

Lecture 8

Holy Smoke from Culture Wars to Clash of Civilizations

1. Difficulties of understanding these phenomena *psychologically*. Note William James' once born and twice born types. Domke on *Fundamentalist personality*.
2. *Culture Wars*: 'What's the Matter with Kansas?' another form of 'left behind'?
3. The *Clash of Civilizations* – Samuel Huntington, Bernard Lewis, and Norman Podhoretz. I claim *Fight among Fundamentalists* best describes current situation.
4. *Millennialism*
5. *Manifest Destiny*

Some psychology of religion aspects:**William James: from Varieties of Religious Experience [1905]****RELIGION OF HEALTHY-MINDEDNESS AND THE SICK SOUL**

The once born and twice born. Former emerges in Roman Church rather than Protestantism where “the fashions of feeling have been set by minds of a decidedly pessimistic order”. [81] Recent liberal developments such as Unitarianism-Universalism have started to challenge this. Though in some optimism can become "quasi-pathological" [83]. Eg Walt Whitman. Gospel of Relaxation; the “Don't worry Movement”; [95] "repeating **youth, health, vigor** when dressing in the morning as their motto for the day" [95]. No complains of the weather allowed in some homes.

But: “All religions have the notion that man has a **dual nature**, and is connected with two spheres of thought, a shallower and a profounder sphere, in either of which he may learn to live more habitually. The shallower and lower sphere is that of the fleshly sensations, instincts, and desires, of egotism, doubt, and the lower personal interests.” [97] But you can climb out of this, either by yourself or with God's grace.

THE SICK SOUL. The question is the relationships of different types of religion to different types of need. [135] **Goethe and Luther p 137.** Freud and Jung had a divide here I believe. James wants to acknowledge this reality:

“The completest [sic] religions would therefore seem to be those in which the pessimistic elements are best developed. Buddhism, of course and Christianity are the best known of these. They are essentially religions of deliverance; the man must die to an unreal life before he can be born into the real life.” [165]

What does a divided personality look like, and what might be roads to recovery?

“Homo duplex, homo duplex!” writes Alphonse Daudet...p 167

This is the concept of the 2 selves. This is very typical of Germanic writers such as Goethe, Hesse, etc. I once taught a course on German Literature, and they all had this concept. It is very binary. To deny it is to make way for the **Holocaust** some say. Although **Reinhold Niebuhr**, who certainly believed that **Romans 7** was both pre and post conversion, was more concerned with Luther’s **political naivety**. “*What I would, that do I not; but what I hate, that do I.*” St Augustine is the same divided self.

James claims **genetics** are also important. Some are born with an inner constitution that is harmonious and well balanced from the outset. But the lives of most saints are usually split into various modes within, and many as James points out have rather blasphemous obsessions.

Let’s ask about **Domke’s four points** of fundamentalism in re: to personality.

Certainly a culture has an effect on the self. What does binary thinking, universalization of a gospel, obsession with time, and intolerance of dissent do to one eventually? What effect does Sunday School have? I leave it to you to decide.

CULTURE WARS

So we go to sociology and politics, and analyze *Culture Wars*[100 years after James]. The book that has made a big hit is ‘*What’s the Matter with Kansas?*’ and we can view it as another form of ‘**left behind**’ much to Tim LaHaye’s disgust I’m sure.

The reason I say ‘left behind’ is that is the main thesis of the book the subtitle of which is ‘How the Conservatives Won America’ and that for decades mid-westerns have **believed** they have been left behind by the Coastal Establishment - Spiro Agnew called them the ‘nattering nabobs of negativism’; others simply call them ‘intellectuals.’ It’s Boston, NYC, Philadelphia, Miami, Chicago, Cleveland, San Francisco, New Orleans, and Seattle versus Middle America without knowing it. It happens in all sorts of ways: Hear G Gordon Liddy, the celebrated Watergate felon:

There exists in this country an elite that believes itself entitled to tell the rest of us what we may and may not want to do – for our own good, of course. These left-of-center, Ivy-educated molders of public opinion are concentrated in the mass news media, the entertainment business, academia, the pundit corps, and the legislative, judicial, and administrative government bureaucracies. Call it the divine right of policy wonks. These people feed on the great American middle class, who do the actual work of this country and make it all happen. They bleed us with an income tax rate not seen since we were fighting for our lives in the middle of WW II; they charge us top dollar at the box office for movies that assail and undermine the values we are attempting to inculcate in our children. [116]

Liberalism – meaning everything from racy TV to deconstructionists in the French Dep’t – is an affectation of the loathsome rich, as bizarre as their taste for Corgi dogs and extra-virgin olive oil. As Ann Coulter says:

Only when you appreciate the powerful driving force of snobbery in the liberals' worldview do all their preposterous counterintuitive arguments make sense. They promote immoral destructive behavior because they are snobs, they embrace criminals because they are snobs, they oppose tax cuts because they are snobs, they adore the environment because they are snobs. Every pernicious idea to dome down the pike is instantly embraced by liberals to show how powerful they are. Liberals hate society and want to bring it down to reinforce their sense of invincibility. Secure in the knowledge that their beachfront haciendas will still be standing when the smoke clears, they giddily fiddle with the little people's rules and morals. [117]

Frank: 'While the liberals use their control of the airwaves, newspapers, and schools to persecute average Americans – to ridicule the pious, flatter the shiftless, and indoctrinate the kids with all sorts of permissive nonsense – the Republicans are the party of the disrespected, the downtrodden, the forgotten.' [119] Clinton was a 60's person. He upset the great American traditions while trying to look religious. Frank sees this as BACKLASH! Payback!

'In one of his better essays [Jack] Cashill proposes that the real divide in America is between "the Consensus," the polite, superior people from Mission Hills [rich suburb in KN] to the Ivy League; and the "Snake-handlers," the abortion-protesting fundies who "wonder why tax dollars cannot be used for a nativity scene, but can be used to underwrite works like *Piss Christ*." Although fewer in numbers, the Consensus is the ruling class; it always thinks it knows better; it shakes its head disapprovingly at the God-happy hillbillies of the hinterland and does its best to instruct them in proper, sensitive behavior.' [162]

So what happened? According to Frank, the Kansas and mid-west voters ignored the economic issues and voted their gut – get rid of the liberals. Boost the values of conservative and fundamentalists. We can't stand those other atrocious people! It is 'an implacable ideological bitterness.' [Brown 238]

But it is more than that. There are rich and relatively poor Republicans. The rich may or may not be fundamentalists, or annoyed at the Costal Establishment. But they know a good road to the bank, and that is to get the poor Republicans all fired up about abortion, stem-cell research, prayer in schools, gay marriage, the Ten Commandments, Iraq, Viet-Nam, elitism, etc.

That is PAYDAY for the rich, and how! The poor Republicans, voting on culture war issues, will vote for lower taxes which in the end do terrible harm to their communities, will vote **against** social services, welfare, better schools, and good health plans. The rich Republicans don't need these, but using culture war tactics they are able to persuade the gullible to get out and vote conservative.

'American conservatism depends for its continued dominance and even for its very existence on people never making certain mental connections about the world, connections that until recently were treated as obvious or self-evident everywhere on the planed. For example, the connection between mass culture, most of which conservatives hate, and laissez-faire capitalism, which they adore without reservation. Or between the small towns they profess to love and the market forces that are slowly grinding those small towns back into the red-state dust – which forces they praise in the most exalted terms ... Kansas gloats when celebrities say stupid things; it cheers when movie stars go to jail. And when two female rock stars exchange a lascivious kiss on national TV, Kansas goes haywire. They scream for the heads of the liberal elite. Kansas comes running to the polling place. And Kansas cuts those rock stars' taxes.' [Brown 248-9]

Kay O'Connor is a good example of someone who is – to use not very nice words – **duped, trusting, credulous, innocent, and simple.** Kay is a conservative state senator from Olathe. She is middle-lower range of income. But she is a tireless proponent for school vouchers – those little things that most think will destroy the public schools. She took out a loan on her house to set up an organization to fight for this. She says that women's suffrage is a symptom of American moral decline. She was laughed out of court, and comedian Jay Leno gave her the award of 'Taliban woman of the year.' A Latin-Mass Catholic, she holds other conservative views.

Why does she do it? What makes a person who is just scraping by want to lower taxes for the super-rich 1%, who already hold 40% of America's wealth? Her words: 'I'm a happy captive of 43 years [of marriage] and I am obedient to my husband in all things moral. And the other half of it, for a Christian, is my husband has to love and care for me as Jesus loved and cared for the church. And Jesus died for his church, so my husband has to be willing to die for me. And if he's willing to die for me, the least I can do is be obedient in moral things, right?' [Brown 172]

Brown ends the book on a sad note. He asks how much longer will this go on? How many of these old, warm associations are we willing to dissolve? How much will we give away to the rich who are duping us right and left? He answers: 'My guess is, quite a bit. The fever-dream of martyrdom that Kansas follows today has every bit as much power as John Brown's dream of justice and human fraternity. And even if the state must sacrifice it all – its cities and its industry, its farms and its small towns, all its thought and all its doings – Kansas is ready to lead us singing unto the apocalypse. It invites us all to join in, to lay down our lives so that others might cash out at the top; to

renounce forever our middle-American prosperity in pursuit of a crimson fantasy of middle-American righteousness.’ [250-1]

Melling quotes Hofstadter 1964 and claims fundies have a faith of the forgotten, the ill-educated, and the insecure. It is a defensive reaction to the loss of social, economic and cultural autonomy in small-town America and the modernist challenges. Though interesting, I am not sure I go along with this all the way. ‘Moral values’ seem to trump a lot of the economic interests among the right-wing in America.

The *Clash of Civilizations* argument – Lewis & Huntington v. Condoleezza Rice.
My point is that *Fight among Fundamentalists* best describes current situation.

Two major East Coast intellectuals, Samuel P Huntington – University Professor at Harvard, and Bernard Lewis – an Englishman for years at the Institute of Advanced Study, Princeton; have put forward an argument that has persuaded many. It is about the ‘clash of civilizations’ and roughly states that the world is divided by fault lines between West, Islam, Chinese, and other major cultures. Lewis doesn’t speculate about the whole world – just the West and Islam. Both these men have been to the White House a lot, and the Defense Dept, and other inroads in Washington. They carry enormous sway for a government sometimes committed to disparaging ‘intellectuals’ who just happen to be run by Paul Wolfowitz, Richard Perle, Condi, and other right wingers or neo-cons who inhabit the halls of power these days. It is something of an irony that the binary thinking in the US government has been helped a lot by an Englishman, Bernard Lewis, [‘get tough or get out’] though developed and systematized in the usual overarching and overgeneralized way by Huntington of old Puritan Harvard.

Here is a further note about clash of civilizations. The doyen of the neocons is an American Jew names Norman Podhoretz, a major influence on Washington. *Commentary* carried an article by him *World War IV: How It Started, What It Means, and Why We Have to Win*. He says America's unconditional support for Israel isn't a factor in the war. What the jihadists are about is pure anti-Americanisms:

'His objective is not merely to murder as many of us as possible and to conquer our land. Like the Nazis and Communists before him, he is dedicated to the destruction of everything good for which America stands.'

Responding to this is the nobility of the Bush Doctrine which has "a passionate democratic idealist of the Reaganite stamp." It is a "repudiation of moral relativism and an entirely unapologetic assertion of the need for and the possibility of moral judgment in the realm of world affairs." This restores America to its pay-any-price-bear-any-burden internationalist and democratic roots.

He also wants "the reform and modernization of the Islamic religion itself." He asks: "Are we ready? Are we willing?"

My own idea is that we are not in a Clash of Civilizations, but rather the present day is dominated by a Fight among Fundamentalists – Jewish, Christian & Muslim¹. The big players are Bin Laden and his deputies and people in government such as Tom DeLay who are at opposite sides of the pole – yet both are fundamentalists and in agreement on many things in form if not content such as **binary thinking, obsession with time, universalized gospel, intolerance of dissent, necessity of jihad, and the rule of the chosen**. They all are **puritans** with a **deep suspicion of 'modernism'** and are not

¹ I understand Adam Curtis in 3 one-hours BBC programs said something of the same. It ain't original.

interested in any **textual criticism of the sacred books**. With the original definition of fundamentalism that we had in Lecture 1: They are 'true believers' who attempt to arrest the erosion of religious identity, fortify the borders of the religious community, and create viable alternatives to secular institutions and behaviors. There will be no gay marriage for those three.

My understanding from a news briefing by Condoleezza Rice is that she agrees. It is not a Clash of Civilizations. ('My hus – I mean President Bush agrees too.')

I suggest that we find the middle grounds of the monotheistic faiths and look for common cause. Many people are doing this and working together on liberation and social justice projects. Another way is to use interfaith services. It is important to give equal weight to each of the faiths, to demonstrate common cause such as liberation themes, and to offer basic concepts and prayers of each faith. Here is a sampler:

Divine Worship with Moses, Jesus, and Muhammad

Invocations from

- Moses** Who is like you, O Lord, among the gods? **Who is like you, majestic in holiness, awesome in splendor, doing wonders?** *Exodus 15*
- Jesus** Father, hallowed be your name. **Your kingdom come.** *Matthew 6*
- Muhammad** **Those who have said, ‘Our Lord is God’ then go straight to Him, upon them the angels descend, saying, ‘Fear not, neither sorrow; rejoice in Paradise that you were promised.’** *Sura 41*

Prayers from the scriptures *[silences in between]*

- Confession** My Lord, **forgive me and my parents and whosoever enters my house as a believer, and all the believers.....** *Sura 71*
- Forgiveness** Behold, I create new heavens and a new earth. **be glad and rejoice forever in what I am creating.....** *Isaiah 65*
- Petition** Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. **Give us each day our daily bread. Do not bring us to the time of trial, but deliver us from evil. For yours is the kingdom, the power, and the glory for ever.** *Matthew 6*

Readings from the Hebrew Scriptures, New Testament, Koran - Sermon

Creedal Proclamation *[said together]:*

Hear O Israel: **The Lord our God, the Lord is one, and you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength, and your neighbor as yourself.** *Deut. 6.5; Lev 19.18; Mk 12.29-31*

True piety is this: to believe in God, and the Last Day, the angels, the Book, and the Prophets, to give of one’s substance, however cherished, to kinsmen, and orphans, the needy, the traveler, beggars, and to ransom the slave, to perform the prayer, to pay the alms. Those who fulfill this and endure with misfortune, hardship and peril; they are truly just and god-fearing. *Sura 2.172-3*

Prayers of Thanksgiving & Intercession

Blessing: The Lord bless you and keep you; the Lord make his face to shine upon you, and be gracious unto you; the Lord lift up his countenance upon you, and give you peace. *Numbers 6*

We take refuge with the Lord of all, the King of all, the God of all. *Sura 114*

Go in peace to love and serve the Lord. **AMEN** *II Thess 3*

Peace: Greet each other with a kiss of love *I Peter 5*

Hymns, music and other readings etc. can be incorporated at many points within the service.

There is yet the question of **Millennialism** that exercises many minds in the USA. It has a long history, from Daniel 7 to Rev 21 et al throughout the history of the church. Methinks it comes in many guises. As Tuveson points out, rigid Calvinism has gone out of style but the secular apocalyptic has stayed on. It has three leading characteristics of the religious forms – it is deterministic, dualistic, and simplistic. It is in direct opposition to the ideas of the Enlightenment, which held forth the hope that people using their reason honestly and objectively can solve their problems and make a relatively good society. Communism is also anti-Enlightenment on these points too, and much as Marx was a child of the Enlightenment, so also he was the descendent of 14 generations of rabbis if I remember correctly. It too sees a millennial or quasi-millennial state at the end of things, and a conflict between the capitalist conspiracy and the party of the innocent and oppressed working class. It sees every historical problem in simple terms of good and evil. It regards violence as necessary. Eisenstein's great movie *Potemkin*, if the labels were changed, could service admirably as a model for an epic of apocalyptic doctrine. It was no accident, perhaps, that Marx was writing when millennialism was particularly strong in both Britain and the USA.²

It is TS Eliot who also has picked up the theme in choruses in *The Rock*. It is not only millennial but separatist:

² Tuveson, Ernst Lee; *Redeemer nation – the Idea of America's Millennial Role*; Chicago; 1968; p51

And what shall we say of the future? Is one church all
we can build?

Or shall the Visible Church go on to conquer the World?

The great snake lies ever half awake, at the bottom of
the pit of the world, curled

In folds of himself until he awakens in hunger and moving his head to right and to left
prepares for his hour to devour.

But the Mystery of Iniquity is a pit too deep for mortal
eyes to plumb. Come

Ye out from among those who prize the serpent's golden eyes,
The worshippers, self-given sacrifice of the snake. Take
your way and be ye separate.

Eliot, as you may know, was from St Louis; Harvard; Merton College, Oxford;
and a bank clerk in High Wycombe. He was a high Anglican, and became a British
citizen who became very pro-monarchy. His friend Ezra Pound from Philadelphia, long a
resident of England and Italy and also a fine poet, supported Mussolini during WWII.
Binary, separatist, intolerant – three necessary ingredients for fundamentalism were there.
But their snobbiness kept them a long way from St Louis and Kansas.

We grow 'em strange in America. But they are more dependent on English
thought that they realize. And Red Staters won't like to hear me saying it either.

MANIFEST DESTINY

John Foster Dulles, a son of a Presbyterian minister and doubtless from Princeton, was Secretary of State under Eisenhower. In 1954 he said ‘there can be no coexistence between the Free World and the Communist world.’ China was ‘fanatically hostile, aggressive, treacherous. Critics tagged his moralizing ‘dull, duller, Dulles’ but he is straight from the Puritan Calvinist tradition. ‘It seems pretty clear that Communism is Satan in action, to be resisted by all means at all times.’ Eisenhower famously said that ‘Our government makes no sense unless it is founded on a deeply held religious faith – and I don’t care what it is.’ But Morone thinks it makes perfect sense. This was no time for religious squabbles over Darwin or the Pope or the historical Jesus or the Second Coming. The world was split into God-fearers and Communists. They added IN GOD WE TRUST as the national motto, and added the words the words UNDER GOD to the Pledge of Allegiance. This was unanimously passed in Congress.

Now that Communism is kaput, where does the American eagle, like the eagle in Revelation, descend now? They can’t fight all ‘terror’ otherwise US Army would be ubiquitous. It is Al-Qaeda that is the enemy – radical Islam; fundamentalist Islam. But is this mission mercenary or messianic? Is it about oil, globalization, control of markets, or is it ‘making the world safe for democracy’, about spreading technology? Consider the faith-based initiatives which got 1 billion last year; statements about spreading freedom around the world; prayers in the White House; binary thinking, the globalization of their gospel, the hastiness of action disregarding Europe, UN, and traditional allies, and the intolerance of dissent. But restoring a godly centre for society? Might it be that we are getting - *pause for heart attack* - a Bush theocracy?