

Adam Smith
(1723-1790)

LIBERALISM

If humans are given the freedom to pursue their own interests this will unintentionally serve the interests of society as a whole. One example of this is the division of labor. If capitalists are allowed to break up the production process into individual tasks this will decrease the cost of labor, which will raise real income because the cost of goods will decrease. This will then lead to the market growing by boosting consumer demand which will then increase the division of labor even more. This “virtuous spiral of economic development” results in wealth, collective wealth- the wealth of nations.

Quote: “It is not from the benevolence of the butcher, the brewer, or the baker that we expect our dinner, but from their regard to their own interest”

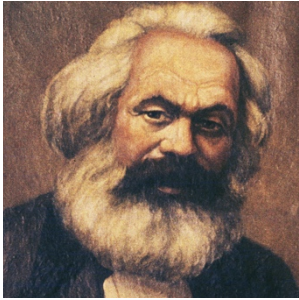


Georg Wilhelm
Friedrich Hegel
(1770-1831)

IDEALISM

Humans have fashioned the world according to the ideas they have about it. Ideas aren't static though, they change by being confronted by the contradictions in their own logic. When an idea is presented with something about it that is false or doesn't add up, it is overcome in this dialectic process of Thesis (original idea) → Antithesis (contradiction with the original idea) → Synthesis (new idea that overcomes the contradictions of the old idea but still builds on it in some way). According to Hegel this process of ideas transforming leads to absolute truth.

Quote: “The history of the world is nothing but the development of the idea of freedom”

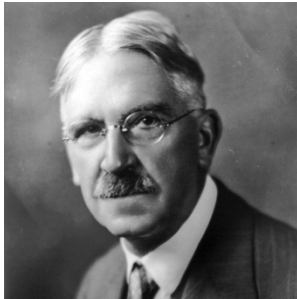


Karl Marx
(1818-1883)

DIALECTICAL HISTORICAL MATERIALISM

Before anything else, humans must organize themselves to satisfy their human needs. Therefore, the way a society organizes itself to provide food, shelter and to reproduce life (the material conditions of society) determine the nature of that society and the individuals in it. Societies and their material conditions are not static, they are changing in response to their own contradictions. These contradictions are elements that pose problems for the continued reproduction of that society. But contradictions alone don't lead to the transformation of society, rather they contribute to class struggle which is the process by which a society transforms.

Quote: "The history of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggles"

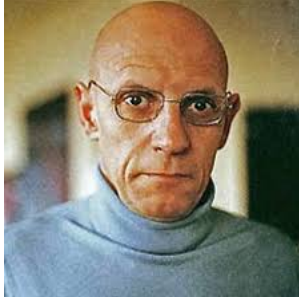


John Dewey
(1858-1952)

PRAGMATISM

Truth is not determined by what is real, but rather what is "true" is whatever beliefs, habits and behaviors work for us, whatever delivers the results that we were reaching for. This is the ultimate test because when a behavior ceases to bring the desired results we must enter a reasoning process to modify that behavior leading us to a resolution that bears within it the new "workable" truth.

Quote: "The self is not something ready-made, but something in continuous formation through the choice of action"



Michel Foucault
(1926-1984)

POST-MODERNISM

All knowledge is subject to power. Mechanisms of social control define and determine what is considered scientific knowledge and this in turn is used to control humans. Everything that we consider to be true is specific to our society, to who is in power and have more to do with controlling the individual than actual truth. Our experience of the world, which is conditioned by the mechanisms of social control, shape our conception of reality.

Quote: "I don't feel that it is necessary to know exactly what I am. The main interest in life and work is to become someone else that you were not in the beginning"