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HISTORY 291-03W
DU 124—M: 2:45–5:15
writing intensive

history & the social sciences

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The purpose of this course is (1) to explore methods and styles in the *writing* of history; (2) to show that the enterprise of writing history creates new concepts and horizons of thought; (3) to analyze the complex relationships between history and the social sciences, in particular anthropology and sociology; (4) to investigate how philosophical themes such as the subject/individual, the public and the private, reason and madness, etc., could be problematized within a historical perspective (see the works of Foucault, Elias, and Habermas); (5) to study the establishment of “social history” as the dominant genre in academia today; particularly the impact of the *Annales* on twentieth-century historiography and the transfer of the narrative from the political to the social; (6) an analysis of the shortcomings of the *Annales*: if “social history” as a “total history” is in crisis, what are the new emerging approaches?; (7) an exploration of some new ways in writing history: “textual” history as a way of exploring “documents” as totalities from the viewpoint of the actors who have created them; anthropological history which focuses on micro levels of the social and creates totalities out of the microscopic; the awareness that there are several historical becomings (particularly in so-called Third World histories) despite the overwhelming dominance of the Western-capitalistic-liberal system which serves as a model of progress, individualism, democracy and the rule of law, and the successes of science and technology (the Western model de facto imposes itself on the enterprise of writing history, even Third World history: it is near to impossible, from a non-Western perspective, not to question the history of the West as a civilization); (8) What is the historiographical status of non-Western societies and civilizations? Are their social and political structures “obsolete”? What can we learn from them in terms of writing and thinking history?

What has thus far been referred to on many occasions as the “crisis of the *Annales*” is nothing more than the difficulty to conceive “social history” as a “total history.” What has become problematic in modern historiography is the “unit of analysis” itself. Perhaps the shift is best illustrated in the work of Emmanuel Le Roy Ladurie,

who, under the supervision of Braudel, did his first work on the peasants of the Languedoc. His then bestselling book, *Montaillou, village occitan de 1294 à 1324*, clearly shows the shift in the unit of analysis: in Montaillou, the “village” becomes the unit of analysis, that is, what gives the historian the possibility to explore a totality in itself, while Ladorie’s earlier work on the Languedoc followed Braudel’s footsteps in focusing on large units of analysis. Like the anthropologist—and Ladorie’s initial training was in ethnology—who sees totalities in the smallest of all objects, the “village” is what opens the historian towards an understanding of broader units of analysis—and society-as-a-whole.

In short, this course is about the enterprise of *thinking history*, and the rejection of the notion that history is primarily descriptive and factual. Two problems (at least) need to be addressed within the context of this course and from the sample of readings we have at our disposal:

(i) Historians do *use* “texts” as a *source* for their data, but they rarely question them *critically*, that is, first, and above all, *as texts*. The “data” that a historian usually pulls out of a document belongs to the textual nature of this document, which, in turn, has an institutional and ideological context which made its drafting possible. For example, a police record from nineteenth-century Paris could provide us important information on beggars, criminals, prostitutes, political activists, and other categories of the social. But this is only an aspect of police records. What should be done is the contextualization of these “data” into the institution of the police, that is, how such an institution “thinks” and relates to individuals and groups (Foucault’s notions of “discipline” and “surveillance” could be quite enlightening). The same could be said about other types of documents commonly used by historians: such as court records, psychiatric and medical records, newspapers and journals. Foucault’s distinction between discursive and non-discursive practices could be helpful in bringing to historical analysis levels usually left out as too fragmented or visual: bringing architectural, disciplinary, kinship practices to the level of “thought” (or the “unthought”).

(ii) One should meditate on and question the difficulty of the *Annales* in creating a historiography of the “modern,” that is, for anything which is post-French Revolution. Thus while the *Annales* did well for the medieval period (with Bloch, Duby, and Le Goff) and the early or pre-modern (Febvre, Ladorie, Braudel), it does less well for the nineteenth and twentieth centuries in particular. For the latter, historiographical research weakens in favor of sociologists, philosophers, and other intellectuals: Foucault, Elias, Thompson, Habermas and the Frankfurt School, Bourdieu and his sociology, while many others are the apostles of the modern and post-modern. In short, the *Annales* fails whenever single systems of *representation* in the form of the Monarch, King, or Prince cease to be present. The French Revolution could be considered as the turning point in the European system of political representation: the subject-individual-citizen takes over and becomes the focus—for the state and its institutions. Once the monolithic system of representation breaks up, individuals have to create their own, in the form of parties, newspapers, assemblies, publications and journals. Thompson provides a unique portrait of the English “working class” *making* itself through a process of “class consciousness.”

Problems, Approaches, Objects

The *Annales* literature has transformed the narrative from the overtly political to the social and economic. Thus Braudel worked out, in conjunction with the publication of his

Méditerranée, the three “time strata” of historical analysis—the social and economic being at the bottom, because they are subject to the slowest change—while Ladurie, originally by training an ethnographer, combined in a work like *Montaillou* the ethnographic with the historical. (It should be noted that when Lucien Febvre and Marc Bloch founded the *Annales* in the late 1920s, Marxism provided at that time the general framework for an economic and social history, and what the two Founding Fathers thus secularized Marxism, together with a broadening of the perspectives of the latter so that the category of the “social” went with the *Annales* far beyond the usual class struggle analysis.)

The broad success of the *Annales* did not go without problems, and a recent editorial of the notorious journal celebrating its sixtieth birthday, pointed to lots of difficulties in the current writing of history. What the 1989 editorial of the December issue pointed out to was a general malaise among historians due to the large infiltration of the practices of the social sciences (in particular from literary criticism and cultural anthropology) into historical writing. In short, we are now at a juncture where history seems to be much more borrowing from other disciplines than creating anything by itself. Thus history, always left at the unambitious level of being the “witness of the past,” is now wondering what it could contribute to the rest of the social sciences.

New Approaches

“Social history,” in the way it has been traditionally practiced by the *Annales* school in Europe and by *Past and Present* in the Anglo-Saxon world, implicitly assumed a “totality” to “history” and “society” in the sense that there exists a “reality” “outside” us that we can reconstruct through the medium of language. This “reality” is something like a “continuum” in space and time. Different historical periods not only succeed each other in time in a linear fashion, but what comes “after” is explained by what comes “before”: this presupposes a continuity and “connection” between periods, and the task of the historian would be to collect an infinite number of an infinitely small number of “facts”—the totality constitutes the “data.”

Historians usually make use of “documents” to collect their data. Thus, police records, court documents, and newspapers, among others, have become common type of documents for European and North American history, and when such documents are available for Third World societies, they have been widely used as well. The organization of such data usually follows the process of fact-finding. In fact, the two steps of collection and organization are closely inter-linked. Historians usually collect their data with—explicitly or implicitly—something in mind as to how to organize it. Furthermore, considering that the act of data-organization could not be thought of independently of the act of *writing*, it turns out that data-collection, its organization, and the act of writing are inseparable from one another. In my view, the main purpose of “textual history” is to question the entire process of collecting data, its organization and writing.

Fact-finding is probably the most vulnerable aspect of traditional “social history,” as it is from the concept of “collecting” that textual and sociological history demarcates itself. In fact, historians tend to isolate the “fact” from the rest of the “document” because the former is seen to have a value in itself independently from the “context” of the “document” that created it. The “fact” is seen as having a value-in-itself because of the implicit belief of an “external reality” that the historian could reconstruct through the artificial medium of language. “Reality,” according to this view, is made up of an infinite number of discrete facts

that are part of a continuum usually referred to as “nature” or “society” (usually “reality” is thought of as a combination of both, “nature” and “society”). The facts in themselves are discrete, disconnected, and without any particular meaning, but when brought together, they could be part of a continuum or series that makes sense. In fact, the series that brings meaning to an otherwise lifeless fact(s) is an artificial reproduction of this other natural series-continuum, that inherent in “reality” itself, i.e. the natural and social worlds. Historians (and some of their fellows in the social sciences) have always presupposed that the natural and social worlds are by definition coherent, and continuous in the sense that events succeeding each other in time and space are somehow naturally related to each other—even though the facts in themselves are discrete entities, at least the way they are perceived at first sight by the mind.

Historical events, institutions, and social structures of the past and present could only be “represented” to historians and social scientists through the medium of language; or, in other words, they are only accessible to us through the “documents” that make their existence possible. It doesn’t make much sense then to speak of a “social reality” “outside” the “documents” since the reconstruction of an objective history is only possible through the documents that make the latter possible. Thus any approach to history is by necessity “textual” since what we usually refer to as the “reality-outside-us” could only be represented through language, in the form of documents, archives, legal codes, the arts and sciences, and daily practices. It is of course perfectly possible and legitimate to posit a “reality” “outside” these socially constructed linguistic realities—a kind of Kantian approach to the world where a “thing-in-itself” is posited as outside the realm of understanding and judgment—but this “reality” is only accessible to us through language.

“Textual history” considers *all texts* as “social constructions” and as “discourses.” Any “document” is a “social construction” for the simple—and obvious—reason that language is socially constructed. In fact, there are, to simplify, at least two levels in any human language. First, and this is the most obvious level, words represent and *denote* objects (“things”) and “ideas.” The accuracy of such representations is usually verified by means of a set of empirical procedures. But the aspect of language that is of interest to us, within the context of the social sciences, is the second one. This level presupposes that texts have meanings that are socially constructed, hence the re-construction of such meanings could only be done by contextualizing every aspect of a particular language within the ideological and institutional frameworks that made this language possible. In other words, language serves more than simply representing and denoting, or, in addition to denoting something it also vehicles social representations. It is usually such social representations, mediated by language, that are of interest to historians and social scientists.

If we accept that texts are socially constructed, then gender, sex, nations and nationalisms, economic and legal systems, are also “social constructions.”

First, the textualist approach puts an end to what has become a common practice to social historians, namely the use of documents as *sources of information and data accumulation*. Social historians, instead of treating documents as “textual totalities,” are more interested in the *data* provided in such sources (“archives”). Thus, for example, a court document from eighteenth-century France on landed properties would provide, in the eyes of social historians, data about land production and tenure, and family land-holdings. Textual history, by contrast, would consider first the logic of such documents: With what logic (rationale) were they written? For what purpose? To what institution(s) do they belong (judicial, legal, artistic, or scientific)?

References

The underlying concepts of “textual history” would not have been possible without various post-modernists in literary criticism and philosophy, in particular the works of Derrida and Foucault. This led in the early 1980s to a textualism in cultural anthropology (for an overview, see Marcus and Fischer, *Anthropology as Cultural Critique*, Chicago University Press; and James Clifford, *Writing Culture*, Harvard University Press). Clifford Geertz’s *Interpretation of Cultures* was also decisive for the notion of *linguistic turn*.

It was only recently that such notions, borrowed from literary criticism and cultural anthropology, have showed up in historical research. At the origin of the debate was an article by Gabrielle M. Spiegel, “History, Historicism, and the Social Logic of the Text in the Middle Ages,” *Speculum*, 65(1990), 59-86, that prompted criticisms in *Past and Present*; see in particular Lawrence Stone, “History and Post-Modernism,” *Past and Present*, 131(1991), 217-218, and also the articles under the same title in issues 133 and 135 by Patrick Joyce, Catriona Kelly, Lawrence Stone (second intervention), and the final reply by Gabrielle Spiegel. The debate was summarized by Enrico Artifoni, “Une logique sociale du texte?,” *Liber*, 95(1992), 14-15. See also in the same issue Maria Luisa Pesante, “Un défi pour les historiens,” 16-17, which contains a commented bibliography of recent research. Gabrielle Spiegel has a book, *Romancing the Past: The Rise of Vernacular Prose Historiography in Thirteenth-Century France* (Berkeley, 1993), in which she applies her textual approach.

Hayden White was among the first to have accepted the notion of the *linguistic turn* and its implications for history, see his *Metahistory. The Historical Imagination in Nineteenth-Century Europe* (Johns Hopkins, 1973).

Some books from the German *Begriffsgeschichte* era (conceptual history and history of concepts) are now available in English. Two works by Reinhart Koselleck are of particular interest, *Critique and Crisis. Enlightenment and the Pathogenesis of Modern Society* and *Futures Past: On the Semantics of Historical Time*, both published by MIT Press.

We could also add to our highly selective bibliography some of the works to what has been loosely known as the “School of Cambridge” that focuses on the formation of “ideas” during a particular period: “What were the available languages in this particular historical situation?” John G.A. Pocock’s *The Machiavellian Moment. Florentine Political Thought and the Atlantic Republican Tradition* (Princeton, 1975), is one of the most well known works in this tradition. See also his *Virtue, Commerce and History* (Cambridge, 1985). The other historian of note in that direction is Quentin Skinner.

Finally, for those who are already bored with the idea that all of culture is constructed in discourse and would like to get beyond this stage, see the eccentric Michael Taussig, *Mimesis and Alterity. A Particular History of the Senses* (Routledge, 1993).

Requirements

We'll discuss our weekly readings collectively in class. Your participation is essential for the success of the course. You'll also have to complete presentations based on the weekly readings and term-papers (see below). Instructions on the presentations will be posted in due time on Blackboard.

In addition to the two-draft free-topic paper (see below the section on papers), you'll have to submit three interpretive essays based on our weekly readings: you'll receive sets of questions for each. *Each paper counts as 20 percent of the total. All interpretive essays are take-home and you'll be given a week to submit them. The purpose of the interpretive essays is to give you the opportunity to go "beyond" the literal meaning of a text and adopt interpretive and "textual" techniques. A failing grade in all interpretive essays means also a failing grade for the course, whatever your performance in the term-paper is. All essays and papers must be submitted on time according to the deadlines set below.*

First Interpretive Essay	20%
Second Interpretive Essay	20%
Final Interpretive Essay	20%
Term-paper: 2 drafts 10% each	20%
Presentations, Blackboard postings, and class attendance and participation	20%

- It is essential that you complete all readings on time, and that you come to class well prepared. **Always come to class with the required book:** we'll discuss all readings extensively.
- The first, second, and final interpretive essays are all based on our weekly readings. They all consist of a single essay for which you'll receive the appropriate questions at the dates below, and you'll submit them in class a week later.
- The question handouts will only be distributed in class—no email communication.
- For all five papers follow the procedures outlined below in the section on papers.
- Essays and papers are to be submitted only in class. Do not email or fax any material. Do not submit your papers outside the classroom.
- It's your responsibility to submit all essays and papers *in class* on time at the required deadlines. Late papers will be graded accordingly, and papers submitted a week after the deadline will be graded F.
- You must also submit, in addition to the printed hard copies, an equivalent electronic file of each paper in the digital dropbox on Blackboard.
- Each non-submitted paper will receive the grade of F, and your final grade will be averaged accordingly.
- The mid-term paper is a free-topic exercise based on a list of authors/books that you should begin researching as soon as possible.
- If you do not show up for an assigned presentations, you'll be graded F.

Tentative Schedule

This schedule is subject to change, pending on our progress during the semester. Additional readings may be posted on blackboard. Dates of interpretive essays indicate when the essay questions will be made available. Deadlines of essays are a week after the assignment is distributed.

- Week 1: January 14: Introduction
- Week 2: January 28: Paul Veyne, *Did the Greeks Believe in Their Myths?* (Chicago UP).
- Week 3: February 4: G.E.R. Lloyd, *Demystifying Mentalities* (Cambridge UP).
- Week 4: February 11: Tetsuo Najita, *Visions of Virtue in Tokugawa Japan* (University of Hawaii Press).

First Interpretive Essay

- Week 5: February 18: Ranajit Guha, *Dominance Without Hegemony* (Harvard UP).
- Week 6: February 25: Charles Tilly, *Coercion, Capital and European States: A.D. 990-1992* (Blackwell)
- Week 7: March 10: Tilly (continued).

Second Interpretive Essay

- Week 8: March 17: Theda Skocpol, *States and Social Revolutions* (Cambridge UP).
- Week 9: March 31: Skocpol (continued).
- Week 10: April 7: Barrington Moore, *Social Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy* (Beacon Press).

Term-Paper first draft

- Week 11: April 14: Moore (continued).

Final Interpretive Essay

- Week 12: April 21: Discussion of Term-Papers.

Final term-paper drafts must be submitted on April 30 with the final interpretive essay

PAPERS

You are requested to write one major research paper to be submitted on April 30. You will have to submit, however, a first draft of this paper on Monday, April 7. The first draft should follow the same presentation and writing guidelines as your final draft. The purpose of the first draft is to let you assess your research and writing skills and improve the final version of your paper. It is advisable that you choose a research topic and start preparing a bibliography as soon as possible.

It is important that you submit your first draft *on time* so that you'll have few weeks left for a re-write or revisions.

- This is not a course about a specific period, geographic area, or nation, but about methodology and the writing of history. Your papers should therefore concentrate on methodological issues: if, for example, you select nineteenth-century urban America as a topic, your primary focus should be in explaining *how* a topic like “urban America” is methodologically constructed. If, for example, a “city” is analyzed in terms of the aggregate of its classes, neighborhoods, social groups (race, gender, sex, class), how is each one of these categories constructed, and how do they articulate together?
- There are no restrictions as to the time period or geographic area. This is not the most crucial issue here since what is important are the methodological questions that you need to address.
- Because methodology is our theme, start your paper with an introduction that clearly delineates the themes you intend to explore. Explain briefly, right from the beginning, what you think are the main methodological issues for your topic, theme, author(s), or set of books and articles. Then clearly formulate the question you think is crucial for your paper—*the main question should be directly related to a methodological problem and relevant to the process of writing history.*
- When selecting a twentieth-century historian make sure that you read his/her main works (including some key articles and interviews, if available) even if you're not planning a full coverage of the works in question. It is probably much simpler to select a single historian rather than several—this is especially true if you are new to the social sciences. If you therefore focus on a single historian, make sure that, in the context of this course, the aim is not a summary of his/her works, but an analysis of their historical *writing*. When you're dealing with more than one work, integrate them together into some common theme(s) and avoid presenting them separately. Always check how the *writing* evolves from one work to another.
- On questions of presentation, follow Kate L. Turabian, *A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations*, 5th ed., Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987, intended for students and other writers of papers not written for publication, and has useful material on notes and bibliographies.
- Once you've decided on a paper-topic and prepared a preliminary bibliography, post an abstract and bibliography of your topic on blackboard <blackboard.luc.edu> (see below). Your abstract should include: (i) title; (ii) description; (iii) sources; (iv) methodology (e.g. suggestions on how to read sources). **Your preliminary draft will not be accepted unless you've submitted an on-line abstract by April 4.**

Please use the following guidelines for your papers:

- use 8x10 white paper. Do not use legal size or colored paper.
- only print on one side of the paper.
- should be double spaced, with single spaced footnotes at the end of each page and an *annotated* bibliography at the end (check the recommended readings below for an example of an annotated bibliography).
- keep ample left and right margins for comments and corrections of at least 1.25 inches each.
- all pages should be numbered and stapled.
- a cover-page should include the following: title, course number, name, address, phone number and email.

Electronic forum

This course is listed on the Loyola Blackboard webpage to freely post messages and conduct discussions: login at <blackboard.luc.edu> and follow the instructions.

Besides a synopsis of all your presentations and term-paper, you must post each week at least one news item.

RECOMMENDED READINGS

Historiographical Methods History & the Social Sciences

Jacques Rancière, *The Names of History: On the Poetics of Knowledge* (University of Minnesota Press, 1994), describes the current status of recent historiographical methods. Rancière argues that Michelet was the real precursor to the *Annales* (something that Lucien Febvre acknowledged and was the first to see clearly). First, Michelet stepped out from a history of kings and political events into some kind of “social history” of sorts, showing interest in what he broadly defined as “Le Peuple” (the people). Second, Michelet was sensitive to the *document* as a starting point for his analysis: he created this method of reading *into* a document through his own narrative and by listening to their silences. But Michelet could only create a dynamics out of a narrative where the Hobbesian Monarch does not play anymore the central role by transforming *France* into the real Subject of history—something that the *Annales* could not keep up with anymore. The *Annales* in fact transformed its historical “topics” into *objects* of research. In other words, France, for example, becomes an object of research like European feudalism or the Mediterranean. Thus by stating that every entity in the social world is worth being an object of scientific research, the *Annales* has ipso facto robbed traditional historiography, including that of Michelet, from its deepest foundations. Which leaves us today, towards the end of an eventful twentieth century, with a big problem: How can we rehabilitate the role of the subject—that is, *any* subject of democratic societies—in historical processes?

Hunt, Lynn, ed. *The New Cultural History*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989. A collection of articles that discusses the new “cultural history,” a recent trend that focuses on the importance of language in understanding political and social trends—the “linguistic turn.”

Momigliano, Arnaldo. *The Classical Foundations of Modern Historiography*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991.

Palmer, Bryan D. *Descent into Discourse. The Reification of Language and the Writing of Social History*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1990.

Reddy, William M. *Money and Liberty in Modern Europe. A Critique of Historical Understanding*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987. A critical study on modern historiographical trends related in particular to social and economic history.

Scott, Joan Wallach. *Gender and the Politics of History*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1988. Wallach relates gender to history and language and thus joins the “linguistic turn” school that focuses on the importance of language in structuring social and economic movements.

B. H. Moss, “Republican Socialism and the Making of the Working Class in Britain, France, and the United States: A Critique of Thompsonian Culturalism,” *Comparative Study in Society and History*, 35(2) 1993, 390-413. This essay is an attempt to analyze the impact that had Thompson’s *Making of the English Working Class* on studies of labor movements in France, England, and the United States, on the one hand, and the weaknesses of such “culturalist” analyses (as opposed to the Marxist and neo-Marxist) on the other. Moss concludes that what these studies have unknowingly confirmed is the traditional and Marxist view that socialism arises when intellectuals bearing collectivist ideas join with workers undergoing a process of proletarianization.

Philippe Carrard, *Poetics of the New History: French Historical Discourse from Braudel to Chartier*. Parallax Re-visions of Culture and Society, Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1992. Excellent introduction to the *Annales* tradition in historiography. More broadly, Carrard shows that the discipline of history is now marked by fragmentation and that *histoire totale* (in the strong sense of the project) is dead.

Editorial, “Histoire et sciences sociales. Un tournant critique?” *Annales É.S.C.* 2 (April-March 1988): 291-293. A key editorial of the *Annales* in which a “crisis” in contemporary historiography is openly admitted, while a rapprochement with the social sciences is long overdue. The notion of “document” is also questioned and a more “textual” approach is suggested. Some of the responses to this editorial have been collected in the special issue of November–December 1989 celebrating the 60th anniversary of the *Annales*.

Dominick LaCapra, *History & Criticism* (Cornell University Press, 1985). With essays on Ginzburg, *mentalité* history, and the history of criticism, LaCapra provides a critical perspective on contemporary historiography.

Greeks & Romans, Early Christians

Peter Brown, *The Body and Society. Men, Women, and Sexual Renunciation in Early Christianity* (Columbia University Press, 1988). In nineteen chapters, and basing himself on original manuscripts, Peter Brown is successful at describing attitudes of early Christians towards the body and sexuality. Augustine, in the last chapter, provides the *summa* of the endless variations of the early Christians and their erring: fulfillment is only achieved in the “city of heaven.” What Christianity has introduced to the Greek and Roman world-views is the duality between mind and body, a dualism we still live with in different Cartesian or Freudian variations. The mind “controls” the body, its appetites and drives, hence the mind controls the body’s sexuality. To the early Christians, this meant sexual renunciation and virginity in order to preserve the integrity of the soul. Brown demarcates Roman sexuality from the

Christian in his introductory chapters: Roman sexuality looks at women, slaves, and barbarians as inferiors, hence sex with women was riddled with anxieties and it was common for men to have sex with their slaves. Brown, however, does not see Christian renunciation as caused by Roman “tolerance” and he never provides his readers with a sharp answer to the historical causes of Christian asceticism. Instead, he gives us variations of the Christian model, and, with this, a view of religion as an agglomeration of infinitesimal efforts, or, in other words, how disparate views become public and create an institution—the Church. Brown underscores a view of Christianity as a *social* movement with no state control. Brown, however, seems locked up in his texts, limiting his social history on the Roman family, marriage, the social roots of the early Christians, and the Church and its clergy. Brown’s ethos seems to have been influenced by the likes of Veyne and Foucault, which look at sexuality as a discourse, or rather, as a discursive practice.

Medieval Europe

Jacques Le Goff, *The Birth of Purgatory* (Chicago University Press, 1984 [1981 for the French Gallimard edition]). This is a *longue durée* history of the Purgatory, roughly from early Christianity till the twelfth and thirteenth centuries when the Purgatory has achieved a more or less completed structure (even in its poetic form through Dante). Le Goff, however, is eager not to make his history “evolutionary,” that is, he insists that the history of the Purgatory remains unpredictable despite early signs (with Augustine in particular) of a desire to *spacialize* something between hell and heaven. This creation of an additional space of judgment and repentance shall be expressed differently from one period to another, but by the thirteenth century one thing is certain: the Purgatory integrates well in the European societies where the judicial now plays a dominating and intermediary role between the “body politic” and “society” (or “civil society,” *civitas*). Le Goff’s method is very much “textual,” and even though he does well in integrating his material with the social trends of each period, one would have wished more social history, in particular for the thirteenth century when several things seem to come together: the political, religious, judicial, and economic.

Modern Europe: Populations, Material life & the Economy

Fernand Braudel, *The Mediterranean and the Mediterranean World in the Age of Philip II*, trans. Siân Reynolds (New York: Harper & Row, 1973 [first French edition published in Paris by Armand Colin, 1949]). Picking up from where Marc Bloch and Lucien Febvre (his “Maître de thèse”), Braudel constructs a thesis around the Mediterranean as an object of study for what become the cult book of the *Annalistes*: it’s not anymore Philip II who occupies the center of the stage, but the Mediterranean as a complex object of geography, economics, and cultures at the *age* of Philip II. Actually, Braudel dismisses the person of the King altogether as someone who was not even conscious of the importance of the Mediterranean: “I do not believe that the word Mediterranean itself ever floated in his consciousness with the meaning we now give it, nor that it conjured up for him the images of light and blue water it has for us.” With this, Braudel created a fundamental rule for both historians and social scientists: the historian does not have to identify with the “subjects” of history anymore—distance from what shines at the surface has become the golden rule (but wasn’t it so for Marx and Freud?). But the book, half a century later, has also aged tremendously: Braudel never took seriously the claim he has set up for himself and for the discipline of history as “La Reine

des sciences sociales,” and he never borrowed much anyhow from the languages of the social sciences. The *Mediterranean* leaves us struggling with an array of questions concerning the role of the “subject” and “culture” in history.

Reddy, William M. *The Rise of Market Culture. The Textile Trade and French Society, 1750-1900*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984.

Scott, Joan Wallach. *The Glassworkers of Carmaux. French Craftsmen and Political Action in a Nineteenth-Century City*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1974.

Eric Hobsbawm, *The Age of Capital* (1988).

Intellectual Movements in Modern Europe

Latour, Bruno and Steven Woolgar, *Laboratory Life: The Social Construction of Scientific Facts*. London: Sage, 1979. A book that belongs to what we now qualify as the new “anthropology of the sciences,” i.e. a discipline (or sub-discipline) that focuses on how the natural hard-core sciences are produced and manufactured within the laboratories, elite teaching colleges, staff recruitment, and the professional journals that transmit and conserve scientific knowledge. A big step from the “idealized” Khunian paradigmatic view of the sciences that became dominant in the last three decades.

Shapin, Steve and Simon Schaffer. *Leviathan and the Airpump. Hobbes, Boyle and the Experimental Life*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1985. In the line of the “anthropology” of Bruno Latour, this book tries to connect the political ideas of the father of “Absolutism” in the Anglo-Saxon world with those of the natural experimental sciences.

Ernst Cassirer, *The Philosophy of the Enlightenment* (1951). The enlightenment within a Kantian perspective. A book that remains a classic.

Peter Gay, *The Cultivation of Hatred. The Bourgeois Experience: Victoria to Freud. Volume 3* (New York: Norton, 1993). This is the third volume after “Education of the Senses” (1984) and “The Tender Passion” (1986), and is fed by some rich insights. Gay argues that the Victorians were prone to mix cruel aggression and ferocious erotic pleasure; thus our Victorian legacy is a struggle to deal with the joys of aggression. The book also ends with a subtle analysis of the development of “professionalism” and the way all these finer specialties became finely guarded. Unfortunately, the bulk of the book forgets from time to time such rich insights and the reader is left with a bunch of facts that ranges from the very obvious to the sophisticated.

Carlo Ginzburg, *The Cheese and the Worms. The Cosmos of a Sixteenth-Century Miller* (Johns Hopkins, 1980). Ginzburg argues that the heretical thoughts of Menocchio, his sixteenth-century miller, are the effect of an old rural popular culture despite the fact that Menocchio was an avid reader of some medieval texts. In a footnote added later as a response to critics (pp. 154/5), Ginzburg claims a circularity—or complementarity—between elite and popular cultures. Looked upon retrospectively, two decades after the publication of the original Italian edition, which made a sensation, Ginzburg’s thesis on popular culture is neither

convincing nor interesting. Going through Ginzburg's 62 short partitions, one is more puzzled by the Church's insatiable willingness to force Menocchio "confess" than by popular culture which we can hardly see and perceive.

The French Revolution

Edmund Burke, *Reflections on the Revolution in France*, 1790. A great classic.

François Furet & Mona Ozouf, *Critical Dictionary of the French Revolution* (Harvard University Press, 1989). A "dictionary" of the French Revolution organized in thematic and biographic articles.

Roger Chartier, *The Cultural Origins of the French Revolution*, 1990. Focuses on ideas and their "public" circulation before and after 1789.

Alexis de Tocqueville, *The Old Regime and the French Revolution*, 1855. A great classic by the author of *Democracy in America*. Tocqueville was among the first to argue that much of what is usually attributed to the Revolution, namely the centralization of the state and its bureaucracy; the advancement of the "bourgeoisie" as a class, etc., were already part of the policy of the old monarchical regime.

Sewell, William H., Jr. *Work and Revolution in France. The Language of Labor from the Old Regime to 1848*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980. A classic on the French guilds, manufactures and labor force, and the first major historian to apply the Thompsonian problematic to France. An attempt to explain the rise of socialism and the making of the French working class. Sewell chose to highlight the culturalist theme and argued that "socialism" was essentially a cultural reconstruction of an eighteenth-century guild tradition of moral collectivism.

Sonenscher, Michael. *Work and Wages. Natural Law, Politics, and the Eighteenth-Century French Trades*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989.

Robert Darnton, *The Literacy Underground of the Old Regime* (Cambridge, Mass., 1982).

Barry M. Shapiro, *Revolutionary Justice in Paris, 1789-1790* (Cambridge University Press, 1993), addresses the subject of political crime in the first year of the French Revolution.

de Baecque, Antoine. *Le corps de l'histoire. Métaphores et politiques (1770-1800)*. Paris: Calmann-Lévy, 1993.

Lynn Hunt, *The Family Romance of the French Revolution* (University of California Press, 1992), analyzes the images and familial models that inhabited revolutionary France.

United States

Peter Kolchin, *American Slavery, 1619-1877* (New York: Hill & Wang, 1993), is an excellent introduction to the subject of slavery with an annotated bibliography for further reading.

Charles A. Beard, *An Economic Interpretation of the Constitution of the United States* (Free Press, 1963 [1913]). First published in 1913, Beard's radical interpretation brought the Constitution of the United States from its political "idealism" to its economic roots. Scrutinizing the Constitution in light of economic forces, he proposed for the first time that this politico-legal document was shaped by a group of men whose commercial interests were best served by its provisions.

Alexis de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*. Tocqueville's analysis of the American democratic system remains my favorite in its simplicity and complexity. The "democratic spirit" is traced back to the first European settlers who were suspicious of all the monarchies they had left behind and were thus not that eager to replicate on the new continent political systems which they saw as potentially corrupt because based on rigid hierarchies between individuals, classes, and status groups. Tocqueville then goes on to show that this basic idea of democracy—that all men have the *right* to be "equal"—is reproduced at every level. Thus, several laws were promulgated in the 17th and 18th centuries in New England and the North-East in particular forbidding large property holdings. In education, this meant the focus on "practical" matters rather than on formal and abstract issues, a major weakness, according to Tocqueville, because it weakens artistic and scientific creativity. The legal system is analyzed in terms of the "power of judges" to overrule previous decisions and interpret the Constitution (another particularity of the American system is that a single Constitution frames both the political and judicial). But the greatness of American democracy has its dark side too, and in a concluding chapter, Tocqueville is more than cautious about a type of democracy, which despite all its merits, also creates simple-minded individuals and mediocre spirits who have no choice but to leave "government" to a group of professionals.

J. C. D. Clark, *The Language of Liberty, 1660-1832. Political Discourse and Social Dynamics in the Anglo-American World* (Cambridge University Press, 1994). One of the latest attempts in the search for "a deeper understanding of the causes" of the Revolution. Clark makes three general claims: (i) that the years between 1776 and 1787 gave rise to a new dissenting conception of liberty which was the principal source of the ideas of popular sovereignty that some colonists employed against the traditional idea of absolute sovereignty; (ii) that 1776 may be understood as a revolution of natural law against common law; (iii) that the American Revolution was in essence "a rebellion by groups within Protestant Dissent against an Anglican hegemony."

Carl J. Richard, *The Founders and the Classics. Greece, Rome, and the American Enlightenment* (Harvard University Press, 1994). Ever wondered the influence of Greece and Rome on the Founding Fathers of the American Constitution? The addiction of the Founders to classical allusion has never been denied, but in the work of many recent historians its importance has been questioned. Richard's book is a refutation of such doubts. It was in America that the historical and the legendary figures of antiquity could serve as real models for conduct rather than oratorical embellishment. Though Greece and Rome were equal partners in the colonial educational curriculum, it was to the Roman republic that the Founders turned for a model when they came to frame their constitution. Athenian democracy, criticized by Thucydides,

condemned by Plato and disapproved of by Aristotle, inspired in them a fear of the tyranny of the majority. They favored instead what they believed was the “mixed government” of the great days of Rome, the era of the Second Punic War. Should we then be surprised that very few people participate in the democratic process today?

Music & The Arts

Theodor W. Adorno, *Mahler. A Musical Physiognomy* (Chicago University Press, 1993). A major study by one of the leading Frankfurt School giants that focuses on one of the most important Viennese musicians at the turn of this century. Adorno shows that Mahler’s music is the expression, in its artistic form, of the “end” of the false “totalities” that he found in metaphysics (by contrast, Beethoven would look very much Hegelian). Knowledge of Mahler’s nine symphonies is, of course, a must for understanding Adorno’s analysis. For a broader account of modern music see Adorno’s *Quasi Una Fantasia. Essays on Modern Music* (Verso, 1993).

Pierre Bourdieu, Jean-Claude Passeron, Monique de Saint Martin, et al, *Academic Discourse* (Oxford: Polity, 1994). The authors make the claim that “academic discourse” is a rare commodity, some kind of “cultural capital,” in the hands of professors-researchers who find it contrary to their interests to propagate and “popularize” especially among students and other faculty members who might not have access to types of discourse unknown to them and who are thus left in the dark on recent trends and discoveries in the arts and social sciences. Unlike other critiques from the political left, the authors argue that universities exert a conservative social influence not by transmitting an intellectual heritage but by failing to transmit it. While the left and the right continue to bicker over whether the academic culture students absorb is too traditional or too radical, Bourdieu and his colleagues question whether students absorb the academic culture at all. Thus, it is quite common for professors either to claim that their students “cannot understand sophisticated theories,” or that it would be better, in a class-context, “to avoid larky expressions and the like,” or to pretend that “they are already ‘familiar’ with such-and-such an approach.” Academic discourse ends up a “cultural capital” in the possession of the happy few who can afford it. The book, written and published in the mid-sixties on the basis of extensive research on the French educational system, needs to be “re-adapted” to an American context. My impression is that in the United States, a particular kind of academic discourse, which borrows extensively from the French gurus (among them Bourdieu, Lyotard, Derrida, and Foucault), is more common in the Ivy League and the top-twenty-colleges than in other, more provincial, higher education institutions. But even in the Ivy League, it remains to be seen how much of the academic discourse which Bourdieu and his colleagues have in mind is transmitted and “absorbed.”

Bourdieu, Pierre. “Esprits d’État. Genèse et structure du champs bureaucratique.” *Actes de la recherche en sciences sociales* (96-97 1993): 49-62. A brilliant exposition on the “origins” of the modern European state from a historical and sociological perspectives.