

Toward a Lecture on Intellectual and Cultural Developments (1950–2000)

I. Polar Dualisms and Matrices of Interpretation

A. Dualisms (see below)

B. Matrices of Interpretation (Systematic outlooks, beliefs, and mindsets) (see below)

II. Cases

A. The Rise of Popular Culture and Its Relation to Serious Culture

1. Art: Breakdown of communication with the viewer and its reassertion

- a. Abstract Expressionism
- b. Jackson Pollock (1912–1956)
- c. Andy Warhol (1928–1987)
- d. Roy Lichtenstein (1923–1997)

2. Music: Breakdown of communication with the listener and its reassertion

- a. John Cage (1912–1992), *4' 33"*
- b. Jazz
- c. Rhythm and Blues
- d. Rock 'n' Roll
 - (1) Ruth Brown, *Mama (He Treats Your Daughter Mean)* (1953)
 - (2) The Chords, *Sh-Boom* (1954)
 - (3) Buddy Holly, *Peggy Sue* (1957)
 - (4) Jerry Lee Lewis, *Whole Lotta Shakin' Going on* (1957)
 - (5) Conway Twitty, *It's Only Make Believe* (1958)
 - (6) Beatles, *Lady Madonna*
 - (7) Rolling Stones, *Who's Been Sleeping Here* (1965)
- e. Rap

B. Historical Study: Realists vs. Constructivists

1. Realists

- a. G. R. Elton, *The Practice of History* (1967)
- b. Gertrude Himmelfarb, *On Looking into the Abyss* (1994)

2. Constructivists

- a. Hayden White, *Metahistory* (1973)
- b. Leon Goldstein, *Historical Knowing* (1976)

C. Shakespeare and Playwriting

1. Relativism

- a. David Mamet, *Glengarry Glen Ross*
- b. Jonathan Dollimore and Alan Sinfield, eds., *Political Shakespeare* (1985)
- c. Oxfordians: Attribution to the Earl of Oxford (Edward de Vere)

2. Eternal Truth, and Good and Evil
 - a. Tom Stoppard, *Shakespeare in Love* (1998)
 - b. Harold Bloom, *Shakespeare: The Invention of the Human* (1999)
 - c. Stratfordians: Insistence that Skaksper of Stratford is the author

D. Culture Wars

1. Multi-culturalism and the Counterculture
 - a. feminism
 - b. equality for blacks
 - c. toleration for sexual differences
 - d. Critical Legal Studies
2. “Dead, white, European males”
 - a. Alan Bloom, *The Closing of the American Mind* (1987)
 - b. Dinesh d’Souza, *Illiberal Education: The Politics of Sex and Race on Campus* (1991)

E. Philosophy

1. Michel Foucault (1926–1984)
2. Alan Watts (1915–1973), “The Trickster Guru”
3. Robert Pirsig, *Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance*
4. Herbert Marcuse (1898–1979), *Eros and Civilization*

F. Psychology

1. B. F. Skinner (1904–1990), *Walden II* (1946) and *Beyond Freedom and Dignity* (1971)
2. R. D. Laing (1927–1989)

G. Fiction

1. J. D. Salinger (1919–), *Catcher in the Rye* (1951)
2. William Golding (1911–1993), *Lord of the Flies* (1954)
3. Vladimir Nabokov (1899–1977), *Lolita* (1955)
4. Elie Wiesel (1928–), *Night* (1958)
5. Alexander Solzhenitsyn (1918–), *One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich* (1962)
6. Thomas Pynchon (1937–), *V.* (1963) and *Gravity’s Rainbow* (1973)
7. Joseph Heller (1923–), *Catch-22* (1971)

H. Non-Fiction

1. C. P. Snow (1905–1980), *The Two Cultures* (1959)
2. *Thomas Kuhn, The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* (1961)
3. Rachel Carson (1907–1964), *Silent Spring* (1962)
4. Marshall McLuhan (1911–1980), *Understanding Media* (1964)
 - a. hot and cool media
 - b. “The medium is the message”
 - c. “Global village”
5. Carol Sagan (1934–1996), *Dragons of Eden* (1977); and *Cosmos* (1980)
6. Francis Fukuyama, *The End of History and the Last Man* (1992)

7. Richard J. Herrnstein and Charles Murray, *The Bell Curve* (1994)
8. Samuel Huntington, *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of the World Order* (1996)

A. Dualisms

1. **Positivism** — natural laws apply to society, are knowable, and, once known, are applicable to all societies (one correct way)
Relativism — the values of any culture or society are equal to that of any other culture or society (many “correct” ways)
2. **Structuralism** — defines a functioning system according to its internal structure
Semiotics — defines a functioning system according to its signs and outward manifestations
3. **Idealism** — the real world is a world of ideas (e.g., the *Weltgeist*) that determines the material, physical world
Materialism — the real world is the material world, which, in turn, determines the world of ideas (e.g., “You are what you eat”).

B. Matrices of Interpretation (Systematic outlooks, beliefs, and mindsets)

- 1) **Ageist**, a belief that people over or under a certain age are not capable, qualified, or to be trusted
- 2) **Annalectic**, that is, belief in the broad sweep of *la longue durée*, that patterns of behavior filter up from below in society
- 3) **Behaviorist**, that is, belief that the environment determines human and animal behavior
- 4) **Capitalist**, belief that profit for the individual and competition among individuals in a society benefit that society
- 5) **Culture Bias**, a belief that, since any particular culture may be inferior or superior in one feature, it is thus inferior or superior, respectively, in all features
- 6) **Democratic**, a belief that everything can be explained in terms of the rise of political and civil liberty for the individual
- 7) **Elitist**, a belief that in any society, it is the elites who rule and determine standards for the rest of society, that patterns of behavior filter down from above in society
- 8) **Evolutionary**, a belief in the process of development from simple to complex, or from primitive to sophisticated, or more simply a belief in the inevitability of progress
- 9) **Existential**, a belief that any interpretation is an arbitrary and purely personal ordering of a random world
- 10) **Gender Bias**, a belief that one gender is inherently superior to the other (now discredited in scholarship, but it was the prevailing view, in the male-oriented version, until the last few decades of this century, and is still prevalent at non-scholarly levels)
- 11) **Marxist**, a belief in the rise of economic liberty for people within a community or society through cooperation and (if necessary) through violent overthrow of economic exploiters
- 12) **Nationalist**, a belief that when one’s own country gains that’s good, but when one’s own country loses that’s bad
- 13) **Psychoanalytic**, a belief that the behavior of an individual can be explained in terms of patterns that the adult developed as a child
- 14) **Racist**, a belief that there are superior and inferior races (now discredited in scholarship, but quite prevalent earlier in this century and still prevalent at non-scholarly levels)
- 15) **Religious**, a belief that everything can be explained in relation to divine will.