

I'd like to begin by thanking the University for inviting us. Many thanks also to Professor Mon-Han Tsai for suggesting this trip, and for making it all possible. And thank you all for coming.

This is the first of four lectures my wife and I will give, collectively entitled "The promise of intellectual history." I'm sure you know that there is a long tradition, going back thousands of years, of praising history's utility beyond inspiring and civilizing its devotees. Note that not all of this praise of learning history comes from the teachers of history. Politicians and lawyers often pay at least lip-service to the importance of historical knowledge.

We would like to offer not an update but a variation on this theme, one that many historians I know would disagree with. Our contention is that intellectual history can be directly relevant as a guide to action. One reason why many historians would disagree is because intellectual history is sometimes seen as elitist and unfashionable compared to, for instance, social history, or histories of everyday life. Others assume that it's impossible to argue that intellectual history is relevant without having a prior political bias.

This is the context of these lectures, and the most relevant issues that we're NOT going to address. Instead, we'll try to give you four complex case studies to illustrate our claim: the intellectual history of secularisation and current international relations; institutional corruption and constitutional law; behavioural economics and art history; and the history of economic thought and current technical tools in political economy.

Before I begin, let me give you the conclusions of the whole series. Firstly, the main thesis about intellectual history's direct relevance should not be new. In Aristotle, Plutarch, Cicero, Augustine, Cusa, Erasmus, Melanchthon, Hobbes, Locke, etc., it's often an anachronism to distinguish the intellectual historian from the thinker engaged in practical problem-solving. Secondly, the main thesis about intellectual history's direct relevance should not be surprising. You should study at least some

intellectual history, instead of maximising returns on the time and money you invest in your education by trying to second-guess the job market, because the fact that intellectual history is your key to the whole treasury of human experience and learning should assure you that the lessons you learn will enable you to solve at least some problems better than any other form of non-historical education could. I'm not saying you should all become intellectual historians, but I do believe that intellectual historians and their enemies have worked too hard lately to deny this discipline's real-life relevance.

Let's begin with secularisation. The soft and safer way of setting up the thesis of intellectual history's importance is to point out that on the one hand, secularisation is an undeniable historical fact. Somehow Europe moved from an epistemic edifice where theology had at least the potential of having the final word on any subject, to a mindset where there is a more or less robust division of disciplines, with subject matters and methodologies appropriate to them, and theology is not even among the highest ranking one. One has to work extremely hard to cogently reconstruct the historical process of secularisation, but there is no obvious intrinsic necessity why it cannot be done, or why it cannot be done without elitism, irrelevance, or political bias.

The strong way of setting up my thesis begins by pointing out that most conflicts since the end of the Cold War had a religious component, and that the most intransigent problems that the international community has been unable to solve are extra-European and religious.

Trying to address historians, lawyers, international relations experts, and policy-makers at the same time, and reading the texts as closely as I could, the model of secularisation I came up with explains the historical process as contingent, cumulative, and incomplete, with some unintended consequences.

Contingent: there were intellectual alternatives, whether Christian, alternative religions (Christian Cabalism, neoplatonism, Egyptomania), chosen nation theories, etc. Despite the historical need to end the Wars of Religion, probably the greatest historical trauma in Europe, there is a trial and error aspect to the eventual, secular outcome.

Cumulative: one way to conceptualise secularisation is to focus on little groups of thinkers and doers, responding to or creating highly comparable situations. Italian humanists; French 'new historians' (lawyers); the Leiden Circle in Holland; English Arminian sympathisers; German legal thinkers like Pufendorf, Thomasius, Wolff, can be easily presented as parts of a relay race, passing on the baton of secularisation whenever political circumstances demanded and allowed a secularising contribution. Just as in a relay race, each group benefited from the preceding ones.

Unintended consequences: disengaging religion from politics often to protect religion. Also, one finds Grotius and Locke spending their last few years trying to save religion.

Facing severe conflict, key early modern thinkers realised that rival claims that staked their truth-content and validity on religious belief were ultimately irreconcilable. Gradually they removed such conflicts from acceptable discourse.

I'd like to merely illustrate this process through two or, if there's time, three figures: Grotius, Selden, and Harrington.

It's a commonplace in law textbooks that Grotius (1583-1645) is the father of modern international law, just as books on IR invariably invoke the Westphalian system, in the crafting of which Grotius was instrumental. The intellectual historian has some good reasons to dispute these cliches, but no excuse for ignoring them. The fact is that Grotius and Westphalia continue to be used as figureheads and landmarks. The task of intellectual historians is not to convince lawyers and IR experts that their specialties arose ex nihilo, and their historical interests are unjustifiable. Rather, we should enrich and better ground the connection between Grotius and modern IR.

Grotius' best known work is *De iure belli ac pacis* (1625ff). I'd like to talk about *De iure praedae* (1604-5).

1603 Feb. Dutch capture of *Sta Cantarina*, off of Singapore, traveling from Macau to Malacca with Chinese and Japanese merchandise. Unprecedented, huge value. Declared good prize in Sept. 1604. Objections: Portuguese, Mennonites. VOC hires Grotius. Principle of free seas. Often seen as cornerstone of later free trade ideologies.

Objections to ML incl. Welwod: for making Bible low-ranking or non-existent source of authority.

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Very true. In article I describe over two dozen cases: inverting universal and particular laws, historicisation, omission of high-authority legal loci, etc.

To understand, two new components of the context are needed.

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Very few examples. Deut. 10-17

10 When thou comest nigh unto a city to fight against it, then proclaim peace unto it.

11 And it shall be, if it make thee answer of peace, and open unto thee, then it shall be, that all the people that is found therein shall be tributaries unto thee, and they shall serve thee.

12 And if it will make no peace with thee, but will make war against thee, then thou shalt besiege it:

13 And when the Lord thy God hath delivered it into thine hands, thou shalt smite every male thereof with the edge of the sword:

14 But the women, and the little ones, and the cattle, and all that is in the city, even all the spoil thereof, shalt thou take unto thyself; and thou shalt eat the spoil of thine enemies, which the Lord thy God hath given thee.

15 Thus shalt thou do unto all the cities which are very far off from thee, which are not of the cities of these nations.

16 But of the cities of these people, which the Lord thy God doth give thee for an inheritance, thou shalt save alive nothing that breatheth:

17 But thou shalt utterly destroy them; namely, the Hittites, and the Amorites, the Canaanites, and the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites; as the Lord thy God hath commanded thee:

Selden

Perhaps the most famous reply to ML.

Let's begin with the historical puzzle. Both Dutch and English are small nations, Protestant, seafaring. Similar free trade argument, right? Wrong. Selden counters Grotius' and others' free seas argument by developing British exclusivism, and therefore I think he is the true father of modern IL; not Grotius. What these two great men had in common was the powerful secularising import of their work. Grotius resisted Dutch chosen nation theorists advocating pacifism, or divinely ordained Dutch conquest, or state. Selden resisted chosen nation arguments even when developing British exceptionalism.