

The Past and Present Society

The Revival of Narrative: Reflections on a New Old History

Author(s): Lawrence Stone

Source: *Past & Present*, No. 85 (Nov., 1979), pp. 3-24

Published by: Oxford University Press on behalf of The Past and Present Society

Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/650677>

Accessed: 18-11-2017 09:54 UTC

REFERENCES

Linked references are available on JSTOR for this article:

http://www.jstor.org/stable/650677?seq=1&cid=pdf-reference#references_tab_contents

You may need to log in to JSTOR to access the linked references.

JSTOR is a not-for-profit service that helps scholars, researchers, and students discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content in a trusted digital archive. We use information technology and tools to increase productivity and facilitate new forms of scholarship. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

Your use of the JSTOR archive indicates your acceptance of the Terms & Conditions of Use, available at <http://about.jstor.org/terms>



JSTOR

Oxford University Press, The Past and Present Society are collaborating with JSTOR to digitize, preserve and extend access to *Past & Present*

Past and Present has long been conscious of the need to initiate discussion of general points of historical inquiry, theory and method. We have now decided to try to publish at fairly regular intervals short pieces of such a nature, opening up new approaches and stimulating debate. We are pleased to publish the first of these, by Professor Lawrence Stone.

THE REVIVAL OF NARRATIVE: REFLECTIONS ON A NEW OLD HISTORY*

I

HISTORIANS HAVE ALWAYS TOLD STORIES. FROM THUCYDIDES AND Tacitus to Gibbon and Macaulay the composition of narrative in lively and elegant prose was always accounted their highest ambition. History was regarded as a branch of rhetoric. For the last fifty years, however, this story-telling function has fallen into ill repute among those who have regarded themselves as in the vanguard of the profession, the practitioners of the so-called “new history” of the post-Second-World-War era.¹ In France story-telling was dismissed as “l’histoire événementielle”. Now, however, I detect evidence of an undercurrent which is sucking many prominent “new historians” back again into some form of narrative.

Before embarking upon an examination of the evidence for such a shift and upon some speculations about what may have caused it, a number of things had better be made clear. The first is what is meant here by “narrative”.² Narrative is taken to mean the organization of material in a chronologically sequential order and the focusing of the content into a single coherent story, albeit with sub-plots. The two essential ways in which narrative history differs from structural history is that its arrangement is descriptive rather than analytical and that its central focus is on man not circumstances. It therefore

* I am much indebted to my wife and my colleagues, Professors Robert Darnton, Natalie Davis, Felix Gilbert, Charles Gillispie, Theodore Rabb, Carl Schorske and many others for valuable criticism of an early draft of this paper. Most of the suggestions I have accepted, but the blame for the final product rests on me alone.

¹ These recent “new historians” should not be confused with the American “new historians” of an earlier generation, like Charles Beard and James Harvey Robinson.

² For the history of narrative, see L. Gossman, “Augustin Thierry and Liberal Historiography”, *History and Theory*, Beiheft xv (1979); H. White, *Metahistory: The Historical Imagination in the Nineteenth Century* (Baltimore, 1973). I am indebted to Professor Randolph Starn for directing my attention to the latter.

deals with the particular and specific rather than the collective and statistical. Narrative is a mode of historical writing, but it is a mode which also affects and is affected by the content and the method.

The kind of narrative which I have in mind is not that of the simple antiquarian reporter or annalist. It is narrative directed by some "pregnant principle", and which possesses a theme and an argument. Thucydides's theme was the Peloponnesian wars and their disastrous effects upon Greek society and politics; Gibbon's the decline and fall of the Roman empire; Macaulay's the rise of a liberal participatory constitution in the stresses of revolutionary politics. Biographers tell the story of a life, from birth to death. No narrative historians, as I have defined them, avoid analysis altogether, but this is not the skeletal framework around which their work is constructed. And finally, they are deeply concerned with the rhetorical aspects of their presentation. Whether successful or not in the attempt, they certainly aspire to stylistic elegance, wit and aphorism. They are not content to throw words down on a page and let them lie there, with the view that, since history is a science, it needs no art to help it along.

The trends here identified should not be taken to apply to the great mass of historians. All that is being attempted is to point to a noticeable shift of content, method and style among a very tiny, but disproportionately prominent, section of the historical profession as a whole. History has always had many mansions, and must continue to do so if it is to flourish in the future. The triumph of any one genre or school eventually always leads to narrow sectarianism, narcissism and self-adulation, contempt or tyranny towards outsiders, and other disagreeable and self-defeating characteristics. We can all think of cases where this has happened. In some countries and institutions it has been unhealthy that the "new historians" have had things so much their own way in the last thirty years; and it will be equally unhealthy if the new trend, if trend it be, achieves similar domination here and there.

It is also essential to establish once and for all that this essay is trying to chart observed changes in historical fashion, not to make value judgements about what are good, and what are less good, modes of historical writing. Value judgements are hard to avoid in any historiographical study, but this essay is not trying to raise a banner or start a revolution. No one is being urged to throw away his calculator and tell a story.

II

Before looking at the recent trends, one has first to attempt to explain the abandonment by many historians, about fifty years ago, of a two-thousand-year-old tradition of narrative as the ideal mode. In the first place, in spite of impassioned assertions to the contrary, it was

widely recognized, with some justice, that answering the *what* and the *how* questions in a chronological fashion, even if directed by a central argument, does not in fact go very far towards answering the *why* questions. Moreover historians were at that time strongly under the influence of both Marxist ideology and social science methodology. As a result they were interested in societies not individuals, and were confident that a "scientific history" could be achieved which would in time produce generalized laws to explain historical change.

Here we must pause again to define what is meant by "scientific history". The first "scientific history" was formulated by Ranke in the nineteenth century and was based on the study of new source materials. It was assumed that close textual criticism of hitherto undisclosed records buried in state archives would once and for all establish the facts of political history. In the last thirty years there have been three very different kinds of "scientific history" current in the profession, all based not on new data, but on new models or new methods: they are the Marxist economic model, the French ecological/demographic model, and the American "cliometric" methodology. According to the old Marxist model, history moves in a dialectical process of thesis and antithesis, through a clash of classes which are themselves created by changes in control over the means of production. In the 1930s this idea resulted in a fairly simplistic economic/social determinism which affected many young scholars of the time. It was a notion of "scientific history" which was strongly defended by Marxists up to the late 1950s. It should, however, be noted that the current generation of "neo-Marxists" seems to have abandoned most of the basic tenets of the traditional Marxist historians of the 1930s. They are now as concerned with the state, politics, religion and ideology as their non-Marxist colleagues, and in the process appear to have dropped the claim to be pursuing "scientific history".

The second meaning of "scientific history" is that used since 1945 by the *Annales* school of French historians, of whom Emmanuel Le Roy Ladurie may stand as a spokesman, albeit a rather extreme one. According to him, the key variable in history is shifts in the ecological balance between food supplies and population, a balance necessarily to be determined by long-term quantitative studies of agricultural productivity, demographic changes and food prices. This kind of "scientific history" emerged from a combination of long-standing French interest in historical geography and historical demography, coupled with the methodology of quantification. Le Roy Ladurie told us bluntly that "history that is not quantifiable cannot claim to be scientific".³

³ E. Le Roy Ladurie, *The Territory of the Historian*, trans. B. and S. Reynolds (Hassocks, 1979), p. 15, and pt. i, *passim*.

The third meaning of “scientific history” is primarily American, and is based on the claim, loudly and clearly expressed by the “cliometricians”, that only their own very special quantitative methodology has any claim to be scientific.⁴ According to them the historical community can be divided into two. There are “the traditionalists”, who include both the old-style narrative historians dealing mainly with state politics and constitutional history, as well as the “new” economic and demographic historians of the *Annales* and *Past and Present* schools — despite the fact that the latter use quantification and that for several decades the two groups were bitter enemies, especially in France. Quite separate are the “scientific historians”, the cliometricians, who are defined by a methodology rather than by any particular subject-matter or interpretation of the nature of historical change. They are historians who build paradigmatic models, sometimes counter-factual ones about worlds which never existed in real life, and who test the validity of the models by the most sophisticated mathematical and algebraical formulae applied to very large quantities of electronically processed data. Their special field is economic history, which they have virtually conquered in the United States, and they have made large inroads into the history of recent democratic politics by applying their methods to voting behaviour, both of the electorate and the elected. These great enterprises are necessarily the result of team-work, rather like the building of the pyramids: squads of diligent assistants assemble data, encode it, programme it, and pass it through the maw of the computer, all under the autocratic direction of a team-leader. The results cannot be tested by any of the traditional methods since the evidence is buried in private computer-tapes, not exposed in published footnotes. In any case the data are often expressed in so mathematically recondite a form that they are unintelligible to the majority of the historical profession. The only reassurance to the bemused laity is that the members of this priestly order disagree fiercely and publicly about the validity of each other’s findings.

These three types of “scientific history” overlap to some degree, but they are sufficiently distinct, certainly in the eyes of their practitioners, to justify the creation of this tripartite typology.

Other “scientific” explanations of historical change have risen to favour for a while and then gone out of fashion. French structuralism produced some brilliant theorizing, but no single major work of history — unless one considers Michel Foucault’s writings as primarily works of history, rather than of moral philosophy with examples drawn from history. Parsonian functionalism, which itself

⁴ An unpublished paper by R. W. Fogel, “Scientific History and Traditional History” (1979), offers the most persuasive case that can be mustered for regarding this as the one and only truly “scientific” history. But I remain unconvinced.

was preceded by Malinowski's *Scientific Theory of Culture*,⁵ had a long run, despite its failure to offer an explanation of change over time and the obvious fact that the fit between the material and biological needs of a society and the institutions and values by which it lives has always been less than perfect, and often very poor indeed. Both structuralism and functionalism have provided valuable insights, but neither has come even near to supplying historians with an all-embracing scientific explanation of historical change.

All the three main groups of "scientific historians", which flourished respectively from the 1930s until the 1950s, the 1950s to mid-1970s, and in the 1960s and early 1970s, were supremely confident that the major problems of historical explanation were soluble, and that they would, given time, succeed in solving them. Cast-iron solutions would, they assumed, eventually be provided for such hitherto baffling questions as the causes of "great revolutions" or the shifts from feudalism to capitalism, and from traditional to modern societies. This heady optimism, which was so apparent from the 1930s to the 1960s, was buttressed among the first two groups of "scientific historians" by the belief that material conditions such as changes in the relationship between population and food supply, changes in the means of production and class conflict, were the driving forces in history. Many, but not all, regarded intellectual, cultural, religious, psychological, legal, even political, developments as mere epiphenomena. Since economic and/or demographic determinism largely dictated the content of the new genre of historical research, the analytic rather than the narrative mode was best suited to organize and present the data, and the data themselves had as far as possible to be quantitative in nature.

The French historians, who in the 1950s and 1960s were in the lead in this brave enterprise, developed a standard hierarchical arrangement: first, both in place and in order of importance, came the economic and demographic facts; then the social structure; and lastly, intellectual, religious, cultural and political developments. These three tiers were thought of like the storeys of a house: each rests on the foundation of the one below, but those above can have little or no reciprocal effect on those underneath. In some hands the new methodology and new questions produced results which were little short of sensational. The first books of Fernand Braudel, Pierre Goubert and Emmanuel Le Roy Ladurie will rank among the greatest historical writings of any time and place.⁶ They alone fully justify the adoption for a generation of the analytical and structural approach.

⁵ Bronislaw Malinowski, *A Scientific Theory of Culture, and Other Essays* (Chapel Hill, N.C., 1944).

⁶ F. Braudel, *La Méditerranée et le monde méditerranéen à l'époque de Philippe II* (Paris, 1949); P. Goubert, *Beauvais et le Beauvaisis de 1600 à 1730* (Paris, 1960); E. Le Roy Ladurie, *Les paysans du Languedoc* (Paris, 1966).

The conclusion, however, was historical revisionism with a vengeance. Since only the first tier really mattered, and since the subject-matter was the material conditions of the masses, not the culture of the élite, it became possible to talk about the history of Continental Europe from the fourteenth to the eighteenth centuries as "l'histoire immobile". Le Roy Ladurie argued that nothing, absolutely nothing, changed over those five centuries, since the society remained obstinately imprisoned in its traditional and unaltered "éco-démographie".⁷ In this new model of history such movements as the Renaissance, the Reformation, the Enlightenment and the rise of the modern state simply disappeared. Ignored were the massive transformations of culture, art, architecture, literature, religion, education, science, law, constitution, state-building, bureaucracy, military organization, fiscal arrangements, and so on, which took place among the higher echelons of society in those five centuries. This curious blindness was the result of a firm belief that these matters were all parts of the third tier, a mere superficial superstructure. When, recently, some scholars from this school began to use their well-tried statistical methods on such problems as literacy, the contents of libraries and the rise and fall of Christian piety, they described their activities as the application of quantification to "le troisième niveau".

III

The first cause of the current revival of narrative is a widespread disillusionment with the economic determinist model of historical explanation and this three-tiered hierarchical arrangement to which it gave rise. The split between social history on the one hand and intellectual history on the other has had the most unfortunate consequences. Both have become isolated, inward-looking, and narrow. In America intellectual history, which had once been the flagship of the profession, fell upon hard times and for a while lost confidence in itself;⁸ social history has flourished as never before, but its pride in its isolated achievements was but the harbinger of an eventual decline in vitality, when faith in purely economic and social explanations began to ebb. The historical record has now obliged many of us to admit that there is an extraordinarily complex two-way flow of interactions between facts of population, food supply, climate, bullion supply, prices, on the one hand, and values, ideas and customs on the other. Along with social relationships of status or class, they form a single web of meaning.

⁷ E. Le Roy Ladurie, "L'histoire immobile", in his *Le territoire de l'historien*, 2 vols. (Paris, 1973-8), ii; the article was written in 1973.

⁸ R. Darnton, "Intellectual and Cultural History", in M. Kammen (ed.), *History in Our Time* (forthcoming Ithaca, N.Y., 1980).

Many historians now believe that the culture of the group, and even the will of the individual, are potentially at least as important causal agents of change as the impersonal forces of material output and demographic growth. There is no theoretical reason why the latter should always dictate the former, rather than vice versa, and indeed evidence is piling up of examples to the contrary.⁹ Contraception, for example, is clearly as much a product of a state of mind as it is of economic circumstances. The proof of this contention can be found in the wide diffusion of this practice throughout France, long before industrialization, without much population pressure except on small farms, and nearly a century before any other western country. We also now know that the nuclear family antedated industrial society, and that concepts of privacy, love and individualism similarly emerged among some of the most traditional sectors of a traditional society in late seventeenth- and early eighteenth-century England, rather than as a result of later modernizing economic and social processes. The Puritan ethic was a by-product of an unworldly religious movement which took root in the Anglo-Saxon societies of England and New England centuries before routine work-patterns were necessary or the first factory was built. On the other hand there is an inverse correlation, at any rate in nineteenth-century France, between literacy and urbanization and industrialization. Levels of literacy turn out to be a poor guide to "modern" attitudes of mind or "modern" occupations.¹⁰ Thus the linkages between culture and society are clearly very complex indeed, and seem to vary from time to time and from place to place.

It is hard not to suspect that the decline of ideological commitment among western intellectuals has also played its part. If one looks at three of the most passionate and hard-fought historical battles of the 1950s and 1960s — about the rise or decline of the gentry in seventeenth-century England, about the rise or fall of working-class real income in the early stages of industrialization, and about the causes, nature and consequences of American slavery — all were at bottom debates fired by current ideological concerns. It seemed desperately important at the time to know whether or not the Marxist interpretation was right, and therefore these historical questions mattered and were exciting. The muting of ideological controversy caused by the intellectual decline of Marxism and the adoption of mixed economies in the west has coincided with a decline in the thrust of historical research to ask the big *why* questions, and it is plausible to suggest that there is some relationship between the two trends.

⁹ M. Zuckerman, "Dreams that Men Dare to Dream: The Role of Ideas in Western Modernization", *Social Science Hist.*, ii (1978).

¹⁰ F. Furet and J. Ozouf, *Lire et écrire* (Paris, 1977). See also K. Lockridge, *Literacy in Colonial New England* (New York, 1974).

Economic and demographic determinism has not only been undermined by a recognition of ideas, culture and even individual will as independent variables. It has also been sapped by a revived recognition that political and military power, the use of brute force, has very frequently dictated the structure of the society, the distribution of wealth, the agrarian system, and even the culture of the élite. Classic examples are the Norman conquest of England in 1066, and probably also the divergent economic and social paths taken by eastern Europe, north-western Europe and England in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.¹¹ Future historians will undoubtedly severely criticize the "new historians" of the 1950s and 1960s for their failure to take sufficient account of power: of political organization and decision-making and the vagaries of military battle and siege, destruction and conquest. Civilizations have risen and fallen due to fluctuations in political authority and shifts in the fortunes of war, and it is extraordinary that these matters should have been neglected for so long by those who regarded themselves as in the forefront of the historical profession. In practice the bulk of the profession continued to concern itself with political history, just as it had always done, but this is not where the cutting edge of the profession was generally thought to be. A belated recognition of the importance of power, of personal political decisions by individuals, of the chances of battle, have forced historians back to the narrative mode, whether they like it or not. To use Machiavelli's terms, neither *virtu* nor *fortuna* can be dealt with except by a narrative, or even an anecdote, since the first is an individual attribute and the second a happy or unhappy accident.

The third development which has dealt a serious blow to structural and analytical history is the mixed record to date in the use of what has been its most characteristic methodology — namely quantification. Quantification has undoubtedly matured and has now established itself as an essential methodology in many areas of historical inquiry, especially demographic history, the history of social structure and social mobility, economic history, and the history of voting patterns and voting behaviour in democratic political systems. Its use has greatly improved the general quality of historical discourse, by demanding the citation of precise numbers instead of the previous loose use of words. Historians can no longer get away with saying "more", "less", "growing", "declining", all of which logically imply numerical comparisons, without ever stating explicitly the statistical basis for their assertions. It has also made argument exclusively by example seem somewhat disreputable. Critics now demand supporting statistical evidence to show that the examples are typical, and not

¹¹ I refer to the debate triggered off by Robert Brenner, "Agrarian Class Structure and Economic Development in Pre-Industrial Europe", *Past and Present*, no. 70 (Feb. 1976), pp. 30-75.

exceptions to the rule. These procedures have undoubtedly improved the logical power and persuasiveness of historical argument. Nor is there any disagreement that whenever it is appropriate, fruitful and possible from the surviving records, the historian should count.

There is, however, a difference in kind between the artisan quantification done by a single researcher totting up figures on a hand-calculator and producing simple tables and percentages, and the work of the cliometricians. The latter specialize in the assembling of vast quantities of data by teams of assistants, the use of the electronic computer to process it all, and the application of highly sophisticated mathematical procedures to the results obtained. Doubts have been cast on all stages of this procedure. Many question whether historical data are ever sufficiently reliable to warrant such procedures; whether teams of assistants can be trusted to apply uniform coding procedures to large quantities of often widely diverse and even ambiguous documents; whether much crucial detail is not lost in the coding procedure; if it is ever possible to be confident that all coding and programming errors have been eliminated; and whether the sophistication of the mathematical and algebraic formulae are not ultimately self-defeating since they baffle most historians. Finally, many are disturbed by the virtual impossibility of checking up on the reliability of the final results, since they must depend not on published footnotes but on privately owned computer-tapes, in turn the result of thousands of privately owned code-sheets, in turn abstracted from the raw data.

These questions are real and will not go away. We all know of doctoral dissertations or printed papers or monographs which have used the most sophisticated techniques either to prove the obvious or to claim to prove the implausible, using formulae and language which render the methodology unverifiable to the ordinary historian. The results sometimes combine the vices of unreadability and triviality. We all know of the doctoral dissertations which languish unfinished since the researcher has been unable to keep under intellectual control the sheer volume of print-out spewed out by the computer, or has spent so much effort preparing the data for the machine that his time, patience and money have run out. One clear conclusion is surely that, whenever possible, sampling by hand is preferable and quicker than, and just as reliable as, running the whole universe through a machine. We all know of projects in which a logical flaw in the argument or a failure to use plain common sense has vitiated or cast in doubt many of the conclusions. We all know of other projects in which the failure to record one piece of information at the coding stage has led to the loss of an important result. We all know of others where the sources of information are themselves so unreliable that we can be sure that little confidence can be placed in the conclusions based on their quantitative manipulation. Parish registers are a classic example, upon which a

gigantic amount of effort is currently being spent in many countries, only some of which is likely to produce worthwhile results.

Despite its unquestionable achievements it cannot be denied that quantification has not fulfilled the high hopes of twenty years ago. Most of the great problems of history remain as insoluble as ever, if not more so. Consensus on the causes of the English, French or American revolutions are as far away as ever, despite the enormous effort put into elucidating their social and economic origins. Thirty years of intensive research on demographic history has left us more rather than less bewildered. We do not know why the population ceased to grow in most areas of Europe between 1640 and 1740; we do not know why it began to grow again in 1740; or even whether the cause was rising fertility or declining mortality. Quantification has told us a lot about the *what* questions of historical demography, but relatively little so far about the *why*. The major questions about American slavery remain as elusive as ever, despite the application to them of one of the most massive and sophisticated studies ever mounted. The publication of its findings, far from solving most problems, merely raised the temperature of the debate.¹² It had the beneficial effect of focusing attention on important issues such as the diet, hygiene, health and family structure of American Negroes under slavery, but it also diverted attention from the equally or even more important psychological effects of slavery upon both masters and slaves, simply because these matters could not be measured by a computer. Urban histories are cluttered with statistics, but mobility trends still remain obscure. Today no one is quite sure whether English society was more open and mobile than the French in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, or even whether the gentry or aristocracy was rising or falling in England before the Civil War. We are no better off now in these respects than were James Harrington in the seventeenth century or Tocqueville in the nineteenth.

It is just those projects that have been the most lavishly funded, the most ambitious in the assembly of vast quantities of data by armies of paid researchers, the most scientifically processed by the very latest in computer technology, the most mathematically sophisticated in presentation, which have so far turned out to be the most disappointing. Today, two decades and millions of dollars, pounds and francs later, there are only rather modest results to show for the expenditure of so much time, effort and money. There are huge piles of greenish print-out gathering dust in scholars' offices; there are many turgid and excruciatingly dull tomes full of tables of figures, abstruse algebraic equations and percentages given to two decimal places. There are also

¹² R. W. Fogel and S. Engerman, *Time on the Cross* (Boston, Mass., 1974); P. A. David *et al.*, *Reckoning with Slavery* (New York, 1976); H. Gutman, *Slavery and the Numbers Game* (Urbana, Ill., 1975).

many valuable new findings and a few major contributions to the relatively small corpus of historical works of permanent value. But in general the sophistication of the methodology has tended to exceed the reliability of the data, while the usefulness of the results seems — up to a point — to be in inverse correlation to the mathematical complexity of the methodology and the grandiose scale of data-collection.

On any cost-benefit analysis the rewards of large-scale computerized history have so far only occasionally justified the input of time and money and this has led historians to cast around for other methods of investigating the past, which will shed more light with less trouble. In 1968 Le Roy Ladurie prophesied that by the 1980s “the historian will be a programmer or he will be nothing”.¹³ The prophecy has not been fulfilled, least of all by the prophet himself.

Historians are therefore forced back upon the principle of indeterminacy, a recognition that the variables are so numerous that at best only middle-range generalizations are possible in history, as Robert Merton long ago suggested. The macro-economic model is a pipe-dream, and “scientific history” a myth. Monocausal explanations simply do not work. The use of feed-back models of explanation built around Weberian “elective affinities” seems to provide better tools for revealing something of the elusive truth about historical causation, especially if we abandon any claim that this methodology is in any sense scientific.

Disillusionment with economic or demographic monocausal determinism and with quantification has led historians to start asking a quite new set of questions, many of which were previously blocked from view by the preoccupation with a specific methodology, structural, collective and statistical. More and more of the “new historians” are now trying to discover what was going on inside people’s heads in the past, and what it was like to live in the past, questions which inevitably lead back to the use of narrative.

A significant sub-group of the great French school of historians, led by Lucien Febvre, has always regarded intellectual, psychological and cultural changes as independent variables of central importance. But for a long time they were in a minority, left behind in a remote back-water as the flood-tide of “scientific history”, economic and social in content, structural in organization and quantitative in methodology, swept past them. Now, however, the topics they were interested in have quite suddenly become fashionable. The questions asked, however, are not quite the same as they used to be, since they are now often drawn from anthropology. In practice, if not in theory, anthropology has tended to be one of the most ahistorical of disciplines in its lack of interest in change over time. None the less it has taught us how a whole social system and set of values can be brilliantly illuminated by the

¹³ Le Roy Ladurie, *Le territoire de l'historien*, i, p. 14 (my translation).

searchlight method of recording in elaborate detail a single event, provided that it is very carefully set in its total context and very carefully analysed for its cultural meaning. The archetypal model of this "thick description" is Clifford Geertz's classic account of a Balinese cock-fight.¹⁴ We historians cannot, alas, actually be present, with notebooks, tape-recorders and cameras, at the events we describe, but now and again we can find a cloud of witnesses to tell us what it was like to be there. The first cause for the revival of narrative among some of the "new historians" has therefore been the replacement of sociology and economics by anthropology as the most influential of the social sciences.

One of the most striking recent changes in the content of history has been a quite sudden growth of interest in feelings, emotions, behaviour patterns, values, and states of mind. In this respect the influence of anthropologists like Evans-Pritchard, Clifford Geertz, Mary Douglas and Victor Turner has been very great indeed. Although psycho-history is so far largely a disaster area — a desert strewn with the wreckage of elaborate, chromium-plated vehicles which broke down soon after departure — psychology itself has also had its effect on a generation now turning its attention to sexual desire, family relations and emotional bonding as they affect the individual, and to ideas, beliefs and customs as they affect the group.

This change in the nature of the questions being asked is also probably related to the contemporary scene in the 1970s. This has been a decade in which more personalized ideals and interests have taken priority over public issues, as a result of widespread disillusionment with the prospects of change by political action. It is therefore plausible to connect the sudden upsurge in interest in these matters in the past with similar preoccupations in the present.

This new interest in mental structures has been stimulated by the collapse of traditional intellectual history treated as a kind of paper-chase of ideas back through the ages (which usually ends up with either Aristotle or Plato). "Great books" were studied in a historical vacuum, with little or no attempt to set the authors themselves or their linguistic vocabulary in their true historical setting. The history of political thought in the west is now being rewritten, primarily by J. G. A. Pocock, Quentin Skinner and Bernard Bailyn, by painfully reconstructing the precise context and meaning of words and ideas in the past, and showing how they have changed their shape and colour in the course of time, like chameleons, so as to adapt to new circumstances and new needs.

The traditional history of ideas is concurrently being directed into a study of the changing audience and means of communication. There

¹⁴ C. Geertz, "Deep Play: Notes on the Balinese Cock-Fight", in his *The Interpretation of Cultures* (New York, 1973).

has sprung up a new and flourishing discipline of the history of the printing-press, the book and literacy, and of their effects upon the diffusion of ideas and the transformation of values.

One further reason why a number of "new historians" are turning back to narrative seems to be a desire to make their findings accessible once more to an intelligent but not expert reading public, which is eager to learn what these innovative new questions, methods and data have revealed, but cannot stomach indigestible statistical tables, dry analytical argument, and jargon-ridden prose. Increasingly the structural, analytical, quantitative historians have found themselves talking to each other and no one else. Their findings have appeared in professional journals, or in monographs so expensive and with such small print runs (under a thousand) that they have been in practice almost entirely bought by libraries. And yet the success of popular historical periodicals like *History Today* and *L'histoire* proves that there is a large audience ready to listen, and the "new historians" are now anxious to speak to that audience, rather than leaving it to be fed on the pabulum of popular biographies and textbooks. The questions being asked by the "new historians" are, after all, those which preoccupy us all today: the nature of power, authority and charismatic leadership; the relation of political institutions to underlying social patterns and value systems; attitudes to youth, old age, disease and death; sex, marriage and concubinage; birth, contraception and abortion; work, leisure and conspicuous consumption; the relationship of religion, science and magic as explanatory models of reality; the strength and direction of the emotions of love, fear, lust and hate; the impact of literacy and education upon people's lives and ways of looking at the world; the relative importance attached to different social groupings, such as the family, kin, community, nation, class and race; the strength and meaning of ritual, symbol and custom as ways of binding a community together; moral and philosophical approaches to crime and punishment; patterns of deference and outbursts of egalitarianism; structural conflicts between status groups or classes; the means, possibilities and limitations of social mobility; the nature and significance of popular protest and millenarian hopes; the shifting ecological balance between man and nature; the causes and effects of disease. All these are burning issues at the moment and are concerned with the masses rather than the élite. They are more "relevant" to our own lives than the doings of dead kings, presidents and generals.

IV

As a result of these convergent trends a significant number of the best-known exponents of the "new history" are now turning back to the once despised narrative mode. And yet historians — and even publishers — still seem a little embarrassed when they do so. In 1979

the *Publishers' Weekly* — an organ of the trade — promoted the merits of a new book, a story of the trial of Louis XVI, with these peculiar words: "Jordan's choice of *narrative rather than scholarly treatment* [my italics] . . . is a model of clarity and synthesis".¹⁵ The critic obviously liked the book, but thought that narrative is by definition not scholarly. When a distinguished member of the school of "new history" writes a narrative, his friends tend to apologize for him, saying: "Of course, he only did it for the money". Despite these rather shamefaced apologies, the trends in historiography, in content, method and mode, are evident wherever one looks.

After languishing unread for forty years Norbert Elias's path-breaking book about manners, *The Civilizing Process*, has suddenly been translated into English and French.¹⁶ Theodore Zeldin has written a brilliant two-volume history of modern France, in a standard textbook series, which ignores almost every aspect of traditional history, and concentrates on little other than emotions and states of mind.¹⁷ Philippe Ariès has studied responses over a huge time-span to the universal trauma of death.¹⁸ The history of witchcraft has suddenly become a growth industry in every country, as has the history of the family, including that of childhood, youth, old age, women and sexuality (the last two being topics in serious danger of suffering from intellectual overkill). An excellent example of the trajectory which historical studies have tended to take over the last twenty years is provided by the research interests of Jean Delumeau. He began in 1957 with a study of a society (Rome); followed, in 1962, by that of an economic product (alum); in 1971, of a religion (Catholicism); in 1976, of a collective behaviour (*les pays de Cocagne*); and finally, in 1979, of an emotion (fear).¹⁹

The French have a word to describe the new topic — *mentalité* — but unfortunately it is neither very well-defined nor very easily translatable into English. In any case story-telling, the circumstantial narration in great detail of one or more "happenings" based on the testimony of eyewitnesses and participants, is clearly one way to recapture something of the outward manifestations of the *mentalité*

¹⁵ D. P. Jordan, *The King's Trial: Louis XVI v. the French Revolution* (Berkeley, 1979); reviewed in *Publishers' Weekly*, 13 Aug. 1979.

¹⁶ N. Elias, *Über den Prozess der Zivilisation* (Basel, 1939), trans. Edmund Jephcott as *The Civilizing Process*, 2 vols. (Oxford and New York, 1978).

¹⁷ T. Zeldin, *France, 1848-1945*, 2 vols. (Oxford History of Modern Europe ser., Oxford, 1973-7), trans. as *Histoire des passions françaises* (Paris, 1978). See also R. Mandrou, *Introduction à la France moderne, 1500-1640* (Paris, 1961).

¹⁸ P. Ariès, *L'homme devant la mort* (Paris, 1977).

¹⁹ J. Delumeau, *Vie économique et sociale de Rome dans la seconde moitié du XVI^e siècle*, 2 vols. (Paris, 1957-9); *L'alun de Rome, XV^e-XIX^e siècle* (Paris, 1962); *Le catholicisme entre Luther et Voltaire* (Paris, 1971); *La mort des pays de Cocagne: comportements collectifs de la Renaissance à l'âge classique* (Paris, 1976); *L'histoire de la peur* (Paris, 1979).

of the past. Analysis certainly remains the essential part of the enterprise, which is based on an anthropological interpretation of culture that claims to be both systematic and scientific. But this cannot conceal the role of the study of *mentalité* in the revival of non-analytical modes of writing history, of which story-telling is one.

Of course narrative is not the only manner of writing the history of *mentalité* which has been made possible by disillusionment with structural analysis. Take, for example, that most brilliant reconstruction of a vanished mind-set, Peter Brown's evocation of the world of late antiquity.²⁰ It ignores the usual clear analytical categories — population, economics, social structure, political system, culture, and so on. Instead Brown builds up a portrait of an age rather in the manner of a post-Impressionist artist, daubing in rough blotches of colour here and there which, if one stands far enough back, create a stunning vision of reality, but which, if examined up close, dissolve into a meaningless blur. The deliberate vagueness, the pictorial approach, the intimate juxtaposition of history, literature, religion and art, the concern for what was going on inside people's heads, are all characteristic of a fresh way of looking at history. The method is not narrative but rather a *pointilliste* way of writing history. But it too has been stimulated by the new interest in *mentalité* and made possible by the decline of the analytical and structural approach which has been so dominant for the last thirty years.

There has even been a revival of the narration of a single event. Georges Duby has dared to do what a few years ago would have been unthinkable. He has devoted a book to the account of a single battle — Bouvines — and through it has illuminated the main characteristics of early thirteenth-century French feudal society.²¹ Carlo Ginzburg has given us a minute account of the cosmology of an obscure and humble early sixteenth-century north Italian miller, and by it has sought to demonstrate the intellectual and psychological disturbance at the popular level caused by the seepage downward of Reformation ideas.²² Emmanuel Le Roy Ladurie has painted a unique and unforgettable picture of life and death, work and sex, religion and custom in an early fourteenth-century village in the Pyrenees.²³ *Montaillou* is significant in two respects: first, because it has become one of the greatest historical best-sellers of the twentieth century in France; and secondly, because it does not tell a straightforward story — there is no story — but rambles around inside people's heads. It is

²⁰ P. Brown, *The World of Late Antiquity from Marcus Aurelius to Muhammad* (London, 1971).

²¹ G. Duby, *Le dimanche de Bouvines, 27 juillet 1214* (Paris, 1973).

²² C. Ginzburg, *Il formaggio e i vermi* (Turin, 1976).

²³ E. Le Roy Ladurie, *Montaillou, village occitan de 1294 à 1324* (Paris, 1976), trans. B. Bray as *Montaillou: Cathars and Catholics in a French Village, 1294-1324* (London, 1978).

no accident that this is precisely one of the ways in which the modern novel differs from those of earlier times. More recently, Le Roy Ladurie has told the story of a single bloody episode in a small town in southern France in 1580, using it to reveal the cross-currents of hatred that were tearing apart the social fabric of the town.²⁴ Carlo M. Cipolla, who has hitherto been one of the hardest of hard-nosed economic and demographic structuralists, has just published a book which is more concerned with an evocative reconstruction of personal reactions to the terrible crisis of a pandemic than with establishing statistics of morbidity and mortality. For the first time, he tells a story.²⁵ Eric Hobsbawm has described the nasty, brutish and short lives of rebels and bandits around the world, so as to define the nature and objectives of his "primitive rebels" and "social bandits".²⁶ Edward Thompson has told the story of the struggle in early eighteenth-century England between the poachers and the authorities in Windsor forest, in order to support his argument about the clash of plebeians and patricians at that time.²⁷ Robert Darnton's latest book tells how the great French *Encyclopédie* came to be published, and in so doing has cast a flood of new light on the process of diffusion of Enlightenment thought in the eighteenth century, including the nuts and bolts of book production and the problems of catering to a national — and international — market for ideas.²⁸ Natalie Davis has presented a narrative of four *charivaris* or ritual public shame procedures in seventeenth-century Lyon and Geneva, in order to illustrate community efforts to enforce public standards of honour and propriety.²⁹

The new interest in *mentalité* has itself stimulated a return to old ways of writing history. Keith Thomas's account of the conflict of magic and religion is constructed around a "pregnant principle" along which are strung a mass of stories and examples.³⁰ My own recent book on changes in the emotional life of the English family is very similar in intent and method, if not in achievement.³¹

All the historians mentioned so far are mature scholars who have long been associated with the "new history", asking new questions,

²⁴ E. Le Roy Ladurie, *Le carnaval de Romans* (Paris, 1979).

²⁵ C. M. Cipolla, *Faith, Reason and the Plague in Seventeenth-Century Tuscany* (Ithaca, N.Y., 1979).

²⁶ E. J. Hobsbawm, *Primitive Rebels* (Manchester, 1959); E. J. Hobsbawm, *Bandits* (London, 1969); E. J. Hobsbawm and G. Rudé, *Captain Swing* (London, 1969).

²⁷ E. P. Thompson, *Whigs and Hunters* (London, 1975).

²⁸ R. Darnton, *The Business of the Enlightenment* (Cambridge, Mass., 1979).

²⁹ N. Z. Davis, "Charivari, honneur et communauté à Lyon et à Genève au XVII^e siècle", in J. Le Goff and J.-C. Schmitt (eds.), *Le charivari* (forthcoming).

³⁰ K. V. Thomas, *Religion and the Decline of Magic* (London, 1971).

³¹ L. Stone, *The Family, Sex and Marriage in England, 1500-1800* (London, 1977).

trying out new methods, and searching for new sources. Now they are turning back to the telling of stories. There are, however, five differences between their stories and those of the traditional narrative historians. First, they are almost without exception concerned with the lives and feelings and behaviour of the poor and obscure rather than the great and powerful. Secondly, analysis remains as essential to their methodology as description, so that their books tend to switch, a little awkwardly, from one mode to the other. Thirdly, they are opening up new sources, often records of criminal courts which used Roman law procedures, since these contain written transcripts of the full testimony of witnesses under interrogation and examination. (The other fashionable use of criminal records, to chart the quantitative rise and fall of various types of deviance, seems to me to be an almost wholly futile endeavour, since what is being counted is not the number of perpetrated crimes, but criminals who have been arrested and prosecuted, which is an entirely different matter. There is no reason to suppose that the one bears any constant relationship over time to the other.) Fourthly, they often tell their stories in a different way from that of Homer, or Dickens, or Balzac. Under the influence of the modern novel and of Freudian ideas, they gingerly explore the subconscious rather than sticking to the plain facts. And under the influence of the anthropologists, they try to use behaviour to reveal symbolic meaning. Fifthly, they tell the story of a person, a trial or a dramatic episode, not for its own sake, but in order to throw light upon the internal workings of a past culture and society.

V

If I am right in my diagnosis, the movement to narrative by the "new historians" marks the end of an era: the end of the attempt to produce a coherent scientific explanation of change in the past. Economic and demographic determinism has collapsed in the face of the evidence, but no full-blown deterministic model based on politics, psychology or culture has emerged to take its place. Structuralism and functionalism have not turned out much better. Quantitative methodology has proved a fairly weak reed which can only answer a limited set of problems. Forced into a choice between *a priori* statistical models of human behaviour, and understanding based on observation, experience, judgement and intuition, some of the "new historians" are now tending to drift back towards the latter mode of interpreting the past.

Although the revival by the "new historians" of the narrative mode is a very recent phenomenon, it is merely a thin trickle in comparison with the constant, large and equally distinguished output of descriptive political narrative by more traditional historians. A recent example which has met with considerable scholarly acclaim is Simon

Schama's book about Dutch politics in the eighteenth century.³² Works such as this have for decades been treated with indifference or barely concealed disdain by the new social historians. This attitude did not have very much justification, but in recent years it has stimulated some of the traditional historians to adapt their descriptive mode to ask new questions. Some of them are no longer so preoccupied with issues of power and therefore with kings and prime ministers, wars and diplomacy, but are, like the "new historians", turning their attention to the private lives of quite obscure people. The cause of this trend, if trend it be, is not clear but the inspiration seems to be the desire to tell a good story, and in so doing to reveal the quirks of personality and the inwardness of things in a different time and culture. Some traditional historians have been doing this for some time. In 1958 G. R. Elton published a book consisting of stories of riot and mayhem in sixteenth-century England, taken from the records of Star Chamber.³³ In 1946 Hugh Trevor-Roper brilliantly reconstructed the last days of Hitler.³⁴ Just recently he has investigated the extraordinary career of a relatively obscure English manuscript-collector, con-man and secret pornographer, who lived in China in the early years of this century.³⁵ The purpose of writing this entertaining yarn seems to have been sheer pleasure in story-telling for its own sake, in the pursuit and capture of a bizarre historical specimen. The technique is almost identical to that used years ago by A. J. A. Symons in his classic *The Quest for Corvo*,³⁶ while the motivation appears very similar to that which inspires Richard Cobb to record in gruesome detail the squalid lives and deaths of criminals, prostitutes and other social misfits in the underworld of revolutionary France.³⁷

Quite different in content, method and objective are the writings of the new British school of young antiquarian empiricists. They write detailed political narratives which implicitly deny that there is any deep-seated meaning to history except the accidental whims of fortune and personality. Led by Conrad Russell and John Kenyon, and urged on by Geoffrey Elton, they are now busy trying to remove any sense of ideology or idealism from the two English revolutions of the seventeenth century.³⁸ No doubt they or others like them will soon

³² S. Schama, *Patriots and Liberators: Revolution in the Netherlands, 1780-1813* (London, 1977).

³³ G. R. Elton, *Star Chamber Stories* (London, 1958).

³⁴ H. R. Trevor-Roper, *The Last Days of Hitler* (London, 1947).

³⁵ H. R. Trevor-Roper, *A Hidden Life: The Enigma of Sir Edmund Backhouse* (London, 1976); U.S. edn., *The Hermit of Peking* (New York, 1977).

³⁶ A. J. A. Symons, *The Quest for Corvo* (London, 1934).

³⁷ R. Cobb, *The Police and the People* (Oxford, 1970); R. Cobb, *Death in Paris* (Oxford, 1978).

³⁸ C. Russell, *Parliaments and English Politics, 1621-29* (Oxford, 1979); J. P. Kenyon, *Stuart England* (London, 1978); see also the articles by John K. Gruenfelder, Paul Christianson, Clayton Roberts, Mark Kishlansky and James E. Farnell, in *Jl. Mod. Hist.*, xlix no. 4 (1977).

turn their attention elsewhere. Although their premiss is never explicitly stated, their approach is pure neo-Namierism, just at a time when Namierism is dying as a way of looking at eighteenth-century English politics. One wonders whether their attitude to political history may not subconsciously stem from a sense of disillusionment with the capacity of the contemporary parliamentary system to grapple with the inexorable economic and power decline of Britain. Be that as it may, they are very erudite and intelligent chroniclers of the petty event, of "l'histoire événementielle", and thus form one of the many streams which feed the revival of narrative.

The fundamental reason for the shift among the "new historians" from the analytical to the descriptive mode is a major change in attitude about what is the central subject-matter of history. And this in turn depends on prior philosophical assumptions about the role of human free will in its interaction with the forces of nature. The contrasting poles of thought are best revealed by quotations, one on one side and two on the other. In 1973 Emmanuel Le Roy Ladurie entitled a section of a volume of his essays "History without People".³⁹ By contrast half a century ago Lucien Febvre announced. "My quarry is man", and a quarter of a century ago Hugh Trevor-Roper, in his inaugural lecture, urged upon historians "the study not of circumstances but of man in circumstances".⁴⁰ Today Febvre's ideal of history is catching on in many circles, at the same time as analytical structural studies of impersonal forces continue to pour out from the presses. Historians are therefore now dividing into four groups: the old narrative historians, primarily political historians and biographers; the cliometricians who continue to act like statistical junkies; the hard-nosed social historians still busy analysing impersonal structures; and the historians of *mentalité*, now chasing ideals, values, mind-sets, and patterns of intimate personal behaviour — the more intimate the better.

The adoption by the historians of *mentalité* of minute descriptive narrative or individual biography is not, however, without its problems. The trouble is the old one, that argument by selective example is philosophically unpersuasive, a rhetorical device not a scientific proof. The basic historiographical trap in which we are ensnared has recently been well set out by Carlo Ginzburg: "The quantitative and anti-anthropocentric approach of the sciences of nature from Galileo onwards has placed human sciences in an unpleasant dilemma: they must either adopt a weak scientific standard so as to be able to attain significant results, or adopt a strong scientific

³⁹ Le Roy Ladurie, *The Territory of the Historian*, p. 285.

⁴⁰ H. R. Trevor-Roper, *History, Professional and Lay* (Univ. of Oxford, Inaugural Lecture, Oxford, 1957), p. 21.

standard to attain results of no great importance".⁴¹ Disappointment with the second approach is causing a drift back to the first. As a result what is now taking place is an expansion of the selective example — now often a detailed unique example — into one of the fashionable modes of historical writing. In one sense this is only a logical extension of the enormous success of local history studies, which have taken as their subject not a whole society but only a segment — a province, a town, even a village. Total history only seems possible if one takes a microcosm, and the results have often done more to illuminate and explain the past than all the earlier or concurrent studies based on the archives of the central government. In another sense, however, the new trend is the antithesis of local history studies, since it abandons the total history of a society, however small, as an impossibility, and settles for the story of a single cell.

The second problem which arises from the use of the detailed example to illustrate *mentalité* is how to distinguish the normal from the eccentric. Since man is now our quarry, the narration of a very detailed story of a single incident or personality can make both good reading and good sense. But this will be so only if the stories do not merely tell a striking but fundamentally irrelevant tale of some dramatic episode of riot or rape, or the life of some eccentric rogue or villain or mystic, but are selected for the light they can throw upon certain aspects of a past culture. This means that they must be typical, and yet the wide use of records of litigation makes this question of typicality very difficult to resolve. People hauled into court are almost by definition atypical, but the world that is so nakedly exposed in the testimony of witnesses need not be so. Safety therefore lies in examining the documents not so much for their evidence about the eccentric behaviour of the accused as for the light they shed on the life and opinions of those who happened to get involved in the incident in question.

The third problem concerns interpretation, and is even harder to resolve. Provided the historian remains aware of the hazards involved, story-telling is perhaps as good a way as any to obtain an intimate glimpse of man in the past, to try to get inside his head. The trouble is that if he succeeds in getting there, the narrator will need all the skill and experience and knowledge acquired in the practice of analytical history of society, economy and culture, if he is to provide a plausible explanation of some of the very strange things he is liable to find. He may also need a little amateur psychology to help him along, but amateur psychology is extremely tricky material to handle successfully — and some would argue that it is impossible.

Another obvious danger is that the revival of narrative may lead to

⁴¹ C. Ginzburg, "Roots of a Scientific Paradigm", *Theory and Society*, vii (1979), p. 276.

a return to pure antiquarianism, to story-telling for its own sake. Yet another is that it will focus attention upon the sensational and so obscure the dullness and drabness of the lives of the vast majority. Both Trevor-Roper and Richard Cobb are enormous fun to read, but they are wide open to criticism on both counts. Many practitioners of the new mode, including Cobb, Hobsbawm, Thompson, Le Roy Ladurie and Trevor-Roper (and myself) are clearly fascinated by stories of violence and sex, which appeal to the voyeuristic instincts in us all. On the other hand it can be argued that sex and violence are integral parts of all human experience, and that it is therefore as reasonable and defensible to explore their impact on individuals in the past as it is to expect to see such material in contemporary films and television.

The trend to narrative raises unsolved problems about how we are to train our graduate students in the future — assuming that there are any to train. In the ancient arts of rhetoric? In textual criticism? In semiotics? In symbolic anthropology? In psychology? Or in the techniques of analysis of social and economic structures which we have been practising for a generation? It therefore remains an open question whether this unexpected resurrection of the narrative mode by so many leading practitioners of the “new history” will turn out to be a good or a bad thing for the future of the profession.

In 1972 Le Roy Ladurie wrote confidently: “Present-day historiography, with its preference for the quantifiable, the statistical and the structural, has been obliged to suppress in order to survive. In the last decades it has virtually condemned to death the narrative history of events and the individual biography”.⁴² It is far too early to pronounce a funeral oration over the decaying corpse of analytical, structural, quantitative history, which continues to flourish, and even to grow if the trend in American doctoral dissertations is any guide.⁴³ Nevertheless in this, the third decade, narrative history and individual biography are showing evident signs of rising again from the dead. Neither look quite the same as they used to do before their alleged demise, but they are easily identifiable as variants of the same genus.

It is clear that a single word like “narrative”, especially one with such a complicated history behind it, is inadequate to describe what is in fact a broad cluster of changes in the nature of historical discourse. There are signs of change with regard to the central issue in history, from the circumstances surrounding man, to man in circumstances; in the problems studied, from the economic and demographic to the cultural and emotional; in the prime sources of influence, from sociology, economics and demography to anthropology and psychology; in the subject-matter, from the group to the individual; in the

⁴² Le Roy Ladurie, *The Territory of the Historian*, p. 111.

⁴³ Darnton, “Intellectual and Cultural History”, Appendix.

explanatory models of historical change, from the stratified and monocausal to the interconnected and multicausal; in the methodology, from group quantification to individual example; in the organization, from the analytical to the descriptive; and in the conceptualization of the historian's function, from the scientific to the literary. These many-faceted changes in content, objective, method, and style of historical writing, which are all happening at once, have clear elective affinities with one another: they all fit neatly together. No single word is adequate to sum them all up, and so, for the time being, "narrative" will have to serve as a shorthand code-word for all that is going on.

Princeton University

Lawrence Stone

ANNUAL CONFERENCE 1980
on
LAW AND HUMAN RELATIONS

The 1980 Annual Conference of the Past and Present Society will be held on **WEDNESDAY, 2 JULY 1980** in the rooms of the Geological Society, Burlington House, London W1.

Anyone interested in receiving further information or in participating in the Conference is invited to write to:

The Editor, *Past and Present*,
Corpus Christi College,
Oxford OX1 4JF.

Further details and Registration Forms will be available in the next issue.

ANNUAL CONFERENCE 1981
on
THE REVOLT OF 1381

Further details will be available in subsequent issues.