

History 9702F
Social Theory

(History Department seminar room, Lawson Hall, Wednesday, 9:30-11:30)

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It is difficult to imagine a historian who does not employ theories, at least as the Oxford English Dictionary defines the word: "a scheme or system of ideas or statements held as an explanation or account of a group of facts or phenomena; a hypothesis that has been confirmed or established by observation or experiment, and is propounded or accepted as accounting for the known facts; a statement of what are held to be the general laws, principles, or causes of something known or observed." The Oxford English Dictionary, 2nd ed., vol. XVII (Oxford, 1989), p. 902, Definition 4.a. Virtually every history course focuses, to a considerable degree, on theories. What distinguishes this course is that it will focus on a range of works that theorize historical problems at a higher level of abstraction, and/or more explicitly, than is typical in works of history. One aim is to help students in creating and refining their own research agendas, by suggesting questions, problems, and methods of analysis. Another goal is to promote literacy regarding theories or terms that are often encountered in historical studies, usually without a very detailed explanation of all the implications of the reference.

After considering two very general accounts of the reasons why historians might find a more explicit focus on theory stimulating, by Peter Burke and Reinhart Koselleck, the course turns to selections from the work of Max Weber, one of the founding fathers of the discipline of sociology, and also a historian. Weber wrote in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. He died shortly after the First World War. Weber believed that capitalism and the development of the nation-state had created fundamentally new conditions for mankind, and undertook to characterize the nature of the change that had taken place. Theories of a high order of abstraction are usually a product of an attempt to encompass and characterize long periods of history and/or the experiences of very large numbers of individuals, and Weber's theories certainly were broad in scope. His efforts to describe the differences between modern and traditional societies have proven highly influential. His framework has been both much utilized and much criticized.

We then examine the French Annales School, associated with a journal that began publication in 1929. As described in selections from the early years of the journal Annales d'Histoire Économique et Sociale, and in retrospective examinations by Robert Forster and Lynn Hunt, historians associated with the Annales sought, as had Weber, to understand the fundamental spirit of - generally European - societies over long periods. We will also read excerpts from one of the great works of a leading figure of the Annales, Marc Bloch's Feudal Society, first published in 1939. As had Weber, Bloch attempted to characterize an entire age, in Bloch's case the history of Christian Europe from roughly 900 to 1300, by generalizing about key experiences and mentalities. We will analyze the kinds of evidence Bloch employed, the conclusions he drew, and the ways in which his approach was similar to, or different from, that of Weber.

Neither Weber nor Bloch can be characterized as viewing historical change as bringing, necessarily, progress. The writings of Friedrich Nietzsche and Michel Foucault are even more clearly critiques of modernity. Nietzsche attacked European civilization primarily on the grounds that it produced mediocrity. Foucault argued that what many Europeans viewed as the increasing humanity and respect for the individual displayed by European societies in the nineteenth and (less notably) twentieth centuries was largely a mask for ever more oppressive domination. As did Nietzsche, and also Weber and Bloch, Foucault claimed that certain patterns of feeling, thinking, valuing, in the terminology of the Annales, mentalities, were common to particular eras. This also implied that mentalities were subject to radical change. While Nietzsche emphasized the role of Christian morality in deforming European culture, Foucault argued, with Weber, that it was capitalism that dramatically altered society's responses to a range of aspects of the human condition. In comparison to Weber, however, he focused less on states and institutions and more on opinions and individual practices. Foucault examined evidence that neither Weber nor Bloch, nor, for that matter, Nietzsche, made central to their works: conceptions of and responses to madness, criminality, and sexuality. We will read excerpts from two of Foucault's major works, Madness and Civilization, his first major study, published in 1961, and The History of Sexuality, on which he was working when he died in 1984. We will also read a series of analyses of Foucault's work that suggest why historians and scholars from other disciplines have found Foucault's work stimulating as well as problematic.

The next section of the course focuses on the work of French sociologist and anthropologist Pierre Bourdieu. Bourdieu's book Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste, from which we will read selections, was published in 1979. The work analyzed the relationship between class, taste, and personality, or what Bourdieu termed habitus. Class is a fundamental category of historical analysis of modern society, and often even of societies that are not modern. Bourdieu developed a sophisticated interpretation of the ways in which class molds tastes and the personality, and in this way influences life choices and chances. Bourdieu was critical of class distinctions, but appeared to believe them an inherent part of modern society. His

purpose was to unmask and delegitimize them. While Bourdieu's theories are most applicable to France, and perhaps within France especially to Paris, of the 1960s and 1970s, his approach clearly has applications in many different times and places. Historians stimulated by Bourdieu have investigated how tastes in food, sports, music, and clothes can be used to explain mentalities and class relations, and also operate - in different ways in different societies - to perpetuate social and economic positions and boundaries.

Among the avenues of inquiry that have cast the most light on the past condition of humankind over the past several decades have been those conducted under the rubric of women's or gender history; the terminology, and the meaning of the terms, has varied significantly among historians. We examine the writings of several of the most interesting and influential historians working in these fields, including Joan Scott, Olwen Hufton, and Isabel Hull. We will compare their approaches, and ask how their questions and methods relate to, and perhaps modify, central claims of writers read earlier in the semester.

Theories of nationalism and histories of nations are the subjects of the next two classes. That nationalism is a fundamental aspect of the modern world is an everyday reality of our lives. Much of the world is divided along national lines. States claiming to speak on behalf of nations constantly make demands of various kinds on their citizens and other states. Exactly how nations came into being, what the foundations of the distinctive sense of solidarity that they display or claim to display are, and the ways in which this sense of solidarity has been abused, have been among the most important subjects of historical inquiry since the early nineteenth century. We begin by examining classic accounts of the creation of the German and French nations, and consider what aspects of the national story they highlight or de-emphasize. We then consider selections that emphasize the ways in which national feeling has involved the conscious transformation, rather than (as is often claimed) the realization or liberation, of ancient traditions and loyalties. This section also includes an examination of the work of Ken Burns, one of the most influential historians currently alive, an unabashed advocate of (US) American national feeling. We examine critiques of Burns' work and seek to relate his methods and conclusions to those of more traditional academic historians.

The final class of the seminar focuses on the works of theorists and historians of colonialism, gender, and race. The assigned texts by Gayatri Spivak and Radkhika Mohanram argue that the experience of colonization, in India and elsewhere, cannot be understood using the categories developed and questions posed in canonic works of social theory derived primarily from the historical experience of Western Europe. This claim applies even to the works of those considered critics of dominant Western institutions and ideologies. For example, Spivak writes that while Foucault's interpretation suggests the insignificance of centrally produced ideologies, she believes these ideologies played a critical role in the history of imperialism and colonization. Mahanram argues that Foucault also ignores the central significance of race to the

historical experience of much of the world.

Students will be required to write an analysis of seven to eight pages in length based either on the selections from the work of Pierre Bourdieu or on three of the assigned readings on the development of nationalism. These essays will be due in class before the first discussion of the books in question. Students who write on Bourdieu should focus on the following question: In what ways does the habitus, as described by Bourdieu, reflect and perpetuate class status? Students who write on nationalism should answer the following question: What are the most important similarities and differences between the appeal and nature of nationalism as described in the assigned texts by Nipperdey, Eugen Weber, and Hobsbawm?

The grade on the book analyses will be given a weight of 20% of the class grade. Late essays will not be accepted. Students who fail to turn in either essay by the date the second essay is due will be assigned a different subject, and a penalty of 10% of the essay will be imposed on the second essay. Both the Bourdieu and the nationalism essays must be based on a reading of all the assigned materials by these authors, and not just on the pages (in the case of Bourdieu) or texts (in the case of the nationalism essay) assigned for the first week in which the subject is discussed.

Students will also be required to write a final essay of approximately 15 pages in length. These essays are due in Eli Nathans' mailbox in the History Department by 4:00 pm on Thursday, December 8. Copies should also be sent to him as attachments in Word by the end of the day on December 8. Essays that are late will be penalized two points, on a hundred point scale, for every day the essay is late, the imposition of penalties starting at 4:00 pm on Thursday, December 8. Students are encouraged to select a historical question that reflects the questions and modes of analysis suggested by one or more of the thinkers discussed in the course, and develop their own theoretically informed analyses on this basis. Students who choose to select their own topic must email the instructor no later than Wednesday, November 2, outlining the question they propose to pursue and the sources they plan to use to answer it. Students must receive the approval of the instructor for the question and topics chosen. Students will not receive credit for an essay on a question that the instructor has not approved. The instructor will also suggest possible questions, and texts, for the final essay.

The final essay will be given a weight of 40% of the grade for the course.

40% of the course grade will be based on class participation in the classes for which texts have been assigned. Grading will be based primarily on the quality rather than the quantity of participation. The instructor is looking primarily for succinct comments that reflect a close and thoughtful reading of the assigned texts. To give all students who wish to participate a chance to do so, students are requested to ask to be recognized before speaking. Students who have not previously contributed to

discussion on the day in question will generally be given priority over students who have already spoken on that day, except when there is an ongoing series of comments, or a need to clarify earlier comments.

Students will also be given the opportunity to turn in response papers of 3-4 pages that sketch answers to the questions posed with respect to the assigned readings for each class. Students need not answer every question, but should select a sample that demonstrates reflection regarding each of the assigned texts. Half of the participation grade for that day's class be based on the grade assigned to the response paper for students who choose to hand in a response paper. Students may choose to exercise this option for individual classes; there is no need to turn in a response paper for every class in order to take advantage of this option. Response papers must be received by the start of class on the day the relevant discussion takes place to receive credit. Students who write an analysis of Bourdieu's work are not permitted to submit response papers for the two classes in which the Bourdieu reading will be discussed. Students who write an analyses of the nationalism books are not permitted to submit response papers for the classes in which the works of these three authors will be discussed.

There will be no mid-term or final examinations.

Scholastic offenses are taken seriously and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitutes a Scholastic Offence, at the following Web site:

http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/handbook/appeals/scholastic_discipline_grad.pdf

The syllabus may be adjusted as the course proceeds. Discussions not completed in one class may be carried over into the following class period.

Coursepack

There is a coursepack for this course that is available for purchase at INPRINT, in the basement of UCC. Please bring the coursepack to class when readings from it are assigned, since we will usually examine the texts in the course of discussions. Materials that are in the coursepack, or in the xeroxed readings handed out in class, are marked in the syllabus with a star.

Assignments

Wednesday, September 14 History and Social Theory

*Peter Burke, History and Social Theory (Cornell University Press; 2005, 2nd ed.), 1-10, 13-19; *Reinhart Koselleck, "Concepts of Historical Time and Social History," in The

Practice of Conceptual History: Timing History, Spacing Concepts, translated by Todd Presner and others (Stanford University Press, 2002), 115-121. How does Burke explain the growing interest in theory among historians? Why is it that he claims that an interest in social history, as opposed to political or intellectual history, tends especially to lead to a need for theory? How does Koselleck explain the utility of a focus on theory? To what extent do you agree with Koselleck's claim that much historical work is based, often implicitly rather than explicitly, on the premise that the history of mankind is fundamentally a story of progress? Assuming that this premise is true, to what kinds of questions does it lead? Do what extent do Burke's and Koselleck's analyses overlap, and to what extent do they differ? To the extent that they differ, which approach do you find more convincing?

Wednesday, September 23 Max Weber

*Wolfgang Mommsen, The Age of Bureaucracy: Perspectives on the Political Sociology of Max Weber (Oxford, 1974), 72-115. *Max Weber, Economy and Society, Vol 1, 24-26, 36-43, 212-231, 241-249, 266-271. Weber begins his work by drawing very general distinctions between the types of social actions, bases for legitimacy, and kinds of conflict and community that are characteristic of modern and traditional societies. The fundamental distinction is between forms that are instrumentally rational and those that are traditional, with actions and forms that Weber terms "value-rational" and "affectual" serving as intermediate variations. What does Weber mean by these different categories? What kinds of arguments are implied by the terminology he employs? Why does he claim that "the purely bureaucratic type of administrative organization . . . is, from a purely technical point of view, capable of attaining the highest degree of efficiency and is in this sense formally the most rational known means of exercising authority over human beings?" (p. 223) How do bureaucratic models transform the lives of those living in modern societies? What, according to Weber, are the principal characteristics of traditional authorities, and in what ways do they differ from "the purely bureaucratic type of organization"? What is the basis of the legitimacy of charismatic domination? In what ways does charismatic authority threaten other forms of authority? In what ways can charismatic domination be reconciled, to some degree, with modern bureaucratic organizations?

Wednesday, September 30 The Annales

*Selections from the first two years of Annales d'Histoire Économique et Sociale (1929 and 1930), including statements of purpose and indices of articles. Marc Bloch, Feudal Society, vol. 1, The Growth of Ties of Dependence, translated by L.A. Manyon (University of Chicago, 1961) pp. 3, 15-19, 39-42, 57-87, 121-156, 219-230; *Fernand Braudel, The Mediterranean World in the Age of Philippe II (preface, table of contents, and conclusion); *Robert Forster, "Achievements of the Annales School," The Journal

of Economic History 38 (March 1978): pp. 58-76; *Lynn Hunt, "French History in the Last Twenty Years: The Rise and Fall of the Annales Paradigm," Journal of Contemporary History 21 (1986): pp. 209-224

Please note that Weldon and the affiliated college libraries have multiple copies of Bloch's Feudal Society.

The Forster and Hunt essays can be accessed on-line, at Western, at <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2119315?&Search=yes&term=%22Achievements+of+the+Annales+School%22&list=hide&searchUri=%2Faction%2FdoBasicSearch%3FQuery%3D%2522Achievements%2Bof%2Bthe%2BAnnales%2BSchool%2522%26dc%3DHistory&item=1&ttl=22&returnArticleService=showArticle>

and

<http://www.jstor.org/stable/260364?&Search=yes&term=%22French+History+in+the+last+twenty+years%22&list=hide&searchUri=%2Faction%2FdoBasicSearch%3FQuery%3D%2522French%2BHistory%2Bin%2Bthe%2Blast%2Btwenty%2Byears%2522%26dc%3DHistory&item=1&ttl=14&returnArticleService=showArticle>

What were the goals of the journal Annales when it was founded? On what kinds of themes, on what types of evidence, on what time periods and places, did it focus?

What are the key characteristics of feudal society, according to Bloch's analysis? What links does he draw between political and economic structures, forms of families, and what one can call mentalities, ways of viewing the world, the emotional texture of life? How does Bloch account for particular features of feudalism? What is the relationship of the reader to Bloch's historical account: what is that Bloch's form of history teaches? Does the period he describes seem entirely foreign, or is the reader supposed to feel a close connection to it, to learn lessons that might apply to his own life and society? To what extent do the excerpts from Max Weber's work on feudalism focus on similar or different questions? How does the different form of each work affect the questions each writer asks and the conclusions that he draws?

To what extent does Braudel's introduction to his work on the Mediterranean world in the 16th century follow, and to what extent does it differ from, the original emphases of the journal and from Bloch's work? Why is Braudel seemingly so contemptuous of politics?

What, according to Forster and Hunt, are the main achievements and weaknesses of the Annales approach to history?

Wednesday, October 5

Friedrich Nietzsche

*Friedrich Nietzsche, The Genealogy of Morals, 7-13, 18-47, 53-58, 61-82, 99-118. How does Nietzsche characterize modern society? What aristocratic virtues or values does it lack, in his account? Why has it become so mediocre, grey, petty, and low, in his view? What is the difference between what Nietzsche terms "aristocratic morality" and what he terms "slave morality"? (p. 34) Why does he consider "slave morality" fundamentally a product of "the vindictive hatred and revengefulness of the weak"? (p. 35) Why does he claim that "slave morality" leads to the "decline of humanity"? (p. 42) How does Nietzsche explain the development of guilt and bad conscience, which he thinks characteristic of modern societies? Note that there are alternative explanations: one focuses on the role of the group Nietzsche calls priests, another on the defensive response to domination of most of society, and a third on the internal, psychological consequences of domination. Why does Nietzsche adopt the posture of a historian in analyzing contemporary cultural problems? What does Nietzsche propose?

Wednesday, October 12

Michel Foucault

*Michel Foucault, Madness and Civilization: A History of Insanity in the Age of Reason, translated by Richard Howard (Vintage Books, 1988), ix-xii, 241-278; *Michel Foucault, History of Sexuality, vol. 1: An Introduction, translated by Robert Hurley (Random House, 1978), pp. 3-26.

*M.D, Cranston, "Michel Foucault," Encounter (June 1968), pp. 34-42; *Lawrence Stone, The past and the present revisited (Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1987); *Clifford Geertz, "Stir Crazy," New York Review of Books (26 January 1978), pp. 3-6; *Michael Walzer, "The Politics of Michel Foucault," in David Couzens Hoy, Foucault: A Critical Reader (Blackwell, 1986), pp. 51-68.

What are the chief characteristics of western society before 1800 that interest Foucault? What changes around 1800? Why is the modern era characterized by a decline in the freedom of the individual, rather than an increase, as has often been argued, according to Foucault? In what ways does his study of the history of sexuality follow the argument begun in his work on madness, and to what extent does it modify Foucault's claims? What role is played by the state, or more generally by politics, in the process Foucault describes? What does Foucault owe to Nietzsche? What are the most significant differences between their accounts? Consider the nature of the maladies each finds in modern societies, and to what each author attributes them. To what extent is Foucault arguably more democratic and even liberal than Nietzsche? To what extent is the distinction between modern and early modern Europe found in Foucault similar to, or different from, that found in the writings of Max Weber? To what extent does Foucault's critique of modernity differ from, or coincide with, that of Weber? On what grounds has Foucault been criticized by other scholars? Do you agree with

Michael Walzer that Foucault is fundamentally an anarchist? Explain why you do or do not find the critiques persuasive. Do you think historians have anything to learn from Foucault?

Wednesday, October 19

Pierre Bourdieu

*Pierre Bourdieu, Language and Symbolic Power (Harvard University Press, 1991), 12-31 (introduction by John B. Thompson); *Pierre Bourdieu, Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste (Harvard University Press, 1996), 99-115. *New York Times article on class. In what ways, according to Bourdieu, does class background mold personality or disposition, what Bourdieu terms the habitus? How do distinct tastes both reflect and perpetuate class-linked habituses? Why are habitus and tastes critical to the maintenance of class barriers and privileges, according to Bourdieu?

Wednesday, October 26

Bourdieu (continued)

*Pierre Bourdieu, Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste (Harvard University Press, 1996), 126-131, 142-143, 169-219. What are the different forms taken by capital, in Bourdieu's account? How does one form of capital become transformed into another? How does Bourdieu explain what he sees as class-based differences in tastes for food, clothing, and sports? How does he relate these different tastes, in turn, to different ideals of the body and to class-based conceptions of gender-roles? How convincing do you find Bourdieu's depiction? What kinds of historical research might Bourdieu's analysis stimulate?

Wednesday, November 2

Gender and History

Olwen Hufton, "Women in History: Early Modern Europe," Past & Present 101 (November 1983) 125-41; Joan Wallach Scott, "Women in History: Early Modern Europe," Past & Present 101 (November 1983) 141-57; *Joan Wallach Scott, "Gender: A Useful Category of Analysis," in Feminism and History (Oxford University Press, 1996) 152-80; Cécile Dauphin et al, "Women's Culture and Women's Power: Issues in French Women's History," Journal of Women's History 1 (Spring 1989); Gail Hershatter and Wang Zheng, "Chinese History: A Useful Category of Gender Analysis," American Historical Review 113 (December 2008) 1404-21; Joanne Meyerowitz, "A History of Gender," American Historical Review 113 (December 2008) 1346-56.

The article by Olwen Hufton can be accessed through the Weldon library catalogue at: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/pdfplus/650672.pdf?acceptTC=true>

The article by Joan Scott in Past and Present can be accessed through the Weldon library catalogue at: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/650673>

The article from the Journal of Women's History can be accessed through the Weldon library catalogue at:
<http://pao.chadwyck.co.uk/PDF/1251913223754.pdf>

The American Historical Review articles can be accessed through the Weldon library at:
<http://www.journals.uchicago.edu/doi/pdf/10.1086/ahr.113.5.1346>
and
<http://www.journals.uchicago.edu/doi/pdf/10.1086/ahr.113.5.1404>

How do Hufton and Scott characterize the state of women's history in the paired articles published in Past and Present in 1983? What were the most significant emphases of the field, and where does each see room for further work? Scott's article "Gender: A Useful Category of Analysis," first published in 1986, critiqued problems, as Scott saw them, with prevailing modes of women's history and proposed new directions for the field. What were the principal forms taken by women's history in the 1970s and early 1980s, according to Scott, and what does she find problematic in each? What alternatives does she suggest? In what respects was the analysis of and agenda for women's history proposed by Scott similar to, or different from, that of the group of French historians of women's history who wrote the article published by the Journal of Women's History? (Note that the article by the group of French historians of women's history first appeared in the spring of 1986, before the publication of Scott's essay.) The December 2008 issue of the American Historical Review contained several articles that examined the influence and larger context of Scott's article on several different historical fields. I have assigned two of the six articles. According to these articles, how did Scott's piece influence subsequent scholarship? To what extent has scholarship taken directions that Scott did not envision?

Wednesday, November 9

Olwen Hufton and Isabel Hull

We examine excerpts from two significant historical studies undertaken in the field of women's and gender history in the 1990s: Olwen Hufton, The Prospect Before Her: A History of Women in Western Europe 1500-1800 (Vintage, 1998), 3-61, 102-11, 137-220; and Isabel Hull, Sexuality, State, and Civil Society in Germany, 1700-1815 (Cornell, 1996), 1-7, 107-53, 349-59, 407-11.

What were the most significant forces that shaped women's lives in the early modern era, according to Hufton? How significant was the role played by religious and patriarchal ideologies and beliefs? To what extent did physical differences between men and women influence women's life choices and chances? How important was class or estate, and the economic and social circumstances of the period? What

differences were there in the forms of parental control exercised over women in this period, in the degree of choice women had in the selection of a husband, or in whether they had to select a husband, and in the relationship between husband and wife?

Hull argues that the relationship between state and society in early modern Germany can be understood through the changing forms taken by regulation of sexual practices. In what ways, and to what ends, did states in 18th century Germany seek to regulate sexual conduct? Why was there a relaxation in the regulation of sexuality, according to Hull, in the course of the 18th century? How did this relaxation promote the development of a new form of civil society? To what extent does Hull's argument fit the model developed by Foucault? In what respects is Hull's emphasis different from that of Foucault? Consider, for example, the significance of legislation in Hull's account.

Wednesday, November 16 The genesis of national feeling: conflicting narratives

*Thomas Nipperdey, Germany from Napoleon to Bismarck 1800-1866, translated by Daniel Nolan (Princeton University Press, 1996), pp. 1-54. Nipperdey's study is one of the most widely read histories of Germany written in the post-1945 era. It is in large part a paean to and defense of the (German) nation. In the assigned segment, Nipperdey provides a range of rationales for the creation of a German state through the leadership of Prussia. Although the accomplishment of this aim is not realized until the next volume of the series, the very dates of the assigned book, the first in a series of three, make clear that this is a story of national death and resurrection, a movement from national humiliation to triumph, from division to unity. Why is it that the conquest of the German states by Napoleon made the creation of a German state seem highly desirable, according to Nipperdey? What are the most important bases of national solidarity suggested by this part of his history of Germany? In what parts of Nipperdey's narrative does outside pressure from France and Napoleon play a dominant role? In what parts of the narrative does France recede in importance? How does this aspect of the narrative affect the conclusions it implies? How does beginning the story in 1800 affect the national narrative? Why does Prussia appear, in Nipperdey's account, as the natural leader of the future Germany?

Eugen Weber, Peasants into Frenchmen: The Modernization of Rural France, 1870-1914 (Stanford University Press, 1976), pp. 67-114, 195-210, 241-277, 292-338, 452-496. How does Weber explain the spread of French national feeling? To what extent is it a product of "modernization"? What role is played by the state and its institutions, and what role is played by economic and cultural forces? How does Weber's version of French history differ from Nipperdey's version of the genesis of Germany? To what extent is each kind of account convincing, and to what extent open to question?

Weber's book is available online through the web, through Weldon, at:

<http://alpha.lib.uwo.ca/search~S20?/tpeasants+into+frenchmen/tpeasants+into+french>

[men/1%2C1%2C5%2CB/frameset&FF=tp easants+into+frenchmen+the+modernization+of+rural+france+1870+1914&5%2C%2C5](#)

Wednesday, November 25

The invention of traditions and the production of memories

*Eric Hobsbawm, "Mass-Producing Traditions: Europe, 1870-1914," in The Invention of Tradition, Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger, eds. (Cambridge University Press, 1983), 263-283. On what grounds does Hobsbawm claim that the development of national feeling, especially in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, was largely a product of invention? Who is engaging in the invention, in Hobsbawm's account, and to what ends? How did the emphases of invented traditions differ among France, Germany, and the United States, according to Hobsbawm, and how does he account for these differences? To what extent is Hobsbawm's account compatible with the assigned excerpts from Nipperdey and Eugen Weber? In what ways does it suggest different emphases? To what extent can one draw connections between the account of modernity found in Hobsbawm and the analyses of Max Weber and Foucault?

*Michel Vovelle, "La Marseillaise: War or Peace," in Realms of Memory: The Construction of the French Past, Vol. III, Symbols, edited by Pierre Nora, translated by Arthur Goldhammer (New York, Columbia University Press: 1998), pp. 29-74. Hobsbawm claims that "by deliberately annexing the revolutionary tradition, the [bourgeois] Third Republic either domesticated social revolutionaries (like most socialists) or isolated them (like the anarcho-syndicalists). . . . [T]he basic fact was that those who controlled the imagery, the symbolism, the traditions of the Republic were the men of the centre masquerading as men of the extreme left" (p. 270) To what extent does Vovelle's history of the Marseillaise support this claim? To what extent might it call such claims into question? More generally, what light does the history of the Marseillaise cast on the development of French national feeling? What can the study of such cultural and political artifacts add to more conventional political histories?

Wednesday, November 30

Ken Burns' Version of Nationalism

*Ken Burns, "Four O'Clock in the Morning Courage," in Robert Toplin, Ken Burns's The Civil War: Historians Respond (Oxford, 1996), 153-183; *David Blight, "Homer with a Camera, Our Iliad Without the Aftermath: Ken Burns' Dialogue with Historians," in Beyond the Battlefield: Race, Memory & the American Civil War (University of Massachusetts Press; 2002), 211-220; *David Blight, Race and Reunion: The Civil War in American Memory (Harvard, 2001), 1-5; David Harlan, "Ken Burns and the Coming Crisis of Academic History," Rethinking History 7:2 (2003); pp. 169-192. Ken Burns is the most important maker of historical films now active in the United States, in terms of

audience size and the scope of his work. He created one the most widely viewed historical film series ever made, on the American Civil War, as well as films on the history of jazz, baseball, the Statue of Liberty, and the ways in which citizens of the United States experienced the Second World War. Harlan writes that Burns' films are designed to promote a certain kind of national memory, an "affirmation" of a deep sense of solidarity. (p. 172) The films create a sense of national solidarity not by ignoring the cruelty and injustice that are part of the national past, but by leading viewers to identify with historical figures - often obscure ones - and to experience injustice from the points of view of both perpetrator and victim, as well as from a range of other points of view as well. The effect is a kind of national catharsis, the building up and relief of emotional tension that purges hatred and resentment and leaves the viewer with a deep sense of identification with all those who are the subjects of the films. Burns' approach to history is both extraordinarily popular and also, among academic historians, controversial. How does Burns justify his approach? On what grounds does Blight criticize it? In what ways do Burns' films illustrate what Hobsbawm terms the invention of traditions? Does the invention of tradition occur in the same manner, and serve the same ends, as described by Hobsbawm? To what extent is Burns engaged in a historical project that is little different from what we found in Nipperdey's account of the history of Germany? What is different? To what extent is Burns' approach analytic? Should historians seek to create catharsis?

David Harlan's article is available on-line at
http://pdfserve.informaworld.com/535239_770885140_713779882.pdf

Wednesday, December 7 Colonialism, Race, and Gender

*Gayatri Spivak, The Spivak Reader, edited by Donna Landry and Gerald MacLean (Routledge, 1996), 1-7 (Introduction); *Gayatri Spivak, "Can the Subaltern Speak?," in Cary Nelson and Lawrence, Marxism and the Interpretation of Culture (Macmillan, 1988), 271-5, 289-91, 297-308; *Radhika Mohanram, Imperial White. Race, Diaspora and the British Empire (University of Minnesota Press, 2007), xi-xvii, 57-61, 70-7.

On what grounds does Spivak critique Foucault? Do you agree with her that Foucault's attack on liberalism "systematically ignore[s] the question of ideology and and [his] own implication in intellectual and economic history"? (272, and similarly at 274) Spivak writes that Foucault "[aligns himself] with bourgeois sociologists who fill the place of ideology with a continuous 'unconscious' or a parasubjective 'culture'"? (274) Do you agree? What does Spivak mean by the claim that "in the name of desire, [Foucault reintroduces] the individual subject into the discourse of power," and why does this present a problem? (274) In what sense does Foucault's philosophy "[render] Asia transparent"? (272) Why do "the clinic, the asylum, the prison, the university, seem screen-allegories that foreclose a reading of the broader narratives of imperialism"? (p.

291) To what extent does Spivak restate Walzer's critique of Foucault, and to what extent does she go beyond it?

What is Spivak's goal in examining widow suicide? In what ways is her account a critique of European, and in particular British, interpretations (and condemnations) of the practice of widow suicide? Is she suggesting that her analysis helps us understand the state of mind of the subalterns on whom she focuses?

How might one explain the opacity of Spivak's style of writing? Why is it on Foucault in particular that she focuses so much of her critique?

Why does Mohanram claim in the introduction to Imperial White that "whiteness studies" are characterized by "the complete silencing and writing out of the racialized Other"? (p. xv) Why does she argue that Foucault's treatment of sexuality in non-Western societies "occludes the centrality of racial difference from the very production of his reading of Western desire"? (73)