L’Auberge espagnole
[The Spanish Apartment]

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http://www.bc.edu/offices/international/programs/semester/year/europeusia/barcelona.html
Circa 1150: Aristotle’s Children

Greece / Persia / Cordoba / Paris / Oxford

6 September 2007
Week 01-Lecture 02

Point of this lecture and next Tuesday’s:

to set up the highly-ordered world
that the
Black Plague [1347-48] will destroy.

It is an Aristotelian world:
a “great chain of being”
held firmly in place by fixed essences
which human knowledge can access;
a world in which your social place
is fixed by blood inheritance
and unchanging.
I. History as Archeology

The present is built on the past…
but we don’t see it 😊…
Hence, the need to **dig deep!!!!!**

Anti-SAT History:

Make the familiar **UN-familiar**
1. Post-linguistic turn: language is a hammer, not a mirror
2. Psychoanalysis / Genealogy / History v. Memory
3. Trauma theory – encounter w/ chaos = loss of meaning system
4. Anthropology (purity and danger)
5. Hybridity/hybridization (post-colonialism)
6. Base-Superstructure (post-Marxism / structuralism)
6. [Post-] structuralism of the 1960s (from Marxism)

SUPERSTRUCTURE
[culture]

BASE
[material realities]

III. Recapitulation:
History as Archeology →

Against Ideology

(History as a moral project...)
The function of ideology is to cover up origins . . .

History is against ideology …

History uncovers what has been covered;
redisCOVERs what has been purposely repressed.

...and all origins are **bloody**.

My father told me we was all born
Of blood and tribulation.
And so then too was our great city....
But for those of us who lived and died in those furious days, it was like . . . no matter what they did to build this city up again . . .

for the rest of time, it would be like no one even knew we was ever here.

http://www.bc.edu/schools/cas/history/faculty/alphabetical/quigley_david.html
6. [Post-] structuralism of the 1960s (from Marxism)

SUPERSTRUCTURE
[culture]

BASE
[material realities]

Aristotle:
384-322 BC

SUPERSTRUCTURE maintains and legitimizes the base

BASE Shapes the Superstructure

Edenication
Family
Mass Media

Politics

Superstructure and base in society

RELATIONS OF PRODUCTION

Means of Production: All the forces you need to produce:
Capital, labor, land, machinery, etc., 384 (384-322 BC)

“Essentialism” imported 1400 years later (after Aristotle for a reason: an ideology that sustains medieval societal organization.)

The function of ideology is to cover up origins . . .

KEY FOR MIDDLE AGES: “Essentialism” is an ideology.
It justifies the social distribution: 3% own land; 97% work it.

. . .and all origins are bloody.
Our own ideology: “All men are created equal.”

USA distribution of wealth by quintile, 1998

KEY FOR MIDDLE AGES: “Essentialism” is an ideology. It justifies the social distribution: 3% own land; 97% work it.
New York Daily News

Leona Helmsley's former housekeeper said yesterday the Queen of Mean's pampered $12 million pooch made life miserable for the hired help.

"We had so much trouble with Trouble," Zamfira Sfara told the Daily News. "I was bitten dozens of times!"

The Romanian housekeeper, who worked in Helmsley's posh apartment in the Helmsley Park Lane Hotel, described the lavish life the 8-year-old Maltese shared with Helmsley.

The hotel queen, who died last week at age 87, showered love and money on the furball, who snagged the largest individual trust from her fortune, which is worth at least $4 billion. Helmsley believed her late husband, Harry, communicated with her through the dog.

"I never saw a human being so in love with an animal," said Sfara, 48. "They were always together everywhere." Helmsley even shared her double king-size bed with Trouble, Sfara said, and lots of kisses.

"She would lick the dog tongue to tongue," she said. "It was unnatural. It was unhealthy."

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USA distribution of wealth by quintile, 1998

**KEY FOR MIDDLE AGES:** “Essentialism” is an ideology.

It justifies the social distribution: 3% own land; 97% work it.
I. How Aristotle survived the “Dark Ages”
Plato: ca. 428-348 BC

Aristotle: 384-322 BC

Are Istanbul [formerly Constantinople] and Athens “Western” or “Eastern”?

NB: they are boundary regions: ambiguous identities
Even “the School of Athens” -- Plato and Aristotle!! – seems to be in the “East” ...

Late 400s CE/AD: Visigoths [“Germanic Migrations”] conquer Iberian Peninsula from Romans
Weak unstable governments; infighting
Early 600s:
Muhammad the Prophet: proclaims a radical monotheism in the Arabian desert:

There is no god but God.

NB Menocal’s usage: not “Allah” --- i.e., implying another “God” [polytheism]
We don’t say “YHWH” or “Deus” or “Dieu”

Quran = “recitation” of this revelation

Dies in 632 in Mecca [“Saudi Arabia”]

caliph = “successor” = problem of legitimacy

How close are you in blood marriage?
[contrast Xty: bishops --- how close to the apostles?]

KEY EVENT: 661

Caliph #4 = cousin Ali -- assassinated

Umayyads come to power: ARABS

Move center of Islam out of isolated Arabian desert [Mecca/Medina] up into Damascus [Syria]

Build: Great Mosque of Damascus;
“Dome of the Rock” in Jerusalem – Isaac spared --- reassign meaning

Ideological point: Islam replaces Judaism as inheritor of Abraham’s monotheism
Late 600s: conquered Berbers/ embrace Islam
(NB: Berbers are non-Arab Muslims)

Berbers led by Syrian Arabs across Straits of Gibraltar
Mercenaries don’t leave! 720: “Conquest” complete.
Establish a Muslim kingdom loyal to Umayyad Caliphate in Damascus [Syria]
732: Battle of Poitiers

- 720: Muslim conquest of Spain complete
- Cross Pyrénées into “Gaul” [France]
- 732: Battle of Poitiers
- Charles Martel “the Hammer”
- [grandfather of Charlemagne] turns invaders back at Poitier
- Muslims retreat back to Iberian Peninsula

750 --- Abassids massacre whole Umayyad family in Damascus [“Syria”]

Transfer capital of Islamic Empire to Baghdad [“Iraq”]

→ Saudi Arabia
→ Syria
→ Iraq

NB: Problem of legitimacy
750: One survivor! Abd al-Rahman; Arab father/Berber mother

755: He appears in the Maghrib, i.e., “Far West”

756: Defeats the Abbasid governor of Cordoba

929: Declaration that Abd al-Rahman III is true Defender of the Faith

Cordoba in Spain --not Baghdad-- is true center of Islam

Again NB: Problem of legitimacy: Saudi Arabia→Syria→Iraq→Spain

CORDOBA [Umayyad] vs. BAGHDAD [Abbasid]:

rival visions / versions of Islam:

1) “People of the Book” = *dhimmi*
   --- Quran says: all who share Abraham’s monotheism get special protection.

2) Umayyad: a multi-lingual/ religious/ culture

3) *Umayyads are “assimilationists”* --- like Romans before them,
   borrow and recycle everything they can [cf. Zeus ---> Jupiter]
al-Andalusia ("Spain"): ca. 720 - 1492
Islamic ["Moorish"] kingdom + co-existing Christians and Jews
Ancient texts [Plato/ Aristotle] introduced back into “West” via Islamic libraries

- Arabic -> Spanish -> Latin
- e.g., Pope Sylvester II: “Spanish,” fluent in Hebrew, Arabic, Greek and Latin

Toledo (Spain) and Sicily (Italy):
Translation centers

Averroès, *Dommentary on the Metaphysics of Aristotle*

Arabic text established by Maurice Boyges, S.J.

[Beirut, Lebanon, 1967]

O’Neill Library: B 434 .A94
shamelessness is bad, and similarly that a man should not be ashamed to do evil, and similarly it is not right either 249 that a man should do things of this kind and be advanced. (8) Nor is self-righteousness either a virtue, but is a viciuous thing. We shall speak about this later. Now we speak about justice.

End of the Fourth Discourse of the Ethics of Aristotle, and praise he to God and peace upon His servants whom He has chosen.

BOOK V

In the name of God, the Merciful, the Compassionate.

God bless Muhammad and his family and give them peace

The Fifth Discourse of the Book of Ethics of Aristotle

249 This translation is somewhat far from the Greek.
II. What is the Intellectual-Religious Problem with Aristotle???
The three “religions of the Book” are all “radical monotheisms”

“God” is absolutely other than all other “beings.”

First [or second] commandment:

**prohibition against images of God as idolatrous.**

God is beyond representation / imagination.
Congregational churches
Concept = Thing:

an optimistic view of human knowledge.

Plato thought concepts [“Ideas”] had an independent “pure” existence outside of the material world.

Aristotle did not. Concepts are the “formal causes” that shape things in the material world as well as in our minds. That’s how we can know things “as they are in reality.”

Monotheism [“religion” or “revelation”]: our minds are absolutely incapable of knowing “God.”

Empiricism [“science”]: I can know what things are as they really are through observation.

CAN THESE BE PUT TOGETHER??
Avicenna
980-1037
Ibn Sina, Abū ‘Alī al-Husayn ibn ‘Abd Allāh ibn Sīnā
Persian: ابوعلي سينا
Arabic: أبو علي الحسين بن عبد الله بن سينا
Averroes
1128-1198
Abul Walid Muhammad Ibn Ahmad Ibn Rushd
Muhammad Ibn Ahmad Ibn Ahmad Ibn Rushd
Maimonides
1135-1204
Moshe ben Maimon (Hebrew: משה بن מקيمن)
Arabic: موسى بن ميمون بن عبد الله القرطبي الإسرائيل
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