JOHN F. KENNEDY-INSTITUT FÜR NORDAMERIKASTUDIEN

ABTEILUNG FÜR GESCHICHTE

Working Paper No. 85/1995

ISSN 0948-9436

Dorothy Ross

The New and Newer Histories:

Social Theory and Historiography

in an American Key

The New and Newer Histories:

Social Theory and Historiography in an American Key

Dorothy Ross

Johns Hopkins University

Submitted for inclusion in Imagined Histories, ed. Anthony Molho and Gordon Wood, October 29, 1995.

During the twentieth century, historians in Europe and the United States have repeatedly revised their historical programs to make greater use of social theory. Beginning early in the century with the American Progressives' "New History" and the French Annales, there has been a succession of "new histories" based on alliance with the social sciences. Instead of writing narrative accounts of political events, the new historians used social theory to analyze the social and economic forces within and structures beneath the course of national politics. Using the Annales as his prime example, Georg Iggers links the rise of new history and its more structural understanding of historical process to the decline of belief in progress around the time of the First World War. "Exactly because the societies and cultures of the past are no longer seen as stages in a linear progression, they are now viewed not merely diachronically but also synchronically as structures possessing a degree of integrity and stability in time." As such, they invited analysis rather than narrative, and attention to collectivities and their material, social, and cultural conditions rather than individual actions.[1]

These new histories of the twentieth century thus stand at the intersection of two larger histories. One is the history of historicism, defined broadly as that "historical-mindedness" which began in the eighteenth century: a recognition of the qualitative difference, the "otherness," of the past, which in turn mandated that human affairs be understood historically.[2] While abandoning or attenuating the

conception of linear progress and the focus on political events that gave shape to nineteenth-century historicism, the new histories of the twentieth century retained their grounding in temporality.[3]

The new histories also belong to the history of the social sciences, studies that grew out of the Enlightenment effort to understand modernity. In their belief that the West had embarked on a novel course of historical development that was still unfolding, these social thinkers shared the historicism of the eighteenth century. But unlike the historians, their focus was on the social and economic dimensions of civil society that modernity disclosed; using analogs of scientific method, they produced social theories rather than political narratives.[4] During the nineteenth century history and the social sciences diverged and intertwined in a number of ways, although it was not until the twentieth century that a succession of new historians made a concerted effort to use social theory in their practice.

At first glance, the relation between historiography and social theory in the United States seems to follow a different path from that Iggers laid out. The New History that was announced in the United States in 1912 did not abandon, but emphasized the liberal narrative of Western progress. When American historians finally turned to analytic, structural history and a full alliance with the social sciences in the decade after World War II, it was during a moment of American

triumphalism. On closer examination, however, the United States proves to be a variant, rather than an exception. Both historicism and social science have had somewhat different histories in the United States, producing differences in the character and timing of anxieties about the course of history and the uses of social theory. In the American case, too, new historians used social theory to stabilize and clarify an increasingly uncertain narrative of Western history. The newer histories that make use of postmodern theories both extend and alter that story.

* * *

What accounts for the American variation on this Western theme is historical consciousness, shaped in the United States, as it was in the other countries of Europe, by the understanding of national history. The writers, politicians, and clergymen who constructed that national self-understanding in the decades after the American Revolution located the United States within the story of Western progress, a liberal story of growing commercial development, representative political institutions based on democratic consent, and the advance and diffusion of knowledge, processes that were projected to remake the entire world. But they seated world progress not in Europe, where a class-ridden feudal past and industrial future distorted history, but in the American

nation. The special place of the United States in this story was attributed in part to favorable historical conditions that allowed it to form a New World antithetical to the Old: the heritage of Anglo-Saxon institutions, the republican frame of government, the continent of uncultivated land, the opportunity offered by a free market of small producers. But specialness derived fundamentally from divine favor, a favor that began with the Puritan mission to New England and was sealed in the Revolution and Constitution. The country's unique foundation located it in millennial as well as historical time, freeing it from the ills of Europe and guaranteeing it an ideal future, exemplary for the world. In this view, American progress would be a quantitative multiplication and elaboration of the country's founding institutions, not a process of qualitative change. George Bancroft gave this exceptionalist historical consciousness its most popular form in the nineteenth century, while his contemporaries J.L.Motley and William H. Prescott set the pattern for American historians of Europe, who found there histories of decline that proved the rule of American progress.[5]

During the Gilded Age, roughly from the late 1870s to late 1890s, the weakening of religious belief and the industrial transformation of society called American exceptionalism into question. The Gilded Age was also the period in which history and the new social sciences

established disciplinary identities in the universities. The historians wanted to separate history from its divine background and turn it into an historical science on the Rankean model. The central figures in the movement to professionalize history, however, like Andrew Dixon White, John W. Burgess, and Herbert Baxter Adams, also believed that history and political science were part of the same large field. The double enterprise was linked by a common task: amidst rapid industrial development, fierce social conflict, and widespread political corruption, they wanted to strengthen established historical principles so as to guide political action in a conservative direction. They sought this structural support in political principles and institutions: Adams' tracing of Teutonic "germs" from old to New England communities was one contribution to this program, as was the importation of Germanic conceptions of the "State."

At the same time, however, they were cognizant of the economic and social upheavals around them and of the new social science disciplines competing for academic space; they opened their field outward and laid the ground work for the New History. They often spoke of the historical and political sciences in the plural and took under their wings historical jurisprudence, economics, and sociology. Adams' students, among them Frederick Jackson Turner, quickly developed social and economic dimensions in their work. At Columbia, the interdisciplinary environment Burgess established was the

seedbed for James Harvey Robinson's announcement of a New History in 1912 and for Charles Beard's economic interpretation of history.[6]

Taking over from historico-politics the desire to link historical knowledge to present politics and to widen attention to economic and social history, this younger generation also had a deeper appreciation of historicism. The Gilded Age crisis had opened the way to a full recognition of the difference of the American past and the country's dependence on the contingent forces of history. To secure the ideal American future, they fully attached American history to Western liberal history and its progressive motors of capitalism, democracy, and science. The New History turned to the social sciences because those studies show us not accidental events, Robinson said, but "the general trend of development and progress."[7] European history was no longer seen as a realm of failure that proved American success, but as a realm of progress continuous with that of the United States and moving toward a common goal.[8] Exceptionalism was retained by placing the United States at the forefront of the movement and by casting progress in American shapes.

Turner was a transitional figure in this New History. Deeply committed to the old exceptionalist ideal, he located the source of American democracy in the vanishing frontier rather than in the new industrial process. He then tried to translate the frontier thesis into sectional analysis, in the

vain hope that the continued diversity of sections and the democratic character of the American West would provide a continuing basis for American democracy. Geography and comparative geography were tools in this project and had some influence on the school of Western history founded on his work but never became a major source of social-theoretical interest in American historiography.[9] Geography, as Annales history confirms, is best suited to provide continuity and in American historiography, political principles continued to serve that purpose until after World War II.

In contrast, Robinson and Beard were driven by their liberal reformist politics to look forward: the ideal American democracy had yet to be achieved and they were impatient with the slow pace of reform. Their models were the progressive European evolutionary theories of the nineteenth century and the adaptations of them American social scientists had already begun to make in the 1890s. In The New History Robinson borrowed Thorstein Veblen's evolutionary concept of institutions as "habits of thought," but his major focus was on social psychology. An intellectual historian and latter day philosophe, he believed that advances in science and knowledge were the chief factor in progress. The social psychologies of James Mark Baldwin, Gabriel Tarde, and Sigmund Freud explained the irrationality of the masses of men, the inertial force that progress must overcome. Robinson never inserted such social psychological analysis into his textbooks

or articles but elaborated it only in his popular book The Mind in the Making (1921), where it remained programmatic.[10]

Beard's economic interpretation of history was by far the most influential form of the New History. He learned it from his exposure to socialism in England and from his Columbia colleague, the historical economist E.R.A. Seligman, who had transformed Marx's historical materialism into a liberal theory of capitalist progress. Beard's focus was on the economic basis of politics and the construction of American democracy. But Seligman's theory did not offer much guidance on the specific links between economic conditions, politics, and ideas. Beard chronicled the conflict between social-economic classes, but dealt with them most often as economic interest groups rather than structural classes.[11] Politics and ideas were generally treated as derivative of economic and social "forces" and perpetually lagging behind technological and industrial advance. This view of historical change, formalized by the sociologist William Ogburn in the 1920s as "cultural lag," ran all through Progressive social science and historiography. It configured social conflict not as structural contradiction, but as a partiality in historical advance that progress would resolve.[12]

Still, lagging progress exposed the dependence of the American ideal on the contingencies of history. After World War I and the conservative reaction of the 1920s, the New Historians' anxiety was palpable. It was reflected in

Robinson's stress on irrationality in The Mind in the Making and in the textbook he titled The Ordeal of Civilization (1926). In the companion volume by Charles and Mary Beard, The Rise of American Civilization, progress operated as the regulative principle of the narrative, but it was now a question that had to be explicitly asked and answered. The uncertainties of history also drove a wedge between the New History and the social sciences. During the Progressive era, Robinson and Beard had based the historical alliance with the social sciences on their common genetic viewpoint and a younger generation of historians continued their project during the interwar decades. Social scientists' commitment to forging instrumental sciences, however, led them to break with historical and evolutionary theory and adopt a harder-edged scientism.[13]

It was not until the decades after World War II that American social science and historiography joined again, this time around a more structural, analytic model of historiography. During this period the social sciences were in command of growing resources and intellectual authority in academia, government and popular culture. Over the course of the 1930s and 1940s they absorbed new influences from European social theory. Talcott Parsons brought into American social theory a Durkheimian sense of the reality of social norms. The work of Max Weber also had a major impact on the structural understanding of society. Although Marx was

largely proscribed in American universities, his work nonetheless influenced social thinkers in and out of academia. American social science thus greatly expanded its conceptual repertoire.

At the same time, it shifted from a focus on socializing individuals to a concern for integrated social systems. Society was still presumed to consist of aggregated individuals, but the statistical analysis of collective behaviors and the functional constituents of society that ruled behavior became the focus of analysis. System norms were assumed to achieve social cohesion and equilibrium. In politics, too, American democracy was configured as a pluralist system of competing interest groups that tended toward an equilibrium of justice and order. These functionalist theories took over the description of modernity found in earlier evolutionary theories, but functionalism assumed a static society, removed from history. It often identified the social systems actually at work in contemporary American society with the exceptionalist ideal. Older theories of liberal progress, recast as modernization theory, were applied to the world outside the United States and measured the distance still to be traversed to achieve the American norm.[14]

The social sciences thus participated in the construction of a newly static historical consciousness. During the decade after World War II, the country was experiencing the "American

Moment" of the "American Century," when the United States seemed already to stand at the summit of world power and already to embody the values its exceptionalist history promised.[15] At the same time, however, Cold War abroad and McCarthyism at home created a new sense of anxiety about the exceptionalist triumph. To some critical intellectuals, the dominant position of the United States in the world quickly raised questions about the limits of American power and example. The possibility that America's unique consensus had disabled the country from effectively playing its leading role in the world--a possibility soon reinforced by widespread criticism of the United States--threatened the universal consummation of exceptionalist history.[16] It was in this context that the historians Richard Hofstadter, H. Stuart Hughes, David Potter, and Edward N. Saveth, among others, called for a new alliance with the social sciences.[17] The static structuralism of the postwar/Cold War social sciences, with their sense of liberal progress achieved, promised to stabilize the disorientation in time of a less than perfect triumph.

The social sciences at the same time promised relief from historians' epistemological problems. In the 1930s Beard and Carl Becker led historians into a debate on whether the historian could ever reach objective knowledge of history. Much of the profession eventually took a compromise position, concluding that certainty was possible with regard to facts,

but that interpretation was necessarily subjective.[18] Recognizing that history was at bottom an imaginative "representation of the human situation," Hofstadter turned to social science concepts as a way of deepening the historical imagination. Potter, on the other hand, believed social science theory would remedy "the historian's lack of systematic procedure in the practice of generalization," making history more scientific.[19]

One consequence of both disorientation in time and the turn to social science was the demotion of narrative. The books written by these postwar/Cold War historians were what Hofstadter called "the new genre of analytical history ... part narrative, part personal essay, part systematic empirical inquiry, part speculative philosophy."[20] Analytical history is framed by the historian's argument; the chronological time of its story can be interrupted or obscured to fit the purposes of argument.

Another consequence was the construction of an ironic version of exceptionalist history that reflected contemporary postwar/Cold War concerns.[21] Social theory helped to conceptualize American failings as inevitable aspects of success. Ironic historians argued that the achievement of egalitarian democracy led to a harmonious pluralist order, but this very success and the consequent absence of real ideological conflict and debate led to inflated expectations and a conformist, absolutist mentality. Drawing on Marxist

influences of the 1930s that had criticized the monolithic liberalism of American society,[22] this analysis centered after the War in Tocqueville's consensual understanding of American society. As Wilfred McClay has shown, a host of social scientists in the 1950s from Erich Fromm to David Riesman were finding a "soft" totalitarianism in the United States parallel to the "hard" totalitarianism attributed to Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union, an idea rooted in the critique of atomized mass society that had originated with conservative thinkers after the French Revolution, including Tocqueville. The theory was revived by the Frankfurt critics of modern society and culture, many of whom had emigrated to the United States, and then taken up by American social theorists.[23] This theoretical apparatus allowed American historians to configure American vices as the unfortunate product of consensual virtues.

The social sciences were also used extensively in historical analysis. Historians paid particular attention to concepts like status, role, culture, and personality--theories of the middle range that could specify the social, economic, and psychological relations left inchoate by the New History. These concepts were understood by many American historians to operate within a liberal functionalist theoretical framework.[24] Status anxiety, deviance, relative deprivation, and a host of psychological disorders defined the tensions emerging from society understood in a functionalist way. Static "social

strains" replaced progressive "cultural lag" as a focus of historical/social scientific explanation.[25] The irrational, dysfunctional processes of history were also important for American historians of Europe, who looked to European theorists like Freud and Pareto. As Leonard Krieger has pointed out, postwar historians of Europe, continuing on a well-worn American path, were attracted to the lost causes, the failed rationality, and the reactionary episodes that marked a counterpoint to the larger story of Western and American progress.[26]

* * * * *

The postwar/Cold War alliance of historiography and the social sciences around an ironic revision of American exceptionalism and its middle-range conceptual apparatus turned out to be unstable. It became the opening wedge in a proliferating series of historiographical programs making use of social science and social theory.

By the late 1950s a number of political and economic historians began to argue that it was scientific method that produced novel findings and reliable generalizations, not borrowed concepts. Although they made use of theory, they chiefly urged that historians adopt scientific methods, particularly quantitative methods. They launched a new social history "from the bottom up" that aimed to correct the

impressionistic, overgeneralized stories previous historians told by using large data sets and statistical correlations.[27]

That history was no sooner begun, however, when the political conflict of the 1960s created new historiographical energies and directions. The concatenation of the Civil Rights movement, the war in Vietnam, youth rebellion, and the women's movement decisively ended the "American Moment" and its consensual explanation of American virtues and vices. What has been called the "New Left" drew into political debate and then into the historical profession a range of radical views, based in liberal democratic, populist, Marxist, and feminist traditions as well as in contemporary radical movements. It produced a social-cultural history that focused on the "inarticulate," the working class, racial minorities, and women, those who had been marginalized in American history and left out of its historiography.[28] Both these new social histories "from the bottom up" were heavily influenced by the achievements of European historiography, particularly the social-cultural history of the Annales in France and the English historians around Past and Present and the History Workshop, themselves influenced by Marxism and the Annales.[29] And fueling all these political and historiographical trends was the changing composition of the profession, as the postwar democratization of higher education opened a historical vocation to men and--after the mid-1960s--women from a wider spectrum of American society.[30]

Many varieties of historiography flowed from these influences. I would like to look at three variants of new history that developed in these post-sixties decades: the social science history that formed in the mid-1970s around the Social Science History Association (SSHA), the historiography that has made use of modernization theory, and the social-cultural history of marginalized groups that was influenced by the activism of the 1960s. All three categories overlap and I can only touch on them here, but I will try to suggest some of the characteristic ways these American new histories used social theory and how those uses have changed in recent years. All three set out to remake American historiography on terms suggested by social theory; all have enriched historiography, but none has succeeded in its imperialist ambition.

The movement for social science history was spearheaded by a group of historians in the late 1950s who responded to the instability of historical interpretation and the heated ideological climate of the Cold War by trying to make history into a science. The ambitions of these pioneers varied from William Aydelotte's modest desire to improve the way historians generalize to Lee Benson's effort to turn history into a science that generates general laws of human behavior.[31] They were joined by pioneer economic historians like Robert Fogel and Stanley Engermann, and in the late 1960s and 1970s, by younger historians who were drawn into social science methods through their work on new social history topics, such

as studies of voting behavior and demography. Their model of science was most often the empirical, behaviorist, quantitative social science practiced in the United States.[32]

Some of the social scientists who joined the SSHA in the mid-1970s shared the historians' scientific aspirations, but most had a very different agenda: while retaining the goal of a generalizing science, they wanted to move beyond a narrow positivism in social science and import some of the hermeneutic understanding and contextual richness of historiography. Charles Tilly, influenced by the Annales, and Theda Skocpol, influenced by Barrington Moore, along with their students and allies were early participants, as were scholars of historical demography and the sociology of the family. The social science participants were chiefly sociologists, and to a lesser extent political scientists and economists; very few anthropologists appeared and virtually no psychologists.[33]

The social science history that resulted thus represented a number of theoretical strains, but quantitative American social science predominated. One of its most characteristic products were the voting-behavior studies that developed an ethnocultural interpretation of American politics. Like the Annales "serial history," these studies used numerical series to find continuous or changing patterns over time. However, the Annalistes took their patterns as clues to a qualitative analysis of underlying social structural conditions, while the

behaviorist historians of voting submitted their numbers to statistical analysis in the hope of producing a causal account of political behavior; they largely ignored the structural features of American politics and society that shaped both political behavior and ethnocultural identity.[34]

During the 1980s, the scientific fervor of the social science history program receded, the victim of powerful critiques of the results of quantitative history and the broad attack on positivism.[35] At the SSHA, the balance between historians and social scientists has shifted: social scientists now comprise sixty percent of the program participants.[36] Among social scientists the interest in history has grown, but those committed to historicism are still marginilized in their own disciplines, making the SSHA a welcome venue. The reverse is true among historians: committed scientism has declined, while an eclectic interest in social theory is welcomed throughout the discipline.[37] Moreover, the array of interests represented in the Association has broadened. Gender has become an important area of interest, as has culture, and even narrative--the enemy against which the Association originally formed--has established a beachhead.[38]

As a result, those involved in SSHA's original aims tend to be disappointed, whether historians devoted to the original quantitative scientific program or social scientists who wanted to transform the social sciences into genuinely

historicist disciplines.[39] The SSHA nonetheless remains one of the few forums where historians, sociologists, political scientists, and historical economists can listen to one another on topics of overlapping--if not quite mutual--interest. The joint venue also attracts European scholars. Social Science History now prints articles that self-consciously test the power of social theories in historical contexts, often concluding that the theories do not adequately capture the complexity of history. That exercise can be illuminating, but it is a long way from the original effort to reconstitute American historiography.

Another kind of new history emerged from efforts to use modernization theory as the narrative and analytical spine of American historiography. Modernization theory is a reworking by 1950s American social scientists of ideas of liberal progress that have been powerful since the 18th century. Modernization was understood as synonymous with westernization and particularly in the United States, Americanization; it was designed to provide a counter-ideology to Marxism that would enlist the "Third World." It cast economic development as the prime motor of progress, to which were linked changes in "modal personality" and politics. Inscribing the structural-functionalist assumptions of 1950s sociology, it tended to view modernization as an integrated, deterministic process but allowed for failure, particularly through the semi-autonomous sphere of politics.[40]

Modernization theory provided a social-theoretical replacement for discredited ideas of progress, but its ideological tone, reductionism, and historical determinism made historians wary of it from the start. Few historical studies have in fact openly claimed modernization as the theoretical basis of their work.[41] Perhaps the most influential instance of modernization theory in American historiography was Robert Wiebe's The Search for Order, 1877-1920, published in 1967. It analyzed the transformation of a decentralized, agrarian-commercial society constructed around "island communities" into a nationalized, industrial capitalist, urban, bureaucratic society.[42] While Wiebe's prose sometimes hinted at distress over the impersonality of this process, what he wanted was a smoothly running, integrated bureaucratic order of the kind theorists imagined to exist in the postwar United States. Wiebe's emphasis was on the disorder of the transitional process: by 1920 the decisive turn had been taken, but there were still only "separate bureaucracies, barely joined in some areas, openly in conflict elsewhere."[43] What almost all readers of Wiebe failed to notice was that after the upheavals of the late 1960s, he lost faith in the ability of the modernization process to achieve unassisted a harmonious bureaucratic order in modern America. Instead he attempted to construct a uniquely American order that was only partially modernized, but that had, in exceptionalist fashion, turned persisting conflict into

harmony.[44]

The Search for Order was nonetheless a major starting point for the attempt to formulate an "organizational synthesis" of modern American history around the formation of large-scale bureaucratic organizations. Drawing on Weber, the new political science of the American state, and Alfred Chandler's pioneer work in business history, it has attempted to draw together the expanding historiography of professions, business corporations, and the intersection of state and private institutions in United States political economy. It is not clear that these historiographies, written by both liberal modernists and left critics of "corporate liberalism," constitute a "synthesis." One of its principal architects, Louis Galambos, notes that it often ignores crucial issues of conflict, power, and the distribution of resources. He also carefully disconnects his discussion of modern organizations from modernization as a necessary process. The "organizational synthesis" nonetheless assumes such a single, interconnected process, while historicizing the different forms that it takes in different locales.[45]

If organizations have not provided a new master narrative of American history, modernization continues to reappear, in part as a foil against which more complex historical accounts are written, in part as the narrative line around which stories are silently told. One important use derives from the fact that although modernization theory was resolutely

progressive, it incorporated the theory of traditional society as Gemeinschaft and thus could be turned to express ambivalence about modernity.[46] Numerous studies in American history, often elegaic in tone, show the movement from Gemeinschaft to Gesellschaft, starting with the early social histories of New England communities and stretching through the twentieth century. New Left historians of working-class communities and popular culture who lament the loss of community have found this framework particularly congenial.[47] In part as a reaction to the historiography of community, there has been a substantial effort to reexamine the early development of the capitalist market and to reaffirm the progressive course of capitalism, a line of analysis with ideological as well as analytical links to modernization theory and which may take on new life with the resurgence of market economics.[48]

Finally I want to discuss the social-cultural historians who were energized by the activism of the 1960s and have hoped to rewrite history on the basis of race, gender, class, and ethnicity. Rebelling against the consensus historiography of the postwar/Cold War era, they argued that workers, immigrants, racial minorities, and women had resisted domination and maintained their own group identities. Among the leaders of this compound movement, a number came from backgrounds that had exposed them to the orthodox Marxism that had survived in the United States and to Marxist theory.

Rejecting orthodox Marxism, but remaining attuned to Marxist theory, they and others from different backgrounds were then influenced by the broader anti-authoritarian, anti-racist, and feminist currents of the 1960s.[49] As a result, Marxist theory was modified by an eclectic and culturally-oriented mix of social theory: revisionist Marxism, particularly Gramsci and the English historians Raymond Williams and E.P. Thompson; the symbolic anthropology of Clifford Geertz, Victor Turner and others; and most recently, poststructural literary theories. The implications of this last influence--poststructural literary theory--are complex and I will return to them shortly, but on one level, the view of language as hegemonic, yet broken, contradictory, and open to reconstruction by its speakers reinforced both the Gramscian critique and pluralist reconfiguration of American culture already underway in social-cultural historiography.

Moved by populist, socialist, and/or feminist political sympathies, social cultural historians often valorized their subjects' resistance to oppression and sturdy survival, or conversely, their victimization by oppressors.[50] Using a symbolic anthropology that depicted culture as the primary realm of integration and meaning in peoples' lives, culture became the site of indigenous strength.[51] This romantic tendency has been both accentuated and made more difficult with the increase in historical sophistication, democratic sensitivity to each historical subject, and the

poststructuralist valorization not simply of differences, but of difference, with its fear of essentializing any category. Because racial, ethnic, class, and gender identities cross-cut each other, sometimes supporting and sometimes contradicting other identities, historians are pushed to an increasingly atomized level of analysis. At the same time they strive to maintain the conceptual and moral integrity of social-cultural groups.[52]

These historians nonetheless expressed the ambition to reconfigure all of American or Western history on the basis of the social-cultural history of the dispossessed. They brought with them progressive narratives of history that might effect such integration, derived from Marxism, feminist theories of patriarchy, and liberal/social democratic hybrids. While the revolutions of the 1960s had regenerated the progressive historical hopes embodied in these theories, the political weakness of Marxism in the United States made them elusive, and the recent retreat of socialism and collapse of communism around the world has made them difficult to sustain. At the same time, the romantic current in the social-cultural enterprise, the determination that those who have, by some standards, lost in life will not lose in historiography, makes it difficult to plot a narrative that leaves the subjects of social history undiminished. Herbert Gutman, for example, in 1981 quoted T.S. Eliot's Christian imagery of redemption, and thereby the mythic basis of both Marxist and American history,

when he called for "a new synthesis...that incorporates and then transcends the new history" of Blacks, the working class, and women.[53] In his own work on labor history, however, unlike his model E.P. Thompson, Gutman was unable to achieve a Marxist-like synthesis that would sustain a progressive history of the American working class.[54]

Increasing disillusion with liberal politics and the liberal state has taken a heavy toll on liberal proposals for reintegration as well. Thus Thomas Bender has suggested that a synthetic history of the United States could be written around the idea of the civic sphere, developed by Jurgen Habermas and others, "as an arena for the play of cultures and interests in society and the product of that play." But his proposal was immediately met with criticism of the structural constraints on that civic "arena" and of the hierarchical premise of civic culture as "core" and social-cultural life as "periphery."[55]

So the progressive narratives of American and Western history promised by social theory have remained elusive. Nonetheless, the social-cultural history of the dispossessed has had a major impact on the practice of historiography in the United States, more so than that of social science history or modernization theory. The relatively decentralized university system and the conjunction of 1960s politics with the opening of academic careers to women, African-Americans, and the the children of immigrants swept this new history

rapidly through the discipline. Grounding their work in the accepted scholarly standards of the profession and showing that agency--and with it, politics--operates at all levels of society and culture, the social-cultural historians succeeded in multiplying the subjects of historiography and revising traditional topics.[56]

If we step back for a moment to compare the new histories of the last three decades with Annales historiography, we can see that in many ways they have followed similar paths.[57] Like Annales historiography, American new histories entered into a "dialogue between history and the social sciences" that looked for the social-cultural structures and processes at work beneath the level of political events. Especially among the social science historians and modernizationists, that dialogue included the adoption of formal social scientific theories and methodologies. Most often, however, both American historians and Annalistes have borrowed questions, approaches, and techniques less formally. Working eclectically to suit the needs of their empirical data, they have brought multiple dimensions of analysis to bear on their studies. That loose and eclectic mode of operation often reflects historians' superficial engagement with social theory, but it also follows from their preference for empirical richness and complexity.[58] On both sides of the Atlantic, the new histories are now less driven by their original programmatic intentions, and--as historiography has multiplied--less by theory than

historiography.[59]

There are also distinct differences between Annales historiography and the American new histories. The Annales emphasis on the longue duree has suited the French national temper far better than the American.[60] The longue duree focuses on the structural conditions that constrain human action, while American social thought, even in the truncated form of behaviorism, has tended to assume voluntarism. Social-cultural historians in the United States have tried to show how even ordinary people construct their own lives. The longue duree in France is also an alternative to progress, while American new histories have at least hoped to reestablish a sense of progress, whether the progress of a genuine historical science, or the progress inscribed in the middle-range theories of American social science, or the narratives of American and Western progress provided by Marxist and liberal social theory. It is indicative of that difference that the Annales program of "total" history has moved in recent years away from global ambitions to emphasize depth within a smaller compass, while many social-cultural historians in the United States have moved in the other direction, calling for larger narrative syntheses or, in Charles Tilly's terms, analyses of "big structures, large processes, huge comparisons."[61]

The hallmark of post-sixties historiography in the United States, however, is the social-cultural history of

dispossessed groups. And here, of course, is a major difference from Annales historiography. If French historians recovered the social experience and mentalite of the peasantry, American historians focused specifically on women, the working class, and the diverse racial and ethnic groups that compose American society. When we move from the social-cultural history of the dispossessed to the newer cultural history that has formed in its wake, the difference is even more striking. A principal catalyst of that new cultural history is poststructural literary theory that originated in France, but it has influenced American rather than French historiography.

* * * * *

The newer histories of culture, gender, race, and postcolonialism enact an alliance with the humanities rather than the social sciences, a shift in alliance linked to the declining fortunes of positivism just as historicism and theories of language were gaining new philosophical stature.[62] The theories that have influenced these newer histories are--roughly speaking--postmodern: anti-foundationalist philosophies and poststructural literary theories that examine the linguistic construction of reality.[63] In the American academy, language and texts have generally come to be understood as products of history, but postmodern theory

embraces a radical historicism. It pushes the qualitative difference of the past to the point of *dis*continuity, leading the historian to look for breaks and fissures that have been glossed over by previous historiography and to show how historical forms are at every moment produced and reproduced. Radical discontinuity also means radical contextualism. Not only are there no transcendental or natural kinds imbedded in history that persist through time, there are no "historical individuals," no self-acting, wholistic historical entities such as stages, nations, classes, intellectual disciplines, or selves. Like the "natural" categories of race and sex, these too are held to be discontinuous social-cultural constructions whose fissures and reproduction must be disclosed.[64]

Postmodern theories found a welcome audience among social-cultural historians of the dispossessed who were already studying culture and already becoming self-critical about their historical categories. Through work in anthropology, particularly Geertz's textualization of culture, they were prepared for a view of culture as a system of signs.[65] The new theory encouraged them to go beyond the separate histories of groups to the social-cultural categories of gender, race, class, and ethnicity that define those groups. As a result postmodern theory has helped to catalyze an explosion of new historical energies. Women's history, already the most innovative sector of social-cultural history, was reenergized by the study of gender.[66] Gender and race

became major categories of analysis, to be applied not only to women and people of color, but to the white race and the male gender.[67] New topics emerged that drew on the methods and perspectives of postmodern theory, such as the body, time, and postcolonial experience. And cultural history, including the study of popular culture, became a fast-growing frontier of historical investigation.[68]

Postmodern theory also found an audience among intellectual historians. During the 1970s, intellectual historians had felt challenged by the new social history to defend their focus on elites and on ideas that seemed to float free of concrete social realities.[69] In a variety of efforts to rethink the basis of their practice, they drew on Collingwood, speech-act theory, and Kuhn's historical theory of science to argue that actions and social formations are inseparable from their meanings and that meanings are produced by speakers and writers engaged in a social enterprise. As a result of this work, intellectual historians in the United States began to think of their subject less as "ideas" than as the collective enterprise that shaped them. David Hollinger described that enterprise as the discourse of intellectuals and the term discourse was adopted by others, though it could mean a variety of things. Hollinger urged that discourses centered on questions. Others applied the term to J.G.A. Pocock's historical languages, paradigms, and traditions, and still others to looser connections of ideas and metaphors.

Foucault's understanding of discourse, with its emphasis on the linguistic construction of experience as an exercise of power, both reinforced and altered historians' use of the term.[70] The interest in the social construction of meanings that drew American intellectual historians toward discourse could also draw them toward the study of culture. The new cultural history was formed as both social and intellectual historians converged on the importance of culture and began to explore postmodern methods of analysis.[71]

Postmodern theories thus originate in different intellectual territory from the social theories we considered earlier. On one level, postmodern theories extend deeper into the historian's hermeneutic realm the structural elaboration of historicism that has been going on since early in the twentieth century. They insert into language and culture the structuralist concern with power: their interest is in how linguistic codes and systems construct subjectivity; they prefer spacial metaphors that make fluid linguistic and cultural phenomena concrete. Yet on another level, these poststructural theories move in a profoundly different direction from the global theories of progress and the analytical theories of structure and process that previously have been employed to stabilize the uncertainties of modern history. In postmodern theories, it is precisely the structural element, the constructed character of all texts and linguistic categories, that make them unstable. In this view,

the social-theoretical narratives of progress and fixed theoretical categories like class and culture, by their normative inclusive character, deny their own fictionality and instability and thereby distort the creative possibilities of the present and future.[72]

There are good reasons for the special appeal of postmodern theory in the United States. The twentieth century's brutalities and the inchoate condition of the contemporary world have stunned without entirely banishing the deep reserve of liberal faith in America. The political tendency of postmodernism is individualistic and pluralistic, if not anarchistic, motivated by fear of the monolithic social order it locates in modernity.[73] Such a fear has deep roots in the ambivalent American individualism analyzed by Tocqueville. Since the postwar/Cold War decade, an important segment of American social thinkers and new historians have mobilized against similar threats to individual freedom, first in the form of a "soft totalitarianism" and then on the New Left, the cultural hegemony exerted by capitalism.[74] The fear of a monolithic social order leads postmodernists toward liberal and radical versions of individualistic, pluralist politics. It also leads toward the realm of culture, a prime contemporary site of contestation between individual freedom and social constraint. Postmodern theory can thus express both the uncertainties of the present and deeply ingrained political impulses. It is no accident that in concluding her

introduction to the new cultural history, Lynn Hunt asked playfully, "Are we headed here for a "comic" ending in literary terms? An ending that promises reconciliation of all contradictions and tensions in the pluralist manner most congenial to American historians?"[75]

How postmodern theory will play itself out in American historiography is an open question. Decentralization and specialization give academic disciplines in the United States enormous power to absorb and disarm disruptive innovations. Indeed, these theories have not yet penetrated very deeply into the historical profession; even those areas most strongly affected, like women's history and cultural history, are only partially shaped by them.[76] Unlike earlier social theories that provided historians with useful tools, the tools of postmodern theory carry with them epistemological burdens. Social theory attacked the epistemological doubt that had been an undercurrent in the discipline since the 1920s, strengthening the historian's authoritative claim to discover what really happened. Postmodern theory questions that claim and urges the historian to signal reflexive doubt in her text. Social theory helped stabilize the uncertainties of twentieth century history and of historical interpretation. Postmodern theory urges that these uncertainties be acknowledged and creatively magnified. To date, intellectual historians are more cognizant of these issues than others; many in the discipline have been scared off by a political attack on

postmodern theory that caricatures its most radical implications. However, American historians who have made use of poststructural theories show no inclination to accept the reduction of all experience to textuality or of all narrative to fiction. On the contrary, most have argued that experience remains a viable category apart from textuality and that their constructed narratives produce warrantable knowledge.[77]

Just as American new historians and Annalistes used social theory loosely and eclectically and not beyond the point at which historical values would be threatened, a similar outcome is likely for postmodern theories. Most historians will be more interested in reaping the empirical harvest of this new perspective than in facing or resolving its epistemological dilemnas. Nor is it likely that the focus on language and culture will eclipse all other approaches to history. Rich veins of structural analysis and social history are still productive and social theorists themselves are exploring postmodern theories, reconfiguring what has been sharply separated as "social" and "cultural."[78] Again it is noteworthy that Lynn Hunt has already voiced regret at the absence of social theory from new works in cultural history.[79]

Postmodern theory nonetheless contributes to a new kind of alliance between history and neighboring disciplines, a process foreshadowed in the transformation of the SSHA. What is happening in the United States is not a partnership of the sort forecast by the new historians of 1912 or 1950, nor the

Annales model of an integration of other perspectives within the master discipline of history. Rather it is the diffusion of historicism across disciplinary boundaries into the humanities and social sciences, producing works that are recognizably historicist, yet recognizably different in aproach. American historians are increasingly conscious of these historical works as well as the theory being produced in adjacent disciplines.[80] Historians' special authority may, of course, disperse along with the diffusion of their outlook. For example, in a recent survey of the historical work being done in the social sciences, the authors found that historical social scientists looked to each other rather than to historians for their authorities, creating subfields within rather than across disciplinary borders.[81] Yet a common, if variegated, allegience to historicism could allow the human sciences and humanities to function more like the natural sciences, where the assurance of a common approach allows researchers to follow their problems across disciplinary lines. In either case, this new alliance between history and theory promises to again remake the writing of history in the United States.

Note: I want to thank my colleagues at the San Marino Conference for their stimulating comments, particulatly Roger Chartier and Jacques Revel. I am also grateful for the excellent suggestions offered by the members of the Washington Seminar on American History and Culture, particularly James Gilbert and James Banner; and for the thoughtful comments of John R. Hall, who responded to a brief paper on this topic that I presented at the SSHA meeting in 1994.

1. This understanding of the twentieth century new histories is derived from Georg G. Iggers, "Historicism (A Comment),' Historia Historiographie, 10(1986):131-144, and Ignacio Olabarri, "'New' New History: A *Longue Duree* Structure," History and Theory, 34 (No. 1, 1995):1-29. Following an earlier suggestion of Iggers in New Directions in European Historiography, Ian Tyrrell has developed the comparison between the first New History in the United States and Annales historiography in The Absent Marx: Class Analysis and Liberal History in Twentieth-Century America, (New York: Greenwood, 1986), ch. 2. See also Ernst A. Breisach, "Two New Histories: An Exploratory Comparison," in At the Nexus of Philosophy and History, ed. B.P. Dauenhauer. The quotation is from Iggers, "Historicism," 140.

2. There are a number of definistion of historicism. Karl Popper identified historicism as a hybrid of naturalistic conceptions of law and historicist conceptions of change in The Poverty of Historicism (Boston: Beacon Press, 1957).

Maurice Mandelbaum limited historicism to teleological doctrines of historical development and specifically excluded the historian's "historical sense," in History, Man, and Reason: A Study of Nineteenth Century Thought (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1971). My view of historicism follows one usage common in intellectual history and draws from Iggers, "Historicism (A Comment)," 131-40; Friedrich Meinecke, Historism, trans. J.E. Anderson (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1972); Hayden V. White, "On History and Historicisms," Introduction to From History to Sociology. The Transition in German Historical Thinking, by Carlo Antoni (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1959), xv-xxviii; and J.G.A. Pocock, Politics, Language and Time (New York: Atheneum, 1973).

3. This point is implied in Iggers, "Historicism," 141-142, and developed in Olabarri, "'New' New History," 4-11.

4. Dorothy Ross, The Origins of American Social Science (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), ch.1.

5. In calling the view of American history Bancroft exemplified "exceptionalism," I resist the argument of the admirable essay by Daniel Rodgers in this volume. To limit the term to Turner and post-1945 histories misses the way in which Bancroft, as well as many Teutonist historians, understood American history as an exception from salient, universal processes of history. Precisely because America gathered in the historical seeds of liberty from around the

world and enacted the ideal towards which universal history moved, it was exempt from the destructive historical forces that shaped the histories of all other countries. I believe it is more than homology that links the millennial identification of the American republic with Turner's seating of the universal frontier process in the United States, and Bancroft's Hegelianism with the American historical dynamics inspired by Marx. For this more expansive view of American exceptionalism, see Ross, Origins, pt. 1; Dorothy Ross, "Historical Consciousness in Nineteenth-Century America," American Historical Review (AHR), 89 (October, 1989):909-928, and "Grand Narrative in American Historical Writing: From Romance to Uncertainty," AHR, 100 (June 1995):651-77. On Motley and Prescott as well as Bancroft, see David Levin, History as Romantic Art (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1959).

6. This view of historico-politics as the context for the founding of the historical discipline in the United States and seedbed for the New History is set out in Origins, ch.3 and 8.

7. James Harvey Robinson, The New History: Essays Illustrating the Modern Historical Outlook (New York: Macmillan, 1912), 14.

8. Although he does not link it to a revision of American exceptionalism under the deeper influence of historicism, Leonard Krieger notes this shift in American historians' treatment of European history, in "European History in America, in History by John Higham, Krieger, and Felix Gilbert

(Englewood Cliffs, NJ, 1965), 241, 263, and ch. 2-3 passim.

9. Ross, Origins, 270-274.

10. Dorothy Ross, "The 'New History' and the 'New Psychology': An Early Attempt at Psychohistory," in The Hofstadter Aegis, ed. Stanley Elkins and Eric McKitrick (New York: Knopf, 1974), 207-234. In Robinson, New History, see particularly ch.1 and 3.

11. For illuminating discussions of Beard and the New History, see Tyrrell, The Absent Marx, chs. 1-2, and Ernst A. Breisach, American Progressive History (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993). On Beard's influence, see also Terrence J. McDonald, "Theory and Practice in the 'New' History: Rereading Arthur Meier Schlesinger's *The Rise of the City, 1878-1898*," Reviews in American History, 20(1992):432-445. McDonald shows that Arthur M. Schlesinger used Beard and Seligman's economic interpretation in his urban history, but at such a low level of specificity, that it was taken for no theory at all. As McDonald points out, Beard's reputation as a radical also probably helped to blur Schlesinger's analysis.

12. Ross, Origins, ch. 9 and 442-444.

13. Ibid., ch. 10.

14. The key text in the structural transformation of postwar/Cold War American social science is Talcott Parsons, The Structure of Social Action (New York, 1937). For surveys of the structural movement in a number of social sciences, see

Fred Matthews, "Social Scientists and the Culture Concept, 1930-1950: The Conflict Between Processual and Structural Approaches," Sociological Theory, 7(1989):87-101, and Dorothy Ross, "Social Science," in A Companion to American Thought, ed. Richard Wightman Fox and James T. Kloppenberg, (Oxford: Blackwell, 1995), 634-637.

15. Edward A. Purcell, Jr., The Crisis of Democratic Theory: Scientific Naturalism and the Problem of Value (Lexington, KY, 1973), pt. 4. For liberals, this shift in historical consciousness was prepared by the Depression and theories of a mature economy; for the left, by the stalemate between the discredited alternatives of Marxism and liberalism. See Howard Brick, Daniel Bell and the Decline of Intellectual Radicalism: Social Theory and Political Reconciliation in the 1940s (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1986).

16. This theme is implicit and explicit in many texts of this period. Among historians, see Louis Hartz, The Liberal Tradition in America (New York: Harcourt Brace, 1955), ch.11; C.Vann Woodward, "The Irony of Southern History," (1953) in The Burden of Southern History (New York: Vintage, 1960).

17. Richard Hofstadter, "History and the Social Sciences," in Varieties of History, ed. Fritz Stern (New York, 1956; Richard Hofstadter, "History and Sociology in the United States," in Sociology and History: Methods, ed. Hofstadter and Seymour Martin Lipset (New York, 1968); H. Stewart Hughes, "The Historian and the Social Scientist," AHR, 60(1960):20-46;

David M. Potter, People of Plenty: Economic Abundance and the American Character (Chicago, 1954), Introduction; Edward N. Saveth, ed., American History and the Social Sciences (Glencoe, 1964).

18. On the response to Beard's and Becker's relativism, see Tyrrell, The Absent Marx, 22-23, 36-39, 93-95, although unlike Tyrrell, I believe this uncertainty was only partially contained and never vanquished; on Becker, Carl L. Becker, The Heavenly City of the Eighteenth-Century Philosophers (New Haven, 1932); Burleigh Taylor Wilkins, Carl Becker: A Biographical Study in American Intellectual History (Cambridge, 1961).

19. Hofstadter, "History and the Social Sciences," 370; Potter, People of Plenty, xii. For Hughes, the social sciences also offered to make generalization more precise, as well as to make historians' weakly conceptualized fields of economic, social, and cultural history more coherent. Hughes, "The Historian and the Social Scientist."

20. Richard Hofstadter, "History and Sociology in the United States," in Sociology and History: Methods, Hofstadter and Seymour Martin Lipset, eds. (New York, 1968), 18.

21. For a view of postwar/Cold War historiography as more complacent and monolithic than I suggest here, see Peter Novick, That Noble Dream: The 'Objectivity Question' and the American Historical Profession (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), Pt. 3.

22. For example, Richard Hofstadter's American Political Tradition (1948). See Hofstadter, "The Importance of Comity in American History," Columbia Forum, 9.

23. This connection is drawn by Wilfred M. McClay in The Masterless: Self and Society in Modern America (Chapel Hill, 1994), ch.6-7, a superb study of the symbiotic relationship between autonomous individualism and social absorption in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

24. Saveth, American History and the Social Sciences, 17-18. On theories of the "middle range," see Robert Merton, Social Theory and Social Structure, rev. ed. (New York: Free Press of Glencoe, 1963).

25. Examples are Hofstadter's The Age of Reform (1955) and The Paranoid Style in American Politics (1965); David Donald, "Toward a Reconsideration of Abolitionists," in Lincoln Reconsidered (1956); Marvin Meyers, The Jacksonian Persuasion (1960). William H. Sewell, Jr., remarks on this cast of 1950s social science history in, "Introduction: Narratives and Social Identities," Social Science History (SSH), 16(Fall, 1992), 487.

26. Krieger, "European History in America," ch.4-5. Examples are Franklin L. Ford, Robe and Sword: The Regrouping of the French Aristocracy after Louis XIV (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1953), and H. Stuart Hughes, Consciousness and Society: The Reconstruction of European Social Thought 1890-1930 (New York, 1961 [1958]).

27. For an early sampling, see Quantification in American History: Theory and Research, ed. Robert P. Swierenga (New York, 1970).

28. Novick, That Noble Dream, ch. 13.

29. Lynn Hunt, ed., The New Cultural History (Berkeley, 1989), Introduction and Pt.1.

30. Novick, That Noble Dream, 362-367, 470.

31. See the selections in Quantification in American History and Lee Benson, Toward the Scientific Study of History (Philadelphia: Lippincott, 1972).

32. My account of the social science history that formed around the SSHA draws largely on Andrew Abbott, "History and Sociology: The Lost Synthesis," in Engaging the Past: The Uses of History Across the Social Sciences, ed. Eric H. Monkkonen (Durham: Duke University Press, 1994), 77-112, an excellent account of the movement. On this model of American social science, see Christopher G.A. Bryant, Positivism in Social Theory and Research (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1985), ch. 5.

33. My information on relative participation comes from a talk by Donna Garbaccio at the SSHA meeting, November, 1994.

34. For an excellent account of the Annales method of "serial history," see Robert Forster, "Achievements of the Annales School," Journal of Economic History, 38(March 1978):58-76. Ronald P. Formisano, "The Invention of the Ethnocultural Interpretation," AHR, 99 (April, 1994): 453-477 is a revealing

history and defense of ethnocultural voting studies; the best critique is still Richard L. McCormick, "Ethno-cultural Interpretations of Nineteenth-Century American Voting Behavior," Political Science Quarterly, 89(June, 1974).

35. One obstacle faced by social science history - the time-consuming difficulty of gathering data - speaks to the difference between the individualistic and decentralized historical discipline in the United States and the centralized historical program of the Annales. See Forster, "Achievements of the Annales School."

36. Garbaccio talk.

37. As Edward Berkowitz tells me, political historians who feel marginalized in an historical profession predominantly devoted to social and cultural history continue to find the SSHA a welcome venue for meeting the historically-oriented political scientists who share their interests.

38. Sewell, "Introduction: Narratives and Social Identities."

39. Thus Abbott regards the SSHA alliance as a mismatched failure, in "History and Sociology"; for an historian's disappointment, see Allan G. Bogue, "Great Expectations and Secular Depreciation: The First Ten Years of Social Science History Association," SSH, 11(1987):329-342.

40. The best introduction is the long entry on "modernization," written by two architects of the theory, Daniel Lerner and James S. Coleman, in International Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences, 10:386-402.

41. Peter Burke, History and Social Theory (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1992), 132-141.

42. Robert Wiebe, The Search for Order, (New York: Hill and Wang, 1967). See also Kenneth Cmiel, "Destiny and Amnesia: The Vision of Modernity in Robert Wiebe's *The Search for Order*," Reviews in American History, 21 (1993):352-368.

43. Wiebe, Search for Order, 300.

44. Robert Wiebe, The Segmented Society: An Historical Preface to the Meaning of America (New York: Oxford University Press, 1975). The subtitle is revealing. Wiebe argued for "the persisting segmentation of American society," and relocated the source of its harmony to a "unique pattern of relationships" among those segments, that constitute a "consistent, interdependent system," based on "widespread agreement on certain fundamentals." (x-xi, 13) Alan Brinkley noted that Wiebe had retreated to a position of incomplete modernization, in "The Problem of American Conservatism," AHR, 99(April, 1994), 427.

45. Louis Galambos, "The Emerging Organizational Synthesis in Modern American History," Business History Review, 44(1970):279-90; Louis Galambos, "Technology, Political Economy, and Professionalization: Central Themes of the Organizational Synthesis," loc cit, 57 (1983):471-493.

46. Harry Liebersohn, Fate and Utopia in German Sociology, 1870-1923 (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1988).

47. See Thomas Bender, Community and Social Change in America (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1982 [1978]).

48. For a sympathetic review of some of this literature, see Gordon S. Wood, "Inventing American Capitalism," The New York Review of Books (June 9, 1994), 44-49.

49. Visions of History, ed. Henry Abelove, et al (New York: Pantheon, 1983), particularly the interviews with Linda Gordon, Natalie Zemon Davis, and Herbert Gutman; Warren I. Sussman, Culture As History: The Transformation of American Society in the Twentieth Century (New York: Pantheon, 1984), Introduction and headnotes.

50. Michael Kammen, ed., The Past Before Us: Contemporary Historical Writing in the United States (Ithaca, 1980), particularly Peter N. Stearns, "Toward a Wider Vision: Trends in Social History."

51. Lawrence W. Levine, "Clio, Canons, and Culture," Journal of American History, 93(1993), 864; Suzanne Desan, "Crowds, Community, and Ritual in the Work of E.P. Thompson and Natalie Davis," in Hunt, New Cultural History, 47-71; Ira Berlin, "Introduction: Herbert G. Gutman and the American Working Class," in Gutman, Power and Culture: Essays on the American Working Class, ed. Berlin (New York, 1987), 36-45; Carroll Smith-Rosenberg, "The Female World of Love and Ritual: Relations between Women in Nineteenth century America," Signs, 1(1975): 1-29.

52. See, for example, David Roediger, "Race and the Working-Class Past in the United States: Multiple Identities and the Future of Labor History," International Review of Social History, 38 (1993), Supplement:127-143.

53. Herbert G. Gutman, "The Missing Synthesis: What Ever Happened to History?" Nation (November 21, 1981),554. For other calls for a new synthetic history based in working class history, gender, and race, see J. Carroll Moody and Alice Kessler-Harris, eds., Perspectives on American Labor History: The Problems of Synthesis, (DeKalb, Ill., 1990), and Roediger, "Race and the Working-Class Past."

54. On the comparison of Gutman and Thompson, see also Tyrrell, The Absent Marx, 146-154.

55. Thomas Bender, "Wholes and Parts: The Need for Synthesis in American History," JAH, 73(June, 1986):120-136, and "A Round Table: Synthesis in American History," JAH, 74 (June, 1987):107-130.

56. The massive publication of the Freedmen's Bureau papers, edited and interpreted by a team under Ira Berlin, for example, has both enlarged and shifted the focus of Reconstruction historiography. Freedom: A Documentary History of Emancipation, 1861-1867 (Cambridge University Press, 1982-); Eric Foner, Reconstruction: America's Unfinished Revolution, 1863-1877 (New York, 1988). The ways in which women's civic participation reconfigured politics and shaped the Welfare State is now a major topic in the study of the

United States and of Europe: Mary Ryan, Women in Public: Between Ballots and Banners, 1825-1880 (Baltimore, 1990); Paula Baker, The Moral Frameworks of Public Life: Gender, Politics, and the State in Rural New York, 1820-1930 (New York: Oxford, 1991); Linda Gordon, Pitied But Not Entitled: Single Mothers and the History of Welfare (New York, 1994); Seth Koven and Sonya Michel, eds., Mothers of a New World: Maternalist Politics and the Origins of Welfare States (Routledge, 1990).

57. My comparisons here are drawn against Forster, "Achievements of the Annales School."

58. For an excellent analysis of historians' failures in this regard, see Terrence J. McDonald, "Faiths of Our Fathers: Middle Range Social Theory and the Remaking of American Urban History, 1940-1985," in American City History: Modes of Inquiry, ed. Kathleen Neils Conzen, Michael H. Ebner, and Russell Lewis (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992).

59. Galambos makes this point for the organizational synthesis, but it is also true of the other new histories. Galambos, "Technology, Political Economy, and Professionalization," 471, 493.

60. As Gordon Wood points out in this volume, only the colonial period of American history provided American historians with something like a longue duree of a century or more.

61. Charles Tilly, Big Structures, Large Processes, Huge Comparisons (New York, 1985). On the reformulation of total history, see Olabarri, "'New' New History," 17-18.

62. A good way to track this shift is through the work of Richard J. Bernstein, The Restructuring of Social and Political Theory (New York, 1976); Beyond Objectivism and Relativism: Science, Hermeneutics, and Praxis (Philadelphia, 1985); and The New Constellation: The Ethical-Political Horizons of Modernity/Postmodernity (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1992).

63. Introductions to this body of theory that are especially useful in this context are Allan Megill, Prophets of Extremity: Nietzsche, Heidegger, Foucault, Derrida (Berkeley, 1985); Bernstein, The New Constellation; Lynn Hunt, "Introduction: History, Culture, and Text," in Hunt, ed., New Cultural History; Terry Eagelton, Literary Theory (Minneapolis, 1983), ch. 4.

64. The historicist direction of American literary theory is exemplified in Frank Lentricchia, After the New Criticism (Chicago, 1980). See also Brook Thomas, The New Historicism and Other Old-Fashioned Topics (Princeton, 1991). On radical historicism, see Michel Foucault, "Nietzsche, Genealogy, History," in Language, Counter-Memory, Practice, ed. Donald Bouchard (Ithaca, 1988).

65. Lynn Hunt, "Introduction: History, Culture, and Text," and Aletta Biersack, "Local Knowledge, Local History: Geertz and

Beyond," in Hunt, ed., New Cultural History.

66. Historians of women, for example, quickly found it useful to discuss the way culture "constructs" gender differences and the way women re-figure those differences in their own lives. See, for example, Joan Scott, Gender and the Politics of History (New York: Columbia University Press, 1988).

67. David Roediger, for example, has convincingly shown that male gender and white race-consciousness were crucial to the forging of the antebellum working-class in the United States. David Roediger, The Wages of Whiteness: Race and the Making of the American Working Class (London, 1991).

68. Hunt, New Cultural History.

69. See New Directions in Intellectual History, ed. John Higham and Paul Conkin (Baltimore, 1979).

70. This history is reviewed in David A. Hollinger, "Running To and Fro: Discourse, Historians, and Daniel's Dream," paper delivered at the San Marino Conference. See also Hollinger, "Historians and the Discourse of Intellectuals," New Directions, 42-63; J.G.A. Pocock, "Introduction: The State of the Art," Virtue, Commerce, and History (Cambridge, 1985); Jan Goldstein, "Foucault Among the Sociologists: The 'Disciplines' and the History of the Professions," History and Theory, 23 (1984):170-192.

71. That joint convergence is visible in Hunt, ed., New Cultural History, and Richard Wightman Fox and T.J.Jackson Lears, The Power of Culture: Critical Essays in American

History (Chicago, 1993).

72. Terry Eagelton, Literary Theory (Minneapolis, 1983), ch. 4.

73. On the centrality of this fear in postmodern theory, see John McGowan, Postmodernism and its Critics (Ithaca 1991).

74. McClay, The Masterless. See note 23 above.

75. Hunt, New Cultural History, 22.

76. The distinction often made between cultural history and cultural studies, for example, marks a line most historians are reluctant to cross into a fuller embrace of postmodern theory.

77. See for example, John E. Toews, "Intellectual History after the Linguistic Turn: The Autonomy of Meaning and the Irreducibility of Experience," AHR, 92 (1987):879-907; Gabrielle M. Spiegel, "History, Historicism, and the Social Logic of the Text in the Middle Ages," Speculum, 65 (1990):59-86; Nancy Partner, "History Without Empiricism/Truth Without Facts," in Transformations: The Languages of Culture and Personhood After Theory, ed. Christie McDonald and Gary Wihl (State College, Pa., 1994):1-10. This can be said even of Hayden White and Dominick LaCapra, who go furthest in acceptance of the theoretical claims of postmodernism, but continue to produce historical narratives that follow the conventional rules of the profession's realist historiography. See LaCapra, Rethinking Intellectual History: Texts, Contexts, Language (Ithaca, 1983).

78. The works of sociologists Pierre Bourdieu and Richard Harvey Brown and of the social theorist Richard J. Bernstein point in this direction.

79. Lynn Hunt, "History Beyond Social Theory," in The States of 'Theory': History, Art, and Critical Discourse, ed. David Carroll (New York, 1993).

80. One sign is the books being reviewed in the leading reviewing journal in American history. In a recent number singled out by Morton Keller as indicative of the new orientation of American historiography, at least 10 or the 43 books reviewed were by scholars in disciplines other than history. Reviews in American History, 21(December 1993); Morton Keller, "Reviews in American History," Times Literary Supplement, March 18, 1994, p.22.

81. Eric H. Monkkonen, Introduction, in Engaging the Past.

PUBLICATIONS

OF THE JOHN F. KENNEDY-INSTITUTE

MATERIALIEN

A complete list of titles (1ff) is available from the institute.

26. AMERICA SEEN FROM THE OUTSIDE - TOPICS, MODELS, AND ACHIEVEMENTS OF AMERICAN STUDIES IN THE FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF GERMANY. Proceedings of a Symposium held at the John F. Kennedy-Institut für Nordamerikastudien, December 1-4, 1988. Ed. by Brigitte Georgi-Findlay, Heinz Ickstadt. Berlin 1990.

27. CONTEMPLATING OTHERS: CULTURAL CONTACTS IN RED AND WHITE AMERICA. An Annotated Bibliography on the North American Indian by Robert E. Bieder. Berlin 1990

28. DER AMERIKANISCHE DOKUMENTARFILM. Eine Bibliographie der Sekundärliteratur. Michael Barchet, Mo Beyerle, Maren Schmohl und Eva-Maria Warth. Berlin 1992.

29. MICROFORM COLLECTIONS IN THE LIBRARY OF THE JOHN F. KENNEDY-INSTITUT. FREIE UNIVERSITÄT BERLIN. Compiled and edited by Hans Kolligs. Berlin 1992.

30. PERSPECTIVES ON MULTICULTURALISM IN NORTH AMERICA. Lectures from the Ringvorlesung Wintersemester 1990/1991. Ed. by Carol W. Pfaff. Berlin 1992.

31. PROBLEMS OF DEMOCRACY IN THE UNITED STATES. Symposium of the Graduiertenkolleg at the John F. Kennedy-Institut für Nordamerikastudien Freie Universität Berlin on the occasion of its 30th anniversary. With contributions by Christoph Bruch ... Berlin 1993.

32. DIRECTORY OF EUROPEAN HISTORIANS OF NORTH AMERICA. Addresses, Publications, Research in Progress. 3rd rev. ed. Comp. and ed. by Willi Paul Adams and Wolfgang J. Helbich. Berlin 1994.

ERNST FRAENKEL VORTRÄGE ZUR AMERIKANISCHEN POLITIK,

WIRTSCHAFT, GESELLSCHAFT UND GESCHICHTE

1. LIPSET, Seymour Martin : Neoconservatism: Myth and Reality. STEINFELS, Peter, The Short Happy Life of Neoconservatism. Berlin 1988.

2. SCHNEIDER, William: The political legacy of the Reagan years. Berlin 1988.

3. NEUSTADT, Richard E.: American Presidential Transitions: Constitutional Requirements and Policy Risks. -
POLSBY, Nelson W.: The American Election of 1988: Outcome, Process, and Aftermath. Berlin 1989.

4. **BALDWIN, Robert E.: Recent U.S. Trade Policy at the Multilateral and Bilateral Levels.-**
SARGENT, Thomas J.: Interpreting the Reagan Deficits.-DORNBUSCH, Rüdiger: The Economic Decline of the U.S.? The Dollar and the Adjustment Options. Berlin 1990.

5. **FRANKLIN, John Hope: What Europeans Should Understand About African-American History.**
KERBER, Linda K.: Paradoxes of Women's Citizenship in the United States. Berlin 1990.

6. **COLEMAN, James S.: Parents' Rights in Choice of School.SEARS, David O.: Ethnic Conflict and the Politics of Race in the United States. -**
MCCULLOCH, Rachel: The Impact of Foreign Ownership on U.S. Business. - Berlin 1992.

7. **NAU, Henry R.: America's Staying Power - Does Europe Need a Partner?**
SCHLESINGER, Arthur M., Jr.: Reflections on the Multiethnic Society: The American Case. Berlin 1993.

BERLINER BEITRÄGE ZUR AMERIKANISTIK

1. **IREK, Malgorzata: The European Roots of the Harlem Renaissance. Berlin 1994.**

2. **NIROUMAND, Mariam: 'Americanization' of the Holocaust. Berlin 1995.**

WORKING PAPERS *(Geographie/Geschichte/Politik/Soziologie/Wirtschaft)*

1. **HONECK, Jürgen: "Spekulantentum" und Versorgungskrise in Pennsylvanien zu Zeit des amerikanischen Unabhängigkeitskrieges. Berlin 1986. (JFKI, Abt. f. Geschichte)**

2. **HOLTFRERICH, Carl-Ludwig: U.S. economic (policy) development and world trade during the interwar period compared to the last twenty years. Berlin, 1986. (JFKI, Abt. f. Wirtschaft)**

3. **MEDICK-KRAKAU, Monika: Administration und Kongreß in der amerikanischen Außenpolitik der Ära Eisenhower: Die Beispiele Außenhandelspolitik und Allianzpolitik. Berlin 1986. (JFKI, Abt. f. Politik)**

4. **SCHERRER, Christoph: The U.S. autoindustry: Can it adapt to global competition? Berlin 1986. (JFKI, Abt. f. Politik)**

5. **GWIAZDA, Adam: American-European relations with the Comecon countries in the 1980's. Berlin 1986. (JFKI, Abt. f. Wirtschaft)**

6. **HOLTFRERICH, Carl-Ludwig: The Roosevelts and foreign trade: Foreign economic policies under Theodore and Franklin Roosevelt. Berlin 1986. (JFKI, Abt. f. Wirtschaft)**

7. SCHERRER, Christoph: Mini-Mills - A new growth path for the U.S. steel industry? Berlin 1987. (JFKI, Abt. f. Politik)

8. JANKOVIC, Novak: The relevance of post-Keynesian economic theory for socialist economies. Berlin 1987. (JFKI, Abt. f. Wirtschaft)

9. HOLTFRERICH, Carl-Ludwig und SCHÖTZ, Hans Otto: Vom Weltgläubiger zum Weltschuldner: Erklärungssätze zur historischen Entwicklung und Struktur der internationalen Vermögensposition der USA. Berlin 1987. (JFKI, Abt. f. Wirtschaft)

10. MITUSCH, Kay: Die USA in der Weltwirtschaft 1919-1987. Berlin 1987. (JFKI, Abt. f. Wirtschaft)

11. GÖRISCH, Stephan: Träume von Besitz, Arbeit und Unabhängigkeit. Die Vereinigten Staaten im Spiegel deutscher Informationsschriften für Auswanderer im 19. Jahrhundert. Berlin 1988. (JFKI, Abt. f. Geschichte)

12. HAAS, Jan: Ziele und Ergebnisse der Sozialpolitik in der Ära Reagan. Berlin 1988. (JFKI, Abt. f. Wirtschaft)

13. KRAKAU, Knud: Der Supreme Court: Seine Funktion und Problematik im gewaltenteilenden demokratischen Staat. Berlin 1988. (JFKI, Abt. f. Geschichte)

14. ADAMS, Willi Paul: Föderalismus: Die Verteilung staatlicher Aufgaben zwischen Bundesregierung, Einzelstaaten und Kommunen. Berlin 1988. (JFKI, Abt. f. Geschichte)

15. ADAMS, Willi Paul: Die Geschichte Nordamerikas und Berliner Historiker. Berlin 1988. (JFKI, Abt. f. Geschichte)

16. CONZEN, Kathleen Neils: German-Americans and ethnic political culture: Stearns County, Minnesota, 1855-1915. Berlin 1989. (JFKI, Abt. f. Geschichte)

17. GOLDBERG, Bettina: The German language in Milwaukee's grade schools, 1850-1920: The case of the catholic schools. Berlin 1989. (JFKI, Abt. f. Geschichte)

18. BEYFUSS, Jörg: Wettbewerbsverhältnisse zwischen der Bundesrepublik Deutschland, den USA und Japan. Berlin 1989. (JFKI, Abt. f. Wirtschaft)

19. HOLTFRERICH, Carl-Ludwig: The Grown-up in Infant's Clothing. The U.S. Protectionist Relapse in the Interwar Period. Berlin 1989. (JFKI, Abt. f. Wirtschaft)

20. ADAMS, Willi Paul: Amerikanischer Nationalismus, ethnische Vielfalt und die Deutschamerikaner. Berlin 1989. (JFKI, Abt. f. Geschichte)

21. HOLTFRERICH, Carl-Ludwig: Reaganomics und Weltwirtschaft. Berlin 1990. (JFKI, Abt. f. Wirtschaft)

22. VON SENGER UND ETTERLIN, Stefan: Das Foto als historische Quelle: Versuch einer methodologischen Annäherung. Berlin 1990. (JFKI, Abt. f. Geschichte)

23. VON SENGER UND ETTERLIN, Stefan: Emigration and Settlement Patterns of German Communities in North America. Berlin 1990. (JFKI, Abt. f. Geschichte)

24. **ADAMS, Willi Paul: Ethnic Politicians and American Nationalism during the First World War: Four German-born Members of the U.S. House of Representatives. Berlin 1990. (JFKI, Abt. f. Geschichte)**

25. **GEHRING, Uwe W., Comp.: The 1988 U.S. Elections. A Collection of State Date. Berlin 1990. (JFKI, Abt. f. Politik)**

26. **GOLDBERG, Bettina: "Our Fathers' Faith, our Children's Language". Cultural Change in Milwaukee's German Evangelical Lutheran Parishes of the Missouri Synod, 1850-1930. Berlin 1990. (JFKI, Abt. f. Geschichte)**

27. **DANOWSKI, Anne: Die "Caribbean Basin Initiative" - ein Entwicklungsprogramm? Berlin 1990. (JFKI, Abt. f. Wirtschaft)**

30. **SCHÜLER, Anja: Die "Feminine Mystique" der 1920er Jahre: Zur Berufstätigkeit amerikanischer Frauen zwischen Weltkrieg und Weltwirtschaftskrise. Berlin 1990. (JFKI, Abt. f. Geschichte)**

33. **KRAKAU, Knud: Reflections on the Future of NATO. Berlin 1991. (JFKI, Abt. f. Geschichte)**

34. **HOLTFRERICH, Carl-Ludwig: Die USA: Agrarwirtschaft, Industrialisierung, wirtschaftliche Weltmacht. Berlin 1991. (JFKI, Abt. f. Wirtschaft)**

35. **ASKOLDOVA, Svetlana: The American Enlightenment and the Problem of Education. Berlin 1991. (JFKI, Abt. f. Geschichte)**

38. **FERTIG, Georg: Migration from the German-speaking parts of Central Europe, 1600-1800: Estimates and Explanations. Berlin 1991. (JFKI, Abt. f. Geschichte)**

41. **HOLTFRERICH, Carl-Ludwig: International Economic Relations of the U.S. and Their Impact on Economy, State, and Society to 1860. Berlin 1991. (JFKI, Abt. f. Wirtschaft)**

46. **KRAKAU, Knud: Die Entwicklung der politischen Hegemonie über Europa seit dem Ersten Weltkrieg. Berlin 1992. (JFKI, Abt. f. Geschichte)**

47. **AmerikanistInnen zum Golfkrieg. Berlin 1992. (JFKI, Abt. f. Politik)**

49. **SCHERRER, Christoph: The U.S. Foreign Policy Establishment and the Transformation of Europe. Berlin 1992. (JFKI, Abt. f. Politik)**

52. **HOLTFRERICH, Carl-Ludwig: Erklärungsansätze zum Rückgang der Sparquote der privaten Haushalte in den USA während der 1980er Jahre. Berlin 1992. (JFKI, Abt. f. Wirtschaft)**

54. **MISSION, MYTH, RHETORIC, AND POLITICS IN AMERICAN HISTORY. Gustav H. Blanke und Knud Krakau. Berlin 1992. (JFKI, Abt. f. Geschichte)**

55. **HIGHAM, John: Multiculturalism in Disarray. Johns Hopkins University, Department of History, Baltimore, MD, 1992. (JFKI, Abt. f. Geschichte)**

59. **WESTBROOK, Robert B.: Pragmatism Old and New. Department of History, University of Rochester, Rochester, New York, 1992. (JFKI, Abt. f. Soziologie)**

62. NOWAK-LEHMANN D., Felicitas: Die wirtschaftliche Entwicklung der USA seit 1945: Stationen der US-Wirtschaftspolitik. Berlin 1993. (JFKI, Abt. f. Wirtschaft)

65. SCHERRER, Christoph: Freer Trade Elites and Fair Trade Masses - Why Has Public Opinion Mattered so Little? Berlin 1994. (JFKI, Abt. f. Politik)

69. NOWAK-LEHMANN, Felicitas D.: Strategische Handelspolitik und nationale Wohlfahrt: Eine kritische Analyse. Berlin 1994. (JFKI, Abt. f. Wirtschaft)

70. WERNER, Welf: Geschäftserfolg im internationalen Rückversicherungshandel der USA. Eine Auswertung der Dienstleistungsbilanz des *U.S. Department of Commerce*. Berlin 1994. (JFKI, Abt. f. Wirtschaft)

76. GOEZE, Matthias: Großraum Toronto (unter besonderer Berücksichtigung der Bürostandortverlagerung). Berlin 1995. (JFKI, Abt. f. Geographie)

80. HOLTFRERICH, Carl-Ludwig: Brooks Adams and Charles P. Kindleberger. Berlin 1995. (JFKI, Abt. f. Wirtschaft)

82. BAUMANN, Rainer and GREVEN, Thomas: Congress, the President, and U.S. Decisions to Use Military Force. Berlin 1995. (JFKI, Abt. f. Politik)

83. LENZ, Karl: Das ethnische Profil Kanadas und seiner Großstädte im Wandel. Berlin 1995. (JFKI, Abt. f. Geographie)

84. FERTIG, Georg: Does overpopulation explain emigration? The case of 18th century transatlantic migration from the Rhine lands. Berlin 1995. (JFKI, Abt. f. Geschichte)

All publications are available from

John F. Kennedy-Institut
für Nordamerikastudien
der Freien Universität Berlin
Lansstr. 5 - 9
14195 Berlin
Germany

Januar 1996