

# The “Humanities” and the “Human Sciences”

December 2, 2003

# [ Introduction to the Humanities ]

- Why now?
- Where did they come from?
  - The medieval university: theology, law, medicine
  - 1700s: new disciplines of literature and history emerge; philosophy differentiates itself from theology
  - Humanities = “not theology”

# [ Stepping into the gap ]

- Theology doesn't disappear—it just gets specialized
- “Literature” and “history” tell us about the human past— what people did, what they said, and what it all meant.
- The humanities are interpretive disciplines (or “exegetic,” if you like fancier words)

[ For example... ]

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- How we read Plato's Socrates
- How we read Shakespeare
- How we read documents of a distant culture that we have little or no preparation for reading

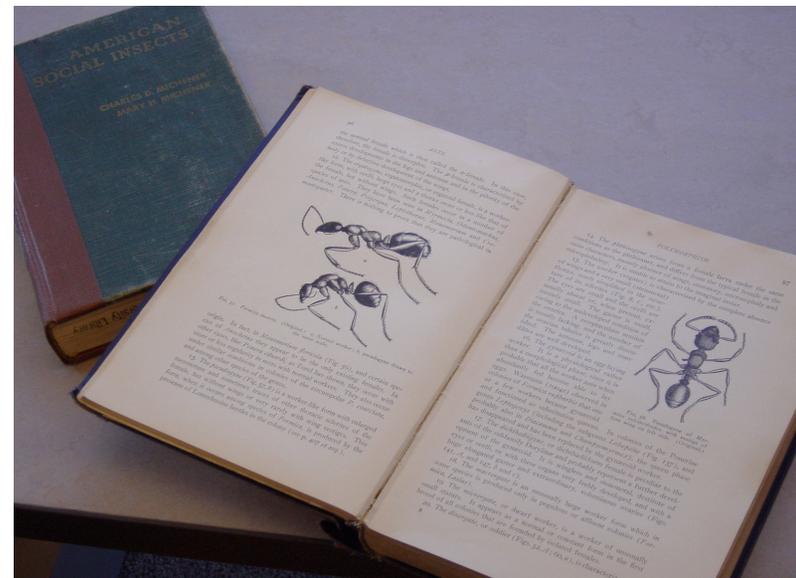
# [ The social sciences ]

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- Born in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, out of the turmoil of philosophy and social revolution: need for sciences that will explain human behavior
- “social” = not theological, and also not individual (not concerned with authors or heroes)
- Reformist agendas: identify problems and solve them

# [ Ants in pants and bees' knees ]

- Social sciences are predictive disciplines
- They deal in models
- Predicting human behavior by extrapolation from past experience and identifying mechanisms



# [ OK, now cross the wires ]

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- Humanities : interpretative
- Human sciences : predictive
- What would happen if we tried to do predictive humanities and interpretative social science?

# [ Voilà! ]

- We might get Tristes Tropiques
- We might also get chaos in the streets
- May 1968 students: “No orthopedic social science, no conformist humanities!”



# Another predictive human science

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- See the page you made: The “path” sticks to your soles (cookies, logs)
- Internet journalism: “narrowcasting,” “pull technology”
- Choices “personalize” your cyberspace

# [ You are what you buy ]

- Amazon.com sociology: “you” are a set of preferences that sooner or later fall into a, identifiable pattern or mean (“taste”)
- A model of human behavior; your very own Sim represents yourself





# [ 20 Percent Of Area Man's Income Spent Ironically

LOUISVILLE, KY—Alex Vartan, 24, a Louisville-area convenience-store cashier and part-time DJ, spends 20 percent of his income ironically, sources reported Monday.

**Above: Vartan in his irony-filled apartment.**



Though his job as a cashier doesn't provide much in the way of disposable income, Vartan spends roughly one-fifth of his \$21,000-a-year salary on such ironic items as Future Farmers of America jackets, Successories posters, and *Knight Rider* lunchboxes... The habit grew worse in the spring of 1996, when Vartan discovered eBay.

A typical trip to the supermarket for Vartan involves the purchase of at least one ironic foodstuff, such as Frank's Kraut Juice or Uncle Sam's cereal. When he returns home, he often pops open a can of Schlitz beer and unwinds with his prized laser-disc copy of *Leonard Part 6* or a book of *Lockhorns* comic strips.

# [Anamnesis]

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- Humanists may not “believe” in it
- But we sure do act “as if”
- The realm of ideas

# [ An experiment ]

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- Doing without anamnesis when we read Plato
- Doing without specialized knowledge when we read foreign books
- Doing without “a clue” when we read contemporary social games

# [ Guess what ]

- You've just been a part of this experiment, to see what happens when we graft humanities and social sciences together in a composite that breaks some rules of each

