To Be or Not to Be?

That is the question.

Modern History: HS041
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From Pestilence to Enlightenment, 1348-1789
8 September 2004
Week 01-Lecture 01

I. History as Archeology

The present is built on the past…
but we don’t see it ☺…
Hence: the need to dig deep!!!!!
History as Archeology:
To see where you are now

really…. you have to **dig!** hard!
to see how it contains the past.

Bapst Library: named after Fr. John Bapst, S.J.

O’Neill Library: Named after Speaker of the House Tip O’Neill
Compare Freud: “depth psychology”; search for “deep structures,” family trees, “genetic explanations” in the past of present behaviors e.g., Oedipal complex…

“The past isn’t dead yet. It isn’t even past.” --- Wm. Faulkner

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It isn’t even past.
--- Wm. Faulkner

If the past isn’t dead yet, what makes history often so lifeless???

SAT History:
Memorize names, dates, places, people, events…
Make the unfamiliar familiar.

Anti-SAT History:
Make the familiar UN-familiar!
étrange!
strange / foreign / alien
II. A course in “Cultural-Intellectual History”

Other types of history:
- political
- military
- economic/social

Political History

Military History
(Obviously overlaps with political…)

Economic-Social History
(Overlaps with political and military)

Cultural – Intellectual History
“Culture” (from Mary Douglas, Purity and Danger)

“A system or positive pattern in which ideas and values are tidily ordered.”

Cf. Ancients: true / good / beautiful

Intellectual-Cultural history: ties ideas and values together with material / social facts

1. MATERIAL PRE-CONDITIONS [“facts”]: penicillin; transplants; hygiene
2. ORDER: NEWLY THINKABLE [“ideas”]: “I can live to be 100.”
3. ORDER: NEW EXPECTATIONS / ANXIETIES [“values”]:
   “I ought to live to be 100.” “Living to 100 is a good thing.”

4) RESULT: NEW PROBLEMS / CHALLENGES:
   “Who is going to pay for all of this?”
   By EDUARDO PORTER

THE good news is we are living longer than ever before. The bad news is it’s going to cost us.

As global fertility rates grow more slowly and increasing prosperity enhances life expectancy, a complicated mix of forces are causing the contours of the world to change. From the private to the public, from the personal to the global, it is already clear that the world will pay for these.

A larger population of retirees, living longer, means that the labor force will shrink as a percentage of the total population. With fewer people at work to support everyone else, living standards could fall.

Aging will put stress on government finances, drawing more and more money from budgets to pay for pensions and health care. Interest rates could rise sharply as a result, with the old drawing down their lifelong savings, depressing savings rates across the industrial world.

The upshot is that the bulging cohort of the elderly will probably be forced to work well into what today is considered old age, and then get stingier pensions when they eventually retire. Moreover, their children will have to work harder to support them.

“This is the result of desirable trends,” says Joseph Chamie, director of the United Nations population division. “Lower mortality is very good news. But we’ve got to adjust the system.”
IDEAS AND MEANINGS INTER-RELATED WITH 
POLITICAL / MILITARY / ECONOMIC: 
Anxiety? Trust? Fear? 
Pessimism? Optimism? 
Prejudices? 
Repressions? 

III. THESIS AND ARGUMENT 
OF HS041: 
“To be or not to be…”

To be, or not to be: that is the question: 
Whether 'tis nobler in the mind to suffer 
The slings and arrows of outrageous fortune, 
Or to take arms against a sea of troubles, 
And by opposing end them? To die, to sleep; 
No more; and by a sleep to say we end 
The heart-ache and the thousand natural shocks 
That flesh is heir to, 'tis a consummation 
Devoutly to be wish'd.

Thus conscience does make cowards of us all; 
And thus the native hue of resolution 
Is sicklied o'er with the pale cast of thought, 
And enterprises of great pitch and moment 
With this regard their currents turn awry, 
And lose the name of action.

“Modernity” = “subjective individualism” 
The individual “subject” 
 bearing his/her rights
is the fundamental reality
and prior
to other concerns.
[“Rights-bearing subject”]

Traditional society: 
individual finds his/her role/meaning within a 
large organic whole 
Value/meaning of individual derives from place in community 

Modernity: the “atom” 
<individual member> is prior to the organism <society/ community> of which it is a
Key question for HS041:

What is the relationship between
the individual and the community?

“Pre-modern” --- communitarian:
-- Understand the individual in terms of the whole

“Modern” --- individualist:
-- Understand the whole as a composite of individuals

Modern society:
“democracy” / individual rights / representative government…

Sounds familiar???

but a little more complicated than that!!!

Key question for democracy: HOW TO NEGOTIATE MAJORITY WILL AND MINORITY RIGHTS?
Key question for democracy:

**HOW TO NEGOTIATE MAJORITY WILL AND MINORITY RIGHTS?**

**RECAP:**

Key question for HS041:

What is the relationship between the individual and the community?

- **Pre-modern** --- **communitarian**:
  - Understand the individual in terms of the whole

- **Modern** --- **individualist**:
  - Understand the whole as a composite of individuals

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**IV. Syllabus Overview**

Why study history???

* "A moral project . . ."

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

---George Orwell
A moral project:
Being informed about the past . . .
lets us make better-informed
decisions in the present.
Less susceptible to propaganda…
more capable of rational deliberation.

“Who controls the past,
controls the future;
who controls the present
controls the past.”
—George Orwell

An aesthetic project . . .

“Toute chose qui n’est pas étrange
est fausse.”
[“Everything not strange / foreign is false.”]

Not only a moral project but also aesthetic
What we thought familiar becomes unfamiliar
— not obvious or necessary but contingent . . . and perhaps a matter of chance ---
hence both more interesting and valuable.

A religious project . . .?

“To seek God in all things.”
St. Ignatius of Loyola

“Jesuit” ↔ “Society of Jesus”

Jesuit order
History… as a moral, aesthetic, and perhaps religious project.

Recap: History as Archeology

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 what 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 know we was ever here.

The function of ideology is to cover up origins…

…and all origins are bloody.
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.