

Reaching a Summit  
End of first quarter

Making connections



What does synthesis mean?

- c : “the combining of often diverse conceptions into a coherent whole”

*Miriam-Webster On-line Dictionary*

- ***The work of synthesis occurs little by little.***
- ***After this session the work of synthesis is still to be done – by you.***



Social glue: What holds people together in a family or a state?

- ***King Lear***: The idealized bonds that hold together king and subject, parent and child depend on an understanding of reciprocal benefits, duties, and obligations. Family and state are analogous. Inheritance is important to both.
- ***Two Treatises of Government***: Locke uses a vocabulary of “law” and “compact” to explain how people live together in civil society. His argument for government as a form of trusteeship opposes the family /inheritance model.



Social glue, cont.

- What, according to Freud, holds a family together? Can those bonds be extended to the state?
- What counts as “social glue” in *Huck Finn*?
- Slavery is a human association. What was the “glue” that bound slaves to masters? What is a slave’s relation to family? State?



## The costs of association & dissociation

- Costs of association
  - Locke: giving up liberty of the state of nature to gain the security of civil society
  - Freud: gaining the benefits of civilization at the cost of neuroses
  - Huck Finn: lighting out for the territories in order to escape the costs of civilization
- Cost of dissociation: war

## Large generalization to small detail: What does it mean to take off clothes?

- “Unaccommodated man is no more but such a poor, bare, forked animal as thou art. Off, off, you lendings! Come, unbutton here” [*Tearing off his clothes*] (III, iv, 98-100, p. 70).
- “Soon as it was night, out we shoved; when we got her out to about the middle, we let her alone, and let her float wherever the current wanted her to; then we lit the pipes and dangled our legs in the water and talked about all kinds of things—we was always naked, day and night, whenever the mosquitoes would let us—the new clothes Buck’s folks made for me was too good to be comfortable, and besides I didn’t go much on clothes, nohow” (157-8)

## Achievement or corruption?

- Consider Locke’s state of nature, Huck Finn’s life on the Mississippi, Kaspar Hauser’s entrance into social life, and Freud’s account of the relation between individual and civilization.
- Could you make a better argument for a or b?
  - a) The structures of family and state allow social life but cause an inevitable corruption of the natural state of human beings.
  - b) The structures of family and state are an achievement that, despite the cost, make human life possible.

## This is your page.

- Which books or themes or questions would you like to put together on your mental map?