

THE FOCUS OF HISTORICAL STUDY: A CHRISTIAN VIEW

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April, 1980



This paper was presented at Malone College, Ohio, in April, 1980. Before submitting it for publication the author wishes to solicit criticism and comments. He will appreciate hearing from readers; send comments to the author at the Institute for Christian Studies, 229 College Street, Toronto, Ontario, Canada M5T 1R4

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## The Focus of Historical Study: A Christian View

### 1. A time for definition

Ours is a time of tremendous turmoil in historical study. For many years historians promoting the study of new special fields of history have challenged the long hegemony of the traditional political, ecclesiastical, and intellectual histories in Western Civilization. Those advocating economic and social history have, for a time and in some circles, successfully won a hegemony of their own, victors over the traditional histories. A still newer set of historians, however, have sought to displace even the economic and social histories, or at least to overturn the traditional methods of economic and social history. The list of histories practised these days is long, and getting longer--immigration history, urban history, psycho history, demographic history, local history, prosopography, oral history, history of technology, peasant history, labor history, history of revolutions, garden history, history of sociology, folk history, and even history of history. The list expands to take in the whole globe, and every culture and people. Moreover, advocates of almost every ideology and religion seem to enter the picture to provide their own kind of history--Marxists, Liberals, Conservatives, Baptists, Mormons, Hindus, Catholics, Evangelicals, and many more.

To complicate matters we historians organize ourselves into specialized societies and sub-societies, and we establish new journals for the history of each special thing. The American Historical Association has increasing difficulty maintaining an all-embracing society as it tries to cope with the rapidly enlarging sociology of historical specialization.<sup>1</sup>

In short, we face today a bewildering assortment of histories, methods, phenomena to be studied, theories, organizations, and relationships with other fields, such as psychology, anthropology, sociology, theology, and many more.

To add to our confusion, we are plagued with many false dilemmas. Alan Bullock, for example, in "Is History Becoming a Social Science? The Case of Contemporary History," accepts as the basis of his debate with the French *Annales* school of social and economic history, the distinction that individuals, ideas, narrative, events, and political history may be grouped on one side against structures, behavior, analysis, series, and social-economic history on the other.<sup>2</sup> Such a distinction distorts the reality that there are economic events, that political history entails analysis, that narrative and analysis are not polar opposites, that thinking ideas is a kind of behavior, or that events are structured and structures are the results of events.

What gets lost in all this turmoil--besides clarity--is an understanding of what it is that provides a focus to historical study. Underneath all this multiplicity and specialization, what in reality does the "historical" have to do with? What core of meaning is common



to all our uses of the word "history" in our terms such as urban history, general history, the history of science, and even the history of the animal we call a cat?

Ours is a time when some definition can be very helpful. In this paper I wish to add my suggestions to the ongoing reflection on the focus of historical study. I use the word "suggestions" quite pointedly, since the ideas I am putting forward are far from complete, and since a careful look at these matters requires at least a book.

I should indicate the meaning of my subtitle, "A Christian View." I do not mean to present a theology of history in which I discuss the ways of God in history or our beliefs about God, Jesus, providence, and the like. I do, however, wish to make use of certain Christian insights as a basis of my look at historical reality and our thoughts about our study of that historical reality. I find helpful Herbert Butterfield's idea that God's work in history and human action in history are two ways of looking at the same thing.<sup>3</sup> If I concentrate my attention on human history, I do not thereby deny God in history. Moreover, as a Christian I affirm both that history is at root a creaturely response to God's intentions as disclosed in created reality, and that our understanding of history is true insofar as biblical insights into created reality, history, and our humanity inwardly shape our understanding. The ideas I put forward I understand to be an attempt to apprehend historical reality seen as the ongoing response by all God's creatures to God's will in creation. Hence we look at history and creation, with creation understood both as what was established in the beginning, and as the ontic basis of all human and non-human reality today.

My central suggestion is that the focus of human historical study may be indicated as temporal culturation, or culture-making as time process. If we expand our horizon to include non-human reality--the rocks and stars, the plants and the animals--then we can say that the historical is a temporal process of coming into being and going out of being. For humans and all that we humans put our hand to, the coming into being and going out of being occurs by culturation, whereas for the non-human it occurs by natural processes, sometimes in interaction with human culturation. We may use the word "formation" or "forming" to indicate the characteristic of coming into being which is common to both humans and non-human creatures, e.g. the forming of a mountain range, the forming of the French monarchy. The formation is cultural formation for humans and natural formation for non-humans.

I mention the non-human merely to suggest that those creatures of God share the same historical reality as we human creatures. Quite literally, everything under the sun, as well as the sun, is historical. This is one major point we can learn from the current proliferation of histories. Not only is it possible in principle to study the history of anything, but we do in fact try. Astronomy, geology, paleontology, and biology are as much historical studies as are political, literary, and social history. Indeed we would be better off if our college and university curricula would acknowledge this reality, and make room for the interaction of the historical viewpoint with all the



disciplines as well as for the interrelation of all the special histories with each other.

My concern here, however, is mainly with the human historical. Let me direct our attention to the two primary elements of human historicity--time and culture, or more precisely, temporality and cultururation.

## 2. Time, temporality

Robert Berkhofer has reminded us that we historians spend very little time thinking about one of the fundamental elements of our studies, namely time. We use it, divide it, interpret it, but persist in not seeking to understand why it is so important to historical study.<sup>4</sup> We have tended to leave the matter to the physicists and philosophers of science, although not entirely.<sup>5</sup>

I wish to suggest in what way time is one of two primary elements of the historical. To indicate this I shall mention a number of the most salient features of time and discuss briefly their importance for historical study. Needless to say, I make no attempt to be comprehensive.

The first thing to notice about time is the relationship of past-present-future by which we experience it. We speak of before, at the same time, and after. Our verb tenses allow for many nuances of expression indicating this relation and whether or not, for example, that which is past is done and gone or still carrying on--e.g. they played the game, and they are playing the game.

The relationships of past-present-future is a fundamental feature of created reality, but not every culture perceives it that way. For example, John S. Mbiti, after a study of the tenses of a number of African languages, concludes that "according to traditional concepts, time is a two-dimensional phenomenon, with a long past, a present, and virtually no future." Sasa is the "now-period" and Zamani is "Big Time," especially moving infinitely backward into the past.<sup>6</sup> Other cultures and civilizations, including the Hindu and Buddhist, have their understandings of time as well.<sup>7</sup> Indeed, it is not too much to say that the understanding of time as past-present-future relationship is a special legacy of Jewish and Christian cultures. Even today, to talk of time in this way involves a choice, notwithstanding that the Christian insight has become a common holding of Christian and non-Christian alike.<sup>8</sup> Because of the secularization of the Christian understanding of time it is necessary to reflect upon time freshly under the guidance of Christian insight.

It is important to affirm that time is a relationship of past-present-future. We may avoid in this way atomizing time into a succession of points on a graph line, as some do in physics.<sup>9</sup> The relationship is a whole in which at no moment is past entirely



past, nor future merely future. The relationship is a dynamic one in which at any moment the past holds within it not only the conditions on which the future is based, but a variety of forthcomings which, unless something occurs to alter them, bear us into the future. In this context, the present is the point of reference according to which we may look backward or forward in time. The point of reference is different for every person and every epoch. My present is not the same as Pope Pius IX's present in 1860. As an historian I look from my present back to Pius' present. His present is my past, and my present is his future. But more. In Pius' past was the establishment of the papal temporal power, which through many vicissitudes, had endured for eleven hundred years. For Pius that temporal power bore him into the future, for unless he or others destroyed it, his life was to be taken up with maintaining and exercising the temporal power. And until I give up studying and writing about Pius' temporal power, Pius' past-present-future are in one respect an important element of my past-present-future, beginning in 1963.<sup>10</sup>

Seen in this way tradition is not a dead accumulation of the past, but a dynamic carrying over into the future, a transmission. Memory, custom, habit, and structures gather in elements of our past and induce us into the future. Similarly, plans, intentions, wishes, expectations and hopes project us into the future even as they take hold of our past and are based upon it. Not only the continuities but the discontinuities too are part of the relationship of past-present-future.

The point I wish to make here is that contrary to a long-standing academic and popular assumption, the historical is not about the past, but about the relationship of past-present-future. Even when we study people and things in our past, we must study their past-present-future. And our past is also a matter of our past-present-future, for our study itself is a projection into our future.

The second thing about time that is important is the new. That there is that which is new is a feature of time. New here means it has not been before, it is different. The new is a feature of the present yielding the future. Seen in this way the present is the moment in which we come to the new. The past is the old, that which has occurred or has been done and cannot be undone. The new is that which is yet to be done. The present is the moment in which we may change things, in which we make decisions which alter some things and retain others. It is the moment when tradition may be changed and something new may be introduced. The new allows us to speak of beginnings and endings in history, and therein lies the basis of all periodization.

From a Christian point of view the possibility of the new is very important. As people we are not bound to tradition although we know that tradition is in its own way a projection into the future. We not only may bring about the new, but we are held responsible to do so when the old is deformed, repressive, and



broken. Christ's claim that He makes all things new, and His call to us to be new people have their basis in time present as the moment of the new. The eschatological perspective of Christian hope rests upon the moment of the new, even as the future is, as Pannenberg has suggested, a coming to us of the new.<sup>11</sup>

In our historical studies, the reality of the new is important to keep ever in view, lest we misread the relationship of past-present-future as a determinism, or as Butterfield has said, as a trick we play on ourselves by means of retrospection.<sup>12</sup> It is probably correct to say that all theories of determinism and inevitability exaggerate the futurative power of the past to the detriment of the innovative power of the present.

A third crucial feature of time is that it is ongoing, or, depending on the time perspective, forthcoming. Time is a movement, a procession, a course, a process, which is not to say progress. The ongoing character of time is the basis of all processes in history. We have many words to point to this feature--sequence, succession, precedence, antecedence, and indeed, the word occurrence itself. To occur is to enter the course of history, to happen. An event is quite literally a forthcoming, a unit of the time-process demarcated by a beginning as an appearance of something new and by an ending. Occurrence and event are synonyms, both pointing to a unit of time as ongoing.

Anything that occurs is, in one sense of the word, unique. It happens only once. Strictly speaking it cannot happen again, that is, over again. Time, we say, is irreversible and einmalig. The biblical view in the Old and New Testaments was a categorial break with all beliefs in eternal return.<sup>13</sup> It is not clear whether ancient near eastern, oriental, and African views of history that imaged time as a wheel or circle believed that occurrences literally happened all over again, but it is fair to say that Jewish and Christian views certainly did not believe that they did. In the Christian view, things happened only once, we live only once, and Christ died once and for all as the Redeemer for our sins.<sup>14</sup> This was the insight that led Augustine to develop his Christian interpretation of world history, a view which influenced our view of the course of history ever since.<sup>15</sup> At least on this point, it is clear that the Hindu understanding of time and history does picture a person's Atman being "again born" repeatedly in new dwellings, through many lives, just as the Hindu view believes there are many incarnations of the God.<sup>16</sup>

There is an important qualifier that must be mentioned here. While it is true that the ongoing character of time means each occurrence is unique, it does not mean each is one of a kind. Each occurrence and phenomenon is unique, but it is also similar to others of its kind. This is the basis of our identification of processes and stages of processes as well as our comparison of times. For example, each sunrise is unique, but each is similar to all other sunrises; each opening of Parliament is unique, but similar to other openings. Our "time of troubles" in Western



Civilization may be similar to the fourth and fifth centuries in the Roman Empire. Because of this comparability of times, it is not very helpful to employ the simplified geometric figures of linear and cyclical to represent respectively the Christian and Hindu or Greek views of time. I find it more clarifying to speak as I have of uniqueness and similarity in the context of the on-going, process character of time. Then we must go further to see how the understanding of the unique and the similar differ in Christian and Hindu views of time.<sup>17</sup> Usually what we call "cycles"--business cycles, life cycles, cosmic cycles--are not returns to the beginning of a circle, but temporal processes and stages of processes further along in the course of history and which are comparable to others of their kind which occurred earlier.

A fourth feature of time is that we never experience time per se, but always manifested via the phenomena of history. Time is not an aspect of things, nor an addition to other things. It is the very mode of being of everything creaturely. There are as many different times as there are kinds of phenomena. This is a point Herman Dooyeweerd makes very well.<sup>18</sup> Astronomic time we record by means of our clocks and western calendars, and by a twist of reality we are prone to regard clock and calendar times as the real historical time. We lose the fullness and diversity of time when we reduce it to dates and points calculated according to the earth's turns around the sun. Biotic time is related to astronomic time, but very different from it. It is the time of planting, growing, and harvesting, or of birth, maturation, and bodily death. Psychic time is the slowness of a boring lecture, or the losing track of time of two people in love. Capitalist economic time is the hourly wage, time-efficiency management, and the savings account. Religious time is the confession of the Nicene creed, "Christ has died, Christ is risen, Christ will come again." Musical time is rhythm and beat. I could go on. Quite literally each type or phenomenon manifests time in its own way. Kevin Lynch has studied many of these in Boston and shown both how omnipresent and how diverse are the manifestations of time.<sup>19</sup>

The point is crucial for historical study. We distort if we do not respect the time appropriate to each type of phenomenon, but instead reduce them all to dates on the calendar. We are burdened by such reductionism. We calculate and periodize history by centuries, decades, years, millenia--all equal numerical units on our calendars. We miss thereby the timing of things which do not fall into our metric blocks. The point is illustrated by the old saying that the nineteenth century began in 1789 and ended in 1914. It is perhaps one of the failings of serial history, one form of quantification, that it works with equal units on the calendar, usually years, and easily misses the fact that things may be clustered between August 1748 and February 1749 and not occur again until December 1750. For serial history the years 1748, 1749, 1750 are equal units.<sup>20</sup>

It should be clear from what I have so far said that we do ourselves a disservice if we look upon the historian's act of



dating things either as a mere mechanical exercise or as a placing of things on an astronomically measured time-line. Unless we first determine the place of something in the relationship of past-present-future, we can go no further in historical study. Temporal colligation, to borrow a word from W.H. Walsh, is the basis of historical interpretation.<sup>21</sup> Furthermore, we should not forget that to date something 1860 A.D. is really a confession of faith. To say 1860 puts one arm around the astronomical calendar as a lowest common denominator, but to say A.D. puts the other arm around the Incarnation of Jesus Christ. Symbolically, when we bring our arms together we embrace the entire cosmos with Christ. The Christian calendar took centuries to gain predominance even in Christendom. The Venerable Bede, for instance, records the struggles in seventh and eighth century England over the date of Easter.<sup>22</sup> Other cultures and civilizations have had and still have their own calendars. Like the Christian they reveal their ultimate concerns about time. The Romans calculated from the founding of Rome, the Jews from Moses, the Buddhists from Buddha's enlightenment, the Muslims from Mohammed's hejira, and the Jacobians from the outbreak of the Revolution.

There are many more things to say about time, of course, but I have pointed out enough, perhaps, to give some idea of half of my suggestion about the focus of historical study. We can move on to the element of cultururation.

### 3. Culture, cultururation

Berkhofer is one of those who has suggested that the concept of culture, like time, is crucial to historical study. The term, as used by cultural anthropologists, has been en vogue for a generation or more among historians and social scientists. Berkhofer's observation is that the value of the concept is running out, unless it can be redefined and recast.<sup>23</sup>

There is good reason for its usefulness to expire, because, it seems, its meaning has become more and more needlessly restricted to a very limited thing--ideation. Many prominent historians and anthropologists used it to refer to shared ideas or norms or symbols or myths or mental constructs. As such when they tried to define American culture as American shared ideation they were confronted by very little shared ideation. Moreover, as they pursued ideation they had to face the difficulties of getting inside other minds and of formulating a description which would cover a whole group's ideas. With such a definition of culture, there would seem to be many important matters left untouched--institutions, technology, farming, laws, oppression, indeed a whole list of things. Pitirim Sorokin sought to overcome this by speaking of the triad society, culture, and personality, adding perhaps environment.<sup>24</sup> Long ago Jacob Burckhardt, the cultural historian of the Renaissance, distinguished the state, religion, and culture as the three powers of history.<sup>25</sup>



The meaning I understand with the concept is not so partial as these, but is very comprehensive. I am closer to the more holistic definitions suggested by T.S. Eliot and Herman Dooyeweerd, although I disagree with both.<sup>26</sup>

To indicate my meaning, I must first turn the word "culture" into a noun which denotes a process, reflective of the process character of temporality--culturation. I can disclose my meaning further if I open up culturation into two connected words--culture-making. My suggestion is that culturation, culture-making, is the second primary element of the historical, and as such it is a manifestation of time.

I understand making to be the means by which humans and animals bring phenomena into being--the bird makes a nest, the legislature makes a law. Human making, in contrast with animal making, involves all those features that differentiate humans from animals--characteristics like moral responsibility, deciding, believing, loving, thinking and conceptualizing, tool making, self-consciousness, historical awareness, speech, division of labor, and so on. The attempts to identify these distinguishing features have been many.<sup>27</sup>

Culturation is the process of making culture. Culture is that which has been made. My emphasis is upon the process of making by which phenomena or features of phenomena which have not hitherto existed are brought into being. The result of the process is culture.

The etymology and the history of the usage of the word "culture" and related words provides us with some clues. In Latin the word and its relatives carried a wide range of connotations, including tilling the soil, the forming of refined manners and dress, the cultivation of the mind, religious worship. In English we preserve a wide range of meaning in our terms agriculture, horticulture, technoculture, physical culture, artistic culture, American culture, bourgeois culture, and so on.

The common thing in reality to which these usages point, it seems to me, is that we humans have the capacity to make, to produce, to create--we are able to bring things into existence, and all of us do it all the time. Understood in this way culture-making and creativity are the same thing. Creativity is not a special genius possessed by the relatively few, such as great artists, but it is a standard feature of our humanity. The difference between people is that we make, create different things, and that we do it well or poorly, not that some of us create and the rest of us do not.

If we follow the clues and turn our attention to historical reality, we can see an immense variety of human actions which all have making as a common element. In our languages we have a primary set of verbs of making which explicitly refer to making and creating. I will mention just some--to construct, to produce, to form, to develop, to fashion, to influence, to institute, to erect,



to raise, to establish, to set up, to originate, to fabricate, to manufacture, to issue, to breed, to shape, to mould, to give rise to, to restore, to rehabilitate, to leaven, to effect, to pass [a law], and so on. Surrounding these primary terms of making, there is the entire remaining range of transitive verbs which carry an action by an agent over to the object, and which indicate the making of a result in or about the object. Let me illustrate: To sail the boat is to make the boat move; to storm the Bastille is to crash down the doors, break through the restraints, and enter the building; to calculate the interest is to find out what sum of money is in question; to confuse the masses is to make the people at large less clear about what you are doing. If we broaden our horizon to include intransitive verbs we see that making is not a primary or even necessarily a connoted meaning of such words. To show result, it is necessary to add a phrase: the woman persisted, and the man finally gave in; our spirits drooped, so we decided to quit; the prices rose and hurt the people on welfare.

It should not be forgotten that the other side of the making process is the process of unmaking. Not only do we build up, but we also destroy, abolish, quit, fail, deform, put to death. In other words, not only do we bring things into being, but we bring things to an end, we put them out of being. For every verb of making, we can find a corollary of ending.

The making process refers us immediately to what is made. If human making is the cultural act, then culture is that which is made. The variety of phenomena of culture embraces, literally all that we humans make. This is the widest possible meaning of the word culture, for it includes everything we humans bring into being. Understood in this way, culture is the all-embracing totality concept, and everything human-made is a form of culture. Culture embraces society, personality, family, technology, farming, industry, sports, religion, art, language, morals--these and everything else human-made are brought into being by human action.

Marx was so impressed by the human culture-making capacity that he came to believe that "man makes himself." Gordon Childe, the Marxist prehistorian, enshrined the phrase in the title of a justly famous book.<sup>28</sup> What Marx pointed to was that we humans, by means of our labor, transform the material of nature into human products, like food, clothing, and shelter. Bit by bit, we create an environment around us which is almost entirely human-made. By our social relations we influence each other as we form and transform our families, states, clubs, schools, churches, and recreation. The phenomenon Marx pointed to is exactly the same one to which I point by means of the term "culture-making."

Marx rightly saw something, but he distorted it in two directions. On the one hand, he tended to regard human labor in relation to nature as the preeminent act of making. He developed a narrowly materialist understanding of human creativity. On the other hand, he extrapolated the results of labor infinitely and pictured humans as their own creators. To give his own wording:



Since, however, for socialist man, the whole of what is called world history is nothing but the creation of man by human labour, and the emergence of nature for man, he therefore, has the evident and irrefutable proof of his self-creation, of his own origins.<sup>29</sup>

According to Christian insight, it is important to see that our human capacity to make culture, to create, calls for us to work in keeping with God's intentions. We cannot make things ex nihilo, and we cannot make whatever we wish. Moreover, in our making of culture we are responsible, under God, for establishing and maintaining the health of the world.

The Genesis account tells us at least three things essential to our theme.<sup>30</sup> First, God created the cosmos and everything in it, or as the Nicene Creed confesses:

We believe in one God,  
the Father, the Almighty,  
Maker of heaven and earth,  
of all that is, seen and unseen.

Second, God established the relations among all his creatures--the stars and rocks, the plants and animals, together with humans--and in particular made us humans to be the makers and caretakers of all things after God. Third, God cares for and maintains His creation to be good, in spite of our irresponsibility, carelessness, and destruction. Indeed, God calls us to recreate and renew, and to do what we do in keeping with the good creation God has made.

In such a context we may say, that our culture-making is both an ability given us by God, and our response to God's creation. What we make is based upon, works out of, and is a manifestation of what God has established, maintained, and what he today continues to reveal. Let me illustrate what I mean concretely. God made us to be social; our culture-making may express our social nature in a wide variety of ways, but it is impossible for us not to be social, however much we may try to be asocial. Or again, God made us to cultivate the earth; we may work out our agriculture in many ways, but, unless we merely gather food growing in the wild, we cannot get away from tilling the soil in some form. Or still again, God made us to worship; we may worship God or turn ourselves to countless idols, including ourselves, but we will worship nonetheless. What I am saying is that our making of culture is a wonderful thing which functions according to the dynamic limits and possibilities of God's creation. We may understand God's handiwork as a marvelous and dynamic creation order by which God mediates to us His will and to which we respond in health or unhealth.

I now need to relate my discussion of culture-making to my brief look at time. Simply put, my suggestion is that human



culturation is the means by which time is manifested as history. Moreover, historical study focusses upon this temporal culturation, the temporal process of culture-making.

Let me recall what I said about time never appearing per se, but only as manifested in different kinds of phenomena. Culture-making is the creation of cultural phenomena and the features of the phenomena. As I have indicated, the phenomena include everything we make--a hybrid rose, the city of Toronto, the Inuit people, radios, paints, poems, friendships, a thought, the papal temporal power, wage and price controls, inflation, an identity crisis, Western Civilization. Time--as an ongoing process, according to the relationship of past-present-future, yielding the new and maintaining or discarding the old--is manifested as human history by our making and unmaking the cultural phenomena of the world.

We use certain forms of nouns, often those ending in -tion, and -ing, to denote cultural process, the bringing into being of different types of phenomena. For example, secularization is the creation of secular society and thought. Industrialization is the making of industry and its interrelations with the rest of society. The mobilization of the Russian army in 1914 is the bringing to military readiness of the Russian peasants and others. The urbanization of metropolitan New York is the building up of city life and the incorporation of surrounding people, towns, and countryside. The construction of the pyramids of Giza was the process by which those incredible edifices were made. The painting of the Mona Lisa, the drafting of the Book of Common Prayer, the sinking of the value of the dollar, the cooking of a meal--all are nouns of cultural process. All such nouns refer to the process by which, through human agency, some phenomenon or a feature of a phenomenon was made or modified or unmade over the course of a period of time.

Just as there is not merely one time, but as many types of time as there are types of phenomena, so there is not merely one kind of culturation. There are as many kinds of culturation as there are types of phenomena to be made. This is a point which would have giant consequences for theory if we really worked it out. What I refer to is the proper domain of theories of history, a much neglected affair. The other sciences have been working out their theories for a long time--theories of motion and energy in physics, theories of supply and demand in economics, theories of justice or warfare in politics, theories of education, and so on. Even though such theories may treat their phenomena as static, they nonetheless do develop insight into matters appropriate to such fields of study. Historical theory, by contrast, has almost overlooked the matter which is centrally appropriate to it, namely, temporal culturation. What historical theory we have is mainly epistemological--a worthwhile enough thing, but only one part of the task. We historians have not helped ourselves by our somewhat bullheaded insistence that historical study deals only with the unique. Things have begun to improve now that we have started to make use of social theory in our historical study of social



phenomena, economic theory in the historical study of economic phenomena, and so on. We may rightly use the theory drawn from other disciplines to elucidate the structure of each kind of phenomenon we study historically.

This still leaves historical theory proper. We need models and theories of cultural processes in time--theories of revolution, theories of industrialization, theories of making, theories of social historical change, theories of the creative process in economics, theories of the development of belief. R.M. Hartwell, historian of the industrial revolution in England, chastized historians for failing to give so little thought to defining what an "industrial revolution" is.<sup>31</sup> Because the need is there and because historians are not filling the need, sociologists, economists, and anthropologists, though ill-equipped to think historically, have come up with theories of economic growth, modernization theory, theory of social change, development theory--all of which are species of historical theory. Some of this, like Robert A. Nisbet's Social Change and History: Aspects of the Western Theory of Development, and A.S. Cohan's Theories of Revolution: An Introduction, is pioneering work.<sup>32</sup> The burgeoning field of comparative history is a fruitful source of genuine historical theory.

Theory helps us perform another type of colligation which the historian is obliged to do. I have already mentioned temporal colligation. Now by means of cultural colligation we have to establish relationships among our data to determine what belongs to what phenomena. For example, what is the structure of papal relations with apostolic delegates in the papal states in the 1860's, or who and what kind of people immigrated from Italy to Canada after World War II, or what fiscal data belongs together. These are things we must know in order to be able to examine the temporal process of culture making. Knowledge of government theory, immigration theory, and fiscal theory may enable us to make connections and discern relationships we would otherwise miss.

There is a third duty which precedes temporal and cultural colligation, namely, determining whether a phenomenon even existed. We cannot study it if we do not know whether it existed. And even those things we know about we may misunderstand if some of its relatives existed about which we do not know.

A massive amount of historical study is taken up with these three preliminary requirements--determining the existence of phenomena, arranging things in temporal sequence, and discerning what belongs to the cultural phenomena being studied. But as necessary as these duties are they are only preliminaries to the central concern of historical study--to understand, analyze, describe, and explain the human making and unmaking of phenomena in time.

Let me briefly relate what I am saying about culture to some of the other features I mentioned about time. The past-present-future relationship of time is a relationship of cultural phenomena



as well. For example, Pope Pius IX received the temporal power in 1846 as a patrimony from the past, he sought to defend and maintain it through many ups and downs, but he eventually failed and by 1870 lost all the temporal power except the Vatican palace, St. Peters, and the gardens around it. The new is not only a new time, but it is the appearance of new phenomena and new features of phenomena as well as the disappearance of old phenomena. For instance, my home was a new row house for a Toronto artisan in 1876, but it meant the end of the old farm land and open spaces where it was built. If I periodize the history of my house, I not only set dates, but I mark over the years the coming of new inhabitants who establish new social mores and style in the house as well as contribute to successive deteriorations or renovations of the edifice.

Seen on its grandest scale, the ongoing character of time is, by means of human cultururation, a journey by humanity over the course of time from the Origins of humanity to the Eschaton, the last time when our humanity will be fulfilled and there will be no more pain, brokenness, and sorrow. My individual journey, or that of Malone College, or the journey of the capitalist economy, are, for good or ill, journeys within the journey to the culmination of history.

An attentive person will have noticed that I have so far failed to use the words "cause" and "causation" in discussing the focus of historical study. The omission has been intentional. I am aware that much of what I have been discussing about culture-making, another person might readily regard as talk about causation. I shall not deny the point. I acknowledge that the most likely realm of discourse to which my suggestions may be related is causation theory. Nevertheless I have chosen to avoid the words "cause" and "causation" until now for several reasons. First, I am not convinced that causation theory has successfully overcome its origins in physics and philosophy of natural science. Much of the talk about causation involves asserting that human causation is different from physics, or denying that it is unlike physics. The discussion of covering laws, for example, has difficulty breaking entirely free of notions of laws of cause and effect. Second, the historical causation discussion is dominated by philosophers in the tradition of linguistic analysis, who, for all their positive contributions to understanding language and logic, seem too often not very sensitive to what historical study actually entails. Even the very best in this tradition, like Maurice Mandelbaum, discuss historical causation by means of cases like one billiard ball striking another billiard ball, a simplification which historians rightly regard as unreal and irrelevant to the complexity they deal with.<sup>33</sup> Third, among historians discussion of causes has tended to revolve around a listing of relevant causes followed by a debate in which each proponent advocates one list against another. As Hartwell has observed, there are "no obvious criteria by which one list could be judged superior to any other for explaining why the industrial revolution occurred when, where, and how it did."<sup>34</sup>



My most important reason for avoiding the notions cause and causation is that I have wished to call our attention to matters which I regard as more whole and integral, less reductionistic, and therefore more potentially fruitful of results. Culture and culturaton are more comprehensive than cause and causation, while time and temporality are often neglected by the causation debate. If we are to discuss cause, we would be wise to do so in the context of the larger discussion of time and culture.

#### 4. A concluding remark

My main suggestion has been that the historical in historical study is the temporal process by which phenomena come into being and go out of being. The human historical is the temporal process of culture-making and unmaking. In the light of this definition, when we refer to Italy, 1860, or Jerusalem, A.D. 70, or Papua, 1935, we do more than indicate a point on the astronomic calendar and a space somewhere on the globe. To talk of history as having to do with time-space in this sense is clearly inadequate. My suggestion is that we do better to talk of time-culture and by these terms to indicate the fullness which temporality and culturaton entail. It is the relationship of time and culture that makes the whole thing dynamic and constitutes the human historical.

I do not claim that what I put forward here is the solution to the current confusion in historical study. And almost any of the matters I raise, not to mention the things I left out, can be discussed at great length. I do believe, however, that we can clarify more than we think if we take the time to reflect upon the focus of historical study.



## NOTES

1. The Council of The American Historical Association discussed this problem at its meeting in New York, December, 1979. More than 50 societies are now affiliates of the AHA and many other societies are not.
2. Allan Bullock, "Is History Becoming a Social Science? The Case of Contemporary History," History Today, 39 (1979), 760-767. This was Lord Bullock's Leslie Stephen Lecture in Cambridge University in 1976.
3. Herbert Butterfield, "God in History," God, History and Historians: Modern Christian Views of History, edited by C.T. McIntire (New York: Oxford University Press, 1977), 193-204.
4. Robert F. Berkhofer, Jr., A Behavioral Approach to Historical Analysis (New York: The Free Press, 1969), 211. Berkhofer devotes two thick chapters to the theme.
5. See for example Richard M. Gale (ed.), The Philosophy of Time (New York: MacMillan, 1967). A number of historians do make time central to their definition of the focus of historical study, such as Eric Hobsbawn, "From Social History to the History of Society," and Francois Furet, "Quantification History," both in Historical Studies Today, edited by Felix Gilbert and Stephen R. Graubard (New York: W.W. Norton, 1972), 10-11, and 54-55.
6. John S. Mbiti, African Religions and Philosophy (London: Heinemann, 1969), 16-23.
7. K.K. Mandel, A Comparative Study of the Concepts of Space and Time in Indian Thought (Varanasi: Chowkhamba Sanskrit Series, 1968).
8. Oscar Cullmann, Christ and Time: The Primitive Christian Conception of Time and History (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1950). See also C.T. McIntire, The Ongoing Task of Christian Historiography (Toronto: Institute for Christian Studies, 1974).
9. Berkhofer, Behavioral Approach, 215-216.
10. See C.T. McIntire, England Against the Papacy, 1858-1861: Tories, Whigs, and the Overthrow of Papal Temporal Power (forthcoming).
11. Wolfhart Pannenberg, Theology and the Kingdom of God (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1969), 53-55.
12. Butterfield, The Whig Interpretation of History (London: Bell, 1931).



13. Mircea Eliade, Cosmos and History: The Myth of the Eternal Return (New York: Harper and Row, [1954], 1959). In my judgment Eliade is mistaken to view the Christian understanding of a New Heaven and New Earth as an example of eternal return to a Golden Age of Paradise. The New Earth is not a repeat of the Garden of Eden, but is the fulfillment of the whole course of intervening history.
14. Hebrews 9:11-10:18.
15. Butterfield, Writings on Christianity and History, edited by C.T. McIntire (New York: Oxford University Press, 1979), 124-130.
16. Bhagavad Gita VI, 40-45; IV, 5-9.
17. Grace Cairns, in her Philosophies of History: Cyclical Interpretations of History (New York: Citadel, 1957), classifies even the Bible and Augustine as cyclical.
18. Herman Dooyeweerd, The New Critique of Theoretical Thought (Philadelphia: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1953-1958), I, 16, 28, 30; II, 85, 100-103, 127.
19. Kevin Lynch, What Time is This Place? (Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press, 1972).
20. See, for example, Emmanuel Le Roy Ladurie and Paul Dumont, "Quantitative and Cartographical Exploitation of French Military Archives, 1819-1826," Historical Studies Today, 62-106.
21. W.H. Walsh, Philosophy of History: An Introduction, rev. ed., (New York: Harper and Row, 1968, 59-63).
22. Bede, A History of The English Church and People, trans. by Leo Sherley-Price, revised by R.E. Latham (Penguin, 1955, 1968), 186-191, 315-324. Denys Hay, Annalists and Historians: Western Historiography from the Eighth to the Eighteenth Centuries (London: Methuen, 1977).
23. Berkhofer, A Behavioral Approach, chapters 4-7. Also, Berkhofer, "Clio and the Culture Concept: Some Impressions of a Changing Relationship in American Historiography," Social Science Quarterly, 53 (1972), 297-320.
24. Pitirim Sorokin, Society, Culture, and Personality (New York:, 1962).
25. Jacob Burckhardt, Reflections on History (Indianapolis: Liberty Classics, 1979). The original German text was published in 1905, based on lectures he gave in the period 1868-1885.
26. In McIntire, God, History, and Historians, 261-290.



27. I shall point only to two as examples: in pre-history, Grahame Clark, World Prehistory in New Perspective, Third edition (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977); in Christian philosophy, Dooyeweerd, New Critique, II ("The General Theory of the Modal Spheres").

28. V. Gordon Childe, Man Makes Himself (New York: Mentor, [1936], 1951).

29. Karl Marx, Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts [1844], in Early Writings, edited by T.B. Bottomore (New York: McGraw Hill, 1964), 165-167.

30. Genesis 1-4.

31. R.M. Hartwell (ed.), The Causes of the Industrial Revolution in England (London: Methuen, 1967), 6.

32. Robert A. Nisbet, Social Change and History: Aspects of the Western Theory of Development (New York: Oxford University Press, 1969). A.S. Cohan, Theories of Revolution: An Introduction (London: Nelson, 1975).

33. Maurice Mandelbaum, The Anatomy of Historical Knowledge (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1977), 55.

34. Hartwell, 6.