[handwritten marginalia, top left:] write a essay on "your philosophy in History"; History must speak the philosophy; worlds of history

[handwritten marginalia, top center:] read clearly - note Thesis - be perhaps be ready to discuss some of the articles

The Symphony of History: An Anthology

OUVERTURE

The ancient Greeks personified history as a changeable, elusive, mysterious little lady called Clio the Muse. By now in your study of history you are well-acquainted with Clio and you have begun to gain some understanding of the exasperating complexity of this troublesome woman. You know, for example that history is not the raw facts, but rather it is the meaning which the historian gives to those facts. By using his own scholarly insights, the historian relates and interprets facts in order to understand and explain the "mind" or the "spirit" of past ages. You know also that in order to accomplish this task, a historian must often draw on the whole breadth of knowledge including such "outside" disciplines as psychology, sociology, scientific theory, philosophy and many more. With these tools the historian shapes and models the raw facts into a comprehensible work of the mind.

Yet this definition of history which you accept as self-evident is the product of long controversy among historians as to their own goals and the scope of their discipline. This controversy goes back at least several centuries, and revolves basically around the question: should history be confined to an erudite, antiquarian recounting of the facts which have been painstakingly extracted from documents, inscriptions and other primary sources, or should history be "philosophical", that is, aimed at discovering the inner principles which those facts demonstrate? During the 17th and 18th centuries this battle between the erudite and the philosophes raged fiercely.** Perhaps only Edward Gibbon, the famous author of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire (1776) achieved a synthesis of the two positions. In his work he combined meticulous scholarship (largely based on the careful

[handwritten marginalia, right:] Extensive Knowledge achieved from Books

[handwritten marginalia, left side, vertical:] scientific or philosophical; erudite; philosophes

** See A. Momigliano, "Gibbon's Contribution to Historical Method," Historia II, 450-63.

érudits) with the philosophic, cultural history of the _philosophes_, such as Voltaire. Unfortunately, this balance between the two viewpoints, so brilliantly achieved in Gibbon, was at least partially lost sight of during the 19th century. The second half of the 19th century was the "age of science" _par excellence._ Because of the many scientific and technological advances made at this time, faith in the scientific method was "in the air". Naturally historians became caught up with this enthusiasm and attempted to make history into an exact science. Especially in Germany "scientific history" reigned supreme: history consisted of facts, primarily facts concerning the political development of nations. If enough facts were accumulated, historical truth would emerge. This scientific history did indeed produce a rich harvest for later generations of historians. Delving into original sources with a zeal and expertise heretofore unexcelled, scholars of the late 19th century unearthed mounds of information. However, on the whole, these scholars were primarily interested in "history as politics:" the reigns of kings, the rise of institutions, the causes and effects of laws.

Since the turn of the century, history has gradually developed away from the political-scientific school toward a more philosophic, Gibbonish position. Of course, modern history is not just the 18th century philosophical history of Gibbon and Voltaire warmed-over for 20th century readers. Drawing upon the results of modern research in psychology, sociology, economics, the philosophy of science, art and religion, modern historians are concerned more and more with determining the underlying values and assumptions and ideologies of past eras in order to understand how they have influenced (and how they have been influenced by) historical events. To do this, today's historians are asking themselves new questions about past centuries. Here are some examples: In a given period, what were the prevalent assumptions (both conscious and unconscious) about life and society? What was real and beautiful and true for the people of the time? What factors helped to set and change these cultural values? What ideas of the intellectual elite influenced the average person? What did most people expect

expect of religion? How was morality defined by the various classes? What was the role of the artist? Of the scientist? The governmental official? What was the "spirit of the age" in regard to the possibility of progress in history? What did people believe was the purpose of man in the universe?

Obviously the list could go on and on. But from this sample you can see that these are not the usual historical questions. They concern the essence of history, the Big Questions about civilization and cultures. The struggle to answer such questions can only end in the gaining of wisdom.

Yet despite these "new questions" and interdisciplinary approach, contemporary history must still be founded on facts and careful research; certainly modern historians are in the debt of the 19th century scientific historians, who have poured over documents, established precise chronologies, etc. A teacher who attempts to present a well-rounded course in this field must draw on both approaches: the descriptive-narrative survey of politics, economics, art and so forth; and also the philosophical-interdisciplinary historical approach to determine the underlying assumptions and values and "mind" of the age.

History may be thought of as a symphony orchestra made up of many instruments; when played together, the instruments provide a full, rich and profound experience. Yet once one realizes the function of all the instruments it is sometimes helpful to hear the same theme played by various instruments individually. Often this method will give new insights in understanding the symphony as a whole. In the following pages there are assembled excerpts from modern classics in history to show you how it has been done by masters. Each passage will show how one "instrument" (that is, auxiliary discipline) can be used by the historian to understand and explain the "mind" of a particular historical age.

To use a different analogy: history, like the world, may be looked at through various types of spectacles. If a person wears pink tinted glasses, he will see everything from a rosy point of view. Likewise, the sociologist, if he writes history, will view developments through a different pair of spectacles because of his training, interests and values. He will see things in the facts which the art historian or the economist will miss. On the other hand, a philosopher's glasses will see history in a new perspective all together: his lenses will block certain rays of light but let other rays shine through. Ideally, for an anthology such as this, one should look at only one event or aspect of history through a variety of spectacles. Yet there are virtually no historical subjects which have been studied by experts in all possible fields, including science, art, religion, economics, psychology, etc. Thus, as an alternative it has been necessary to choose historical works which deal with different topics in order to demonstrate to you how the various types of "historical glasses" work.

First, Erwin Panofsky describes how the philosophy of the Middle Ages is mirrored in the art of the Gothic cathedral. Thomas Kuhn in his Structure of Scientific Revolutions describes how scientific revolutions occur and then how scientific "paradigms" or outlooks color the whole intellectual world view of an age. The selection from Michel Foucault's Madness and Civilization illustrates how psychology and the study of insanity can help to explain the values of men in different ages. The passage from Eric Ericson's Young Man Luther is another brilliant use of psychology to illuminate historical personalities. The sociologist-historian Phillippe Ariès' Centuries of Childhood will indicate how the study of the concept of childhood and the family can become a key to under-standing historical change. The excerpt from Lester Crocker's Nature and Culture uses literature as a tool in the analysis of social attitudes; his spectacular thesis that the Marquis of Sade, besides lending his name to sadism was the precursor of modern nihilism. The excerpt from Fredrich Engels illustrates how

the "instrument" of Marxian economics and historical materialism can play the

tune of history. Mellers' article on Stravinsky indicates that even music can

be employed by the alert historian to interpret a civilization. As a change of

pace, St. Augustine's City of God is included as a brilliant example of history

as seen through a Christian theologian's glasses. Finally, A. O. Lovejoy's

Great Chain of Being shows you how one specific concept has shaped and has been

shaped by history for thousands of years.

I.   Art Selection: from Erwin Panofsky's Gothic Architecture and Scholasticism

In this passage Panofsky postulates an intimate connection between medieval

philosophy and Gothic art.   He believes that "Scholasticism," that is, the

philosophy movement of the 12th and 13th centuries which attempted to reconcile

faith and reason by using logic, greatly influenced the plans of the Gothic

cathedrals.   Scholastic thinkers wrote highly technical expositions of philosophical

problems called Summae; they were obsessed by the possibilities of harmonizing

and organizing all ancient schools of thought with Christianity.   They loved to

organize and arrange.   These characteristics are also found in the cathedrals.

> During the "concentrated" phase of this astonishingly synchronous
> development, viz., in the period between about 1130-40 and about 1270,
> we can observe, it seems to me, a connection between Gothic art and Scholastic-
> ism which is more concrete than a mere "parallelism" and yet more general than
> those individual (and very important) "influences" which are inevitably
> exerted on painters, sculptors, or architects by erudite advisers.   In
> contract to a mere parallelism, the connection which I have in mind is a
> genuine cause-and-effect relation; but in contrast to an individual influence,
> this cause-and-effect relation comes about by diffusion rather than by direct
> impact.   It comes about by the spreading of what may be called, for want of
> a better term, a mental habit.... Such mental habits are at work in all and
> every civilization.   All modern writing on history is permeated by the
> idea of evolution (an idea the evolution of which needs much more study
> than it has received thus far and seems to enter a critical phase right now);
> and all of us, without a thorough knowledge of biochemistry or psychoanalysis,
> speak with the greatest of ease of vitamin deficiencies, allergies, mother
> fixations and inferiority complexes.

> Often it is difficult or impossible to single out one habit-forming force
> from many others and to imagine the channels of transmission.   However the
> period from about 1130-40 to about 1270 and the "100-mile zone around Paris"
> constitute an exception.   In this tight little sphere Scholasticism possessed
> what amounted to a monopoly in education.   By and large, intellectual training
> shifted from the monastic schools to institutions urban rather than rural
> cosmopolitan rather than regional, and, so to speak, only half ecclesiastic:
> to the cathedral schools, the universities, and the studia of the new
> menlicant orders--nearly all of them products of the thirteenth century--
> whose members played an increasingly important role within the universities
> themselves.

> Like the High Scholastic Summa, the High Gothic cathedral aimed, first
> of all, at "totality" and therefore tended to approximate, by synthesis as
> well as elimination, one perfect and final solution; we may therefore speak
> of the High Gothic plan or the High Gothic system with much more confidence
> than would be possible in any other period.   In its imagery, the High Gothic
> cathedral sought to embody the whole of Christian knowlege theological
> moral, natural, and historical, with everything in its place and that which no
> longer found its place, suppressed.   In structural design, it similarly sought
> to synthesize all major motifs handed down by separate channels and finally

II. Science Selection: from Thomas Kuhn's The Structure of Scientific Revolutions

To understand how the theories of an age influence an era's whole "world view." every student should read Thomas Kuhn's Structure in its entirety. However, the following passages will give you an idea of his argument and approach. Kuhn asserts that scientific progress is not a steady, gradual assimilation of facts to form one body of truth. Instead, scientific advance results from periodic revolutions in thought, which are revolts against the accepted scientific paradigm or view of the world. The change from Ptolemaic to Copernican cosmology in the 16-17th centuries is an example.

A scientific revolution begins with the accidental discovery of phenomena which cannot be explained by the current theories. If more mysterious phenomena are discovered, a period of crisis in the scientific community results. Finally, a scientist (usually a man relatively new to the field) devises a new general theory which will explain the new discoveries. Younger scientists tend to accept this new competing theory. The "old guard" in the field continue to adhere to the current theory, but they soon die out. Then the "new men" take over, re-write the textbooks in accordance with the new view and begin to fit all aspects of the old science into the new paradigm. This process will eventually repeat itself.

From this article we can see how a scientific paradigm influences all of culture. For example, in our own age, the theory of relativity and the atomic "principle of indeterminacy" has certainly influenced philosophy and ethics. Relativism in morality and "situation ethics" are founded on the proposition that one cannot know any absolute truth so everyone must devise a life-style of his own. Just as some atomic particles seem to behave according to their own standards, so each person must "do his own thing." Although Kuhn writes primarily from a scientific view, he also employs psychology to understand history.

(Kuhn says that the first step in scientific revolution is the discovery of phenomena which do not fit into the current paradigm.)

achieved an unparalleled balance between the basilica and the central plan type, suppressing all elements that might endanger this balance, such as the crypt, the galleries, and towers other than the two in front.

The second requirement of Scholastic writing, "arrangement according to a system of homologous parts and parts of parts," is most graphically expressed in the uniform division and subdivision of the whole structure. As a result of this homology we perceive what corresponds to the hierarchy of "logical levels" in a well-organized Scholastic treatise. /Gothic architects divided the/ entire structure, as was customary in the period itself, into three main parts, the nave, the transept, and the chevet (which in turn comprises the fore-choir and the choir proper), and distinguishing, withing these parts, between high nave and sideaisles, and the one hand, and between apse, ambulatory, and hemicycle of chapels, on the other. . . .

Both the Scholastics and Gothic architects, says Panofsky, were interested

in achieving harmony and the "ultimate reconciliation" of all contradictions.

He explains how this ideal began:

All that mediaeval man could know about divine revelation, and much of what he held to be true in other respects, was transmitted by the authorities (auctoritates): primarily, by the canonical books of the Bible which furnished arguments "intrinsic" though merely "probably," and of the "philosophers" which furnished arguments "Not intrinsic" (extranes) and merely probably for this very reason. Now, it could not escape notice that these authorities, even passages of Scripture itself, often conflicted with one another. There was no other way out than to accept them just the same and to interpret and reinterpret them over and over again until they could be reconciled.

It was this technique of reconciling the seemingly irreconcilable, perfected into a fine art through the assimilation of Aristotelian logic, that determined the form of academic instruction. . . . .

Needless to say, this principle was bound to form a mental habit no less decisive and all-embracing than that of unconditional clarification. Combative though they were in dealing with each other, the Scholastics of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries were unanimous in accepting the authorities and prided themselves on their skill in understanding and exploiting them rather than on the originality of their own thought.

An attitude similar to that of High Scholasticism must be presupposed in the builders of the High Gothic cathedrals. For these architects the great structures of the past had an auctoritas quite similar to that which the Fathers had for the schoolmen. Of two apparently contradictory motifs both of them sanctioned by authority, one could not simply be rejected in favor of the other. They had to be worked through to the limit and they had to be reconciled in the end;. . . .