

Raymond J. Jirran

## A. Introduction

History was generally written to satisfy the rights and interests of those people communicating power. Through the course of Modern times, the shift has been from kings to nobles to middle class merchants to the masses themselves. The felt needs of community college students are generally through the masses. In that spirit, the for this lesson is **to evaluate the legitimacy of human rights in Seventeenth-Century England** according to a criteria of the people, places, and times involved and the degree of certitude warranted. Many concepts of human have originated in England. Unless otherwise stated, however, all references in this lecture are specifically to England, rather than to Western civilization in general.

## B. Ideology

### 1. Political

Implicit in the meaning of English history is the adaptability between the crown and shires, between common law and Parliament. However great the adaptability of England, England was still in no position militarily, between 1453 and 1688, to get involved on The Continent. Such lack of involvement had a practical effect for historians of England the British Empire. Because the Gregorian Calendar came from the papacy, the British Empire refused to abandon the Julian Old Style Calendar between 1582 and 1752.<sup>1</sup> This means seventy years of British dates are ten days more than what was generally accepted elsewhere in Europe. Britain only joined with Scotland in 1707 and Ireland in 1801.

Moving ahead, but continuing the theme: the Irish Revolution of 1919-21, by creating the new Irish state, became a gift of the Irish to the world. That gift was in demonstrating that modern insurgency warfare by the masses could be successful. The rule of Britannia world-wide continued, until effectively ended by the Japanese in the Second World War. Britain ruled by her navy to protect her world-wide economic interests. English history, therefore, is not only about communicating the interests of the powerful to the masses, but also about the masses communicating their own interests to the powerful.<sup>2</sup>

### 2. Economic

Seventeenth-Century England was a transitional era, from a time of thinking of England as an economic work-shop producing profits for merchants to a time of beginning to realize that England was also an economic market place producing consumer goods for the masses. Work-shop, or mercantile, theorists were concerned with balance-of-trade, productivity, and control of the laboring classes. See pages 442-446 in the seventh edition of Chambers.<sup>3</sup> Consumption, at best, was a necessary evil. Market place, or laissez-faire theorists were concerned with domestic rather than foreign consumption as demand; with how to get people to spend rather than how to get people to save for personal self-improvement or for the good of the whole. The basic understanding of this laissez-faire theory was described in Adam Smith, The Wealth of Nations, first published in 1776. Despite the English origin, the French were probably the first to use the language, *laissez-faire* and adopt the theory in governance.<sup>4</sup>

What was actually going on was that the economy was separating most workers from their tools or their access to land and forcing workers to sell their labor. Labor itself, as a commodity,

Raymond J. Jirran

became subject to the unseen forces of the market place, rather than to the visible and personal authority of the previous eras. While much has been made of the congruence between freedom and capitalism, it was the freedom of property owners from social obligations toward the workers which was critical to capitalistic growth in the Seventeenth Century. Freedom for the poor was politically dangerous for the rich. Economic theory was slow to accept this reality, this truth.

### **C. General Chronology**

The time-frame in which economic developments occurred within Western civilization was significant. The Sixteenth Century was the first century of Modern History, an era of discovery and exploitation, middle class wealth. The Seventeenth Century was a transitional period in which the middle classes wedged their way into the political scene in their own right as businessmen rather than simply as paid bureaucrats. During the Eighteenth Century, the middle class business interests gained enough influence to begin taking over governments. Economic power translated into political power and leisure.

Again, moving ahead, while continuing the theme: during the Nineteenth Century, those political gains were solidified. Common people were patronizing the theater. Even in the Seventeenth Century, Renaissance Shakespeare was well-known in small Mississippi River towns. Shakespeare died in 1616, Queen Elizabeth in 1603. The queen is not legitimately associated with the bard, except for the label "Elizabethan drama."<sup>5</sup>

The Twentieth Century has been an era of the growth of the common people into the roles of the middle classes. Nineteenth Century middle class bawdiness forced Shakespeare out of middle class arenas into the more salon-like, The College of William and Mary-type, theaters where Shakespeare is now played. What about Shakespeare as popular art? The recognized artistic attributes of the plays of Shakespeare prevent the plays from being included in popular culture, regardless of their high degree of popularity.<sup>6</sup>

Recognizing this change, historians are beginning to apply the point of view of the lower classes. During the Sixteenth Century, the peasant tended to stay on his farm. During the Seventeenth Century, he was frequently driven off and attracted away from the land and into the cities. Over-population, rather than the greed of capitalist landlords caused most of those who left the land, to go. Once they got into the cities, however, laborers in manufacturing were better off financially than those in most agricultural or other traditional economic sectors. During the Eighteenth Century, the lower classes began to find a political place fighting in the armed service. In the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries, this place was definitely confirmed.

### **D. Conclusion**

In reality, people are motivated by much more than economics alone. Both mercantile control and laissez-faire freedom have acceptable places in contemporary economic ideology. By studying the Introduction to England; Ideology, and Chronology, students have been able to evaluate the legitimacy of human rights in Seventeenth Century England. Students are reminded to read Chambers. On "Map 15.4 Areas of Fighting 1618-1660" on page 476 in the sixth edition of Chambers, note the items in the lower left hand corner.<sup>7</sup>

Raymond J. Jirran

## Supplement

### **E. Introduction**

The academy is biased in favor of things English. The professor has little objection to this, because it is English principles of democracy which have empowered the masses in the U. S. The professor does object, however, to elitism in the presentation of history from which identity emerges.

### **F. Scots**

Picts and Irish Celts prevented the Romans from getting far into Scotland. Romans introduced Christianity before leaving during the Fifth Century. Between the Fifth and mid-Ninth Centuries, Scotland was divided into four kingdoms. After that Scotland united. Between the Eleventh and Fifteenth Centuries, Scotland struggled to struggling for independence from England.<sup>8</sup> The English-Scottish succession war of 1496-1497 separated the two countries<sup>9</sup> for the next two centuries.

As the seventh edition of Chambers points out on page 507, James Stuart , James I of England (r. 1603-1625) and James VI of Scotland (r. 1567-1625), succeeded Elizabeth (r. 1588-1603) without incident in 1603. There was one king ruling two kingdoms. On page 526 Chambers notes that Parliament blocked the union of Scotland with England which James desired. The Stuarts are not indexed. Anne (r. 1702-1714), the last Stuart to rule England before the accession of William and Mary is included in "The English Succession" chart in Chambers on page 608.

In 1707 Scots entered the British Empire in order to gain access to America and other places. This was especially true of the lowland Scots.<sup>10</sup> The issue is regionalism. In 1999 *The American Historical Review* devoted sixty-five pages to a *Forum* by four scholars on "Bringing Regionalism Back to History." To paraphrase the issue, is Scotland best understood a nation, part of a region, or a combination? The *Review* scholars focus on Europe, East Asia, especially China and Japan, the United States South, and Southeast Asia.<sup>11</sup>

Between 1680 and 1690 a thousand or more Scots migrated to New Jersey and North Carolina. A famine in the 1690 held back an immediate run to the colonies from Scotland after the Union of 1707. Scots who did emigrate had first gone to the north of Ireland. The north of Ireland did send many to the colonies during the first half of the Eighteenth Century. The Scots who came were skilled and educated. The early Scots left more because of politics, diplomacy, and trade than starvation and other demographic imperatives.<sup>12</sup>

During the 1680s predominantly Quaker and Episcopalian Scots sent about seven hundred settlers to New Jersey. These Scots were ensuring a place for themselves in the Union of Crowns during the Restoration of the British monarchy. Rival Presbyterians sponsored Stuart's Town in Carolina. This was also the time when James Blair, the Scottish Episcopal clergyman, emigrated to Virginia. Scottish merchants participated in the Chesapeake tobacco trade.<sup>13</sup>

Raymond J. Jirran

As Celts, the Scots may have considered themselves as of a different race from the English. The Scots, however, considered themselves North Britons.<sup>14</sup> The European sense of race, especially as it involves the Celts is decidedly different from the United States sense of race. Britain did have a Black racial component which will be taken up in the next section.

The early colonists were more interested in subsistence and exchange than capital. This did not change until the Late Eighteenth Century. There had to be a market before there would be a surplus to sell there. Without the market, farmers would not grow the surplus. Reluctance to engage capital markets was especially true in New England and the Middle Colonies.<sup>15</sup>

Scholars ask why did not the work-ethic of John Calvin impel his followers into capitalism any earlier? The answer seems to be that Calvinists wanted to control rather than unleash the market economy. Until the end of the Seventeenth Century, concerned about selfishness and pride, Calvinism served to slow capital development.<sup>16</sup>

Scholars then wonder about the effect of the 1776 War for Independence on capitalism. The way the reviewer politely words it, ". . . the American Revolution stimulated new rural enterprises but actually delayed the emergence of a manufacturing sector."<sup>17</sup> These "rural enterprises" appear to be a euphemism for plantation slavery.

## **G. Racism**

Racial sensitivity was not something new, following World War II. African-American families were present in Britain at least since 1504. By the Eighteenth Century, the civic elites of Bristol, Liverpool, and Birmingham had built their wealth on slavery and the slave trade. This slave trade inspired resistance on the part of the native African Americans. American abolitionists, like Frederick Douglass, tapped into this resistance.<sup>18</sup>

The slope of racism becomes slippery from trying to determine the attributes to use. The logical problem involves the "fantastic possibility of the difference of the identical."<sup>19</sup> What are the laws of history? Are there laws of history? One scholar argues for a "history composed of attempts to impose laws of difference on the emergence of otherness."<sup>20</sup> The Professor likes the notion of politics trying to impose laws of truth. Students are invited to watch Chambers to consider whether the concepts of class conflict and self-interest appear the same as concepts throughout the text, but different in time and place. Some argue that differences in time and place force differences in concept.<sup>21</sup>

So, we do get back to the use of the Julian Calendar, after all. The professor regards the difference between the other and the same as key to all communication. Both are required in order to communicate.

Before the Civil War there was no uniform time throughout the United States. Usually noon was whenever the sun was directly overhead. The issue was difference and otherness. As H & R Block, the tax preparation company likes to put it, "The same tax for all is the same tax for nobody." With the telegraph and the railroad it became necessary to coordinate time zones, for example between

Raymond J. Jirran

New York and Cincinnati. Only in 1883 did the United States standardize the four time zones still in use today on the continental United States. Later the rest of North America and Europe followed similar suit.<sup>22</sup>

The rise of the Ku Klux Klan resolved some of the tension between otherness and difference. Under the banner of whiteness, the otherness of ethnicity became a difference of family origin. The tension between otherness and difference is what makes up the moral nature of narrative history. Narrative changes incompatible inseparables into differences and similarities. The Professor regards otherness, as used here, as a political act objectifying something away from one's own identity and difference as truth revealing that humans have more in common with one another than with any other aspect of creation.<sup>23</sup>

## **H. Elitism**

An ongoing theme throughout these lectures is that discord is essential for adaptation. A further theme is that the masses furnish the best source of such discord. That is why, for example, the professor is willing to offer extra credit for watching the thirteen Kenneth Clark art series of videotapes referenced in V. Assignments C. Optional 3. Other in the supplement to Topic Two. Kenneth Clark is not the only prig to have been among us, however.

Allen Bloom, author of The Closing of the American Mind is another who has attacked the democratization of knowledge. Lawrence Levine is one of the great defenders of the democratization of knowledge. While he was doing research for his 1977 Black Culture and Black Consciousness: Afro-American Folk Thought from Slavery to Freedom, Levine was struck by the parodies of Shakespeare which he found in the scripts of pre Civil War minstrel shows. This meant that the masses knew Shakespeare. From that introduction, Levine began his work on what the masses knew about Shakespeare.

Levine is convinced that the masses are quite capable of understanding and enjoying high culture, but in their disconcertant ways. "While professing that their defense of high culture will trickle down from the high ground, . . . elitists gain even greater comfort from maintaining their distance from a popular culture they despise and fear."<sup>24</sup> In this way, Shakespeare was taken away from the masses, as described above. For human rights to be legitimate for the Thomas Nelson Community College student body, human rights must be legitimate for the masses from whom that body rises. History is presented in that light.

## **I. Conclusion**

The incompatible inseparables at work here are those between the vernacular, or language as spoken by the people, and Latin, or language as spoken by the intellectual specialist. Which is to prevail is determined not by political strength in Western civilization, but by truth itself. Political power has not always been the side of truth. Educated people distinguish between what is politically correct and what is true, whether for king, nobility, middle class merchant, the masses, or all of humanity.

Raymond J. Jirran

Comments on the Seventh Edition of Chambers, pages 0478-0491.

In the opinion of the professor, Chambers is the most scholarly textbook on the market. Chambers well represents mainstream thinking in the history profession. The professor, however, disagrees in many significant ways with mainstream thinking. Some of these disagreements are set forth above and others in the following comments.

Page Column  
Paragraph

Line

0485 1 3

12

". . . *lit de justice*. . . "

See page 183, 1, 1, 3<sup>rd</sup> last "...violence..." in Topic 17--Nationality.

The Merovingians, by relying on violence, messed the notion of truth as the legitimating force to define power. Later, in contrast to using violence Francis I (r. 1515-1547), ". . . invoked the *lit de justice*, a prerogative that allowed him to appear in person before an assembly that was delaying the registration of any of his edicts or ordinances and declare them registered and therefore law."

## Endnotes

---

<sup>1</sup> Thomas W. Spalding, The Catholic Historical Review, Vol. LXXI No. 4 (October 1985), p. 507.

<sup>2</sup> See me if you are interested in finding a specific reference for this.

<sup>3</sup> See pages 552-554 in the fifth edition of Chambers; 401-404 in the sixth edition, . 442-446 in the seventh edition.

<sup>4</sup> Jean-Pierre Hirsch, "Revolutionary France, Cradle of Free Enterprise," *The American Historical Review*, Vol. 94, No. 4 (December 1989), page 1284.

<sup>5</sup> Philip D. Curtin, "Depth, Span, and Relevance," The American Historical Review, Vol. 89, No. 1 (February 1984), p. 6.

<sup>6</sup> Lawrence W. Levine, "William Shakespeare and the American People: A Study in Cultural Transformation," The American Historical Review, Vol. 89, No. 1 (February 1984), pp. 34 ff.

<sup>7</sup> On "Map 15.2 Areas of Fighting 1618-1660" on page 582 in the fifth edition of Chambers, note the items in the lower left hand corner; page 476 in the sixth edition; "Map 15.2 Areas of Fighting 1618-1660" on page 524.

<sup>8</sup> *The Concise Columbia Encyclopedia: Third Edition* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994), page 784.

<sup>9</sup> Jack A. Goldstone, review of Charles Tilly, *European Revolutions, 1492-1992*. (The Making of Europe.) in *The American Historical Review*, Vol. 99, No. 4 (October 1994), page 1306.

<sup>10</sup> Ned C. Landsman, "Nation, Migration, and the Province in the First British Empire ??," *The American Historical Review*, Vol. 104, No. 2 (April 1999), page 464.

<sup>11</sup> *The American Historical Review*, Vol. 104, No. 4 (October 1999), pages xv-xvi and 1156-1220.

<sup>12</sup> Ned C. Landsman, "Nation, Migration, and the Province in the First British Empire ??," *The American Historical Review*, Vol. 104, No. 2 (April 1999), page 469.

<sup>13</sup> Ned C. Landsman, "Nation, Migration, and the Province in the First British Empire ??," *The American Historical Review*, Vol. 104, No. 2 (April 1999), page 469.

<sup>14</sup> Ned C. Landsman, "Nation, Migration, and the Province in the First British Empire ??," *The American Historical Review*, Vol. 104, No. 2 (April 1999), page 464.

<sup>15</sup> Oliver A. Rink, review of James A. Henretta, *The Origins of American Capitalism: Collected Essays* in *The American Historical Review*, Vol. 98, No. 2 (April 1993), pages 550.

<sup>16</sup> Oliver A. Rink, review of James A. Henretta, *The Origins of American Capitalism: Collected Essays* in *The American Historical Review*, Vol. 98, No. 2 (April 1993), pages 550.

<sup>17</sup> Oliver A. Rink, review of James A. Henretta, *The Origins of American Capitalism: Collected Essays* in *The American Historical Review*, Vol. 98, No. 2 (April 1993), pages 550.

<sup>18</sup> ??, review of Peter Fryer, Staying Power: Black People in Britain since 1504 in The American Historical Review, Vol. 93, No. 2 (April 1988), pages 412-413.

<sup>19</sup> ?? Castoriadis as quoted in the review by Michael O'Malley of John Bender and David E. Wellbery, eds., *Chronotypes: The Construction of Time in History and Theory*, Vol. ??, No. ?? (October 1992??), page 345.

<sup>20</sup> ?? Castoriadis as mentioned in the review by Michael O'Malley of John Bender and David E. Wellbery, eds., *Chronotypes: The Construction of Time in History and Theory*, Vol. ??, No. ?? (October 1992??), page 346.

<sup>21</sup> Michael O'Malley, review of John Bender and David E. Wellbery, eds., *Chronotypes: The Construction of Time in History and Theory*, Vol. ??, No. ?? (October 1992??), page 346.

<sup>22</sup> Michael O'Malley, review of John Bender and David E. Wellbery, eds., *Chronotypes: The Construction of Time in History and Theory*, Vol. ??, No. ?? (October 1992??), page 347.

<sup>23</sup> This paragraph draws from Michael O'Malley, review of John Bender and David E. Wellbery, eds., *Chronotypes: The Construction of Time in History and Theory*, Vol. ??, No. ?? (October 1992??), page 346.

<sup>24</sup> Michael Fellman, review of Lawrence W. Levine, Highbrow/Lowbrow: The Emergence of Cultural Hierarchy in America in The American Historical Review, Vol. 95, No. 2 (April 1990), pages 569-570.