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**Great Minds of the Western
Intellectual Tradition, Part VI
Modernism and the Age of Analysis:
Conclusions**
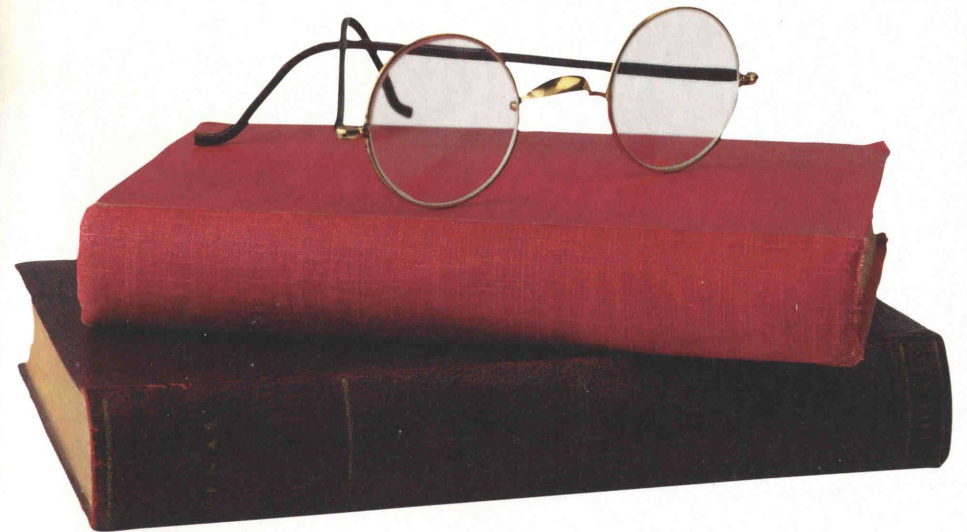
COURSE GUIDE

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Great Minds of the Western Intellectual Tradition

Part VI: Modernism and the Age of Analysis:

Conclusions

Scope:

This series of lectures discusses the major developments of western philosophy since World War II.

The series begins with Thomas Kuhn's groundbreaking text, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*. Kuhn examines the history of sciences and calls the theoretical framework under which normal science is practiced a "paradigm." Such paradigms are challenged and sometimes overthrown when a crisis occurs because of new evidence. This is called a paradigm shift. Kuhn's model is helpful not only for thinking about science, but also for human knowledge in general. It gives the idea of "truth" a historical contingency.

Lecture Two examines the work of a second-generation member of the Frankfurt School, Jurgen Habermas. Unlike his elders, Habermas is less dogmatic in his Marxism. He seeks to understand the rationale for legitimation crises in advanced capitalist societies. He argues that ideal speech situations, where human beings realize perfect freedom, get distorted by coercive norms that have not been rationally decided to be in the general interest.

The critique of the foundation of knowledge leads to the postmodernism of Roland Barthes. Lecture Three examines Barthes's demythologizing project, which is an attempt at liberating the self from any limitation. Reality is something that must be unmasked, and in Barthes's theory of semiotics, the critic has the ultimate power over the text.

In contrast, Lecture Four looks at the political theory of John Rawls who sought to provide the philosophical underpinning for the social welfare state. Combining social contract theory with Kantian teleology, Rawls constructs the "original position" where rational individuals are put behind the "veil of ignorance." Here they can choose, without bias, the system of government that will provide the greatest liberty with the greatest social justice.

Lecture Five examines the work of renegade Marxist Alvin Gouldner, who attempted to explain the flaws in Marxism, such as why industrial western societies never experienced the revolution of the proletariat. Gouldner analyzed the "new class" of intellectuals who were often in the forefront of revolutions. According to Gouldner, it was the complaints of this "new class" that drove much of the radical activity in the West.

Lecture Six deals with Michel Foucault, another postmodern thinker. Foucault examined such transgressive ideas as criminality, insanity, and homosexuality.

He argued that such definitions of individual identity were coercively imposed by society so as to limit individual freedom. They were social constructs.

Lecture Seven explains the work of Willard Van Orman Quine, who was critical of the positivist attempt to create a foundational first philosophy that would establish the meaning of language. Instead, Quine argued that language was not a mirror in the world, but rather a causal connection between a person and the world.

Lecture Eight examines the work of Richard Rorty, who extends pragmatic theory another step forward. He, too, is skeptical of the notion of "truth" and believes that philosophers should cease their pursuit of it. Truth is simply culturally and historically contingent. Instead, Rorty's hero is the ironist, who understands the contingency of truth and instead seeks to be sensitized to life's cruelties through art and literature and thereby create the social solidarity needed for a postmodern bourgeois liberalism.

Lecture Nine presents the ideas of Jean-Francois Lyotard, another leading postmodern thinker. Lyotard argues against the great metanarratives of the modern era, arguing instead for an endless diversity of human beliefs in the hope of maximum human freedom. The postmodernist is suspicious of any accepted truth or authority. In the final lectures, Professors Sugrue and Staloff sum up the major themes of the series.

Lecture One
Kuhn's Paradigm Paradigm

Darren Staloff, Ph.D.
City College of New York

Scope: This lecture presents the ideas of Thomas Kuhn, whose groundbreaking book, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*, is one of the most influential philosophical texts of the twentieth century. His theory of normal and revolutionary science and his theory of paradigm shifts have had an influence in a wide variety of disciplines. In Kuhn's theory, a paradigm is a generally shared theoretical framework within which "normal science" is carried out. During times of scientific "crisis," old paradigms are challenged and replaced by new paradigms.

Outline

I. Thomas Kuhn's landmark study, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*, is perhaps the most influential high cultural text of the twentieth century. Kuhn's study of the history of science led him to conclude that the positivist theory of science could not adequately account for the actual historical development of the natural sciences.

  A. Kuhn argues against the received conception of science as the steady and incremental accumulation of observation, data, discoveries, and inventions.

  B. Instead, he argues that the history of science is really characterized by periods of peaceful and normal research punctuated by epochs of crisis and transformations. He calls these crises "scientific revolutions."

  C. Kuhn's theory of science replaces the logical positivist's conception of science as a rational reconstruction with a historical sociology of scientific communities and problems.

II. Kuhn's divides history of science into early, "immature" science with modern, "normal" science.

  A. The early, "immature" development of science is characterized by continual competition between distinct views of nature. Scientists argue at cross-purposes, and there is no way to prove which theory is right or wrong.

  B. Modern, "normal" science cannot begin until a community of scientists or practitioners agree about the basic entities that they are talking about. They must agree on what are the legitimate questions and what would demarcate the range of legitimate answers to those questions. This agreement is reached by means of one or many paradigms. Without paradigms, all facts seem equally relevant.

III. Kuhn's definition of a paradigm.

  A. A paradigm is a universally recognized scientific achievement that, for a time, provides model problems and solutions to a community of practitioners.

  B. Such achievements must be unprecedented enough to gain adherents.

  C. They must be open-ended enough to allow these adherents to solve problems that had been postulated but had not been completely resolved.

  D. Paradigms present standard cases of the various theories and observations of the paradigm's application.

IV. Aristotle, Galileo, and Newton provide three distinct paradigms of the same problems: the study of dynamics.

V. Normal science is paradigm-based. Kuhn describes such normal science as "mopping up," tightening the fit between the facts displayed by the paradigm and the paradigm's predictions.

  A. Normal scientific research and experimentation pose the following three problems.

    1. The first involves investigation of facts that the paradigm says are exemplary or particularly revealing about the paradigm. (Newton's examination of pendulums)

    2. The second involves investigation of esoteric facts that can be compared to the paradigm's predictions (Newton's astronomy).

    3. The third involves research done to extend or articulate the paradigm, resolve its ambiguities, and solve problems which had earlier only drawn attention (The search for mathematical constants, quantitative laws such as Maxwell's Laws on electromagnetics, experiments in optics).

  B. Normal science is a sort of puzzle-solving.

    1. Both are designed to be solved.

    2. Both have rules.

    3. Preparadigmatic science is like mixing the pieces of two separate jigsaw puzzles.

VI. The undermining of a paradigm. Anomalies are facts or phenomena that violate the facts or expectations of the paradigm. The persistence and proliferation of anomalies generate scientific crises.

  A. Scientific crises can be resolved in three ways.

    1. Normal scientific research solves the problem.

    2. No solution is found and the problem is ignored.

3. A new paradigm emerges. This is a "paradigm shift." (e.g. Newtonian physics to Einsteinian physics)

B. No paradigm is ever destroyed by its anomalies. You can never go back to preparadigmatic science. A bad paradigm is better than no paradigm. However, an old paradigm can be replaced by a new one.

VII. Implications of Kuhn's theory.

    A. It devalorizes science.

    B. It emphasizes consensus.

    C. Preparadigmatic discussions occur in books. Paradigmatic discussions occur in articles.

VIII. Kuhn's paradigm is a paradigm of science. Scientific paradigms are unidirectional. There is rarely a reverse shift in science to a prior interpretation. Yet Kuhn's theory is self-referentially coherent. It teaches us that science may not be the ultimate litmus test. This allows more intellectual free play. Openness, flexibility, and the creation of new conceptual schemes might be the values of a large amount of human intellectual endeavor.

Essential Reading:

Thomas Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*

Supplemental Reading:

Barry Barnes, *T.S. Kuhn and Social Sciences*

Karl Popper, *The Logic of Scientific Discovery*

Questions to Consider:

1. How scientific is Kuhn's theory of science?
2. Does science advance at a steady pace or by revolutionary spurts and stops?

Lecture Two
Habermas's Critical Theory

Michael Sugrue, Ph.D.
Princeton University

Scope: This lecture presents the ideas of German philosopher Jurgen Habermas, the most prominent heir of the Critical Theory school associated with the Frankfurt School. Habermas attempts to reconnect science and ethics without resorting to metaphysics; i.e., he seeks to return to a teleological conception of reason. His purpose is to create a philosophical overview that will provide a criticial analysis of advanced capitalism. Habermas is a non-dogmatic Marxist who seeks to explain the reasons behind the crises of legitimation in advanced capitalist societies. Though all societies rest on coercion, he argues that coercion can only be justified if it serves the general interests. Habermas's philosophy has been influential on the radical critique of law called Criticial Legal Studies.

Outline

I. In *Legitimation Crisis* (1976), Habermas offers an expanded conception of rationality that allows us to criticize reasonably our present society. His goal is a rational, critical analysis of advanced capitalism. Reacting against positivism, he tries to reconnect science and ethics without resorting to metaphysics. His approach appropriates Freudian psychoanalysis, Hegelian Marxism, and modern linguistic philosophy.

II. Habermas breaks society down into three parts that make up an organic whole: the state, the economic system and the socio-cultural system.

    A. There is a homeostatic relationship between state and economy. The economic system gives revenues to the state, and the state tinkers with the economy ("steering performance"), which helps the economic system thrive.

    B. The socio-cultural system is the way we legitimize the political system, most importantly by socializing and educating children.

III. The equilibrium of this system sometimes breaks down. Tensions emerge and a social crisis develops. Habermas is interested in what might be done to prevent these crises from overwhelming society.

    A. Example of a legitimation crisis. Problems may be found in the socio-cultural system, but they are caused by a political or economic breakdown.

1. One example is provided by the counterculture of the 1960s. Any mass defection from the characteristic norms of a society means there is something wrong in the socio-cultural system. For Habermas, the cause might be found in the economic or political system (e.g., the Vietnam War).
2. Another example is provided by homelessness in the 1980s and 1990s. The homeless have not been properly socialized. There is a political unwillingness to spend money on education.

B. Marx was wrong about the economic demise of capitalism. The political system stepped in and restored equilibrium.

IV. Coercive norms can be legitimized on a universal, rational basis without resorting to metaphysics. Every society must coerce people. Question: How will we know which coercion is rationally legitimate? Answer: We can rationally legitimize coercion if it serves the general interest.

A. Examples of legitimate coercion include protection of the ozone layer and promotion of free trade (e.g., the GATT).

B. Illegitimate coercion that does not meet these standards is exemplified by the former government of South Africa.

V. The ideal speech situation.

A. Habermas rescues us from fact/value distinctions. He revives the teleological conception of reason, which tells us what the ends of society should be. How will we know when we have sufficiently legitimized coercion? It is an ongoing rolling process.

B. Habermas comes up with the ideal speech situation (never actually realized). Some situations more or less approximate this. One cannot deform the speech of people by coercion. (Your boss asks you whether you like his tie. This is the opposite of the ideal speech situation. You are forced to alter your speech to satisfy some other need.)

VI. Habermas has had an influence on the Critical Legal Studies movement in America.

A. Critical Legal Studies seeks to analyze the structure of American law. Since law is backed up by coercion, it asks: Who benefits from this coercive law? Law should not benefit a small section of society.

B. Examples of coercive law are provided by slavery and women's rights.

C. A society is truly just when coercion is legitimate in all eyes or in the eyes of all that can reason. Habermas's philosophy represents a return of the Platonic ideal,"*Logos uber alles*," which makes moral discourse legitimate again.

D. Habermas wants to create a system that redeems the judgments of "should" and "ought." It is universal and global, but especially apt for advanced capitalist societies.

Essential Reading:
Jurgen Habermas, *Legitimation Crisis*.

Supplemental Reading:
Axel Honneth, *The Critique of Power: Reflective Stages in a Critical Social Theory*.
Thomas McCarthy, *The Critical Theory of Jurgen Habermas*.

Questions to Consider:
1. Can political questions be decided rationally?
2. How can we tell when "coercion" has been sufficiently legitimized?

Lecture Three

Barthes, Semiotics, and the Revolt Against Structuralism

Michael Sugrue, Ph.D.
Princeton University

Scope: Roland Barthes was an influential literary critic and proponent of semiotics, the theory of signs. He broke with structuralism and Marxism. He was also a major influence on the postmodernist movement. Barthes was an outsider in France: Protestant, homosexual, and without a terminal academic degree. This propelled his demythologizing project and made him more sensitive to the hidden coercion in society. His book *Mythologies* (1957) is the best example of this project, in which Barthes examines the myths of popular culture such as wrestling and detergent.

Outline

I. Barthes's demythologizing project is a reading of mass culture.

   A. Barthes's reading of mass culture raises the following questions.

      1. Where are the hidden messages, and how are they discovered?

      2. Who generates these myths?

      3. What coercive purpose do these myths serve?

      4. In the demythologizing project, Barthes hopes to liberate us from the tyranny of mass-produced culture.

   B. Barthes retreats into interiority.

      1. He exemplifies the critic as the lonely ego.

      2. The external world is constructed by us, not given to us. Nature is a social and linguistic aesthetic.

      3. Barthes is liberating the self and the critic from pre-conceived identities. His is a poetic protest against human limitations.

      4. Barthes's demythology project quickly becomes reflexive and ironic. The demythologizer ends up demythologizing demythology. After the unmasking of reality, we see that reality is just a mask all the way down. There is no substantial reality.

      5. Barthes is an exponent of the pleasure principle. He withdraws into his mind to escape the oppressive reality of the external world.

      6. Critics therefore have complete free play with the text. The critic becomes like the creative artist.

II. *Mythologies* (1957) is a combination of Marxist *Kulturkritik* and ironic self-reference.

   A. Semiotics is the science or theory of signs. It is a subset of structural linguistics.

   B. It views the human domain as made up of signs, and it attempts to read these symbols and look for their internal coherence. Semiotics is concerned with the internal coherence of the relationship between signs.

   C. Examples of semiotic systems include Freudian psychoanalysis, Marxism, advertising, and clothing (Barthes tells the story of the two women—the nun and prostitute—who greet the sailor).

   D. Targets of Barthes's demythologizing project include wrestling, detergent, striptease, Einstein's brain, and plastic.

   E. Barthes describes the relationship of the sign to that which it signifies by means of the following examples.

      1. The photo of a black soldier saluting a French flag. On one level, it is a surface image of a soldier saluting the flag. On a deeper level, it is an apology for French colonialism.

      2. *Rambo*. On one level it is a film about an American Achilles. On a deeper level, it is statement of American invincibility, suggesting that America did not lose the Vietnam War.

      3. Semiotics is an open-system. There is a multitude of conclusions one can come up with. There is no clarity of interpretation. A Freudian critique does not disprove a Marxist critique. Barthes is liberating the connection between the signifier and the thing signified. There is an infinitude of criticism and interpretation. There is no privileged representation of the world. This undermines the authority of the author and gives the critic complete free play. Barthes undermines structuralism and Marxism.

III. The ironic ubiquity of myth.

   A. By demythologizing all myths, Barthes also demythologizes the demythology project. This is akin to intellectual vandalism. Nothing is left except for the ego, but there is not even a complete self left over. The self becomes dubious and contingent. The advantage is that it allows the critic complete free play. The disadvantage is that it is a hopeless attempt to avoid the external world.

   B. Barthes is an anti-Daedalus. There is no way out of the labyrinth. Everyone is locked in his own subjectivity, and the domain of everyone's universe is at his fingertips.

   C. Barthes makes readers little gods and gives them omnipotence over an infinite domain called the literary text.

Essential Reading:

Roland Barthes, *Mythologies*.

Michael Moriarty, *Roland Barthes.*

Mary Bittner Wiseman, *The Ecstasies of Roland Barthes.*

Questions to Consider:

1. What are some other references from popular culture that lend themselves to being "demythologized"?

2. When one myth is demystified, is it always replaced by another?

Lecture Four
A Theory of Justice by John Rawls

Darren Staloff, Ph.D.
City College of New York

Scope: John Rawls's *A Theory of Justice* has been the most influential work of social philosophy in the twentieth century. Drawing upon the theories of Hobbes, Locke, and Rousseau, Rawls argues that the best society would be founded upon principles chosen by rational citizens in the "original position." Making decisions behind a "veil of ignorance" that prevents social position or natural talents to skew their choice, these rational citizens, according to Rawls, would then choose a system that would grant the most extensive liberties to its citizens while ensuring the maximum justice. The text has served as a philosophical defense of the modern welfare state.

Outline

I. Rawls's *A Theory of Justice* (1971) attempted to give a philosophical and moral foundation for constitutional social democracy, a society that is both procedurally and substantively just.

    A. Earlier defenses of democracy were based on utilitarian philosophy.

    B. Rawls's theory is a combination of social contract theory (Hobbes and Rousseau) and Kantian philosophy (human autonomy, universality, theory of ends).

    C. Rawls is interested in the idea of social justice, a set of principles that legitimates the division of advantages and primary social goods in a society.

        1. Rights and liberties.

        2. Opportunities and power.

        3. Income and wealth.

    D. Social institutions generate inequalities.

    E. A well-ordered society is one that is designed to promote the good of its members and at the same time is regulated by a public conception of justice.

    F. Reflective equilibrium begins with the existence of strong views, and it tries to develop theories why those strong views are true. It then applies those views to more uncertain views.

        1. Racism is bad.

        2. Religious intolerance is bad.

G. The "original position" is the equivalent of Hobbes's state of nature. It is where free and rational agents find themselves before they constitute a society.

1. Rational citizens will arrive at the best principles of justice for society.

2. Rawls admits that the original position is non-historical, but he explains it as a hypothetical thought experiment.

3. He thinks people will be able to form universally agreed-upon forms of justice based on reason. Rawls calls it "justice as fairness."

4. Conditions for the original position include the following.

   a. Veil of ignorance states that each of us in the original position does not know what our social position is within that society, and that we do not know what our talents or goals will be.

   b. In the original position, people will have access to all the general laws of social science.

   c. Since parties are rational, they will unanimously agree to the principles adopted. (This is similar to Habermas's ideal speech situation.)

5. Rawls claims that rational, disinterested persons would always agree to two basic principles in the original position if they were to maximize social goods and minimize injustice. The first principle is prior to the second, and the benchmark for all principles of justice is the case of complete social and economic equality. All proposed inequalities must improve upon this benchmark for every prospective social position.

   a. The first principle states that each person is to have an equal right to the most extensive liberty compatible with a similar liberty for others. (Political liberties)

   b. The second principle states that any social and economic inequalities must be to everyone's advantage and must be attached to positions and offices that are equally open to all. (Class differences)

6. The second principle can be interpreted in four ways. The first two are based on "efficiency principles," and the last two are based on the "difference principle."

   a. A system of natural liberty (eighteenth-century liberalism).

   b. A system of liberal equality (twentieth-century liberalism).

   c. A system of natural aristocracy (Founding Fathers, Plato's *Republic*).

   d. A system of democratic equality (Rawls's preferred interpretation).

IV. The virtues of Rawls' philosophy.

A. It precludes the constitution of a callous meritocracy or technocracy and treats hereditary gifts not as an individual advantage, but as a social resource.

B. It is good for the well-off, whose goal is continued social stability and who need agreement from the less-well-off. How better to arrive at this state than by showing that agreement is in their interest and the system is socially just?

C. It gives flesh to the notion of fraternity.

D. It avoids the problems of relying on utilitarianism for the moral-philosophical foundation of constitutional social democracy.

V. The problems with Rawls's philosophy.

A. His theory assumes the univocality of reason and social science. Rawls's rationality of agents resembles the "*homo economicus*" of neo-classical economics, which seeks to maximize returns and minimize risks.

B. Because it is a universal, Kantian moral theory, it is ahistorical. It ignores the fact that codes of justice might be relative.

C. Rawls' theory is fraught with a methodological individualism. It sees society as a collection of individuals. It ignores the ideas of "nation," "state," and "culture." It ignores the possible contributions of Michelangelo's art.

Essential Reading:

John Rawls, *A Theory of Justice*.

Supplemental Reading:

Roberto Alejandro, *The Limits of Rawlsian Justice*.
Chandren Kukathas and Philip Petit, *Equality and Liberty: Analyzing Rawls and Nozick*.

Questions to Consider:

1. Should the justice of society be judged from the perspective of the least advantaged?

2. Is the "veil of ignorance" a plausible philosophical construct?

Lecture Five
Alvin Gouldner's *Dark Side of the Dialectic*

Darren Staloff, Ph.D.
City College of New York

Scope: Alvin Gouldner was often called a "renegade sociologist." He was a self-professed ridge-rider between traditional academic sociology and critical Marxist social theory. In the trilogy *The Dark Side of the Dialectic*, Gouldner presented a Marxist critique of Marxism itself. He became an "outlaw Marxism." He uses the dialectic to show the flaws in Marxism, calling himself a "Marxist Socratic." His analysis of the "new class" of intellectuals and others who earn their living from their education and not their ownership of capital, provides a necessary corrective to the Marxist idea of class struggle and helps explain why so many Marxists and radicals were not proletarians, but intellectuals.

Outline

I.   *The Dialectic of Ideology and Technology* (1976) focuses on the historic conditions that give rise to ideology.

    A. Ideologies emerge in the modern period as a response to the breakdown of the discursive credit of traditional authorities.

        1. The modern epoch (American and French Revolutions) destroyed the traditional authority of aristocracy and clerics.

        2. How do we replace this authority? With a new culture of rational discourse.

            a. All assertions must be justified without reference to authority.

            b. Assent must be voluntary.

            c. Assumptions must be made explicit.

        3. Ideologies were able to respond to a crisis in "credit" that the overthrow of the *ancien regime* brought about because of the communications revolution in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.

            a. The development of cheap rag paper made possible the printing of inexpensive newspapers and journals.

            b. The decentralization of the modes of production of newspapers allowed for a vast number of small, privately owned newspapers and journals. They provided a venue for the new ideologies.

        4. Ideologies unmask each other by exposing the hidden, occluded interests that lay behind them.

        5. Ideologies appeal to college-educated people who are familiar with the culture of rational discourse. If Marxism is the philosophy of the working class, why are so many Marxists trained academicians and other well-educated people?

II. *The Future of Intellectuals and the Rise of the New Class* (1979) explains the major flaw in the Marxist scenario: Why did no major social revolutions occur in the advanced capitalist countries of western and central Europe between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat, but occurred instead in less advanced countries and involved the peasantry, not the proletariat, mobilized by a vanguard party of intellectuals?

    A. The real class struggle of the modern era, which Marxism misses, is between the old class and the new class.

        1. The old class is the moneyed bourgeoisie.

        2. The new class is made up of the technical intelligentsia who make their income based on their education (doctors, lawyers, engineers) and traditional humanistic intellectuals.

    B. Part of what constitutes this class is its human or cultural capital, and what unifies it is its shared culture of critical discourse.

    C. Though Gouldner sees the new class as flawed (arrogant and hubristic), he also sees it as a universal class committed to certain positive principles. Among these are social justice, public rationality, and constant critique of authority.

III. In *Two Marxisms* (1979), Gouldner examines the division in Marxist thought between critical and scientific Marxism. Each argues that it is the real Marxism.

    A. The two Marxisms.

        1. The philosophy of early Marx is Hegelian and romantic, and it lives on in most twentieth-century Marxists in their belief in free will and voluntarism. Critical Marxists include Lenin, Habermas, and Gramsci.

        2. Scientific Marxism is that of *Das Kapital* and it is found in economistic writers who believed Marxism was a science. It is found in the structuralism of Althusser.

    B. This dispute exists because there is a true disparity in Marx's work.

    C. Gouldner wants to examine Marxism as a paradigm.

        1. Phase One: The basic elements of Marx's thought: historical materialism, the problem of scarcity, the class struggle, the withering away of the state, the idea of the proletariat.

        2. Phase Two: Apply their new paradigm to other cases. Find anomalies with the paradigm. (Class struggles in France, Asiatic modes of production)

3. Phase Three: Theory consolidation and defense of the theory against vulgarizations and anomalies.

IV. The anomalies of Marxism.

A. The state may not be a function of the economic system. After the revolution of the proletariat, the state, therefore, might not wither away. What one is left with is the possibility of totalitarianism.

B. Not all classes may be propertied. Marxism is relevant only to northwestern Europe.

C. Marxism may not have been a science after all, but rather just another utopian socialism.

D. The real nightmare of Marxism is that the theory has failed to see that it was Europe's unique experience with proprietary classes and private property that led to its Promethean dynamism. Without such dynamism, Marxist revolution is a bad idea. Abolishing private property will bring a static, gray, dull society with a totalitarian state (e.g., the Soviet Union, Maoist China).

V. Gouldner's legacy is his discussion of the role of intellectuals, which allows a fundamental transformation in social theory and sheds light on the important problems in the sociology of knowledge, as well as political and cultural history.

Essential Reading:

Alvin Gouldner, *Dialectic of Ideology and Technology*.

Alvin Gouldner, *The Future of Intellectuals and the Rise of the New Class*.

Supplementary Reading:

Edward Shils, *The Intellectuals and the Powers*.

Questions to Consider:

1. Do intellectuals make up a distinct and separate "class"?

2. Why role have intellectuals and other well-educated elites played in radical and revolutionary movements?

Lecture Six
Foucault: Power, Knowledge, and Post Structrualism

Michael Sugrue, Ph.D.
Princeton University

Scope: Michel Foucault was a leading postmodernist thinker. Influenced by Nietzsche, his work dealt with such subjects as psychiatry, prisons, medicine, and sex. He claimed that the fundamental concepts that constitute an individual's identity are contingent. His work emphasized issues of power. Foucault believed concepts like punishment, insanity, and homosexuality were coercive attempts by society to limit individual freedom.

Outline

I. Michel Foucault was one of the most controversial thinkers of the twentieth century. He possessed a deep interiority and was obsessed with death and power. Foucault's thought was basically anti-humanist, and he took Nietzsche's "will to power" as far as it could go. To Foucault, there is merely power, desire, and our relationship to the utterly contingent. He studied madness, sexuality, and criminality. His focus was negative and on the macabre.

A. The only way to extend human freedom is a ruthless analysis of power that seeks out all coercion by one person over another and eliminates it.

B. Foucault's philosophy undermines, interrogates, and delegitimizes all prevailing moral, political, and epistemological codes. He calls into question the category of the transgressive (the criminal, the insane, the homosexual), because he believes that anything that limits our absolute freedom and marks off the transgressive from the morally praiseworthy is a self-imposed limitation. He is an anarchist who declares war upon any such limitations.

C. Foucault's intellectual heritage included the following components.
1. Hobbes's conception of man.
2. Kant's critical stance towards knowledge.
3. Marquis de Same's concentration on self and limit experiences.
4. Nietzsche's nihilism.
5. Sorel's defense of violence and terrorism.
6. Heidegger's anti-humanism.
7. Structuralism's abolition of human agency.

II. Foucault's *Madness and Civilization* (1961) studies madness in the Age of Reason and argues that the humanitarian reforms of the Enlightenment were insidiously and covertly coercive.

A. The idea of "madness" is socially constructed. By examining what gave rise to the idea of madness, Foucault could unmask the power relations behind stigmatization and coercion.

B. Foucault influenced the anti-psychiatry movement and the recent move towards deinstitutionalization of the insane.

III. *The Order of Things* (1966) is perhaps Foucault's greatest, and most difficult, work.

A. It examines the soft sciences in western history in the last 500 years. Foucault finds four distinct "epistemes." An episteme is a stance of looking at the world, a grammar of interpretation analogous to Kuhn's paradigm. There are no rules for the change from one episteme to another. It is a discontinuity, arbitrary and irrational. Epistemes are epistemological breaks. They included:
1. Renaissance (1500-1650). The age of the analogy.
2. Enlightenment (1650-1800). Analysis replaces analogy.
3. Modern era (1800-1950). Knowledge, ethical judgements, and politics are legitimized by reference to a totalizing meta-narrative.
4. Postmodernism (1950-present). Grand meta-narratives are forsaken, and we can no longer legitimize our moral, political, and aesthetic principles. We become "beyond good and evil."

B. Foucault's ambitious argument transforms Kant's *a priori* categories into a historically contingent set of socially constructed, arbitrary presuppostions.

C. With the end of modernism, we lose our conception of human existence. Our idea of man becomes contingent. "The twilight of the human beings."

IV. In *Discipline and Punish* (1975), Foucault extends his inquiry into the social construction of criminality.

A. Foucault criticizes Bentham's Panopticon as unnecessarily limiting human freedom.

B. Construction of criminality is merely a method of social control so that capital is able to have a docile workforce.

V. Foucault's three-volume *History of Sexuality* (I 1976, II 1983, III 1984) is his final encounter with the historical development of subjectivity. He argues for the social construction of nature.

A. Foucault emphasizes homosexuality. He believes homosexuality was an invention of the nineteenth century.

B. Sexuality is a social construct. Prior to the nineteenth century, there was just the pleasure of the flesh.

C. In all three volumes, there is little mention of women. It is almost exclusively a male-dominated social history of sexuality.

VI. Problems with Foucault's theory.

A. His philosophy tends towards a powerful nihilism. Liberation and coercion seem equally acceptable.

B. His philosophy tends toward radical historicism. Nature is dependent on our will for its existence.

C. Foucault has constructed a Pyrrhonic skepticism that dissolves all claims to authority and obligation. This turns into a philosophical "me-tooism" which delegitimizes other discourses without inquiring into the lack of foundations that we construct.

Essential Reading:

Michel Foucault, *Madness and Civilization*.
Michel Foucault, *The Order of Things: An Archaelogy of the Human Sciences*.

Supplementary Reading:

Gary Gutting, *Foucault's Archaeology: Science and the History of Reason*.
James Miller, *The Passion of Michel Foucault*.

Questions to Consider:

1. Is the social construction of madness, criminality, and homosexuality an attempt to limit human freedom?

2. Does Foucault's theory necessarily lead to nihilism?

Lecture Seven
Quine's Ontological Relativism and the End of "Philosophy"

Darren Staloff, Ph.D.
City University of New York

Scope: Willard Van Orman Quine is among the most profound and important philosophers of the twentieth century, as well as one of its most eminent logicians. He made major contributions to ontology, epistemology, and mathematical logic. Quine's philosophy came at a time when logical positivism suffered a series of setbacks in its attempt to reduce mathematics to logic. He attacked positivism's attempt to create a foundational first philosophy that would establish the meaning of language.

Outline

I. The context for Quine's philosophy is a series of setbacks to the positivist attempt to reduce mathematics to logic.

   A. The anomaly of Russell's paradox.

   B. Gertel's incompleteness proof.

II. Quine directed his criticism at the foundational or "Kantian" elements of logical positivism.

   A. Positivist linguistic analysis and epistemology tried to constitute itself as a first philosophy that foundationally and unequivocally established the meaning of expressions or discourse prior to scientific analysis of truth or verifiability.

   B. Positivists set out to limit the range of legitimate discourse.

   C. Positivists presupposed that language and theory possess a determinate meaning or contain fixed structural or conceptual features.

III. Quine's first large-scale attack on positivism came in the article entitled, "Two Dogmas of Empiricism."

   A. The first dogma is the belief that there is a basic and fundamental distinction between analytic and synthetic truths. An analytic sentence is true solely on the basis of its meanings rather than on any factual state of the world. Quine believes this   is an insupportable view since synonymy is a dead end.

   B. The second dogma is that of reductionism, that every meaningful statement about the world is equivalent to some statement which is a logical construct of terms referring to a sense experience. Quine

states that some statements are true, even if they have no factual basis.

   C. The positivists allowed pragmatic considerations to rule over only our choice of synthetic beliefs. By destroying the analytic/synthetic distinction, however, Quine allows for a more thoroughgoing pragmatism.

IV. Quine's most powerful attack on positivism is *Ontological Relativity and Other Essays* (1969). He argues that when we specify the entities of some theory or language (the object language), we do so by translating sentences with those entities into another background theory or language (the metalanguage) that is richer and more inclusive. The outcome is an ontological relativity.

   A. The reference or ontological import of an object language is relative to the metalanguage into which it is translated.

   B. Radical translation is relative and indeterminate.

   C. One must find out the referential apparatus of the object language, the "logical particles" ("a," "and," "not," plural endings, etc.).

   D. In translating a language, one must posit an analytic hypothesis that explains the first rough guesses as to how to individuate terms. We could come up with more than one analytic hypothesis, meaning there could be more than one translation.

   E. The ontology of language is not only relative to the metalanguage into which one translates, but also to the analytic hypothesis one uses for translation.

   F. Meaning merely refers to a move in a language game.

   G. Language is not a mirror of the world, but rather a causal connection between you and the world.

V. The result of Quine's work is that a foundational analysis of linguistic meanings is rendered impossible.

   A. Quine's theory means that there is nothing left called "philosophy" that is distinguishable from science.

   B. Quine offers a theory of epistemology naturalized, which needs no foundation, but instead he explains how man uses his symbolic systems to erect scientific theories and explanations.

Essential Reading:

W. V. Quine, *Ontological Relativity and Other Essays*.

Supplementary Reading:

Christopher Hookaway, *Quine, Language, Experience, Reality.*

Hillary Kornblith, ed., *Naturalizing Epistemology.*

Questions to Consider:

1. Why is a theory of language important?
2. Is meaning fixed?

Lecture Eight
Rorty's Neo-Pragmatism

Darren Staloff, Ph.D.
City College of New York

Scope: Rorty argues that philosophers have traditionally sought to escape from history by providing searching for "truth." Rorty believes that truth can never be found imbedded in language, but is merely a statement that we approve of. He believes philosophers should end their pursuit of the truth. Rorty admires "ironists" who see the contingency of truth and instead aim for self-creation and the elimination of cruelty by means of cultural edification. Rorty's pragmatism is the basis of his defense of the postmodern bourgeois liberalism of the West.

Outline

I. Richard Rorty is one of the most profound and influential philosophers on the current high-cultural scene.

   A. He is attempting to move post-analytic American philosophy in a pragmatic direction.

   B. His pragmatism is deeply informed by a commitment to democracy, naturalism, tolerance, and intellectual openness, as well as a profound awareness of the contingency of such values and institutions.

II. In *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature* (1979), Rorty examines the notion of truth as correspondence.

   A. Rorty suggests that the history of modern epistemology can be seen, from Descartes to the present, as based on the notion that there is a medium standing between ourselves and the world which, either adequately or inadequately, mirrors the world.

      1. Descartes introduced the idea of the positive mind as the medium between the individual and the world—i.e., the mind as a mirror. A philosopher examines the mirror to find which representations are true. Locke continued this tradition.

      2. The problem with the idea of the veil of ideas is skepticism. It is hard to know if our ideas correspond to the way the world really is.

      3. Kant tried to solve the problem of skepticism by making epistemology the "first philosophy."

      4. Hegel undermined Kant's scheme by pointing out the historical contingency of such ideas. This led to the profusion of speculative metaphysics, which in turn led to the positivists who,

wanting to return to "first philosophy," turned to linguistics for a philosophical foundation.

B. Rorty claims that what underlies such projects as seeking a philosophical foundation and what unites them with their Platonic forerunners is the desire to constitute philosophy as a metacultural criticism—the desire to have a "God's eye view."

1. The philosopher's goal is to stand above all other intellectual disciplines and tell them what is meaningful and what is not.

2. Rorty argues that a truly secular culture will have no such architectonic structure, but will allow free play between the various intellectual disciplines and fields.

III. In *Consequences of Pragmatism* (1982), Rorty argues that pragmatism is the ultimate enemy of philosophy in both its metaphysical and positivistic/analytic forms.

A. Rorty thinks it is time to stop searching for "truth." A "true" sentence is one of which we approve. Truth is a primitive, normative concept, a compliment you pay to a sentence that is working for you.

B. Correspondence theories of truth assume that language is a medium of representation that we can compare to some fixed and final reality.
   Rorty believes language is part of the world, not a mirror of the world.

C. Rorty argues for an "anti-realism." The notion of a final, fixed reality has zero explanatory power. There is no way to compare your conceptual scheme to a fixed and final world because you always experience the world under some paradigm or conceptual scheme.

D. Philosophy should try to show how our various descriptions and actions "hang together," rather than try to offer epistemological foundations for our beliefs. He wants to turn western society from a debate into an ongoing, edifying conversation.

IV. In *Contingency, Irony, and Solidarity* (1988), Rorty tries to show how his edifying pragmatic discourses "hang together" with the contemporary democratic project of the West called "postmodern bourgeois liberalism."

A. Rorty does not try to ground democracy, give it philosophical foundations, or prove that it is the best form of government. Instead, he offers a view on how things cohere with our democratic practices. He offers support short of justification.

B. Democracy has priority over philosophy. Philosophy does not have to support democracy.

C. Post-Hegelian inquiry has shown us the contingency of our language, beliefs, values, and institutions.

D. It allows us to redescribe ourselves and our institutions.

E. The "strong poet," who allows us to redescribe ourselves in a new way, is the hero of Rorty's utopian, postmodern liberal society (e.g., Emerson, Douglass, Einstein).

F. "Ironists" are people who understand the contingency of final vocabularies and have doubts about it. They know that their present vocabularies cannot resolve these doubts. They do not think that language corresponds to reality or taps into a metaphysical power.

G. The greatest fear for the ironists is that they might be a copy or replica, and that their final vocabularies might not be of their own choosing, but rather imposed upon them by society. Therefore, ironists are constantly redescribing themselves so that they can be Nietzschean self-creators.

H. Rorty believes that liberals believe that humiliation is the worst thing that we can do. One is humiliated when he is forced to perform an act or affirm a statement such that he can no longer describe himself consistently. Humiliation is the ultimate purpose of torture.

I. Rorty finds that we achieve moral education through literature, movies, and the theater. Such works sensitize us to the suffering of others. They transform "others" into "us." Such a sense of solidarity holds society together.

J. Our culture is the most tolerant because it is the only culture that mistrusts itself.

Essential Reading:

Richard Rorty, *Consequences of Pragmatism.*

Richard Rorty, *Contingency, Irony, and Solidarity.*

Supplementary Reading:

Kai Nielson, *After the Demise of the Tradition: Rorty, Critical Theory, and the Fate of Philosophy.*

Questions to Consider:

1. How would Rorty defend the principles of liberal democracy?

2. Is self-creation an interesting project or is it narcissism made respectable?

Lecture Nine
Jean-Francois Lyotard: The Postmodern Condition

Michael Sugrue, Ph.D.
Princeton University

Scope: Jean-Francois Lyotard is a leading postmodernist thinker. He argues against the philosophical search for metanarratives or truth that characterized the modern era. Instead, postmodernism is, by definition, suspicious of all forms of power in the world. It calls for the endless diversity of human beliefs in the hope of maximum human freedom. For Lyotard, any attempt to silence this *differend*, or multitude of untranslatable discourses, is, "terroristic."

Outline

I. Jean-Francois Lyotard's *The Postmodern Condition* (1979) crystallizes some of the main themes of contemporary thought.

  A. Lyotard is an anti-essentialist and anti-foundationalist thinker who rejects the idea that there is some fundamental reality we can disclose through some demythologizing principle.

    1. Postmodernism believes we cannot have a totalizing discourse or one unified theory. Instead, Lyotard bases his theory of "little narratives" on Wittgenstein's theory of language.
    2. The first goal is to satisfy the desire for justice. The second goal is respect for the unknown.
    3. There is a connection between romanticism and postmodernism.
       a. Heroic individuals
       b. Unrestrained narcissism
       c. Powerful internal activities
    4. Postmodernism is not a logically coherent system, but rather an organized system of emotions, systematic distrust, organized mistrust. It suspects all sites of power in the world. It mistrusts everything except itself.

  B. Lyotard seeks to inquire into the status of knowledge. Intellectuals can no longer take seriously the legitimizing grand narratives that had held together the modern world. The legitimization of science and the state are always bound together.

  C. Modernist metanarratives have no place in the postmodern project. Examples include Hegel's *Geist*, Marxist class conflict, the *Volk*, and Habermas's attempt at the rational legitimation of ethics.

III. Lyotard offers a critique of two leading modernists: Habermas and Luhmann.

  A. Lyotard takes issue with Habermas's ideal speech situation. In generating a consensus, Lyotard argues, you are enforcing a totalitarian myth on people. Instead, Lyotard calls for a polymorphous perversity of discourses. His goal is to maximize difference and diversity.

  B. Lyotard attacks Luhmann's systems theory, which is an attempt to talk about the world as a large cybernetic system. Lyotard's problem with Luhmann is that systems theory is a closed system. Also, this theory legitimizes "performativity," which is maximum output for minimum input. This is the underpinning for advanced capitalism. Luhmann finds such a theory rational; Lyotard calls it just another coercive myth, a social construct.

  C. Instead, Lyotard wants to give up on the theory of science and examine the practice of science and turns to parology. He wants to undermine consensus and encourage an infinite number of interpretations to exist. We must resist the terroristic modernist desire to silence difference.

IV. Problems with the Lyotard, "the postmodern gamester."

  A. How is communication possible if this infinite number of language games is not held together by a totalizing metadiscourse? Aren't we then all playing our own language game and making noise like scat singing? Example: Should abortion be made illegal? There is no neutral ground in language to answer that question. It depends on whether one considers it murder or a matter of choice.

  B. Is postmodern legitimation an oxymoron? Postmodernism dissolves the domain of communication into a giddy, self-indulgent laughter. Postmodernism is both serious and facetious.

  C. Is the silencing of the *differend* really "terroristic"? Is Singaporean authoritarian government really "terroristic," no matter how much Singaporeans support their government? America does not provide free air time to all political candidates. Does this mean Americans are toiling under "terrorism"? One man's dystopian terror is another man's utopian happiness. This is analogous to the Marxist problem of false consciousness.

  D. Postmodernism is a posture of studied suspicion, an exaggerated intellectual scrupulosity. The result is not intellectual cleanliness, but rather intellectual sterility.

Essential Reading:

Jean-Francois Lyotard, *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge.*

Supplementary Reading:

Andrew Benjamin, *Judging Lyotard.*

Bill Readings, *Introducing Lyotard: Art and Politics.*

Questions to Consider:

1. Is Lyotard's definition of "terror" similar to the standard definition of the word?

2. How is postmodernism related to nihilism?

Lecture Ten
Conclusion: The Theory of Knowledge and Language

Darren Staloff, Ph.D.
City College of New York

Scope: In this first concluding lecture, we will examine the distinguishing marks of twentieth-century epistemology: the problem of representation and the search for the foundation of knowledge of the external world. Both Hegel's historicism and Nietzsche's perspectivalism pulled the rug out from under previous understandings of representation. We will then look at four different approaches to the problem of representation that twentieth-century philosophers have taken. But such responses have usually led to cultural and moral relativism and we look at whether that has been a positive or negative development.

Outline

I. What distinguishes twentieth-century epistemology from previous epistemological epochs has been the search for a certain foundation for knowledge of the external world and the problem of representation ("the linguistic turn").

    A. Part of the project of twentieth-century epistemology has been to establish a foundation for our knowledge that is itself absolutely certain. From such a foundation, we can distinguish those cultural precincts which can make truth claims from those which are purely relativistic.

        1. Twentieth-century philosophy came about in response to Hegel's historicism and Nietzsche's perspectivalism, which showed the contingency of many of our beliefs.

        2. This gave rise to the modern problem of relativism.

        3. Part of the project of twentieth century epistemology has been to establish a foundation for our knowledge that is itself absolutely certain. From such a foundation we can distinguish those cultural precincts which can make truth claims from those which are purely relativistic.

    B. Theories of knowledge in the twentieth century have also been characterized by an awareness of the presence and significance of language as a medium of representation. Our understanding of the world is encoded through language. How do we know that our descriptive schemes reflect the nature of the universe?

II. There have been four approaches in dealing with the problems of certainty and representation. One approach to the problem of epistemology in the twentieth century has been to get behind representation and marshal various philosophical methods and procedures to generate the necessary foundations for criticizing the culture.

A. Phenomenological reduction. Husserlian phenomenology offers the method of phenomenological and eidetic reduction to remove the historically contingent elements of our linguistic consciousness. Heidegger's quasi-Kierkegaardian meditation on dread, death, and conscience.

B. Habermas and the Frankfurt School attempt to eliminate the distortions in our speech caused by the hidden irrational interests of particular groups—elites, classes—by means of an ideological critique grounded in Marxist scientific understanding, a dialectical understanding, and by an emancipatory critique.

III. The second approach is to clarify representation and understand our medium of representation instead of either superseding or correcting it.

A. Logical positivism classes all truth-bearing sentences into two classes: the analytic and the synthetic.

B. Structuralism offers an analysis of language distinguishing between the necessary (synchronic) and the contingent (diachronic).

IV. The third approach to the problem of representation is the post-structural attempt to note the failure of representation. The postmodern condition is that of a speaker caught in a failed representational scheme, where even this knowledge is subject to criticism once it is encoded in language.

V. The final approach is that of the pragmatists who go one step further than the poststructuralists in rejecting the idea of representation. While the poststructuralists claim that language fails to represent the world accurately, the pragmatists deny that language is representative at all.

A. Kuhn's attempt to sociologize epistemology says: If you want to know what scientific truth is, watch what scientists do. The procedures they come out with are probably as close to the truth as you will get. If they come up with different procedures next year, then scientific truth has also probably changed.

B. Quine's attempt to naturalize epistemology asks: How do humans use markings and sounds to control their world? The explanation should be purely causal.

VI. All of these twentieth-century positions generate a sense of cultural and moral relativism. Such relativism can be read in different ways.

A. You can read relativism as a bad sign. Without moral and philosophical foundations, our cherished democratic and liberal traditions cannot survive. Relativism leads to nihilism. This has been the basis for recent "culture wars."

B. You can read relativism as a good sign. Relativism is nothing other than contingency, which means the freedom of individuals and groups to choose their own beliefs and values. Relativism is then the culmination of the Western tradition. It allows individuals to choose their own values, opinion, and even their own identities.

C. You can choose to read the rise of relativism as an irrelevant sign. Our democratic and liberal traditions do not really need an epistemological foundation because they were not based on such a philosophical foundation. Instead, it was the beliefs and practices of practical politicians and the experience of everyday life that generated liberal democracy. Rorty called this "democracy without foundation." In addition, few outside of academia have actually noticed the rise of relativism.

Lecture Eleven
Conclusion: Political, Social, and Cultural Criticism and Theory

Michael Sugrue, Ph.D.
Princeton University

Scope: In the final concluding lecture, we sum up the major strands of twentieth-century political, social, and cultural theory. The theories of Nietzsche and Freud both shattered inherited conceptions of the self. We summarize the twentieth-century responses to this problem, including Marxism, existentialism, positivism, pragmatism, structuralism, and poststructuralism. We will next examine how various philosophers have dealt with the problems of technology. Finally, we will ask what influence twentieth-century philosophy has had on the everyday, practical world.

Outline

I. Contemporary philosophy exists in the shadow of Freud and Nietzsche—the masters of distrust—who shattered inherited conceptions of self and society.

    A. The effects of Nietzsche's political theory.

        1. Nietzsche offered the idea that "God is dead" which not only signaled the end of theology, but also the end of metaphysics.

        2. Ethics becomes aesthetics, and there is a collapse of moral universality.

        3. Politics is transformed into an exclusive domain of the will to power. The reason we advance certain political projects is that they advance our will to power. Chaos ensues where politics cannot be reasoned out, but must be fought out.

    B. The effects of Freudian psychoanalysis.

        1. Freudian psychoanalysis split the subject into component parts (id, ego, superego). Introspection becomes deprivileged.

        2. The interrogation of the content of language makes communication problematic.

        3. The fragmentation of the self and society seems to preclude coherent discourses about the self and society and leads to the fragmentation of knowledge that is found in postmodern thought.

II. Contemporary philosophers have had to cope with the problems of the machine. Specifically, there are the advances in communications technology which have allowed for a wider and quicker dissemination of information.

    A. Technology offers new prospects for human freedom, but it also creates unanticipated problems.

        1. It appears that technology pushes man around more so than man uses technology to affect nature.

        2. With this technology, there is a feeling that our options are being limited and our privacy is eroded. More people can know more about us with greater ease and the mechanism of social control becomes more effective with such information.

    B. Problems with technology give the philosopher new questions to ponder.

        1. Whose responsibility is global warming and other environmental problems?

        2. Will environmental limits prevent Third World development?

        3. Will the developed countries then need to redistribute their wealth to undeveloped nations?

    C. The reaction of the philosopher to technology.

        1. Heidegger inveighed against the distraction of gadgets and the lack of authenticity of modern man.

        2. The Frankfurt School extended its criticism to the ideological manipulation of public opinion through the media of mass communications.

        3. For Habermas, technology is potentially liberating when used to extend the communicative rationality of an enlarged speech community.

        4. Foucault found the increase in the power of science a Trojan Horse that would bring more state-authorized coercion, thereby diminishing human freedom (i.e., the penitentiary).

        5. Lyotard believed that science is ideologically tainted and skews truth and justice toward wealth. The *differend* is then terroristically silenced.

        6. Gouldner argued that postmodernism is merely a power play by humanistic intellectuals who, deprived of political power, construct an elaborate vocabulary to delegitimize scientific and political power because they resent their own growing irrelevance.

III. In twentieth-century philosophy, moral and political legitimation becomes problematic.

    A. Existentialists such as Sartre and Heidegger substitute legitimacy with free play. Sartre becomes an anti-fascist, and Heidegger becomes a Nazi. They aestheticize ethics. Romantic notions of commitment become the only legitimizing force.

    B. Marxism is still alive and well in the universities, while it has collapsed everywhere else. This legitimizes Marxism and its stance of

defiance against the world at large. Gouldner stands apart, though, as a "renegade Marxist."

C. Beyond Marxism are various forms of efficiency arguments or utilitarianism that are sympathetic to capitalism and found in the Anglo-American tradition. Rawls stands as a critic of this type of Utilitarianism, and he defends the welfare state.

D. Pragmatism is an attempt to muddle through the fact that we do not have any grounds for our moral and political judgements. Scratch a pragmatist and you will find a positivist with a broken heart. Pragmatism is the second-choice philosophy for many people. You can have left-wing pragmatists like Rorty or right-wing pragmatists like Quine.

E. Poststructuralists, like Barthes and Levi-Strauss, take us from the earlier, modernist standpoint of structuralism. They turn the demythologizing process of structuralism against itself and find that the inner reality of structuralism is just another myth. Structuralism demands poststructuralism.

F. Gadamer's hermeneutics does not really fit into this postmodern paradigm. It believes it is possible to know a real external world which exists independent of our feelings about it. It allows us to avoid solipsism.

IV. A major irony of the humanistic intellectuals' negative, antagonistic stance towards science, technology, and the theory of knowledge is that the everyday practical world is blissfully unaware of the contemporary developments in intellectual life. Even noteworthy political actors—Gorbachev and Lee Kwan Yu—and moral influences—Desmond Tutu and Mother Teresa—have probably ignored recent philosophical debates. Postmodern intellectuals have become provincial and conventional. The political ground occupied by most professional intellectuals is a small and self-contained infinity which marginalizes itself and makes a virtue out of its own alienation.

Glossary

Episteme: An episteme is a stance of looking at the world, a grammar of interpretation analogous to Kuhn's paradigm. There are no rules for the change from one episteme to another.

Epistemology: The branch of philosophy that deals with the origin, nature, and limits of human knowledge.

Metaphysics: Metaphysics originally referred to the writings of Aristotle that came after his writings on physics. Traditionally, metaphysics refers to the branch of philosophy that attempts to understand the fundamental nature of all reality, whether visible or invisible. It seeks a description so basic, so essentially simple, so all-inclusive that it applies to everything, whether divine or human or anything else.

Nihilism: The denial of all real existence or the possibility of an objective basis for truth.

Ontology: The branch of metaphysics that studies the nature of existence or being, as distinct from material or spiritual existence.

Paradigm: A paradigm is a universally recognized scientific achievement that, for a time, provides model problems and solutions to a community of practitioners.

Phenomenology: The twentieth-century philosophical movement dedicated to describing the structures of experience as they present themselves to consciousness, without recourse to theory, deduction, or assumptions from other disciplines such as the natural sciences.

Postmodernism: The belief that there are no totalizing metanarratives or unified theories that describe the world. Instead postmodernism is, by definition, suspicious of all forms of power in the world. It calls for the endless diversity of human beliefs in the hopes of maximum human freedom

Pragmatism: A doctrine developed by the nineteenth-century American philosophers Charles Sanders Peirce, William James, and others. According to pragmatism, the test of the truth of a proposition is its practical utility; the purpose of thought is to guide action; and the effect of an idea is more important than its origin. Pragmatism was the first independently developed American philosophy.

Semiotics: Deriving from linguistics, semiotics is the science or study of signs and signifying practices.

Solipsism: The theory that only the self exists or can be proven to exist.

Veil of Ignorance: John Rawls, in his *A Theory of Justice*, describes the original position where free and rational citizens would meet before they constitute a

society to decide upon the best principles of justice for a society. The veil of ignorance states that people in the original position do not know what their social position is within that society and do not know what their talents or goals will be. Therefore, an objective creation of a just society is possible.

Biographical Notes

Barthes, Roland (1915-1980). Barthes was born in Cherbourg, France. During his twenties, he suffered from tuberculosis. During this time, Barthes read voraciously. Through his writings, he became an influential literary critic. He taught in Rumania and Egypt and three years prior to his death, he received an appointment to the College of France.

Foucault, Michel (1926-1984). Foucault was born in Poitiers, France, and was educated at the *Ecole Normale Superieure* and the University of Paris. He taught in the philosophy department at the University of Clermont-Ferrand from 1962 to 1968. From 1968 to 1970, he was professor at the University of Paris-Vincennes and subsequently became professor of the history and systems of thought at the College de France in Paris.

Gouldner, Alvin (1920-1980). Gouldner, a prominent sociologist and educator, received his B.A. from Bernard Baruch College in 1941. He received his Ph.D. in 1953 from Columbia University. From 1954 to 1959, Gouldner taught at the University of Illinois at Urbana. Thereafter, he was a professor of sociology at Washington University in St. Louis, where he remained until his death. He was founder and editor of *Transaction* and was a co-founder and editor-in-chief of *Theory and Society*.

Habermas, Jurgen (1929-). Habermas was born in Dusseldorf, Germany. Educated at the Universities of Gottingen, Bonn, Zurich, and Marburg, he is the most prominent heir of the school of Critical Theory associated with the Frankfurt School. In the late 1950s, he was an assistant researcher at the Institute of Social Research in Frankfurt. In 1961, he was appointed professor of philosophy at Heidelberg, and three years later became professor of philosophy and sociology at the University of Frankfurt. During the 1970s, he was director of the Max Plank Institute.

Kuhn, Thomas (1922-). Kuhn was born in Cincinnati, Ohio, and received his B.A. and his Ph.D. in physics from Harvard University. He has taught at Berkeley, Boston, Harvard, and Princeton Universities. At present he teaches at MIT.

Lyotard, Jean-Francois (1924-). Lyotard was born in Versailles, France. A high school philosophy teacher for a decade after World War II, he taught philosophy at the University of Paris from 1959 until 1989.

Quine, Willard Van Orman (1908-). Quine was born in Ohio into a middle-class American family. His autobiography, *The Time of My Life* (1985), describes his happy childhood in Akron. He received his B.A. from Oberlin College in 1930. Four years later, he received a Ph.D. from Harvard University where his supervisor was the British philosopher Alfred North Whitehead. Quine became a Junior Fellow of the Society of Fellows at Harvard from 1933 to 1936, an

instructor from 1936 to 1941, and an associate professor from 1941 to 1948. In 1948, Quine was made full professor at Harvard.

Rawls, John Boardley (1921-). Rawls was born in Baltimore, Maryland. He studied at Princeton University and received his Ph.D. there in 1950. After completing his doctorate, he stayed at Princeton for two years as an instructor. He then taught at Cornell University and became a full professor there in 1962. Since 1976, Rawls has been the John Cowles Professor in the department of philosophy at Harvard University.

Rorty, Richard (1931-). Rorty was born in New York City and educated at the University of Chicago and Yale University. He taught at Yale (1955-1957), Wellesley College (1958-1961), and Princeton University (1961-1982) before becoming professor of humanities at the University of Virginia in 1982. Most recently, he has been awarded the MacArthur and Guggenheim fellowships.

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