

- **What is the main message of this module?**

I think the main message of this module is that just because we can bring someone back, because somethings can be seen, heard, and experienced, through things like sonification, and agent based modelling, should it be brought back? I had a conversation with Keegan one day about Heinrich Schlieman, and I got me thinking. In a previous class, when we brought individuals back from the dead, we asked “Should we do this?”, do some people deserve to be brought back. I can not remember our exact example, but we said the person that was brought back may not deserve it. So, if individuals do not deserve it, what about entire societies? Consider the Mongols for a minute. They are one of the most influential societies in existence, in terms of what they did, how far they reached, and the fact that they could conquer civilizations in months/years. As important as the Mongols are to history, do they deserve to come back? Consider that the Mongols are theorized to have started the Black Plauge. The Mongols also killed 30 Million people in there conquests, which brings the total body count of the Mongol empire to 105 Million people at the lowest estimate. If we created an Agent-Based Model of the Mongol Empire, would these same conquests happen? This to me is the takeaway, that do some civilizations/individuals deserve to be brought back, as many civilizations perform horrific actions to become historically significant.

I also think of the week where we talked about sonification, and turning data into music. When I decided to do the data of population growth in Hiroshima, I had a grim goal in mind. I wanted to see if you could hear death. In my excitement to work on the sonification, I never stopped to think, “Is this something I should be doing?” That didn’t really cross my mind for a few weeks, and I think no, I might not have chosen that event if I stopped for a minute and thought about it.

All in all, I do think the main lesson of this module, and for a lot of the course is, “should we do this?” Does everything in history warrant a piece of media around it?

Should some events be playfully engaged with? At the end of the day, I think respecting the past we are trying to engage with is the most important part of the course, and its something I do not think I always do.

- **How does it connect with your ideas for your Unessay?**

The way that the idea of “Should we do this?” connects to my unessay, is due to the inspiration I took for my unessay. My ARG, which is called “Who is Bluebird?” was based off of the CIA MKULTRA project. If you have not heard of it, the CIA wanted to create Sleeper agents of unwilling participants, as well as seeing if psychedelic drugs could break targets minds, and get them to confess. The project lasted about 20 years, and was done through shady means. The CIA dosed hundreds of unwilling American civilians with drugs like LSD, in the hope of seeing if they could be made into agents. The Project was a monumental failure, and is responsible for at least 2 deaths. One of the people who died, Frank Olson, was very much an inspiration for many puzzles and the central character. Olson was dosed, suffered 8 or 9 days of intense paranoia, thinking that the American government was coming to kill him, before he took his own life, by jumping from a window in a hotel. The case is extremely dark, and showed what Cold War Era paranoia, combined with illegal human experimentation could do to people. So, “Should I do this?” To be honest, I think yes. Many people, when talking about MKULTRA, get a lot of details wrong, and focus on the goal, not people that were affected. My hope with this project was to show people the human side of what had happened. I really think this is a story that needs to be told, and even if I made a game of it, my hope was for people to look into the reality of this game.

- **What does it mean to ‘do history’ when the machine is a co-creator of the experience working on its own**

- **that is, you haven't explicitly coded particular elements or experiences, they emerge on their own: what's the role of the historian here?**

I think "Doing History" with a machine means to give the machine as much accurate historical data as possible. The role of the historian is to create an accurate environment by doing the adequate research, and, observe what the machine does with it. When Melanie and I were working on the agent based model, we were entering very very basic information, and got a somewhat working model. If we had more time, and, if we were actually talented programmers, we definitely would have been able to make a good model. The goal of the class was to model movement, and see if we could accurately model the movements of humans throughout history.

With this information in mind, we can see the role of the machine. Its job is to model information. And that's where the historian comes into play. The machine needs information, as much information as possible to create a good, and accurate model. Obviously the historian has to relinquish control in this scenario, and understand that the machine may not get everything right. The historian in this situation should attempt to correct the information, and try running again, to see if the outcome is different. The job of the historian is logging data into the machine, or in other words, creating the agents for the model. Then, they record the data. Once that is done, they compare the data to the actual history.

Again, doing history is quite difficult when it is up to the history to relinquish control of the situation, and observe a machine making its own history. I think it's definitely difficult to have a machine being a co-creator of history, as you have to give up what you know, and put your faith that random chance will generate proper information.

- **How does this intersect with things you saw in module 1, module 2? BE EXPLICIT.**
 - **revamp the HPS framework: what is the ‘problem space’ when you’re trying to simulate some phenomenon in the past?**
 - **what is the ‘problem space’ when you are ‘raising the dead’, and creating some kind of simulacrum of a historical figure?**

In the last module we were asked to identify the Threshold concepts of the course, and the two that I think are most important, are what I identified as concept 2 (Although I would change the wording from game to media), 4, and 5. Concept 4 was how can we engage playfully with the past, and 5 is, is playful engagement with the past proper history. Looking at these concepts, we can see if the HPS and raising the dead intersect properly.

To start off, I think the Problem space does not work when it comes to “raising the dead”. The issue is that the problem space is too specific to video games and needs a redraft. The way I would redraft the problem space, for the Raising the dead is:

1. What did the person do? What did they find/make/create?
2. How did this person's actions affect the world?
3. What was the person's intention or goal? Was it good/bad?
4. How did this person attain this goal?
5. Is what they did right or wrong? Is it in a grey area?

I think this lets you critically analyze the person, and see who they are, what they did, what they wanted to do, how it affected people, what was the goal, how did they reach that goal, were there actions right or wrong? These chatbots are an obvious example of concept 4. These bots allow us to engage with historical figures in a way we could not imagine. We are able to talk to figures, and are able to in effect, program a brain, that allows us to contact with people who have been dead for centuries. We can use this method of engagement to playfully engage with the past, using the revamped HPS. This way, there is still a space that every historical human can fit in. Using this, we can properly analyze historical figures in a fair, and unbiased way, that will break people down to their most base motivations, allowing us to playfully engage with the past.

When I tried (and failed), to make my chatbot/simulacrum/necromantic husk, I attempted to revive James Cook. James is known for “Discovering” many of the pacific islands, like Hawaii, Tahiti, New Zealand and many others (Criteria 1). His affect was later Colonization and Christianization of these islands (Criteria 2). Cook wanted to find a new continent to put his name on, he wanted glory (Criteria 3). Cook sailed a fleet of ships across the pacific to find this land (Criteria 4). Criteria 5 is where things get a little tricky. Was what James Cook did good or bad? On the one hand, he was Christian, and a colonizer, but on the other hand, when he tried to spread his ideas, he was brutally murdered. In my opinion Cook falls in a grey area. He wanted to convert a culture, but his failure was incredibly spectacular. I think Cook is worth bringing back. His voyages are very interesting, and are historically important, which would mean he is worth learning about, as it is probable people would know nothing about Maori and Hawaiiin culture without him. A question about this though. Is this proper history? When the prof. made his bot, it was strange to say the least. The Bot was able to communicate, but due to somewhat limited writings from the journals of (I don’t remember the name, but believe it was) Sir John Franklin of the Franklin expedition, it knew how to write like him, but was not able to properly communicate what Franklin was thinking. I think for these bots to be considered proper history, they need a few criteria. Firstly, these bots need to

be made using first hand knowledge, the writings of the person who is being revived. I also think these need to be comprehensive writings. That way the bot can be as close to the person as humanly possible, and as close as possible to proper history.

Who are humans that don't deserve to be brought back though? This is where things get difficult. I think history is subjective, and that people can view someone in a positive way, where as another could view that person in an incredibly negative way. An example of this would be Michael Collins, who led the IRA in the 1920s. To people in Ireland, he is a national hero, a man who was instrumental in making Ireland independent. But to the British he would be a terrorist. It falls into the idea of One man's terrorist is another's freedom fighter. I think much like the original HPS (which in my second Interlude I said was flawed), I would say mine is as well. However I think it is still effective enough to determine who is and is not worthy of bringing back.

Update on Unessay:

My Unessay has been progressing pretty well. I am as of writing, finishing up my technical aspects, and am about to send out the project to some people to play test it. In all I ended using a few mural websites, twitter, youtube, and several other mediums, to try and get the story across.

I also finished all of the Video components, including the Number Station broadcasts, (5 Total), as well as the video that ends my ARG, which is the title character of the ARG, Bluebird, getting shot, (I would like to give to credit to my friend Mark power for helping me edit, shoot the videos, as well as shooting me in the final video.).

All in all, I think my unessay is coming along well, and I'm excited to run. I hope it works well, and that the story comes across through all of the puzzles.