

# Making Sense of the Senseless: War in the Postmodern Era

A Monograph

By

MAJ Larry A. Kay  
US Army



School of Advanced Military Studies  
US Army Command and General Staff College  
Fort Leavenworth, KS

2018

Approved for public release; distribution is unlimited

<b>REPORT DOCUMENTATION PAGE</b>				<i>Form Approved OMB No. 0704-0188</i>	
<small>The public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average 1 hour per response, including the time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing the collection of information. Send comments regarding this burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing the burden, to Department of Defense, Washington Headquarters Services, Directorate for Information Operations and Reports (0704-0188), 1215 Jefferson Davis Highway, Suite 1204, Arlington, VA 22202-4302. Respondents should be aware that notwithstanding any other provision of law, no person shall be subject to any penalty for failing to comply with a collection of information if it does not display a currently valid OMB control number.</small> <b>PLEASE DO NOT RETURN YOUR FORM TO THE ABOVE ADDRESS.</b>					
<b>1. REPORT DATE (DD-MM-YYYY)</b> 24-05-2018		<b>2. REPORT TYPE</b> SAMS Monograph		<b>3. DATES COVERED (From - To)</b> JUN 2017 - MAY 2018	
<b>4. TITLE AND SUBTITLE</b> Making Sense of the Senseless: War in the Postmodern Era				<b>5a. CONTRACT NUMBER</b>	
				<b>5b. GRANT NUMBER</b>	
				<b>5c. PROGRAM ELEMENT NUMBER</b>	
				<b>5d. PROJECT NUMBER</b>	
<b>6. AUTHOR(S)</b> MAJ Larry A. Kay				<b>5e. TASK NUMBER</b>	
				<b>5f. WORK UNIT NUMBER</b>	
<b>7. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES)</b> U.S. Army Command and General Staff College ATTN: ATZL-SWD-GD Fort Leavenworth, KS 66027-2301				<b>8. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION REPORT NUMBER</b>	
<b>9. SPONSORING/MONITORING AGENCY NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES)</b> School of Advanced Military Studies, Advanced Military Studies Program				<b>10. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S ACRONYM(S)</b>	
				<b>11. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S REPORT NUMBER(S)</b>	
<b>12. DISTRIBUTION/AVAILABILITY STATEMENT</b> Approved for Public Release; Distribution is Unlimited					
<b>13. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES</b>					
<b>14. ABSTRACT</b> This research project theoretically describes many of the confusing phenomena occurring in today's strategic context. In particular, the paper argues that the United States is in the midst of a philosophical crisis, the preliminary to a paradigm shift, between modern thought and postmodern thought. It further argues that the United States' governmental institutions, which were designed to be occupied by modern thinkers, will cease to function as intended as more postmodern thinkers occupy them. The research gives a history of thought from Ancient Greece to the modern United States. The paper argues that postmodern thinkers live in hyperrealities, making them susceptible to deception and disinformation, because they seek alternative narratives to explain the world around them. Using the 2016 US Presidential election, the research investigates how Russian strategic deception and disinformation influenced the postmodern thinkers in the United States. The paper describes postmodern strategies than can be employed alone or in conjunction with modern strategies against both modern and postmodern populations.					
<b>15. SUBJECT TERMS</b> Postmodernism, Theory, Deception, Strategy, Postmodern Strategy, Psychology, Psychological Warfare, Social Media Warfare, Cyber Warfare, Information Warfare, Russian Disinformation, 2016 US Presidential Election					
<b>16. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF:</b>			<b>17. LIMITATION OF ABSTRACT</b>	<b>18. NUMBER OF PAGES</b>	<b>19a. NAME OF RESPONSIBLE PERSON</b>
<b>a. REPORT</b>	<b>b. ABSTRACT</b>	<b>c. THIS PAGE</b>			MAJ Larry A. Kay
(U)	(U)	(U)	(U)	54	<b>19b. TELEPHONE NUMBER (Include area code)</b> 954-261-2802

Reset

# Monograph Approval Page

Name of Candidate: MAJ Larry A. Kay

Monograph Title: Making Sense of the Senseless: War in the Postmodern Era

Approved by:

\_\_\_\_\_, Monograph Director  
Alice Butler-Smith, PhD

\_\_\_\_\_, Seminar Leader  
Tod Strickland, COL

\_\_\_\_\_, Director, School of Advanced Military Studies  
James C. Markert, COL

Accepted this 24<sup>th</sup> day of May 2018 by:

\_\_\_\_\_, Director, Graduate Degree Programs  
Robert F. Baumann, PhD

The opinions and conclusions expressed herein are those of the student author and do not necessarily represent the views of the U.S. Army Command and General Staff College or any other government agency. (References to this study should include the foregoing statement.)

Fair use determination or copyright permission has been obtained for the inclusion of pictures, maps, graphics, and any other works incorporated into this manuscript. A work of the United States Government is not subject to copyright, however further publication or sale of copyrighted images is not permissible.

## Abstract

Making Sense of the Senseless: War in the Postmodern Era, by MAJ Larry A. Kay, US Army, 74 pages

This research project theoretically describes many of the confusing phenomena occurring in today's strategic context. In particular, the paper argues that the United States is in the midst of a philosophical crisis, the preliminary to a paradigm shift, between modern thought and postmodern thought. It further argues that the United States' governmental institutions, which were designed to be occupied by modern thinkers, will cease to function as intended as more postmodern thinkers occupy them. The research gives a history of thought from Ancient Greece to the modern United States. The paper argues that postmodern thinkers live in hyperrealities, making them susceptible to deception and disinformation, because they seek alternative narratives to explain the world around them. Using the 2016 US Presidential election, the research investigates how Russian strategic deception and disinformation influenced the postmodern thinkers in the United States. The paper describes postmodern strategies than can be employed alone or in conjunction with modern strategies against both modern and postmodern populations.

## Contents

Acknowledgement .....	v
Acronyms.....	vi
Figures .....	vii
Making Sense of the Senseless.....	1
A Journey of Thought.....	14
Manna in the Desert of a Postmodern Mind.....	42
Looking Forward to the Past.....	53
Back to the Basics.....	62
Bibliography .....	70

## Acknowledgement

I am indebted to Dr. Alice Butler-Smith and Colonel Tod Strickland. They provided me the liberty to explore this topic and take this project in unimaginable directions. Their wise counsel, guidance, professionalism and candor helped immensely. I am thankful of my classmates who provided keen insights by challenging me daily. I have become a better officer for it. I would like to thank my children, Benjamin and Alexander, for holding me accountable as a father. Last but not least, I want to thank my beautiful wife, Jillian, for enduring and tolerating, but supporting my continuous efforts to serve my country.

## Acronyms

ATP	Army Techniques Publication
BCE	Before Common Era
CE	Common Era
CIA	Central Intelligence Agency
JP	Joint Publication
KGB	Komitet gosudarstvennoy bezopasnosti (Russian Intelligence Agency)
US	United States

## Figures

Figure 1. Raphael's <i>The School of Athens</i> .....	18
Figure 2. Philosophical crises using Thomas Kuhn's paradigm shifts.....	35
Figure 3. Assorted Facebook posts created by Russia .....	42
Figure 4. A graphical interpretation of Carl von Clausewitz's paradoxical trinity .....	50



## Making Sense of the Senseless

Those who can make you believe absurdities, can make you commit atrocities.

- Francois-Marie Arouet, *Questions Sur Les Miracles*

On December 4, 2016, a married father of two from Salisbury, North Carolina walked into a pizzeria in Washington, DC armed with a rifle and pistol to liberate child sex slaves from a basement in which Hillary Clinton sexually abused children in satanic rituals.<sup>1</sup> Confident that he was, “sacrificing the lives of a few for the lives of many,” he boldly searched the pizzeria, scaring the patrons, shooting locks on doors only to discover that the pizzeria did not, in fact, have a basement, and nor were there any child sex slaves.<sup>2</sup> The liberator’s confidence evaporated and morphed into dejection: he had been duped by disinformation, and betrayed by his self-contrived narratives about some political elites.

At first glance, this story seems like an anomaly, one of an endless amount of conspiracy theories that have flourished for centuries. However, this conspiracy theory transcended the confines of secret underground meetings and fringe internet blogs; what was cognitive manifested itself in the physical. An ostensibly normal American thought the disinformation credible enough to sacrifice himself and his posterity. The claim that Hillary Clinton was a pedophile started in a Facebook post, spread to Twitter and then went viral with the help of widely visited platforms like Breitbart and Info-Wars.<sup>3</sup> Within weeks of its fabrication, information about this reported pedophile ring had been viewed and shared by millions of Americans. Among the millions of people who

---

<sup>1</sup> Amanda Robb, “Anatomy of a Fake News Scandal: Inside the web of conspiracy theorists, Russian operatives, Trump campaigners and Twitter bots who manufactured the 'news' that Hillary Clinton ran a pizza-restaurant child-sex ring,” *Rolling Stone Magazine*, November 16, 2017, accessed April 5, 2018, <https://www.rollingstone.com/politics/news/pizzagate-anatomy-of-a-fake-news-scandal-w511904>

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

shared this story were senior politicians and military officers.<sup>4</sup> The days when only the uninformed masses could fall prey to deception by cleverer adversaries, were over; even the smartest, most experienced and most educated, given a lack of vigilance and an abundance of misguided opportunism, can become victims.

On the other side of the world, viewers watched in horror as Syrian children choked to death as the result of a chemical weapons attack. Syrian President Bashar Assad suggested that reports of chemical weapons used by his military in the April 4, 2017 attack in Khan Sheikhoun were “100 per cent fabricated.”<sup>5</sup> When asked about footage and videos of the victims, he added, “Those are not real. Those are fake. You can forge anything these days. We are living in a fake news era.”<sup>6</sup> Meanwhile, in the United States, seven million subscribers to Info-Wars, which is the same website that spread the Pizzagate story, listened as one of their hosts propagated a conspiracy theory that an al-Qaeda affiliated group armed and funded by George Soros, the United Kingdom, and Hillary Clinton were responsible for the chemical weapons attack.<sup>7</sup> Expectedly, Breitbart News published an article highlighting Russia’s support of Assad’s claim, stating that the United Nations was consuming “fake information.”<sup>8</sup>

Very differently, in the last decade, the United States has witnessed a surge in protests, social

---

<sup>4</sup> Bryan Bender, “Flynn Under Fire for Fake News,” *Politico Magazine*, December 5, 2016, accessed April 10, 2018, <https://www.politico.com/story/2016/12/michael-flynn-conspiracy-pizzeria-trump-232227>.

<sup>5</sup> David Gilbert, “Fake News: Assad, Despite Overwhelming Evidence, says Report of Chemical Attack in Syria are Fabricated,” *Vice News*, April 13, 2017, accessed April 5 2018, [https://news.vice.com/en\\_us/article/5958p5/assad-despite-overwhelming-evidence-says-chemical-weapons-attacks-in-syria-were-fabricated](https://news.vice.com/en_us/article/5958p5/assad-despite-overwhelming-evidence-says-chemical-weapons-attacks-in-syria-were-fabricated).

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

<sup>7</sup> Mimi Al-Lanham, “Report: Soros-Linked Group Behind Chemical Attack in Syria,” *InfoWars*, April 5, 2017, accessed April 5, 2018, <https://www.infowars.com/report-soros-linked-group-behind-chemical-attack-in-syria/#>

<sup>8</sup> John Hayward, “Russia Stands Behind Assad after Chemical Weapons Attack,” *Breitbart News*, April 5, 2017, accessed April 5, 2018, <http://www.breitbart.com/national-security/2017/04/05/russia-stands-behind-assad-after-syrian-chemical-weapons-attack/>

upheaval and social movements. The Occupy Wall Street, Black Lives Matter, Environmentalist Movement, Women's March, and March for Science movements have caused protests and marches similar in scope and frequency to that of the 1960s. Superficially, these movements attempt to displace power from the established power structures and replace the power with the marginalized elements of society around which specific movements are centered. For example, the Black Lives Matter movement's mission is "to build local power and to intervene in violence inflicted on Black communities by the state and vigilantes."<sup>9</sup> The mission of the Women's March is "to harness the political power of diverse women and their communities to create transformative social change."<sup>10</sup> Similarly, the March for Science's mission is to "publicly communicate science as a pillar of human freedom and prosperity," indicating as well that they "base their political positions, advocacy and outreach efforts, and internal practices on best-available evidence."<sup>11</sup> The mission of the White Nationalist Movement, which participated in the Unite The Right or White Lives Matter protests in Charlottesville in 2017 is to "unify the American people and liberate them from the communist regime that currently occupies the White House and Congress."<sup>12</sup> Adding that "the American people have been shackled with chains of 'equality', beaten bloody with the whip of 'diversity,' and forced to bow a knee before the tyrants ruining our homeland."<sup>13</sup> The mission of Infowars is to, "seek truth and expose the scientifically engineered lies of the globalists and their

---

<sup>9</sup> "About," Black Lives Matter, accessed April 5, 2018, <https://blacklivesmatter.com/about>.

<sup>10</sup> "Unity Principles," Women's March, accessed April 5, 2018, <https://www.womensmarch.com/mission>.

<sup>11</sup> "About Us: Our Mission," March for Science, accessed April 5, 2018, <https://www.marchforscience.com/our-mission>.

<sup>12</sup> "Mission," White Nationalist Movement, accessed January 12, 2018, <http://www.nationalist.org>.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid.

ultimate goal of enslaving humanity.”<sup>14</sup> Narratives, in this vein, become conduits or vehicles for constructing and reconstructing imagined identities, the goal of which is to get people to argue about who they are, rather than what they have.

These movements and the ideologies that motivate them are not so uniquely different with regard to the history of social movements in the United States and the world. Yet, in recent years, there was something sensationally different about them: The strategic context of the 1960s is not the same as it is today. While many of the ideas remain the same, the internet, social media and traditional, television news media make these protests more intimate, with the traditionally disengaged becoming not only engaged, but politically active. The groups’ organizers and even just ordinary people saw an opportunity to support and grow their cause. Unfortunately, adversaries of the United States exploited this opportunity as well.

On January 6, 2017, the Director of National Intelligence published an Intelligence Community Assessment, stating that Russia conducted an extensively complex influence campaign that was designed to undermine public faith in the US democratic process, denigrate Secretary Hillary Clinton, and harm her electability and potential presidency.<sup>15</sup> With a shrewd understanding of how best to use social media, the Russians mimicked political discourse and rhetoric to divide Americans over some of the nation’s most sensitive social issues, such as Black Lives Matter, Islamic terrorism, immigration reform, environmentalism, and white nationalism.<sup>16</sup> Russia’s influence campaign employed disinformation, which consisted of imagined and artificial stories and

---

<sup>14</sup> “About Alex Jones,” InfoWars, accessed April 5, 2018, <https://www.infowars.com/about-alex-jones/>

<sup>15</sup> Office of the Director of National Intelligence, “Assessing Russian Activities and Intentions in Recent US Elections,” Intelligence Community Assessment 2017-01D, January 6, 2017, ii, accessed April 5, 2018, [https://www.dni.gov/files/documents/ICA\\_2017\\_01.pdf](https://www.dni.gov/files/documents/ICA_2017_01.pdf)

<sup>16</sup> Craig Timberg, “Russian Ads, Now Publicly Released, Show Sophistication of Influence Campaign,” *The Washington Post*, November 1, 2017, accessed April 5, 2018, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/business/technology/russian-ads-now-publicly-released-show-sophistication-of-influence-campaign/2017/11/01/d26ae2-bf1b-11e7>

voices. Then, in some cases, the Russians would create identities that would own the voices, which would then communicate with real people's voices.<sup>17</sup> Ordinary Americans, who innocently enjoyed social media, became the direct target of this disinformation, deceived into believing facts about politicians that did not correspond or cohere to reality. Many took these lies at face-value and did not seek to corroborate or critically examine them. The truth about the reports was secondary to the interesting and sensational emotional response they provoked; it was entertaining. It relieved both the producer/author and the consumer/audience of information of the obligation of being right, and demanded that they only be interesting.<sup>18</sup>

By this point, these stories may seem disconnected and random. However, they are particular examples of a growing trend of postmodern thought and, consequently, postmodern political strategies in the United States and the world.<sup>19</sup> The conspiracy theories highlight two characteristics of postmodern thought: these stories are often referred to by academic and political elites as 'fringe' or nonsense, thereby making them marginalized and worthy of examination and adoption by postmodernists. In fact, journalist Glenn Greenwald astutely remarked, "no conspiracy theory is too moronic, too demented, too self-evidently laughable to disqualify its advocates from being taken seriously."<sup>20</sup> Secondly, postmodernists are unable to offer coherent accounts of reality because, in

---

<sup>17</sup> Summer Meza, "Jenna Abrams, Alt-Right hero on Twitter, Was Really a Russian Troll Who Tricked Republicans and Celebrities," *Newsweek Magazine*, November 3, 2017, accessed April 5, 2018, <http://www.newsweek.com/jenna-abrams-fake-russian-troll-account-700801>

<sup>18</sup> Stanley Fish. *Is There a Text in this Class?* (New York: Harvard University Press, 1982), 180.

<sup>19</sup> Pauline Marie Rosenau, *Postmodernism and the Social Sciences: Insights, Inroads, and Intrusions* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1992), 3. In this monograph, postmodernism, postmodernist, postmodern condition, and postmodern thought describe the same phenomena. Most confuse postmodernism with poststructuralism, which concentrates on deconstruction, language, discourse, meaning and symbols while postmodernism casts a broader net. Put clearly, poststructuralism names a theory, or a group of theories, concerning the relationship between human beings, the world, and the practice of making and reproducing meanings. Catherine Belsey, *Poststructuralism: A Very Short Introduction* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), 5.

<sup>20</sup> Glenn Greenwald, "Centrist Democrats Launch Smear Campaign Against Young Transgender Woman, All to Keep an Old, Straight, White Man, in Power," *The Intercept*, January 15, 2018, accessed April 5, 2018, <https://theintercept.com/2018/01/15/centrist-dems-launch-smear-campaign-against-young-trans->

their view, reality itself is heterogeneous.<sup>21</sup> President Assad's skepticism about photographs and videos is deeper and more dubious than just ordinary incredulity. It represents a substantive refutation of modern technology and science, photographs and videos being artifacts brought about by the technological revolution and emphasized as "evidence" of reality and "truth" by the modern world. Postmodernism rejects epistemological assumptions, refutes methodological conventions, resists knowledge claims, and dismisses policy recommendations based on modern conceptions of evidence.<sup>22</sup>

The growth of marginalized voices on the peripheries of society, such as Black Lives Matter (race), Women's March (gender) et al, represents an attempt by the repressed, disillusioned and border-lined communities to level the playing field – to find the individuals and energies on the margins of society: the alienated, the subaltern, the outcast, the divergent and then, through political activism, shock and destabilize the established power structures that are perceived responsible for their alienation, leaving the door open for a renewal of humanity through socialism.<sup>23</sup> The failure of socialism necessitated postmodernism and it is in this way, an ostensibly innocuous egalitarianism that "postmodernism seeks not to find the foundation and the conditions of truth, but to exercise power for the purpose of social change."<sup>24</sup>

Postmodernism is not some form of trendy, divergent thinking, but rather a serious intellectual, conceptual, cultural, psychological and philosophical engagement which challenges humanity's

---

woman-all-to-keep-an-old-straight-white-man-in-power/

<sup>21</sup> Michael Drolet, *The Postmodern Reader: Foundational Texts* (New York: Routledge, 2004), 33.

<sup>22</sup> Pauline Marie Rosenau, *Post-Modernism and the Social Sciences: Insights, Inroads, and Intrusions*, 1.

<sup>23</sup> Stephen R. C. Hicks, *Explaining Postmodernism: Skepticism and Socialism from Rousseau to Foucault*, 166.

<sup>24</sup> Frank Lentriccia, *Criticism and Social Change* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1983), 12.

engagement with itself and the world; truth and reality are, more or less, on trial.<sup>25</sup> As such, the term often provokes strong resistance, including deep suspicion and outright hostility, especially by those who champion modern thought and reason as the primary way to obtain truth and knowledge.<sup>26</sup> Postmodernism directly challenges the modern paradigm, seeking not to judge modernity by its own criteria but rather to deconstruct it entirely.<sup>27</sup> In the past, postmodern thought was thought to emerge exclusively from academic institutions, because they offered alternative and informed views of the world. However, technology's advancements have created endless spaces within which postmodern thought can incubate.<sup>28</sup> As well, while the political left's postmodern inclination often originates from the academic institutions, the political right's postmodern inclination originates from the internet, where a multitude of divergent perspectives can thrive freely. Frustratingly, there are probably as many forms of postmodernism as there are postmodernists.<sup>29</sup>

Consequently, postmodernism is resistant to attempts at a grand unifying theory that explains itself in entirety, while postmodernists decry causation as a "myth" and logic as useless. Postmodernism is stimulating and fascinating, and simultaneously, it is always on the brink of collapsing into confusion and senselessness.<sup>30</sup> Postmodernists are cognizant of the trenchant contradictions, and revel in the frustration it engenders.<sup>31</sup> It is for this reason that military strategists

---

<sup>25</sup> Michael Drolet, *The Postmodern Reader*, 2.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, 1.

<sup>27</sup> Pauline Marie Rosenau, *Post-Modernism and the Social Sciences: Insights, Inroads, and Intrusions*, 5.

<sup>28</sup> Stephen R. C. Hicks, *Explaining Postmodernism: Skepticism and Socialism from Rousseau to Foucault*, 171. In 1974, Herbert Marcuse, one of the progenitors of postmodernism, was asked whether he thought the New Left was history. He replied, "I don't think it's dead, and will resurrect in the universities."

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, 115.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, 14.

<sup>31</sup> Stephen R. C. Hicks, *Explaining Postmodernism: Skepticism and Socialism from Rousseau to*

must investigate, appreciate and understand how postmodern philosophy and strategies affect the strategic context. And, until the military concedes that postmodern strategies are effective, there will not be a strategist within the military, who will understand what is happening until the social change postmodern strategies seek becomes a societal reality; the peripheries and the fringes will eclipse and transform the whole, bringing with it a new identity.

This monograph is about today's strategic context, one in which postmodern thought is encroaching, and in some cases overwhelming, modern thought. As it so happens, strategies are the products of their own times, primarily attempting to respond to the social, political, economic and technological conditions of their day.<sup>32</sup> Today, strategists should consider, if not embrace, postmodern thought as a lens through which to ascertain the operational environment. The United States' adversaries have, and it is working to their advantage, forcing the United States to fight by their rules.

In warfare, many battles are won before they are fought.<sup>33</sup> The goal of adversaries who exploit postmodern strategies is initially to shape the target audiences' ideas, impression and perspectives to a narrative that is favorable to their policy objectives, and then to transform the structures that determine power, hierarchy, and order itself. Warfare in the postmodern era is multi-domain, borderless competition dominated by state and non-state actors who possess the ability to manipulate information through narratives that decisively overwhelm or undermine adversaries, focusing on non-combatants for sources of internal political dissidence. Through the internet and social media, adversaries will construct, reconstruct, deconstruct, seize and exploit narratives that simultaneously serve the purposes of factional interest groups while disintegrating the harmony of

---

*Foucault*, 184.

<sup>32</sup> Peter Paret, *Makers of Modern Strategy: From Machiavelli to the Nuclear Age* (New Jersey, 1986), 141.

<sup>33</sup> Sun Tzu, trans. by Roger Ames, *The Art of Warfare* (New York: Random House, 1993), 65.



the American narrative. Adversaries, supported by the United States' current political hyper-partisanship, will target biases and perspectives of factions, sewing discord, and exacerbating internal political strife with the aim of creating a political climate that is ultimately agreeable to their policy goals. Catalyzed by the postmodern condition, exacerbated by the internet, and ushered by the failed promises of modern scientific thought and the illusions of socialism, the most imperceptibly threatening arena of battle today is the discursive battlefield of the internet by ways of keen rhetoric and clever deception. This warfare will be waged, firstly, lastly and endlessly, in the minds of the people.

If not mitigated, postmodern thought will become increasingly detrimental to the United States national security. In the long term, postmodern thought affects political behavior by encouraging the decline, radical transformation, and reorientation of political parties, encouraging as well the growth of new social and political movements, and ambivalence toward previously existing ones.<sup>34</sup> Put simply, postmodern thought demands cultural and societal transformation for the sake of transformation. It is a radically different cultural movement coalesced around a broadly gauged reconceptualization of how people experience and explain the world around them.<sup>35</sup> Since, postmodernists are relentlessly constructing and reconstructing their identities and realities, the postmodern self remains an unfinished project, with identity becoming a role and a performance in the making, temporarily selecting the one which becomes best for public consumption and recognition.<sup>36</sup> This penchant and willingness for change is a rich target for adversaries wanting to manipulate populations.

---

<sup>34</sup> John R. Gibbons & Bo Reimer, *The Impact of Values* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995), 309.

<sup>35</sup> Pauline Marie Rosenau, *Post-Modernism and the Social Sciences: Insights, Inroads, and Intrusions*, 4.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, 309.

Additionally, postmodernism affects national security because it distorts the population's ability to distinguish between fact and fiction, which confuses and subsequently prevents the ability of decision-makers to make sound decisions. The modern western conception of warfare presumes that there is one accepted, physical reality in which military operations occur, but postmodernism inhibits the ability of people to determine against which reality they will respond. Alternatively, postmodern strategies like argument deconstruction are often unknowingly employed by modernists. However, it is one thing to employ a postmodern strategy and quite another to be a postmodernist. Often, the success that argument deconstruction offers tends to cause people to use it more frequently. However, if not tended to, habituation can set in and people begin to think deconstructively about everything. Postmodern thought, like antifreeze to a dog, tastes good and is often satisfying, but it kills civil discourse in the end. Postmodernism's ascendance and influence constitute one of the greatest intellectual challenges to established knowledge of the twenty-first century.<sup>37</sup>

Describing postmodern thought without first describing modern and pre-modern thought, would dismiss a key element of postmodern thought: that it is a fundamental repudiation of modern thought, and in many cases it is interdependently described by what it is not. Therefore, the next section will offer a brief history of philosophical themes and thoughts that contributed to the ascendancy of postmodern thought. The central purpose of the next chapter is to argue against postmodern thought's expansion in the United States, because it is anathema to the modern principles on which the country is built and therefore its philosophical ascendancy signals a very real threat to the democratic institutions on which the United States relies. During this review, the research will emphasize a central element of the difficulties and intransigencies that arise when modern thought discursively clashes with postmodern thought: there is an incommensurability of

---

<sup>37</sup> Pauline Marie Rosenau, *Post-Modernism and the Social Sciences: Insights, Inroads, and Intrusions*, 5.

reality in which people cannot appreciate viewpoints because they have different thoughts of what counts as truth and reality. Finally, the second chapter will describe technology's impact on human epistemology, and how the exponential growth of technology contributes to the spread of postmodern thought. Chapter two will explain how the consumption of narratives, and the hyper-real, which consists entirely of images, illusions, and simulations becoming indistinguishable from the entities they were designed to represent, make postmodern thinkers susceptible to deception and disinformation.

Chapter three will discuss propositions and cognitive factors in military deception to demonstrate how postmodern thinkers are especially susceptible to deception. Many in the military demur when it comes to deception in both theory and practice.<sup>38</sup> However, military deception at the strategic level has been and is today an "effective and efficient technique in armed conflict, one that repays handsomely the minimal investment of resources it usually requires."<sup>39</sup> More importantly, the philosophical, epistemological and technological dynamics of the strategic context enhance deception's effectiveness. Postmodernists are committed to the now and the immediate, the interesting and sensational over facts and truth, and are willing to believe a story if it appeals to them, despite its lack of correspondence to reality. A cunning, shrewd and politically astute adversary can easily deceive a population, especially a postmodern society.<sup>40</sup> This theoretical review of deception will provide a solid foundation for postmodern strategies.

Afterward, the research will describe postmodern strategies. Postmodern strategies have the

---

<sup>38</sup> Michael I. Handel, *Masters of War: Classical Strategic Thought, Third, Revised and Expanded Edition* (London: Frank Cass Publishers, 2001), 223. Both Clausewitz and Jomini put little faith in the value of diversion and deception, which they see as the last resort of the weak and desperate, not as a weapon of choice. This critical opinion of deception has been inculcated in the American military due to its reliance on Clausewitzian and Jominian canon.

<sup>39</sup> Donald C. Daniel & Katherine L. Herbig, *Strategic Military Deception* (New York: Pergamon Press, 1981), xiii.

<sup>40</sup> John R. Gibbins & Bo Reimer, *The Impact of Values*, 310.

potential to be employed offensively and defensively. These strategies take into consideration the following elements: identity, narrative, constructivism, language and rhetoric. One specific strategy will be highlighted: historical relinguification. Historical relinguification is a strategy made useful by society's reliance on the internet not for learning about the world and history, but for making new knowledge of the world and history. Postmodern thought states that history is a narrative, and therefore, is intertextual, becoming an endless conversation not grounded in facts.<sup>41</sup> An adversary can emplot a story, represent it as having happened, and the normal person who cannot, or will not verify the claims will believe it as fact.<sup>42</sup> The adversary achieves a *fait accompli* and now has the victim appreciating the truth about their version of history, seeing the world in their terms and questioning their previously held reality. With this in mind, "effective results in war have rarely been attained unless the approach has had such indirectness as to ensure the opponent's unreadiness to meet it:" historical relinguification is the ultimate indirect approach in today's strategic context.<sup>43</sup>

Finally, not only are the means of deception changing, but the potential scope and scale of the consequences of deception are also dramatically increasing.<sup>44</sup> This condition is made stunningly worse in a postmodern strategic context, where deception becomes the preferred strategy over actual physical conflict. Therefore, strategic counter-deception, which seeks to identify when deception is employed, will be a skill that the entire United States population must learn. For as long as the internet remains an open and free marketplace of information, it will abound with

---

<sup>41</sup> Pauline Marie Rosenau, *Post-Modernism and the Social Sciences: Insights, Inroads, and Intrusions*, xii.

<sup>42</sup> Emplotment is the assembly of a series of historical events into a narrative with a plot.

<sup>43</sup> B. H. Liddell Hart, *Strategy: Second Revised Edition* (New York: Henry Holt & Company, Inc., 1967), 5.

<sup>44</sup> Michael Bennet & Edward Waltz, *Counter-Deception: Principle and Applications for National Security* (Norwood, MA: Artech House, Inc., 2007), 2.

disinformation and deception. Aware of the potential harm that postmodern strategies can inflict upon society, a propositional framework which espouses epistemic vigilance will be presented. As well, there will be institutional recommendations that could develop a level of resilience within society to repel deception in the future. American society needs to reflect on its philosophy and epistemology in a way that allows it, like the Enlightenment thinkers, to regain knowledge of its own roots. Only in this way, can the United States overcome its current philosophical crisis.<sup>45</sup>

---

<sup>45</sup> Marshall Berman, *All That is Solid Melts into Air: The Experience of Modernity* (London: Verso, 1983), 13.

# A Journey of Thought

## Postmodernism's Effect on the Strategic Context

Knowledge is an unending adventure at the edge of uncertainty.

—Jacob Bronowski

Everyone practices some form of philosophy. Equally true, most people's sense of reality and worldview are shaped by that philosophy.<sup>46</sup> Philosophy is a powerful force in the human experience, and it is an extremely broad term covering a very wide range of intellectual activities.<sup>47</sup> Man's search for meaning is often identified with reference to its fundamental questions, such as "What is knowledge?" (epistemology), "What is reality?" (metaphysics), and "What is good?" (ethics).<sup>48</sup> In some ways, it is negligent to not seek to understand what one believes, which is one of the purposes of philosophy: not define or describe faith, but to explain it.<sup>49</sup>

In many ways, the history of the world is a history of thoughts, shaped by ideas before it is shaped by events.<sup>50</sup> Philosophy helps understand the structures of thought and patterns of inquiry that guide people and societies through their lives. Understanding these structures involves critically observing how the parts function and interconnect; how information is perceived, understood and subsequently manifested as behavior and action. Taken a step further, it helps

---

<sup>46</sup> Edward Craig, *Philosophy: A Very Short Introduction* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), 1.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*, 5.

<sup>48</sup> C. Stephen Evans, *Pocket Dictionary of Apologetics & Philosophy of Religion* (Illinois: InterVarsity Press, 2002), 92. Epistemology, often referred to the theory of knowledge, addresses questions about knowledge and belief and related issues such as justification and truth. Metaphysics, often described as ontology, deals with the nature of reality. Ethics is a branch of philosophy concerned with questions of right and wrong, good and evil, virtues and vices. This monograph will address all branches of philosophy, with ethics addressed the least.

<sup>49</sup> Yuval Levin, *Tyranny of Reason: The Origins and Consequences of the Social Scientific Outlook* (Maryland: University Press of America, Inc., 2001), 45.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*, 215.

understand what happens, for better or worse, when these structures change.<sup>51</sup> The central purpose of this chapter is to argue against the expansion of postmodern thought in the United States, because it is anathema to the modern principles on which the country is built and therefore its philosophical ascendancy signals a very real threat to the democratic institutions on which the United States relies.

There are numerous philosophical schools of thought that span history and geography. These philosophies depend on the social, political, economic, geographic and cultural circumstances at the time; they are dynamic and constantly evolving. The history of thought is interesting, dense, long, and still ongoing – a never-ending story. This brief meta-inquiry aims to demystify some of philosophy's more inaccessible concepts, ideas and themes, by employing hermeneutics. The word 'hermeneut' derives from the name of the Greek god Hermes, who was/is the patron deity of speech and writing.<sup>52</sup> Hermeneutics helps to understand by integrating facts into a meaningful whole; this type of interpretation is interested in the nature of understanding or how and under what conditions does understanding occur.<sup>53</sup> The juxtaposition of modern thought with postmodern thought through hermeneutic lenses will explain how they are simultaneously dependent on, yet, incongruous with each other.

Analyzing the strategic context is necessary for an understanding of the environment in which any offensive or defensive policy formulation will occur.<sup>54</sup> Too often, analysts mistake symptoms for causes, overlooking the meta-structures that cultivate dynamic circumstances. Analyzing meta-

---

<sup>51</sup> Simon Blackburn, *Think: A Compelling Introduction to Philosophy* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 2.

<sup>52</sup> Leslie Paul Thiele, *Thinking Politics: Perspectives in Ancient, Modern and Postmodern Political Theory* (New York: Chatham House Publishers, 2003), 16.

<sup>53</sup> Jens Zimmerman, *Hermeneutics: A Very Short Introduction* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2015), 7.

<sup>54</sup> Alan G. Stolberg, "Making National Security Policy in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century" in *U.S. Army War College Guide to National Security Issues* (Pennsylvania: US Army Strategic Studies Institute, 2012), 43.

structures will grow structural knowledge, helping to explain the meaning of elements in a system and context, while also explaining how and why they interact and influence each other.<sup>55</sup>

Philosophy, epistemology, metaphysics and ontology are absent from doctrine concerning the framing of an operational environment.<sup>56</sup> However, an operational environment will be misunderstood, or wrongly framed if the governing philosophies within the strategic context are not analyzed. Moreover, a strategic context is never static. It emerges from history, and changes daily. Therefore, all analyses of a strategic context must explain the conditions which gave rise to the present day situation while offering advice on what may follow in the future.<sup>57</sup> The intent of this chapter is to do just that.

During the premodern era, the majority of events, such as catastrophes, natural disasters, accidents, were explained in the context of a world created and ordered by a divine being. People and societies often believed they were subject to the arbitrary whim of unknown and powerful forces, whose behavior could not be predicted.<sup>58</sup> Metaphysically, our existence was granted to us by a god, who communicated occasionally with people through divine revelation. More often, however, the word of god was intermediated through the dogma of a specific religion, and churches often dictated the rules of community and personal behavior. Epistemologically, people came to understand their world through faith. Science and mysticism were one and the same with science aiming to reveal the miracles and works of God, but not to replace it. In some cases, inanimate objects were anthropomorphically imbued with a spirit that helped humans to understand their place

---

<sup>55</sup> Dietrich Dorner, *The Logic of Failure: Recognizing and Avoiding Error in Complex Situations* (New York: Metropolitan Books, 1996), 41.

<sup>56</sup> A review of Joint and Army doctrine yielded no mention of philosophy, epistemology and ontology.

<sup>57</sup> John Lewis Gaddis, *The Landscape of History: How Historians Map the Past* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), 11.

<sup>58</sup> Ibid., xviii.



in the world. Politically and economically, feudalism dominated whereby certain castes provided opportunities to other castes to work in exchange for permitted residence, resulting in virtually no ability to escape the circumstances into which one was born.

And I will establish my covenant with you that neither shall all flesh be cut off any more by the waters of a flood; nor shall there any more be a flood to destroy the earth.

—Genesis, 9:11

The Hebrews partially escaped the randomness through monotheism, finding a single source of world laws.<sup>59</sup> The book of Genesis, the cornerstone of Judeo-Christian faith, promises man relief from the capricious unpredictability of the premodern world. Furthermore, Abraham's plea to save the innocent in the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah explains that rules and the rational laws which govern the world are set above the world and in some ways above god.<sup>60</sup> It is this righteousness, combined with concepts of justice, fairness, morality and law, that consign the Hebrews to seek a holistic approach when studying the natural and social worlds, and to understand experiences more broadly aiming to predict what was to come next. Jesus's pledge of immutability, that he will remain "the same yesterday, today and forever," breeds confidence and removes triviality.<sup>61</sup> These rules became a powerfully liberating force, freeing man to understand the world by experience and rationality, without sudden, senseless interferences.

Ancient Greek religion celebrated the twelve Olympians, whose influence eventually extended beyond Greece and the Mediterranean to Asia Minor. In Greek myth, the world was born out of chaos, the deep and empty nothingness.<sup>62</sup> To make sense of natural phenomenon, the ancient Greeks worshipped and appeased the gods, believing that these gods controlled the world. The

---

<sup>59</sup> Yuval Levin, *Tyranny of Reason: The Origins and Consequences of the Social Scientific Outlook* 13.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid., 8.

<sup>61</sup> *The New Testament*, Hebrews, 13:8.

<sup>62</sup> Yuval Levin, 11.

Greeks tended to assign causality to events in their world, attributing specific occurrences to individual actions of the gods, but did not provide predictions of the future.<sup>63</sup> This world, subject to the whims of imperfect, unpredictable gods, proved unbearably trivial as the Greek worldview began to develop.<sup>64</sup> And, as the power and importance of Ancient Greece spread, innovations of thought including mathematics, medicine, architecture, politics, and economics became commonplace. In turn, gradually seeing rationality in nature itself persuaded the Greeks that god and nature were one and the same. This equation grew in Hellenistic philosophy until it approached a rudimentary pantheism, resulting in the total equation of nature with the divine.<sup>65</sup> This rationality attenuated the chaos and disorder of the world, giving life to the idea of order, or in the Greek language: Kosmos.<sup>66</sup>

---

<sup>63</sup> Yuval Levin, *Tyranny of Reason: The Origins and Consequences of the Social Scientific Outlook*, 12.

<sup>64</sup> Ibid., 13.

<sup>65</sup> Ibid. Pantheism is the belief that god and the world are identical, and that god and nature are two names for the same reality. C. Stephen Evans, *Pocket Dictionary of Apologetics & Philosophy of Religion* (Illinois: InterVarsity Press, 2002), 88.

<sup>66</sup> Ibid., 18.

DUE TO COPYRIGHT RESTRICTIONS,  
IMAGES ARE NOT INCLUDED  
IN THIS ELECTRONIC EDITION.

Figure 1. *The School of Athens*. The painting captures the dual character of Western culture from the beginning. Illustration from Sartle. Raphael, *The School of Athens*, 1511, accessed April 9, 2018, <https://www.sartle.com/artwork/the-school-of-athens-raphael>

It is curious that so many great minds might arise in one place at the same time.<sup>67</sup> It is even more curious that three men – a patient, stubborn teacher, a mystical utopian philosopher, and an ingenious logician with eclectic interests, would have such a profound impact on the world thousands of years after their death.<sup>68</sup> The portrait above is Raphael's *The School of Athens*. Completed in 1511 CE, it summarizes the legacy of Plato and Aristotle (center) as the progenitors of Western thought and philosophy.<sup>69</sup> On the left, carrying the *Timaeus*, is Plato, the idealist, whose spirit modeled Western idealism and religious thought.<sup>70</sup> On the right, carrying his *Nicomachean*

---

<sup>67</sup> Yuval Levin, *Tyranny of Reason: The Origins and Consequences of the Social Scientific Outlook* 18.

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid.*, 19.

<sup>69</sup> Arthur Herman, xx. CE: Common Era. BCE: Before Common Era.

<sup>70</sup> *Ibid.*, xxi. The *Timaeus* is a Platonic dialogue that speculates as to the nature of the physical world.

Ethics, is Aristotle, the man of science and logic.<sup>71</sup> Plato points to the Heavens, while Aristotle points to the Earth. The image captures their philosophical perspectives elegantly: mysticism or logic, religion or science, idealism or empiricism.<sup>72</sup> Plato's philosophy constantly looks backward to what man was and what he has lost or to an original of which man is just a pale imitation or flawed copy.<sup>73</sup> It is pessimistic. Whereas, Aristotle's philosophy steadily looks forward to what man can achieve and become. By contrast, it is optimistic. These ideas, modes of thought, and patterns of inquiry eventually collided with the Hebrew, Christian and Islamic models of rationality when Alexander the Great, instructed by Aristotle but favoring Platonic teachings, began his world conquest around 332 BCE.

In addition to war and Hellenism, the Greeks brought a rich tradition of culture, political thought and philosophy to the middle east. Greek philosophy coalesced neatly with Christian doctrine, which allowed Greek-speaking Christians to spread their faith in Hellenistic terms in order to convert educated pagans.<sup>74</sup> In particular, Christians found Plato's mysticism and the immanence of a soul especially appealing and helpful to combat rivaling ideologies centered around naturalism and materialism. This auspicious coalescence began the synthesis of monotheism and Greek philosophy which shaped centuries of Western thought. Meanwhile, Islamic thinkers, such as Avicenna and Averroes, creatively synthesized the Greek philosophical thoughts of Plato and Aristotle with the monotheistic faith of the Qur'an, which served as the foundation of Islamic philosophy today.<sup>75</sup> The joining of Athens and Jerusalem through philosophy and faith became the

---

<sup>71</sup> Arthur Herman, *The Cave and the Light: Plato Versus Aristotle, and the Struggle for the Soul of Western Civilization*, 19.

<sup>72</sup> Ibid., xxi.

<sup>73</sup> Ibid., 52.

<sup>74</sup> Yuval Levin, *Tyranny of Reason: The Origins and Consequences of the Social Scientific Outlook* 39.

<sup>75</sup> C. Stephen Evans, *Pocket Dictionary of Apologetics & Philosophy of Religion*, 62.

great project of the middle ages.

However, philosophical revolutions are slow journeys, expanding and evolving imperceptibly, as the stream of human thought flows in yet unforeseen channels through which to proceed in unimaginable directions.<sup>76</sup> The next thousand years of western thought was guided by an Algerian priest named Saint Augustine of Hippo. In his youth, Saint Augustine was drawn to Platonic ideals and after his baptism and conversion to Christianity, he developed a novel approach to philosophy and theology.<sup>77</sup> In 398 CE, Saint Augustine argued that Christians should avoid the temptations of the physical world, because it is illusory and unable to offer real knowledge or truth.<sup>78</sup> Instead, real knowledge and truth come from within each believer. And, while Saint Augustine employed Aristotelian logic, his premises and consequently the church's, were based on Platonic metaphysics. This proposition is what stifled scientific innovation in this period, because reason's existence was superfluous and could only point back to truth from within each believer.<sup>79</sup> Answers to the deepest questions were found inward within the soul, not outward in a physical reality. This Platonic view – the rejection of a physical world and the non-negotiable insistence on the falsehood of accessible knowledge combined with the absolute knowledge of transcendent truth shaped Christianity during this period.

Eight hundred years later, a scholar monk named Thomas of Aquino, entranced with the writings of Aristotle and dissatisfied with Augustinian perspectives of faith, sought to argue that man can know something about ultimate truth from his experience in the world.<sup>80</sup> The modern

---

<sup>76</sup> Yuval Levin, *Tyranny of Reason: The Origins and Consequences of the Social Scientific Outlook* 42.

<sup>77</sup> Eugene TeSelle, *Augustine: The Theologian* (London, 1970), 347 – 349.

<sup>78</sup> Yuval Levin, 44.

<sup>79</sup> Arthur Herman, *The Cave and the Light: Plato Versus Aristotle, and the Struggle for the Soul of Western Civilization*, 182.

<sup>80</sup> Yuval Levin, 56.

celebration of science actually found its roots in scholasticism.<sup>81</sup> Thomas of Aquino was one of the leading proponents of scholasticism, which synthesized ancient Greek philosophy and biblical theology.<sup>82</sup> Like Aristotle, Thomas of Aquino believed that a complete understanding of something required an understanding of its essence, which, in turn, depends on discovering its purpose by observing its interactions with everything else.<sup>83</sup> Thomas thought god endowed man with reason, and to deny the power of this reason would be throwing away one of god's greatest gifts, so he sought to subject Christianity to the burden of earthly proof.<sup>84</sup> Subsequently, the intricate workings of the physical world could be understood through observation, but the purposes behind them could only be known through revelation and faith.<sup>85</sup> This tremendous realization removed the polemic tension between science and faith, because science no longer sought to disprove god's existence, deeming the question irrelevant for its purposes. Right or wrong, science began to ask "why" by looking backward instead of forward and by seeking causes in lieu of purposes. Consequently, this metaphysical and epistemological rearrangement catapulted society into the modern era.

Ironically, the Enlightenment did not function as its name would portend by providing illumination. Instead, it transformed society by removing the walls of certainty which prevented light from reaching European eyes.<sup>86</sup> In fact, the historical period referred to as the *Enlightenment* is a historian's construction that has changed over time based on the changing interests of modern

---

<sup>81</sup> Leslie Paul Thiele, *Thinking Politics: Perspectives in ancient, modern and postmodern political theory* (New York: Seven Bridges Press, LLC, 2003), 68.

<sup>82</sup> C. Stephen Evans, *Pocket Dictionary of Apologetics & Philosophy of Religion*, 105.

<sup>83</sup> Arthur Herman, *The Cave and the Light: Plato Versus Aristotle, and the Struggle for the Soul of Western Civilization*, 236.

<sup>84</sup> *Ibid.*, 237.

<sup>85</sup> Yuval Levin, *Tyranny of Reason: The Origins and Consequences of the Social Scientific Outlook*, 60.

<sup>86</sup> *Ibid.*, 65.

historians.<sup>87</sup> A central distinction between premodern and modern thought is that premodern thought views the whole as the sum of its parts and modern thought views the parts as defined by the whole, and in terms of time rather than space, this is a distinction between seeing a process defined by its end, and an end defined by its process.<sup>88</sup> This philosophy was espoused by the political thinker, who is most known for saying, “the ends always justify the means.” However, by restoring Niccolo Machiavelli to the world in which his ideas were initially formed, and by interpreting that world hermeneutically, it is simpler to appreciate the extraordinary originality of his approach toward the prevailing philosophical assumptions of his age.<sup>89</sup>

By 1498, when Machiavelli was nominated to his first administrative position, there was a well-established pedagogy derived from ancient Greek scholasticism referred to as humanism.<sup>90</sup> Humanism is a collection of intellectual, literary, sociopolitical, artistic, and scientific currents.<sup>91</sup> Humanists were convinced that they were on the frontiers of a new modernity, which, ironically, could only be measured with respect and homage to traditional ideas of the past.<sup>92</sup> However, humanists distinguished their appreciation for ancient texts by searching for the purest version of the original texts, which were not marred by copyists and translations from so-called barbaric Arabic cultures.<sup>93</sup> This search, and their unequivocal standards of literary purity resulted in the

---

<sup>87</sup> John Robertson, *The Enlightenment: A Very Short Introduction* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2015), 12.

<sup>88</sup> Yuval Levin, *Tyranny of Reason: The Origins and Consequences of the Social Scientific Outlook* 69.

<sup>89</sup> Quentin Skinner, *Machiavelli: A Very Short Introduction* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 2.

<sup>90</sup> *Ibid.*, 4.

<sup>91</sup> Lawrence M. Principe, *The Scientific Revolution: A Very Short Introduction* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), 8.

<sup>92</sup> *Ibid.*, 9.

<sup>93</sup> *Ibid.*, 11. It is not the opinion of the author that Arabic cultures are barbaric. However, that was the prevailing cultural attitude at that time and place in history, and that attitude motivated the philosophical

establishment of new scientific communities, which claimed novelty. It is in this distinction, that the philosophical battle continued centuries after Plato and Aristotle's passing: Humanists favored Platonic teachings, while the other philosophical communities which the humanists deemed illegitimate, favored Aristotelian teachings. Thus there again existed a divide, and philosophical schism which would find new life in the dawn of the modern era.

In fact, the modern era has three main characteristics: scientism, which is the belief in the preeminent power and prerogatives of science; humanism, which celebrates humanity as the master of the world; and progressivism, which is an attitude attributed by the previous two characteristics that sees the world constantly changing for the better.<sup>94</sup> The early modern thinkers' world was an exciting one. Their world was, "woven together in a complex web of connections and interdependencies, its every corner filled with purpose and rich with meaning."<sup>95</sup> This schism manifested itself in the development of modern thinkers. Platonic thinkers saw an orderly, symmetrical, connection between the planetary macrocosm of the "heavens" and the humanly microcosm of society, often referenced in the expression, "as above, so below."<sup>96</sup> Aristotelian thinkers considered proper knowledge as causal knowledge, reduced to four causal categories: efficient cause, material cause, formal cause and final cause, which explains a things' purpose.<sup>97</sup> Central to Aristotelian thought was the need "to define objects in the context of their relationship to other objects."<sup>98</sup> In the future, this stream of thought will have significant implications for the

---

schism to which this paragraph refers.

<sup>94</sup> Leslie Paul Thiele, *Thinking Politics: Perspectives in Ancient, Modern and Postmodern Political Theory* (New York: Seven Bridges Press, LLC, 2003), 68.

<sup>95</sup> Lawrence M. Principe, *The Scientific Revolution*, 21.

<sup>96</sup> Ibid., 23.

<sup>97</sup> Ibid., 24.

<sup>98</sup> Ibid.



concept of identity.

The modern era, of which the Enlightenment is a central period, consisted of three social revolutions that radically altered man's place in his previously constructed reality. The Copernican revolution illustrated that the Earth is not the center of the universe, while the Darwinian revolution (evolution) described that we are not unnaturally separate and diverse from the rest of the animal kingdom, and the neuroscientific revolution showed that humans are far from being Cartesian minds entirely transparent and self-aware.<sup>99</sup> These social revolutions are the result of modern, enlightened thought and self-inquiry, intended to liberate humans from fear and to install them as the masters of their own world.<sup>100</sup> To quote historian Peter Gay, "the triumph of Newtonian science, striking improvements in industrial and agricultural techniques, a wide-spread loss of religious fervor and a corresponding rise of reasonable religion, an ever bolder play of the critical spirit among the old mysteries of church and state which had for centuries escaped criticism, and a new sense of confidence in man's power over his worldly destiny," coalesced to form the foundation of the modern philosophical revolution.<sup>101</sup>

The Enlightenment's significance transcended its immediate historical circumstances, because it foretold of a new, entirely *modern* understanding of humanity's place in the world, while ushering in, yet unknown and unimaginable, improvements to the human condition. This enterprise in truth and knowledge brought rational management to life in order to improve human existence through science and technology.<sup>102</sup> The most fundamental element of modern thought is the central

---

<sup>99</sup> Luciano Floridi, *The 4<sup>th</sup> Revolution: How The Infosphere is Reshaping Human Reality* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2014), 91.

<sup>100</sup> Max Horkheimer and Theodor W. Adorno, *The Dialectic of the Enlightenment* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2002), 1.

<sup>101</sup> Jack P. Greene, "America and the Creation of the Revolutionary Intellectual World of the Enlightenment," in *Papers on the Constitution* (Washington, DC: Center of Military History, 1990), 74.

<sup>102</sup> Stanley J. Grenz, *A Primer on Postmodernism*, 3.

status of objective reason, as the primary means to attain knowledge and ascertain the truth of things, in contrast to the faith, mysticism and intellectual rigidity of the pre-modern era.<sup>103</sup> Metaphysically, the meaning of life can be found in nature, which operates by a series of discoverable laws. Instead of collectivism, individualism is heralded. Politically and economically, every individual, who has pride of place through the powers of reason, has the opportunity to improve their quality of life through liberal capitalism.<sup>104</sup> Importantly, enlightened thought also gave rise to political sovereignty and the social and political revolutions which directly contributed to the American and French revolutions, altering the course of history.<sup>105</sup>

In fact, the United States' birth coincided auspiciously with the ascendancy of modern thought in Europe, and for many, this new land became completely divested of mystery, since its creators, from inception, were armed mentally with the modern tools to craft a perfect society.<sup>106</sup> As a result, America became, "an example to the world, and the hope of the human race," offering heartening proof that man had capacity for growth, and that reason and humanity could become governing principles as opposed to poetic discourse.<sup>107</sup> It was based on the vision of a Platonic Utopia, but built under Aristotelian thought.<sup>108</sup> The three characteristics of modern thought are

---

<sup>103</sup> Stephen R. C. Hicks, *Explaining Postmodernism: Skepticism and Socialism from Rousseau to Foucault*, 9.

<sup>104</sup> The two landmark modern texts which describe this political and economic thoughts are John Locke's *Two Treatises of Government* (1690) and Adam Smith's *The Wealth of Nations* (1776). John Locke argued that all have a natural (unalienable) right to life, liberty and property, with the purpose of government being to preserve those rights.

<sup>105</sup> R. B. Bernstein, *The Founding Fathers: A Very Short Introduction* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2015), 21.

<sup>106</sup> Jack P. Greene, "America and the Creation of the Revolutionary Intellectual World of the Enlightenment," 80.

<sup>107</sup> *Ibid.*, 87.

<sup>108</sup> *Ibid.*, 70. The term utopia was invented by Sir Thomas More in 1515, but the concept of perfect forms, upon which it is based, was conceived of by Plato. Remarkably soon after its discovery, America became the locus for a variety of imaginary utopian constructions.

explicitly enshrined in the United States Constitution: “The Congress shall have Power To promote the Progress of Science and useful Arts...”<sup>109</sup> In essence, the United States was conceived of and designed to be a society that operates exclusively by modern thinkers.

In time, philosophy disarmed superstition.<sup>110</sup> Modern thought grew out of an intellectual revolution that challenged the assumptions of pre-modern thought and philosophy, and it was only a matter of time, before a similar revolution challenged the explanatory power of modern thought and dogmatism.<sup>111</sup> Reducing the human spirit to a variety of mechanistic and discoverable laws and models caused many philosophers to develop alternative philosophical paradigms.<sup>112</sup> Furthermore, for many, modern thought meant the demise of faith, because objective reason emerged as the standard by which people came to terms with the world. And, as reason and science developed together, supernatural, faith-based religious answers disappeared.<sup>113</sup> God became distant and disinterested, while science slowly demystified and unmasked it, exchanging metaphysical explanations that inspired faith with cold, natural laws and rules. Many disliked the idea that god was a distant architect and not a personal god that could speak to all through revelation, and this worried those in the counter-enlightenment movement because it signaled a potential end to traditional values of community, sacrifice, duty, meaning, purpose and connectedness.<sup>114</sup>

---

<sup>109</sup> Charles W. Eliot, “The Constitution of the United States, Article I, Section 8,” *The Harvard Classics: American Historical Documents, 1000 – 1904* (New York: P. F. Collier & Sons Corporation, 1969), 184.

<sup>110</sup> John Robertson, *The Enlightenment: A Very Short Introduction*, 41.

<sup>111</sup> Stanley J. Grenz, *A Primer on Postmodernism*, 84.

<sup>112</sup> These philosophers are Immanuel Kant, David Hume, Gottlieb Fichte and Friedrich Hegel.

<sup>113</sup> Stephen R. C. Hicks, *Explaining Postmodernism: Skepticism and Socialism from Rousseau to Foucault*, 26.

<sup>114</sup> *Ibid.*, 26.

Everything intuited in space or time, and therefore all objects of experience possible to us, are nothing but appearances, that is, mere representations, which in the manner in which they are represented, as extended beings, or as series of alterations, have no independent existence outside our thoughts.

—Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*

Born out of this skepticism was the rejection that science and reason could be applied to the human sciences, such as sociology, psychology, economics, politics, etc., as it was with the natural sciences like mathematics, physics, calculus, chemistry, biology. This skepticism generated the most central premise of the counter-enlightenment: “Reason has no other purpose than to prescribe its own formal rule for the extension of its empirical employment, and not any extension beyond all limits of empirical employment.”<sup>115</sup> Following this, many skeptics also challenged the certainty of sense perception, claiming that what a person observes is actually an illusion or representation of what the senses can detect – that there is an intermediary between the objective world of reality and the subjective world that a person interprets. The subsequent conclusion is that while people must rely on their perceptions, people should always be tentative about their confidence in them – implying that these senses may, if the conditions support it, delude or color a person’s reality differently from one to the next.<sup>116</sup>

What followed next was the concept of dialectic thought which attempted to reveal the contradictions into which uncritical reason falls.<sup>117</sup> The dialectic randomly imbues reality with contradictions, driving the evolution of circumstances to the point that what is metaphysically and epistemologically true in one era will be contradicted by what is true, and therefore, false in the

---

<sup>115</sup> Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, trans. by Paul Guyer and Allen W. Wood (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 614.

<sup>116</sup> Stephen R. C. Hicks, 31.

<sup>117</sup> C. Stephen Evans, *Pocket Dictionary of Apologetics & Philosophy of Religion* (Chicago: InterVarsity Press, 2002), 34.

next.<sup>118</sup> Put differently, a dialectic method reasons by synthesizing opposites to form a novel idea.<sup>119</sup> A dialectal logic followed, which introduced a formal structure of history that progressively unfolded the absoluteness of all interpretations.<sup>120</sup> In G. W. F. Hegel's words, "the real is the rational and the rational is the real." Passion, violence, and apparent accident all serve an emerging rational pattern accessible to active reason.<sup>121</sup> These elements coalesce in an environment, and are subsequently synthesized by the mind as a phenomenon of rational experience.

Together, Kant and Hegel described many similar oppositions of the past. Hegel attempted to rescue rationalist philosophy from ceaseless skepticism just as Kant rescued science.<sup>122</sup> In the tradition of Plato, Hegel posited that existence and reality were unified under a single principle. In the tradition of Aristotle, Kant argued that the mind operating on experience could provide man with an understanding of reality within a limited scope.<sup>123</sup> Overall, the counter-enlightenment period was a fertile womb for postmodern thought, with its final claim that reason cannot *know* reality and that it is subordinate to feelings, emotion, instinct, intuition and faith, with the latter guiding one through life just as well as, if not better than the former.

Rarely, if ever, do philosophical movements appear suddenly. They percolate gradually and imperceptibly through the social, political, economic and cultural elements of a society. Postmodernism's immediate forerunners were the counter-enlightenment and socialist thought.

---

<sup>118</sup> Stephen R. C. Hicks, *Explaining Postmodernism: Skepticism and Socialism from Rousseau to Foucault*, 49.

<sup>119</sup> Yuval Levin, *Tyranny of Reason: The Origins and Consequences of the Social Scientific Outlook*, 183.

<sup>120</sup> Ibid. Karl Marx would later employ this as part of his dialectal materialism.

<sup>121</sup> H. P. Rickman, *Philosophy in Literature* (Madison, NJ: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 1996), 163.

<sup>122</sup> Yuval Levin, 182.

<sup>123</sup> Ibid.

Although widely debated, socialism emerged from rapid economic and social changes associated with urbanization and industrialization which undermined rural economies, subsequently leading to a breakdown of the cultural norms and values that had underpinned the traditional order.<sup>124</sup> Oddly, however, socialism is both a fundamental repudiation of modern thought and simultaneously its false idol. It chides individualism, favoring instead community, cooperation and association; and rather than celebrating the march of progress arising from the modern, liberal, capitalist enterprise, it is preoccupied with the massive inequities which followed as a result.<sup>125</sup> Finally, believing that society is based on harmony, community and cooperation, socialism establishes its ends as a utopia and its ways through social transformation as a *science*, adding that a revolutionary movement should prefigure the society it wishes to create.<sup>126</sup>

Hence, socialism is converted from a dream of a better future for humanity into a science. The bond between science and practical activity, between theory and practice in the science of society, should be the guiding star of the part of the proletariat.

—Joseph Stalin, *Dialectical and Historical Materialism*

In arguing and organizing social transformation toward utopia, Platonic thought emerged yet again, manifested in the totalitarian Soviet Union. For the Soviet perspective, since science was right and discoverable, that everything abided by natural laws, and that there was an inherent symmetry which bespoke of divine order among the heavens as it did with man, the fate of history became an achievable project if only the people listened to the scientists. The Soviet Union's aim was to dismantle institutions which did not conform to the new science, and "to build a society the proper way from scratch."<sup>127</sup> Even today, socialist states struggle to implement policies based on

---

<sup>124</sup> Michael Newman, *Socialism: A Very Short Introduction* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), 6.

<sup>125</sup> Ibid., 6.

<sup>126</sup> Ibid., 15.

<sup>127</sup> Yuval Levin, *Tyranny of Reason: The Origins and Consequences of the Social Scientific Outlook*

socialist ideology, because while the state may evaporate from existence, the ideologies remain so long as people continue to legitimate it, and attempt to re-socialize others in the process.

Consequently, postmodernism emerged when the skeptical epistemology born out of the counter-enlightenment was employed to rationalize “the leap of faith required to continue believing in socialism.”<sup>128</sup>

Correspondingly, postmodernism grew out of a burgeoning disillusionment with the ideas of the Enlightenment. The central thesis of postmodernism is that the Enlightenment is totalitarian in nature, having discarded the meaning of life on its path toward modern science.<sup>129</sup> Postmodernism is often more easily defined by what it is not, rather than what it is. According to postmodernism, the birth of reason was as liberating as it was despotic, and the two, as history demonstrated, were often indistinguishable.<sup>130</sup> Instead of the human freedom that the Enlightenment was purported to bring, postmodernists perceive the rampant domination, alienation and oppression that rational systems produce; modernism made humanity slaves to, not master of, the world.<sup>131</sup>

Postmodern thought contends that human behavior cannot be meaningfully comprehended in a thoroughly objective way, and while there are rules within the realm of the natural sciences, there is no compelling reason to believe that similar laws exist behind the fabric of the social realm.<sup>132</sup> As such, any perceived attempt to exert influence over social dynamics through scientific means is

---

225.

<sup>128</sup> Stephen R. C. Hicks, *Explaining Postmodernism: Skepticism and Socialism from Rousseau to Foucault*, 181.

<sup>129</sup> Max Horkheimer and Theodor W. Adorno, *The Dialectic of the Enlightenment*, 4.

<sup>130</sup> Yuval Levin, *Tyranny of Reason: The Origins and Consequences of the Social Scientific Outlook*, xix.

<sup>131</sup> Mary Jo Hatch, *Organization Theory: Modern, Symbolic and Postmodern Perspectives*, (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2006), 48.

<sup>132</sup> Yuval Levin, xxi.

fundamentally wrong. Furthermore, in the postmodern view, the Enlightenment gave rise to the tyranny of reason, and that the enlightenment and thought stand in the same relationship as that of dictator to humanity.<sup>133</sup>

Where modern thought characterized itself as the narrative embodiment of progress, postmodernism decries this as a myth – the progress myth – which legitimated the development of technology and spread of liberal capitalism and democracy as the means to bettering the world for all of mankind.<sup>134</sup> This is the grand narrative of the modern era, with which postmodernism vehemently disagrees. Postmodern thought contends that a narrative, like a paradigm, exercises a force apart from argumentation and evidence, and in fact, provides the principle means by which every community legitimates itself.<sup>135</sup> As a result, postmodernism argues that there are infinite ways to acquire knowledge and ascertain reality, not just science, reason and logic. Furthermore, postmodernism employs symbolic representations of reality and experience as a means to both deepen humanity's self-knowledge and strengthen its ability to master the universe.<sup>136</sup>

Simplifying to the extreme, I define postmodern as incredulity toward metanarratives.

—Jean-Francois Lyotard, *The Postmodern Condition*

Postmodern thought declares power and knowledge as synonymous.<sup>137</sup> Postmodernism “unmasks” structures, stating that all epochs have embedded within them power relations which structure people's outlook on reality and relations between themselves.<sup>138</sup> Its goal is not to

---

<sup>133</sup> Max Horkheimer and Theodor W. Adorno, *The Dialectic of the Enlightenment*, 6.

<sup>134</sup> Stanley J. Grenz, *A Primer on Postmodernism*, 45.

<sup>135</sup> Ibid., 44.

<sup>136</sup> Michael Drolet, *The Postmodern Reader*, 7.

<sup>137</sup> Max Horkheimer and Theodor W. Adorno, 4.

<sup>138</sup> Michel Foucault, *Archaeology of Knowledge*, 19. The “mask” metaphor recognizes that words are not always to be taken literally or as directly stating a fact, because language can be textured with layers of



formulate an alternative set of assumptions but to declare the impossibility of establishing any such underpinning for knowledge.<sup>139</sup> Postmodernism decries the privileged position that science has in determining what is good for community and humanity. Postmodern arguments use the wars of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, culminating with the atomic bomb, as evidence that science has not ushered in progress like it purports to do, but conversely inflicts massive harm on society. Postmodern arguments also interpret the gross disparity of wealth and the abundance of famine and suffering in the world as the fault of modern thought, posing the question thusly: if modern thought and science indeed solve these problems, then why do they still exist? Postmodernism's own response to this question is that, in fact, science has its own narrative to legitimate its own enterprise. Postmodernists claim that "science cannot know and make known that it is the true knowledge without resorting to the other, narrative, kind of knowledge, which from its point of view is no knowledge at all."<sup>140</sup>

Historical narratives are verbal fictions, the contents of which are as much invented as found and the forms of which have more in common with the counterparts in literature than they have with those in the sciences.

—Hayden White, *The Content of the Form*

Metanarratives are modern and assume the validity of their own truth claims, while mini-narratives, micro-narratives, and local narratives are just stories that make no truth claims.<sup>141</sup> Challenging metanarratives, postmodernists have a tendency to emphasize smaller narratives – those of the forgotten, subordinated and marginalized, in an effort to displace power in society.<sup>142</sup>

---

meaning to cover hypocrisies. Stephen R. C. Hicks, *Explaining Postmodernism*, 175.

<sup>139</sup> Pauline Marie Rosenau, *Post-Modernism and the Social Sciences: Insights, Inroads, and Intrusions*, 6.

<sup>140</sup> Jean-Francois Lyotard, *The Postmodern Condition* (Manchester, UK: Manchester University Press, 1979), 29.

<sup>141</sup> Pauline Marie Rosenau, xii-xiii.

<sup>142</sup> Christopher Butler, *Postmodernism: A Very Short Introduction* (New York: Oxford University

This approach is practiced through pluralism, in which even the arguments of science and history become another set of narratives in competition for acceptance, having themselves no privileged correspondence to reality.<sup>143</sup> In this context, science and history are just a form of fiction.<sup>144</sup>

Deconstruction never had a meaning or interest, at least in my eyes, other than as a radicalization, that is to say, also within the tradition of a certain Marxism, in a certain spirit of Marxism.

—Jacques Derrida

Postmodernism places a special emphasis on language, claiming that its ability to communicate the nature of reality is an illusion. This led to the practice of deconstruction, the premise of which is that truth is always relative to the perspectives and predisposition of the subject.<sup>145</sup> Deconstruction fosters a way of thinking that seeks contradictions between the ideals of modernism and its actual realities.<sup>146</sup> Continuing in the spirit of contradiction, deconstruction also promotes a way of reading that looks for contradictions between what a writer or speaker intends to write or say and what the text actually says.<sup>147</sup> Subsequently, the relationship between language and reality is unreliable because language is a subjectively constructed phenomenon that does not transcend time; a person can communicate utterances that are only true within the context in which they are spoken.<sup>148</sup> Hence, reality is structured by language, and the development of linguistic discourses results in the structure or system consisting of knowledge, subjects and objects.<sup>149</sup> This consideration causes

---

Press, 2002), 13.

<sup>143</sup> Christopher Butler, *Postmodernism: A Very Short Introduction*, 15.

<sup>144</sup> Ibid.

<sup>145</sup> Ibid., 17.

<sup>146</sup> C. Stephen Evans, *Pocket Dictionary of Apologetics & Philosophy of Religion*, 33.

<sup>147</sup> Ibid., 33.

<sup>148</sup> Stanley J. Grenz, *A Primer on Postmodernism*, 114.

<sup>149</sup> Paul R. Viotti and Mark V. Kauppi, *International Relations Theory, 5<sup>th</sup> Edition* (New York:

postmodernists to attack the veracity of philosophical, scientific, and historical narratives.

In the postmodern view, all of history is an attempted narrative, specifically aimed at reinforcing the legitimation of the current paradigm. In their account, there is no final account of historical truth. As such, these narratives can be undone, often paradoxically, so that truth is more like a fiction, with all reading becoming a misreading, all understanding becoming a misunderstanding.<sup>150</sup> Postmodern thought does not necessarily see a distinction between truth and fiction, and if all of history is an artificially manipulated narrative, then novels, literature and television are as much a reality as the reality in which modern man claims to live. Living in a postmodern society is like inhabiting a film-like world, where truth and fiction merge.<sup>151</sup> Reality, in turn, becomes a hyperreal simulation that is often confused with, if not replaced by, its simulacrum.

Postmodernists do not often have a static or permanent identity. They consider identity and being as endless enterprises in self-rediscovery, constructing, deconstructing and reconstructing their identity by either necessity or choice. As such, postmodernism directly refutes the mathematic approach to personal identity, challenging the first and second principles of logic: the law of identity and non-contradiction, which state that every object bears to itself and to nothing else.<sup>152</sup> Similarly, elements of postmodernism frequently masquerade as other schools of thought or academic disciplines, such as pluralism, liberalism, chauvinism, nationalism, relativism and populism. Populism, for instance, helps achieve radical democracy by reintroducing ‘forgotten’ conflicts into politics to foster the mobilization of alienated sectors of society with the aim of

---

Pearson Education, Inc., 2012), 334.

<sup>150</sup> Christopher Butler, *Postmodernism: A Very Short Introduction*, 21.

<sup>151</sup> Stanley J. Grenz, 33.

<sup>152</sup> Graham Priest, *Logic: A Very Short Introduction* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 64.

displacing the dominant power structure.<sup>153</sup> With populism, postmodernism shares spontaneity and a certain anti-intellectualism, a tendency to idealize the masses and their public resistance.<sup>154</sup> And, intending to disrupt an opponent, postmodernism uses relativism only as a rhetorical political strategy, but does not believe it.<sup>155</sup>

Overall, postmodernism is a fundamental repudiation of the modern enlightenment in which all knowledge that has been established in the previous three hundred years is philosophically deconstructed – this includes nation-states and their grand narratives. All that has been discovered as fact is challenged as an oppressive mechanism. Instead of natural reality governed by discoverable laws, there are anti-realities and the hyperreal, which are made more alluring and numerous by the internet. In lieu of sense perception, experience, objective reason and the scientific method, the tools that crafted the scientific revolutions, the postmodern condition favors linguistic, social subjectivism. Where there was free will and individualism in the modern era, the postmodern era is characterized by various identities, groups, classes, races, and sexes socially constructing their realities. Instead of human interests being mutually beneficial, they are sources of conflict and oppression.<sup>156</sup> Finally, and perhaps most significantly, science, technology and knowledge are suspicious edifices developed to maintain the power of the elite.

Conversions will occur a few at a time until, after the last hold-outs have died, the whole profession will again be practicing under a single, but now different paradigm. We must therefore ask how conversion is induced and how resisted.

—Thomas Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*

---

<sup>153</sup> Cas Mudde and Cristobal Rovira Kaltwasser, *Populism: A Very Short Introduction* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2017), 3.

<sup>154</sup> Pauline Marie Rosenau, *Post-Modernism and the Social Sciences: Insights, Inroads, and Intrusions*, 13.

<sup>155</sup> Stephen R. C. Hicks, *Explaining Postmodernism: Skepticism and Socialism from Rousseau to Foucault*, 109.

<sup>156</sup> *Ibid.*, 14.

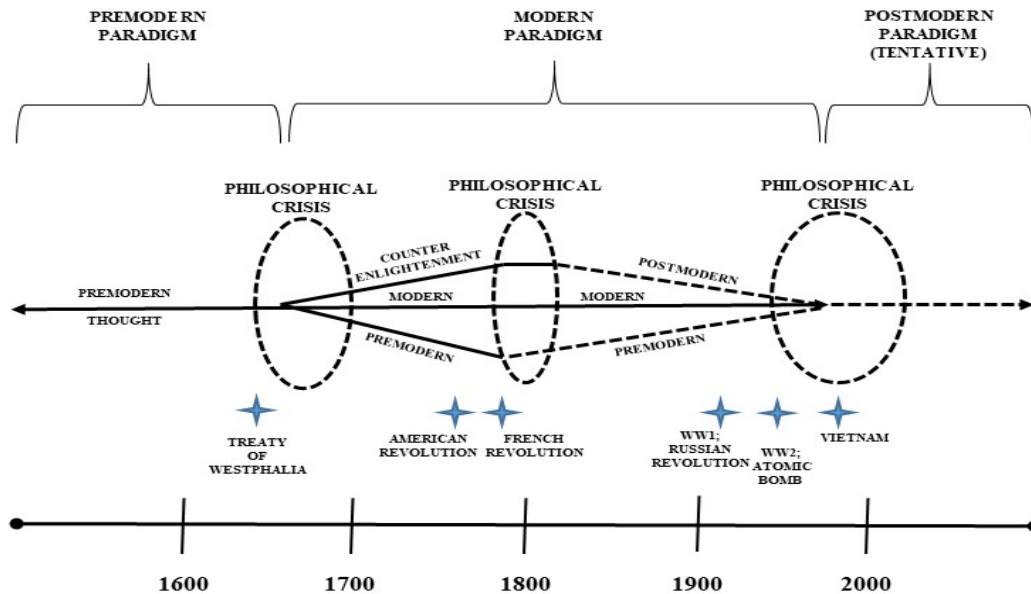


Figure 2. A description of historical, philosophical crises using Thomas Kuhn's *Structure of Scientific Revolutions*. This is an analytical rendition or model based on the ideas Kuhn described. Thomas S. Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996), 66.

Philosophical revolutions are periods of great upheaval when existing philosophical ideas are replaced with radically new ones.<sup>157</sup> Today's strategic context is at a unique inflection point through which various philosophical, social, political and technological dynamics are creating a societal turbulence the likes of which the United States has not experienced since the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The modern philosophical outlook, consisting of the constellation of shared assumptions, beliefs, values, reason, and logic, is currently in a crisis, contending with a postmodern philosophical outlook.<sup>158</sup>

Often, a passionate commitment to an established paradigm will result in staunch resistance to new theories.<sup>159</sup> Moreover, when one side in an argument has come falsely to believe that its positions are sanctified by objective proof, it disrespects the entire debate, casting it as a patent absurdity: reason versus unreason; wisdom versus stupidity; and therefore not worth any time,

<sup>157</sup> Samir Okasha, *Philosophy of Science* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), 81.

<sup>158</sup> Ibid., 81.

<sup>159</sup> Jens Zimmerman, *Hermeneutics: A Very Short Introduction*, 127.

effort or respect.<sup>160</sup> Everyday conversation is riddled with evidence of this crisis: “that does not make any sense,” and “that is hypocritical,” and “that is illogical.” Comments like these signal a rising incommensurability of reality between modern and postmodern thinkers. The incommensurability thesis states that past terms, like ‘mass,’ used in another era or culture cannot be equated in meaning or reference with any present terms or expressions.<sup>161</sup> Put differently, concepts derive their meaning from the paradigm in which they are developed: modern and postmodern logic are incongruous and wholly at odds with each other. In this light, talking past each other will become normal, and increasingly harmful to civil discourse. Among the people, ideas like justice, equality, right, good, fair, the news, etc. will sound the same, verbally, in conversation but will have a different meaning. The tinder is already present, doused in accelerant, awaiting a match.

If a given paradigm, in this case, postmodern philosophy, has very forceful advocates, it is more likely to win widespread acceptance, and the truth that everyone is currently seeking will become relative to the accepted paradigm, in this case a paradigm that espouses many, constantly changing truths.<sup>162</sup> The very idea of objective truth, on which modern thought firmly rests, will be called into question. For there to be an objective truth, paradigmatic theories and beliefs must correspond to the facts, but the idea of such a correspondence will make little sense if the facts themselves are infected by the dominant philosophy.<sup>163</sup> Truth will change ad infinitum, and when falsehoods masquerade as truth, and evil is made to appear as virtue, it becomes simple to convince

---

<sup>160</sup> Yuval Levin, *Tyranny of Reason: The Origins and Consequences of the Social Scientific Outlook*, 241.

<sup>161</sup> Hilary Putnam, *Reason, Truth and History* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1981), 114.

<sup>162</sup> Samir Okasha, *Philosophy of Science: A Very Short Introduction*, 84.

<sup>163</sup> *Ibid.*, 88.

slaves of their freedom.<sup>164</sup> Yet, even worse than living as a slave, is reveling in the servitude, while challenging the very people who wish for freedom, thinking of them as fools.

Furthermore, this philosophical crisis is an existential threat to the constitutional, democratic republic of the United States. Institutions persist only when they are legitimated by the people who inhabit them. When the people who occupy structures intended for the exercise of modern thought do not, in fact, exercise modern thought, then the structures will cease to behave as designed. At its inception, the US government was structurally designed to be occupied by modern, enlightened thinkers. The founding fathers considered reason and enlightened thought as the apogee of human achievement, and that any future progress would be guided by human reason. Obscuring the founding fathers' foresight, postmodernism has the potential to catastrophically disrupt the functionality of governmental institutions.

It is not a coincidence that postmodernism is thriving. Its arrival, concurrent with – and perhaps in response to – societal upheaval, cultural transformation, political change, profoundly philosophical debates about core values and technological advancements, permit a receptive welcome, one that might not have been possible in other junctures.<sup>165</sup> Adding to this unprecedented philosophical crisis is the daily advancement of technology, which has outpaced humanity's ability to adapt to it. Technology's rate of change currently exceeds the adaptive capacity of a single human life.<sup>166</sup> The internet and personal electronic devices have extended postmodern thought's reach and accelerated its acceptance. In particular, the prevalence of personal electronic devices and the inseparable relationship that people have with them transform the object itself into another conduit for sense perception, which offers access to more information, similar to that of the eyes,

---

<sup>164</sup> Yuvan Levin, 233.

<sup>165</sup> Pauline Marie Rosenau, *Post-Modernism and the Social Sciences: Insights, Inroads, and Intrusions*, 9.

<sup>166</sup> Arnold Toynbee, *A Study of History* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1957), 83.

ears and nose. In some cases, people employ the personal electronic device as the primary means to determine fact from fiction, and the real from illusion. It is this evolution that is occurring seriously and realistically, through a radical transformation of the understanding of reality and humanity.<sup>167</sup>

The United States adversaries are shrewdly aware of America's reliance on social media and technology and will exploit these dynamics with postmodern strategies to completely alter America's relationship with the world.

In fact, the spread of postmodernism parallels and has been dependent on the transformation to an information society.<sup>168</sup> To exemplify how postmodern thought mixes dangerously and confusingly with technology, look at the abundance of hypocrisy in today's society. Since postmodernists do not have to abide by a foundational symmetry – that their previous beliefs, thoughts and behaviors do not define their identity and that they do not have to remain consistent with what they have done or said in the past – they do not see hypocrisy as a character indictment, rather quite the opposite. Combine this attitude with the fact that YouTube and social media ensure that people's words and actions of the past remain fresh and present, and it makes making sense, in modern sense, senseless.

The next chapter will demonstrate how a postmodern society is susceptible to adversarial deception, using the 2016 US Presidential election as a case study. Indeed, many in the military demur when it comes to deception in both theory and practice.<sup>169</sup> However, military deception at the strategic level has been and is today an “effective and efficient technique in armed conflict, one

---

<sup>167</sup> Luciano Floridi, *Information: A Very Short Introduction* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), 10.

<sup>168</sup> Stanley J. Grenz, *A Primer on Postmodernism*, 17.

<sup>169</sup> Michael I. Handel, *Masters of War: Classical Strategic Thought, Third, Revised and Expanded Edition* (London: Frank Cass Publishers, 2001), 223. Both Clausewitz and Jomini put little faith in the value of diversion and deception, which they see as the last resort of the weak and desperate, not as a weapon of choice. This critical opinion of deception has been inculcated in the American military due to its reliance on Clausewitzian and Jominian canon.



that repays handsomely the minimal investment of resources it usually requires.”<sup>170</sup> More importantly, the philosophical, epistemological and technological dynamics of the strategic context enhance deception’s effectiveness. A cunning, shrewd and politically astute adversary can easily deceive a population, especially a postmodern society.<sup>171</sup> This theoretical review of deception will provide a foundation for postmodern strategies.

---

<sup>170</sup> Donald C. Daniel & Katherine L. Herbig, *Strategic Military Deception* (New York: Pergamon Press, 1981), xiii.

<sup>171</sup> John R. Gibbins & Bo Reimer, *The Impact of Values* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995), 310.

## Manna in the Desert of a Postmodern Mind

Harry Potter: “Professor Dumbledore, is this real, or has this been happening inside my head?”

Professor Dumbledore: “Of course it is happening inside your head, Harry, but why on earth should that mean that it is not real?”

- J. K. Rowling, *Harry Potter and The Deathly Hallows*

On November 22, 1963, in Dallas, Texas, a former Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) officer, turned double-agent for the *Komitet gosudarstvennoy bezopasnosti* (KGB), named Lee Harvey Oswald assassinated President John F. Kennedy.<sup>172</sup> In the investigation that followed, the Warren Commission determined that Oswald acted alone and not as part of any conspiracy.<sup>173</sup> However, by 1970, after funding radical conspiracy theorists, forging documents and publicly connecting the unbridled ambitions of American oil magnates with a “plot” against the slain president, the KGB could claim that far more Americans believed some form of their conspiracies rather than the accepted main findings of the Warren Commission.<sup>174</sup> To this day, the conspiracies centered on President Kennedy’s assassination abound, but are promulgated more widely and broadly by mediums like Infowars, which seeks to “destroy the official narrative as it lays out how Vice President Lyndon Johnson, with the assistance of the Central Intelligence Agency, the mob and Big Texas Oil, orchestrated the murder of the 37<sup>th</sup> President.”<sup>175</sup> The purpose of this chapter is to demonstrate how a postmodern society is susceptible to adversarial deception, using the 2016 United States Presidential election as a case study.

---

<sup>172</sup> Christopher Andrew and Vasili Mitrokhin, *The Sword and the Shield: The Mitrokhin Archive and the Secret History of the KGB* (New York: Basic Books, 1999), 225.

<sup>173</sup> Ibid., 226.

<sup>174</sup> Ibid., 229.

<sup>175</sup> Roger Stone, “Why I Urged Trump to Release the JFK Files,” *InfoWars*, October 23, 2017, accessed April 11, 2018, <https://www.infowars.com/stone-why-i-urged-trump-to-release-jfk-assassination-files/>

Starting in March, 2016, Russian government and military organizations conducted a multifaceted influence campaign against the United States, which blended covert intelligence operations, cyber operations, state-funded media, third-party intermediaries, and paid social media users, also known as “trolls.”<sup>176</sup> These Russian government linked actors began openly supporting Donald Trump’s candidacy in media aimed at the English-speaking audience.<sup>177</sup> Russia’s goals were to undermine public faith in the United States democratic process, denigrate the opposing candidate, Secretary Hillary Clinton, and harm her electability and potential presidency.<sup>178</sup>



Figure 3. Facebook advertisements and political memes that Russia created and disseminated during the 2016 US Presidential election. This is a collection of advertisements from two sources. Craig Timberg, “Russian Ads, Now Publicly Released, Show Sophistication of Influence Campaign,” *The Washington Post*, November 1, 2017, accessed April 11, 2018, [https://www.washingtonpost.com/business/technology/russian-ads-now-publicly-released-show-sophistication-of-influence-campaign/2017/11/01/d26ae2-bf1b-11e7-8444-a0d4f04b89eb\\_story.html?noredirect=on&utm\\_term=.ba87a985b4b4](https://www.washingtonpost.com/business/technology/russian-ads-now-publicly-released-show-sophistication-of-influence-campaign/2017/11/01/d26ae2-bf1b-11e7-8444-a0d4f04b89eb_story.html?noredirect=on&utm_term=.ba87a985b4b4) and Scott Shane, “These Are the Ads Russian Bought on Facebook in 2016,” *The New York Times*, November 1, 2017, accessed April 11, 2018, <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/11/01/us/politics/russia-2016-election-facebook.html>

<sup>176</sup> Office of the Director of National Intelligence, “Assessing Russian Activities and Intentions in Recent US Elections,” Intelligence Community Assessment 2017-01D, January 6, 2017, ii, accessed April 5, 2018, [https://www.dni.gov/files/documents/ICA\\_2017\\_01.pdf](https://www.dni.gov/files/documents/ICA_2017_01.pdf), 2.

<sup>177</sup> Ibid., 3.

<sup>178</sup> Ibid., ii.

Information is the means to our continued existence, and all domains and environments are a conduit for information, and those who disperse it most freely and effectively have power.<sup>179</sup> These aforementioned examples illustrate the evolution of efforts regarding the use of information as a means to influence political outcomes. At the height of the Cold War, Russia sought any means to disrupt its adversary, seeking to paralyze the United States with confusion rather than outright attacking it.<sup>180</sup> Finally, and yet again, Russia sought to discredit the foundational institution of democracy on which the United States is built.

When the concept of strategy was first described, it dealt extensively with generalship and deceit, contrivance, obfuscation, and general trickery.<sup>181</sup> In nearly all languages, a stratagem, from which the term *strategy* is etymologically derived, is still defined as an “artifice or trick designed to outwit or surprise the enemy.”<sup>182</sup> In this vein, stratagem and deception are nearly synonymous. Eastern military thought views deception as the preferred weapon of choice and basis for all successful operations.<sup>183</sup> Russian strategy often includes political deception, particularly the use of disinformation to exact political gains, which include pre-war deception efforts to exploit dissenting views and weaken the opposing coalition.<sup>184</sup>

The Russian term for deception is *maskirovka*, which at the strategic level includes

---

<sup>179</sup> Everett Carl Dolman, *Pure Strategy: Power and Principle in the Space and Information Age* (New York: Frank Cass, 20015), 168.

<sup>180</sup> B. H. Liddell Hart, *Strategy, Second Revised Edition*, 327.

<sup>181</sup> Lawrence Freedman, *Strategy: A History* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013), 64.

<sup>182</sup> Ibid.

<sup>183</sup> Michael I. Handel, *Masters of War: Classical Strategic Thought; Third, Revised and Expanded Edition* (London: Frank Cass Publishers, Inc., 2001), 253.

<sup>184</sup> David Glantz, *Soviet Military Deception in the Second World War* (New York: Frank Cass and Company Limited, 1989), 584.

disinformation of the enemy regarding the true intentions and operations of the armed forces.<sup>185</sup>

Yet, while the Russians have employed deception and disinformation in the past to some success, there was something remarkably effective about their most recent influence campaign. The strategic context shifted from a modern philosophical outlook to a postmodern philosophical outlook. And, military strategies that have the greatest influence are those that contextualize them.<sup>186</sup> A postmodern strategic context combined with the pervasiveness of the internet makes deception the primary means of imposing one's will upon the enemy.

Deception is a highly effective strategy against a postmodern population. Remember, postmodern thinkers seek marginalized and micro narratives, with attention given to the popular rather than elite culture and alternative rather than dominant ideologies. Postmodern thinkers deconstruct popular narratives, seeking to uncover the power/knowledge behind their construction, and employing a contextualism invoked by their belief in historical contingency.<sup>187</sup> They are concerned with the immediate, the present and have no agreed narrative for the future. Postmodern thinkers relish the simulated, the image and the representation; they savor the sensational over the true; they blur the lines between fact and fiction; they enjoy the anti-real and savor the hyperreal; they constantly construct, deconstruct and reconstruct their identities as the situation permits; and they believe in imagined communities.<sup>188</sup>

All deceptions are applied psychology, and therefore should be of supreme interest to contemporary strategists.<sup>189</sup> Deception is the deliberate misrepresentation of reality by an adversary

---

<sup>185</sup> David Glantz, *Soviet Military Deception in The Second World War*, 2.

<sup>186</sup> Williamson Murray and Allan R. Millett, *Military Innovation in the Interwar Period* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 305.

<sup>187</sup> John R. Gibbins and Bo Reimer, *Postmodernism in The Impact of Values* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995), 305.

<sup>188</sup> Ibid., 302.

<sup>189</sup> Barton Whaley, *Toward a General Theory of Deception*. For the purpose of this monograph, terms such as 'deception', 'misperception', 'delusion', and 'disinformation' will be interchangeable and the

to gain a competitive advantage.<sup>190</sup> Deception does not seek to physically alter reality, but does intend to alter an adversaries' perception of a reality. There are many important elements of an effective deception, but none more important than the deception story. The deception story is a narrative of what the deceiver (author) wants the target (subject/audience) to believe to be the true situation or reality, which in turn, will cause them to behave a certain way.<sup>191</sup> To deceive is to tell a story and storytelling is an ancient, and still ineluctable practice in people's daily lives. Stories and narratives, such as the Bible, the Koran, the Bhagavad Gita and other parables have tremendous salience, and therefore, have immense power to influence the beliefs and actions of those who read them.<sup>192</sup>

Narrative is a fundamental form of knowledge because it gives knowledge of the world through sense-making, but it can also be a rhetorical structure that distorts as much as it reveals.<sup>193</sup>

Narratives are both constructed and told, either conceived of by the individual or contrived by an author to then influence a subject. All disciplines require narrative to explain how they work and why they exist. Narrative is inescapable, and therefore essential. A well-formed argument and a good story can both be used as a means for convincing a person, but are implicitly different. The former appeals to logic and evidence to claim a propositional truth. The latter does not claim truth, but verisimilitude or the appearance of truth.<sup>194</sup> A good story does not necessarily have to be true to

---

specific denotation will be based on the context within which the term is utilized.

<sup>190</sup> Donald C. Daniel and Katherine L. Herbig, *Strategic Military Deception* (New York: Pergamon Press, Inc., 1981), 3.

<sup>191</sup> US Department of Defense, Joint Staff, Joint Publication (JP) 3-13.4, *Military Deception* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2012), I-6.

<sup>192</sup> Michael Bennett and Edward Waltz, *Counterdeception Principles and Applications for National Security* (Norwood, MA: Artech House, Inc., 2007), 88.

<sup>193</sup> Jonathan Culler, *Literary Theory: A Very Short Introduction* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), 92.

<sup>194</sup> Michael Bennet and Edward Waltz, 88.

be believed, and for that reason, narratives are often embellished with evocative and sensational language making them accessible to an audience. Indeed, most stories only exist in people's minds and do not have to correspond to physical realities to be believed.

Like the author of a novel, the author of a deception strategy emplots a narrative, fashioning the story in which the audience will play out their roles, influencing each other in accordance with the deceiver's plot.<sup>195</sup> This presents some significant implications for identity: is it given, constructed, or both? It turns out that both are represented in literature and television, but this entanglement is often narrated in the common plot where characters *discover* who they are, not by learning something about their past, but by acting in such a way that they *become* what has been in their nature all along.<sup>196</sup> Moreover, one of the functions of deception is to cause ambiguity, confusion or a misunderstanding of identity.<sup>197</sup> Postmodern thinkers are constructivists and see identity as an unending project, but also crave the hyperreal, which is, "that which is already reproduced."<sup>198</sup> To a postmodern thinker, movies, shows, literature and novels are indistinguishable from reality and screenplays and fictional narratives become the embodied form of their psychic world.<sup>199</sup> This precarious mixture of disbelieving grand narratives, constructing imagined identities and living in a hyperreality, make postmodern thinkers wholly vulnerable to adversarial deception. Reexamining the Pizzagate story, there is little wonder as to how something so unbelievable could have become so real. It appeared like the plot of a movie more than an ordinary crime and, in fact, it was both.

Indeed, deception is not traditionally an end in itself, and like any other operation, the measure

---

<sup>195</sup> Donald C. Daniel and Katherine L. Herbig, *Strategic Military Deception*, 157.

<sup>196</sup> Jonathan Culler, *The Literary in Theory* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2007), 34.

<sup>197</sup> US Joint Staff, JP 3-13.4, *Military Deception*, 2012, 1-1.

<sup>198</sup> Pauline Marie Rosenau, *Post-Modernism and the Social Sciences: Insights, Inroads, and Intrusions*, xii.

<sup>199</sup> Stanley J. Grenz, *A Primer on Postmodernism* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1996), 35.

of success for deception is its direct contribution to the accomplishment of the mission.<sup>200</sup> The Russian deception objective, which describes what the deception will cause the adversary to do or not to do, was to induce Americans to vote for one presidential candidate and concomitantly, to not vote for another.<sup>201</sup> At a higher level, the Russian objective was to foment distrust towards specific candidates and the United States political system in general.<sup>202</sup> This deception objective was achieved by combining a well-known deception methodology with the first maxim of deception: The “See, Think, Do,” deception methodology and “Magruder’s Principle.”<sup>203</sup>

The goal of the “See, Think, Do,” deception methodology is to manipulate the cognitive process of the deception target’s mind, causing them to take a desired action or inaction.<sup>204</sup> The target unwittingly observes a deception, then perceives the event as valid and real, then takes action based on the deception’s corresponding relevance to reality. Social media-spread Russian disinformation, which propagated countless falsehoods and stories, was real and overwhelming enough to trick unsuspecting American voters. Furthermore, the first maxim of deception known as Magruder’s principle states, “it is easier to induce a deception target to maintain a preexisting belief than to deceive the target for the purpose of changing that belief.”<sup>205</sup> The open information market of the internet made the interpretation and targeting of American political dispositions, biases and

---

<sup>200</sup> US Joint Staff, JP 3-13.4, Military Deception, 2012, 1-5.

<sup>201</sup> Ibid.

<sup>202</sup> Editorial Board, “What Trump Still Doesn’t Get About Russian Interference in the Election,” *The Washington Post*, February 16, 2018, accessed April 19, 2018, [https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/an-indictment-describes-russias-information-warfare-trump-continues-to-miss-the-point/2018/02/16/c2c34254-1359-11e8-9065-e55346f6de81\\_story.html?utm\\_term=.8d3859c40b81](https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/an-indictment-describes-russias-information-warfare-trump-continues-to-miss-the-point/2018/02/16/c2c34254-1359-11e8-9065-e55346f6de81_story.html?utm_term=.8d3859c40b81)

<sup>203</sup> US Joint Staff, JP 3-13.4, Military Deception, 2012, A-1.

<sup>204</sup> Ibid., “Deception Target,” is a joint doctrinal term referring to the particular person an adversary intends to deceive.

<sup>205</sup> Michael Bennet & Edward Waltz, *Counterdeception Principles and Applications for National Security*, 35.



animus' easy. Russians would produce one false narrative about an unwanted political candidate, then disseminate the disinformation over many social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Snapchat etc. These stories, which were not broadcast by traditional news outlets, were especially attractive to postmodern thinkers, precisely because the traditional media ignored them on the basis of poor journalism.

While the central elements of the stories would remain the same, the fact that it was spread over multiple social media platforms would falsely constitute "corroboration" in the minds of unsuspecting voters. Without a doubt, the "psychographic" data that social media platforms collect to target product advertisements also contributed to the precision and accuracy with which some disinformation narratives reached some voters and did not reach others.<sup>206</sup> This contributed to the incommensurability of reality between voters: they lived believing in completely different stories and beliefs about the same handful of people. As a result, people do not merely espouse different political opinions; they actually live in different worlds with respect to basic matters of personal identity, time and space.<sup>207</sup> All things considered, the only difference between JFK conspiracy theories and Pizzagate conspiracy theories is the context in which they were produced. Today, the postmodern philosophical context's and technology's effect on human psychology make deception easier than it was in the past.

However, it is important to distinguish between the effect deception has on a postmodern thinker versus the effect it has on a postmodern society. By virtue of its pedagogy, the United States military uses Carl von Clausewitz' theories as described in *On War* to explain why wars occur. Although never drawn as a model, Clausewitz sought to help statesmen, generals and strategists

---

<sup>206</sup> Matthew Hindman, "This is how Cambridge Analytica's Facebook targeting model really worked – according to the person who built it," *NiemanLab*, March 30, 2018, accessed April 11, 2018, <http://www.niemanlab.org/2018/03/this-is-how-cambridge-analyticas-facebook-targeting-model-really-worked-according-to-the-person-who-built-it/>

<sup>207</sup> Stanley J. Grenz, *A Primer on Postmodernism*, 43.

make sense of the phenomenon of war by integrating the dynamic elements and circumstances of the environment in which it occurred.<sup>208</sup> Interpreted as the ‘remarkable trinity’, Clausewitz’ theory of phenomenon states that above all else “the directing policy of the government, the professional qualities of the army, and the attitude of the population play critically important roles in war.”<sup>209</sup> This is often subjugated by three disparate ideas: reason, chance and enmity. See below.

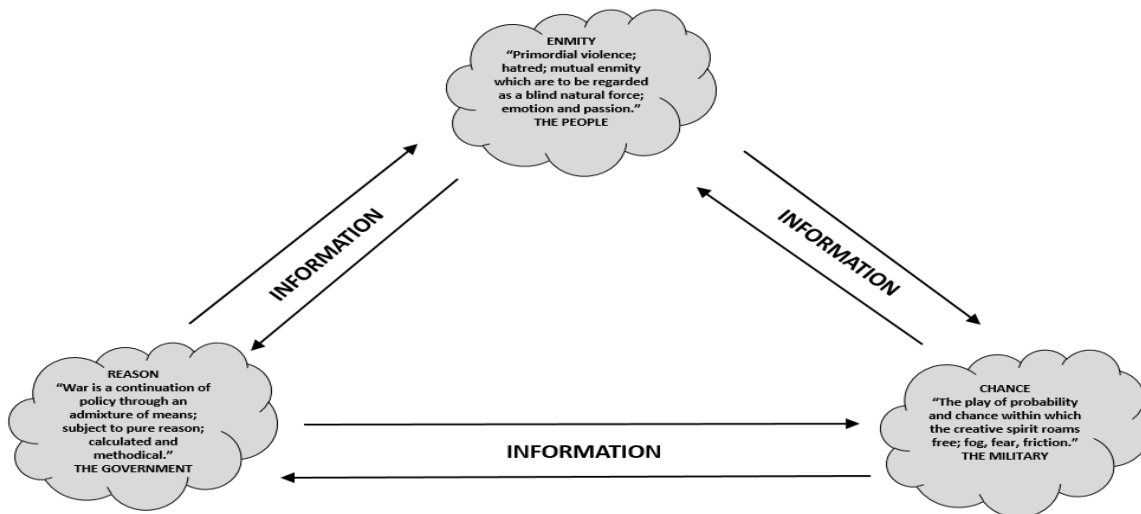


Figure 4. A graphical interpretation of Carl von Clausewitz’s paradoxical trinity. Clausewitz refers to the trinity as the relationship between magnets, but the magnets themselves represent phenomena that only exist as concepts in the mind of a person. For these concepts to manifest in the mind, and then as behavior, information would have to be perceived by the individual. Carl von Clausewitz, *On War*, trans. and eds. Michael Howard and Peter Paret (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1984), 89.

Notably, Clausewitz was not a disciple of any specific philosopher. Instead, the society in which he was raised was heavily influenced by ideas propounded by David Hume, Immanuel Kant, and G.W.F. Hegel.<sup>210</sup> These modern, enlightened and counter-enlightened thinkers colored his rational interpretation and theoretical inquiry. Clausewitz’s writing is imbued with the dialectic that

<sup>208</sup> US Department of the Army, Army Techniques Publication (ATP) 5-0.1, Army Design Methodology (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2011), page 1-8.

<sup>209</sup> Michael Howard, *Clausewitz: A Very Short Introduction* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), 21.

<sup>210</sup> Ibid., 14.

Hegel stressed, with nearly every chapter of Clausewitz' magnum opus including a thesis, antithesis and synthesis. It is important to recognize, in Clausewitz's view, there was a calculated and methodical reason or logic that drove the policy of a government toward war. This was a grand assumption predicated on a modern society, in which governments deliberately thought through their actions: "No one starts a war – or rather, no one is his senses ought to do so – without first being clear in his mind what he intends to achieve by that war and how he intends to conduct it."<sup>211</sup> Consequently, since Clausewitz's remarkable trinity was the product of, and therefore intended to explain war in a modern society, it is incongruent with a postmodern society.

The 2016 US Presidential election demonstrates the inadequacy of Clausewitz's modern model. Of as much importance to how Americans construct and understand their society is how the United States' adversaries understand American society, and the Russians especially so. Importantly, the Russians believe that the nature, means, and potential impact of *maskirovka*, "evolves in consonance with the changing conditions of changing times."<sup>212</sup> Employing active measures and *maskirovka*, which have found tremendous utility in a postmodern context, combined with widespread disinformation by way of the internet, media, and social media, the Russian military attacked the informational interaction or "information space," estranging the government from the people from the military.

In doing so, the Russians incapacitated the dialectic interactions of reason, enmity and chance, subsequently preventing the synthesis of opposites (contradictions) to form a novel idea, and in this particular case, a policy response to an attack on US political sovereignty. In this context, the unique importance of deception becomes clear: its main role is to create a state of mind, which distracts an opponents' attention with both its sensitivities and the efforts conducted by the

---

<sup>211</sup> Carl von Clausewitz, *On War*, trans. and eds. Michael Howard and Peter Paret (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1984), 88.

<sup>212</sup> David Glanz, *Soviet Military Deception in The Second World War*, 571.

adversary to take advantage of them to create surprise.<sup>213</sup> To be sure, achieving surprise applies to waging a war your adversary is not aware of, and to this day, many people still disbelieve the intelligence community's assertion that Russia played a heavy hand in the 2016 US Presidential election. It is precisely because this belief and narrative are maintained and propagated by traditional media and academic elites, that postmodern thinkers will continue to reject it as a reality, preferring instead to hear alternative narratives explaining Russian interference. Perhaps, one of the founding fathers and a ghost of long departed wisdom anticipated the future:

Against the insidious wiles of foreign influence, I conjure you to believe me, fellow-citizens, the jealousy of a free people ought to be constantly awake; since history and experience prove that foreign influence is one of the most baneful foes of a republican Government. But that Jealousy, to be useful, must be impartial; else it becomes the instrument of the very influence to be avoided; instead of a defense against it. Excessive partiality for one foreign nation, and excessive dislike of another, cause those whom they actuate to see danger only on one side, and serve to veil and even second the arts of influence on the other. Real Patriots, who may resist the intrigues of the favourite, are liable to become suspected and odious; while its tools and dupes usurp the applause and confidence of the people, to surrender their interests.

—George Washington, *Washington's Farewell Address*

---

<sup>213</sup> Shimon Naveh, *In Pursuit of Military Excellence: The Evolution of Operational Theory* (United Kingdom: Frank Cass Publishers, 1997), 19.

## Looking Forward to the Past

### Postmodern Strategies

The best way to control and manipulate an individual is not to tell them what to do; that always generates resistance, hostility, and defiance. Instead, tell a person *who* and *what* they are, and they will end up eating out of your hand.

—Wilson Bryan Key, *Subliminal Seduction*

Modern strategists often divide strategy into four essential components: means, ways, ends and risk. Put differently, strategy consists of countering the strengths and exploiting the weaknesses of an opponent in ways that facilitate the achievement of a predetermined goal. Therefore, postmodern strategies are very similar to modern strategies, except the tools and methods are unorthodox, especially to those who are accustomed to traditionally modern strategies. Postmodern strategies, like design, are embedded in routine behavior and actions, and their novelty emerges when they become operationalized on a large scale. Put succinctly, postmodern strategies employ postmodern thoughts and arguments against either modern or postmodern societies. The aim of this chapter is to highlight how postmodern thought manifests itself in postmodern behavior and to discuss postmodern strategies.

From a postmodern perspective, power and knowledge are one and the same, and strategy is the “totality of the means put into operation to implement power effectively or to maintain it.”<sup>214</sup> Reversing Clausewitz’s dictum that war is a continuation of policy through an admixture of means, postmodern strategies operate by a different logic: politics is a continuation of war through a variety of means.<sup>215</sup> In other words, postmodernists are in perpetual struggle, whereby they are constantly seeking to displace power to those that do not momentarily have power. They are constantly

---

<sup>214</sup> Lawrence Freedman, *Strategy: A History*, 425.

<sup>215</sup> Carl von Clausewitz, *On War*, trans. and eds. Michael Howard and Peter Paret (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1984), 87.

looking for a fight – a seemingly non-violent one, in which language and rhetoric are the primary tools to achieve political outcomes, or ends.

Language is a central element of all postmodern thought, so it cannot be taken for granted, but must be analyzed in greater detail what it is and how it affects the knowledge of the world.<sup>216</sup> Language, thought and culture develop in close correlation with each other and human perception is not merely just a mapping of objects of an environment into abstract concepts. Rather, conceptions of the world have much to do with how one speaks of the world.<sup>217</sup> Contrary to the ‘sticks and stones’ rhyme, words, specifically the meanings of them, are everything to a postmodernist, and if used properly can achieve outcomes without the use of violence.

Often referred to negatively, rhetoric is language designed to have a persuasive or impressive effect; it is often considered insincere and meaningless, but nonetheless effective at achieving its aim. Rhetoric is fundamental to the phenomenon of human conflict.<sup>218</sup> In particular, it is necessary to consider rhetoric as a dynamic interaction between opponents; it is a battle that starts with the first utterance and emerges discursively.<sup>219</sup> More than merely words, rhetoric must be seen as the sharpest tool of any postmodern strategy. Rhetoric can stoke the passions of society and animate political movements quickly and unpredictably. The internet, and specifically social media, are the postmodern battleground of political rhetoric, and it is a battleground that is impossible to contain so long as it exists and is free.

Counterintuitively, in a postmodern context, words are never intended to be literal. Language

---

<sup>216</sup> Richard van de Lagemaat, *Theory of Knowledge for the IB Diploma*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 78.

<sup>217</sup> Klaus Krippendorf, *The Semantic Turn: A New Foundation for Design* (Boca Raton, FL: Taylor & Francis Group, 2006), 44.

<sup>218</sup> Richard Toye, *Rhetoric: A Very Short Introduction* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013), 85.

<sup>219</sup> Ibid., 85.

and rhetoric are used elliptically, metaphorically and deliberately falsely, textured with layers of circumstantial meaning, designed to help the speaker evade answering a question or taking a permanent position.<sup>220</sup> Discourse, that is debate, becomes a duel where words are the primary weapons, and each person is trying solely to win. The theory of victory for a postmodernist is to either change the nature of the established power structure altogether, or to increase and maintain discord. In postmodern discourse, there is often a contrarian approach: people will not have a position other than that they disagree with their opponent's position. To achieve this, postmodernists will employ deconstruction, relativism and ad hominem attacks against modern opponents.

Deconstruction will involve exposing the inherent asymmetry between the opponent's words and actions. The modern ideal presupposes an internal logic, matching words with actions thus avoiding hypocrisy, whereas the postmodernist thrives in hypocrisy. Therefore, if the opponent advocates non-violence, yet was arrested years ago for violent crimes, then that becomes the focus of the discussion, designed intently to silence and embarrass the opponent. Next, the postmodernist will employ relativism in response to every point the opponent makes, a phenomenon commonly referred to as "what-about-ism." This practice is designed to strip the initiative away from the opponent and replace it with the postmodernist. Furthermore, postmodernists' strong constructivist positions undermine any theoretical articulation or commitment to a settled philosophical position, resulting in radical separatism.<sup>221</sup> This attitude combined with ceaseless iterations of relativistic responses guarantees that the initial ideological position the postmodernist had will appear nothing like the ultimate position at the conclusion of the debate. Postmodernists are not interested in resolving tensions or reconciling contradictions, because they are content to live by them.<sup>222</sup>

---

<sup>220</sup> Stephen R. C. Hicks, *Explaining Postmodernism: Skepticism and Socialism from Rousseau to Foucault*, 175.

<sup>221</sup> Christopher Butler, *Postmodernism: A Very Short Introduction*, 58.

<sup>222</sup> Stephen R. C. Hicks, *Explaining Postmodernism: Skepticism and Socialism from Rousseau to*

Finally, due to the harsh nature of postmodern rhetoric, they will deploy ad hominem attacks and straw men propositions, in a deliberate effort to bewilder the opponent.<sup>223</sup> Combined, these methods render the assertion of truth and falsity irrelevant: the primary goal is to make the language effective to a larger audience.<sup>224</sup>

These types of rhetorical exchanges or games, often take place on the world stage. As Russia sought to destabilize many regions, in particular the eastern European and Baltic countries of Ukraine, Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania, and its more recent involvement in Syria, it also targeted many of the popular social movements in the United States. Strategically, this was shrewdly clever. Russian-linked Facebook accounts targeted both sides of the Black Lives Matter movement, representing verisimilar identities which simultaneously proposed violence against protesters who burned American flags and those who advocated for more accountability of law enforcement, who coincidentally, burned American flags as a way to emphasize their political dissatisfaction with the local, state and federal government.<sup>225</sup> Meanwhile, as Russia perpetuated violent atrocities against Ukrainians and Syrians, the United States called attention to them through public and diplomatic admonishments. Cleverly, Russia responded by highlighting the protests and discord it exacerbated with social media-spread disinformation: “Racial and ethnic tensions continue to rise in US society. It’s about time the US authorities paid attention to this rather than focusing on lecturing the rest of the world on human rights.”<sup>226</sup>

---

*Foucault*, 191.

<sup>223</sup> Ibid., 178.

<sup>224</sup> Ibid.

<sup>225</sup> Curt Devine, “‘Kill them All’ – Russian-linked Facebook Accounts Called for Violence,” *CNNMoney*, October 31, 2017, accessed April 7, 2018, <http://money.cnn.com/2017/10/31/media/russia-facebook-violence/index.html>

<sup>226</sup> Luke Harding, “From Cairo to Moscow: How the World Reacted to Ferguson,” *The Guardian*, November 25, 2014, accessed April 7, 2018, <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2014/nov/25/world-reacts-ferguson-michael-brown-shooting>



Likewise, the struggle over identity is ubiquitous and unending, sitting at the core of politics.<sup>227</sup> Subsequently, the reshaping of identities is a central target of postmodern strategies. Jacques Derrida claims, “reality is to be understood both in terms of difference, rather than self-identity, and in terms of perpetual deferment, rather than eternal presence.”<sup>228</sup> Therefore, unlike modern thinkers, who interpret individual identity as a near-permanent entity, postmodern thinkers never commit to a permanent self. They seek opportunities to transform and transcend themselves within a social environment that is imbued with changing relationships of power. Subsequently, one’s identity determines one’s interests, which determine one’s values and beliefs, which stimulate one’s behavior and political action.<sup>229</sup> In other words, postmodernists engage in diffuse and pluralistic identity politics often involving the self-conscious assertion of a marginalized identity against the dominant discourse.<sup>230</sup> Rejecting the dominant political discourse, postmodernists *see* themselves and others like them as equally marginalized, and this self-identification serves as the catalyst to political activism, which in the contemporary environment, can quickly transition from online posts on social media to public dissidence.<sup>231</sup>

The inability to determine fact from fiction presents significant concerns for a postmodern technological society. In fact, postmodernists’ notion of identity is constructed like that of a fiction,

---

<sup>227</sup> Leslie Paul Thiele, *Thinking Politics: Perspectives in Ancient, Modern, and Postmodern Political Theory*, 103.

<sup>228</sup> Eric Matthews, *Twentieth Century French Philosophy* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 1996), 168.

<sup>229</sup> *Ibid.*, 101.

<sup>230</sup> Christopher Butler, *Postmodernism: A Very Short Introduction*, 57.

<sup>231</sup> Eric Levitz, “Trump Has Turned Millions of Americans into Activists,” *New York Magazine*, April 6, 2018, accessed April 6, 2018, <http://nymag.com/daily/intelligencer/2018/04/trump-has-turned-millions-of-americans-into-activists.html>. A recent survey found that one in five Americans has attended at least one protest or political rally since the beginning of 2016 — and that 19 percent of *that* group had never attended such an event before that year.

where they play roles.<sup>232</sup> Hyperrealities, which are models that eventually become more real than the realities they supposedly represent, inundate television, the internet and social media. In some ways, many Americans live in a hyperreal panopticon, modeling their behavior on reality television, which models its behavior on them.<sup>233</sup> Unable to register this distinction exposes people to the unsuspecting control by adversaries of the personal narratives and stories which drive their lives. This battle for control of people's minds occurs outside of their awareness, leaving many to become blind spectators in their own psychodrama and prisoners of the images cast on the wall of their skulls.<sup>234</sup>

Equally important, the creation of stories as history is a postmodern political strategy, because stories are the primary way people make sense of things, whether in thinking of life as a progression leading somewhere or in explaining what is happening in the world.<sup>235</sup> It is important to remember that postmodern thought sees history as a narrative, and therefore, it is intertextual, becoming an endless conversation not grounded in facts.<sup>236</sup> In fact, philosophers of history even argue that historical explanation follows the logic of story more than the logic of scientific causality.<sup>237</sup> In other words, from a postmodern perspective, history is above all else a narrative

---

<sup>232</sup> Christopher Butler, *Postmodernism: A Very Short Introduction*, 53.

<sup>233</sup> Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, translated by Richard Howard (New York: Vintage Books, 1977), 165. In a Panopticon, which is a type of prison, each inmate is in a separate cell, separated from and invisible to all the others whereby the central guard tower in the center can monitor every cell at any time. The principle of control is not the fact, but the possibility of observation, inducing in the inmates a state of consciousness and permanent visibility that assures the automatic functioning of power. Gary Gutting, *Foucault: A Very Short Introduction* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), 84.

<sup>234</sup> Lawrence Freedman, *Strategy: A History* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013), 434.

<sup>235</sup> Jonathan Culler, *Literary Theory: A Very Short Introduction* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), 82.

<sup>236</sup> Pauline Marie Rosenau, *Post-Modernism and the Social Sciences: Insights, Inroads, and Intrusions*, xii.

<sup>237</sup> Jonathan Culler, 83.

discourse between competitive power structures; between the power structures of the past and the power structures of the present; between what actually happened and what will happen next, thus opening the possibility of changing historical realities of societies and the identities of the people who live within them.<sup>238</sup>

Who controls the past controls the future, who controls the present controls the past.

—George Orwell, *1984*

Indeed, it is said that history is to society what memory is to the individual.<sup>239</sup> For military strategists the history of war is a staple of their educational development, and while it will forever remain relevant and important to study, in postmodern wars, strategists should be more concerned with the reconstructing and rewriting of history. On May 10, 1933, Nazis burned thousands of books as Nazi-sympathizing Germans ranted and cheered. The burning of books represented an element of censorship, proceeding from a cultural, religious, or political opposition to the materials in question.<sup>240</sup> In essence, the purpose of book burning was to eliminate the possibility of alternate points of view from influencing the population, replacing the burnt books with books that sympathize with the current power structure, in this case Nazism. So, in today's age of information, what does book burning look like on the internet?

As Karl Marx posited, changes in technology determine how society is organized, and this in turn determines how individuals think.<sup>241</sup> For many, the internet has made convenient that which should require effort: the ability to become wise and knowledgeable of the world, but what passes

---

<sup>238</sup> John H. Arnold, *History: A Very Short Introduction* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 13.

<sup>239</sup> Ibid., 33.

<sup>240</sup> "Burning Books," The United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, accessed April 7, 2018, <https://www.ushmm.org/wlc/en/article.php?ModuleId=10005852>.

<sup>241</sup> Richard van de Lagemaat, *Theory of Knowledge for the IB Diploma, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition*, 436.

today for wisdom and knowledge is often an illusion. In light of this, historical relinguification is a postmodern strategy made useful by society's reliance on the internet not for learning about the world and history, but for making new knowledge of the world and history. Today, most inquiry about the world or the answer to a particular question is delegated to the search engines on the internet.<sup>242</sup> The problem, however, is that an internet search with vague keywords produces websites that are the most frequented, but not the most true or accurate. In other words, the website visited by millions of people is more likely to grace an internet search engine than one that has fewer "hits." An adversary needs only to create a false story, visit it themselves thousands of times to represent it as true and real, and the blithely unsuspecting person who cannot, or will not, verify the claims will believe the story as fact. It is cognitive swarming with the internet. With the advent of the internet, seeking knowledge became seeking the popular, and it exposes unsuspecting populations to a floodgate of falsehoods.

During the 2016 United States Presidential election, Russian "troll farms," which comprised hundreds of internet users, created false stories about political candidates, discussion boards with vitriolic rhetoric about protests, and websites dedicated to spreading disinformation.<sup>243</sup> To ensure that false stories, like the Pizzagate story, were viewed by diverse populations within the United States, Russian troll farms worked endlessly to visit the websites thousands of times, producing an artificial base of support and popularity that the story would not have otherwise garnered had it not been for the hundreds of trolls who visited the website. Adding to the falsehoods were thousands of Russian twitter-bots that automatically exposed hundreds of thousands of twitter users to fallacious stories about political candidates.<sup>244</sup> Together, this artificial popularity served as corroboration of

---

<sup>242</sup> Luciano Floridi, *The 4<sup>th</sup> Revolution: How the Infosphere is Reshaping Human Reality*, 94.

<sup>243</sup> Dave Lee, "The Tactics of a Russian Troll Farm," *BBC News*, February 16, 2018, accessed April 7, 2018, <http://www.bbc.com/news/technology-43093390>.

<sup>244</sup> Jon Swaine, "Twitter Admits Far More Russian Bots Posted on the Election Than It Had Disclosed," *The Guardian*, January 19, 2018, accessed April 8, 2018,

stories under the poor assumption that people would not have viewed or “shared” the story as much if it was false. To be fair, adding to the chaos, were also postmodernists, who just sought to create discord by complicating society’s ability to determine fact from fiction, and many unwitting Americans, who were slaves to biased and fallacious impulses, bought it.<sup>245</sup>

Combined, language, rhetoric, identity, and narrative are at the heart of a postmodern strategy. Notably, these elements are intangible and do not cost anything, yet the control and construction of them can have tremendous value in terms of altering conceptions of reality, power structures, and influence either on the world stage, or domestically. Postmodern strategies work alone or in conjunction with traditional, modern strategies. In fact, failing to include these elements in more recent historical instances could explain why the United States performs so poorly in “information operations.”

Nevertheless, as long as there is an internet, and as long as people sacrifice incredulity for convenience, and exchange skepticism for simplicity, there will be an opportunity for people’s historical consciousness to be both wrong and illusory. Postmodern strategies abound on the internet, and American society has become reliant on the internet for information and awareness of the world. This reliance combined with a shift toward a postmodern philosophical outlook will further fray the ideological threads of American society.

---

<https://www.theguardian.com/technology/2018/jan/19/twitter-admits-far-more-russian-bots-posted-on-election-than-it-had-disclosed>.

<sup>245</sup> Billy Baker, “One of the Country’s Biggest Publishers of Fake News Says He Did It for Our Own Good,” *The Boston Globe*, April 7, 2018, accessed April 8, 2018, [https://www.bostonglobe.com/metro/2018/04/07/one-country-biggest-publishers-fake-news-says-did-for-our-own-good/fzIDkkKZf7IbYA9oyGuzhI/amp.html?\\_\\_twitter\\_impression=true](https://www.bostonglobe.com/metro/2018/04/07/one-country-biggest-publishers-fake-news-says-did-for-our-own-good/fzIDkkKZf7IbYA9oyGuzhI/amp.html?__twitter_impression=true).

## Back to the Basics

The cost of liberty is eternal vigilance.

—Anonymous

In Book VII of Plato's *Republic*, Socrates and a student discuss a hypothetical situation, known commonly as the allegory of *The Cave*, in which a small population of people inhabit a dark cave. The people are restrained, so they can only see one side of the cave. Behind them is a torch, and a puppet show with figures of people, animals and objects, taking the form of visible shadows.<sup>246</sup> Having never stepped foot outside the cave, they believe the cave is reality.

Socrates asks the student, "Then, think what would happen to them if they were released of their bonds and cured of their delusions."<sup>247</sup> A single person is released, and soon realizes that the shadows were all illusions, the cave a prison and the real world awaiting exploration. As she exits the cave, she is blinded by the sunlight and thus her visual perceptions distorted. She learns that the shadows were merely reflections of the real things, but still the shadows remained clearer to her. Eventually adjusted to the new reality, she reflects on how fortunate she is to have real knowledge of the world, while simultaneously lamenting the fellows who remained in the cave. Should she continue to enjoy reality, or should she rescue the others from the cave? She returns to the cave, and shares with the others all that she has learned. In the cave, she is disoriented by the darkness, just like she was when she initially stepped out of the cave. After listening to her, the others think she is ignorant, blind and crazy, and violently resist all attempts at freeing them. Socrates adds, "And if anyone tried to release them to show them the truth, they would try to kill her if only they could lay their hands on her."<sup>248</sup>

Twenty-four hundred years ago, Socrates' aim was to explain to others what it is like to be a

---

<sup>246</sup> Arthur Herman, *The Cave and the Light: Plato Versus Aristotle, and the Struggle for the Soul of Western Civilization*, 17.

<sup>247</sup> Ibid., 18.

<sup>248</sup> Ibid., 25

philosopher trying to explain the world to people who could not and would not understand it. Today, the analogy relates to the way in which people ascertain the reality of the world through television media, the internet and social media. Yet, the message then remains the same as it does today: people are more attracted to beautiful falsehoods than to ugly truths.<sup>249</sup> Moreover, most people would sooner retreat from uncomfortable truths, becoming furious when their illusion of reality is challenged and thus provoked into protecting their conception of reality by any means necessary.

Modern thought, which is characterized by scientism, humanism and progressivism co-exists in a philosophical crisis with postmodern thought, which challenges the validity of science, believes that identity is the product of uncontrollable and constantly changing social-linguistic constructions, and claims that modern thought directly causes all of the misery in the world. These meta-structures of thought, which guide all subsequent actions are mutually incompatible, and are so dissimilar that a modernist's conception of reality is completely different from a postmodernists'. Consequently, while it may appear that both live in the same physical reality, they both inhabit different conceptual and perceptual realities, which, in turn, distort their interpretation of things in the physical reality. Indeed, these circumstances present some significant challenges to a representative democracy that operates by majority decision-making, but that is a large part of today's strategic context.

In fact, this is a period of great uncertainty, because it is clear that the United States has lost its identity, and while all of the competing social power structures are claiming what America should be, one thing becomes evident: There is no longer a consensus of what America is. Former Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice recently commented that, "We are a country divided. We are a country that has lost a sense of common purpose. We've lost the sense of common narrative, and no country can hold together without that—but particularly one like the United States, in which we're not united by ethnicity or nationality or religion, but an idea."<sup>250</sup> Commenting further on today's

---

<sup>249</sup> Richard van de Lagemaat, *Theory of Knowledge for the IB Diploma, Second Edition*, 215.

<sup>250</sup> Alexandra King, "Condoleezza Rice says America is 'A Country Divided,'" *CNN Politics*, March

challenges, Former Vice President Joe Biden asserted in an interview that, “We must reclaim the essence of who we are as a country.”<sup>251</sup> And, finally, US Secretary of Defense, James Mattis made comments astutely recognizing the dire domestic context stating, “Our country has got some problems right now, you know it and I know it. It’s got problems that we don’t have in the military. Just hold the line until our country gets back to understanding and respecting each other, and showing it — of being friendly to one another, you know, that Americans owe to one another.”<sup>252</sup> All of these senior political figures know something is wrong, but these meta-structures of thought, like postmodernism, operate subliminally, outside of conscious awareness. It often never occurs to anyone to question their existence, let alone their influence.

Americans were once able to appreciate opposing political viewpoints through civil discourse, but postmodernism’s weaving in and amongst communities has catalyzed the incommensurability of reality which prevents people from understanding each other and in extreme cases, causes them to commit acts of violence to either get their point across or annihilate the opposition. This does not portend well for the country. In June 2017, the National Rifle Association released a video arguing that, “the only way to save the country and freedom is to fight the violence of lies with the clenched fist of truth.”<sup>253</sup> Furthermore, a recent report indicates that white supremacist inspired violence is on the rise all across the country.<sup>254</sup> What is important to remember, however, is that violent rhetoric

---

5, 2018, accessed April 9, 2018, <https://www.cnn.com/2018/03/04/politics/condoleeza-america-divided-cnntv/index.html>.

<sup>251</sup> Joseph Biden. 2018. Interview by Chris Cuomo. *CNN Politics*, February 6., accessed April 9, 2018. <https://www.cnn.com/videos/politics/2018/02/06/joe-biden-presidency-question-essence-of-country-cuomo-sot.cnn/video/playlists/vice-president-joe-biden>.

<sup>252</sup> Marisa Schultz, “Mattis tells troops to ‘hold the line’ until US becomes less divided,” *The New York Post*, August 27, 2017, accessed August 29, 2017, <http://nypost.com/2017/08/27/mattis-tells-troops-to-hold-the-line-until-us-becomes-less-divided>.

<sup>253</sup> Natasha Bertrand, “A Chilling National Rifle Association Ad Gaining Traction Online Appears to Be an ‘Open Call to Violence,’” *Business Insider*, June 29, 2017, accessed April 8, 2018, <http://www.businessinsider.com/national-rifle-association-ad-call-to-violence-2017-6>.

<sup>254</sup> Jonathan Greenblatt, “The Resurgent Threat of White Supremacist Violence,” *The Atlantic*,



begets violent action and when passionate persuasion seems unachievable, enmity and primordial violence often follow.<sup>255</sup> Revolutions do not just arise simply from mounting discontent over poverty, inequality and other changes. Rather, revolution is a complex process emerging from the social order becoming frayed in many areas at once.<sup>256</sup>

Challenging postmodernism does not require a wholesale dismissal of the claims that the various social movements espouse. Each has what its followers believe to be merits. There are probably many more instances of police brutality in black communities than white communities. There is also an abundance of misogyny that provokes violence against women. Meanwhile, there are also crimes committed by immigrants, and white supremacists that blame their inability to cope with an emerging and changing world on the growth of non-white populations. Finally, it is not a surprise that scientists believe they need to march for science, because postmodernists have directly challenged science's utility today. The merit of these narratives corresponds to what many believe are the facts on the ground, and it also neatly coheres to the stories they have constructed to explain their personal circumstances in the world around them.

However, the more pernicious narratives that lurk on alternative outlets are disingenuous to a modern society. To be sure, the media, the internet and social media have played a key role in forcing postmodern thought from tabloid fiction to nationally syndicated, satellite radio listened to by millions of subscribers. Some people thought that the democratization of knowledge made possible by the internet would reduce the need for experts by appealing to the collective intelligence of

---

January 17, 2018, accessed April 8, 2018, <https://www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2018/01/the-resurgent-threat-of-white-supremacist-violence/550634>.

<sup>255</sup> Carl von Clausewitz, *On War*, trans. and eds. Michael Howard and Peter Paret (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1984), 119.

<sup>256</sup> Jack A. Goldstone, *Revolutions: A Very Short Introduction* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2014), 15.

ordinary citizens.<sup>257</sup> This, combined with the hyper-partisanship of all cable news media, caused postmodern viewers to seek alternative “news” sources, which often consist of baseless and empty opinions masquerading as informed analysis leaving listeners with the illusion of knowledge.<sup>258</sup> These alternative outlets’ novelty, sensationalism and their stark difference with traditional journalistic institutions, appealed to postmodern thinkers seeking alternatives. The problem is that emotional reactions to complex issues are a poor guide to their truth.<sup>259</sup>

When strategizing, the Russians realize the importance of time, the subtleties of political relationships, and the broadened spatial dimensions of global war, and above all, they understand the importance of surprise.<sup>260</sup> In some ways, the Russians were more aware of the sociopolitical rifts than US citizens were, and that is precisely why the Russians sought to exploit them. The internet and social media have interconnected billions of people globally, but it has also facilitated every adversary’s ability to collect information on technologically advanced countries. In essence, the Russians utilized the United States’ own strengths and qualities to transform the marketplace of ideas into a marketplace of dangerous fabrications. To prevent this in the future, current and future generations of the United States must learn to enjoy the endless potentials of the internet without suffering from its vulnerabilities. In sum, neither the psychological effects of information technology, nor the full power of social media have been grasped.<sup>261</sup> For now, it seems that the information revolution has outpaced any conventional understanding of its effects on society, while creating

---

<sup>257</sup> Richard van de Lagemaat, *Theory of Knowledge for the IB Diploma, Second Edition*, 63.

<sup>258</sup> Ibid., 46. The illusion of explanatory depth is an illusion that you understand something in detail when, in fact, you do not.

<sup>259</sup> Ibid., 214.

<sup>260</sup> David Glantz, *Soviet Military Deception in the Second World War*, xxxvii.

<sup>261</sup> Hugo Rifkind, “Zuckerberg Runs Rings Around the Political Class,” *The Times*, April 10, 2018, accessed April 10, 2018, <https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/zuckerberg-runs-rings-round-the-political-class-ngzpq7t9h>.

problems, the complexity of which remain outside current comprehension.

Perhaps, one of the reasons why the Russian strategy was so effective was because it specifically affected the United States in such a way as to confuse the elected officials whose responsibility it was to respond. It was a foreign attack that targeted domestic strife which unknowingly caused public dissidence, which in some cases transformed to local protests and violence. That being said, warfare in the postmodern era is multi-domain, borderless competition dominated by state and non-state actors who possess the ability to manipulate information through narratives to decisively overwhelm or undermine adversaries, focusing on non-combatants for sources of internal political dissidence. The expectation that adversaries, and other political organizations, will follow suit is a foregone conclusion.<sup>262</sup> Since it is precisely within the nexus of domestic and foreign policy that the Russians have steered their strategies, future American strategies must evolve in that exact space to counter them.

It is extremely difficult to detect deception, and it is even more difficult to convince someone they have been deceived. Counterdeception involves detecting deception and disinformation and diminishing its effects.<sup>263</sup> However, counterdeception is a task often consigned to intelligence agencies to prevent an adversary from deceiving a forward military or intelligence unit. It is not a task for an entire population, yet that is exactly what the Russians targeted. In light of this, never before has national security strategy been more contingent upon a domestic education strategy that consummately reflects on and addresses the significant challenges posed by a postmodern philosophical paradigm.

This intrinsic strategy would require a wholesale national enterprise in epistemic vigilance, the

---

<sup>262</sup> Marton Bede, "Analysis: Hungarian Taxpayers Fund Unique 'Fake News' Industry," *International Press Institute*, November 16, 2016, accessed April 10, 2018, <https://ipi.media/analysis-hungarian-taxpayers-fund-unique-fake-news-industry>.

<sup>263</sup> Michael Bennett and Edward Waltz, *Counterdeception Principles and Applications for National Security*, 7.

purpose of which would be to institutionalize the adaptation required to thrive in an infosphere that reshapes human reality.<sup>264</sup> Most Americans have been on cognitive autopilot, allowing advancements in technology to supplant, as opposed to augment, their need to engage in inquiry, philosophy and epistemology. Postmodern thought will not disappear once you name it – it will take years to educate it out of people’s minds, but more than that, the case must be made for each subsequent generation that modernism and modern thought do indeed bring about positive changes in the world. Specifically, the United States must make the case to current and future generations that it remains the “shining city on the hill.”

On the other hand, an extrinsic strategy that censors certain information and content would militate against the democratic ideals of an open society, and that is exactly what the Russians want the United States to do. For when a democratic country engages in undemocratic practices it ceases to be a democracy, and becomes something else. Given their incredulity toward metanarratives, trust is a difficult proposition for postmodernists, but that is what they seek from their government: trust that their identities will be recognized, their voices heard and trust that their political positions are represented in political discourse. However, the United States must strike a careful balance in acquiescence, because the very nature, essence and identity of the United States depends on it. Furthermore, postmodern thought must be taken seriously. Many academic elites treat the phenomenon like they would an errant child, but this only exacerbates the crisis, emboldens the postmodernists, and escalates the risk of rhetoric becoming revolution. The country must be careful to ensure that it does not continue to dismiss social movements they deem illegitimate, because legitimacy takes on a new meaning in an imagined community.

The country has a say in which direction it will head, provided it is alerted that it is off-course. However, the argument that people are unconsciously engaging in a harmful pattern of thought is a

---

<sup>264</sup> Luciano Floridi, *The 4<sup>th</sup> Revolution: How the Infosphere is Reshaping Human Reality*, 1.

thick concept, which can only be understood through deep and serious reflection. There are people that will never escape the inexorable grip of postmodern thought; they are terminally disinformed, preferring to luxuriate in the cave. Likewise, there are plenty of people who want to reawaken from the nightmares of falsehoods which have obscured their reality. For many, the cave is and has always been an illusion, and all that must be done to shatter an illusion is to stop believing in it.<sup>265</sup> Then again, such is the irresistible nature of the truth, that all it asks and all it wants is the liberty of appearing.<sup>266</sup>

---

<sup>265</sup> Yuval Levin, *Tyranny of Reason: The Origins and Consequences of the Social Scientific Outlook*, 278.

<sup>266</sup> Thomas Paine, "The Rights of Man," *The Thomas Paine Reader* (London, UK: Penguin Books, 1987), 321.

## Bibliography

- Abbot, H. Porter. *The Cambridge Introduction to Narrative*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008.
- Al-Lanham, Mimi. "Report: Soros-Linked Group Behind Chemical Attack in Syria." *Infowars*, April 5, 2017. Accessed April 5, 2018. <https://www.infowars.com/report-soros-linked-group-behind-chemical-attack-in-syria>.
- Andrew, Christopher and Mitrokhin, Vasili. *The Sword and The Shield: The Mitrokhin Archive and The Secret History of The KGB*. New York: Basic Books, 1999.
- Arnold, John H. *History: A Very Short Introduction*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2000.
- Baker, Billy. "One of the Country's Biggest Publishers of Fake News Says He Did It for Our Own Good." *The Boston Globe*, April 7, 2018. Accessed April 8, 2018. [https://www.bostonglobe.com/metro/2018/04/07/one-country-biggest-publishers-fake-news-says-did-for-our-own-good/fzIDkkKZf7IbYA9oyGuzhI/amp.html?\\_\\_twitter\\_impression=true](https://www.bostonglobe.com/metro/2018/04/07/one-country-biggest-publishers-fake-news-says-did-for-our-own-good/fzIDkkKZf7IbYA9oyGuzhI/amp.html?__twitter_impression=true).
- Bede, Marton. "Analysis: Hungarian Taxpayers Fund Unique 'Fake News' Industry." *International Press Institute*, November 16, 2016. Accessed April 10, 2018. <https://ipi.media/analysis-hungarian-taxpayers-fund-unique-fake-news-industry>.
- Belsey, Catherine. *Poststructuralism: A Very Short Introduction*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2002.
- Bender, Brian. "Flynn Under Fire for Fake News." *Politico Magazine*, December 5, 2016. Accessed April 10, 2018. <https://www.politico.com/story/2016/12/michael-flynn-conspiracy-pizzeria-trump-232227>.
- Bennett, Michael, Waltz, Edward. *Counter-deception: Principles and Applications for National Security*. Massachusetts: Artech House Inc., 2007.
- Berger, Peter L., Luckmann, Thomas. *The Social Construction of Reality: A Treatise in the Sociology of Knowledge*. New York: Random House, 1966.
- Berlin, Isaiah. *The Hedgehog and The Fox*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2013.
- Berman, Marshall. *All That is Solid Melts into Air: The Experience of Modernity*. London, UK: Verso, 1983.
- Bernstein, R. B. *The Founding Fathers: A Very Short Introduction*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2015.
- Bertrand, Natasha. "A Chilling National Rifle Association Ad Gaining Traction Online Appears to be an 'Open Call to Violence.'" *Business Insider*, June 29, 2017. Accessed April 8, 2018. <http://www.businessinsider.com/national-rifle-association-ad-call-to>

violence-2017-6.

- Blackburn, Simon. *Being Good: A Short Introduction to Ethics*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2001.
- . *Think: A Compelling Introduction to Philosophy*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1999.
- Black Lives Matter. “About.” Black Lives Matter Website. Accessed April 5, 2018. <https://blacklivesmatter.com/about>.
- Bousquet, Antoine. *The Scientific Way of Warfare: Order and Chaos on the Battlefields of Modernity*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2009.
- Butler, Christopher. *Postmodernism: A Very Short Introduction*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2002.
- Cahn, Steven M., Markie, Peter. *Ethics: History, Theory, and Contemporary Issues*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2009.
- Capaldi, Nicholas and Smit, Miles. *The Art of Deception: An Introduction to Critical Thinking*. New York: Prometheus Books, 2007.
- Clausewitz, Carl von. *On War*. ed. and trans. By Michael Howard and Peter Paret. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1976.
- Confucius. *The Analects*. London, UK: Penguin Books, 1979.
- Craig, Edward. *Philosophy: A Very Short Introduction*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2002.
- Culler, Jonathan. *Literary Theory: A Very Short Introduction*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1997.
- . *The Literary in Theory*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2007.
- Daniel, Donald C., Herbig, Katherine. *Strategic Military Deception*. New York: Pergamon Press Inc., 1981.
- Davin, Delia. *Mao: A Very Short Introduction*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2013.
- Deth, Jan W. van, Scarbrough, Elinor. *The Impact of Values*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1995.
- Devine, Curt. “‘Kill Them All’ – Russian-linked Facebook Accounts Called for Violence.” *CNNMoney*, October 31, 2017. Accessed April 7, 2018. <http://money.cnn.com/2017/10/31/media/russia-facebook-violence/index.html>.
- Dolman, Everett Carl. *Pure Strategy: Power and Principle in the Space and Information Age*. New York: Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group, 2005.

- Doren, Charles Van. *A History of Knowledge: Past, Present and Future*. New York: Ballantine Books, 1991.
- Dorner, Dietrich. *The Logic of Failure: Recognizing and Avoiding Error in Complex Situations*. New York: Metropolitan Books, 1996.
- Drolet, Michael. *The Postmodernism Reader*. New York: Routledge, 2004.
- Eagleton, Terry. *The Meaning of Life: A Very Short Introduction*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2007.
- Echevarria, Antulio J. II. *Military Strategy: A Very Short Introduction*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2017.
- Edwards, John. *Sociolinguistics: A Very Short Introduction*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2013.
- Eliot, Charles W. "The Constitution of the United States," in *The Harvard Classics: American Historical Documents, 1000 – 1904*. New York: P. F. Collier & Sons Corporation, 1969.
- English, Richard. *Modern War: A Very Short Introduction*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2013.
- Evans, C. Stephen. *Pocket Dictionary of Apologetics & Philosophy of Science*. Chicago, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2002.
- Floridi, Luciano. *The Fourth Revolution: How the Infosphere is Reshaping Human Reality*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2016.
- . *Information: A Very Short Introduction*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2010.
- Foucault, Michel. *Discipline and Punish* trans. by Richard Howard. New York: Vintage Books, 1977.
- Freedman, Lawrence. *Strategy: A History*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2013.
- Gaddis, John Lewis. *The Landscape of History: How Historians Map the Past*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2002.
- Gareev, Makhmut and Slipchenko. *Future War*. Fort Leavenworth, KS: Foreign Military Studies Office, 2005.
- Geraghty, Jeff. "Postmodern Warfare: Beyond the Horizon." Dissertation, The School of Advanced Air and Space Studies, Air University, 2013.
- Gibbons, John R. & Reimer, Bo. *The Impact of Values*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1995.



- Gilbert, David. "Fake News: Assad, Despite Overwhelming Evidence, Says Report of Chemical Weapons Attack in Syria are Fabricated." *Vice News*, April 13, 2017. Accessed April 5, 2018. [https://news.vice.com/en\\_us/article/5958p5/assad-despite-overwhelming-evidence-says-chemical-weapons-attacks-in-syria-were-fabricated](https://news.vice.com/en_us/article/5958p5/assad-despite-overwhelming-evidence-says-chemical-weapons-attacks-in-syria-were-fabricated).
- Glanz, David. *Soviet Military Deception in the Second World War*. New York: Frank Cass and Company Limited, 1989.
- Greenblatt, Jonathan. "The Resurgent Threat of White Supremacist Violence." *The Atlantic*, January 17, 2018. Accessed April 8, 2018. <https://www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2018/01/the-resurgent-threat-of-white-supremacist-violence/550634>.
- Greene, Jack P. "America and The Creation of the Revolutionary Intellectual World of the Enlightenment," in *Papers on the Constitution*. Washington, DC: Center of Military History, 1990.
- Greenwald, Glenn. "Centrist Democrats Launch Smear Campaign Against Young Transgender Woman, All to Keep an Old, Straight, White Man, in Power." *The Intercept*, January 15, 2018. Accessed April 5, 2018. <https://theintercept.com/2018/01/15/centrist-dems-launch-smear-campaign-against-young-trans-woman-all-to-keep-an-old-straight-white-man-in-power>.
- Grenz, Stanley J. *A Primer on Postmodernism*. Cambridge, UK: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1996.
- Goldstone, Jack A. *Revolutions: A Very Short Introduction*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2014.
- Gutting, Gary. *Foucault: A Very Short Introduction*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2005.
- Handel, Michael I. *Masters of War: Classical Strategic Thought, Third, Revised and Expanded Edition*. London, UK: Frank Cass Publishers, 2001.
- Harding, Luke. "From Cairo to Moscow: How the World Reacted to Ferguson." *The Guardian*, November 25, 2014. Accessed April 7, 2018. <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2014/nov/25/world-reacts-ferguson-michael-brown-shooting>.
- Hatch, Mary Jo. *Organization Theory*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2006.
- Hayward, John. "Russia Stands Behind Assad After Chemical Weapons Attack." *Breitbart News*, April 5, 2017. Accessed April 5, 2018. <http://www.breitbart.com/national-security/2017/04/05/russia-stands-behind-assad-after-syrian-chemical-weapons-attack>.
- Hazon, Yoram. *The Philosophy of Hebrew Scripture*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012.
- Herman, Arthur. *The Cave and The Light: Plato Versus Aristotle, and The Struggle for The*

- Soul of Western Civilization*. New York: Random House, 2014.
- Hicks, Stephen R. C. *Explaining Postmodernism: Skepticism and Socialism from Rousseau to Foucault*. China: Ockham's Razor Publishing, 2014.
- Hindman, Matthew. "This is how Cambridge Analytica's Facebook Targeting Model Really Worked – According to the Person Who Built It." *NiemanLab*, March 30, 2018. Accessed April 11, 2018. <http://www.niemanlab.org/2018/03/this-is-how-cambridge-analyticas-facebook-targeting-model-really-worked-according-to-the-person-who-built-it>.
- Horkheimer, Max. *The Eclipse of Reason*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1947.
- Howard, Michael. *Clausewitz: A Very Short Introduction*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2002.
- Infowars. "About Alex Jones." *Infowars*. Accessed April 5, 2018. <https://www.infowars.com/about-alex-jones>.
- Jencks, Charles. *What is Post-Modernism?* Oxford, UK: Academy Editions, 1986.
- Jullien, Francois. *A Treaty of Efficacy*. Honolulu, HI: University of Hawaii Press, 2004.
- . *The Propensity of Things: Toward a History of Efficacy in China*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1995.
- Kant, Immanuel. *Critique on Pure Reason*, trans. by Paul Guyer and Allen W. Wood. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1998.
- Kahneman, Daniel. *Thinking, Fast and Slow*. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2011.
- Kalyvas, Stathis N. *The Logic of Violence in Civil War*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006.
- King, Alexandra. "Condoleezza Rice says America is 'a Country Divided.'" *CNN Politics*, March 5, 2018. Accessed April 9, 2018. <https://www.cnn.com/2018/03/04/politics/condoleeza-america-divided-cnntv/index.html>.
- Knox, MacGregor, Williamson, Murray. *The Dynamics of Military Revolution: 1300 – 2050*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2001.
- Krippendorff, Klaus. *The Semantic Turn: A New Foundation for Design*. Boca Raton, FL: Taylor & Francis Group, LLC, 2006.
- Kubiak, Jeffrey J. *War Narratives and the American National Will in War*. New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2014.
- Kuhn, Thomas S. *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*. Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago Press, 1996.

- Lagemaat, Richard van de. *Theory of Knowledge for the IB Diploma*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2015.
- Lee, Dave. "The Tactics of a Russian Troll Farm." *BBC News*, February 16, 2018. Accessed April 7, 2018. <http://www.bbc.com/news/technology-43093390>
- Lentriccia, Frank. *Criticism and Social Change*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1983.
- Levin, Yuval. *Tyranny of Reason: The Origins and Consequences of the Social Scientific Outlook*. Lanham, MD: University Press of America, Inc., 2001.
- Levitz, Eric. "Trump Has Turned Millions of Americans into Activists." *New York Magazine*, April 6, 2018. Accessed April 6, 2018. <http://nymag.com/daily/intelligencer/2018/04/trump-has-turned-millions-of-americans-into-activists.html>.
- Liddel Hart, B. H. *Strategy: Second Revised Edition*. New York: Henry Holt & Company, Inc., 1967.
- Lipset, Seymour Martin & Marks, Gary. *It Didn't Happen Here: Why Socialism Failed in the United States*. New York: W. W. Norton & Company, Inc., 2000.
- Luce, Edward. *Time to Start Thinking: America in the Age of Descent*. New York: Grove Press, 2012.
- Lyotard, Jean-Francois. *The Postmodern Condition*. Manchester, UK: Manchester University Press, 1979.
- March for Science. "About Us: Our Mission." March for Science Website. Accessed April 5, 2018. <https://www.marchforscience.com/mission>.
- Matthews, Eric. *Twentieth Century French Philosophy*. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 1996.
- Matthews, P. H. *Linguistics: A Very Short Introduction*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2003.
- McHale, Brian. *The Cambridge Introduction to Postmodernism*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2015.
- Merriam, Sharan B., Brockett, Ralph G. *The Profession and Practice of Adult Education: An Introduction*. San Francisco, CA: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 2007.
- Meza, Summer. "Jenna Abrams, Alt-Right Hero on Twitter, Was Really a Russian Troll Who Tricked Republicans and Celebrities." *Newsweek Magazine*, November 3, 2017. Accessed April 5, 2018. <http://www.newsweek.com/jenna-abrams-fake-russian-troll-account-700801>.

- Miller, David. *Political Philosophy: A Very Short Introduction*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2003.
- Mudde, Cas and Kaltwasser, Cristobal Rovira. *Populism: A Very Short Introduction*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2017.
- Mumford, Stephen. *Metaphysics: A Very Short Introduction*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2012.
- Murray, Williamson and Millett, Allan R. *Military Innovation in The Interwar Period*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996.
- Nagel, Jennifer. *Knowledge: A Very Short Introduction*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2014.
- Naveh, Shimon. *In Pursuit of Military Excellence: The Evolution of Operational Theory*. Oxford, UK: Frank Cass Publishers, 1997.
- Nelson, Harold G. and Stolterman, Erik. *The Design Way: Intentional Change in an Unpredictable World*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2012.
- Nesbitt, Richard. *The Geography of Thought: How Asians and Westerners Think Differently...and Why*. New York: Free Press, 2003.
- Newman, Michael. *Socialism: A Very Short Introduction*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2005.
- Office of the Director of National Intelligence. "Assessing Russian Activities and Intentions in Recent US Elections." Intelligence Community Assessment, January 6, 2017. Accessed April 5, 2018. [https://www.dni.gov/files/documents/ICA\\_2017\\_01.pdf](https://www.dni.gov/files/documents/ICA_2017_01.pdf).
- Okasha, Samir. *Philosophy of Science: A Very Short Introduction*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2002.
- Paine, Thomas. "The Rights of Man." *The Thomas Paine Reader*. London, UK: Penguin Books, 1987.
- Paret, Peter. *The Cognitive Challenge of War: Prussia 1806*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2009.
- Pink, Thomas. *Free Will: A Very Short Introduction*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2004.
- Priest, Graham. *Logic: A Very Short Introduction*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2000.
- Putnam, Hilary. *Reason, Truth and History*. Oxford, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1981.
- Pratkanis, Anthony & Aronson, Elliot. *Age of Propaganda: The Everyday Use and Abuse*

- of Persuasion*. New York: Henry Holt and Company, LLC., 2000.
- Principe, Lawrence M. *The Scientific Revolution: A Very Short Introduction*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2011.
- Rickman, H. P. *Philosophy in Literature*. Madison, NJ: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 1996.
- Ricoeur, Paul. *Time and Narrative, Volume I*. Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago Press, 1983.
- Rifkind, Hugo. "Zuckerberg Runs Rings Around the Political Class." *The Times*, April 10, 2018. Accessed April 10, 2018. <https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/zuckerberg-runs-rings-round-the-political-class-ngzpq7t9h>.
- Robertson, John. *The Enlightenment: A Very Short Introduction*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2015.
- Robb, Amanda. "Anatomy of a Fake News Scandal: Inside the Web of Conspiracy Theorists, Russian Operatives, Trump Campaigners and Twitter Bots Who Manufactured the 'News' that Hillary Clinton Ran a Pizza-Restaurant Child-Sex Ring." *Rolling Stone Magazine*, November 16, 2017. Accessed April 5, 2018. <https://www.rollingstone.com/politics/news/pizzagate-anatomy-of-a-fake-news-scandal-w511904>
- Roland, Alex. *War and Technology: A Very Short Introduction*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2016.
- Rosenau, Pauline Marie. *Postmodernism and The Social Science: Insights, Inroads, and Intrusions*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1992.
- Salmon, Wesley C. *Causality and Explanation*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1998.
- Schultz, Marisa. "Mattis Tells Troops to 'Hold the Line' until US Becomes Less Divided." *The New York Post*, August 27, 2017. Accessed August 29, 2017. <http://nypost.com/2017/08/27/mattis-tells-troops-to-hold-the-line-until-us-becomes-less-divided>.
- Skinner, Quentin. *Machiavelli: A Very Short Introduction*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2000.
- Smith, Barbara Herrnstein. *The Politics of Liberal Education*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1992.
- Stolberg, Alan G. "Making National Security Policy in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century," in *US Army War College Guide to National Security Issues*. Carlisle, PA: US Army Strategic Studies Institute, 2012.
- Stone, Roger. "Why I Urged Trump to Release the JFK Files." *InfoWars*, October 23, 2017. Accessed April 11, 2018. <https://www.infowars.com/stone-why-i-urged-trump-to->

release-jfk-assassination-files.

- Swaine, Jon. "Twitter Admits Far More Russian Bots Posted on the Election Than It Had Disclosed." *The Guardian*, January 19, 2018. Accessed April 8, 2018. <https://www.theguardian.com/technology/2018/jan/19/twitter-admits-far-more-russian-bots-posted-on-election-than-it-had-disclosed>.
- TeSelle, Eugene. *Augustine: The Theologian*. Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2002.
- Thiele, Leslie Paul. *Thinking Politics: Perspectives in Ancient, Modern and Postmodern Political Theory*. New York: Chatham House Publishers, 2003.
- Thomas, Timothy L. *The Dragon's Quantum Leap: Transforming from a Mechanized to an Informatized Force*. Fort Leavenworth, KS: Foreign Military Studies Office, 2009.
- Timberg, Craig. "Russian Ads, Now Publicly Released, Show Sophistication of Influence Campaign." *The Washington Post*, November 1, 2017. Accessed April 5, 2018. <https://www.washingtonpost.com/business/technology/russian-ads-now-publicly-released-show-sophistication-of-influence-campaign/2017/11/01/d26aead2-bf1b-11e7>
- Toye, Richard. *Rhetoric: A Very Short Introduction*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2013.
- Toynbee, Arthur. *A Study of History*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1957.
- Tzu, Sun. trans. by Ames, Roger T. *The Art of Warfare*. New York: The Random House Publishing Group, 1993.
- The United States Holocaust Memorial Museum. "Burning Books." Accessed April 7, 2018. <https://www.ushmm.org/wlc/en/article.php?ModuleId=10005852>.
- US Department of the Army, Army Techniques Publication (ATP) 5-0.1, Army Design Methodology. Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2011.
- US Department of Defense, Joint Staff. Joint Publication (JP) 3-13.4, Military Deception. Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2012.
- Viotti, Paul R. and Kauppi, Mark V. *International Relations Theory, 5<sup>th</sup> Edition*. New York: Pearson Education Inc., 2012.
- White, Hayden. *The Content and the Form: Narrative Discourse and Historical Representation*. Baltimore, MD: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1987.
- White Nationalist Movement. "Mission." White Nationalist Movement Website. Accessed January 12, 2018. <https://www.nationalist.org>.
- Women's March. "Unity Principles." Women's March Website. Accessed April 5, 2018. <https://www.womensmarch.com/mission>.

Zimmerman, Jens. *Hermeneutics: A Very Short Introduction*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2015.