Unit 5: Social and Political Philosophy – How to slice up the pie

Christopher Charles Allen

Donald Landry

January 2008
# Table of Contents

SAP Template ............................................................................................................. 2  
Unit Overview ........................................................................................................... 5  
Instructional Organizer for Unit ............................................................................. 6  
Written Summary of Learning Activities/Strategies ............................................... 7  
Major Assessment Task (Culminating Activity) of the Unit .................................... 39  
Statement of the Design Process ............................................................................. 48  
Appendices .............................................................................................................. 49
a) **Enduring understandings for the UNIT**

If people need non-renewable resources, do we culturally modify our need for non-renewable resources to include a need for renewable resources or do we politically manage the distribution of non-renewable resources? The management of renewable resources could be managed through capitalist free-markets. The founder of Greenpeace--and now ironically its most outspoken critic--suggests that we encourage the free-market of trees. Burning them as fuel isn't as damaging to the environment as it seems. Trees can be replanted. During their growth they clean the atmosphere. The whole management of trees helps us to be less dependent upon foreign resources.

Students will have the enduring understanding that if resources are finite (or non-renewable) and if these finite resources are needed, then government will manage. If resources are infinite (or renewable) then government might regulate. Students will understand the advantages and disadvantages of management over regulation.

**Essential questions (the enduring understandings):**

1. Given the scarcity of many of our resources, how do we best allocate them in a society or in the world - i.e. should they managed or regulated?

2. How do we develop our resources for the betterment of all?

3. How would major writers from the history of philosophy address this issue resource allocation (e.g. Plato, Aristotle, Locke, Hobbes, Rousseau, Mill, Marx, Rawls and Nozick)?
**Strand V of VII: Social and Political Philosophy**

HZT4U-V2a - demonstrate an understanding of the main questions of social and political philosophy (e.g., "What are the just limits of state authority?" "Do people have a right to equal treatment?" "Should individual citizens be free to do what they want?" "What are an individual’s rights and responsibilities?")

HZT4U-V2b - evaluate the responses of major philosophers (e.g., Wollstonecraft, Confucius, Rousseau) and major schools of social and political philosophy (e.g., individualism, communitarianism, feminism) to some of the main questions of social and political philosophy (e.g., "What is justice?" "What is the proper boundary between public policy and private morality?"), making reference to classic texts (e.g., Hobbes’ Leviathan, Rousseau’s Social Contract, de Beauvoir’s The Second Sex)

HZT4U-V2c - use critical and logical thinking skills to develop and defend their own ideas about some of the major questions of social and political philosophy, and to anticipate counter-arguments to them

HZT4U-V2d - analyze how theories of social and political philosophy (e.g., libertarianism, egalitarianism) are adopted and realized in contemporary political policy making (e.g., concerning the distribution of wealth), and how the adoption of a particular theory makes a difference to political and social practices

HZT4U-V2e - demonstrate an understanding of how particular philosophical theories (e.g., of rights, citizenship, duties) have influenced the development of subjects such as political science, economics, or law

**b) Summative assessment tasks for the unit**

Students will prove through a multimedia (i.e., combining at least two media in addition to the actual discussion such as PowerPoint, newspaper, podcast, etc.) presentation (as a political party or as a corporation) that urges its audience to either vote for more management through government control or more regulation of corporations through government of one (1) particular resource.

Students must justify through their presentation points using both classical and modern philosophical arguments. Other students are encouraged to challenge the presentation group’s justification of their view of resources through these same argumentative points from the study of both classic and modern philosophies.

**c) Formative assessment(s) or scaffolding required.**

Students will examine the

- traditional philosophies discussing the individual’s relationship to the society of which the individual is part
- modern philosophies discussing the individual’s relationship to the society of which the individual is part
- basic economic philosophy and social analysis of societies like the former USSR and the modern USA
- current Canadian view on society, the individual, and their relationship through the processes of resources (i.e., finding, refining, distribution, etc.)
- way in which the renewable and the non-renewable resources on which we now depend are managed and/or regulated

- debates of how this management and regulation is harming and/or benefiting the environment

- way that our dependence on these resources affects us culturally, economically, politically, and socially
This UNIT should be taught to help students meet expectations in the strand of Social and Political Philosophy, which in turn should be taught after the strands of Metaphysics, Logic and the Philosophy of Science, Epistemology, Ethics, but before Aesthetics and Research and Inquiry Skills. Its subtasks and tasks will allow students to explore how the culture of philosophy affects the culture of economics, politics, and the whole society. Its subtasks are not cumulative; i.e., students needn’t perform all of them in order to be able to perform the task at the end of the UNIT.

Students will understand the power of philosophy as a part of culture. They will comprehend its role in the larger society, which bases its economic and political decisions on philosophy. Students will analyze what happens when two societies (which each run different cultural software) encounter each other.

We have used the principles of the RAFT format; Role, Audience, Format, and Task as explained by Kryza et al. (2007:92-93) so that “[s]tudents will gain deeper understandings about content if they engage from the perspective of something or someone within that content.” By assuming roles of the "haves" and the "have-nots"--arbitrarily assigned by the teacher--students will have the opportunity to see that inherited wealth is not easily given up and redistributed, that wealth is created by weakening the wealth of others; wealth might never be "created," only "reassigned..."
### Instructional Organizer for Unit

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DAY 1</th>
<th>DAY 2</th>
<th>DAY 3</th>
<th>DAY 4</th>
<th>DAY 5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>LESSON 1</td>
<td>LESSON 2</td>
<td>LESSON 3</td>
<td>LESSON 4</td>
<td>LESSON 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Introduction to Social and Political Philosophy</strong></td>
<td><strong>Setting Up the Context/Problem</strong></td>
<td><strong>ECONOMIC JUSTICE: Penny Scramble for Wealth and Power</strong></td>
<td>comprehending knowledge about Socrates</td>
<td>applying knowledge about Socrates</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DAY 6</th>
<th>DAY 7</th>
<th>DAY 8</th>
<th>DAY 9</th>
<th>DAY 10</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>LESSON 6</td>
<td>LESSON 7</td>
<td>LESSON 8</td>
<td>LESSON 9</td>
<td>LESSON 10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mock trial of a modern teacher in ancient setting</td>
<td>analyzing knowledge about Socrates</td>
<td>mock trial of modern teacher in modern setting</td>
<td>comprehending knowledge about Plato</td>
<td>applying knowledge about Plato</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DAY 11</th>
<th>DAY 12</th>
<th>DAY 13</th>
<th>DAY 14</th>
<th>DAY 15</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>LESSON 11</td>
<td>LESSON 12</td>
<td>LESSON 13</td>
<td>LESSON 14</td>
<td>LESSON 15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>business proposal of private school drama</td>
<td>analyzing knowledge about Plato</td>
<td>1-Table graphic organizers comparing Canada’s constitutional monarchy with Plato’s Utopia</td>
<td>comprehending knowledge about Aristotle</td>
<td>applying knowledge about Aristotle</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DAY 16</th>
<th>DAY 17</th>
<th>DAY 18</th>
<th>DAY 19</th>
<th>DAY 20</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>LESSON 16</td>
<td>LESSON 17</td>
<td>LESSON 18</td>
<td>LESSON 19</td>
<td>LESSON 20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>lists of syllogistic logic</td>
<td>analyzing knowledge about Aristotle through Venn diagram graphic organizers comparing and contrasting philosophies of Plato and Aristotle</td>
<td>building knowledge through RESEARCH JOURNALS</td>
<td>building knowledge through RESEARCH JOURNALS AND applying, analyzing, and synthesizing knowledge through RESEARCH DRAMAS</td>
<td>applying, analyzing, and synthesizing knowledge through RESEARCH DRAMAS</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DAY 21</th>
<th>DAY 22</th>
<th>DAY 23</th>
<th>DAY 24</th>
<th>DAY 25</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>LESSON 21</td>
<td>LESSON 22</td>
<td>LESSON 23</td>
<td>LESSON 24</td>
<td>LESSON 25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>applying, analyzing, and synthesizing knowledge through RESEARCH DRAMAS</td>
<td>comprehending knowledge of Confucius</td>
<td>comprehending knowledge of Hobbes</td>
<td>applying knowledge of Locke and of Hobbes</td>
<td>in-class argument over allocation of new resource</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DAY 26</th>
<th>DAY 27</th>
<th>DAY 28</th>
<th>DAY 29</th>
<th>DAY 30</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>LESSON 26</td>
<td>LESSON 27</td>
<td>LESSON 28</td>
<td>LESSON 29</td>
<td>LESSON 30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>analyzing knowledge of Rousseau</td>
<td>discussion of how ideas become the basis of war and conflict</td>
<td>comprehending knowledge of John Stuart Mill-Utilitarianism</td>
<td>comprehending knowledge of Marx</td>
<td>comprehending knowledge of John Rawls-Distributive Justice</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DAY 31</th>
<th>DAY 32</th>
<th>DAY 33</th>
<th>DAY 34</th>
<th>DAY 35</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>LESSON 31</td>
<td>DAY 32</td>
<td>DAY 33</td>
<td>DAY 34</td>
<td>DAY 35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>comprehending knowledge of Robert Nozick-Libertarianism</td>
<td>introduction and comprehending questions and answers</td>
<td>comprehending task groups</td>
<td>application of knowledge through in-class debate/discussion</td>
<td>analysis and synthesis of knowledge through mock UN debate/discussion</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Written Summary of Learning Activities/Strategies

HZT4U-CUP Lesson 1  Introduction to Social and Political Philosophy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Enduring Understandings/Curriculum Expectations</th>
<th>Time Commitment/Scheduling</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>HZT4U-V2a</td>
<td>1 class of 75 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HZT4U-V1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Resources

“A Ridiculously Brief Overview of Political Philosophy” Appendix 1
“For Richer” Appendix 2

Objective

Students will have an understanding of the issues and problems to be addressed in the unit.

Strategies

Socratic discussion - Focus Questions, Issues, Problems:

1) What gives a government authority over its citizens?
2) Why do states exist?
3) Is everyone equal?
4) Are there limits to individual freedom?
5) What are the distinctions between public and private morality?
6) Who decides what the best form of social/economic organization is?
7) What is the ultimate justification for any form of government?
8) What are the limits of a government’s power over individuals?
9) Should elected representatives be able to vote as they see fit or according to the wishes of their constituents?
10) Who makes the ideal type of governor or leader?
11) Who were the major philosophers of social and political thought?
12) What do you like about our current form of democracy?

13) Is wealth fair? If so, how much?

**Lecture: Modern political Spectrum**

1. To lay the foundations for students, the teacher provides a skeletal political spectrum as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Left</th>
<th>Centre</th>
<th>Right</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Communism</td>
<td>Socialism</td>
<td>Liberalism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(primary concern is the people)</td>
<td>(primary concern is for individual freedom)</td>
<td>(primary concern is for the group or the state)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
HZT4U-CUP Lesson 2  

**Setting up the context/problem**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Enduring Understandings/Curriculum Expectations</th>
<th>Time Commitment/Scheduling</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>HZT4U-V1</td>
<td>1 class of 75 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HZT4U-V2a</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HZT4U-V2e</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Resources**

*“Wealth distribution in the U.S.” Appendix 3*

*“Lifeboat Earth” Appendix 4*

*“All social and economic problems caused by an unfair distribution of wealth” Appendix 5*

*“What Should a Billionaire Give – and What Should You”? Appendix 6 (Enriched option)*

**Objective**

Students will have an understanding of some of the tangible issues and concerns that will be addressed in the unit.

**Strategies**

**Jigsaw**

Students will split into 4 groups. In their groups they will read and prepare a presentation on one of the assigned articles. During presentations the rest of the class will take notes.
Enduring Understandings/Curriculum Expectations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Enduring Understandings/Curriculum Expectations</th>
<th>Time Commitment/Scheduling</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>HZT4U-V2a</td>
<td>1 class of 75 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HZT4U-V2c</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Resources

100 pennies, oven mitts, work gloves, goggles smeared with Vaseline, a toy bucket and shovel

Objective

Students will understand how unjust distribution patterns can arise and how they affect individuals by creating economic injustices.

Students will address the following issues/questions:

- How do wealth and power affect one’s ability to enjoy human rights and human dignity?
- Can poor people really achieve human rights?
- Describe how you felt about the relative position you achieved in the activity?
- Are there responsibilities associated with having wealth and power?

Strategies

Activity – Penny Scramble for Wealth and Power

The distribution of wealth and power within society usually affects a person’s opportunities to achieve full human rights and live a life with dignity. This activity involves the distribution of wealth. It challenges participants to examine the concepts of “fairness” and “responsibility” and reflect on their own actions.

PROCEDURE

Note: Keep in mind the socioeconomic composition of your participant population. Guard against having this activity confirm the existing inequalities in wealth and power.

PART A: The Scramble

1. Explain to participants that in this activity they will distribute the wealth and power of the world among themselves. This wealth is represented by the 100 pennies. There is only one rule: no participant may touch another member of the group at any time.

2. Arrange the room so that participants have a fairly large area to play the game. Have participants stand or sit in a circle and scatter the pennies evenly in the middle of the circle. Withhold three
participants from this part of the activity. Distribute oven mitts, work gloves, goggles smeared with Vaseline, a toy bucket and shovel for some participants to use but postpone discussion of reasons for this until debriefing. **Note:** To emphasize that some start off with more than others, consider giving three or four participants five extra pennies to begin with as well as providing them with the special scooping shovels.

At the order of GO, have participants (except the three withheld) gather as many pennies as possible without touching one another. **Note:** Penalties for violations of this rule may be needed, such as removal from the game or payment to the person touched.

3. After all the pennies have been collected, have participants report their wealth to the class. Record participants’ names and number of pennies on a board or chart paper under three categories:

1) **GREAT WEALTH AND POWER** - (those with six or more pennies—the smallest group)

2) **SOME WEALTH AND POWER** (those with three to five pennies—the middle group)

3) **LITTLE WEALTH AND POWER** (those with two or fewer pennies—the largest group)

4. Remind the group that these pennies represent their wealth and power in the world. The amount they possess will affect their capacity to satisfy their needs (e.g., basic education, adequate food and nutrition, good health care, adequate housing) and wants (e.g. higher education, cars, computers, toys, television and other luxury items). Those participants with six or more pennies will have their basic “needs” and most of their “wants” met; those with three to five pennies will have their basic needs met, and those with two or fewer pennies will have difficulty surviving due to disease, lack of education, malnutrition, and inadequate shelter.

5. Tell participants that they may, if they wish, give pennies to others; however, they are not required to do so. Tell them that those who do share will be honored as “DONORS,” with their names placed on the board. Allow a few minutes for participants to redistribute the pennies if they wish. Then ask for the names of those who gave away pennies and the amount each gave. List them on the board or chart entitled “DONORS.” Ask if anyone changed category as a result of giving or receiving pennies and record these shifts on the chart.

6. Explain that some people in their country (and perhaps in their community) and in every country around the globe lack adequate necessities, such as food, education, health care, and shelter. Point out that others, often in the same community or country, are able to acquire almost everything they need and want.

**PART B: Creating Economic “Fairness”**

1. Divide participants into groups according to the number of pennies they have. Distribute those three participants withheld from the original "scramble" randomly among the different groups. Make note of their reactions to being placed in one group rather than another but save discussion of their placement until the debriefing session.

2. Give each group the task of creating a plan for the fair distribution of the pennies (the world’s wealth). Each group should prepare to: a) show why their plan is fair, b) explain what needs to be done (if
anything), and c) describe what the group plans to do and why. Give the groups ten minutes to devise their plans.

3. Ask each group to appoint a spokesperson to explain their plan to the others and answer questions. After the plans have been presented and discussed, announce that a vote will now be held on which plan to adopt.

4. When participants are ready to vote, announce the following: Participants with six or more pennies have five votes, those with three to five pennies have two votes, and those with two or fewer pennies have one-half vote. This strategy reinforces the fact that the distribution of power often reflects that of wealth.

Have participants vote and tabulate the results. Announce which plan is to be implemented. Carry out this plan, redistributing the wealth if necessary.

PART C: Debriefing the Activity

Note: Debriefing is an essential step in this process.

Draw on the following questions to promote a productive discussion. Be sure to devote time to a discussion of changes needed and changes undertaken.

- How did you feel about the way in which the pennies were acquired and distributed?
- Were you treated fairly?
- Did some people give pennies away? Did you give away or receive pennies? Why or why not? How did this feel?
- What determined whether or not people gave away pennies? Knowing what the pennies represented? Having one’s name displayed? Feeling guilty? Something else?
- What aspects of this game represented how the world’s wealth and power are distributed?
- What about the three participants assigned to groups? Were they fairly treated? Is what happened to them similar to what happens to people around the globe? What sorts of people? Is it just chance where we end up?
- What about the participants with mittens (and scooping shovels)? What kinds of people do the mittens (and scooping shovels) represent? What group did they end up in?
- How did the members of the different groups feel about their situation? Did the recommended plan for fair distribution reflect whether the group had more or fewer pennies?
- After playing this game do you have a better understanding of the situation or attitude of poor people/nations? Of the situation or attitude of wealthy people/nations?
- Why were some people given more votes than others? Was this an accurate representation of those with more or less power in the world?
- Who are the “haves” and the “have nots” in the world today? Which countries are the “haves” and the “have nots”? Who are the “haves” and “have nots” in our country today? In our state or community? Why?
- Should the “haves” be concerned about the situation of the “have nots”? For what reasons? economic? moral/religious? political? Why might the “haves” give money or resources to the “have nots”? Is this a way to solve the problems of poverty?
- What might the “have-nots” do to improve their situation? What are some actions that “have-nots” have taken around the globe and at home to address the inequalities of wealth and power?
• Do you think there should be a redistribution of wealth and power throughout the world? Why or why not? If yes, how would you propose to accomplish this? What principles would guide your proposals for change?

• Do you think there should be a redistribution of wealth and power in this country? Why or why not? If yes, how would you propose to accomplish this? What principles would guide your proposals for change?

Source: Written by Sherry Kempf and David Shiman, Center for World Education, University of Vermont. Adapted from S. Lamy, et al, Teaching Global Awareness with Simulations and Games, (Denver: Center for Teaching International Relations, University of Denver, 1994).
Enduring Understandings/Curriculum Expectations | Time Commitment/Scheduling
---|---
HZT4U-V2a | 1 class of 75 minutes

Resources

Passage from Plato’s *Apology*:

> How you, O Athenians, have been affected by my accusers, I cannot tell; but I know that they almost made me forget who I was—so persuasively did they speak; and yet they have hardly uttered a word of truth. But of the many falsehoods told by them, there was one which quite amazed;—I mean when they said that you should be upon your guard and not allow yourselves to be deceived by the force of my eloquence. To say this, when they were certain to be detected as soon as I opened my lips and proved myself to be anything but a great speaker, did indeed appear to me most shameless—unless by the force of eloquence they mean the force of truth; for if such is their meaning, I admit that I am eloquent. But in how different a way from theirs!

Analysis of Passage from Plato’s *Apology*

Socrates continued in his *Apology* to argue that an ideal life was to be virtuous, to not seek fame or fortune, to examine life, and to be wary of democracies. He died a secular martyr. His freely available resources of knowledge were a threat to the society as the knowledge that Socrates offered was contradictory to the knowledge of popular culture. Because the young were the primary consumers of this knowledge, their potential rewriting of their culture and subsequent changing of society was dangerous to those in society who aimed to preserve society.

Objective

Students will understand that Socrates was charged with impiety towards the gods—irreverence that corrupted the Athenian youth. Many of these youth were sons of the Athenian aristocracy.

Strategies

1. Teacher reads passage from Socrates’ *Apology*:

2. Teacher reads “Analysis of Passage from Socrates *Apology*”

3. Students discuss then orally answer in groups the following questions:
   - Do you think that Socrates’ fate was affected by his teaching aristocratic youth and not working-class youth?
• Are there any other examples of how people of a court’s prosecution charge teachers of corrupting youth? How has our idea of teachers’ corruption of youth changed from one that was philosophical to one that is physical?
• Would you have—given the circumstances—have delivered such an “apology” when you were charged with the same allegations of corruption?
• How has the idea of a martyr changed from one who dies for an idea to one who kills themselves and others for an idea?
Enduring Understandings/Curriculum Expectations

HZT4U-V2a

HZT4U-V2c

Time Commitment/Scheduling

2 classes of 75 minutes each

Resources

- Passage from Plato’s *Apology*
- “Analysis of Passage from Plato’s *Apology*”
- computers with word-processing software
- computers with access to online encyclopedia

Objective

Students will apply the concept of the power of knowledge in a society.

Strategies

1. Have students design a court trial in which a modern teacher of the West is accused of corrupting the youth. The design must include a transcript of the trial and a drama in which the events of the transcript is performed for the class.
## Analyzing Knowledge of Socrates

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Enduring Understandings/Curriculum Expectations</th>
<th>Time Commitment/Scheduling</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>HZT4U-V2a</td>
<td>2 classes of 75 minutes each</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HZT4U-V2c</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HZT4U-V2d</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Resources

- transcript of trial of a drama in which a modern teacher is accused of corrupting the youth

### Objective

Students will analyze the concept of the power of knowledge in a society.

### Strategies

1. Have students use the same strategy as in Lesson 2 to compare how the same modern teacher (who was presented by another group: not the one whom students as a group chose) would be charged and tried in an ancient setting.
### Enduring Understandings/Curriculum Expectations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Resources</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
|• transparency outline of “Utopia of Plato’s *The Republic*”:

1. democracy killed the great philosopher and his teacher, Socrates
2. every individual needs to be a part of society or the “state”
3. every individual needs to contribute to the state
4. every individual is a member of a class
   a. philosophers rule the state
   b. warriors protect the state
   c. producers serve the state
5. children should be raised by the state |

### Time Commitment/Scheduling

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>HZT4U-V2a</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 class of 75 minutes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Objective

Students will comprehend the concept of the power of applying knowledge in a society.

### Strategies

1. Teacher allows students to read and to discuss as a whole class the ideas from “Utopia of Plato’s *Republic*.

2. Students discuss then orally answer in groups the following questions:
   - How is Plato’s Utopia as written in the *Republic* a socialist republic?
   - Why is this Utopia un-democratic, even anti-democratic?
Enduring Understandings/Curriculum Expectations | Time Commitment/Scheduling
--- | ---
HZT4U-V2a | 2 classes of 75 minutes each
HZT4U-V2c |  

Resources

- transparency outline of “Utopia of Plato’s Republic”
- computers with access to online provincial governmental websites

Objective

Students will apply the concept of the power of applying knowledge in a society.

Strategies

1. Students in groups will assume the roles of a private corporation who are presenting their business proposal to the provincial government of Ontario.

2. Students will assume that the government has allowed private companies to view for a lucrative contract that would award the successful bid to construct and manage a private school (and—possibly—a chain of schools if deemed successful by taxpayers) that exemplifies the philosophy of Plato’s The Republic.
Enduring Understandings/Curriculum Expectations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Enduring Understandings/Curriculum Expectations</th>
<th>Time Commitment/Scheduling</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>HZT4U-V2a</td>
<td>2 classes of 75 minutes each</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HZT4U-V2c</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HZT4U-V2d</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Resources

- transparency outline of “Utopia of Plato’s The Republic”
- computers with access to online provincial governmental websites
- chart paper
- markers
- masking tape

Objective

Students will analyze the concept of the power of applying knowledge in a society.

Strategies

1. Students compare and contrast Plato’s Utopia with Canada’s constitutional monarchy using a “T-Table” style graphic organizer written on chart paper
2. Students post their analyses around the perimeter of the class
3. Teacher leads a discussion of the ideas of the groups.
Enduring Understandings/Curriculum Expectations

HZT4U-V2a

Time Commitment/Scheduling

1 classes of 75 minutes

Resources

- either chalkboard notes or transparency of “Aristotle’s Analysis”:

Aristotle—who was Plato’s student—disagreed with his teacher’s concept of Forms. Plato understood Forms to be the stuff of which everything was made—only that they as separate ideas existed in another dimension. Aristotle revised Forms to be Universals, which could be perceived by everybody in this dimension. Aristotle also practiced syllogistic logic by which two irrefutable truths (i.e., “axioms”) are related to form a third axiom. An example of this syllogistic logic might read, “All men are mortal. I am a man; therefore, I am mortal.”

Aristotle’s logic allowed him to acknowledge that man was composed of both material and spiritual matter. He believed that slavery was an acceptable social convention, but that usury (i.e., lending money that was to be repaid with interest) was not. Aristotle believed that the best forms of government were monarchy, aristocracy, and constitutional monarchy—but that the first could degenerate into tyranny, the second into oligarchy, and the third democracy.

Objective

Students will comprehend the concept of the power of analyzing knowledge.

Strategies

1. Teacher shares and discusses “Aristotle’s Analysis” with class.

2. Students discuss then orally answer in groups the following questions:

   - How is Aristotle’s assertion that “man was composed of both material and spiritual matter” a hindrance to scientific theory that we know today?
   - Why would Aristotle for example suggest that constitutional monarchy might “degenerate” into democracy: if our society idealizes democracy, how can this discrepancy between ancient and modern value be reconciled?
Applying Knowledge of Aristotle

Enduring Understandings/Curriculum Expectations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Resources</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>chalkboard notes or transparency of “Aristotle’s Analysis”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>chart paper</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>markers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>masking tape</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Objective

Students will apply the concept of the power of analyzing knowledge.

Strategies

1. Students prepare in small groups on chart paper lists of examples of syllogistic logic that apply to our modern societies.

2. Teacher shares the following example, “A society as a computer runs its system software through culture. A multicultural society runs several versions of system software. A multicultural society is susceptible to system crashes.”

3. Teacher leads a discussion of the students’ notes.
Enduring Understandings/Curriculum Expectations | Time Commitment/Scheduling
---|---
HZT4U-V2a | 2 classes of 75 minutes each
HZT4U-V2c
HZT4U-V2d

Resources

- chalkboard notes or transparency of “Aristotle’s Analysis”
- chart paper
- markers
- masking tape

Objective

Students will analyze the concept of the power of analyzing knowledge.

Strategies

1. Students in small groups on chart paper compare and contrast in a Venn diagram the philosophical tenets of Plato and Aristotle.

2. Teacher leads a discussion of the students’ notes.
Enduring Understandings/Curriculum Expectations          Time Commitment/Scheduling

HZT4U-V2                                                  4 classes of 75 minutes each
HZT4U-V2z
HZT4U-V2b
HZT4U-V2c
HZT4U-V2d

Resources

• “Analysis of Passage from Plato’s *Apology*”
• transparency outline of “Utopia of Plato’s *The Republic*”
• chalkboard notes or transparency of “Aristotle’s Analysis”
• computers with access to encyclopedic software
• computers with access to historical research databases
• student textbooks with information on European exploitation of North American resources
• individual rubrics (*Figure 1*)
• workbooks to serve as RESEARCH JOURNALS

Objective

Students will synthesize the knowledge of how knowledge

• is a social resource (and as such may be exploited like any other resource),
• may be distributed along discrete and exclusionary networks, allowing some in society to monopolize knowledge, and
• whose analysis is permissible only when the society is free.

As inspiration for this task, we borrowed the concepts of students’ appreciation of European explorers’ impact on the Americas and students’ assumption of roles of geographers (who are commissioned by a government to report on regions of the society) from Tomlinson and Eidson (2003:62-95, 96-114). Students will be able to synthesize their understanding of the knowledge of philosophical argumentation that was comprehended, applied, and analyzed in the SUBTASKS of this UNIT. This synthesis of knowledge will be a RESEARCH DRAMA through which students as Europeans argue philosophically how to react to the wealth of resources in the Americas of the New World. It will depend upon students’ comprehension of the philosophies of early, middle, and late socio-economic philosophers, the cultural,
economic, and political elements of their assigned New World society, and their ability to synthesize knowledge in one context with that of another.

**Resources**


**Strategies**

1. Students will be encouraged to research the history of the assigned region of the Americas in their individual RESEARCH JOURNEYS.

2. Students will be encouraged to use philosophical arguments to defend their decisions in their group RESEARCH DRAMA.

3. Students prepare a RESEARCH DRAMA by electing their own members to assume the roles of either GEOGRAPHERS or GOVERNMENT; regardless, all students

   i) individually record information about their “raget” New World society in their RESEARCH JOURNEYS and

   ii) participate in the RESEARCH DRAMA through which they may exercise their knowledge of philosophy when discussing to what degree virgin New World resources are taken.

4. Students will be divided into three main task groups:

   i) one that assumes the roles of FRENCH GEOGRAPHERS (i.e., explorers) and the government representatives of the *English government*,

   ii) a second that assumes the roles of BRITISH GEOGRAPHERS and the government representatives of the *French government*, and

   iii) a third that assumes the roles of SPANISH GEOGRAPHERS (i.e., explorers) and the government representatives of the *Spanish government*.

5. Students who assume the roles of GEOGRAPHERS will assume the specialist roles of members of PHYSICAL GEOGRAPHY research teams, CULTURAL GEOGRAPHY research teams, and ECONOMIC GEOGRAPHY teams.
6. The GEOGRAPHERS must research the CULTURE (i.e., language, art, customs, etc.), ECONOMICS (i.e., the trading of resources), and the POLITICS (i.e., the management of the aforementioned culture of the society) then use philosophical arguments to their superiors (i.e., representatives of the government of the “mother” or European country) to justify one of four endeavors.

7. The task group that assumes the roles of English explorers should be encouraged to build knowledge through recording in a RESEARCH JOURNAL the basic facts of the explorations of Giovanni da Verrazzano, Jacques Cartier, Samuel de Champlain, Robert La Salle, and Louis Joliet. These students would assume the roles of physical geographer, cultural geographer, and economic geographer. They would in their RESEARCH JOURNALS have the physical (i.e., list of resources), cultural (i.e., social division of First Nations into languages and clans), and economic (i.e., what trade systems existed between the First Nations before contact with the Europeans) facts in preparation for the drama. They would in the RESEARCH DRAMA present their findings to the government representatives (listed below) and the resulting discussion would synthesize the philosophical arguments of the SUBTASKS with the facts of French interest in the upper St. Lawrence River valley and Hudson Bay. The teacher may decide whether—if student numbers permit—to have one student assume each of these aforementioned roles of explores, to have one student assume more than one role, or to have several students assume one role. The other students in the group may choose to assume the roles of the French government, comprising roles of either Louis XIII or Louis XIV, Cardinal Laval, Intendent Talon, and Governor Comte de Frontenac.

8. The task group that assumes the roles of English explorers should be encouraged to build knowledge through recording in a RESEARCH JOURNAL the basic facts of the relationship between the Virginia Company of London and the Jamestown colony. Students who would eventually assume the roles of the geographers could research the personalities of William Bradford, Mary Dyer, Anne Hutchinson, John Smith, Edward Winslow, George Calvert, Thomas Hooker, William Penn, Roger Williams, Sir Francis Drake and the Sea Dogs, or John Winthrop. They would research the basic physical, cultural, and economic facts of the lower St. Lawrence River Valley and northeastern seaboard. Students who will eventually assume the roles of the representatives of the British Crown could research the personalities of Elizabeth I and Sir Walter Raleigh.

9. The task group that assumes the roles of Spanish conquistadors should be encouraged to build knowledge through recording in a RESEARCH JOURNAL the basic facts of Spanish “foothold in the Americas” with their presence in Mexico and Peru, with the knowledge of Spanish conquistadors like Juan Ponce de Leon, Cabeza de Vaca, Hernando de Soto, and Francisco Vasquez de Coronado.

10. We hope to allow students to recreate history by assuming the roles of Europeans who may choose in their RESEARCH DRAMA to use the philosophical arguments of their SUBTASKS to

   i) completely conquer a new land by hoarding its resources and subjugating its people,
ii) dominate a new land by establishing hegemonic social networks to control the resources and cultural networks to ensure indigenous inhabitants’ compliance with such,

iii) contribute to the collaborative exploitation of the resources by integrating their culture with that of the indigenous peoples to create a multicultural utopia,

iv) leave the new continent altogether upon understanding the breadth and depth of differences between their society and the one that they could possibly destroy.
Figure 1: Culminating Unit Plan Rubric to Assess Student Performance of...

“us[ing] critical and logical thinking skills to develop and defend their own ideas about some of the major questions of social and political philosophy, and to anticipate counter-arguments to them.”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>criteria</th>
<th>level 1 (50%-59%)</th>
<th>level 2 (60%-69%)</th>
<th>level 3 (70%-79%)</th>
<th>level 4 (80%-100%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>comprehension</td>
<td>with difficulty, describes philosophical knowledge with incomplete answers to questions like, “How?” and “Why?”</td>
<td>with little difficulty, describes philosophical knowledge with partial answers to questions like, “How?” and “Why?”</td>
<td>describes philosophical knowledge with answers to questions like, “How?” and “Why?”</td>
<td>easily and independently describes philosophical knowledge with in-depth answers to questions like, “How?” and “Why?”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>application</td>
<td>applies limited philosophical knowledge to inadequately solve a problem</td>
<td>applies some philosophical knowledge to adequately solve a problem</td>
<td>applies philosophical knowledge to solve a problem</td>
<td>applies in-depth philosophical knowledge to solve a problem</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>analysis</td>
<td>analyses limited philosophical knowledge by comparing and contrasting it—with assistance—to other knowledge</td>
<td>analyses some philosophical knowledge by comparing and contrasting it—with some assistance—to other knowledge</td>
<td>analyses philosophical knowledge by comparing and contrasting it with other knowledge</td>
<td>analyses in-depth philosophical knowledge by creatively and intuitively comparing and contrasting it with other knowledge</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Confucius

**Enduring Understandings/Curriculum Expectations**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Resources</th>
<th>Time Commitment/Scheduling</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>HZT4U-V2</td>
<td>1 class of 75 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HZT4U-V2b</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Resources

- Appendix 7 Confucius

### Objective

Students will understand and evaluate the role and impact of Confucius/Mencius on Western political and social philosophy.

### Strategies

Students will read and discuss Confucius handout (Appendix 7). They will form groups and then split off from those groups to form 3 expert groups:

1. Confucius' Social Philosophy
2. Confucius' Political Philosophy
3. Confucius and Education

They will then reform their original groups and lead discussions on what they have learned.
Resources

- transparency or chalkboard notes on Hobbes’ *Leviathan*:

Thomas Hobbes work entitled *The Leviathan* describes a society without order as being prone to social collapse. Only a strong ruler could help to hold society together. God seemed to name monarchs (i.e., kings, queens, royal peerage, etc.) as those in society must suited to this role, but this was their “Divine Right.” Because life was “nasty, brutish, and short,” Hobbes felt that a *social contract* through which rules used collective mandate to rule. Dictatorship was one system of social control that Hobbes believed could wrangle the animals of society.

All humans were instinctively selfish. Harming your fellow citizens to achieve happiness and progress was a necessary evil. There was no such thing as altruism because—even when people committed acts of charity—everybody is out for themselves. Society was a savage anarchy without equally brutish politicians; with them, life was still at the expense of your neighbor and friend.

Objective

*Students will comprehend power of a “social contract.”*

Strategies

The teacher encourages students to discuss in small groups the following question, “Who has used dictatorships in history to control individuals? Where have these tyrannies succeeded? When have these totalitarian states failed to control its citizenry?”
John Locke felt that all knowledge was through experience. He dismissed the concept of innate ideas as related by the Rationalists like Descartes. Rights like “life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness” are to be gained through conflict: they are not ordained by societies.

Capitalism is an economic system that would fit perfectly into Locke’s ideal society. Providing goods and services in society for profit is the ideal economic basis in society. Locke’s own social contract holds that the government of a society has a special obligation to protect rights of individuals. The revolutionaries of the American War of Independence and the later French Revolution used Locke’s principles to effect social change.

Students will apply the concept of a “social contract.”

The teacher has students either argue for Hobbes’ social contract or for Locke’s social contract.

Students can be on whatever side that they choose, but it might be a good idea for the teacher to arbitrarily assign them to a role.

The in-class debate or argument centers on a hypothetical scenario in which the fantastic resource of H2X has been discovered. H2X is a freely available, geographically widespread, cleanly burning, and non-toxic compound that is made from cities’ sewage; however, only scientists of the West know the secret of combining the elements of cities’ sewage to form H2X.
4. Students who are arguing from the point of view of Hobbes should be guided by the teacher to understand the social contract as the only means through which society can save itself from individuals.

5. Students who are arguing from the point of Hobbes should be guided by the teacher to understand the social contract as the only means through which the individual can save herself from society.
HZT4U-CUP Lesson 26 - 27  
Analyzing Knowledge of Rousseau

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Expectations</th>
<th>Time Commitment/Scheduling</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>HZT4U-V2a</td>
<td>2 classes of 75 minutes each</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HZT4U-V2c</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HZT4U-V2d</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Resources

- photocopied notes from Rousseau’s *Discourse on the Origin and Foundation of Inequality of Mankind*:
  
  Jean Jacques Rousseau believed that politeness tended to degrade society, especially a society’s politics and culture. The so-called “primitive” people of the world and their corresponding “simple” societies were superior to “civilized” societies.

- transparencies that reproduce passages from Rousseau’s *The Social Contract*:
  
  Rousseau introduces his *Contract* with, “Man is born free, yet everywhere he is in chains.” Men were born as equals and are all entitled by societies to certain inalienable rights. Some of Rousseau’s readers believe that Rousseau with this remark endorses totalitarian societies.

- computers with access to the Internet
- chart paper
- markers

Objective

Students will analyze the concept of a “social contract.”

Strategies

1. The teacher asks students to read from Rousseau’s *Discourse on the Origin and Foundation of Inequality of Mankind* and *The Social Contract*.

2. Students then discuss in small groups examples of how people have tended to view The Other in any society that is structured differently than theirs.
3. The teacher leads a whole-class discussion around the exploration of how many of the societies that they discussed use military might to physically structure this abstract notion.

4. Students may research using the Internet historical cases of invasion and occupation.

5. Students discuss in their small groups and record their ideas on chart paper using a concept map, analyzing how certain inalienable rights become the basis for war.
Enduring Understandings/Curriculum Expectations

HZT4U-V2

Time Commitment/Scheduling

1 class of 75 minutes

HZT4U-V2b

HZT4U-V2d

Resources


Appendix 8 - John Stuart Mill

Objective

Students will have an understanding of Mill and of how utilitarianism has been influential.

Strategies

After listening to the broadcast on Mill, and studying the reading, answer the following questions:

1. How did Mill's utilitarian background shape his political ideas?
2. Why did he think Romantic literature was significant to the rational structure of society?
3. On what grounds did he argue for women's equality?
4. How did his notions of the individual become central to modern social theory?
5. What is the difference between rule and act utilitarianism?
**Enduring Understandings/Curriculum Expectations**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Resources</th>
<th>Time Commitment/Scheduling</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>HZT4U-V2</td>
<td>1 class of 75 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HZT4U-V2b</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HZT4U-V2d</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Resources**

Appendix 8 – Karl Marx

**Objective**

Students will understand Marxism and see how Marx argued that Socialism and then Communism were the natural outcome of Capitalism.

**Strategies**

Students will read the article on Marxism and then the teacher will lead a discussion on Marxism.
**Enduring Understandings/Curriculum Expectations**

- HZT4U-V2

**Time Commitment/Scheduling**

- 1 class of 75 minutes

**Resources**

- Appendix 9 – John Rawls

**Objective**

Students will understand and explain why John Rawls believes that the redistribution of wealth is justified.

**Strategies**

Students will adopt Rawls’ original position (the Veil of Ignorance) and determine for themselves what principles of justice they would adopt. They will compare them with the principles that Rawls has suggested.

Students will read and discuss the article on Rawls.

Students will examine a current example of what Rawls is trying to address [www.fairtrade.org.uk](http://www.fairtrade.org.uk).
Enduring Understandings/Curriculum Expectations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>HZT4U-V2</th>
<th>1 class of 75 minutes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>HZT4U-V2b</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HZT4U-V2d</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Resources

Appendix 10 – Robert Nozick

Objective

The students will understand of Nozick and his theory of libertarian distribution. As well, they will compare, contrast and debate that position to that of John Rawls.

Strategies

Following the reading of the article on Nozick, students will discuss and explain how Nozick answered these questions:

1. how things not previously possessed by anyone may be acquired;
2. how possession may be transferred from one person to another; and
3. what must be done to rectify injustices arising from violations of (1) and (2).

The teacher will lead a discussion on Nozick’s example: The "Wilt Chamberlain" Argument with an aim to having the students decide if it is indeed a just distribution of wealth.

They will then debate with one side taking the Rawlsian position and the other side that of Nozick.
### Major Assessment Task (Culminating Activity) of the Unit

HZT4U-CUP Summative Task  
*Synthesizing Knowledge of Later Philosophers with Social Dilemmas*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Expectations</th>
<th>Time Commitment/Scheduling</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>HZT4U-V2</td>
<td>4 lessons of 75 minutes each</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HZT4U-V2a</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HZT4U-V2b</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HZT4U-V2c</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HZT4U-V2d</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Resources**

  
  The Somali Civil War
  
  By 1978, the moral authority of the Somali government had collapsed. Many Somalis had become disillusioned with life under military dictatorship and the regime was weakened further in the 1980s as the Cold War drew to a close and Somalia's strategic importance was diminished. The government became increasingly totalitarian, and resistance movements, encouraged by Ethiopia, sprang up across the country, eventually leading to the Somali Civil War.

  
  1991 saw great changes in Somalia. President Barre was ousted by southern warlords. And following a referendum the northern portion of the country declared its
independence as Somaliland; although de facto independent and relatively stable compared to the tumultuous south, it has not been recognized by any foreign government.

The same year, President Ali Mahdi Muhammad was not accepted as leader by warlord General Mohamed Farrah Aidid, and a split in the southern United Somali Congress, which had led efforts to unseat Barre, caused an escalation in violence, especially in the Mogadishu area.

The civil war disrupted agriculture and food distribution in southern Somalia. The basis of most of the conflicts was clan allegiances and competition for resources between the warring clans. James Bishop, the United States last ambassador to Somalia, explained that there is "competition for water, pasturage, and... cattle. It is a competition that used to be fought out with arrows and sabers... Now it is fought out with AK-47s." The resulting famine caused the United Nations Security Council in 1992 to authorize the limited peacekeeping operation United Nations Operation in Somalia I (UNOSOM I). UNOSOM's use of force was limited to self-defense and it was soon disregarded by the warring factions. In reaction to the continued violence and the humanitarian disaster, the United States organized a military coalition with the purpose of creating a secure environment in southern Somalia for the conduct of humanitarian operations. This coalition, (Unified Task Force or UNITAF) entered Somalia in December 1992 on Operation Restore Hope and was successful in restoring order and alleviating the famine. In May 1993, most of the United States troops withdrew and UNITAF was replaced by the United Nations Operation in Somalia II (UNOSOM II).

However, Aidid saw UNOSOM II as a threat to his power and in June 1993 his militia attacked Pakistan Army troops, attached to UNOSOM II, (see Somalia (March 1992 to February 1996)) in Mogadishu inflicting over 80 casualties. Fighting escalated until 18 American troops and more than 1,000 Somalis were killed in a raid in Mogadishu during October 1993. The UN withdrew Operation United Shield in 3 March 1995, having suffered significant casualties, and with the rule of government still not restored.

In June 1996, Mohamed Farrah Aidid was killed in Mogadishu.
Background [of United Nations Operation in Somalia]

Following the eruption and escalation of the civil war in Somalia in 1991, the UN and the Organization of African Unity (OAU) strived to abate the suffering that was caused as a result of the high-intensity conflict. Of the Somali population of 4.5 million people, over half were in severe danger of starvation and malnutrition-related disease, mostly in the drought-stricken rural areas. Another 1.5 million were judged at moderate risk of malnutrition. Three hundred thousand people died outright in the early months of 1992 and another million fled the country as refugees.

The UN was engaged in Somalia from early in 1991 when the civil strife began. UN personnel were withdrawn on several occasions during sporadic flare-ups of violence. A series of Security Council resolutions (733, 746) and diplomatic visits eventually helped impose a ceasefire between the two key factions, signed at the end of March 1992. These efforts were aided by other international bodies, such as the Organization for African Unity, the League of Arab States and the Organization of the Islamic Conference.

Creation of UNOSOM I

The UN, with the active support of all rebel faction leaders, felt that some sort of peacekeeping force would be required to uphold the ceasefire and assist the humanitarian relief effort, in conjunction with other relief agencies and NGOs. By the end of April 1992, the Security Council adopted resolution 751. This provided for the establishment of a security force of 50 UN troops in Somalia to monitor the ceasefire. This detachment would be known as the United Nations Operation in Somalia (UNOSOM) and it existed at the consent of those parties who had been represented in the ceasefire. The resolution also allowed for an expansion of the security force, with a number of around 500 troops initially discussed. The first group of ceasefire observers arrived in Mogadishu in early July 1992.

Ineffectiveness of UNOSOM I
Despite the UN’s efforts, all over Somalia the ceasefire was ignored, fighting continued, and continued to increase, putting the relief operations at great risk. The main parties to the ceasefire, General Mohamed Farrah Aidid and "President" Ali Mahdi Muhammad, once again showing the difficult and troubled relations between the warlords, proved to be difficult negotiating partners and continually frustrated attempts to move the peacekeepers and supplies. In August of 1992 the Security Council endorsed the sending of another 3,000 troops to the region to protect relief efforts. However, most of these troops were never sent.

Over the final quarter of 1992, the situation in Somalia continued to get worse. Factions in Somalia were splintering into smaller factions and splintering again. Agreements for food distribution with one party were worthless when the stores had to be shipped through the territory of another. Some elements were actively opposing the UNOSOM intervention. Troops were shot at, aid ships attacked and prevented from docking, cargo aircraft were fired upon and aid agencies, public and private, were subject to threats, robbery and extortion. Meanwhile, hundreds, if not thousands of poverty stricken refugees were starving to death every day.

By November 1992, General Mohamed Farrah Aidid had grown confident enough to formally defy the Security Council and demand the withdrawal of peace keepers, as well as declaring hostile intent against any further UN deployments.

Transition to UNITAF and UNOSOM II

In November of 1992, the United States of America offered to establish a multinational force under its own leadership to secure the humanitarian operation. This offer was accepted by the Security Council, and what became known as the Unified Task Force (UNITAF) was authorized to utilize "all necessary means" to ensure the protection of the relief efforts. Accordingly, the Security Council suspended any further significant strengthening of UNOSOM as UN affairs in Somalia were subsumed by UNITAF (also known to Americans as Operation Restore Hope). With only a handful of the 3,000 plus troops envisaged for UNOSOM ever put in place, the Security Council left it to “the discretion of the Secretary General” as to what should be done with the abortive mission.
UNITAF was comprised of forces from 24 different countries, with the vast bulk contributed by the United States. UNITAF soon secured the relief operations which were being coordinated and carried out by UNOSOM, which was also attempting to negotiate a political end to the conflict. Indeed, although UNOSOM had been replaced by UNITAF, it was technically still in operation and would remain ready to resume its function when UNITAF had met its goals of creating a secure environment for humanitarian relief.

The Secretary-General convened a meeting in early 1993 in which 14 important Somalia political and rebel factions agreed to hand over all of their weapons to UNITAF and UNOSOM, and over $130 million was pledged by donors at an aid conference that year to assist in reconstruction. However, Somalia continued the stumble, and in March the UN decided to transform the UNITAF mission into what came to be known as UNOSOM II. The mandate of UNOSOM II stipulated that the operation was to secure continued relief efforts and, more significantly, to restore peace and rebuild the Somali state and economy.

Statistics

In the few months of its operation, 54 military observers and 893 military personnel served with UNOSOM I, supported by international civilian and local staff. The mission suffered six fatalities. Contributing nations were: Australia, Austria, Bangladesh, Belgium, Canada, Czechoslovakia, Egypt, Fiji, Finland, Indonesia, Jordan, Morocco, New Zealand, Norway, Pakistan and Zimbabwe.

- chart paper
- markers
Objective

Students will comprehend, apply, and analyze the immense difficulty in one resource-rich society’s will of restoring order in a resource-poor society. They will examine the society of Somalia in the 1990s and the United Nations’ attempt through its smaller social group the United Nations Operation in Somalia or “UNOSOM” to transfer resources to the people of Somalia. Students will further analyze the complexity of one society’s splintering into two satellite societies in order to help another as they comprehend and apply the ideas of the UN’s decision to complement UNOSOM with UNITAF (i.e., “United Task Force” or “Operation: Restore Hope”).

Strategies

1. The teacher leads a group reading or alternatively has students in small groups read the two passages entitled “The Somali Civil War” and “Background [of United Nations operation in Somalia].”

2. The teacher asks some general comprehension questions like,

   “Who is responsible for the social disintegration in Somalia in the 1990s?”

   “What social groups were summoned and created to help the society of Somalia?”

   “What ‘social contract’ might exist between the many nation of the UN...between the UN and Somalia?”

   “Where are the locations of the two societies of the UN and Somalia?”

   “When elsewhere in history has one society that is rich in resources allocated a share of its resources to another society that is poor in resources?”

   These questions are broad in scope but their being answered involves some narrow conclusions.

3. Students are divided into four (4) comprehension task groups:
1) the first will comprehend the concept by listing on chart paper all of the relevant facts about Somalia (i.e., its history, resources, conflict, wars, etc.),

2) the second will comprehend the concept by listing on chart paper all of the relevant details about the United Nations (i.e., how it was formed from Wilson’s *The League of Nations*, permanent members, inability to resolve Iraq issue, etc.)

3) the third will comprehend the concept by listing on chart paper of the relevant statistics about the United Nations Operation in Somalia, and

4) the fourth will comprehend the concept by listing on chart paper all of the relevant ideas of the United Task Force/Operation: Restore Hope.

4. The teacher will allow for *application* of knowledge by leading a discussion in turn of all of the points that are listed on each of the four (4) sheets of chart paper. One conclusion that could be reached is by discussing the wealth of the United Nations, “How was the UN formed? From where does its material and psychological wealth spring?” Another conclusion could be attained by asking, “How did Somalia degenerate to such a degree that its people needed direct assistance with distribution of resources from a foreign society like the UN?” A third conclusion is found by discussing, “How did the situation in Somalia warrant special intervention from the splinter social group UNOSOM of the UN?” A fourth conclusion is gleaned from discussing, “How is the UNITAF or Operation: Restore Hope’s mandate similar and different to relief efforts in modern Iraq?”

5. Students will then analyze and synthesize knowledge by assuming the dramatic roles of the social groups whose knowledge they’ve comprehended and applied. The teacher coordinates a structured, research debate through which the four groups

1. Somalis (i.e., Somalian general population and Somali warlords),

2. the UN (i.e., particularly the US).

3. UNOSOM, and

4. UNITAF/Operation: Restore Hope

debate and discuss the best philosophy of moving and allocating much needed resources of

a) safety,
b) food,

c) water,

d) medicine,

e) supplies, and

f) sustainable infrastructure support from the wealthy society to the UN to a poor society like Somalia.

6. The teacher may again use Figure 1 to assess students’ performance.

---

Ph: Questions and Theories (HZT4U)

Social and Political Philosophy

Figure 1: Culminating Unit Plan Rubric to Assess Student Performance of...
“us[ing] critical and logical thinking skills to develop and defend their own ideas about some of the major questions of social and political philosophy, and to anticipate counter-arguments to them.”

| criteria       | level 1 (50%-59%)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 | level 2 (60%-69%)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 | level 3 (70%-79%)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 | level 4 (80%-100%)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
|----------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| comprehension  | with difficulty, describes philosophical knowledge with incomplete answers to questions like, “How?” and “Why?”                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       | with little difficulty, describes philosophical knowledge with partial answers to questions like, “How?” and “Why?”                                                                                                                                                                                                                               | describes philosophical knowledge with answers to questions like, “How?” and “Why?”                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 | easily and independently describes philosophical knowledge with in-depth answers to questions like, “How?” and “Why?”                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| application    | applies limited philosophical knowledge to inadequately solve a problem                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         | applies some philosophical knowledge to adequately solve a problem                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         | applies philosophical knowledge to solve a problem                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         | applies in-depth philosophical knowledge to solve a problem                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| analysis       | analyses limited philosophical knowledge by comparing and contrasting it—with some assistance—to other knowledge                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       | analyses some philosophical knowledge by comparing and contrasting it—with some assistance—to other knowledge                                                                                                                                                                                                                               | analyses philosophical knowledge by comparing and contrasting it with other knowledge                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 | analyses in-depth philosophical knowledge by creatively and intuitively comparing and contrasting it with other knowledge                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |


I appreciate the opportunity to work with contemporary issues of our society. Working to produce an authentic work helps others to benefit from our experience, as we benefit from their work. Using an online forum encourages free exchange of ideas—not only in the construction of the work, but also in the analysis of the work. I feel especially honored to be in such company of teachers of whom I ask daily—sometimes hourly—to respond to my concerns when they are managing their own concerns and that of their students. Thank you.

Working from the idea that 10% or so of the world’s population controls 80-90% of the wealth, it was important to attempt to see other ways of slicing up the pie. The goal was to arm the students with ideas and systems of thought that would give them the tools to discuss wealth and resource sharing. Hopefully they’d become both aware of what the problem is and of possible solutions.
A Ridiculously Brief Overview of Political Philosophy

A five-minute tour of some political thinkers and ideas by Anja Steinbauer.

Aristotle (384-322 B.C.), one of the greatest political thinkers of the Western tradition, declared that “man is by nature a political animal.” However, there is a tension between two forces which move us; the Greeks termed them ethos – morality and kratos – power. Is doing the politically prudent thing compatible with doing the moral thing? Aristotle, like Confucius (551-471 B.C.) much further east, believed in the continuity between moral character and political interests. And although he believed politics as well as morality to be based on knowledge Plato (427-347 B.C.) held that engaging in politics requires much specialised training, and that only an educated and morally accomplished elite could achieve political competence. Niccolo Machiavelli (1469-1527) finally drove a wedge between the unequal siblings of politics and virtue: A statesman should only be concerned with being powerful, not with being kind or good.

Why have politics at all? Given the many disadvantages which have accompanied political organisation throughout history – such as oppression, conflict and unhappy compromises – would human relationships not acquire a more genuine and superior quality without the mechanisms of politics? The Chinese philosopher Laozi (6th Century B.C.?) had early suggested that the best and most sustainable way for human beings to live together was in small communities with a minimum of political interference. Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712-78) believed the noble savage to be superior to humans formed by civilisation. Several theories contrasting the state of nature (a hypothetical state of affairs marked by the absence of politics) with political states, however, come to the conclusion that political structure is absolutely necessary for successful human flourishing. John Locke (1632-1704) argued that only in a political state would private property be protected. While Locke was a political voluntarist, stating that a government can only have powers over a person who tacitly or expressly consents, Thomas Hobbes (1588-1679) believed that political power could be legitimately acquired by force as well as by consent. This conviction was based on the assumption that, due to human beings’ innate selfishness, a state of nature would be marked by “war of everyone against everyone.” It is therefore rational to accept the dominance of a powerful political leader, a leviathan, who can protect his subjects and uphold the law.

Since only very few of us find the prospect of an allpowerful leviathan attractive, the question remains, which is the best way of organising ourselves politically? The answer which seems most popular today took a long time to reemerge. But despite Plato’s warning that “democracy passes into despotism,” thinkers of the 18th and 19th centuries enthusiastically engaged in debate on democracy. One of the most eloquent writers on the subject remains Rousseau, who believed that the general will could best be addressed in a system of direct (rather than representative) democracy. However, Rousseau was pessimistic about the chances of implementing such an arrangement in society: “Were there a people of gods, their government would be democratic. So perfect a government is not for men.”

As we all know, this did not stop the spread of democratic ideals. And so we find Alexis de Tocqueville (1805-59), a young French judge and liberal thinker, reporting on his oneyear visit to America: “Society has been set in motion, and daily leads people further towards equality of conditions.” However, he also observes: “what repels me most about America is how little concern there is about tyranny.”
This tyranny he feared was that of the majority dominating minorities, a worry that Tocqueville shared with his friend John Stuart Mill (1806-73). Mill wrote his On Liberty as a reflection on how the autonomous space of the individual might be safeguarded from the domination of the majority.

The tensions foreshadowed in the above writings mark contemporary political theory. Another tension is that between liberalism and communitarianism; between the concern for the individual and that for the needs of society. After a crisis in political theorising following the second world war, new inspiration came to the field with two events that took place in 1972. Firstly, a new forum for political debate, the journal Philosophy and Public Affairs was founded and, most significantly, John Rawls (1921-2002) published his Theory of Justice. Rawls argues that in a hypothetical situation of equality and ignorance of their individual social positions and preferences, people discussing the organisation of their society would agree on three fundamental principles: the greatest possible extent of certain civil liberties for all; equality of opportunity for all; and provision for the least advantaged members of society. The last principle refers to the difficult question of redistribution of wealth and of egalitarianism. Libertarian philosopher Robert Nozick (1938-2002) argued in favour of a minimal state, restricted to the defence of the individual against force: On the basis of self-ownership, Nozick argues that individuals have rights not to suffer aggression, and not to have to do anything for themselves or others. He therefore regards taxation for the purpose of redistribution, advocated by Rawls and some egalitarian thinkers, as ‘forced labour’.

Influenced by Karl Marx’ (1818-83) critique of capitalist systems, some social thinkers, notably the Critical Theorists of the Frankfurt School, such as Max Horkheimer (1895-1973), Theodor Adorno (1903-69) and Herbert Marcuse (1898-1979) have seen it as their primary responsibility to critique the political status quo rather than to develop theoretical models of an ideal society. Today, philosophers such as Jürgen Habermas (1929-) and Noam Chomsky (1928-) use their analytical skills to make a real difference to political reality.
Appendix 2

October 20, 2002

For Richer
By PAUL KRUGMAN

I. The Disappearing Middle

When I was a teenager growing up on Long Island, one of my favourite excursions was a trip to see the
great Gilded Age mansions of the North Shore. Those mansions weren't just pieces of architectural
history. They were monuments to a bygone social era, one in which the rich could afford the armies of
servants needed to maintain a house the size of a European palace. By the time I saw them, of course, that
era was long past. Almost none of the Long Island mansions were still private residences. Those that
hadn't been turned into museums were occupied by nursing homes or private schools.

For the America I grew up in -- the America of the 1950's and 1960's -- was a middle-class society, both in
reality and in feel. The vast income and wealth inequalities of the Gilded Age had disappeared. Yes, of
course, there was the poverty of the underclass -- but the conventional wisdom of the time viewed that as a
social rather than an economic problem. Yes, of course, some wealthy businessmen and heirs to large
fortunes lived far better than the average American. But they weren't rich the way the robber barons who
built the mansions had been rich, and there weren't that many of them. The days when plutocrats were a
force to be reckoned with in American society, economically or politically, seemed long past.

Daily experience confirmed the sense of a fairly equal society. The economic disparities you were
conscious of were quite muted. Highly educated professionals -- middle managers, college teachers, even
lawyers -- often claimed that they earned less than unionized blue-collar workers. Those considered very
well off lived in split-levels, had a housecleaner come in once a week and took summer vacations in
Europe. But they sent their kids to public schools and drove themselves to work, just like everyone else.

But that was long ago. The middle-class America of my youth was another country.

We are now living in a new Gilded Age, as extravagant as the original. Mansions have made a comeback.
Back in 1999 this magazine profiled Thierry Despont, the "eminence of excess," an architect who
specializes in designing houses for the superrich. His creations typically range from 20,000 to 60,000
square feet; houses at the upper end of his range are not much smaller than the White House. Needless to
say, the armies of servants are back, too. So are the yachts. Still, even J.P. Morgan didn't have a
Gulfstream.

As the story about Despont suggests, it's not fair to say that the fact of widening inequality in America has
gone unreported. Yet glimpses of the lifestyles of the rich and tasteless don't necessarily add up in people's
minds to a clear picture of the tectonic shifts that have taken place in the distribution of income and wealth
in this country. My sense is that few people are aware of just how much the gap between the very rich and
the rest has widened over a relatively short period of time. In fact, even bringing up the subject exposes
you to charges of "class warfare," the "politics of envy" and so on. And very few people indeed are willing
to talk about the profound effects -- economic, social and political -- of that widening gap.
Yet you can't understand what's happening in America today without understanding the extent, causes and consequences of the vast increase in inequality that has taken place over the last three decades, and in particular the astonishing concentration of income and wealth in just a few hands. To make sense of the current wave of corporate scandal, you need to understand how the man in the gray flannel suit has been replaced by the imperial C.E.O. The concentration of income at the top is a key reason that the United States, for all its economic achievements, has more poverty and lower life expectancy than any other major advanced nation. Above all, the growing concentration of wealth has reshaped our political system: it is at the root both of a general shift to the right and of an extreme polarization of our politics.

But before we get to all that, let's take a look at who gets what.

II. The New Gilded Age

The Securities and Exchange Commission hath no fury like a woman scorned. The messy divorce proceedings of Jack Welch, the legendary former C.E.O. of General Electric, have had one unintended benefit: they have given us a peek at the perks of the corporate elite, which are normally hidden from public view. For it turns out that when Welch retired, he was granted for life the use of a Manhattan apartment (including food, wine and laundry), access to corporate jets and a variety of other in-kind benefits, worth at least $2 million a year. The perks were revealing: they illustrated the extent to which corporate leaders now expect to be treated like ancient régime royalty. In monetary terms, however, the perks must have meant little to Welch. In 2000, his last full year running G.E., Welch was paid $123 million, mainly in stock and stock options.

Is it news that C.E.O.'s of large American corporations make a lot of money? Actually, it is. They were always well paid compared with the average worker, but there is simply no comparison between what executives got a generation ago and what they are paid today.

Over the past 30 years most people have seen only modest salary increases: the average annual salary in America, expressed in 1998 dollars (that is, adjusted for inflation), rose from $32,522 in 1970 to $35,864 in 1999. That's about a 10 percent increase over 29 years -- progress, but not much. Over the same period, however, according to Fortune magazine, the average real annual compensation of the top 100 C.E.O.'s went from $1.3 million -- 39 times the pay of an average worker -- to $37.5 million, more than 1,000 times the pay of ordinary workers.

The explosion in C.E.O. pay over the past 30 years is an amazing story in its own right, and an important one. But it is only the most spectacular indicator of a broader story, the reconcentration of income and wealth in the U.S. The rich have always been different from you and me, but they are far more different now than they were not long ago -- indeed, they are as different now as they were when F. Scott Fitzgerald made his famous remark.

That's a controversial statement, though it shouldn't be. For at least the past 15 years it has been hard to deny the evidence for growing inequality in the United States. Census data clearly show a rising share of income going to the top 20 percent of families, and within that top 20 percent to the top 5 percent, with a declining share going to families in the middle. Nonetheless, denial of that evidence is a sizable, well-financed industry. Conservative think tanks have produced scores of studies that try to discredit the data, the methodology and, not least, the motives of those who report the obvious. Studies that appear to refute claims of increasing inequality receive prominent endorsements on editorial pages and are eagerly cited by right-leaning government officials. Four years ago Alan Greenspan (why did anyone ever think that he was nonpartisan?) gave a keynote speech at the Federal Reserve's annual Jackson Hole conference that amounted to an attempt to deny that there has been any real increase in inequality in America.
The concerted effort to deny that inequality is increasing is itself a symptom of the growing influence of our emerging plutocracy (more on this later). So is the fierce defence of the backup position, that inequality doesn't matter -- or maybe even that, to use Martha Stewart's signature phrase, it's a good thing. Meanwhile, politically motivated smoke screens aside, the reality of increasing inequality is not in doubt. In fact, the census data understate the case, because for technical reasons those data tend to undercount very high incomes -- for example, it's unlikely that they reflect the explosion in C.E.O. compensation. And other evidence makes it clear not only that inequality is increasing but that the action gets bigger the closer you get to the top. That is, it's not simply that the top 20 percent of families have had bigger percentage gains than families near the middle: the top 5 percent have done better than the next 15, the top 1 percent better than the next 4, and so on up to Bill Gates.

Studies that try to do a better job of tracking high incomes have found startling results. For example, a recent study by the nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office used income tax data and other sources to improve on the census estimates. The C.B.O. study found that between 1979 and 1997, the after-tax incomes of the top 1 percent of families rose 157 percent, compared with only a 10 percent gain for families near the middle of the income distribution. Even more startling results come from a new study by Thomas Piketty, at the French research institute Cepremap, and Emmanuel Saez, who is now at the University of California at Berkeley. Using income tax data, Piketty and Saez have produced estimates of the incomes of the well-to-do, the rich and the very rich back to 1913.

The first point you learn from these new estimates is that the middle-class America of my youth is best thought of not as the normal state of our society, but as an interregnum between Gilded Ages. America before 1930 was a society in which a small number of very rich people controlled a large share of the nation's wealth. We became a middle-class society only after the concentration of income at the top dropped sharply during the New Deal, and especially during World War II. The economic historians Claudia Goldin and Robert Margo have dubbed the narrowing of income gaps during those years the Great Compression. Incomes then stayed fairly equally distributed until the 1970's: the rapid rise in incomes during the first postwar generation was very evenly spread across the population.

Since the 1970's, however, income gaps have been rapidly widening. Piketty and Saez confirm what I suspected: by most measures we are, in fact, back to the days of "The Great Gatsby." After 30 years in which the income shares of the top 10 percent of taxpayers, the top 1 percent and so on were far below their levels in the 1920's, all are very nearly back where they were.

And the big winners are the very, very rich. One ploy often used to play down growing inequality is to rely on rather coarse statistical breakdowns -- dividing the population into five "quintiles," each containing 20 percent of families, or at most 10 "deciles." Indeed, Greenspan's speech at Jackson Hole relied mainly on decile data. From there it's a short step to denying that we're really talking about the rich at all. For example, a conservative commentator might concede, grudgingly, that there has been some increase in the share of national income going to the top 10 percent of taxpayers, but then point out that anyone with an income over $81,000 is in that top 10 percent. So we're just talking about shifts within the middle class, right?

Wrong: the top 10 percent contains a lot of people whom we would still consider middle class, but they weren't the big winners. Most of the gains in the share of the top 10 percent of taxpayers over the past 30 years were actually gains to the top 1 percent, rather than the next 9 percent. In 1998 the top 1 percent started at $230,000. In turn, 60 percent of the gains of that top 1 percent went to the top 0.1 percent, those with incomes of more than $790,000. And almost half of those gains went to a mere 13,000 taxpayers, the top 0.01 percent, who had an income of at least $3.6 million and an average income of $17 million.
A stickler for detail might point out that the Piketty-Saez estimates end in 1998 and that the C.B.O. numbers end a year earlier. Have the trends shown in the data reversed? Almost surely not. In fact, all indications are that the explosion of incomes at the top continued through 2000. Since then the plunge in stock prices must have put some crimp in high incomes -- but census data show inequality continuing to increase in 2001, mainly because of the severe effects of the recession on the working poor and near poor. When the recession ends, we can be sure that we will find ourselves a society in which income inequality is even higher than it was in the late 90's.

So claims that we've entered a second Gilded Age aren't exaggerated. In America's middle-class era, the mansion-building, yacht-owning classes had pretty much disappeared. According to Piketty and Saez, in 1970 the top 0.01 percent of taxpayers had 0.7 percent of total income -- that is, they earned "only" 70 times as much as the average, not enough to buy or maintain a mega-residence. But in 1998 the top 0.01 percent received more than 3 percent of all income. That meant that the 13,000 richest families in America had almost as much income as the 20 million poorest households; those 13,000 families had incomes 300 times that of average families.

And let me repeat: this transformation has happened very quickly, and it is still going on. You might think that 1987, the year Tom Wolfe published his novel "The Bonfire of the Vanities" and Oliver Stone released his movie "Wall Street," marked the high tide of America's new money culture. But in 1987 the top 0.01 percent earned only about 40 percent of what they do today, and top executives less than a fifth as much. The America of "Wall Street" and "The Bonfire of the Vanities" was positively egalitarian compared with the country we live in today.

III. Undoing the New Deal
In the middle of the 1980's, as economists became aware that something important was happening to the distribution of income in America, they formulated three main hypotheses about its causes.

The "globalization" hypothesis tied America's changing income distribution to the growth of world trade, and especially the growing imports of manufactured goods from the third world. Its basic message was that blue-collar workers -- the sort of people who in my youth often made as much money as college-educated middle managers -- were losing ground in the face of competition from low-wage workers in Asia. A result was stagnation or decline in the wages of ordinary people, with a growing share of national income going to the highly educated.

A second hypothesis, "skill-biased technological change," situated the cause of growing inequality not in foreign trade but in domestic innovation. The torrid pace of progress in information technology, so the story went, had increased the demand for the highly skilled and educated. And so the income distribution increasingly favoured brains rather than brawn.

Finally, the "superstar" hypothesis -- named by the Chicago economist Sherwin Rosen -- offered a variant on the technological story. It argued that modern technologies of communication often turn competition into a tournament in which the winner is richly rewarded, while the runners-up get far less. The classic example -- which gives the theory its name -- is the entertainment business. As Rosen pointed out, in bygone days there were hundreds of comedians making a modest living at live shows in the borscht belt and other places. Now they are mostly gone; what is left is a handful of superstar TV comedians.

The debates among these hypotheses -- particularly the debate between those who attributed growing inequality to globalization and those who attributed it to technology -- were many and bitter. I was a participant in those debates myself. But I won't dwell on them, because in the last few years there has been a growing sense among economists that none of these hypotheses work.
I don't mean to say that there was nothing to these stories. Yet as more evidence has accumulated, each of the hypotheses has seemed increasingly inadequate. Globalization can explain part of the relative decline in blue-collar wages, but it can't explain the 2,500 percent rise in C.E.O. incomes. Technology may explain why the salary premium associated with a college education has risen, but it's hard to match up with the huge increase in inequality among the college-educated, with little progress for many but gigantic gains at the top. The superstar theory works for Jay Leno, but not for the thousands of people who have become awesomely rich without going on TV.

The Great Compression -- the substantial reduction in inequality during the New Deal and the Second World War -- also seems hard to understand in terms of the usual theories. During World War II Franklin Roosevelt used government control over wages to compress wage gaps. But if the middle-class society that emerged from the war was an artificial creation, why did it persist for another 30 years?

Some -- by no means all -- economists trying to understand growing inequality have begun to take seriously a hypothesis that would have been considered irredeemably fuzzy-minded not long ago. This view stresses the role of social norms in setting limits to inequality. According to this view, the New Deal had a more profound impact on American society than even its most ardent admirers have suggested: it imposed norms of relative equality in pay that persisted for more than 30 years, creating the broadly middle-class society we came to take for granted. But those norms began to unravel in the 1970's and have done so at an accelerating pace.

Exhibit A for this view is the story of executive compensation. In the 1960's, America's great corporations behaved more like socialist republics than like cutthroat capitalist enterprises, and top executives behaved more like public-spirited bureaucrats than like captains of industry. I'm not exaggerating. Consider the description of executive behaviour offered by John Kenneth Galbraith in his 1967 book, "The New Industrial State": "Management does not go out ruthlessly to reward itself -- a sound management is expected to exercise restraint." Managerial self-dealing was a thing of the past: "With the power of decision goes opportunity for making money. . . . Were everyone to seek to do so . . . the corporation would be a chaos of competitive avarice. But these are not the sort of thing that a good company man does; a remarkably effective code bans such behaviour. Group decision-making insures, moreover, that almost everyone's actions and even thoughts are known to others. This acts to enforce the code and, more than incidentally, a high standard of personal honesty as well."

Thirty-five years on, a cover article in Fortune is titled "You Bought. They Sold." "All over corporate America," reads the blurb, "top execs were cashing in stocks even as their companies were tanking. Who was left holding the bag? You." As I said, we've become a different country.

Let's leave actual malfeasance on one side for a moment, and ask how the relatively modest salaries of top executives 30 years ago became the gigantic pay packages of today. There are two main stories, both of which emphasize changing norms rather than pure economics. The more optimistic story draws an analogy between the explosion of C.E.O. pay and the explosion of baseball salaries with the introduction of free agency. According to this story, highly paid C.E.O.'s really are worth it, because having the right man in that job makes a huge difference. The more pessimistic view -- which I find more plausible -- is that competition for talent is a minor factor. Yes, a great executive can make a big difference -- but those huge pay packages have been going as often as not to executives whose performance is mediocre at best. The key reason executives are paid so much now is that they appoint the members of the corporate board that determines their compensation and control many of the perks that board members count on. So it's not the invisible hand of the market that leads to those monumental executive incomes; it's the invisible handshake in the boardroom.
But then why weren't executives paid lavishly 30 years ago? Again, it's a matter of corporate culture. For a generation after World War II, fear of outrage kept executive salaries in check. Now the outrage is gone. That is, the explosion of executive pay represents a social change rather than the purely economic forces of supply and demand. We should think of it not as a market trend like the rising value of waterfront property, but as something more like the sexual revolution of the 1960's -- a relaxation of old strictures, a new permissiveness, but in this case the permissiveness is financial rather than sexual. Sure enough, John Kenneth Galbraith described the honest executive of 1967 as being one who "eschews the lovely, available and even naked woman by whom he is intimately surrounded." By the end of the 1990's, the executive motto might as well have been "If it feels good, do it."

How did this change in corporate culture happen? Economists and management theorists are only beginning to explore that question, but it's easy to suggest a few factors. One was the changing structure of financial markets. In his new book, "Searching for a Corporate Savior," Rakesh Khurana of Harvard Business School suggests that during the 1980's and 1990's, "managerial capitalism" -- the world of the man in the gray flannel suit -- was replaced by "investor capitalism." Institutional investors weren't willing to let a C.E.O. choose his own successor from inside the corporation; they wanted heroic leaders, often outsiders, and were willing to pay immense sums to get them. The subtitle of Khurana's book, by the way, is "The Irrational Quest for Charismatic C.E.O.'s."

But fashionable management theorists didn't think it was irrational. Since the 1980's there has been ever more emphasis on the importance of "leadership" -- meaning personal, charismatic leadership. When Lee Iacocca of Chrysler became a business celebrity in the early 1980's, he was practically alone: Khurana reports that in 1980 only one issue of Business Week featured a C.E.O. on its cover. By 1999 the number was up to 19. And once it was considered normal, even necessary, for a C.E.O. to be famous, it also became easier to make him rich.

Economists also did their bit to legitimize previously unthinkable levels of executive pay. During the 1980's and 1990's a torrent of academic papers -- popularized in business magazines and incorporated into consultants' recommendations -- argued that Gordon Gekko was right: greed is good; greed works. In order to get the best performance out of executives, these papers argued, it was necessary to align their interests with those of stockholders. And the way to do that was with large grants of stock or stock options.

It's hard to escape the suspicion that these new intellectual justifications for soaring executive pay were as much effect as cause. I'm not suggesting that management theorists and economists were personally corrupt. It would have been a subtle, unconscious process: the ideas that were taken up by business schools, that led to nice speaking and consulting fees, tended to be the ones that ratified an existing trend, and thereby gave it legitimacy.

What economists like Piketty and Saez are now suggesting is that the story of executive compensation is representative of a broader story. Much more than economists and free-market advocates like to imagine, wages -- particularly at the top -- are determined by social norms. What happened during the 1930's and 1940's was that new norms of equality were established, largely through the political process. What happened in the 1980's and 1990's was that those norms unraveled, replaced by an ethos of "anything goes." And a result was an explosion of income at the top of the scale.

IV. The Price of Inequality
It was one of those revealing moments. Responding to an e-mail message from a Canadian viewer, Robert Novak of "Crossfire" delivered a little speech: "Marg, like most Canadians, you're ill informed and wrong. The U.S. has the longest standard of living -- longest life expectancy of any country in the world, including Canada. That's the truth."
But it was Novak who had his facts wrong. Canadians can expect to live about two years longer than Americans. In fact, life expectancy in the U.S. is well below that in Canada, Japan and every major nation in Western Europe. On average, we can expect lives a bit shorter than those of Greeks, a bit longer than those of Portuguese. Male life expectancy is lower in the U.S. than it is in Costa Rica.

Still, you can understand why Novak assumed that we were No. 1. After all, we really are the richest major nation, with real G.D.P. per capita about 20 percent higher than Canada's. And it has been an article of faith in this country that a rising tide lifts all boats. Doesn't our high and rising national wealth translate into a high standard of living -- including good medical care -- for all Americans?

Well, no. Although America has higher per capita income than other advanced countries, it turns out that that's mainly because our rich are much richer. And here's a radical thought: if the rich get more, that leaves less for everyone else.

That statement -- which is simply a matter of arithmetic -- is guaranteed to bring accusations of "class warfare." If the accuser gets more specific, he'll probably offer two reasons that it's foolish to make a fuss over the high incomes of a few people at the top of the income distribution. First, he'll tell you that what the elite get may look like a lot of money, but it's still a small share of the total -- that is, when all is said and done the rich aren't getting that big a piece of the pie. Second, he'll tell you that trying to do anything to reduce incomes at the top will hurt, not help, people further down the distribution, because attempts to redistribute income damage incentives.

These arguments for lack of concern are plausible. And they were entirely correct, once upon a time -- namely, back when we had a middle-class society. But there's a lot less truth to them now.

First, the share of the rich in total income is no longer trivial. These days 1 percent of families receive about 16 percent of total pretax income, and have about 14 percent of after-tax income. That share has roughly doubled over the past 30 years, and is now about as large as the share of the bottom 40 percent of the population. That's a big shift of income to the top; as a matter of pure arithmetic, it must mean that the incomes of less well off families grew considerably more slowly than average income. And they did. Adjusting for inflation, average family income -- total income divided by the number of families -- grew 28 percent from 1979 to 1997. But median family income -- the income of a family in the middle of the distribution, a better indicator of how typical American families are doing -- grew only 10 percent. And the incomes of the bottom fifth of families actually fell slightly.

Let me belabor this point for a bit. We pride ourselves, with considerable justification, on our record of economic growth. But over the last few decades it's remarkable how little of that growth has trickled down to ordinary families. Median family income has risen only about 0.5 percent per year -- and as far as we can tell from somewhat unreliable data, just about all of that increase was due to wives working longer hours, with little or no gain in real wages. Furthermore, numbers about income don't reflect the growing riskiness of life for ordinary workers. In the days when General Motors was known in-house as Generous Motors, many workers felt that they had considerable job security -- the company wouldn't fire them except in extremis. Many had contracts that guaranteed health insurance, even if they were laid off; they had pension benefits that did not depend on the stock market. Now mass firings from long-established companies are commonplace; losing your job means losing your insurance; and as millions of people have been learning, a 401(k) plan is no guarantee of a comfortable retirement.

Still, many people will say that while the U.S. economic system may generate a lot of inequality, it also generates much higher incomes than any alternative, so that everyone is better off. That was the moral Business Week tried to convey in its recent special issue with "25 Ideas for a Changing World." One of those ideas was "the rich get richer, and that's O.K." High incomes at the top, the conventional wisdom...
declares, are the result of a free-market system that provides huge incentives for performance. And the system delivers that performance, which means that wealth at the top doesn't come at the expense of the rest of us.

A skeptic might point out that the explosion in executive compensation seems at best loosely related to actual performance. Jack Welch was one of the 10 highest-paid executives in the United States in 2000, and you could argue that he earned it. But did Dennis Kozlowski of Tyco, or Gerald Levin of Time Warner, who were also in the top 10? A skeptic might also point out that even during the economic boom of the late 1990's, U.S. productivity growth was no better than it was during the great postwar expansion, which corresponds to the era when America was truly middle class and C.E.O.’s were modestly paid technocrats.

But can we produce any direct evidence about the effects of inequality? We can't rerun our own history and ask what would have happened if the social norms of middle-class America had continued to limit incomes at the top, and if government policy had leaned against rising inequality instead of reinforcing it, which is what actually happened. But we can compare ourselves with other advanced countries. And the results are somewhat surprising.

Many Americans assume that because we are the richest country in the world, with real G.D.P. per capita higher than that of other major advanced countries, Americans must be better off across the board -- that it's not just our rich who are richer than their counterparts abroad, but that the typical American family is much better off than the typical family elsewhere, and that even our poor are well off by foreign standards.

But it's not true. Let me use the example of Sweden, that great conservative bête noire.

A few months ago the conservative cyberpundit Glenn Reynolds made a splash when he pointed out that Sweden's G.D.P. per capita is roughly comparable with that of Mississippi -- see, those foolish believers in the welfare state have impoverished themselves! Presumably he assumed that this means that the typical Swede is as poor as the typical resident of Mississippi, and therefore much worse off than the typical American.

But life expectancy in Sweden is about three years higher than that of the U.S. Infant mortality is half the U.S. level, and less than a third the rate in Mississippi. Functional illiteracy is much less common than in the U.S.

How is this possible? One answer is that G.D.P. per capita is in some ways a misleading measure. Swedes take longer vacations than Americans, so they work fewer hours per year. That's a choice, not a failure of economic performance. Real G.D.P. per hour worked is 16 percent lower than in the United States, which makes Swedish productivity about the same as Canada's.

But the main point is that though Sweden may have lower average income than the United States, that's mainly because our rich are so much richer. The median Swedish family has a standard of living roughly comparable with that of the median U.S. family: wages are if anything higher in Sweden, and a higher tax burden is offset by public provision of health care and generally better public services. And as you move further down the income distribution, Swedish living standards are way ahead of those in the U.S. Swedish families with children that are at the 10th percentile -- poorer than 90 percent of the population -- have incomes 60 percent higher than their U.S. counterparts. And very few people in Sweden experience the deep poverty that is all too common in the United States. One measure: in 1994 only 6 percent of Swedes lived on less than $11 per day, compared with 14 percent in the U.S.
The moral of this comparison is that even if you think that America's high levels of inequality are the price of our high level of national income, it's not at all clear that this price is worth paying. The reason conservatives engage in bouts of Sweden-bashing is that they want to convince us that there is no tradeoff between economic efficiency and equity -- that if you try to take from the rich and give to the poor, you actually make everyone worse off. But the comparison between the U.S. and other advanced countries doesn't support this conclusion at all. Yes, we are the richest major nation. But because so much of our national income is concentrated in relatively few hands, large numbers of Americans are worse off economically than their counterparts in other advanced countries.

And we might even offer a challenge from the other side: inequality in the United States has arguably reached levels where it is counterproductive. That is, you can make a case that our society would be richer if its richest members didn't get quite so much.

I could make this argument on historical grounds. The most impressive economic growth in U.S. history coincided with the middle-class interregnum, the post-World War II generation, when incomes were most evenly distributed. But let's focus on a specific case, the extraordinary pay packages of today's top executives. Are these good for the economy?

Until recently it was almost unchallenged conventional wisdom that, whatever else you might say, the new imperial C.E.O.'s had delivered results that dwarfed the expense of their compensation. But now that the stock bubble has burst, it has become increasingly clear that there was a price to those big pay packages, after all. In fact, the price paid by shareholders and society at large may have been many times larger than the amount actually paid to the executives.

It's easy to get boggled by the details of corporate scandal -- insider loans, stock options, special-purpose entities, mark-to-market, round-tripping. But there's a simple reason that the details are so complicated. All of these schemes were designed to benefit corporate insiders -- to inflate the pay of the C.E.O. and his inner circle. That is, they were all about the "chaos of competitive avarice" that, according to John Kenneth Galbraith, had been ruled out in the corporation of the 1960's. But while all restraint has vanished within the American corporation, the outside world -- including stockholders -- is still prudish, and open looting by executives is still not acceptable. So the looting has to be camouflaged, taking place through complicated schemes that can be rationalized to outsiders as clever corporate strategies.

Economists who study crime tell us that crime is inefficient -- that is, the costs of crime to the economy are much larger than the amount stolen. Crime, and the fear of crime, divert resources away from productive uses: criminals spend their time stealing rather than producing, and potential victims spend time and money trying to protect their property. Also, the things people do to avoid becoming victims -- like avoiding dangerous districts -- have a cost even if they succeed in averting an actual crime.

The same holds true of corporate malfeasance, whether or not it actually involves breaking the law. Executives who devote their time to creating innovative ways to divert shareholder money into their own pockets probably aren't running the real business very well (think Enron, WorldCom, Tyco, Global Crossing, Adelphia . . .). Investments chosen because they create the illusion of profitability while insiders cash in their stock options are a waste of scarce resources. And if the supply of funds from lenders and shareholders dries up because of a lack of trust, the economy as a whole suffers. Just ask Indonesia.

The argument for a system in which some people get very rich has always been that the lure of wealth provides powerful incentives. But the question is, incentives to do what? As we learn more about what has actually been going on in corporate America, it's becoming less and less clear whether those incentives have actually made executives work on behalf of the rest of us.
V. Inequality and Politics
In September the Senate debated a proposed measure that would impose a one-time capital gains tax on Americans who renounce their citizenship in order to avoid paying U.S. taxes. Senator Phil Gramm was not pleased, declaring that the proposal was "right out of Nazi Germany." Pretty strong language, but no stronger than the metaphor Daniel Mitchell of the Heritage Foundation used, in an op-ed article in The Washington Times, to describe a bill designed to prevent corporations from rechartering abroad for tax purposes: Mitchell described this legislation as the "Dred Scott tax bill," referring to the infamous 1857 Supreme Court ruling that required free states to return escaped slaves.

Twenty years ago, would a prominent senator have likened those who want wealthy people to pay taxes to Nazis? Would a member of a think tank with close ties to the administration have drawn a parallel between corporate taxation and slavery? I don't think so. The remarks by Gramm and Mitchell, while stronger than usual, were indicators of two huge changes in American politics. One is the growing polarization of our politics -- our politicians are less and less inclined to offer even the appearance of moderation. The other is the growing tendency of policy and policy makers to cater to the interests of the wealthy. And I mean the wealthy, not the merely well-off: only someone with a net worth of at least several million dollars is likely to find it worthwhile to become a tax exile.

You don't need a political scientist to tell you that modern American politics is bitterly polarized. But wasn't it always thus? No, it wasn't. From World War II until the 1970's -- the same era during which income inequality was historically low -- political partisanship was much more muted than it is today. That's not just a subjective assessment. My Princeton political science colleagues Nolan McCarty and Howard Rosenthal, together with Keith Poole at the University of Houston, have done a statistical analysis showing that the voting behavior of a congressman is much better predicted by his party affiliation today than it was 25 years ago. In fact, the division between the parties is sharper now than it has been since the 1920's.

What are the parties divided about? The answer is simple: economics. McCarty, Rosenthal and Poole write that "voting in Congress is highly ideological -- one-dimensional left/right, liberal versus conservative." It may sound simplistic to describe Democrats as the party that wants to tax the rich and help the poor, and Republicans as the party that wants to keep taxes and social spending as low as possible. And during the era of middle-class America that would indeed have been simplistic: politics wasn't defined by economic issues. But that was a different country; as McCarty, Rosenthal and Poole put it, "If income and wealth are distributed in a fairly equitable way, little is to be gained for politicians to organize politics around nonexistent conflicts." Now the conflicts are real, and our politics is organized around them. In other words, the growing inequality of our incomes probably lies behind the growing divisiveness of our politics.

But the politics of rich and poor hasn't played out the way you might think. Since the incomes of America's wealthy have soared while ordinary families have seen at best small gains, you might have expected politicians to seek votes by proposing to soak the rich. In fact, however, the polarization of politics has occurred because the Republicans have moved to the right, not because the Democrats have moved to the left. And actual economic policy has moved steadily in favor of the wealthy. The major tax cuts of the past 25 years, the Reagan cuts in the 1980's and the recent Bush cuts, were both heavily tilted toward the very well off. (Despite obfuscations, it remains true that more than half the Bush tax cut will eventually go to the top 1 percent of families.) The major tax increase over that period, the increase in payroll taxes in the 1980's, fell most heavily on working-class families.

The most remarkable example of how politics has shifted in favor of the wealthy -- an example that helps us understand why economic policy has reinforced, not countered, the movement toward greater inequality -- is the drive to repeal the estate tax. The estate tax is, overwhelmingly, a tax on the wealthy. In
1999, only the top 2 percent of estates paid any tax at all, and half the estate tax was paid by only 3,300 estates, 0.16 percent of the total, with a minimum value of $5 million and an average value of $17 million. A quarter of the tax was paid by just 467 estates worth more than $20 million. Tales of family farms and businesses broken up to pay the estate tax are basically rural legends; hardly any real examples have been found, despite diligent searching.

You might have thought that a tax that falls on so few people yet yields a significant amount of revenue would be politically popular; you certainly wouldn't expect widespread opposition. Moreover, there has long been an argument that the estate tax promotes democratic values, precisely because it limits the ability of the wealthy to form dynasties. So why has there been a powerful political drive to repeal the estate tax, and why was such a repeal a centerpiece of the Bush tax cut?

There is an economic argument for repealing the estate tax, but it's hard to believe that many people take it seriously. More significant for members of Congress, surely, is the question of who would benefit from repeal: while those who will actually benefit from estate tax repeal are few in number, they have a lot of money and control even more (corporate C.E.O.'s can now count on leaving taxable estates behind). That is, they are the sort of people who command the attention of politicians in search of campaign funds.

But it's not just about campaign contributions: much of the general public has been convinced that the estate tax is a bad thing. If you try talking about the tax to a group of moderately prosperous retirees, you get some interesting reactions. They refer to it as the "death tax"; many of them believe that their estates will face punitive taxation, even though most of them will pay little or nothing; they are convinced that small businesses and family farms bear the brunt of the tax.

These misconceptions don't arise by accident. They have, instead, been deliberately promoted. For example, a Heritage Foundation document titled "Time to Repeal Federal Death Taxes: The Nightmare of the American Dream" emphasizes stories that rarely, if ever, happen in real life: "Small-business owners, particularly minority owners, suffer anxious moments wondering whether the businesses they hope to hand down to their children will be destroyed by the death tax bill, . . . Women whose children are grown struggle to find ways to re-enter the work force without upsetting the family's estate tax avoidance plan." And who finances the Heritage Foundation? Why, foundations created by wealthy families, of course.

The point is that it is no accident that strongly conservative views, views that militate against taxes on the rich, have spread even as the rich get richer compared with the rest of us: in addition to directly buying influence, money can be used to shape public perceptions. The liberal group People for the American Way's report on how conservative foundations have deployed vast sums to support think tanks, friendly media and other institutions that promote right-wing causes is titled "Buying a Movement."

Not to put too fine a point on it: as the rich get richer, they can buy a lot of things besides goods and services. Money buys political influence; used cleverly, it also buys intellectual influence. A result is that growing income disparities in the United States, far from leading to demands to soak the rich, have been accompanied by a growing movement to let them keep more of their earnings and to pass their wealth on to their children.

This obviously raises the possibility of a self-reinforcing process. As the gap between the rich and the rest of the population grows, economic policy increasingly caters to the interests of the elite, while public services for the population at large -- above all, public education -- are starved of resources. As policy increasingly favours the interests of the rich and neglects the interests of the general population, income disparities grow even wider.

VI. Plutocracy?
In 1924, the mansions of Long Island's North Shore were still in their full glory, as was the political power of the class that owned them. When Gov. Al Smith of New York proposed building a system of parks on Long Island, the mansion owners were bitterly opposed. One baron -- Horace Havemeyer, the "sultan of sugar" -- warned that North Shore towns would be "overrun with rabble from the city." "Rabble?" Smith said. "That's me you're talking about." In the end New Yorkers got their parks, but it was close: the interests of a few hundred wealthy families nearly prevailed over those of New York City's middle class.

America in the 1920's wasn't a feudal society. But it was a nation in which vast privilege -- often inherited privilege -- stood in contrast to vast misery. It was also a nation in which the government, more often than not, served the interests of the privileged and ignored the aspirations of ordinary people.

Those days are past -- or are they? Income inequality in America has now returned to the levels of the 1920's. Inherited wealth doesn't yet play a big part in our society, but given time -- and the repeal of the estate tax -- we will grow ourselves a hereditary elite just as set apart from the concerns of ordinary Americans as old Horace Havemeyer. And the new elite, like the old, will have enormous political power.

Kevin Phillips concludes his book "Wealth and Democracy" with a grim warning: "Either democracy must be renewed, with politics brought back to life, or wealth is likely to cement a new and less democratic regime -- plutocracy by some other name." It's a pretty extreme line, but we live in extreme times. Even if the forms of democracy remain, they may become meaningless. It's all too easy to see how we may become a country in which the big rewards are reserved for people with the right connections; in which ordinary people see little hope of advancement; in which political involvement seems pointless, because in the end the interests of the elite always get served.

Am I being too pessimistic? Even my liberal friends tell me not to worry, that our system has great resilience, that the center will hold. I hope they're right, but they may be looking in the rearview mirror. Our optimism about America, our belief that in the end our nation always finds its way, comes from the past -- a past in which we were a middle-class society. But that was another country.

Paul Krugman is a Times columnist and a professor at Princeton.

Copyright 2008 The New York Times Company

http://query.nytimes.com/gst/fullpage.html?res=9505EFD9113AF933A15753C1A9649C8B63
WEALTH DISTRIBUTION IN U.S.

U.S. Wealth Distribution: I Get $38, You Get 23 Cents -- That's Fair, Right?

Distribution of Our Wealth Is Terribly Askew

September 4, 2001

Most people have no idea that the vast bulk of the wealth of the United States is in the hands of a relative handful of people.

The wealth distribution chart below shows that the top 1% own 38.1% of the wealth in the country, the next 4% own 21.3%, and the next 5% own 11.5%. That is to say, the top 10% of the country owns 70.9% of the wealth of this nation!

Ninety percent of the country owns a mere 29.1%.

[chart from United for a Fair Economy]
Another way to put it: Assume there are 100 people who have $100 to split up. No one expects it to be divided perfectly evenly at $1 apiece, but everyone involved expects that some basic fairness will be used in the process that will split up the money.

Now let's say the $100 winds up being divided as follows:

- 1 person gets $38.10
- 4 people get $5.32 each
- 5 people get $2.30 each
- 10 people get $1.25 each
- 20 people get $0.60 each
- 20 people get $0.23 each
- 40 people get 1/2 cent each

The 40 people getting 1/2 cent each might be a bit annoyed at the person getting $38.10. The 20 people getting 23 cents each would probably not be happy with the 4 people receiving $5.32 each. And so on...
This is how our economic system has distributed the wealth of our country. It’s so far from any type of fairness as to be laughable, were it not a direct cause of certain segments of our society lacking adequate resources for food, clothing, shelter, medical care and other necessities, let alone any amenities of a beyond-subsistence life.

A recent study estimated that the 497 billionaires on the planet Earth own assets worth $1.54 trillion. That's right: $1,540,000,000,000!

Wouldn't it be great if there could be a 10% "You Just Can't Hog That Much of the Earth's Resources" tax imposed on them? That would raise $154 billion.

The United Nations has estimated that for the entire world, "[p]roviding universal access to basic social services and transfers to alleviate income poverty would cost $80 billion."

Gee, the 10% tax would raise almost double that. Maybe we could be less harsh on our billionaire brethren, and cut the tax to 5%. We certainly wouldn't want to unnecessarily cause them to give up any part of the lifestyle to which they've become accustomed.

Objections, Objections, Always Objections!

"Hey, wait a minute!" I hear the right-wing hordes shouting. Those 497 billionaire heroes earned their money honestly, and have every right to keep every red cent of it, the rest of humanity be damned!

Not the way I look at it. In so many ways, Earth is a lifeboat we've all been placed on. Imagine on a real lifeboat that there are five people. One of them nominally "owns" most of the provisions aboard. He insists that he'll eat as much as he wants, and doesn't have to share any of it with anybody else. How long do you think it will be before the only relationship with food that he has is as a tasty meal for a shark?

There's not infinite wealth on earth. If some passengers on the lifeboat have so much that others are without, the over-provisioned ones just have to give some of theirs up!

Private Property?

This whole concept of private property is, don't you realize, an artificial construct of man's imagination. Unless you have a certificate of title from the Creator, no one really can "own" anything other than by the agreement of everyone else that such ownership is valid. And most of the time, that's fine. I'm all for private property!

But right now we do exclude certain things from being owned. Humanity wouldn't tolerate it if someone came along and claimed to own the oxygen in the air. Certain land, such as Antarctica, has been put off limits.

I say ridiculous levels of wealth accumulation by individuals should likewise be considered outside the pale, something that simply cannot be tolerated if the majority of mankind has anything to say about it.

Might Makes Right, Doesn't It?

Which leads to the final point. The majority of humanity has never had any say about it.

Unlike what the powers that be would like us all to obediently believe, the 497 billionaires -- not to mention the First World nations over the centuries of formal colonialism and the successor World Bank/IMF regime -- did not acquire their lewdly disproportionate share of the Earth's resources "honestly." "Might makes right" is more like it.

The Ultimate Aphorism

An "aphorism" is defined as:
1: a concise statement of a principle

2: a terse formulation of a truth or sentiment [Merriam-Webster Collegiate Dictionary]

Viscerally, just about my favorite aphorism in the world is contained in these words I heard from an impoverished but infinitely wise Third World woman:

God gave the earth to everyone equally, and if some have too much and some too little, the ones with too much must have stolen it some way.

It’s long past time for all stolen property to be returned to the rightful owners!

The Rational Radical http://www.therationalradical.com/dsep02/01/lifeboat-earth.htm
"All social and economic problems caused by an unfair distribution of wealth" Appendix 5

All social and economic problems caused by an unfair distribution of wealth

February 1, 2003 |

"The world holds enough to satisfy everyone's need," Mahatma Gandhi once observed, "but not everyone's greed." In these few words he identified the main cause of most of the world's social and economic problems--and also pointed to their obvious solution.

Poverty, hunger, homelessness, illiteracy, preventable disease, polluted air and water, and most of the other ills that beset humanity have the same root cause: the inequitable distribution of the planet's wealth and resources.

People who have an adequate income, no matter where they may live, are well-fed, well-housed, well-educated. They don't have to visit food banks or sleep under bridges. This simple truth underscores the equally obvious fact that the answer to most human misery and injustice is a fair allocation of the world's wealth.

Unfortunately, the economic system that now predominates in most parts of the world--unfettered global capitalism--promotes, defends, and even extols an obscenely unequal distribution of wealth. Its three basic principles are greed, individualism, and competition--all of which militate against economic and social justice.

So we have a system in which 400 billionaires own more wealth than the poorest two-and-a-half billion people. And the proponents of this grossly inequitable system see nothing wrong with it. They would presumably not object if eventually 600 billionaires owned more wealth than 90% of the rest of humankind. That's what a free market is all about, they would remind us. In a system based on the survival of the fittest, the financially unfit don't survive--and don't deserve to.

Of course, this application of the law of the jungle to human society is not new. It reigned supreme in the 1800s when the "robber barons" of business were free to exploit the world's resources and workers for their own enrichment. Poverty and hunger were rampant then, too. But the first three-quarters of the 20th century saw the emergence of governments and unions committed to alleviating human misery. Gradually, through most of the century, the lives of most people (at least in the industrialized nations) were improved by the introduction of a wide range of social programs--programs that were largely funded through progressive legislation, a fair tax system, and strong, government-supported unions.

It seemed for a while, especially in the first three decades after World War II, that corporate leaders and investors were resigned to these constraints on their greed. But in fact they always resented the "social contract" that had been imposed on them, and were determined to break loose from it whenever they could. That opportunity came in the mid-1970s with the simultaneous launch of globalized "free trade" and the development of new computer and communications technologies. Corporations were able to escape from national limits and boundaries--and from any compulsion to keep sharing their profits with society's less fortunate.

With their enormous increase in wealth came more power and influence, including the power to buy and control most politicians. Governments were transformed from agents of wealth redistribution into the legislative branches of big business, devoted to helping the rich become richer at the expense of everyone else.

The labour unions, bereft of government backing and facing employers free to relocate to low-wage regions, were seriously weakened. Some still manage to extract more in wages and benefits than a company is willing to concede, but the unions certainly cannot be expected to compensate for the massive withdrawal of governments from their responsibility to redistribute income from the rich to the poor.
The upshot is that the function of helping the poor, the hungry and the homeless is now mainly taking the form of charity. Thousands of charitable organizations beg the corporations and the high- and middle-income earners to share some of their affluence with the needy. Food banks feed hundreds of thousands of the indigent. Appeals for charitable donations clog the mails, the airwaves, and the telephone lines. Motorists encounter children at busy intersections begging for loonies to help save school programs threatened by government cutbacks.

All of the causes championed by charities are worthwhile. All of the hungry and destitute they help are deserving. But their growing dependence on handouts has two major flaws: it perpetuates—perhaps even institutionalizes—a system built on avarice and inequity; and it ensures that the problems of poverty and hunger will persist and even get worse because the proceeds of charity alone will never be enough to eliminate them.

Social activists are striving mightily—and with some success—against the many manifestations of corporate power and economic injustice: against industrial pollution, free trade, genetically modified foods, pesticides, war-mongering, the AIDS epidemic, the IMF and World Bank, privatization—it's a long list. As we fight these battles, however, it's important always to keep in mind that they are all aspects of the same overarching problem, and that they all have a common solution.

The problem is an unfair distribution of wealth, and the solution—however it may be achieved—is a fair distribution of wealth. Any strategies that ignore that simple truth waste our time, squander our resources, and undermine our efforts to create a better world.

Ed Finn is the editor of The CCPA Monitor, the monthly newsletter of the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives.

Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives
http://www.policyalternatives.ca/index.cfm?act=news&call=635&do=article&pA=BB736455
What Should a Billionaire Give – and What Should You?

By PETER SINGER

$12.8M = $4.3M

ANNUAL SALARY      SUGGESTED ANNUAL DONATION

$132K = $13.2K

ANNUAL SALARY      SUGGESTED ANNUAL DONATION
What is a human life worth? You may not want to put a price tag on it. But if we really had to, most of us would agree that the value of a human life would be in the millions. Consistent with the foundations of our democracy and our frequently professed belief in the inherent dignity of human beings, we would also agree that all humans are created equal, at least to the extent of denying that differences of sex, ethnicity, nationality and place of residence change the value of a human life.

With Christmas approaching, and Americans writing checks to their favorite charities, it’s a good time to ask how these two beliefs — that a human life, if it can be priced at all, is worth millions, and that the factors I have mentioned do not alter the value of a human life — square with our actions. Perhaps this year such questions lurk beneath the surface of more family discussions than usual, for it has been an extraordinary year for philanthropy, especially philanthropy to fight global poverty.

For Bill Gates, the founder of Microsoft, the ideal of valuing all human life equally began to jar against reality some years ago, when he read an article about diseases in the developing world and came across the statistic that half a million children die every year from rotavirus, the most common cause of severe diarrhea in children. He had never heard of rotavirus. “How could I never have heard of something that kills half a million children every year?” he asked himself. He then learned that in developing countries, millions of children die from diseases that have been eliminated, or virtually eliminated, in the United States. That shocked him because he assumed that, if there are vaccines and treatments that could save lives, governments would be doing everything possible to get them to the people who need them. As Gates told a meeting of the World Health Assembly in Geneva last year, he and his wife, Melinda, “couldn’t escape the brutal conclusion that — in our world today — some lives are seen as worth saving and others are not.” They said to themselves, “This can’t be true.” But they knew it was.

Gates’s speech to the World Health Assembly concluded on an optimistic note, looking forward to the next decade when “people will finally accept that the death of a child in the developing world is just as tragic as the death of a child in the developed world.” That belief in the equal value of all human life is also prominent on the Web site of the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, where under Our Values we read: “All lives — no matter where they are being led — have equal value.”

We are very far from acting in accordance with that belief. In the same world in which more than a billion people live at a level of affluence never previously known, roughly a billion other people struggle to survive on the purchasing power equivalent of less than one U.S. dollar per day. Most of the world’s poorest people are undernourished,
lack access to safe drinking water or even the most basic health services and cannot send their children to school. According to Unicef, more than 10 million children die every year — about 30,000 per day — from avoidable, poverty-related causes.

Last June the investor Warren Buffett took a significant step toward reducing those deaths when he pledged $31 billion to the Gates Foundation, and another $6 billion to other charitable foundations. Buffett’s pledge, set alongside the nearly $30 billion given by Bill and Melinda Gates to their foundation, has made it clear that the first decade of the 21st century is a new “golden age of philanthropy.” On an inflation-adjusted basis, Buffett has pledged to give more than double the lifetime total given away by two of the philanthropic giants of the past, Andrew Carnegie and John D. Rockefeller, put together. Bill and Melinda Gates’s gifts are not far behind.

Gates’s and Buffett’s donations will now be put to work primarily to reduce poverty, disease and premature death in the developing world. According to the Global Forum for Health Research, less than 10 percent of the world’s health research budget is spent on combating conditions that account for 90 percent of the global burden of disease. In the past, diseases that affect only the poor have been of no commercial interest to pharmaceutical manufacturers, because the poor cannot afford to buy their products. The Global Alliance for Vaccines and Immunization (GAVI), heavily supported by the Gates Foundation, seeks to change this by guaranteeing to purchase millions of doses of vaccines, when they are developed, that can prevent diseases like malaria. GAVI has also assisted developing countries to immunize more people with existing vaccines: 99 million additional children have been reached to date. By doing this, GAVI claims to have already averted nearly 1.7 million future deaths.

Philanthropy on this scale raises many ethical questions: Why are the people who are giving doing so? Does it do any good? Should we praise them for giving so much or criticize them for not giving still more? Is it troubling that such momentous decisions are made by a few extremely wealthy individuals? And how do our judgments about them reflect on our own way of living?

Let’s start with the question of motives. The rich must — or so some of us with less money like to assume — suffer sleepless nights because of their ruthlessness in squeezing out competitors, firing workers, shutting down plants or whatever else they have to do to acquire their wealth. When wealthy people give away money, we can always say that they are doing it to ease their consciences or generate favorable publicity. It has been suggested — by, for example, David Kirkpatrick, a senior editor at Fortune magazine — that Bill Gates’s turn to philanthropy was linked to the antitrust problems Microsoft had in the U.S. and the European Union. Was Gates,
consciously or subconsciously, trying to improve his own image and that of his company?

This kind of sniping tells us more about the attackers than the attacked. Giving away large sums, rather than spending the money on corporate advertising or developing new products, is not a sensible strategy for increasing personal wealth. When we read that someone has given away a lot of their money, or time, to help others, it challenges us to think about our own behavior. Should we be following their example, in our own modest way? But if the rich just give their money away to improve their image, or to make up for past misdeeds — misdeeds quite unlike any we have committed, of course — then, conveniently, what they are doing has no relevance to what we ought to do.

A famous story is told about Thomas Hobbes, the 17th-century English philosopher, who argued that we all act in our own interests. On seeing him give alms to a beggar, a cleric asked Hobbes if he would have done this if Christ had not commanded us to do so. Yes, Hobbes replied, he was in pain to see the miserable condition of the old man, and his gift, by providing the man with some relief from that misery, also eased Hobbes’s pain. That reply reconciles Hobbes’s charity with his egoistic theory of human motivation, but at the cost of emptying egoism of much of its bite. If egoists suffer when they see a stranger in distress, they are capable of being as charitable as any altruist.

Followers of the 18th-century German philosopher Immanuel Kant would disagree. They think an act has moral worth only if it is done out of a sense of duty. Doing something merely because you enjoy doing it, or enjoy seeing its consequences, they say, has no moral worth, because if you happened not to enjoy doing it, then you wouldn’t do it, and you are not responsible for your likes and dislikes, whereas you are responsible for your obedience to the demands of duty.

Perhaps some philanthropists are motivated by their sense of duty. Apart from the equal value of all human life, the other “simple value” that lies at the core of the work of the Gates Foundation, according to its Web site, is “To whom much has been given, much is expected.” That suggests the view that those who have great wealth have a duty to use it for a larger purpose than their own interests. But while such questions of motive may be relevant to our assessment of Gates’s or Buffett’s character, they pale into insignificance when we consider the effect of what Gates and Buffett are doing. The parents whose children could die from rotavirus care more about getting the help that will save their children’s lives than about the motivations of those who make that possible.
Interestingly, neither Gates nor Buffett seems motivated by the possibility of being rewarded in heaven for his good deeds on earth. Gates told a Time interviewer, “There’s a lot more I could be doing on a Sunday morning” than going to church. Put them together with Andrew Carnegie, famous for his freethinking, and three of the four greatest American philanthropists have been atheists or agnostics. (The exception is John D. Rockefeller.) In a country in which 96 percent of the population say they believe in a supreme being, that’s a striking fact. It means that in one sense, Gates and Buffett are probably less self-interested in their charity than someone like Mother Teresa, who as a pious Roman Catholic believed in reward and punishment in the afterlife.

More important than questions about motives are questions about whether there is an obligation for the rich to give, and if so, how much they should give. A few years ago, an African-American cabdriver taking me to the Inter-American Development Bank in Washington asked me if I worked at the bank. I told him I did not but was speaking at a conference on development and aid. He then assumed that I was an economist, but when I said no, my training was in philosophy, he asked me if I thought the U.S. should give foreign aid. When I answered affirmatively, he replied that the government shouldn’t tax people in order to give their money to others. That, he thought, was robbery. When I asked if he believed that the rich should voluntarily donate some of what they earn to the poor, he said that if someone had worked for his money, he wasn’t going to tell him what to do with it.

At that point we reached our destination. Had the journey continued, I might have tried to persuade him that people can earn large amounts only when they live under favorable social circumstances, and that they don’t create those circumstances by themselves. I could have quoted Warren Buffett’s acknowledgment that society is responsible for much of his wealth. “If you stick me down in the middle of Bangladesh or Peru,” he said, “you’ll find out how much this talent is going to produce in the wrong kind of soil.” The Nobel Prize-winning economist and social scientist Herbert Simon estimated that “social capital” is responsible for at least 90 percent of what people earn in wealthy societies like those of the United States or northwestern Europe. By social capital Simon meant not only natural resources but, more important, the technology and organizational skills in the community, and the presence of good government. These are the foundation on which the rich can begin their work. “On moral grounds,” Simon added, “we could argue for a flat income tax of 90 percent.” Simon was not, of course, advocating so steep a rate of tax, for he was well aware of disincentive effects. But his estimate does undermine the argument that
the rich are entitled to keep their wealth because it is all a result of their hard work. If Simon is right, that is true of at most 10 percent of it.

In any case, even if we were to grant that people deserve every dollar they earn, that doesn’t answer the question of what they should do with it. We might say that they have a right to spend it on lavish parties, private jets and luxury yachts, or, for that matter, to flush it down the toilet. But we could still think that for them to do these things while others die from easily preventable diseases is wrong. In an article I wrote more than three decades ago, at the time of a humanitarian emergency in what is now Bangladesh, I used the example of walking by a shallow pond and seeing a small child who has fallen in and appears to be in danger of drowning. Even though we did nothing to cause the child to fall into the pond, almost everyone agrees that if we can save the child at minimal inconvenience or trouble to ourselves, we ought to do so. Anything else would be callous, indecent and, in a word, wrong. The fact that in rescuing the child we may, for example, ruin a new pair of shoes is not a good reason for allowing the child to drown. Similarly if for the cost of a pair of shoes we can contribute to a health program in a developing country that stands a good chance of saving the life of a child, we ought to do so.

Perhaps, though, our obligation to help the poor is even stronger than this example implies, for we are less innocent than the passer-by who did nothing to cause the child to fall into the pond. Thomas Pogge, a philosopher at Columbia University, has argued that at least some of our affluence comes at the expense of the poor. He bases this claim not simply on the usual critique of the barriers that Europe and the United States maintain against agricultural imports from developing countries but also on less familiar aspects of our trade with developing countries. For example, he points out that international corporations are willing to make deals to buy natural resources from any government, no matter how it has come to power. This provides a huge financial incentive for groups to try to overthrow the existing government. Successful rebels are rewarded by being able to sell off the nation’s oil, minerals or timber.

In their dealings with corrupt dictators in developing countries, Pogge asserts, international corporations are morally no better than someone who knowingly buys stolen goods — with the difference that the international legal and political order recognizes the corporations, not as criminals in possession of stolen goods but as the legal owners of the goods they have bought. This situation is, of course, beneficial for the industrial nations, because it enables us to obtain the raw materials we need to maintain our prosperity, but it is a disaster for resource-rich developing countries,
turning the wealth that should benefit them into a curse that leads to a cycle of coups, civil wars and corruption and is of little benefit to the people as a whole.

In this light, our obligation to the poor is not just one of providing assistance to strangers but one of compensation for harms that we have caused and are still causing them. It might be argued that we do not owe the poor compensation, because our affluence actually benefits them. Living luxuriously, it is said, provides employment, and so wealth trickles down, helping the poor more effectively than aid does. But the rich in industrialized nations buy virtually nothing that is made by the very poor. During the past 20 years of economic globalization, although expanding trade has helped lift many of the world’s poor out of poverty, it has failed to benefit the poorest 10 percent of the world’s population. Some of the extremely poor, most of whom live in sub-Saharan Africa, have nothing to sell that rich people want, while others lack the infrastructure to get their goods to market. If they can get their crops to a port, European and U.S. subsidies often mean that they cannot sell them, despite — as for example in the case of West African cotton growers who compete with vastly larger and richer U.S. cotton producers — having a lower production cost than the subsidized producers in the rich nations.

The remedy to these problems, it might reasonably be suggested, should come from the state, not from private philanthropy. When aid comes through the government, everyone who earns above the tax-free threshold contributes something, with more collected from those with greater ability to pay. Much as we may applaud what Gates and Buffett are doing, we can also be troubled by a system that leaves the fate of hundreds of millions of people hanging on the decisions of two or three private citizens. But the amount of foreign development aid given by the U.S. government is, at 22 cents for every $100 the nation earns, about the same, as a percentage of gross national income, as Portugal gives and about half that of the U.K. Worse still, much of it is directed where it best suits U.S. strategic interests — Iraq is now by far the largest recipient of U.S. development aid, and Egypt, Jordan, Pakistan and Afghanistan all rank in the Top 10. Less than a quarter of official U.S. development aid — barely a nickel in every $100 of our G.N.I. — goes to the world’s poorest nations.

Adding private philanthropy to U.S. government aid improves this picture, because Americans privately give more per capita to international philanthropic causes than the citizens of almost any other nation. Even when private donations are included, however, countries like Norway, Denmark, Sweden and the Netherlands give three or four times as much foreign aid, in proportion to the size of their economies, as the U.S. gives — with a much larger percentage going to the poorest nations. At least as
things now stand, the case for philanthropic efforts to relieve global poverty is not susceptible to the argument that the government has taken care of the problem. And even if official U.S. aid were better-directed and comparable, relative to our gross domestic product, with that of the most generous nations, there would still be a role for private philanthropy. Unconstrained by diplomatic considerations or the desire to swing votes at the United Nations, private donors can more easily avoid dealing with corrupt or wasteful governments. They can go directly into the field, working with local villages and grass-roots organizations.

Nor are philanthropists beholden to lobbyists. As The New York Times reported recently, billions of dollars of U.S. aid is tied to domestic goods. Wheat for Africa must be grown in America, although aid experts say this often depresses local African markets, reducing the incentive for farmers there to produce more. In a decision that surely costs lives, hundreds of millions of condoms intended to stop the spread of AIDS in Africa and around the world must be manufactured in the U.S., although they cost twice as much as similar products made in Asia.

In other ways, too, private philanthropists are free to venture where governments fear to tread. Through a foundation named for his wife, Susan Thompson Buffett, Warren Buffett has supported reproductive rights, including family planning and pro-choice organizations. In another unusual initiative, he has pledged $50 million for the International Atomic Energy Agency’s plan to establish a “fuel bank” to supply nuclear-reactor fuel to countries that meet their nuclear-nonproliferation commitments. The idea, which has been talked about for many years, is widely agreed to be a useful step toward discouraging countries from building their own facilities for producing nuclear fuel, which could then be diverted to weapons production. It is, Buffett said, “an investment in a safer world.” Though it is something that governments could and should be doing, no government had taken the first step.

Aid has always had its critics. Carefully planned and intelligently directed private philanthropy may be the best answer to the claim that aid doesn’t work. Of course, as in any large-scale human enterprise, some aid can be ineffective. But provided that aid isn’t actually counterproductive, even relatively inefficient assistance is likely to do more to advance human wellbeing than luxury spending by the wealthy.

The rich, then, should give. But how much should they give? Gates may have given away nearly $30 billion, but that still leaves him sitting at the top of the Forbes list of the richest Americans, with $53 billion. His 66,000-square-foot high-tech lakeside estate near Seattle is reportedly worth more than $100 million. Property taxes are about $1 million. Among his possessions is the Leicester Codex, the only handwritten
book by Leonardo da Vinci still in private hands, for which he paid $30.8 million in 1994. Has Bill Gates done enough? More pointedly, you might ask: if he really believes that all lives have equal value, what is he doing living in such an expensive house and owning a Leonardo Codex? Are there no more lives that could be saved by living more modestly and adding the money thus saved to the amount he has already given?

Yet we should recognize that, if judged by the proportion of his wealth that he has given away, Gates compares very well with most of the other people on the Forbes 400 list, including his former colleague and Microsoft co-founder, Paul Allen. Allen, who left the company in 1983, has given, over his lifetime, more than $800 million to philanthropic causes. That is far more than nearly any of us will ever be able to give. But Forbes lists Allen as the fifth-richest American, with a net worth of $16 billion. He owns the Seattle Seahawks, the Portland Trailblazers, a 413-foot oceangoing yacht that carries two helicopters and a 60-foot submarine. He has given only about 5 percent of his total wealth.

Is there a line of moral adequacy that falls between the 5 percent that Allen has given away and the roughly 35 percent that Gates has donated? Few people have set a personal example that would allow them to tell Gates that he has not given enough, but one who could is Zell Kravinsky. A few years ago, when he was in his mid-40s, Kravinsky gave almost all of his $45 million real estate fortune to health-related charities, retaining only his modest family home in Jenkintown, near Philadelphia, and enough to meet his family’s ordinary expenses. After learning that thousands of people with failing kidneys die each year while waiting for a transplant, he contacted a Philadelphia hospital and donated one of his kidneys to a complete stranger.

After reading about Kravinsky in The New Yorker, I invited him to speak to my classes at Princeton. He comes across as anguished by the failure of others to see the simple logic that lies behind his altruism. Kravinsky has a mathematical mind — a talent that obviously helped him in deciding what investments would prove profitable — and he says that the chances of dying as a result of donating a kidney are about 1 in 4,000. For him this implies that to withhold a kidney from someone who would otherwise die means valuing one’s own life at 4,000 times that of a stranger, a ratio Kravinsky considers “obscene.”

What marks Kravinsky from the rest of us is that he takes the equal value of all human life as a guide to life, not just as a nice piece of rhetoric. He acknowledges that some people think he is crazy, and even his wife says she believes that he goes too far. One of her arguments against the kidney donation was that one of their children may one day need a kidney, and Zell could be the only compatible donor. Kravinsky’s love for
his children is, as far as I can tell, as strong as that of any normal parent. Such attachments are part of our nature, no doubt the product of our evolution as mammals who give birth to children, who for an unusually long time require our assistance in order to survive. But that does not, in Kravinsky’s view, justify our placing a value on the lives of our children that is thousands of times greater than the value we place on the lives of the children of strangers. Asked if he would allow his child to die if it would enable a thousand children to live, Kravinsky said yes. Indeed, he has said he would permit his child to die even if this enabled only two other children to live. Nevertheless, to appease his wife, he recently went back into real estate, made some money and bought the family a larger home. But he still remains committed to giving away as much as possible, subject only to keeping his domestic life reasonably tranquil.

Buffett says he believes in giving his children “enough so they feel they could do anything, but not so much that they could do nothing.” That means, in his judgment, “a few hundred thousand” each. In absolute terms, that is far more than most Americans are able to leave their children and, by Kravinsky’s standard, certainly too much. (Kravinsky says that the hard part is not giving away the first $45 million but the last $10,000, when you have to live so cheaply that you can’t function in the business world.) But even if Buffett left each of his three children a million dollars each, he would still have given away more than 99.99 percent of his wealth. When someone does that much — especially in a society in which the norm is to leave most of your wealth to your children — it is better to praise them than to cavil about the extra few hundred thousand dollars they might have given.

Philosophers like Liam Murphy of New York University and my colleague Kwame Anthony Appiah at Princeton contend that our obligations are limited to carrying our fair share of the burden of relieving global poverty. They would have us calculate how much would be required to ensure that the world’s poorest people have a chance at a decent life, and then divide this sum among the affluent. That would give us each an amount to donate, and having given that, we would have fulfilled our obligations to the poor.

What might that fair amount be? One way of calculating it would be to take as our target, at least for the next nine years, the Millennium Development Goals, set by the United Nations Millennium Summit in 2000. On that occasion, the largest gathering of world leaders in history jointly pledged to meet, by 2015, a list of goals that include:

Reducing by half the proportion of the world’s people in extreme poverty (defined as living on less than the purchasing-power equivalent of one U.S. dollar per day).
Reducing by half the proportion of people who suffer from hunger.

Ensuring that children everywhere are able to take a full course of primary schooling.

Ending sex disparity in education.

Reducing by two-thirds the mortality rate among children under 5.

Reducing by three-quarters the rate of maternal mortality.

Halting and beginning to reverse the spread of H.I.V./AIDS and halting and beginning to reduce the incidence of malaria and other major diseases.

Reducing by half the proportion of people without sustainable access to safe drinking water.

Last year a United Nations task force, led by the Columbia University economist Jeffrey Sachs, estimated the annual cost of meeting these goals to be $121 billion in 2006, rising to $189 billion by 2015. When we take account of existing official development aid promises, the additional amount needed each year to meet the goals is only $48 billion for 2006 and $74 billion for 2015.

Now let’s look at the incomes of America’s rich and superrich, and ask how much they could reasonably give. The task is made easier by statistics recently provided by Thomas Piketty and Emmanuel Saez, economists at the Acole Normale Suparieure, Paris-Jourdan, and the University of California, Berkeley, respectively, based on U.S. tax data for 2004. Their figures are for pretax income, excluding income from capital gains, which for the very rich are nearly always substantial. For simplicity I have rounded the figures, generally downward. Note too that the numbers refer to “tax units,” that is, in many cases, families rather than individuals.

Piketty and Saez’s top bracket comprises 0.01 percent of U.S. taxpayers. There are 14,400 of them, earning an average of $12,775,000, with total earnings of $184 billion. The minimum annual income in this group is more than $5 million, so it seems reasonable to suppose that they could, without much hardship, give away a third of their annual income, an average of $4.3 million each, for a total of around $61 billion. That would still leave each of them with an annual income of at least $3.3 million.

Next comes the rest of the top 0.1 percent (excluding the category just described, as I shall do henceforth). There are 129,600 in this group, with an average income of just
over $2 million and a minimum income of $1.1 million. If they were each to give a quarter of their income, that would yield about $65 billion, and leave each of them with at least $846,000 annually.

The top 0.5 percent consists of 575,900 taxpayers, with an average income of $623,000 and a minimum of $407,000. If they were to give one-fifth of their income, they would still have at least $325,000 each, and they would be giving a total of $72 billion.

Coming down to the level of those in the top 1 percent, we find 719,900 taxpayers with an average income of $327,000 and a minimum of $276,000. They could comfortably afford to give 15 percent of their income. That would yield $35 billion and leave them with at least $234,000.

Finally, the remainder of the nation’s top 10 percent earn at least $92,000 annually, with an average of $132,000. There are nearly 13 million in this group. If they gave the traditional tithe — 10 percent of their income, or an average of $13,200 each — this would yield about $171 billion and leave them a minimum of $83,000.

You could spend a long time debating whether the fractions of income I have suggested for donation constitute the fairest possible scheme. Perhaps the sliding scale should be steeper, so that the superrich give more and the merely comfortable give less. And it could be extended beyond the Top 10 percent of American families, so that everyone able to afford more than the basic necessities of life gives something, even if it is as little as 1 percent. Be that as it may, the remarkable thing about these calculations is that a scale of donations that is unlikely to impose significant hardship on anyone yields a total of $404 billion — from just 10 percent of American families.

Obviously, the rich in other nations should share the burden of relieving global poverty. The U.S. is responsible for 36 percent of the gross domestic product of all Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development nations. Arguably, because the U.S. is richer than all other major nations, and its wealth is more unevenly distributed than wealth in almost any other industrialized country, the rich in the U.S. should contribute more than 36 percent of total global donations. So somewhat more than 36 percent of all aid to relieve global poverty should come from the U.S. For simplicity, let’s take half as a fair share for the U.S. On that basis, extending the scheme I have suggested worldwide would provide $808 billion annually for development aid. That’s more than six times what the task force chaired by Sachs estimated would be required for 2006 in order to be on track to meet the Millennium
Development Goals, and more than 16 times the shortfall between that sum and existing official development aid commitments.

If we are obliged to do no more than our fair share of eliminating global poverty, the burden will not be great. But is that really all we ought to do? Since we all agree that fairness is a good thing, and none of us like doing more because others don’t pull their weight, the fair-share view is attractive. In the end, however, I think we should reject it. Let’s return to the drowning child in the shallow pond. Imagine it is not 1 small child who has fallen in, but 50 children. We are among 50 adults, unrelated to the children, picnicking on the lawn around the pond. We can easily wade into the pond and rescue the children, and the fact that we would find it cold and unpleasant sloshing around in the knee-deep muddy water is no justification for failing to do so. The “fair share” theorists would say that if we each rescue one child, all the children will be saved, and so none of us have an obligation to save more than one. But what if half the picnickers prefer staying clean and dry to rescuing any children at all? Is it acceptable if the rest of us stop after we have rescued just one child, knowing that we have done our fair share, but that half the children will drown? We might justifiably be furious with those who are not doing their fair share, but our anger with them is not a reason for letting the children die. In terms of praise and blame, we are clearly right to condemn, in the strongest terms, those who do nothing. In contrast, we may withhold such condemnation from those who stop when they have done their fair share. Even so, they have let children drown when they could easily have saved them, and that is wrong.

Similarly, in the real world, it should be seen as a serious moral failure when those with ample income do not do their fair share toward relieving global poverty. It isn’t so easy, however, to decide on the proper approach to take to those who limit their contribution to their fair share when they could easily do more and when, because others are not playing their part, a further donation would assist many in desperate need. In the privacy of our own judgment, we should believe that it is wrong not to do more. But whether we should actually criticize people who are doing their fair share, but no more than that, depends on the psychological impact that such criticism will have on them, and on others. This in turn may depend on social practices. If the majority are doing little or nothing, setting a standard higher than the fair-share level may seem so demanding that it discourages people who are willing to make an equitable contribution from doing even that. So it may be best to refrain from criticizing those who achieve the fair-share level. In moving our society’s standards forward, we may have to progress one step at a time.
For more than 30 years, I’ve been reading, writing and teaching about the ethical issue posed by the juxtaposition, on our planet, of great abundance and life-threatening poverty. Yet it was not until, in preparing this article, I calculated how much America’s Top 10 percent of income earners actually make that I fully understood how easy it would be for the world’s rich to eliminate, or virtually eliminate, global poverty. (It has actually become much easier over the last 30 years, as the rich have grown significantly richer.) I found the result astonishing. I double-checked the figures and asked a research assistant to check them as well. But they were right. Measured against our capacity, the Millennium Development Goals are indecently, shockingly modest. If we fail to achieve them — as on present indications we well might — we have no excuses. The target we should be setting for ourselves is not halving the proportion of people living in extreme poverty, and without enough to eat, but ensuring that no one, or virtually no one, needs to live in such degrading conditions. That is a worthy goal, and it is well within our reach.

*Peter Singer is the Ira W. DeCamp professor of bioethics at the Center for Human Values at Princeton University. He is the author of many books, including most recently “The Way We Eat: Why Our Food Choices Matter.”*

Copyright 2008 The New York Times Company

Appendix 7

Confucius

Confucius (551-479 BCE), according to Chinese tradition, was a thinker, political figure, educator, and founder of the Ru School of Chinese thought. His teachings, preserved in the Analects, form the foundation of much of subsequent Chinese speculation on the education and comportment of the ideal man, how such an individual should live his live and interact with others, and the forms of society and government in which he should participate. Fung Yu-lan, one of the great 20th century authorities on the history of Chinese thought, compares Confucius' influence in Chinese history with that of Socrates in the West.

2. Confucius' Social Philosophy

Confucius' teachings and his conversations and exchanges with his disciples are recorded in the Lunyu or Analects, a collection that probably achieved something like its present form around the second century BCE. While Confucius believes that people live their lives within parameters firmly established by Heaven—which, often, for him means both a purposeful Supreme Being as well as 'nature' and its fixed cycles and patterns—he argues that men are responsible for their actions and especially for their treatment of others. We can do little or nothing to alter our fated span of existence but we determine what we accomplish and what we are remembered for.

Confucius represented his teachings as lessons transmitted from antiquity. He claimed that he was “a transmitter and not a maker” and that all he did reflected his “reliance on and love for the ancients.” (Lunyu 7.1) Confucius pointed especially to the precedents established during the height of the royal Zhou (roughly the first half of the first millennium, BCE). Such justifications for one's ideas may have already been conventional in Confucius' day. Certainly his claim that there were antique precedents for his ideology had a tremendous influence on subsequent thinkers many of whom imitated these gestures. But we should not regard the contents of the Analects as consisting of old ideas. Much of what Confucius taught appears to have been original to him and to have represented a radical departure from the ideas and practices of his day.

Confucius also claimed that he enjoyed a special and privileged relationship with Heaven and that, by the age of fifty, he had come to understand what Heaven had mandated for him and for mankind. (Lunyu 2.4). Confucius was also careful to instruct his followers that they should never neglect the offerings due Heaven. (Lunyu 3.13) Some scholars have seen a contradiction between Confucius' reverence for Heaven and what they believe to be his skepticism with regard to the existence of ‘the spirits.’ But the Analects passages that reveal Confucius's attitudes toward spiritual forces (Lunyu 3.12, 6.20, and 11.11) do not suggest that he was skeptical. Rather they show that Confucius revered and respected the spirits, thought that they should be worshipped with utmost sincerity, and taught that serving the spirits was a far more difficult and complicated matter than serving mere mortals.

Confucius' social philosophy largely revolves around the concept of ren, “compassion” or “loving others.” Cultivating or practicing such concern for others involved deprecating oneself. This meant being sure to avoid artful speech or an ingratiating manner that would create a false impression and lead to self-aggrandizement. (Lunyu 1.3) Those who have cultivated ren are, on the contrary, “simple in manner and slow of speech.” (Lunyu 13.27). For Confucius, such concern for others is demonstrated through the practice of forms of the Golden Rule: “What you do not wish for yourself, do not do to others;” “Since you yourself desire standing then help others achieve it, since you yourself desire success then help others...
attain it.” (Lunyu 12.2, 6.30). He regards devotion to parents and older siblings as the most basic form of promoting the interests of others before one's own and teaches that such altruism can be accomplished only by those who have learned self-discipline.

Learning self-restraint involves studying and mastering li, the ritual forms and rules of propriety through which one expresses respect for superiors and enacts his role in society in such a way that he himself is worthy of respect and admiration. A concern for propriety should inform everything that one says and does:

Look at nothing in defiance of ritual, listen to nothing in defiance of ritual, speak of nothing in defiance or ritual, never stir hand or foot in defiance of ritual. (Lunyu 12.1)

Subjecting oneself to ritual does not, however, mean suppressing one's desires but instead learning how to reconcile one's own desires with the needs of one's family and community. Confucius and many of his followers teach that it is by experiencing desires that we learn the value of social strictures that make an ordered society possible (See Lunyu 2.4.). Nor does Confucius' emphasis on ritual mean that he was a punctilious ceremonialist who thought that the rites of worship and of social exchange had to be practiced correctly at all costs. Confucius taught, on the contrary, that if one did not possess a keen sense of the well-being and interests of others his ceremonial manners signified nothing. (Lunyu 3.3). Equally important was Confucius' insistence that the rites not be regarded as mere forms, but that they be practiced with complete devotion and sincerity. "He [i.e., Confucius] sacrificed to the dead as if they were present. He sacrificed to the spirits as if the spirits were present. The Master said, ‘I consider my not being present at the sacrifice as though there were no sacrifice.’" (Lunyu 3.12)

While ritual forms often have to do with the more narrow relations of family and clan, ren, however, is to be practiced broadly and informs one's interactions with all people. Confucius warns those in power that they should not oppress or take for granted even the lowliest of their subjects. “You may rob the Three Armies of their commander, but you cannot deprive the humblest peasant of his opinion.” (Lunyu 9.26) Confucius regards loving others as a calling and a mission for which one should be ready to die (Lunyu 15.9).

3. Confucius' Political Philosophy

Confucius' political philosophy is also rooted in his belief that a ruler should learn self-discipline, should govern his subjects by his own example, and should treat them with love and concern. “If the people be led by laws, and uniformity among them be sought by punishments, they will try to escape punishment and have no sense of shame. If they are led by virtue, and uniformity sought among them through the practice of ritual propriety, they will possess a sense of shame and come to you of their own accord.” (Lunyu 2.3; see also 13.6.) It seems apparent that in his own day, however, advocates of more legalistic methods were winning a large following among the ruling elite. Thus Confucius' warning about the ill consequences of promulgating law codes should not be interpreted as an attempt to prevent their adoption but instead as his lament that his ideas about the moral suasion of the ruler were not proving popular.

Most troubling to Confucius was his perception that the political institutions of his day had completely broken down. He attributed this collapse to the fact that those who wielded power as well as those who occupied subordinate positions did so by making claim to titles for which they were not worthy. When asked by a ruler of the large state of Qi, Lu's neighbor on the Shandong peninsula, about the principles of good government, Confucius is reported to have replied: “Good government consists in the ruler being a ruler, the minister being a minister, the father being a father, and the son being a son.” (Lunyu 12.11) If I claim for myself a title and attempt to participate in the various hierarchical relationships to which I would
be entitled by virtue of that title, then I should live up to the meaning of the title that I claim for myself. Confucius' analysis of the lack of connection between actualities and their names and the need to correct such circumstances is usually referred to as Confucius' theory of zhengming. Elsewhere in the Analects, Confucius says to his disciple Zilu that the first thing he would do in undertaking the administration of a state is zhengming. (Lunyu 13.3). Xunzi composed an entire essay entitled Zhengming. But for Xunzi the term referred to the proper use of language and how one should go about inventing new terms that were suitable to the age. For Confucius, zhengming does not seem to refer to the 'rectification of names' (this is the way the term is most often translated by scholars of the Analects), but instead to rectifying behavior of people so that it exactly corresponds to the language with which they identify and describe themselves. Confucius believed that this sort of rectification had to begin at the very top of the government, because it was at the top that the discrepancy between names and actualities had originated. If the ruler's behavior is rectified then the people beneath him will follow suit. In a conversation with Ji Kangzi (who had usurped power in Lu), Confucius advised: “If your desire is for good, the people will be good. The moral character of the ruler is the wind; the moral character of those beneath him is the grass. When the wind blows, the grass bends.” (Lunyu 12.19)

For Confucius, what characterized superior rulership was the possession of de or ‘virtue.’ Conceived of as a kind of moral power that allows one to win a following without recourse to physical force, such ‘virtue’ also enabled the ruler to maintain good order in his state without troubling himself and by relying on loyal and effective deputies. Confucius claimed that, “He who governs by means of his virtue is, to use an analogy, like the pole-star: it remains in its place while all the lesser stars do homage to it.” (Lunyu 2.1) The way to maintain and cultivate such royal ‘virtue’ was through the practice and enactment of li or ‘rituals’—the ceremonies that defined and punctuated the lives of the ancient Chinese aristocracy. These ceremonies encompassed: the sacrificial rites performed at ancestral temples to express humility and thankfulness; the ceremonies of enfeoffment, toasting, and gift exchange that bound together the aristocracy into a complex web of obligation and indebtedness; and the acts of politeness and decorum—such things as bowing and yielding—that identified their performers as gentlemen. In an influential study, Herbert Fingarette argues that the performance of these various ceremonies, when done correctly and sincerely, involves a ‘magical’ quality that underlies the efficacy of royal ‘virtue’ in accomplishing the aims of the ruler.

4. Confucius and Education

A hallmark of Confucius' thought is his emphasis on education and study. He disparages those who have faith in natural understanding or intuition and argues that the only real understanding of a subject comes from long and careful study. Study, for Confucius, means finding a good teacher and imitating his words and deeds. A good teacher is someone older who is familiar with the ways of the past and the practices of the ancients. (See Lunyu 7.22) While he sometimes warns against excessive reflection and meditation, Confucius' position appears to be a middle course between studying and reflecting on what one has learned. “He who learns but does not think is lost. He who thinks but does not learn is in great danger.” (Lunyu 2.15) Confucius, himself, is credited by the tradition with having taught altogether three thousand students, though only seventy are said to have truly mastered the arts he cherished. Confucius is willing to teach anyone, whatever their social standing, as long as they are eager and tireless. He taught his students morality, proper speech, government, and the refined arts. While he also emphasizes the “Six Arts” -- ritual, music, archery, chariot-riding, calligraphy, and computation -- it is clear that he regards morality the most important subject. Confucius' pedagogical methods are striking. He never discourses at length on a subject. Instead he poses questions, cites passages from the classics, or uses apt analogies, and waits for his students to arrive at the right answers. “I only instruct the eager and enlighten the fervent. If I hold up one corner and a student cannot come back to me with the other three, I do not go on with the lesson.” (Lunyu 7.8).
Confucius' goal is to create gentlemen who carry themselves with grace, speak correctly, and demonstrate integrity in all things. His strong dislike of the sycophantic “petty men,” whose clever talk and pretentious manner win them an audience, is reflected in numerous *Lunyu* passages. Confucius finds himself in an age in which values are out of joint. Actions and behavior no longer correspond to the labels originally attached to them. “Rulers do not rule and subjects do not serve,” he observes. (*Lunyu* 12.11; cf. also 13.3) This means that words and titles no longer mean what they once did. Moral education is important to Confucius because it is the means by which one can rectify this situation and restore meaning to language and values to society. He believes that the most important lessons for obtaining such a moral education are to be found in the canonical *Book of Songs*, because many of its poems are both beautiful and good. Thus Confucius places the text first in his curriculum and frequently quotes and explains its lines of verse. For this reason, the *Lunyu* is also an important source for Confucius' understanding of the role poetry and art more generally play in the moral education of gentlemen as well as in the reformation of society.
Appendix 8 - John Stuart Mill

John Stuart Mill
(1806 - 1873)

His *Utilitarianism* 1861 remains the classic defence of the view that we ought to aim at maximizing the welfare of all sentient creatures, and that welfare consists of their happiness. Mill's defense of the view that we ought to pursue happiness because we do pursue happiness, has been the object of savage attack by, among others,

**Act-Utilitarianism**

"According to act-utilitarianism, it is the value of the consequences of the particular act that counts when determining whether the act is right. Bentham's theory is act-utilitarian, and so is that of J.J.C. Smart.

One objection to act-utilitarianism is that it seems to be too permissive, capable of justifying any crime, and even making it morally obligatory, if only the value of the particular consequences of the particular act is great enough. Another objection is that act-utilitarianism seems better in theory than in practice, since we hardly ever have the time and the knowledge to predict the consequences of an act, assess their value, and make comparisons with possible alternative acts.

Modern act-utilitarians think that these objections can be met. Others have developed alternatives to act-utilitarianism, e.g. rule-utilitarianism, and other forms of indirect utilitarianism."

**Rule-Utilitarianism**

"Instead of looking at the consequences of a particular act, rule-utilitarianism determines the rightness of an act by a different method. First, the best rule of conduct is found. This is done by finding the value of the consequences of following a particular rule. The rule the following of which has the best overall consequences is the best rule. Among early proponents were John Austin (*The Province of Jurisprudence* 1832) and John Stuart Mill (*Utilitarianism* 1861).

One problem with rule-utilitarianism is this: it invites us to consider the consequences of the general following of a particular rule. Suppose the consequences of the general following of rule R are optimal. We can say that rule R is the best rule, and that everyone ought to follow that rule. But how ought one to act if people are not generally likely to follow that rule? To illustrate: suppose that for every country, the best traffic rule is to keep to the right. According to rule-utilitarianism, I ought to keep to the right. Suppose I am in Britain and know that people will generally keep to the left...Ought I really to keep to the right?

Another problem is that the best rules would not be simple. The best rule for promise-keeping would be of the form: 'Always keep your promises except...' (where the list of exceptions would be very long). This led the American philosopher David Lyons to argue, in *Forms and Limits of Utilitarianism* 1965, that a plausible formulation of rule-utilitarianism would make it recommend the same actions as act-utilitarianism, so the two kinds are 'extensionally equivalent' and there is no practical difference between the two. Currently, rule-utilitarian formulations seem to be ought of favour, but there are attempts to rehabilitate them."
What is Marxism? A Bird's-Eye View

By Bertell Ollman

A young reporter asked a leading capitalist how he made his fortune. "It was really quite simple", the capitalist answered. I bought an apple for 5 cents, spent the evening polishing it, and sold it the next day for 10 cents. With this I bought two apples, spent the evening polishing them, and sold them for 20. And so it went until I amassed 80. It was at this point that my wife’s father died and left us a million dollars". Is this true? Is it fair? What does it all mean? There are no more hotly contested questions in our society than why some are rich and others poor—and whether things have to be this way.

Karl Marx sought the answers to these questions by trying to understand how our capitalist society works (for whom it works better, for whom worse), how it arose out of feudalism and where it is likely to lead. Concentrating on the social and economic relations in which people earn their livings, Marx saw behind capitalism's law and order appearance a struggle of two main classes: the capitalists, who own the productive resources, and the workers or proletariat, who must work in order to survive. "Marxism" is essentially Marx's analysis of the complex and developing relations between these two classes.

1 ORIGINS

The main theories that make up this analysis—the theory of alienation, the labour theory of value, and the materialist conception of history—must all be understood with this focus in mind. Even Marx's vision of socialism emerges from his study of capitalism, for socialism is the unrealized potential inherent in capitalism itself (something our great material wealth and advanced forms of organization makes possible) for a more just and democratic society in which everyone can develop his/her distinctively human qualities.

Some socialist ideas can be traced as far back as the Bible, but Marxism has its main intellectual origins in German philosophy, English political economy, and French utopian socialism. It is from the German philosopher, Hegel, that Marx learned a way of thinking about the world, in all its fluid complexity, that is called "dialectics." The British political economists, Adam Smith and David Ricardo, provided Marx with a first approximation of his labour theory of value. From the French utopians, especially Charles Fourier and the Comte de Saint-Simon, Marx caught a glimpse of a happier future that lay beyond capitalism. Along with the paradox of an Industrial Revolution which produced as much poverty as it did wealth, these are the main ingredients that went into the formation of Marxism.


2 MARXIST PHILOSOPHY
Marx’s study of capitalism was grounded in a philosophy that is both dialectical and materialist. With dialectics, changes and interaction are brought into focus and emphasized by being viewed as essential parts of whatever institutions and processes are undergoing change and interaction. In this way, the system of capitalism, the wider context, is never lost sight of when studying any event within it, an election or an economic crisis for example; nor are its real past and future possibilities, the historical context, ever neglected when dealing with how something appears in the present. Whatever Marx’s subject of the moment, his dialectical approach to it insures that his fuller subject is always capitalist society as it developed and is still developing. The actual changes that occur in history are seen here as the outcome of opposing tendencies, or “contradictions”, which evolve in the ordinary functioning of society.

Unlike Hegel’s dialectic, which operates solely on ideas, Marx’s dialectic is materialist. Marx was primarily concerned with capitalism as lived rather than as thought about, but people’s lives also involve consciousness. Whereas Hegel examined ideas apart from the people who held them, Marx’s materialism puts ideas back into the heads of living people and treats both as parts of a world that is forever being remade through human activities, particularly in production. In this interaction, social conditions and behavior are found to have a greater affect on the character and development of people’s ideas than these ideas do on social conditions and behavior.

3 ALIENATION

Marx’s specific theories are best understood as answers to his pointed questions about the nature and development of capitalism. How do the ways in which people earn their living affect their bodies, minds and daily lives? In the theory of alienation, Marx gives us his answer to this question. Workers in capitalist society do not own the means—machines, raw materials, factories—which they use in their work. These are owned by the capitalists to whom the workers must sell their “labour power”, or ability to do work, in return for a wage.

This system of labour displays four relations that lie at the core of Marx’s theory of alienation: 1) The worker is alienated (or cut off) from his or her productive activity, playing no part in deciding what to do or how to do it. Someone else, the capitalist, also sets the conditions and speed of work and even decides if the worker is to be allowed to work or not, i.e. hires and fires him. 2) The worker is alienated from the product of that activity, having no control over what is made or what happens to it, often not even knowing what happens to it once it has left his hands. 3) The worker is alienated from other human beings, with competition and mutual indifference replacing most forms of cooperation. This applies not only to relations with the capitalists, who use their control over the worker’s activity and product to further their own profit maximizing interests, but also to relations between individuals inside each class as everyone tries to survive as best he can. 4) Finally, the worker is alienated from the distinctive potential for creativity and community we all share just because we are human beings. Through labour which alienates them from their activity, product and other people, workers gradually lose their ability to develop the finer qualities which belong to them as members of the human species.

The cutting of these relationships in half leaves on one side a seriously diminished individual physically weakened, mentally confused and mystified, isolated and virtually powerless. On the other side of this separation are the products and ties with other people, outside the control and lost to the understanding of the worker. Submitted to the mystification of the marketplace, the worker’s products pass from one hand to another, changing form and names along the way—“value”, “commodity”, “capital”, “interest, rent, wage”—depending chiefly on who has them and how they are used. Eventually, these same products—though no longer seen as such—reenter
the worker's daily life as the landlord's house, the grocer's food, the banker's loan, the boss's factory, and the various laws and customs that prescribe his relations with other people.

Unknowingly, the worker has constructed the necessary conditions for reproducing his own alienation. The world that the worker has made and lost in alienated labour reappears as someone else's private property which he only has access to by selling his labour power and engaging in more alienated labour. Though Marx's main examples of alienation are drawn from the life of workers, other classes are also alienated to the degree that they share or are directly effected by these relations, and that includes the capitalists.
John Rawls' Theory of Justice

John Rawls' book ‘Theory of Justice’ (1971) explores the construction of socially just systems against a background of Kantian influences (for more information on Immanuel Kant see click here). In particular he emphasises the individual's freedom of choice and, one could argue, sense of duty to make decisions which will act in the interests of all, rather than just oneself. However, this is balanced by the notion that the development of a just society is always going to played out against the backdrop of each individual's place in such a community, and how the creation of laws to govern it will affect them.

Rawls’ basic idea is that justice should involve developing social institutions that do not lead to unfair advantages for some at the expense of others. Any political or economic system which leads to racial, social, sexual, religious or economic discrimination, for example, is to be rejected (or deemed wrong). In order to facilitate the construction of a just society one actually needs to revert to a hypothetical ‘original ignorance’ (or what Rawls calls a 'Veil of Ignorance'), so that all decisions are made from a level playing field. Without this unfair advantages might be had by some at the expense of others.

‘The principles [the individual] acts upon are not adopted because of his social position or natural endowments, or in view of the particular kind of society in which he lives or the specific things that he happens to want...’ (Rawls quoted in Sorell T, 'Moral Theory and Capital Punishment' p.23f)

Although no-one knows their position in society it must be assumed that individuals have enough knowledge about economics, sociology and politics to make 'good' decisions.

Starting from this position of 'original ignorance' principles for social ordering are developed which will ultimately protect the interests of those who might be in 'the worst case scenarios'. This is done because the 'law-makers' might be in that position. In Rawl's just society there is no reason to assume that the 'law-makers' have any political, social or economic advantage which might cause them to formulate certain laws to protect.

From here Rawls establishes two ordering principles:

**First principle**

Every individual is to have the right to the greatest equal liberty *(which rules out persecution, political oppression and discrimination)*

**Second principle**

Social and economic inequalities are justified only insofar as they benefit the least advantaged.

The first principle has priority over (and governs) the second. This means that people are allowed to attain positions of economic success in a social system only if it will also benefit the less well off (E.g. The distribution of financial benefits through increased taxation). However, people are not entitled to the product of their natural ability as this may impose unfair disadvantages on minorities. For example, if a person has a good business head and is able to make good financial decisions to increase their wealth, this does not mean that they should be entitled to a better standard of living than others. Furthermore, those who accumulate such sums of money have the responsibility to make sure that others are not treated unfairly as a result of their gains (for an example of what Rawls is trying to address here see www.fairtrade.org.uk).
Appendix 10 – Robert Nozick

According to Nozick there are three sets of rules of justice, defining:

4. how things not previously possessed by anyone may be acquired;
5. how possession may be transferred from one person to another; and
6. what must be done to rectify injustices arising from violations of (1) and (2).

A distribution is just if it has arisen in accordance with these three sets of rules.

Nozick does not try to specify in detail the rules under the above three headings ('I shall not attempt that task here', p. 153). However, he does give some further information on rules of acquisition; see p. 174ff. He follows John Locke who as Nozick interprets him held that a person has a right (1) to own what he makes, and (2) to appropriate anything not already owned, provided he leaves 'enough and as good' for others - i.e. provided his appropriation leaves them no worse off. (Nozick calls this the 'Lockean proviso'.)

It is not clear how Nozick would defend (1) against his own criticisms of Locke (p. 174-5). As for (2), he points out that the proviso cannot reasonably be taken to mean that there can be no worsening of others' opportunities to appropriate; it must mean that in other respects they are no worse off. Nozick raises the question 'No worse than they would be how?' What is the baseline? In Rawls's theory the representative worst-off person must be no worse off than he would be under any other possible arrangement. Nozick rejects this, but does not define another baseline: 'This question of fixing a baseline needs more detailed investigation that we are able to give it here'; p. 177. However, 'whether or not Locke's particular theory of appropriation can be spelled out so as to handle various difficulties, I assume that any adequate theory of Justice in acquisition will contain a proviso similar to the weaker of the ones we have attributed to Locke'; p. 178. Nozick says that the proviso is violated if a person appropriates all of something necessary to life - or purchases it, or combines with the other owners of it, or finds himself the sole owner when other supplies are lost (e.g. when all the other water holes dry up). Nozick refers to the possibility of losing entitlement to something that was originally yours because of developments since, such as the drying up of other waterholes, as the 'historical shadow' of the Lockean proviso; p. 180.

Nozick vs. Rawls

Robert Nozick defends a conception of justice very unlike Rawls's conception.

Basic idea = A distribution is just if and only if everyone is entitled to the holdings they possess in that distribution.

Three elements to this "entitlement conception":

1. Principles of justice in acquisition define how unowned resources can become owned.
2. Principles of justice in transfer define how holdings can be transferred from one person to another.
3. Principles of rectification of injustice define how much compensation is owed for breaches of principles 1 & 2.

In a slogan:

   From each as they choose, to each as they are chosen.

Why does Nozick think his entitlement conception of justice is superior to Rawls and others' conceptions?

**The "Wilt Chamberlain" Argument**

Start with any distribution of holdings you believe to be just (say, an egalitarian distribution). Call this D1.

Suppose Wilt sets up a contract that says 25¢ of each home game ticket price goes directly to him. Over a year one million fans each drop a quarter in a box at the gate.

This nets Wilt $250,000, producing a new distribution D2.

D2 is unequal. But how, asks Nozick, could it be unjust? It arose via voluntary steps from a just distribution D1!

The lesson = absent constant interference, liberty will disrupt any favored pattern. So we should prefer entitlement conceptions of justice to “patterned” ones.