

## Lecture Seventy-Three

### Introduction

Darren Staloff, Ph.D.

**Scope:** Philosophy in the latter half of the twentieth century was written in the context of accelerating and often disturbing changes in Western society, politics, and culture. These unsettling changes, coupled with the transformations and crises of the previous fifty years, led many philosophers to reexamine the entire modern project. In particular, philosophers focused on two critical features of modernity (both inherited from the Enlightenment). One issue focused on modern political theory and practice. The other focused on the ideal of objective scientific rationality and progress.

### Outline

- I. Philosophy in the latter half of the twentieth century was written in the context of accelerating and often disturbing changes in Western society, politics, and culture. Coupled with the devastating wars and atrocities of the first half of the century, these changes led many philosophers to reexamine the value of the entire modern philosophical project. In particular, philosophers came to critically examine the theory and practice of modern politics and the value of scientific rationality.
- II. The historical developments and changes of the second half of the twentieth century produced no small amount of anxiety, along with a growing awareness of the fractures and contradictions in the modern project.
  - A. Coming hard on the heels of World War II, the very heart of Europe was divided by a geopolitical and ideological Cold War led by the two competing superpowers, the United States and the Soviet Union.
    1. Both parties in the Cold War drew on a cultural and intellectual tradition of modern/enlightened rationalism
    2. What kept the Cold War “cold” in the very heart of Europe was the realization that mutual assured destruction (MAD) would be the inevitable result of a direct military conflict.
    3. Beside creating a climate of uncertainty (and occasionally terror), this MAD deterrence highlighted the contradiction between the promise of scientific progress in the form of nuclear physics and the dangerous fruit it produced in modern weaponry of mass destruction.
  - B. The end of World War II also marked the decline of Western imperialism.

1. The struggles for independence and subsequent third-world nonalignment in the Cold War signaled that the values of the modern West were clearly not universal.
  2. The end of colonial rule also brought ex-colonials into the very heart of the old metropolises. Western societies struggled to cope with a multi-ethnic and culturally diverse population.
- C. The post-war period also saw dramatic changes in the economy. Despite general prosperity and a rising standard of living (and life expectancy), these changes dislocated many and produced a great deal of insecurity.
    1. As heavy and basic industries moved to the developing world, a new post-industrial economy emerged in the first world, dislocating former semi-skilled industrial workers.
    2. The economy became increasingly globalized, as reflected by the movement of heavy industries to cheaper labor markets.
    3. The economic prosperity of the latter half of the twentieth century has been accompanied by an intensification of work procedures.
  - D. The second half of the twentieth century was also subject to an information revolution.
    1. The rise of television, popular music, youth culture, and mass spectator professional athletics all contributed to the emergence of a mass popular culture. What some saw as harmless fun, others saw as debasing and “dumbing down” of cultural norms.
    2. The development of the high-speed digital computer and the Internet revolution quickened the pace of global communication and (for those who are “wired”) democratized access to information. On the other hand, the “cyber” age has also been charged with fostering depersonalized interaction and alienation, a growing sense of “information overload,” and a widening social and economic rift between information haves and have-nots.
    3. Both the computing revolution and the dramatic expansion of academia have resulted in a profusion of high cultural research.
    4. Scientific and technological advance continued to accelerate, generating great hope and fear.
- III. These unsettling changes, coupled with the transformations and crises of the previous fifty years, led many philosophers to reexamine the entire modern project. In particular, philosophers focused on two critical features of modernity (both inherited from the Enlightenment). One issue focused on modern political theory and practice. The other focused on the ideal of objective scientific rationality and progress.
    - A. The problem for political theorists was how to react to the divergence between Enlightenment theories of liberal parliamentarianism and the current practice of social democracy.

1. The “liberal” strategy has been to try to reconcile theory and practice by showing the fundamental affinity between social democracy and enlightened modern political theory. John Rawls has fused social contractarianism with Kantian universalism to generate a theory of social justice that fulfills the Enlightenment ideal of a rational scientific politics (including an appreciation for individual liberty). At the same time, Rawls’s theory allows for an activist state that intervenes to ensure the welfare of all its citizens. Jürgen Habermas also seeks to ground social democratic practice in enlightened modern ideals. Instead of social contractarianism, Habermas invokes an ideal speech situation from which he rationally educes a set of immanent values inherent in the practice of communicative action
  2. The “conservative” strategy has been to acknowledge a real contradiction between the ideals of enlightened political theory and current social practice and reject the latter in favor of the former. Hayek’s critique of central planning and defense of “undersigned” institutions stressed the irrationality and lack of adequate knowledge behind the more extreme attempts of the activist state to intrude in the economy. Nozick shows that our notion of fundamental rights is incompatible with many of our social democratic practices.
  3. A third “radical” strategy has been to argue for the irrelevance of Enlightenment theory. Rorty does this by arguing that social democracy doesn’t need philosophical “grounding” and is far more compatible with romantic utopianism. By contrast, Alvin Gouldner defends the Enlightenment by arguing that its critical contribution was not a particular political theory, but the formulation of a grammar of theorizing that allowed for a publicly performed fusion of scientific and humanistic knowledge and values.
- B.** The second crisis of modernity has involved the normative ideal of scientific rationality.
1. Karl Popper emerged as a champion of scientific rationality and the secular enlightened ideals often associated with it. Although he denied the possibility of scientific certitude, he stressed the probabilistic and rational grounds for belief in empirically falsifiable deductive-hypothetical theories. By way of contrast, Thomas Kuhn rejected the traditional “cumulative” image of science in favor of a “conjunctural” interpretation of scientific revolutions. Scientific progress in this view is a messy business, based on bitter conflicts of scientific paradigms (worldviews) that are often no-holds-barred and fundamentally irreconcilable.
  2. Willard Quine offered a more broad-based, if less strident, defense of scientific rationality than Popper.
  3. Derrida has rejected the Enlightenment cult or modern scientific rationality as just another form of traditional philosophic “logocentrism.” Based on invidious “binary” distinctions between a philosophically privileged “higher” and materially based “lower,” Derrida seeks to deconstruct such culturally imposed distinctions by embracing the culturally “marginal” and denying the existence of any preexisting norms, fixed truths, or pure methods or logics.
  4. MacIntyre represents a newly emerging “right wing” form of post-modernism. Unlike Derrida, however, MacIntyre does not revel in the incoherence and relativity (“free play,” “marginality,” “deconstruction”) resulting from the demise of enlightened scientism. Instead, he seeks a new coherence in traditions that disclose moral phronesis rather than scientific rules and procedures. Such right-wing post-modernism treats traditions like paradigms that give meaning (“a horizon”) and context to our actions and choices and help us develop complete and well-rounded characters.

**Questions to Consider:**

1. What are some of the inherent strengths and weaknesses of the liberal and conservative strategies of the modern world?
2. In what ways has the modern project of philosophy been reexamined during the past fifty years?

## Lecture Seventy-Four

### Hayek and the Critique of Central Planning

Jeremy Shearmur, Ph.D.

**Scope:** Hayek was an economist and political philosopher, although he is also well known for his work on intellectual history and has written challenging material in psychology. In this lecture, we will look at his striking ideas about the use of knowledge in society.

Hayek's starting point was with a debate about whether socialism (in the sense of a planned economy) was compatible with the act of making rational decisions about the use of resources. Hayek was among those who argued that it was not. In the course of exchanges with socialists, he developed a distinctive view of markets as allowing for the use of knowledge that was scattered through society, including tacit knowledge, that is, "knowledge how" rather than "knowledge that." This allowed Hayek to offer a powerful reinterpretation of Adam Smith's ideas about the social division of labor. He also argued, in his *Road to Serfdom*, that the attempt to introduce central planning into a society was incompatible with individual liberty.

Hayek is also well known for his critique of the ideal of "social justice"—arguing that, in a market-based economy, one cannot expect that people will be rewarded on the basis of some notion of what they merit. We will explore this and some of Hayek's other key ideas in social philosophy, including his interpretation of the rule of law. We conclude by discussing some of the continuing lessons that his ideas offer for societies such as our own.

### Outline

#### I. Background.

- A. I became seriously interested in Hayek's work in the early 1970s. I wrote my Ph.D. on his political thought and, subsequently, a book. I believe his work is immensely important for how we should think about our society and the problems we face today.
- B. Hayek was an Austrian-born economist and philosopher. In the 1930s, he moved to the United Kingdom and became a British citizen, but he spent many years in the United States and ended his life teaching and working in Austria and Germany.
- C. He is well known in a number of academic fields.
  1. He received a Nobel Prize in Economics in 1974 for some of his early work (on the theory of money and economic fluctuations and

for his analysis of the interdependence of economic, social, and institutional phenomena).

2. He subsequently worked largely in social and legal philosophy, but he also produced distinguished work in the history of ideas and is known for some interesting ideas in psychology.

- D. Hayek was also a public intellectual. He wrote *The Road to Serfdom*—a controversial critique of economic planning—and was the founder of the Mont Pelerin Society, which became an important association of libertarian and conservative intellectuals.
- E. Hayek was a prolific author. His most important works are difficult to pick out, but one might mention his *Pure Theory of Capital* (on technical economics) and *The Sensory Order* (concerning psychology). In my view, his key works are *Individualism and Economic Order*, *The Road to Serfdom*, and *The Constitution of Liberty* (dealing with social and political philosophy).
- F. Why does Hayek matter?
  1. He exercised important historical influences on politics, both in 1945 (the debate about planning) and in the 1970s and 1980s (on Thatcher and Reagan).
  2. He is responsible for the argument—now widely accepted—that the traditional understanding of socialism (that socialism means the replacement of markets by a planned economic society with social ownership of the means of production) is problematic. Indeed, he believes it is unworkable and needs radical revision if it is to be viable in any sense.

#### II. Hayek's early influences included socialism and the work of Ludwig von Mises.

- A. As a young man, Hayek's concern about social conditions—especially in Vienna after the First World War—led him to a (mild) form of socialism.
- B. After training as an economist and brief period in the United States, he returned to Vienna, where he worked with the economist Ludwig von Mises.
- C. Mises had argued that economic calculation under socialism was impossible.
  1. To understand Mises's argument, we must distinguish *technical* superiority—e.g., production process (process A uses less of *all* inputs than process B does)—from *economic* superiority. If process A uses more coal than process B does, but B uses more steel than A does, which should we prefer to make the same product if we are concerned with the efficient use of resources?
  2. In a market-based economy, we can be guided in our choices about which process to use by prices. These represent others' valuations

of alternative uses of the other factors of production, across the economy.

3. Mises argued that we can't get this information—and, hence, can't perform *economic* calculation—under socialism (if that means there are no markets).

- D. This claim led to much controversy. Hayek was impressed by Mises's broad claims, but was led to rework his argument. This, in turn, led Hayek to some of his central ideas.

### III. Hayek considers knowledge, undesigned and imperfect institutions, and the critique of social justice.

- A. Hayek's key redevelopment of Mises's views was his argument about the social division of knowledge.
  1. Recall Adam Smith and the social division of labor: the activities of different people in an economy were coordinated by self-interest and prices.
  2. Hayek argued that a social division of information also exists, but it is scattered in a society. This information includes tastes, situation-dependent knowledge, skills, and tacit know-how (e.g., of a market trader).
  3. Much of this information can't be centralized; it could not be made available to social planners.
  4. But market mechanisms allow for decentralized decision making and, thus, for the use of this scattered knowledge—individuals make use of it in situ—which, in turn, leads to the social division of knowledge.
- B. Undesigned and imperfect institutions.
  1. Hayek drew a wider lesson from this example: here and in other cases we have an undesigned institution that plays a key social role. We must not presume that things are no use unless we have designed them. Consider language or the common law (compare Adam Smith on "the invisible hand").
  2. Further, a society like ours may be morally imperfect (e.g., it may run on greed; people may receive rewards that have no merit-based rationale), but these imperfections may be *necessary* features of such a society. The discovery of moral defects of this kind does not mean that anything *better* exists.
- C. This idea led Hayek to develop a critique of the ideal of social justice.
  1. Hayek argued that the economic system uses prices for informational and motivational purposes.
  2. Rewards in such a society—the prices for our services—don't depend on merit.
  3. Further, we can't make rewards depend on merit in a market-based society. The ideal of social justice (in the sense of rewards fitting

merit) makes no sense in the mechanisms of a market-based society.

4. This does not mean that we can't run a welfare safety net *outside* the market, which Hayek advocated (if countries were rich enough).

### IV. Socialism, *The Road to Serfdom*, and the rule of law.

- A. Hayek's argument about knowledge had important implications for socialism.
  1. Hayek's argument criticized the ideal of central planning as a *substitute* for markets.
  2. In his own case, personal sympathy for socialist ideals (e.g., egalitarianism) persisted for a while; later, his sympathy (silently) died down.
  3. Some socialists—Lord Plant and David Miller in the United Kingdom, the economist John Roemer in the United States—seek ways of pursuing egalitarian socialist ideals in ways compatible with Hayek's argument; others still contest Hayek's argument.
- B. Hayek's critique of central planning was *The Road to Serfdom*.
  1. People may, nonetheless, *try* to plan a society; Hayek argued that the pursuit of this would lead to terrible problems and a loss of freedom.
  2. People may have incompatible preferences and priorities, differences that can't be resolved rationally.
  3. In a market-based society with private property, people can agree to differ and pursue incompatible ideals, each using his or her own resources.
  4. Under central planning, these differences must be resolved in some way. In Hayek's view, such a resolution can only be arbitrary, but it is typically imposed as if it were rational—e.g., through propaganda.
  5. Planned economies also have a dangerous concentration of power, power that goes beyond anything found in "capitalist" societies. Hayek was skeptical that such power could be controlled democratically.
  6. All told, Hayek argued, persistence in the attempt at central planning leads to a loss of freedom.
- C. John Maynard Keynes's response was surprising.
  1. Hayek sent *Road to Serfdom* to John Maynard Keynes, a leading economist with whom Hayek had bitter theoretical disagreements in the 1930s.
  2. Keynes was surprisingly sympathetic to the book.
  3. But he raised a problem. Keynes saw that Hayek himself favored some government action; he did not support a strict *laissez-faire*

approach. Keynes asked whether Hayek was not on what by his own argument was the slippery slope that led to serfdom.

4. Possibly in response to Keynes, Hayek, in his later writings, stressed the role of the rule of law.

#### D. The rule of law.

1. The rule of law was understood by Hayek in terms of law being equally applicable to all citizens *and* to the government. Law also should be general in its character, accessible, and not retrospective.
2. Hayek had, in *The Road to Serfdom*, expressed the view that central planning may not be compatible with the rule of law.
3. Later, he suggested the rule of law as a criterion for judging when governmental action does or does not have the potential to put freedom at risk. This criterion was as a necessary, not a sufficient, condition for the action being well advised; action compatible with the rule of law may, in his view, nonetheless be misguided.

#### E. This use of the idea of the rule of law was striking. The rule of law then has three roles in Hayek's work:

1. It forms the institutional basis for the kind of economic activity needed, in Hayek's account, in an extended market-based society.
2. It serves as a criterion for judging when government action is in order.
3. It also relates to an understanding of individual freedom that Hayek offered in the tradition of Rousseau and Kant: that someone is free if laws apply equally to all citizens—if an individual is not singled out.

#### V. The later Hayek.

- A. From the time of his reaction to Mises onward, Hayek had a tendency to generalize lessons from economics to unplanned institutions in general (cf., Adam Smith's "invisible hand").
- B. At times, his critique of planning and radical reform was presented as a critique of rationalistic approaches to society (cf., Burke).
- C. Under the impact of the Italian legal philosopher Bruno Leoni, Hayek became concerned about uncertainties that may follow from legislative changes to the legal system. As a result, he came to favor common-law approaches to the law, instead of a codification-based approach.
- D. In his later writings, Hayek often presented a conservative view of the superiority of unplanned social institutions and traditions over anything designed (cf., Burke). He backed this notion up with ideas about the selection of unplanned institutions through a process of social evolution.

- E. These ideas were always found alongside—and in tension with—more reformist ideas and support for the kind of critical rationalist approach found in the work of Karl Popper.

#### VI. The heritage of Hayek.

- A. Hayek's views are stimulating and challenging.
- B. They develop out of his critique of socialist planning and his ideas about the social division of knowledge.
- C. If we accept Hayek's views and the idea that we need markets, then we see the suggestion that we need to change, radically, some other ideals, such as how we might interpret socialism or social justice.
- D. Hayek's ideas about freedom and the rule of law are also striking, but several scholars have questioned whether they really work.
- E. Hayek's writings also suggest many other important issues, such as how we can best handle the social division of knowledge and tacit knowledge *within* organizations.

#### Essential Reading:

Friedrich Hayek, *The Road to Serfdom* (Chicago: 1994).

———, *The Constitution of Liberty* (Chicago: 1978).

———, *Individualism and Economic Order* (Chicago: 1996).

#### Supplementary Reading:

John Gray, *Hayek on Liberty* (London: 1998).

Stephen Kresge and Leif Wenar, eds., *Hayek on Hayek* (Chicago: 1994).

Chandran Kukathas, *Hayek and Modern Liberalism* (Oxford: 1991).

Jeremy Shearmur, *Hayek and After* (London: 1996).

#### Questions to Consider:

1. Why does Hayek's argument about the social division of knowledge pose problems for socialism? Are there ways in which it might be overcome?
2. Can the ideal of social justice have any real meaning in a society in which the economic arrangements are based on markets?

**Lecture Seventy-Five**  
**Popper—The Open Society  
and the Philosophy of Science**  
Jeremy Shearmur, Ph.D.

**Scope:** Karl Popper was a leading twentieth-century philosopher of science. He wrote extensively on scientific issues and the history of ideas and was the author of *The Open Society and Its Enemies*, an impressive work in political philosophy, which was also controversial for its critical engagement with both Plato and Marx.

In this lecture, we will explore Popper's ideas about knowledge and politics and their connections. We will look at his distinctive approach to the status of scientific knowledge—his stress on its fallibility—and at his account of how science progresses by way of conjectures and refutations, rather than by means of induction. We will also consider other aspects of his views, including the role that Popper gives to non-testable ideas in the development of science, his theory of “metaphysical research programs.”

After discussing Popper's theory of knowledge, we will turn to his social philosophy. This draws on his ideas about knowledge—in which his stress on fallibility puts a premium on openness to criticism—and on what he calls “protectionism”: a concern for the role of the state in securing the liberty and freedom from exploitation of each individual.

### Outline

#### I. Background.

- A. I was a student of Popper's at the London School of Economics and subsequently worked as his assistant for eight years.
- B. Popper has a major reputation in the United Kingdom and is widely recognized on the European continent, but is less well known in the United States, where I think he deserves a more acknowledged reputation.
- C. He was born in Austria of nonobservant Jewish parents (who had formally converted to Lutheranism). He had to flee, anticipating a takeover by a Nazi regime. He became a university lecturer in New Zealand during World War II, then moved to the United Kingdom. He made some visits to and held brief appointments in the United States.
- D. His key works were *The Logic of Scientific Discovery* (*Logik der Forschung*) and *The Open Society and Its Enemies*.

- E. Why does he matter? His views have important implications for how we view ourselves and organized society.
- #### II. Popper on scientific knowledge—a challenge to tradition.
- A. The traditional view of knowledge was twofold:
    1. It justified true belief.
    2. Claims to knowledge often served as a justification for the authority of rulers. Compare Plato's *Republic* and its idea of philosopher-kings.
  - B. Popper argued that we should learn an important lesson from Einstein's challenge to Newton.
    1. We need, here, to appreciate the success of Newton's scientific ideas and his wider cultural impact—the importance of a unified theory of events large and small in the physical world. Alexander Pope's “Epitaph for Newton” suggests his far-reaching reputation.
    2. In this context, we can appreciate the significance of Einstein's challenge to Newton; that is, Einstein challenged amazingly successful and amazingly well-confirmed knowledge.
    3. Popper argued that we should, from this, draw the lesson that in science we can aim at truth, but that we can't be sure we have reached it.
    4. Our best knowledge—science—is thus *not* justified true belief.
    5. Popper further argued that experts are fallible and should be open to criticism; that knowledge does not justify unquestioned political authority.
  - C. The result is that Popper offers a middle path between the uncritical adulation of science and relativism.
  - D. How does this work? Popper argued several points:
    1. All knowledge is fallible.
    2. We can aspire to progress and truth.
    3. How? We need to start from where we are; if there are problems, we should replace our existing ideas by something better.
- #### III. A particular view of scientific knowledge results.
- A. Science does not operate by induction (as Newton had claimed, but which David Hume had argued is problematic. Consider Bertrand Russell's turkey—fed daily until Thanksgiving, its neck is then rung!). Rather, knowledge grows by conjectures and refutations.
  - B. The development of science may involve inspiration similar to the production of literature or music.
  - C. But it is important that such ideas can be tested. Others will do this, but individual scientists will wish to satisfy themselves that they have overcome the obvious problems and have undertaken the most obvious tests.

- D. This leads to a picture of objectivity as the product of inter-subjective criticism, what amounts to a social account of objectivity.
- E. Can't non-testable ideas be useful—and what (one might say to Popper) about your own philosophical views?
  1. One might respond that testability is a virtue.
  2. But many non-testable ideas are important. They can serve as what Popper called “metaphysical research programs” for science—ideas that can guide and inspire scientific work but are not themselves testable scientific theories.
  3. We need, though, to make sure that these ideas are open to criticism. The same goes for Popper's own philosophy.

#### IV. How does Popper's view relate to all of us?

- A. In Popper's account, humans have biological and social predispositions, and we interpret the world through theoretical categories.
- B. But our interpretations may not be correct.
- C. It is vital that we allow our hypotheses to die in our stead (contrast us with the frog, which has a built-in interpretation of the world that it can't criticize).
- D. Our own individual certainty or doubt is not necessarily a good guide to truth; rather, we need to learn from inter-subjective criticism.
- E. We can only learn piecemeal, while taking other things for granted, even though no single piece of knowledge is immune from criticism.
- F. Popper thus acknowledges and stresses the role of unconscious and tacit knowledge. At the same time, he affirms the importance of objectifying knowledge—of turning it into an object that we can criticize—and of making it open to inter-subjective criticism.
- G. He sees us as shaped by the products of human action—theories, culture, and so on—which he refers to as “world 3” (in contradistinction to the physical “world 1” and the subjective “world 2”). He sees these “worlds” as interacting.

#### V. Popper considers the role of society.

- A. Popper here is best known for *The Open Society and Its Enemies*, written during World War II.
- B. His thinking on this subject has several important aspects.
  1. Popper's ideas about knowledge included criticism of elitism and of ideas about historical inevitability.
  2. He criticized these latter ideas by way of a critique of Plato and Marx.
  3. Popper's own social philosophy draws on Kantian and utilitarian themes.

4. He wishes the state to be a protector of the individual, by way of securing his or her liberty, including freedom from economic exploitation.
  5. In Popper's view, the concern of public policy should be the relief of human suffering (the pursuit of well being should be up to individuals themselves; we can give up our friends if their concern for our well being becomes a pain).
  6. Such governmental actions, he stresses, when they address suffering, have unintended consequences.
  7. This points to the need for feedback and criticism—even though politicians and officials may not like it!
  8. For Popper, each individual is valuable as a source of criticism and feedback; he developed this as the idea of the rational unity of mankind.
- C. Popper's criticisms of Plato and of Marx are controversial and much debated. His positive ideas sound reasonable.
    1. But they have striking implications (how much public policy is assessed as he would suggest?)
    2. Popper's ideas pose problems about how politicians and public servants can be led to welcome criticism. I've argued that such matters are easier in the private sector and that Popper's views can usefully be applied there.
    3. We also need a public sphere of inter-subjective criticism and critical engagement about “big issues.” That sphere typically operates around government.
    4. Are there wider implications? It seems to me that Popper's work suggests significant ideas for knowledge management. Here we can contrast his stress on critical appraisal with approaches that simply stress information.

#### VI. Conclusion.

- A. Popper has striking ideas about science and human knowledge.
- B. These ideas lead to an interesting view of the human situation and offer challenging notions about how we should approach social issues.
- C. Popper's thought may also lead to a rethinking of our ideas about political organization, as well as how we see and organize knowledge in the private sector and, thus, in management.

### Essential Reading:

- David Miller, ed., *Popper Selections* (Princeton: 1985).  
Karl Popper, *The Open Society and Its Enemies* (London: 1966).  
———, *The Logic of Scientific Discovery* (London, 1992).  
———, *Conjectures and Refutations* (London: 1992).  
———, *The Myth of the Framework* (London: 1996).  
———, *Unended Quest* (London: 1976).

### Supplementary Reading:

- Joseph Agassi, *A Philosopher's Apprentice* (Amsterdam: 1993).  
Bryan Magee, *Confessions of a Philosopher* (London: 1997).  
———, *Philosophy and the Real World* (La Salle, IL: 1985).  
J. Shearmur, *The Political Thought of Karl Popper* (London: 1996).  
G. Stokes, *Popper: Philosophy, Politics and Scientific Method* (Oxford: 1999).  
Alan Chalmers, *What Is This Thing Called Science?* (Open University Press, 1999).

### Questions to Consider:

1. What difference should it make to our lives and to the organization of society if we consider our best scientific and personal knowledge to be fallible?
2. How might Popper's ideas be used in reshaping practices in organizations in which you work or with which you are familiar?

## Lecture Seventy-Six

### Kuhn's Paradigm Paradigm

Jeremy Shearmur, Ph.D.

**Scope:** Thomas Kuhn's *Structure of Scientific Revolutions* has sold more than a million copies. The use of the term "paradigm" in the sense that he introduced it has become so well known that many people may not know where it came from or just what Kuhn meant by it. In this lecture, we will look at Kuhn's views and how he came to them. We will follow his concerns, from his early encounter—as a Ph.D. student in physics—with Aristotle's ideas about motion, through his work on *The Copernican Revolution*, to his recognition of "The Function of Dogma in Scientific Research." All this will lead us into his *Structure of Scientific Revolutions* and his striking and controversial ideas about the character of science.

We will look at his ideas about scientific education, normal science, and scientific revolutions, as well as his controversial view that ideas on each side of a scientific revolution may be "incommensurable." We will also look at how his work was received and consider why different people's reactions were so different that *they* almost seemed to be incommensurable, as if the people had been reading different books. We will examine Kuhn's response to critics and at the way in which he was led to refine his idea of a "paradigm" in light of criticism that he had used the term too loosely. Finally, we will look at the kinds of research to which Kuhn's ideas have led.

### Outline

- I. Introduction.
  - A. Kuhn was an American historian of science and a philosopher; he was the author of the million-plus bestseller *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*.
  - B. Kuhn's name may not be all that well known, but some of his ideas are, including his use of the terms *paradigm* and *paradigm shift* and his picture of scientists as typically working uncritically in a tradition.
  - C. Kuhn's work has led to a striking reinterpretation of science and to much important research.
  - D. But it also leads to some interesting and thought-provoking problems.
- II. Kuhn's *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* was a groundbreaking book in the context of tradition.
  - A. To appreciate the impact of Kuhn's work, we need to understand how scientists were often seen before he wrote.



1. Scientists are open minded; they practice divergent thinking.
  2. Scientists base their views on evidence.
  3. They draw their ideas from experiments or—if, say, one has read Popper—puts them to the test.
  4. Science itself was often seen as cumulative.
- B. In two talks, one given in 1959, Kuhn signaled his disagreement with these notions; he stressed the role of *convergent* thinking and tradition. In 1961, he addressed “The Function of Dogma in Scientific Research.”
- III. In his *Structure of Scientific Revolutions*, Kuhn offers an account of typical developments in the “hard” sciences.
- A. Initially, there is pre-science. This is characterized by diversity and debates about fundamentals. Teaching, in such “sciences” is by way of encounters with key (and divergent) writers; many social sciences still operate in this way.
  - B. For Kuhn, science begins when criticism *stops*. Kuhn’s view of mature science involves puzzle solving in a paradigm. This activity Kuhn calls “normal science.”
  - C. The term *paradigm*—for which Kuhn is best known—has many meanings in his work (ranging from a worldview within which particular kinds of science are conducted, through influential models or examples, to standard views and assumptions in a scientific discipline).
  - D. After a critic complained that Kuhn had used *paradigm* in twenty-one different ways, he split the concept into two main ideas:
    1. An *exemplar*, or work that serves as a model for other scientific work.
    2. A *disciplinary matrix*: a view of the world, of what an explanation should look like. This, Kuhn asserts, is the product of socialization into a discipline through scientific education; practitioners may not even be *conscious* of the fact that they hold distinctive views, as with language or table manners.
  - E. “Normal science” is characterized by puzzle solving.
    1. The specific task of scientists is filling out the paradigm, that is, showing that nature fits it. This activity, for Kuhn, constitutes the bulk of detailed scientific work.
    2. The scientific community assumes that such tasks can and should be accomplished. Failure is a failure on the part of the investigator, not of the paradigm. Compare a failure to complete a jigsaw puzzle.
  - F. Scientists see the world in terms of the paradigm, rather than just seeing objective evidence.
  - G. Over time, anomalies accumulate. Gradual divergences take place in the paradigm to try to cope with these anomalies.
  - H. This process leads to paradigm breakdown, to philosophical and methodological argument, to diversity, to what Kuhn calls “extraordinary science.”
  - I. From this emerges a new paradigm.
  - J. In Kuhn’s account, the move from one paradigm to another is like a “Gestalt-switch.” Kuhn also talks about “incommensurability” between different paradigms; they cannot be rationally compared.
- IV. Kuhn’s path to these ideas took many years.
- A. Kuhn trained as a physicist at Harvard; he received his Ph.D. in 1949.
  - B. While there, he was asked to lecture on the history of science and was struck by differences between Aristotle’s and Newton’s views on motion.
  - C. After studying the issue, Kuhn decided that Aristotle was not so much wrong as *different*. Kuhn came to believe that we should achieve a sympathetic understanding of such different views across history.
  - D. His concern, thus, became the different conceptual frameworks within which people were working and with changes in the frameworks—with scientific revolutions.
  - E. Kuhn set out his ideas about these issues in *The Copernican Revolution* (1957).
    1. This book told the dramatic story of a shift from a view of the universe in which the earth was fixed at the center of the universe to an understanding in which the earth was in motion around the Sun—and later to Newton’s work. It was a story of dramatic changes in our understanding of the world.
    2. Kuhn’s view was that science increased in its scope through history as the result of changes in conceptual frameworks.
    3. But he was concerned, because his account seemed at odds with the more usual view of scientific change. It seemed to him that scientific change was not *just* a product of experience. Kuhn also noted what he called “bandwagon effects” that accompany changes in the views of the scientific community.
    4. *Structure of Scientific Revolutions* is Kuhn’s later theory of how such change takes place.
- V. The reactions of three different groups to *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* are worth considering.
- A. Kuhn made an immense impact on those who took the “traditional” view of science, including some scientists.
    1. Kuhn brought home the importance of theoretical perspectives and conceptual frameworks in science.
    2. He introduced the terms *paradigm* and *normal science* and, more generally, the ideas that we discussed earlier.

*motion*. If one takes a view like Bellarmine's, what might otherwise look like relativism does not matter. From this perspective, paradigms are not really about the world; they are just ways in which we give order to our experience.

3. He also showed how science experiences revolutionary and discontinuous change.
- B. Popperians and many other philosophers of science reacted in different ways.
1. Much that had struck the first group was not new (to these thinkers).
  2. What *was* new was that Kuhn seemed to dispute the possibility of scientific progress. His account of scientific change—including bandwagon effects—seemed to call into question the idea of science as being in any sense a rational enterprise.
- C. Kuhn's account of scientific change as a (purely?) sociological phenomenon concerned others.
1. Imre Lakatos, a critic of Kuhn's, described his account as making scientific change a matter of "mob rule."
  2. Kuhn seemed to legitimate the disregard of criticism and of empirical problems as mere anomalies.
  3. Kuhn seemed to legitimate uncritical "normal science" and dogmatic education in science.
  4. What to these thinkers was especially worrying was not that Kuhn said that these things took place in science, so much as his view that this was also how science ought to be.
- D. A new generation in history and sociology of science has taken Kuhn a step further.
1. This new generation welcomed and advanced a purely sociological approach to science—seeing it as simply a particular culture, rather than anything distinctively rational or special.
  2. They took Kuhn's questioning of science as a distinctive example of rationality. They saw, and welcomed, Kuhn's views as relativistic. Kuhn distanced himself from this—without (it seems to me) fully explaining how, given his views, this conclusion was to be avoided.
- VI. Kuhn's work has many implications.
- A. Kuhn's approach poses problems. Although he repudiated relativism, he did not clarify the sense in which progress could be made in science.
1. To some, Kuhn's account seemed acceptable if it were treated as a non-realist approach (i.e., if paradigms are seen as just conceptual frameworks, rather than telling us what the world is actually like).
  2. To understand what is at issue, contrast Galileo and the Church on the Copernican revolution. Cardinal Bellarmine argued that Copernicus's ideas were no big deal *if* they were just offering us a new way of representing things and of making calculations, rather than an account that purported to tell us what was actually taking place. Galileo wanted to assert that the earth is, indeed, *actually in*
3. If this is the case, clearly there is no problem if we simply choose which of these paradigms is the more convenient, and we jump between them. But can one accept such an understanding of science? Those in Galileo's tradition would bitterly oppose it.
  4. Even if we take such a non-realist view, we still face the problem that has been referred to as "Kuhn loss." Namely, that rather than describing scientific revolutions as just changes in paradigms, Kuhn also maintains that we typically lose content in terms of what phenomena we can deal with in the course of scientific change.
  5. Kuhn's views also run into philosophical arguments about incommensurability and ambiguities about how we understand the relations between the world and our perceptions of it. As you might imagine, philosophers are still arguing about these ideas.
- B. In my view, Kuhn's ideas are immensely fruitful and exciting.
1. They lead us to a concern with the *actual* history and sociology of science.
  2. This has widely been taken to be at odds with a view that is concerned with the *appraisal* of knowledge; i.e., that is normative (suggesting how things might be improved) rather than descriptive (simply describing how things are).
  3. I think that we need both viewpoints. We can't get away from the need for a normative approach if we are trying to appraise some new approach in a particular field. At the same time, I think that those concerned with normative issues need to pay attention to the sociological issues that Kuhn highlighted and to the actual practice of science. Accordingly, ideas from Kuhn and older views can complement one another.
  4. This is not simply a matter of adding the two views together. At certain points, they are at odds, and one needs to understand and to try to resolve the differences.
- C. Compare, for example, Kuhn's and Popper's approaches to science.
1. Kuhn takes a sociological, not a logical, approach to science, but there is surely a need for *both* (e.g., if we wish to improve our knowledge, we must, as Edmund Burke would have stressed, start with people as they are).
  2. Kuhn's account of normal science, for Popper, is uncritical; it is too ready to accept the status quo. Popper was also concerned by narrow, over-specialized, scientific education and dismayed that Kuhn found this "normal" and favored it. Those who follow Kuhn would challenge Popper to give an account of continuity in science

and of the role played by tradition and education and would suggest that he treats what is, in effect, extra-ordinary science as if it were typical.

3. Popper takes science as aspiring to truth and is a scientific realist. Kuhn is somewhat ambiguous about this issue, and those who favor his perspective need, I think, to sort out what his views imply here.
- D. All told, if we are interested in *improving* how we do things, we need to bring these different concerns together and to resolve the problems at issue between them. This is an immensely stimulating and challenging task, on which much work is still to be done.
1. Accordingly, Kuhn has introduced a valuable new perspective on science. It has led to valuable work in the history and sociology of science.
  2. It has also challenged accepted views of science—those of the uncritical layperson and practitioner, as well as those of many philosophers of science.
  3. This new perspective has also led to a whole range of fruitful and interesting open problems—which is one of the best things that a writer can do for us.

#### Essential Reading:

Thomas Kuhn, *The Copernican Revolution* (Cambridge, MA: 1957).

———, *The Essential Tension* (Chicago: 1979).

———, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* (Chicago: 1996).

#### Supplementary Reading:

Paul Hoyningen-Huene, *Reconstructing Scientific Revolutions: Thomas S. Kuhn's Philosophy of Science* (Chicago: 1993).

I. Lakatos and A. Musgrave, eds., *Criticism and the Growth of Knowledge* (Cambridge: 1970).

#### Questions to Consider:

1. What was Kuhn's idea of a *paradigm* and why was he led to modify it?
2. Why was the reaction among different groups of people to Kuhn so different? Were they all equally justified in the views that they took?

## Lecture Seventy-Seven

### Quine — Ontological Relativism

Darren Staloff, Ph.D.

**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. Among the most profound and important philosophers of the twentieth century, as well as one of its most eminent logicians, Willard Quine has done more to undermine logical positivism and turn Anglo-American thought in a pragmatic direction than any other thinker.
  - A. In the background of his work and "historical moment" were a series of setbacks to the positivist attempt to reduce mathematics to logic.
  - B. Quine has directed his criticism at the foundational or "Kantian" elements of logical positivism.
    1. Positivist linguistic analysis and epistemology tried to constitute itself as a "first philosophy."
    2. Positivism tried to set limits to the range of meaningful discourse.
    3. The positivist program presupposes that all theories possess determinate meanings or conceptual features.
- II. Quine's first large-scale attack on two dogmas of logical positivism was an article entitled "Two Dogmas of Empiricism."
  - A. The first dogma is the distinction between synthetic (or factual) truths and their analytic counterparts, which are true solely on the basis of their meanings (intentional) rather than reference (extensional).
    1. Aside from tautologies, analytic truths are based on synonymy, or sameness of intentional meaning.
    2. Synonymy can't be reduced to interchangeability or clarified, and its lexicographic basis in dictionaries is thoroughly empirical.
  - B. Reductionism, the second dogma, claims that every meaningful statement can be rendered as a statement about sense experience.
    1. Classical empiricists—Locke, Berkeley, Hume—tried this project on a term-by-term basis, and it ultimately proved unsuccessful.

2. Logical positivism opted for a sentence-by-sentence reduction, but this also left terms that could not be reduced.
  3. Reductionism persists in the dogmatic belief that any factual statement must have some unique set of sense experiences that would confirm or disconfirm it. This implies that every sentence stands before the tribunal of truth on its own.
- C. Quine rejects attempts to match up particular sentences with their uniquely relevant sensory datum, insisting that our beliefs face experience as a body (wholesome) and likens “total science,” or the sum of our knowledge, to a field of force whose boundary conditions are experience.
1. Anomalous experiences force us to readjust “core” beliefs.
  2. Logical laws are those sentences we place at the center of our field, but even they are subject to revision.
  3. The chief considerations governing the arrangement of our interior “field” are simplicity and conservation of belief.
- III. Quine’s most powerful attack on the positivists is *Ontological Relativity and Other Essays*. Quine’s thesis is that when we specify the entities in some theory or language (the object language) we do so by translating sentences with those entities into another background theory or language (the meta-language), which is rich and more inclusive.
- A. The ontological import of an object language is relative to the meta-language into which it is translated.
1. The basic entities of an object language will depend on the meta-language, as well as the perspective taken in it.
  2. The meta-language serves as a conceptual “coordinate grid” imposed on the object language.
- B. In “radical” translation, Quine demonstrates that translation is indeterminate.
1. Such translation hinges on the choice of analytic hypotheses.
  2. Distinct analytic hypotheses can render contradictory but equally effective translations. The distinction between metaphysics and science is undermined.
- C. Contra Wittgenstein, Quine argues that reference in our home language can also be inscrutable. We must simply accept our home language in a pragmatic fashion and work within it. To ask for the ultimate reference of our terms is like asking for absolute position or velocity.
- IV. The result of Quine’s work is that foundational analysis of linguistic meanings is rendered impossible.
- A. It would seem that there is nothing left called “philosophy” that is distinguishable from science.

- B. Quine offers “epistemology naturalized,” which is the empirical study of how a particular species uses its symbolic systems to erect scientific theories and explanations.
1. This project has obvious connections to experimental psychology and has been pursued in the sociology of science and knowledge by Kuhn and others.
  2. Quine’s project also exemplifies the holism of pragmatism and the naturalistic scientism of the empiricist tradition.

**Essential Reading:**

W. V. Quine, *Ontological Relativity and Other Essays* (New York: 1969).

**Supplementary Reading:**

Christopher Hookaway, *Quine, Language, Experience, Reality* (Palo Alto, CA: 1988).

Hillary Kornblith, ed., *Naturalizing Epistemology* (Cambridge, MA: 1994).

**Questions to Consider:**

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

## Lecture Seventy-Eight

### Habermas — Critical Theory and Communicative Action

Douglas Kellner, Ph.D.

**Scope:** Jürgen Habermas has emerged as one of the most influential philosophers of our day, distinguished by his analyses of language, communication, and democracy. A second-generation member of the so-called “Frankfurt School,” Habermas studied with Horkheimer and Adorno in Frankfurt, Germany, and published his first major book on the origins, genesis, and decline of the public sphere. This work showed how democracy was made possible by the rise of newspapers, literary journals, and public spaces where ideas that are critical of the existing order could be discussed and debated. Eventually turning to the study of language and communication, Habermas made many important contributions to philosophy and social theory and is today one of the most highly respected thinkers of our time.

#### Outline

- I. Jürgen Habermas has emerged as one of the most prolific and influential philosophers and social theorists of our era.
  - A. Associated with the critical theory of the Frankfurt School, Habermas is now seen as the major figure in the second generation, succeeding Adorno, Horkheimer, Marcuse, and his predecessors. He continues their efforts to develop a critical theory of contemporary society and to form a philosophy and social theory that is up to the challenges of the contemporary era.
  - B. In particular, Habermas’s writings on the public sphere and democracy; on language and communication; and on major philosophical, cultural, political, and historical events of the day have won him global acclaim.
    1. Because of the magnitude of his publications—entire books have been published listing his bibliography—and the complexity of his thought, we will consider different stages of Habermas’s work. We will examine his work in the 1950s and 1960s, his linguistic turn of the 1970s, and his subsequent development of a theory of communicative action on which he bases his philosophy and social theory, his moral theory, and his theory of democracy.
    2. In conclusion, we’ll consider the major themes and significance, along with the limitations, of his work.

#### II. The life and times of Jürgen Habermas.

- A. Habermas was born in Dusseldorf, Germany, in 1929; he grew up in Gummersbach, where his father was director of the Chamber of Commerce.
  1. Although he was a member of the Hitler youth as a young boy, the German surrender of 1945 was a liberation for him and henceforth he would be strongly critical of anything having to do with fascism.
  2. John Dewey’s strong notions of liberal democracy, politics and the public, and the active connection between theory and practice made a strong impression on Habermas when he was a youth after World War II.
  3. Habermas has now emerged as one of the major theorists and defenders of liberal democracy in our day; he can thus be seen as a successor to Dewey, who was one of the major representatives of democratic theory during his lifetime.
- B. From 1949 to 1954, Habermas studied philosophy, history, and other topics in Gottingen, Zurich, and Bonn and began publishing articles on various topics.
  1. Of his early writings, one of his most interesting is a critique of the German philosopher Martin Heidegger, who had supported fascism.
  2. Habermas saw Heidegger’s view as a glorification of German fascism, of which he was severely critical.
  3. Indeed, Habermas would continue to criticize Heidegger over the years. Although he was impressed by Heidegger’s 1927 treatise *Being and Time*—which many consider one of the great philosophical works of the twentieth century—on the whole, he thought that Heidegger promoted mysticism, irrationalism, and obscurantist modes of thought.
- C. In 1956, Habermas came to study in the fabled Institute of Social Research in Frankfurt, Germany.
  1. His first major work, *Structural Transformations of the Public Sphere*, was published in 1962.
  2. The text contrasted various forms of an active, participatory bourgeois public sphere in the heroic era of liberal democracy with the more privatized forms of spectator politics in a bureaucratic industrial society.
- D. Generalizing from developments in Britain, France, and Germany in the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, Habermas first sketched out a model of what he called the “bourgeois public sphere,” then analyzed its degeneration in the twentieth century.
  1. The public sphere for Habermas consisted of organs of information and political debate, such as newspapers and journals, as well as institutions of political discussion, such as parliaments, political

clubs, literary salons, and places where sociopolitical discussion took place. For the first time in history, individuals and groups could shape public opinion, giving direct expression to their needs and interests while influencing political practice.

2. Habermas's concept of the public sphere described a space of institutions and practices between the private interests of everyday life in civil society and the realm of state power. The public sphere mediates between the domains of the family and the workplace—where private interests prevail—and the state, which often exerts arbitrary forms of power and domination.
  3. The principles of the public sphere involved an open discussion of all issues of general concern in which discursive argumentation was used to ascertain general interests and the public good. The public sphere presupposed freedoms of speech and assembly, a free press, and the right to freely participate in political debate and decision making.
- E. Many defenders and critics of Habermas's notion of the bourgeois public sphere fail to note that the thrust of his study is precisely that of transformation.
1. This analysis assumes and builds on the Frankfurt School model of the transition from market capitalism and liberal democracy in the nineteenth century to the stage of state and monopoly capitalism evident in European fascism and the welfare state liberalism of the New Deal in the United States in the 1930s.
  2. The two major themes of the book include an analysis of the historical genesis of the bourgeois public sphere, followed by an account of the structural change of the public sphere in the contemporary era. This change is brought about by the rise of state capitalism, the culture industries, and the increasingly powerful role of economic corporations and big business.
- F. Like Horkheimer and Adorno in *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, Habermas had produced an account of how the bourgeois public sphere had turned into its opposite.
- G. Hence, to discern a new standpoint for critique, to provide new philosophical bases for critical theory, and to contribute a new force for democratization, Habermas turned to the sphere of language and communication.
- III. As the 1960s moved on, Habermas became increasingly dissatisfied with the direction of Frankfurt School social theory.
- A. In the 1930s, the Frankfurt School used the method of immanent critique by which they criticized fascist and totalitarian societies from the standpoint of Enlightenment concepts of democracy, human rights, individual and social freedoms, and rationality.
    1. But Horkheimer and Adorno's *Dialectic of Enlightenment* (1947) showed how Enlightenment norms had turned into their opposites: democracy had produced fascism, reason had produced unreason, instrumental rationality created military machines and death camps, and the culture industries were transforming culture from an instrument of humanization and enlightenment into an instrument of manipulation and domination.
    2. In this situation, the procedure of using "bourgeois ideals as norms of critique," Habermas concluded, had been refuted by what he called the "civilized barbarism" of the twentieth century.
    3. Thus, critical theory, he concluded, needs a new foundation, a new standpoint for critique, and Habermas's innovation was to turn to language and communication.
  - B. Habermas's argument is that language itself contains norms to criticize domination and oppression and is a force that could ground and promote societal democratization.
    1. In the capacity to understand the speech of another, to submit to the force of a better argument, and to reach consensus, Habermas found a rationality inherent in what he came to call "communicative action."
    2. Developing what he called an "ideal speech situation," Habermas thus cultivated grounds for social critique.
  - C. Consequently, Habermas made his linguistic turn, looking to language and communication as a basis at once for social critique and democratization and to establish critical theory on a stronger theoretical foundation to overcome the impasse that he believed the Frankfurt School had become trapped in.
- IV. From this perspective of grounding critical theory in a theory of language and communication, Habermas went on to develop an entire critique of traditional and contemporary philosophy and social theory.
- A. In his two-volume magnum opus, *Theory of Communicative Action*, translated into English in 1983 and 1987, Habermas claims that all major social theorists, including Marx, Weber, Durkheim, and Talcott Parsons, failed to develop a theory of communicative action foundation.
  - B. In particular, he argued, they assumed a subject/object relation in which subjects relate to objects.
  - C. Habermas instead argues that modern social theory—and ethics and politics, as we will later argue—should be established on a self/other model in which we relate to other human beings as subjects and not objects.
    1. This self/other relation is exemplified, Habermas claims, in non-distorted communication in which we relate to others as subjects.

2. Habermas argues that Karl Marx, for instance, has basically a subject/object production paradigm.
  3. Against Marx, Habermas argues that social interaction, communication, should be the paradigm for social relations.
  4. In *Theory of Communicative Action*, Habermas draws a distinction between the system, governed by the imperatives of money and power—and he's obviously thinking of the economic and political system—and the human life-world of social interaction and communication.
- D. Thus, undistorted communication, what Habermas calls the ideal speech situation, is the model for rational inquiry, ethical relations, and democratic politics in which we try to overcome distortions and differences, come to an understanding, and reach consensus.
- E. Of contemporary philosophers, Habermas is one of the most steadfast defenders of reason and rationality, the Enlightenment and democracy, and the project of modernity during an era when it is fashionable to criticize all things modern and to champion the postmodern.
- V. Many have argued that Habermas's ideal speech situation and model of unrestrained communication is idealist and overlooks the force of authority and power.
- A. His critics have argued that Habermas's analysis overlooks unequal power relations.
  - B. Habermas's answer is that he is aware that his position is counterfactual, but he insists that it's a good ideal that we should pursue in interpersonal relationships, in resolving conflict and difference, and in trying to reach consensus on issues of public importance.
    1. Moreover, he argues that his theory of communicative action, of the ideal speech situation, is grounded in language and communication itself.
    2. Further, he claims, if we reflect on what is involved in reaching understanding and consensus, we will see that language presupposes an ability to reach understanding, to grasp the force of better arguments, and thus to assent to rational argumentation and to reach agreement.

#### Essential Reading:

- Jürgen Habermas, *Towards a Rational Society* (Boston: 1970).  
 ———, *Knowledge and Human Interests* (Boston: 1972).  
 ———, *Theory and Human Practice* (Boston: 1973).  
 ———, *Legitimation Crisis* (Boston: 1975).  
 ———, *Communication and the Evolution of Society* (Boston: 1979).

- , *Theory and Communicative Action* (Boston: 1983).  
 ———, *The Philosophical Discourse of Modernity* (Cambridge, MA: 1987).  
 ———, *Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere* (Cambridge: 1989).  
 ———, *Between Facts and Norms* (Cambridge: 1998).

#### Supplementary Reading:

- Rolf Wiggershaus, *The Frankfurt School* (Cambridge: 1996).  
 Thomas McCarthy, *The Critical Theory of Jürgen Habermas* (Cambridge: 1978).  
 Peter Dews, ed., *Habermas: Autonomy and Solidarity* (London: 1986).

#### Questions to Consider:

1. Jürgen Habermas claims that language and communication play a fundamental role in human life. What do you consider his basic insights into language and communication and what limitations do you find in his views?
2. Habermas claims that most theorists of democracy fail to adequately theorize what democracy involves because they fail to grasp the importance of language and communication in a democratic society. In what ways do Habermas's views contribute to revitalizing democracy and what do you think of his views on language and democracy?

## Lecture Seventy-Nine

### Rawls's Theory of Justice

Darren Staloff, Ph.D.

**Scope:** John Rawls's *A Theory of Justice* has been the most influential works of social philosophy in the twentieth century. Drawing on the theories of Hobbes, Locke, and Rousseau, Rawls argues that the best society would be founded on 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 choices, 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. John Rawls's influential *A Theory of Justice* (1971) represents an attempt to give a moral and philosophical foundation or charter to our ideals of constitutional social democracy that is not utilitarian. At the core of his thinking, however, is the conjunction of two strains: the social contract theory, which culminates in Rousseau, and the Kantian moral scheme.
- II. Rawls is particularly concerned with the moral problem of justice as applied to society. His goal is to find the best set of principles of justice that will comprise a universally recognizable theory.
  - A. His primary concern is the basic structure of society. These institutions often generate inequalities of advantages, and the task of a theory of justice is to judge and legitimate these inequalities.
  - B. The method of moral reasoning that Rawls deploys is a quest for reflective equilibrium.
  - C. The "original position" is the equivalent of the classical notion of the state of nature.
    1. The veil of ignorance states that we find ourselves in the original position without any knowledge of what social position we will have, what our natural talents are or will be, and what plan of life or life goals we will have.
    2. The rationality of the parties assumes that the parties are mutually disinterested.
  - D. The "two principles" are the basic agreement that rational persons would reach in the original position.

1. The first principle states, "each person is to have an equal right to the most extensive basic liberty compatible with a similar liberty for others."
  2. The second principle states that any social and economic inequalities must be, first, to everyone's advantage and, second, attached to positions and offices that are equally open to all.
  3. The second principle can be interpreted in a variety of ways, depending on whether one subscribes to the principle of efficiency or the principle of difference.
- III. The principle of justice as fairness or the system of democratic equality has several philosophical and practical virtues that commend it over others.
    - A. The desired reading of the two principles precludes the construction of a callous meritocracy or technocracy.
    - B. The difference principle gives meat to our ideal of fraternity.
    - C. Justice as fairness helps us avoid the problems that arise from using utility as the moral and philosophical foundation of our constitutional social democracy.
  - IV. The theory of justice espoused by Rawls also raises critical questions, some of which are potentially problematic for the theory as a whole.
    - A. The theory assumes a univocality of reason and social science.
    - B. As in all universal and absolute moral theories, justice as fairness is ahistorical. It fails to account for the fact that our codes of justice may be culture-bound.
    - C. The theory of justice proposed by Rawls is fraught with methodological individualism.

### Essential Reading:

John Rawls, *A Theory of Justice* (Cambridge: 1971).

### Supplementary Reading:

Roberto Alejandro, *The Limits of Rawlsian Justice* (Baltimore: 1998).

Chandren Kukathas and Philip Petit, *Equality and Liberty: Analyzing Rawls and Nozick* (Albany, NY: 1991).

### 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 Eighty

### Derrida and Deconstruction

Lou Markos, Ph.D.

**Scope:** In this lecture, we will consider the origins of deconstruction in the theories of Derrida, particularly as they were first presented to America in his (in)famous lecture, “Structure, Sign and Play in the Discourse of the Human Sciences” (1966). We shall see how Derrida, rather than work within the binaries of traditional metaphysics (or logocentrism), attempted to break down (or deconstruct) all such binaries. We shall contrast deconstruction from both Platonic and Christian thought and seek to understand the main terminology associated with deconstruction.

### Outline

- I. Jacques Derrida reads the history of Western metaphysics as a continual search for a logos, or originary presence.
  - A. Indeed, until the modern period, most of the great Western philosophers have been logocentric in their thinking.
    1. Logocentrists consider meaning to emanate finally from some logos, or originary source, that is pure and undefiled.
    2. Examples of this logos include Plato’s forms, John’s *logos*, Augustine’s Trinity, Descartes’ *cogito*, Locke’s natural laws, Hegel’s idea, and so on.
    3. Sometimes, in the work of epistemologists (Kant and others) this logos becomes internalized and is known as the absolute self or transcendent ego.
    4. Most logocentric philosophers provide for the expression of this logos through a sensuous incarnation into the physical/material world (cf., incarnation in Christian belief).
    5. The final function of philosophy, theology, aesthetics, linguistics, and other disciplines is to point back to meaning (such disciplines are means to a higher end).
  - B. Logocentrism generally expresses itself through binaries.
    1. A binary is a set of two related terms, in which the first term (which is perceived to be closer to the *logos*) is privileged over the second.
    2. Indeed, the second term is often seen as a falling away from the first.
    3. The most famous (and most defining) binary is to be found in Plato, where the idea (or form) is always given precedence over the image (or imitation) of this idea.
  - C. According to Derrida, all metaphysicians seek the logos, because it promises to give meaning and purpose to all things and to act as a universal center, a transcendental signified that all signifiers can be referred back to.
    1. Behind this search is a desire for a higher reality, a full presence that is beyond (and thus not implicated in) the play of structure.
    2. Western philosophy since Plato has simply renamed this presence and shifted this center without ever breaking from its centering impulse.
    3. Even the structuralists sought a center, a fixed locus or presence.
    4. Philosophers have broken from the old metaphysics, but still use its terminology and its binaries; although they sometimes reverse these binaries, they still think in terms of them.
    5. Indeed, the desire for a center is so strong that theorists will often posit one even if it doesn’t exist.
    6. Derrida would deconstruct all such attempts to posit a center or to establish a system of binaries; he would replace it instead with a “full free play of meaning.”
    7. In keeping with his desire never to freeze meaning, Derrida litters his work with verbal puns and grammatical quibbles.
    8. As a master player of the game, Derrida is careful never to leave himself open to being deconstructed by another, more clever player.
  - D. Derrida’s theories were first made public in a 1966 lecture: “Structure, Sign and Play in the Discourse of the Human Sciences.”
    1. This lecture is generally accepted as the “birthday” of deconstruction (also known as poststructuralism or postmodernism).
    2. In it, Derrida, ironically, spends more time attacking and deconstructing modern theorists (i.e., structuralists) than he does the traditional ones.
    3. Derrida’s attack on all theory (whether traditional or modern) has led to a growing suspicion of (and backlash against) theory itself.
4. Other binaries include: soul/body, logos (word, logic, speech)/praxis (act, experience, writing), being/becoming, intellectual/physical, conscious/unconscious, essence/existence, rational/emotional.
5. In general, that which is closer to perfection, to the eternal, to that which is unchanging is privileged over that which alters or decays.
6. Binaries may also be viewed in spatial terms, with the first term acting as the center and the second, as the margin.
7. In general, Platonists think vertically; Aristotelians think horizontally.

4. Indeed, neopragmatists, such as Richard Rorty, have argued that ultimately no link exists between a critic's theoretical stance and his actual practice, that is, the theory entails no practical consequences.
- E. In his lecture, Derrida identifies as his forerunners Nietzsche, Freud, and Martin Heidegger (though even these are not spared some deconstruction).
1. Nietzsche did away with such concepts as being and truth, showing them to be arbitrary and in constant play.
  2. As such, he is the true father of both structuralism and deconstruction.
  3. Freud did away with the faith that the subjective self (or consciousness) can function as a logocentric presence or a transcendental signified.
  4. He "demystified" that nostalgic, romantic turn inward that would seek to posit itself and its ego as a fixed, stable center.
  5. Heidegger did away with the metaphysical concept of being as presence, of an eternal, preexistent "I am."
  6. Like Sartre, he argued that existence precedes essence.
- II. Derrida, in rejecting logocentrism (and its earliest proponent, Plato), has ironically reaffirmed the foundational tenets of Plato's nemesis, Gorgias the Sophist.
- A. According to Gorgias's three propositions: nothing exists; if it exists, it cannot be known; if it can be known, it cannot be communicated.
1. In place of Gorgias's first proposition, Derrida argues that there exists no pure, undifferentiated presence, no norm, no center, no touchstone against which all other "imitations" can be measured.
  2. For proposition two, Derrida asserts our inability to find a clear way back to any originary presence or even any controlling system of logic.
  3. Derrida expresses this inability in a word that he coined—*différance*—an untranslatable pun that both plays on the French words for difference and to defer and breaks down the binary of speech/writing.
  4. Like the structuralists, Derrida privileges difference over sameness; however, he does not share their faith in structure.
  5. Derrida argues instead that every time we think we have found a center, it points back to some other center or signified.
  6. Thus, meaning is perpetually deferred; indeed, whenever we try to get to the center (or meaning) of a text, we end up trapped in an *aporia* (Greek for "wayless"), a state of suspension in which meaning is "always already" deferred.
7. Proposition three finds its echo in Derrida's insistence that there has been a breakdown between signifier (the word) and signified (the meaning that that word purports to point back to).
  8. Can writing, the deconstructionist asks, as a system of arbitrary signification, capture or even express meaning?
- B. Metaphysically speaking, deconstruction also marks a rejection of Trinitarian-Incarnational Christianity.
1. Deconstruction marks the polar opposite of the Christian notion that Jesus of Nazareth embodied perfect manhood and godhood combined or, to put it metaphysically, that God is wholly transcendent and wholly immanent.
  2. The Christian belief that God is the eternal creator and origin (*alpha* and *omega*), that in Christ he made himself known to the world, and that he communicates to us through the Holy Spirit (via the Scriptures) offers a full refutation of Gorgias's three propositions.
  3. We might say that the reason it has taken almost 2,500 years for Gorgias's three propositions to resurface and seize the Academy is that the systems of Plato and Christianity have been remarkably strong and resilient.
  4. Indeed, we might say that Plato and Augustine trounced poor old Gorgias so severely that it took him a couple of millennia to recover!
- C. Still, we must be fair to Derrida and his fellow deconstructionists.
1. Though the deconstructionist state of *aporia* is, for Platonist and Christian alike, tantamount to being in Dante's Dark Wood of Error, it is not so for Derrida.
  2. For Derrida, *aporia* is not a negative state that should call for a nostalgic longing for meaning/presence (as in Rousseau).
  3. It is, rather, positive; it marks (as in Nietzsche) "the joyous affirmation of the play of the world and of the innocence of becoming."
  4. It frees us from being bound by any fixed truths or origins; it frees us, too, from any guilt we might feel over the absence of meaning.
  5. In this affirmation, Derrida is much like existentialist Jean-Paul Sartre, who felt that the absence of a higher plan or purpose in our lives did not render life meaningless but made our choices even more vital.

### Essential Reading:

Jacques Derrida, "Structure, Sign and Play in the Discourse of the Human Sciences," in *Writing and Difference*, translated by Alan Bass (Chicago: 1980).

### Supplementary Reading:

Hazard Adams, ed., *Critical Theory since Plato*, revised edition (New York: 1992).

Jacques Derrida, *Of Grammatology*, translated by Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak (Baltimore: 1977).

Terry Eagleton, *Literary Theory: An Introduction* (Minneapolis: 1983), chapter 4.

Jonathan Culler, *Structuralist Poetics: Structuralism, Linguistics, and the Study of Literature* (Ithaca, NY: 1975).

### Questions to Consider:

1. Do you, in your own life, yearn for a fixed center of meaning and purpose? Why? Do you seek such a center when you read/study the great works of philosophy?
2. Are the deconstructive theories of Derrida and the Christian belief in the Incarnation of Christ incompatible? Can they be reconciled? Is the answer to this question relevant to the role and status of the philosopher?

## Lecture Eighty-One

### Rorty's Neo-Pragmatism

Darren Staloff, Ph.D.

**Scope:** Rorty argues that philosophers have traditionally sought to escape from history by 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. One of the most profound and influential philosophers on the current high-cultural scene, Richard Rorty has attempted to move post-analytic American philosophy in a pragmatic direction. 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. Much of Rorty's work critiques the modern epistemology-centered philosophic tradition.
  - A. In *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature*, he suggests that the history of modern epistemology can be seen, from Descartes to the present, as based on the notion that a medium stands between ourselves and the world and, either adequately or inadequately, "mirrors" the world.
    1. Descartes first posited the phenomenal mind as the medium, or representation between the individual and the world. The role of the philosopher was to inspect this medium and decide which ideas truly "reflect" the world—which are true and which are false.
    2. This dualism of ideas and things gave rise to the problem of skepticism, the central issue of modern epistemology.
    3. Kant tried to solve this problem by making epistemology, the study of knowledge, the "first philosophy."
    4. Hegel undermined Kant's project by "historicizing" conceptual schemes.
    5. The positivists tried to resurrect the Kantian project by using philosophy of language as an epistemological first philosophy.
  - B. Rorty claims that what underlies such philosophical projects, and what unites them with their Platonic forerunners, is the desire to constitute philosophy as meta-cultural criticism, itself the result of having achieved a "God's eye-view."

1. The goal is for the philosopher to legislate the limits of meaning and truth for all other high-cultural disciplines.
  2. Rorty argues that a truly secular culture will have no such architectonic discipline but will allow free play between the various disciplines and fields.
- III.** In *Consequences of Pragmatism*, Rorty uses pragmatism to critique and transcend traditional epistemological philosophy. For him, pragmatism represents the ultimate anti-philosophy.
- A. Rorty rejects the traditional attempt to define truth as correspondence with reality.
    1. Correspondence assumes that language is a medium of representation that can be compared with reality, yet Rorty claims that language is itself a part of reality and its relation to the rest of the world is causal rather than representational.
    2. Truth, for Rorty, is a compliment we pay to sentences that work for us and, thus, “truth is what is good in the way of belief.”
  - B. Rorty also rejects the realist tradition.
    1. The notion of a fixed and final reality has no explanatory power.
    2. Conceptual schemes cannot be compared to reality, because our experience of reality is always under some conceptual scheme.
  - C. Philosophy should try to show how our various descriptions and actions “hang together,” rather than trying to offer epistemological foundations for our beliefs.
- IV.** Instead of the traditional search for epistemological foundations, Rorty thinks philosophers should try to show how our various descriptions and actions “hang together,” a project he pursues in *Contingency, Irony, and Solidarity*. There, he tries to show how his edifying pragmatic discourses “hang together” with the contemporary democratic projects of the West, called “postmodern bourgeois liberalism.”
- A. He argues that post-Hegelian inquiry has shown us the contingency of our language, beliefs, and institutions.
    1. Contingency allows us to see how we might redescribe ourselves and our institutions.
    2. The hero of Rorty’s postmodern liberal society is the “strong poet,” or utopian reformer, who shows us how to redescribe ourselves in new ways.
  - B. Ironists are people who realize the contingency of their “final vocabularies” and have doubts about it.
    1. Ironists realize that their present vocabularies cannot resolve or underwrite these doubts and don’t think that vocabulary corresponds to reality or taps into an extrahuman/metaphysical power.

2. The greatest fear of ironists is that they might merely be products of their culture. This leads to constant Nietzschean self-creation.
- C.** For Rorty, solidarity is the phenomenon that makes postmodern bourgeois society “liberal.”
1. Solidarity is the glue that holds society together, and it can be expanded through acts of identification with those previously considered as others.
  2. Such moral education is best achieved through works of fiction that sensitize us to the suffering and humiliation of others.
  3. Liberalism is the realization that cruelty and humiliation are the worst things we can inflict on one another.

**Essential Reading:**

Richard Rorty, *Consequences of Pragmatism* (Minneapolis, 1982).

———, *Contingency, Irony, and Solidarity* (Cambridge: 1989).

**Supplementary Reading:**

Kai Nielson, *After the Demise of the Tradition: Rorty, Critical Theory, and the Fate of Philosophy* (Boulder, CO: 1991).

**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 Eighty-Two

### Gouldner's—Ideology and the "New" Class

Darren Staloff, Ph.D.

**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 Marxist.” 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, 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. In a remarkable trilogy of books written in the late 1970s called the *Dark Side of the Dialectic*, the late Alvin Gouldner offered a powerful analysis of the conditions that produced modern ideological discourse in general and Marxism in particular.
- II. According to Gouldner, modern ideologies emerged in the modern period as a response to the breakdown of traditional authorities.
  - A. The American and French Revolutions destroyed the traditional authority of the aristocracy and clergy. This authority was replaced by a new culture of rational discourse based on three conventions:
    1. All assertions in this discourse must be justified without reference to authority or the status of the author.
    2. Assent must be voluntary.
    3. All assumptions must be made explicit.
  - B. Ideologies were able to respond to the “crisis in credit” because of the communications revolution in print in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.
    1. The development of rag paper made possible the printing of cheap newspapers and journals.
    2. The decentralized nature of publication provided a venue for a wide range of ideological viewpoints.
  - C. Ideologies “unmask” each other by exposing the hidden occluded interests that lay behind them. Their rationality is limited, because each ideology/ideologue claims to be, unlike his competitors, disinterested.
  - D. Because ideology is a variant of the culture of rational discourse, with its fixation on public objectivity and rule-bound inference, it is

profoundly tied up with those people who are immersed in that culture, i.e., intellectuals.

- III. The second volume of Gouldner's trilogy is devoted to identifying the defects in the Marxist scenario. In brief, the major social revolutions did not occur in the advanced capitalist countries of western and central Europe between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat, but have occurred in more backward countries and have involved the peasantry.
  - A. The real class struggle of the modern epoch is between the old class, the moneyed bourgeoisie, and the new class of technical intelligentsia and humanistic intellectuals.
    1. The latter stratum is the smaller of the two and is represented by the traditional scholarly and literary community.
    2. The intelligentsia, the “new” stratum, is made up of engineers, doctors, lawyers, managers, and other white-collar professionals whose income is based on their college training.
    3. Part of what constitutes this class is its cultural capital, but it also shares a culture of critical discourse.
  - B. The class struggle in the West is not revolutionary, but even here it is apparent in organizations and politics.
  - C. Gouldner sees the new class as a flawed universal class. It has an inordinate will to power.
- IV. In the third volume of his trilogy, Gouldner offered an “archeology” of Marxism.
  - A. Traditional Marxology distinguishes between two Marxisms, critical and scientific. Each argues that it is the essential Marxism and that the other is a distortion of the true teaching.
    1. Critical Marxism draws on the early “romantic” or Hegelian writings of Marx, stresses volition, and reads Marxism as a liberating ideology.
    2. Scientific Marxism is based on *Das Kapital* and sees Marxism as a scientific theory.
    3. Gouldner argues that this dispute exists precisely because there is disparity in Marx's work.
  - B. Gouldner, influenced by Thomas Kuhn, offers in place of the two Marxisms a tripartite development of the theory as part of a general paradigm of theory development.
    1. In the first phase, Marx developed his basic paradigm.
    2. In the second phase, Marx and Engels confront anomalous cases.
    3. In the third phase, they turned away from the anomalies and toward the paradigm case of England, and consolidated and defended their theory against vulgarizations and criticisms.

- C. Gouldner holds that the period of paradigm application, the second “transitional phase” between the two Marxisms, is in many ways the most interesting and fruitful. These anomalies together constitute the basis of “nightmare Marxism.”
1. The state might actually be independent of society. In that case, a revolutionary centralization of political power could produce authoritarian domination.
  2. Marxism might not be a science after all, but just another utopian ideology.
  3. Marx might have been wrong in seeing property as the basis of all class divisions.
  4. Propertied class structures might be the key to Western economic dynamism in the modern era. Socialism might represent a return to a more static and less Promethean civilization.

**Essential Reading:**

Alvin Gouldner, *Dialectic of Ideology and Technology* (New York: 1979).

———, *The Future of Intellectuals and the Rise of the New Class* (New York: 1979).

**Supplementary Reading:**

Edward Shils, *The Intellectuals and the Powers* (Chicago: 1972).

**Questions to Consider:**

1. Do intellectuals make up a distinct and separate “class”?
2. What role have intellectuals and other well-educated elites played in radical and revolutionary movements?

**Lecture Eighty-Three**

**MacIntyre—The Rationality of Traditions**

Phillip Cary, Ph.D.

**Scope:** Alasdair MacIntyre, a contemporary philosopher of ethics, articulates a form of “right-wing” postmodernism, affirming the importance of traditions in contrast to the modern rejection of tradition and authority. For MacIntyre, traditions are not only capable of being rational, but are also the necessary context of rationality. This point is illustrated by his contention in *After Virtue* that modern moral reasoning is incoherent, because it consists of ill-understood fragments of previous and more coherent traditions of moral reasoning. The former point—that traditions can be rational—is argued at length in his later book *Whose Justice? Which Rationality?*, which provides a non-relativist account of the nature of traditions.

**Outline**

- I. Who is Alasdair MacIntyre?
  - A. A Scottish philosopher and historian of ethics, he has taught in the United States for the past twenty years.
  - B. He is a critic of liberal modernity, first as a Marxist, then as a Thomistic Catholic.
  - C. He develops a form of what one could call “right-wing” postmodernism, based on an understanding of tradition as the necessary context of rationality.
  - D. He proposes that moral reasoning in modernity is incoherent and that we should learn lessons from Aristotle and the Christian tradition to arrive at a rational ethics.
- II. Right-wing postmodernism.
  - A. Modernity against tradition.
    1. Right-wing postmodernists (along with many left-wing postmodernists) tend to see the Enlightenment (e.g., Locke, Hume, Kant) as the heart of modernity.
    2. Kant speaks of enlightenment as a kind of coming of age, learning to think for oneself rather than living under the tutelage of traditional authorities. (Like Augustine, the Enlightenment thinkers contrasted authority and reason as tutelage versus adulthood.)
    3. In Jeffrey Stout’s phrase, the modern Enlightenment project involves a “flight from authority,” an attempt to figure out the world for oneself, an individualism untrammelled by tradition and authority.

4. In Gadamer's terms, modernity is based on the "prejudice against prejudice," the attempt to escape from all prejudgments and preconceptions and start anew, with a relation between the self and the world unmediated by previous culture, education, and tradition (cf., Descartes).

**B. Postmodern traditionalism.**

1. Modernity in general and the Enlightenment in particular tended to see tradition as an enemy of rationality.
2. MacIntyre contends, on the contrary, that tradition is necessary for rationality—that all reasoning takes place in the context of some tradition or another.
3. This recognition is fatal to modernity (i.e., one cannot recognize this and remain modern), because it means that modernity itself must be a tradition—and the self-image of modernity is that one must escape tradition to be rational.
4. Thus, right-wing postmodernists, like MacIntyre, find deep and systematic incoherence in modernity, the tradition that is hostile to all traditions (incoherence and a lack of self-understanding). This is where postmodernism begins, as modernity dissolves in incoherence.
5. On the other hand, right-wing postmodernists do not share the left-wing tendency to revel in the incoherence or regard it as an inescapable condition. Right-wing thinkers believe that coherent traditions, such as Catholicism and Judaism, can outlast modernity, just as they existed long before modernity came to be.

**III. After virtue: the incoherence of modern ethics.**

**A. The *is-ought* gap.**

1. One of the central preoccupations of modern philosophy is meta-ethics, the attempt to explain and justify the meaning of ethical terms, such as *ought*.
2. One of the basic problems of meta-ethics is to find rational justification for moral obligation, our sense that we *ought* to follow certain moral rules.
3. The difficulty of this problem is that if (like most modern philosophers) you assume a fundamental distinction between facts and values, it seems impossible to move logically from a statement of fact (or "what is") to a statement of value (or "what ought to be").
4. This means that it is difficult to find convincing reasons to justify particular moral rules and the obligation to follow them.
5. This inability to justify moral rules, in turn, makes irresolvable moral disagreement (e.g., about abortion) a pervasive feature of modern thought.

6. MacIntyre argues that such disagreements are inevitable and irresolvable in our time, because modernity has inherited only incoherent fragments of the coherent traditions of ethical reflection in the past.

**B. Contrast the modern focus on rules, obligations, and "the right thing to do" with Aristotle's focus on forming character.**

1. Modern philosophy typically wants to establish an "autonomous" morality, which is not derived from legislation or theology.
2. Catholic philosopher Elizabeth Anscombe argued, in an influential article late in the 1950s, that this removes the context in which the sense of divine obligation makes sense.
3. MacIntyre agrees with Anscombe's point and develops another suggestion she makes: that modern moral philosophy seems to have forgotten about the notion of virtue.
4. In fact, modern moral philosophy tends to focus on moral rules and obligations rather than on character and virtue—on what makes an act right or wrong rather than on what makes a person good or evil.
5. Thus, modern moral philosophy leads to moral skepticism, as our narrow focus on moral rules, isolated from the larger context that would make sense of them, starts to seem irrational and unjustified, the expression of mere preference or "personal commitment" (as if we decide what's right and wrong).
6. Likewise, intelligence is separated from morality, so that what matters is either rigidly following rules or else abandoning all rules and just being well intentioned.

**C. The dependence of moral reasoning on traditions.**

1. MacIntyre argues that specific "social practices" support both virtues and practical intelligence in pursuit of goods internal to the practice.
2. Practical intelligence, in the Aristotelian sense, is the root of moral reasoning (= critical, philosophical thought about practical moral life in general).
3. Hence, moral reasoning, like the practical intelligence it is founded on, is impossible without social practices sustained by traditions.
4. Thus, for MacIntyre, tradition does not hinder moral rationality but makes it possible.

**IV. Traditionalism without relativism.**

**A. What is a tradition?**

1. A tradition includes a worldview or conceptual scheme, but also a history through time, and its "bearer" is a community with its way of life and social practices.
2. Traditions are similar to "scientific paradigms" (Kuhn) in that they are not just theoretical systems but are rooted in social practices (e.g., learning how to do experiments in a lab).

3. MacIntyre finds an even closer analogy in scientific “research programs” as described by Lakatos—like Kuhnian paradigms but a bit more rational (because rational criteria exist for deciding whether a research program is “getting somewhere” or is “degenerating”).

**B. Relativist views of tradition.**

1. Relativism is a modern form of skepticism, derived from the modern view that traditions are not rational.
2. Perhaps the most famous form of relativism arose from anthropologists (such as Margaret Mead) observing that many “primitive” tribes had beliefs that “we” (Westerners) would find outlandish, but that made intelligent sense (and were even “true”) in the context of their traditions and worldviews.
3. The holism in this insight (as in Kuhn’s talk of paradigm) is something that MacIntyre would accept: we should judge individual beliefs in the context of whole traditions and how they make sense therein.
4. What’s wrong is the notion that different tribes have their own “truth” (and by implication their own “rationality”) that other tribes or traditions “can’t argue with.” This is the sort of relativist claim that MacIntyre wants to refute.

**C. What’s wrong about relativism?**

1. Some traditions do seem to be fundamentally wrong about things (e.g., Nazis). We should be able to argue with them and win (by rational standards).
2. Other traditions are intelligently adapted to their own world (jungle tribes in New Guinea) but cannot explain the larger world as well as the various Western traditions can.
3. The worthy motive of relativism is to respect the intelligence and integrity of worldviews that are alien to us.
4. Yet the price tag is another form of disrespect: failure to respect the other as truth-seeker.
5. Imagine a tribesman from New Guinea who really wanted to figure out whether her ancestral view is as true as Western scientific views. Would it really be honest (or respectful) for an anthropologist to tell her, “Don’t worry, your views are just as true as mine”?
6. The underlying point is that some traditions don’t seem to be able to explain as much of the world as others.
7. The criterion for rationality of tradition is as follows: one tradition is more rational than another if it can explain both the successes and failures of the other tradition better than the other tradition itself can (and the other tradition cannot reciprocate) and if it can

understand the other tradition well enough to explain its failures to it in the other tradition’s own terms.

- D. Hence, against liberal modernity MacIntyre can affirm that no tradition-neutral standpoint exists from which to judge traditions (as Descartes thought) without falling into the relativist view that all traditions are equally rational (or equally irrational).
- E. Nor does this mean any tradition can afford to be stagnant and immune from criticism.
  1. Even a tradition that “wins” the argument may learn a great deal from another tradition with which it comes into conflict. (Its superiority is precisely that it is able to assimilate the wisdom from the other tradition—it can learn, while remaining itself, more from the other tradition than the other tradition can learn from it.)
  2. In addition, traditions of inquiry are inherently self-critical, consisting of ongoing arguments within the tradition.
  3. One of the great strengths of the Western traditions, for instance, is that they incorporate practices of philosophical discussion.
  4. This, in turn, allows for a richer quest for the good life, one that involves a search for reflective self-understanding and the ongoing pursuit of truth in the spirit of Socrates.

**Essential Reading:**

Alasdair MacIntyre, *After Virtue: A Study in Moral Theory*, 2nd ed. (South Bend, IN: 1984).

**Supplementary Reading:**

Alasdair MacIntyre, *Whose Justice? Which Rationality?* (South Bend, IN: 1988).

Jeffrey Stout, *Flight from Authority: Religion, Morality and the Quest for Autonomy* (South Bend, IN: 1981).

**Questions to Consider:**

1. Does it bother you that people can’t reach agreement about issues such as abortion? Why do you think that is? Do you agree with MacIntyre’s thesis that modern moral reasoning is incoherent and fragmented?
2. Do you think traditions can be rational—are even necessary for rationality, as MacIntyre argues?



## Lecture Eighty-Four

### Nozick's Defense of Libertarianism

Jeremy Shearmur, Ph.D.

**Scope:** Hayek sometimes described himself as a “libertarian,” but his arguments were largely consequentialist, arguing that his views were to be preferred because of the freedom and well-being that individuals could be expected to enjoy in the kind of society that he favored. Robert Nozick is perhaps best known for *Anarchy, State, and Utopia*, a work that is libertarian with an emphasis on rights. A brilliant Harvard philosophy professor, Nozick also wrote in other areas of philosophy both before and after this work.

In this work, Nozick asks us to consider that individuals have rights to their person and to their justly acquired property—and then asks us to take these ideas seriously. Starting with a view of individuals in a “state of nature”—a situation before the existence of government—Nozick poses the question: could such people form a government without the infringement of people’s rights? (Consider, in particular, the rights of those people who don’t want to form a government.) Nozick argues that the purpose would be in order to form a “nightwatchman state.” He then argues that anything that goes beyond that—any government of the kind with which we are today familiar—would be illegitimate. He offers several striking lines of criticism, including some reflections on democracy, redistribution, and justice, and a critique of the leading American political philosopher, John Rawls.

One problem arises, however, with Nozick’s views: much of the weight of his argument is carried by claims about rights, including rights to property, but he does not provide more than a sketch of the underlying character of these rights. In addition, in a later work, Nozick indicated that he now has some reservations about his earlier views. His work is important, nonetheless. It is full of powerful ideas put in a striking manner. It also leads us to focus on the implications for individuals and their rights of many ideas about the role of government that we casually take for granted. It also contains, in its final and under-appreciated section on “utopia,” an important discussion of how libertarian ideas may allow for the flowering of different social ideals and for experiments in living, from which we may all learn.

## Outline

- I. Background.
  - A. I will focus on Nozick’s controversial book, *Anarchy, State, and Utopia*, rather than on Nozick the man.
    1. Nozick is a contemporary professional philosopher, and much of the rest of his work—although of interest to other philosophers—is not connected with the book that has made his name.
    2. In addition, Nozick has detached himself from the book (e.g., he has not responded to criticism of it) so that knowing more about the person or his career does not give the kind of payoff that it might in the case of other people we have studied.
  - B. Let us, then, turn to the book. What happens if we take ideas about individuals having rights seriously?
  - C. Nozick starts his *Anarchy, State, and Utopia* by saying: “Individuals have rights, and there are things no person or group may do to them (without violating their rights).”
  - D. What follows from this depends very much on what view you have about the character of such rights. Nozick understands them in the tradition of Locke and, say, Thomas Jefferson, rather than in terms of a right to modern welfare entitlements.
  - E. In his book, Nozick begins with a situation in which individuals have rights to their persons and to acquire property, but there is no government; this is the so-called “state of nature,” in the tradition of Locke’s work.
  - F. Nozick argues that, from this, a government that is limited in its scope—a “nightwatchman” state—could come about without coercion, without infringing people’s rights.
  - G. But, he claims, anything beyond that, including the involuntary redistribution of wealth of the kind that we are used to today, would be illegitimate.
  - H. Nozick’s book created a stir.
    1. It defended unpopular views—at least, views that were unpopular in academia.
    2. It did so with brilliance and using lively examples.
    3. The author was a professor of philosophy at Harvard (who, before and since, was known largely for technical work in philosophy).
  - I. This leads to a problem: much of the interest of the book is in the details of Nozick’s argument and his clever examples.
- II. What is Nozick’s starting point and that of his book?
  - A. Nozick tells us his initial concern was to *refute* libertarianism and that he had a discussion with the individualist anarchist Murray Rothbard, a

well-known defender of libertarian views. Rothbard thought that individual rights and markets were all that was needed—the state was not needed.

- B. Nozick does raise *some* problems for libertarians, and he is critical of individualist anarchism. But the overall thrust of his book is sympathetic to, and a powerful voice for, a libertarian perspective (note its influence in making libertarian perspectives more respectable in academic circles). Nozick's argument is based on rights, not on arguments about consequences; one might contrast this with Hayek.
- C. Nozick's argument starts from individuals in a state of nature, with rights to their persons and to acquire property.
- D. This is familiar, because it is reminiscent of John Locke, but there are important differences.
  - 1. Nozick doesn't have Locke's *right* to charity from the surplus of others.
  - 2. The basis of rights—theological in Locke—is left unexplained. Nozick criticizes Locke's ideas about how people can initially acquire property rights, but he doesn't provide answers to the problems that he raises.
  - 3. That he does not provide these answers becomes a pressing problem when these ideas are used critically against others.

### III. From the state of nature to limited government.

- A. The idea of a state of nature has been used, historically, to reflect on government and its proper relation with citizens (cf., Hobbes and Locke).
- B. The most useful specific parallel with Nozick's work is the account in Locke. There, individual rights in a state of nature serve as a basis for the powers of government and for the limitations to these powers.
- C. Some people, including individualist anarchists, such as Rothbard, would argue that we should *stay* in the state of nature. (Compare Locke's own response to Robert Filmer, a defender of royal absolutism, in Locke's *Second Treatise of Government*, paragraph 93: "[Filmer] avoid[s] what mischiefs may be done... by... foxes, but [is] content nay think[s] it safety, to be devoured by lions.")
- D. How might one contend that we could stay in the state of nature?
  - 1. For Locke, there is property and commercial activity in the state of nature, but we need government to resolve disputes and enforce judgment; for this, Locke brings in the state.
  - 2. Individualist anarchists argue: *we* can solve these *within* the state of nature, while setting up government involves morally illegitimate coercion.

- E. Nozick argues that we can get to a *minimal* state without coercion and without assuming that we must all get together to reach agreement. This state can come about spontaneously—as if Smith's "invisible hand" was at work! Nozick offers a clever argument.
  - 1. In agreement with the individualist anarchist, Nozick suggests that commercial agencies for the protection of rights would emerge in the state of nature.
  - 2. He argues that we can expect either the development of monopoly or of cooperation between such agencies, in respect of any specific geographical area. This looks a bit like a private government, but it is not.
  - 3. What of those who don't want to join? (Jonathan Wolff, who has written about Nozick, refers to them as "John Wayne" types!)
  - 4. Nozick offers an argument that it would be legitimate to *compel* the John Wayne types to join in with the more general arrangements: others have a right to a public procedure when there are disputes, and private justice imposed by the individual poses a potential danger to others.
  - 5. So, Nozick argues, it is acceptable to compel people not to be independents and to force them to join a dominant protection agency, but these people must be compensated by offering them protection services if they can't afford such services.
- F. The argument is interesting and clever, but it is only really of interest to—and has been contested by—individualist anarchists, who think you can't have a legitimate state of any kind. In particular, they contest the idea that one can assume that it is the state's system of justice that is good and reliable.
- G. A more widely controversial issue is raised by Nozick's next line of argument: that we can legitimately go no further than a minimal state—that states, as we are used to them, are typically behaving in illegitimate ways.

### IV. Nozick versus the redistributionist state.

- A. A critique of the democratic legitimization of redistribution: the tale of the slave.
  - 1. Nozick asks us to consider changes by way of slow gradations from an individual at the mercy of a brutal master.
  - 2. This individual moves, eventually, to a point at which all the slaves vote as to what one should do, where one has a vote, and one's vote is crucial if there is ever a tie (which is more, it might be said, than our votes do in actual elections).
  - 3. At what point, Nozick asks, does one stop being a slave?
- B. Self-ownership versus taxation.

1. Taxes mean that others have a stake in you, that you don't fully own yourself.
  2. Taxation is, thus, on a par with forced labor.
  3. Nozick, though, is perfectly happy with voluntary charitable giving; he favors it—it is *coercion* that, for him, is the problem.
- C. Consider the case of Wilt Chamberlain, well known, I understand, as the player of some American sport.
1. Chamberlain was wealthy, because people wished to pay to watch him play.
  2. His wealth was a product of voluntary transactions, so it is morally acceptable.
  3. Preventing such voluntary transactions between adults infringes their liberty.
  4. To secure equality would also mean constant interference by the government to undo the results of voluntary exchanges.
- D. Nozick offers a critique of John Rawls for disregarding how things come to be owned.
1. Rawls argues that we should consider what social arrangements should be from behind a “veil of ignorance,” that is, where we don't know what social position we will hold.
  2. Nozick objects: Rawls treats wealth as if it were manna from heaven, that it is simply *there* for us to discuss how it should be distributed.
- E. Behind all this lies Nozick's view of justice.
1. The key issue for Nozick is entitlement not patterns (e.g., equality).
  2. If a question arises about the legitimacy of someone's holdings, we must ask the following question: is this possession justly acquired directly by that individual or legitimately acquired from someone who themselves acquired it justly (if it isn't, there is a case for historically based compensation).
  3. This is an interesting approach, but it suggests that no problems arise if the path to the acquisition was just. Is this acceptable?
  4. Nozick's self-ownership, Wilt Chamberlain, and the slave arguments are still provocative. The argument about entitlement is also forceful, insofar as people are willing to grant that there is just entitlement (and this, surely, has some real force).
- F. I would like to make three other brief points about Nozick's work.
1. He sees the rights that individuals have, as constraints on what other people can do. He describes these as “side constraints.”
  2. He argues for respecting each person's rights, not, say, restricting the rights of some people, so that, in some sense, the rights enjoyed by everyone are maximized. Nozick criticizes this view as a “utilitarianism of rights.”

3. One might ask whether rights can never be infringed? What if someone's insistence on his rights led to a terrible moral disaster?

V. What should we make of Nozick?

- A. He offers stimulating and clever arguments; he also poses a number of problems for welfare liberals on the basis of how liberty and individual rights are widely understood in America.
- B. The key weakness of his work is that depends too much on undefended assumptions.
- C. We must also look at the “utopia” section of his book, which seems very interesting.
  1. In this, he discusses a minimal state and property rights as offering a framework within which people can live diverse lives and can disagree about fundamental values without conflict.
  2. It also provides a setting in which we learn from others' and our own “experiments in living.”
  3. Provided, that is, that other people will allow us the freedom to do these things.

**Essential Reading:**

Robert Nozick, *Anarchy, State, and Utopia* (New York: 1974).

———, *The Examined Life* (New York: 1989).

**Supplementary Reading:**

G. A. Cohen, *Self-Ownership, Freedom and Equality* (Cambridge: 1995).

Will Kymlicka, *Contemporary Political Philosophy: An Introduction* (Oxford: 1990).

G. Paul, ed., *Reading Nozick* (Oxford: 1982).

Raymond Plant, *Modern Political Thought* (Oxford: 1991).

Johnathan Wolff, *Robert Nozick: Property, Justice and the Minimal State* (Stanford: 1991).

**Questions to Consider:**

1. Just how damaging are the problems of Nozick's assumptions about rights for the overall force of his argument?
2. Are the ideas of Nozick's “utopia” just a utopian fantasy, or could they have any real contribution to make to problems of the real world?

## Glossary

**Aporia:** Greek for “wayless”; a term used by deconstructionists to refer to what happens when a critic tries to trace a given signifier back to a single, stable signified. This finally futile attempt to reach the center (or meaning) of a text leaves the critic, ultimately, in a state of suspension in which meaning is always already deferred.

**Binary:** A set of two terms in which the first term is privileged over the second, and the second term is seen, in some way, as a falling away from the first: form/imitation, being/becoming, presence/absence. Whereas structuralists tend to invert binaries, deconstructionists seek always to break them down. Binaries can be viewed either vertically, with the first term up and the second term down, or horizontally, with the first term in the center and the second at the margin.

**Decenter:** Traditional metaphysicians have posited a center that is fixed and pure and that can function both as the source of all meaning and as the transcendental signified toward which all signifiers can be referred. Structuralists sought to disrupt this traditional view by replacing this center (or logos) with material structures. Deconstructionists, however, have argued that structuralism did not, in fact, decenter the old system; it just created new centers to serve as new transcendental signifieds. Critics like Derrida were left, therefore, to truly eliminate the center and to posit no final reference point for the signifiers of philosophy, religion, poetry, and language itself.

**Deconstruction:** A critical school (initiated by Derrida) that seeks to break down (or deconstruct) traditional binaries; at its heart lies a refusal to posit a simple link between signified and signifier or, indeed, to allow for any fixed center of meaning.

**Deferral:** In deconstructionist lingo, deferral occurs when a critic tries to link a given signifier to a single, stable signified. In attempting to do so, the critic finds that every time he thinks he has found a signified (or center) that will halt the meaning of the signifier (and the text it is a part of), it merely points back to another signified (or center). This process is carried out through a perpetual series of deferrals until the critic puts aside his desire to find a center and enters a state of *aporia*.

**Différance:** A “one-word poem” coined by Derrida that is composed of two French words: one meaning *difference*; the other meaning *to defer*. The word functions on two levels. First, it links the structuralist notion (best expressed in the linguistic theories of Saussure) that language and meaning are based on, and produced by, differences rather than similarities with the deconstructionist notion that (because of the breakdown of signifier and signified) meaning is perpetually deferred. Second, it deconstructs the traditional binary of speech/writing by privileging the written word over the spoken word. (Because *différance* and the properly spelled *différence* are pronounced exactly the same in French, the

listener can determine which word is being spoken only by seeing it in written form.)

**Logocentrism:** A metaphysical and theoretical orientation that has dominated Western thought since Plato, logocentrism has come under growing attack by modern and postmodern thinkers (especially Derrida). Put simply, logocentrism considers meaning to emanate finally from some logos, or originary source, that is pure and undefiled. Logocentric-minded aestheticians consider the best art to be that which most fully realizes this logos and believe that such works of art, as they express and incarnate eternal truths, can transcend their time and place to exist on a plane of perpetual meaning. Logocentrists not only believe that a real and essential link exists between the signifiers of language and the signifieds to which they point, but also generally posit a transcendental signified (or center) to which all signifiers can ultimately be referred.

**Logos:** Though the word *logos* is often used specifically to refer to the incarnate Christ (John 1), it is used more generally by logocentrists to refer to a final center or presence (a transcendental signified) that not only gives meaning and purpose to all things, but also serves as the final referent point and touchstone against which all forms of beauty and truth can be measured and judged. The pre-Socratic philosopher Heraclitus spoke of the logos as being somehow originary in force, but because he claimed that nothing could be known or understood of this logos and because his vision of nature is finally materialist, he is far closer to twentieth-century thought than he is to traditional metaphysics.

**Meta-ethics:** a recently formulated branch of modern philosophy concerned with questions of the meaning and justification of key ethical concepts, such as moral obligation. Whereas “Is abortion wrong?” is an ethical question, “What does it mean to say something is wrong?” is a meta-ethical question.

**Meta-language:** In Quine, a conceptual “coordinate grid” imposed on an object language for purposes of translation.

**Nightwatchman state:** In Nozick, that the state should be limited in its functions to the preservation of people’s safety and of their property; i.e., that it should be concerned with defense and law and order, but should not, for example, undertake welfare functions.

**Original position:** According to Rawls, a sort of refined version of the state of nature as described by Hobbes, Locke, and Rousseau.

**Paradigm:** Term used by Thomas Kuhn to denote the (changeable) frameworks of ideas into which modern scientists are led by their education, within which those in a scientific community work and through which they interpret the world.

**Presence:** In metaphysical, logocentric terms, presence signifies a belief in a center or logos that contains within itself pure being, that is self-contained and self-existent (the ultimate example of presence would be the “I am” of Exodus 3:16). Whereas ontological theorists (whether Judeo-Christian or Platonic) tend

to locate presence in some heavenly world of being, epistemological theorists since Descartes (and especially since Kant) often posit the absolute self (or transcendent ego) as the central, controlling presence in their metaphysical systems. Deconstructionists like Derrida have sought to break down both the ontological and epistemological faith in presence. The existentialist motto, “existence precedes essence,” is, in part, a rejection of presence.

**Protectionism:** The idea in Popper that people’s liberty and well-being requires active protection by the state.

**Reductionism:** The belief that every meaningful statement about the world is equivalent to some statement that is a logical construct of terms referring to sense experience.

**Transcendental signified:** For logocentric metaphysicians, the transcendental signified is the ultimate or originary signified (the primal center) toward which all signifiers and signifieds (all meaning itself) finally refers. For the theist, God himself is the final transcendental signified. Deconstruction has been particularly strong in tearing down the status of the transcendental signified (which is also to deconstruct being, presence, and center) and in exploring the powerful human desire to posit such a signified as the source and touchstone of all truth and meaning.

**Veil of ignorance:** Rawlsian notion of ignorance central to the idea of the original position.

## Biographical Notes

**Derrida, Jacques** (1930– ). French literary theorist; founder of deconstructionism. His 1966 lecture (delivered at Johns Hopkins), “Structure, Sign and Play in the Discourse of the Human Sciences,” ushered American critics into the era of poststructuralism.

**Foucault, Michel** (1926–1984). Foucault was born in Poitiers, France, and was educated at the Ecole Normale Supérieure 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 a professor at the University of Paris-Vincennes and subsequently became a 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 cofounder and editor-in-chief of *Theory and Society*.

**Habermas, Jürgen** (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.

**Hayek, Friedrich August von** (1889–1992). A Vienna-born economist and philosopher who later taught at the London School of Economics. Hayek, who supported free markets and opposed government intervention, won the Nobel Prize for Economics in 1974 and significantly influenced the political regime of Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher.

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

**MacIntyre, Alisdair** (1929– ). Scottish philosopher, historian of ethics, and critic of liberal modernity, whose book *After Virtue* (1981) revived interest in Aristotle's ethics of virtue. His subsequent book, *Whose Justice? Which Rationality?* (1988), argued that traditions are the necessary context of rationality.

**Nozick, Robert** (1938– ). American philosopher who challenged Rawls's notion of the distributionist state. His book *Anarchy, State, and Utopia* argues that such basic rights as life, liberty, and legitimate property are absolute.

**Popper, Karl** (1902–1994). An Anglo-Austrian philosopher renowned for his work with science and pseudo-science. Popper, who was knighted in 1964, believed that the development of knowledge couldn't be systematized given the unpredictable nature of knowing itself. *The Logic of Scientific Discovery*, *The Poverty of Historicism*, and *Objective Knowledge: An Evolutionary Approach* are among his works.

**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.