

Class Essay on Caritat and the Nineteenth Century theorists encounter with the issues of Freud and Foucault

Date Due: The final submission date is May 3rd.

The Class essay requirement is a 2500 word essay on a `final¿ journey of Professor Caritat (Condorcet) in which he travels to a utopia/dystopia that illustrates the issues of personal identity and internalized forms of control exercised by society over its members that preoccupied Foucault. At least two of Marx, Weber, Durkheim, Simmel, Blau/Coleman will accompany Caritat in his journey (you can substitute personalities who can speak on their behalf). The essay must be documented with specific quotations or page references from the readings taken from the theorists.

Possible Ways of meeting the above criteria:

1) You can continue Professor Caritat's journey to Egalitaria. You will need to describe what an egalitarian society looks like, paying attention not only to such issues as educational, health, and property rights or job opportunities, but also to the ways the society `civilizes¿ its members and their drives (including originality). Egalitaria should be a `good enough¿ society, not a dark Utopia. You should also pay some attention to how justice operates and how politics works, remembering that indirect forms of control, not direct coercion, is the way that order is maintained in modern society. You are free to invent your Egalitaria in any way that allows these issues to be discussed. Set up, for instance, systems of educational and job opportunities that seek to create conforming citizens. You can use Caritat, as does Lukes, to bring out the salient aspects of this society. Then, bring in (literally, if you want), two of the theorists that we have considered and at least the ideas of Foucault, and have them discuss with Caritat the society that you have invented. Use quotations from them, and do the same for Caritat -- either from the novel or from Condorcet's writings in the Readings. Bear in mind that each theorist has a distinctive way of looking at society and its 'ideal' arrangements. Thus, it's unlikely that they will be satisfied with the society that you have invented. You can make use of the contrast between the progressive optimism of Caritat (Condorcet) and of Marx, the preoccupation of Weber and Durkheim with the bases for order and legitimacy in modern society, and the relative pessimism of Foucault with respect to the difficulties of achieving both order and individual freedom and originality. Remember that Caritat learns from his journeys. By the time he comes to Egalitaria, he is, as the end of the novel indicates, ready to see the ideal society as something that depends on constant vigilance and on tinkering with its arrangements rather than on a perfect blueprint.

2) You can choose an existing 'ideal' society. This can be the United States, Communist China, Afghanistan or any other country, the State of Texas, or a community that you know. The community can be a University, a Church, or an Association of one kind or another. You will need to describe it -- again you can use Caritat as a device -- the innocent stranger -- for bringing out the crucial aspects of your society. It can either be presented as a dark utopia (dystopia) or a light one. The account can be satirical, but it should be factual. Then, use quotations from, and the presence of at least two of the theorists to look at what

is right and wrong in the society that you are considering. The comments above on the theorists apply to this way of answering the question.

3) You can write a more conventional academic essay on the notion of the ideal society, using the theorists that we have considered. You would need to outline each theorist's view of what made for an 'ideal' or properly working society, and contrast these positions with each other. Then, in the conclusion, you would try to reconcile the differing positions or come down in favor of one or more of the positions. Here, too, you need to use quotations from the theorists.