Trends in Western Civilization Project, No. 2

CONCEPTS OF WESTERN PLURALISM

By

Erik Rudeng
Chair in Conflict and Peace Research
University of Oslo

Table of contents:

1. The social role of historians to-day: Between prophets and sociologists 1-3

2. How the traditional ethos and prestige of historians impede the development of universal history ('macro-history') 3-6

3. The comparative study of civilizations 6-20

4. The classical theory of Western uniqueness 21-29

5. Depths and limits of Western pluralism 30-45

6. Towards a new history of liberation 46-49

1. The social role of historians to-day:
Between prophets and sociologists.

> 'Of all the approaches to history none has been less explored than that which we usually call world-history or universal or 'oecumenical' history. And yet there is probably no type of history which is closer to our present preoccupations or more nearly attuned to the world in which we live.'
>
> (Barraclough 1961)

Modern societies need historians, but not all kinds of history: Everything has its history, but all things are not equally important. We cannot escape the perennial problem of selection and priority according to some criterion of value, meaning or relevance.

Of course, this is not to say that the problem of priority lies outside the competence of historians or outside history itself. On the contrary: 'The social need of history' should be defined by those who are best aquainted with history.

Since this task of definition is a highly controversial and unpleasant one, it is understandable that many serious historians, preferring the calm of diligent study, refrain from it.

However, by leaving the field open, they may contribute to two equally pernicious tendencies:

(i) that the traditional priorities of themes and methods of historians are perpetuated with a minimal amount of regard to the changing world and the changing needs outside the history departments

(ii) that the relative vacuum of new policy making inside the universities - directly or indirectly - are increasingly filled by priorities imposed by government or other authorities outside the universities.

Not all views of history would imply that such tendencies are inimical to the practice of good historical research. Lynn White Jr has given a statement which defines what many historians take to be the only socially relevant contribution of history.

'From the kaleidoscopic and iridescent record of mankind, we can learn chiefly this : the possible range of human thought, emotion, organization, and action is almost infinite. In facing today's problems, we must therefore liberate ourselves from presuppositions as to what may or may not be possible. Knowledge of history frees us to be contemporary.'

(White 1968, p. 9-10).

Important as this kind of attempted liberation from presuppositions may be, it fails to provide a framework for constructive historical understanding: for the contemplation of specific problems of history and contemporary society.

In this essay I shall discuss the social role of historians with regard to the specific problem of transnational, global history. Within the context of the present world economy and world politics there is surely an essential time dimension - global history.

This dimension is generally acknowledged as a subject-matter in our schools, where textbooks named "world history" are obligatory. But the syntheses in these textbooks are based on singularily little research since that kind of macro-historical interpretation holds an extremely modest position in most history departments.

As a British historian says,

'This has been left to the journalists, the prophets or the philosophers, but some of those who have attempted it acquired great popular success. H.G. Wells, Oswald Spengler and Arnold Toynbee (and in Scandinavia: Carl Grimberg), who sought to mould history into a meaningful past, secured millions of readers but the almost universal condemnation of historians. Yet the reception of their books points to the need of ordinary people, as well as to the difficulty of fulfilling it.' (Plumb 1969, p. 136).

About the difficulty of fulfilling the need of ordinary people for a meningful world-historical past, there is no doubt. But this difficulty itself can hardly explain the vast incongruence between the amount of narrow, specialized studies and more comprehensive historical research.

This is at the same time an incongruence between one of the deepest social needs for history to-day and the actual activity and standards of merit of most history departments.

It seems to be worth while asking why it has come about that so many historians still regard world history at worst as an

object of journalism or at best as a piece of sociology or philosophy.

In an age when global interaction and the need for a global understanding is generally acknowledged, it is particularly paradoxical that macro-history tends to be exiled to journalism, prophecy, philisophy or sociology by probably most historians.

Their suspicion against the hypotheses of (Spengler 1918-22), (Sorokin 1937-41) and (Toynbee 1934-61) is - with few exceptions like (McNeill 1963 and 1967) and (Stavrianos 1970-71) natural, but why have the ordinary historical milieu itself failed to produce any fully-fledged counter-interpretations? Are the questions of world history methodologically simply "too difficult"?

2. How the tradtional ethos and prestige of historians impede the development of universal history ('macro-history')

> 'By Universal History I understand that which is distinct from the combined histories of all countries, which is not a rope of sand, but a continuous development, and it is not a burden on the memory, but an illumination of the soul. It moves in a succession to which the nations are subsidiary. Their story will be told, not for their own sake, but in reference and subordination to a higher series, according to the time and the degree in which they contribute to the common fortunes of mankind .....'
>
> (Acton 1952)

> 'Given the course which historical studies have taken in recent times and which must be continued insofar as history is to produce studies embodying thorough research and presice knowledge, there does exist the danger of losing sight of the universal, of the type of knowledge everyone desires.'
>
> (Ranke 1888)

Thorough research and precise knowledge connected with first-hand archival study of original sources - those were the marks of academic scholarship by which Ranke and his school established history as a prestigeous prefession in the last century.

In this way the professionalized Quellenkritik of the new history satisfied at the same time the hegemonic current of positivism, the nationalistic need for a confidence-inspiring genealogy on the basis of the national archives and the prevailing concepts of "thorough", diligent, resepctable bourgeois work. Thus, the whole ethos and respectability of academic historians became directly linked to one specific aspect of the research process: the discovery

and critique of original sources. This was clearly percieved and stated in the prospectuses of the leading historical periodicals of the 19th century (Historische Zeitschrift 1859), (Revue Historique 1876), (The English Historical Review 1886).

It goes without saying that this traditional identification of historical method with first-hand Quellenkritik tends to define projects of universal history outside the centrality and prestige of history proper.

Even to-day, this limited conception of method still seems to be prevalent among "radical" and "conservative" historians alike. Indeed, it is typical that the application of new insights from sociology and political science and the re-opening of social and local history have in many ways only extended the scene of original sources activity, whereas the problem of transnational, universal history - with the exception of economic macro-history - have bemefited to a much lesser extent from these developments.

Thus, the traditional ethos of historians and the national structure of historical archives still have a dominating effect on historical studies.

Any "way out" of this situation will have to be based on the legitimization of non-original sources as sufficient material for the study of universal history.

Such a legitimization would imply new kinds of scholarship, with a heavy emphasis on bibliographical information and methods of data processing on the basis of already published and organized historical material. Of course, a more concentrated work to refine these methods is completely dependent on the basic research done by the original-sources historians. And the errors made by these will inescapably be prolonged and blown up in the works of the comparative and synthesizing historians . This is a dilemma, but the probability of such errors can hardly constitute an absolute argument against comparison and synthesis.

To-day, synthesis of world-historical problems are very often by-products of mature original-sources historians' work on more specialized subjects. Again Ranke represents the model historian who in himself combines the roles of a specialist and a generalist. But it seems that Ranke's warning about 'the danger of losing sight of the universal' has not been taken serious by his successors as by himself. We all have to admit that the "production" of techniques and data directly connected with

original sources has increased infinitely more than the supposedly complementary output in universal history.

This phenomenon is only too evident even in the great works of world history. Usually, (Gottschalk 1964) they are multi-volume anthologies so to speak:

Periods, nations, civilizations, the various aspects of history are dealt with by specialists - except the essential aspects of world history itself, on the theories of which there are exceedingly few "specialists".

This lack of any explicit, lengthy analysis of theories of world history in the great multi-volume works points to the fact that such insights are regarded as more or less casual bye-products of ordinary history or as matters of other subjects: philosophy or religion.

In order to bridge the gap between the narrow and theoretically inexplicit studies of most historians and the less empirical "philosophies of history", it seems necessary to open a new area of specialized studies in history and to constitute theories of world historical problems as a speciality per se. That would mean to extend the professionalization of history to an area which until now have been cultivated by a rich fauna of aging, immensely learned historians, dispairing prophets, gifted journalists and subtle theologians.

In the cosmopolitan centers of the world such a professionalization is slowly under its way. Indeed, it has been so ever since Polybius prepared himself for the task of writing a world history for the world-historical Roman aristocracy. In the modern Western world there are indications that the U.S. and the German historians are most developed in this direction. In the case of the United States world history is a direct extension of its present global activities. It is also a natural reflex of the unique internationality of the U.S. population.

In the German case the deep-rooted traditions of cosmopolitan thinking since the days of the Holy Roman Empire may still account for parts of the interest in world history. It is likely that the catastrophic experiences of Modern Germany has sharpened the sense of universal crisis and Zusammenhang in history. (Randa 1969)

For smaller countries like the Scandinavian ones, whose world historical role since the time of the Vikings have been extremely limited, it is particularly necessary to leave the traditional ethos of original-sources scholarship as the one prestigeous kind of merit.

Otherwise we shall persist in our self-imposed provincialism on the seemingly respectable and pragmatic ground that our national archives simply force us to do so. Such a view ignores the amount of publication of foreign original sources and the vast production of special studies, many of which are more reliable than any single original source. But above all it ignores the need for a thorough systematization and processing of the flow of data of the special studies.

In this work to counterbalance the microscopic with the macroscopic even smaller countries may have useful contributions, especially when the hegemonic interpretations of great-power representatives tend to reduce the variety of world history. Indeed, the writing of world history gives ample evidence of the truth in J.H. Plumb's dictum that

> 'The personal ownership of the past has always been a vital strand in the ideology of all ruling classes'.
> (Plumb 1969).

A new ethos of historians would recognize both the necessity of original-sources studies and the need for more refined methods of synthesis. This would at the same time mean to recognize the commitment to both the local and the universal perspective on history.

But it is only a debateable impression that this balance of historical research seems to be seriously destroyed - at the sacrifice of "the universal, of the type of knowledge everyone desires"?

3. The comparative study of civilizations

N. Danilevsky calls them 'the culture-historical types';
O. Spengler terms them 'the High Cultures' (die Hochkulturen);
A. Toynbee refers to them as 'the Civilizations' or 'the units and intelligible fields of historical study';
N. Berdyaev, as 'the great cultures';
F.S.C. Northrop, as 'cultural systems' or 'the world cultures';
I call them 'the social and cultural supersystems'.
Whatever the name, all investigators of these vast 'socio-cultural continents' agree in that they are real, casual-

meaningful wholes, different from the state, or the nation or any other social group.'

Pitirim A. Sorokin, (International Society for the Comparative Study of Civilization 1964).

'Precisely what is meant by the term civilization? Anthropologists point to certain characteristics found in civilizations that distinguish them from the preceding Neolithic cultures. These characteristics include urban centers, institutionalized political authority in the form of the state, tribute or taxation, writing, social stratification into classes or hierarchies, monumental architecture, and specialized arts and sciences. Not all civilizations have possessed these characteristics. The Andean civilization, for example, developed without writing, while the Egyptian and Mayan lacked cities as commonly defined. But this cluster of characteristics does serve as a general guide for defining the attributes of the civilizations that emerged at various times in various parts of the world.'

(Stavrianos, 1971a).

(1) The basic unit of world history

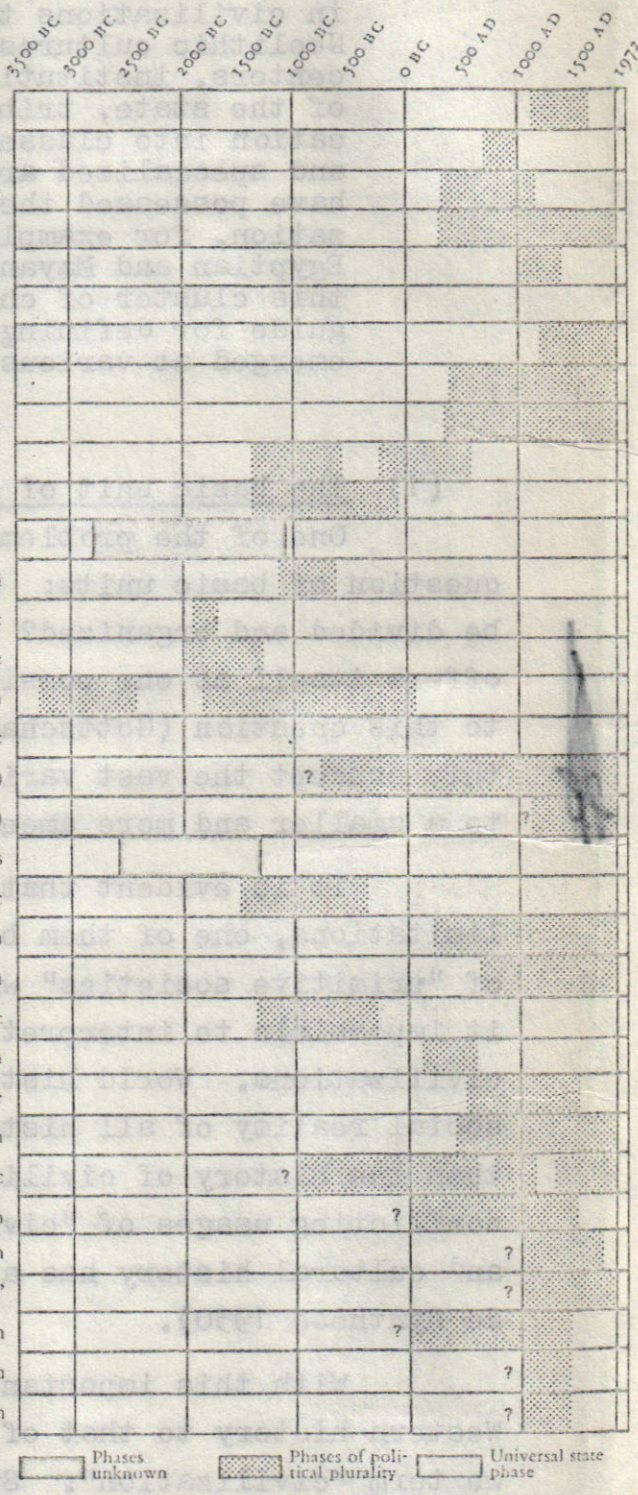
One of the problems of universal or world history is the question of basic units: How is the enormous field of study to be divided and organized? The concept of different "civilizations" offers itself as one possible answer - and the most common one - to this question (Gottschalk 1965), (Engel-Janosi 1973). Through this concept the vast variety of historical "societies" is reduced to a smaller and more amenable number of basic cultural configurations.

It is evident that this kind of approach has many severe limitations, one of them being the injustice done to the analysis of "primitive societies" whose very number and differences makes it impossible to interpret them within the framework of some few civilizations. World history in so far it should represent the social reality of all historical peoples is therefore much more than the history of civilizations. This problematic nature and the conflicting usages of "civilization" with respect to the universal and cultural history has a long prehistory (Centre international de Synthèse 1930).

With this important qualification in mind we can relate Western history to that of other comparable cultural areas which we term "civilization". Such an idea of different and comparable civilizations has been classic at least since the beginning of this century (Durkheim and Mauss 1913).

On the next page you will find, for the sake of an example, a reproduction of Toynbee's latest table of civilizations (Toynbee 1972). The definition and age of these civilizations are hotly debated, and many of Toynbee's central arguments depend on such

54 The civilizations of the world, 3500 BC to AD 2000 illustrating the successive phases of their growth.



FULL-BLOWN CIVILIZATIONS

A INDEPENDENT CIVILIZATIONS

Unrelated to others

Middle American
Andean[18]

Unaffiliated to others

Sumero-Akkadian[19]
Egyptiac
Aegean[20]
Indus
Sinic

Affiliated to others

Syriac *to* Sumero-Akkadian, Egyptiac, Aegean, and Hittite
Hellenic *to* Aegean
Indic *to* Indus
African *first to* Egyptiac, *then to* Islamic, *then to* Western[21]
Orthodox Christian, Western, Islamic } *to* both Syriac and Hellenic

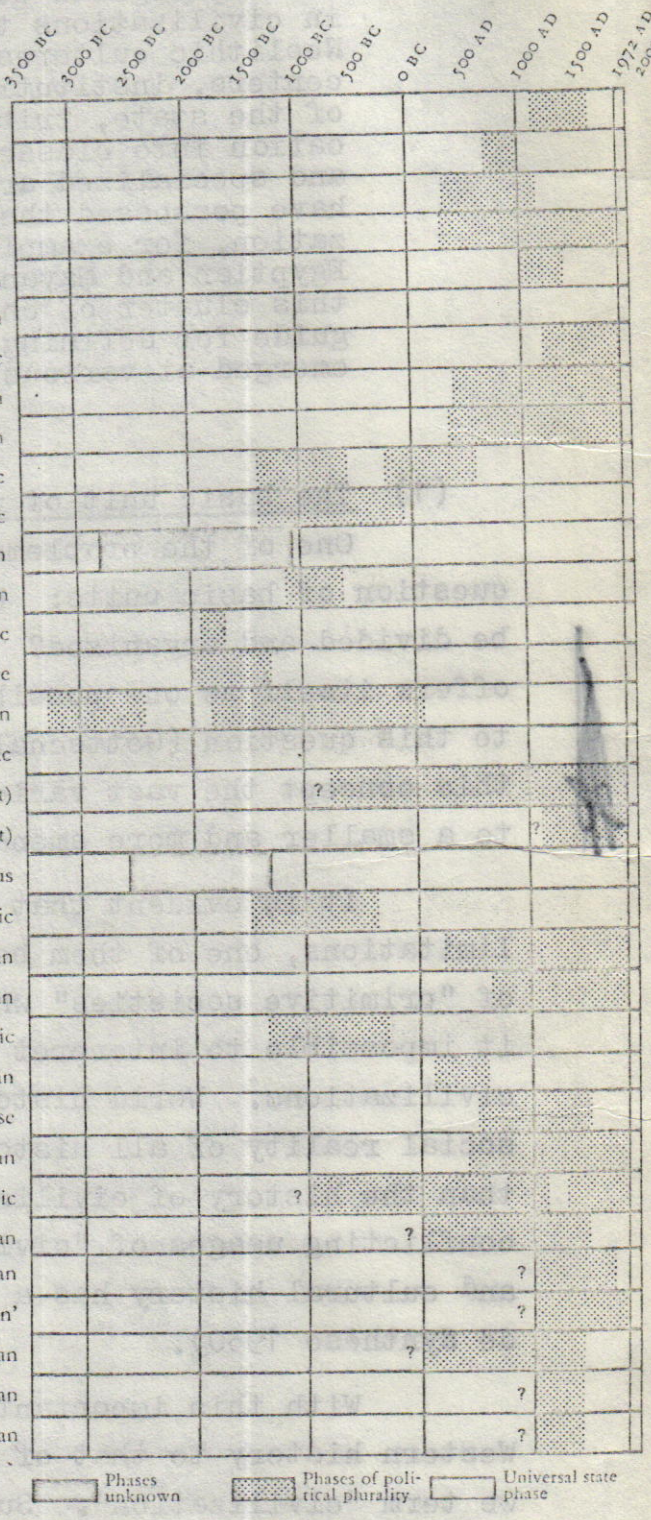
B SATELLITE CIVILIZATIONS

Mississippian, 'South-Western'[22] } *of* Middle American
North Andean[23], South Andean[24] } *of* Andean
?Elamite[25] *of* Sumero-Akkadian
Hittite[26] *of* Sumero-Akkadian
?Urartian[27] *of* Sumero-Akkadian
Iranian *first of* Sumero-Akkadian, *then of* Syriac
?Meroitic[28] *of* Egyptiac
Korean, Japanese, Vietnamian } *of* Sinic
?Italic[29]
South-East Asian *first of* Indic, *then*, in Indonesia and Malaya only, *of* Islamic
Tibetan[30]
Russian *first of* Orthodox Christian, *then of* Western
Nomadic *of* sedentary civilizations adjacent to Eurasian and Afrasian steppes

II ABORTIVE CIVILIZATIONS[31]

First Syriac, eclipsed by Egyptiac
Nestorian Christian, eclipsed by Islamic
Monophysite Christian, eclipsed by Islamic
Far Western Christian, eclipsed by Western
Scandinavian, eclipsed by Western
Medieval Western City-State Cosmos, eclipsed by

54 The civilizations of the world, 3500 BC to AD 2000 illustrating the successive phases of their growth.



FULL-BLOWN CIVILIZATIONS

A INDEPENDENT CIVILIZATIONS

Unrelated to others

Middle American
Andean[18]

Unaffiliated to others

Sumero-Akkadian[19]
Egyptiac
Aegean[20]
Indus
Sinic

Affiliated to others

Syriac *to* Sumero-Akkadian, Egyptiac, Aegean, and Hittite
Hellenic *to* Aegean
Indic *to* Indus
African *first to* Egyptiac, *then to* Islamic, *then to* Western[21]
Orthodox Christian, Western, Islamic } *to* both Syriac and Hellenic

B SATELLITE CIVILIZATIONS

Mississippian, 'South-Western'[22] } *of* Middle American
North Andean[23], South Andean[24] } *of* Andean
?Elamite[25] *of* Sumero-Akkadian
Hittite[26] *of* Sumero-Akkadian
?Urartian[27] *of* Sumero-Akkadian
Iranian *first of* Sumero-Akkadian, *then of* Syriac
?Meroitic[28] *of* Egyptiac
Korean, Japanese, Vietnamian } *of* Sinic
?Italic[29]
South-East Asian *first of* Indic, *then*, in Indonesia and Malaya only, *of* Islamic
Tibetan[30]
Russian *first of* Orthodox Christian, *then of* Western
Nomadic *of* sedentary civilizations adjacent to Eurasian and Afrasian steppes

II ABORTIVE CIVILIZATIONS[31]

First Syriac, eclipsed by Egyptiac
Nestorian Christian, eclipsed by Islamic
Monophysite Christian, eclipsed by Islamic
Far Western Christian, eclipsed by Western
Scandinavian, eclipsed by Western
Medieval Western City-State Cosmos, eclipsed by

meaningful wholes, different from the state, or the nation or any other social group.'

Pitirim A. Sorokin, (International Society for the Comparative Study of Civilization 1964).

'Precisely what is meant by the term civilization? Anthropologists point to certain characteristics found in civilizations that distinguish them from the preceding Neolithic cultures. These characteristics include urban centers, institutionalized political authority in the form of the state, tribute or taxation, writing, social stratification into classes or hierarchies, monumental architecture, and specialized arts and sciences. Not all civilizations have possessed these characteristics. The Andean civilization, for example, developed without writing, while the Egyptian and Mayan lacked cities as commonly defined. But this cluster of characteristics does serve as a general guide for defining the attributes of the civilizations that emerged at various times in various parts of the world.'

(Stavrianos, 1971a).

(1) The basic unit of world history

One of the problems of universal or world history is the question of basic units: How is the enormous field of study to be divided and organized? The concept of different "civilizations" offers itself as one possible answer - and the most common one - to this question (Gottschalk 1965), (Engel-Janosi 1973). Through this concept the vast variety of historical "societies" is reduced to a smaller and more amenable number of basic cultural configurations.

It is evident that this kind of approach has many severe limitations, one of them being the injustice done to the analysis of "primitive societies" whose very number and differences makes it impossible to interpret them within the framework of some few civilizations. World history in so far it should represent the social reality of all historical peoples is therefore much more than the history of civilizations. This problematic nature and the conflicting usages of "civilization" with respect to the universal and cultural history has a long prehistory (Centre international de Synthèse 1930).

With this important qualification in mind we can relate Western history to that of other comparable cultural areas which we term "civilization". Such an idea of different and comparable civilizations has been classic at least since the beginning of this century (Durkheim and Mauss 1913).

On the next page you will find, for the sake of an example, a reproduction of Toynbee's latest table of civilizations (Toynbee 1972). The definition and age of these civilizations are hotly debated, and many of Toynbee's central arguments depend on such

definitions.

(2) The historical background of the concept

Some of the trouble is inherent in the historical background of the concept of civilization: The very word appeared for the first time in a printed work in 1766(Braudel 1969 p.259) at the time when the crise de la conscience européenne (Hazard 1934) and the querelle des anciens et des modernes seemed to have resulted in a widespread feeling that the modern West-European society in most respect had attained a higher level than its Greco-Roman model.

This diachronic sense of superiority was matched by an equivalent sense of superiority on the synchronic scale: By the middle of the eighteenth century knowledge of Russia, China, India, the Pacific Islands, and America began to be fully digested among West-European intellectuals, and although they retained a curiosity and an open-mindedness towards the alien cultures which is impressive compared to the more arrogant outlook of their nineteenth-century successors, they nevertheless regarded Western Europe as the most "developed" area in the world. It was this developmental stage of Western Europe that they termed civilization. In other words: The rise of such a concept was due to the new feeling of common identity and history which educated Western Europeans collectively experienced when they in the mid-eighteenth century became fully aware of the existence of past and present cultures completely different from their own - civilization.

But already from its beginning the word "civilization" had both a negative and a positive connotation: It meant a stage of historical development, but also the excesses and dehumanizing aspects of that stage.

It was to this problem of civilization (-Kulturkritik-) that Rousseau addressed himself, and as we are experiencing a similar problem to-day, it may be rewarding to study in our context as well the first fully-fledged ideologuer of "civilizational crisis".

Rousseau's fundamental issue was that of nature being corrupted by culture through inequality, "commerce" and over-refined manners. Also, the strains of classicism and puritanism had meant the repression of libido and spontaneity. This was the problem not of a single nation, but of a cultural area. It was the special property of that area to have reached a stage in which a larger proportion of people than in any other place had become civilized

and acquired civilité. (Civilité meant polite, upper-class manner. Civilité and civiliser had been in use more than a hundred years before the emergence of the word civilisation (Littré 19).). Thus, to the generation of Rousseau and Voltaire attention was fixed on civilizational moeurs - manners and style - rather than socio-economic systems of production. This French fixation on style gave the concept of civilization from the beginning a rather abstract and general character, which until the eighteenth century was represented by such (for the interpretation of universal history) unfitting concepts as nation or era. The advantage of the new concept was that it introduced the idea of a homogeneous cultural unit which was bigger than a single nation and situated in time de longue durée.

In the 19th century this concept was deepened and multiplicated: the new archeological and historical research made it clear that the modern European civilization was only one among several comparable cultural units. Although West Europeans retained for themselves the honour of being most civilized, they discovered that a lot of cultural configurations, past and present, satisfied the normal criteria of civilization.

This multiplicity of civilizations has continued to increase in our century as reflected in Toynbee's work. Whereas the first columned of the first edition of his Study comprised sixteen civilizations, his 1972 edition recognizes more than thirty. Some unavoidable subjectivity of definition apart, this increase in number corresponds above all to the enormous advance in factnal information about past societies. But one should not forget that this construction of civilizations very much depend on the West's need to find parallels to its own identity and to seek self-understanding and self-esteem through comparison with these parallels. The concept is based on the peculiarly Western ambiguity towards its traditions: a self-assertive pretension of contiunity in spite of the most dramatic changes the world has ever seen. This has meant a continuous activatization and reinterpretation of the Western identity ever since the time of Herodotus' historical perception:

> 'Asien und die barbarischen Völker in Asien sehen die Perser nämlich als ihnen gehörig an; Europa und Griechenland aber ist in ihren Augen eine Welt für sich.'
>
> Quoted from (Engel-Janosi 1973, p.16).

There are many who consider such a Western continuity to be a false construction: '---it would hardly be possible to regard Western civilization throughout its history as a single type.' (Bottomore 1972).

Thus the ancestry-seeking activity of the West has resulted in a concept of civilization specially adapted to its own lack of continuity in economic and political structures and to its compensating cultural genealogy. Societies without a literary history will therefore fall outside the framework of civilization and normally be considered "primitive".

There have nevertheless been important attempts to deepen the concept. Some of these attempts were based on the supposed differences between French and German traditions, dramatized during and after the Napoleonic wars: The German view was that the French concept of civilization emphasized superficial styles of materialistic modernity - Äusserlichkeit - whereas the equivalent German idea - expressed by the word Kultur - stressed spiritual Innerlichkeit. The old distiction was revived and modified by Alfred Weber. His term "civilization" covered the material and technical products of any society, whereas by "culture" he meant the spiritual and artistic aspects. (Weber 1935).

Even in Germany to-day the stage of civilization is commonly termed Kultur; civilizations in the plural are termed Hoch-Kulturen, or in the older anthropological tradition: Kultur-Kreise.

The Franco-German difference probably accentuated the awareness of the diverse elements in the concept and thereby contributed to attempts at some structural synthesis. Although the Hegelian synthesis was biased on the side of ideas, its holistic insistence on dialectical Zusammenhang between the various aspects of culture, proved most important.

Perhaps the later development of the civilization concept can best be desrcibed as a deepening of this idea of interconnectedness: attempts at connecting, genetically as well as structurally, more and more aspects of a given civilization.

To this deepening social anthropology gave an important contribution, which was long ignored by historians. Above all, it brought in data on every-day life, kinship, and popular religion ('primitive thinking') which for a long time defied - and partly

still defies - the conventional analytical concepts of historians.

Already in 1871 the anthropologist E.B. Tylor defined culture 'or civilization' (as he himself added) as

> 'that complete whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, law, morals, customs, and all other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society.' (Tylor 1871).

Although Tylor's classic, but extremely wide definition of culture is rejected as inoperational by many or most anthropologists, it is tempting for us, in the very beginning of our project, to proceed with such an all-inclusive idea of the elements in civilization.

In the attempts to find and interconnect these elements there will be a great danger to search for some all-explaining common denominator, an all-important indivisible kernel within a nicely structured picture of civilizational unity. (Galtung 1974a).

There have been many such uni-factorial analyses of (e.g.) Western civilization, the most popular being the theories of rationality or liberty at the inmost driving force of this special civilization.

(3) Comparisons between Western civilization and other cultures.

Consequently, it is with considerable hesitation we set out to employ the concept of Western civilization. But it may be fruitful to take a new transnational look at the rise of the West as William McNeill has termed the process which so many Westerners regard as the central phenomenon of modern history. Perhaps it is precisely this common self-consciousness of the West which in the end makes it legitimate to treat it as a "civilization" with some coherence. And since this concept originally emerged in Western Europe, we feel on more congenial and safer ground than if we were to use it with respect to all kinds of cultures and societies in the present and past world.

If we take the Western ascendancy in the world as a point of departure for a cross-cultural comparison, it would be an obvious task to study the technological superiority which made this ascendancy possible. To quite a lot of historians this has meant to study the industrial revolution, especially in its birth place, England.

The Trend in Western Civilization Project aims at something else, although we share the basic assumption that the industrial revolution of the first half of the nineteenth century is the most conspicuous and tangible creation of the Western world. But at the same time when this revolution took place, Europe was already the most powerful and expansive single continent in the world. In a global perspective, therefore, the unique character and technological superiority of Europe were well established long before the industrial "take off", to use Rostow's phrase without adhering to his theory. (White 1968).

That is why the most interesting period for us probably will be the so-called Early Modern Period, (1400-1700), when Europe went through a vigorous expansion and dramatic self-transformation, whereas its main rivals - the Moslem and the Chinese civilizations - entered upon a period of increasing ossification and stagnation.

In this global context an analysis of the Western uniqueness must be coupled with what Western historians too often have ignored: An up-to-date knowledge of the history of non-Western societies. The supposedly distinctive structure of the Western development will only have meaning in so far its definition has emerged through comparison with non-Western history.

To-day, as during centuries before, the most distinctive and powerful non-Western civilization seems to be the Chinese one. For some purposes therefore, we shall have to investigate the similarities and differences between especially these two civilizations. Of course, such comparative studies have been conducted before, e.g. (Needham 1954 -), (Parmele 1960),(Levenson 1967), (Elvin 1973), (Weber 1961). But again there is a need for an over-all analysis of the most important interpretations presented in specialized monographs.

We shall take a very long-term view in order to identify and understand those Western structures which seem fairly constant and therefore fundamental to our civilization as a whole. Concerning the long-term interplay between geographical-economic and socio-cultural developments, one of our basic assumptions will be the not very original one that Christianity has a lot to do with the rise of capitalism, science and industry in the West. Consequently we need a time-scale which is long enough to encompass the development of Christianity itself, being the Western world-view par excellense; which is to say that our starting point will be the last centuries of the Roman Empire.

(4) The dimensions of comparison

In a certain sense the perspective of the Trend in Western Civilization Project is traditional: it emphasizes Western structures and makes comparisons on this basis; which nearly amounts to asking why the non-West did not become like the West itself - a somewhat ethnocentric attitude.

Historically, the whole concept of Western (Christian) Civilization has frequently been invoked for apologetical purposes - just to defend and propagate a narrow definition of "typically Western" structures or to cover political aggression with a smoke screen of cultural rhetoric.

This rhetoric has generally been based on an alleged dichotomy between the East asn the West, the frontiers of which has been defined according to political conveniences since the time of Herodotus. The attempts to define East-Europe and communism outside the realm of Western civilization is a recent example of this kind of political semantics.

Fortunately, even in the era of the Cold War there were West-European historians who insisted on the concept of a common European heritage, e.g. (Barraclough 1955), (Stadtmüller 1965). And to-day critics of both marxism and liberalism have little difficulty in identifying basic similarities resulting from a common civilization origin (Galtung 1974 b).

Westerners are unavoidable Westerners. Even an attempt to turn Western history and Western values upside down would imply that the old agenda of the priority of the Western dimensions prevails with a prolonged life. Western self-criticism and self-hatred is also a form of enthnocentrism.

The Trends in Western Civilization Project will unavoidably contribute to the prolongation of the old agenda. But we assume that a more adequate Western self-understanding will lead to a new focus on cultural dimensions generally associated with the East or with "primitive cultures". The central role of orientalism and primitivism throughout Western history indicates that our obsession with comparisons of scietific, technological and political "modernity" implies a very one-sided view of Western Civilization itself.

It will be argued later in this essay that ever since the ancient Greeks appropriated Oriental culture and became fascinated

with things Eastern, one of the distinctive features of Western Civilization has been a highly developed ability to incorporate foreign thought into its own body of experience.

Several versions of Orientalism, Classicism, and Primitivism have throughout Western history enriched and deepened the Western quest for reform and accommodation to new problems. The almost permanent existence of non-Western counter-cultures within the most central cores of Western civilization itself is not merely a case of extravagant exoticism, but also a mark of cultural openness and ingenuity.

To cite one example: When Western society from the mid-nineteenth century seemed to become overburdened with the Unbehagen in der Kultur, with the neurotic and repressive forms of bourgeois life styles, several of its most prominent representatives turned to various Oriental or newly discovered "primitive" cultures in order to find less aggressive, "warmer" and emotionally and sexually freer life forms.

The ultimate discovery - or rediscovery - of feeling and the "unconscious" of the 1890-1930 generation (Hughes 1958) in Europe was both a negative protest against the new bourgeois-industrial civilization and a positive response to the recent exploration of the non-Western world. In this case comparisons of different cultures were made on the basis of values normally supposed to be non-Western.

(5) Two kinds of comparison:
"Modern" West compared with non-West
and Modern West compared with the
"Traditional" West.

The twentieth-century revelations of the actual and potential horrors of science and technology - the Western identity mark par excellense - have left us rather bewildered: Where are we to find inspiring social models when the mere continuation of the dominant present trends seem to end in disaster? Apart from the few construction of utopias, there are two mains sources for alternative thinking: forms of life found in non-Western cultures and those found in earlier phases of the West's own history. In neither case is there necessarily a question of really trying to resurrect remote ideals, but certainly of feeling a very specific inspiration.

In this situation it will become a test of Western vitality whether the West again will prove its ability to learn from the non-Western world. There is no doubt that the present "crises" (urban, population, environmental etc.) imply a challenge to reduce our dependence on things and induce us to lead a simpler and perhaps more collectivist life, more dependent on immaterial values and fellow human beings. (As for instance during the Second World War: "The last time the Norwegian people was happy was during the war". At that time circumstances forced people to have a more healthy diet and to rely on each others' social initiatives instead of being passively entertained by show business.)

In this respect we have much to learn from people to whom less extravagant life forms and ecological balance has been necessity and a tradition for generations. Possibly one need no longer be a cultural "primitivist" to reach such conclusions: The excesses of our own civilization are now so widely acknowledged that we should "admit" the necessity of at least some counter-examples.

As Johan Galtung has suggested, the industrially advanced countries should begin sending out experts also to learn from people in the poor countries of the world, and not only try to teach them. The coolness and lack of imagination with which such ideas generally are received may reveal a more arrogant and narrow concept of Western civilization than Westerners previously have had.

This is not to say that all - or most - facets of non-Western influence in the world to-day are to be welcomed. The author of these lines have very strong reservations against e.g. the new U.S. wave of Oriental mysticism, (Pope 1973). But one should keep in mind that this wave probably would have been unthinkable without the many perversions of science, technology, and bureaucracy in the West.

However useful or important Asian or African examples may be, they cannot - for Westerners - substitute an analysis of the Western experience through history, the self-images of "traditional" West before it became "modern", of the tendencies that won and the - too often forgotten - tendencies that lost in the course of Western development.

Thus the intention behind the Trends in Western Civilization Project is not only to find out and understand the causal structures and long-term pattern of Western history, but also - through this search - to dig up characteristic elements in this heritage which we may be conditioned to appreciate differently from our predecessors.

Western civilization has many and highly contradictory aspects, and in order to feel the living inspiration of such a heritage, it is the necessary task of every new generation to do some existential book-keeping of that complex tradition: find out what is by now dead weight, what is neglected but maybe useful, what is inspiring, and what has proved damaging.

> ----'it has semmed to me imperative, at this critical juncture in the history of European civilization, to re-examine afresh such concepts as "the European inheritance", "the values of European civilization" ----!
>
> (Barraclough 1955)

Even for those who feel completely at ease with the present state of Western civilization, it would indeed be strange if that complex heritage does not contain values which deserve to be analyzed and actualized to-day.

We take this values to be something more and something else than the static presentation of "Greek liberty and science, Roman law, and Judeo-Christian religion" - a conventional apologia for so much Western "civilized" aggression and brutality. We cannot share the pessimistic stance taken by Western conservatives in the face of the increasingly contracting Western influence in the world.

Nor do we agree with those radical historians who take a similar, unimaginative and conventional view of Western civilization and who therefore, by some simplistic negation, denounce the very idea of any valuable aspects inherent in that civilization. "The world we've lost" (to use Peter Laslett's idiom) contained among other aspects

> 'a boundless world of humourous forms and manifestations opposed to the official and serious tone of medieval ecclesiastical and feudal culture.' (Bakhtin 1968.)

This festive aspect was realized in the carnivals and the culture of the marketplace.

> 'They were the second life of the people, who for a time entered the utopian realm of community, freedom, equality and abundance .....
>
> Carnival was the true feast of time, the feast of becoming, change, and renewal. It was hostile to all that was immortalized and completed. [In contrast to official, legitimizing feasts linked to a static past.]
>
> .....
>
> Large medieval cities devoted an average of three months a year to these festivities.'
>
> (Bakhtin 1968)

It is no coincidence that also the author of Homo ludens emphasized this seemingly forgotten world of utopian joy and 'grotesque realism' (Huizinga 1967).

The point I want to make is not the anachronistic one that Western Civilization should reestablish its old carnivals or that pre-industrial festive culture was completely idyllic, but rather that the past carnivalization of life represented an authentic spontaneous public spirit which steadily since the 17th century has been privatized into the rituals of family life, or commercialized, or turned into official parade.

To-day the contemplation of earlier, relatively unprivatized and uncommercialized concrete forms of popular culture will probably prove more encouraging and constructive than a similar contemplation of the Bingo world. In this sense it is an important task for historians to be value-conscious and dig up thought-provoking reminders of alternatives to the darker aspects of our celebrated modernity. Another example may illustrate this point of view. Let us take the problem of role specialization (division of labour).

> 'Sans doute, à la base, comme d'eux-mêmes, les métiers connaissent-ils une spécialisation progressive : en 1568, un artisan suisse, Jost Amman, énumère 90 métiers divers; l'Encyclopedie de Diderot en recense 250; le catalogue de la maison Pigot, à Londres en 1826, donne pour la grande ville une liste de 826 activités diverses, certaines amusantes, nettement marginales.'
>
> (Braudel 1967, p.329.)

Since 1826 role specialization in the West has increased to a level where a systematic fragmentation of life and lack of responsible over-view have made many people look to China for alternatives: unity of manual and intellectual labour, a low degree of stratifying formal schooling.

But alternatives are also to be found in earlier phases of Western Civilization. Although the humanistic and neo-humanistic movements were largely aristocratic, they had a view of many-sided work and interests which would have radical effects as a practical ideal to-day. For instance Wilhelm von Humboldt's theory of personality presents a concept of harmonious Bildung completely alien to the man power requirement and conditions of industrial capitalism. (Spranger 1911).

One might well think that von Humboldt's aristocratic theory is farther from F.W. Taylor's system of scientific management than

from Chairman Mao's egalitarian idea of division of labour.

In many important cases the structures of Traditional West will have more in common with the non-Western world than with the Modern Western one.

(6) The danger of nostalgia and anachronism

The West is no longer the newest and less experienced civilization. It has become the oldest Modern industrial civilization. In this sense, the West undoubtedly contains much experience relevant to the other parts of the world, but it is an idea behind the Trend in Western Civilization Project that in trying to convey its experience the West should stress the full complexity of that experience and discuss it in the reinterpretative light of our present sense of history.

We do not believe that some entirely new idea of Western history will come out of this project, but we recognize the need that we and other historians contribute to some change in emphasis, to some knowledge of Western things forgotten or ignored, in order to bring about a more many-sided image of the Western experiences. In doing so, there is a chance that we shall come across several of the "losers" and "lost worlds" in Western history - tendencies that did not prevail, that were overrun by the stronger forces of industrial capitalism.

A preconceived idea of wanting to accentuate other aspects of Western Civilization than those which have conventionally been praised or denounced as "typically Western", may easily lead to a distorted view of history: to a priority of events completely different from that of the actors themselves. As Ranke always insisted, it is necessary to grasp the dominant trends of every epoch.

But too often these trends have been defined according to law of victory and modernity: those trends which became dominant, in the succeeding epochs. The danger of anachronistic constructions is therefore particularly dominant for conventional historians. Thus the importance of "non-Western" trends in the West has been consistently underrated and misunderstood until recently. As Christopher Hill writes in a review article on The Rosicrusian Enlightenment (Yates 1973):

> 'Historians are slowly learning to cope with the different task of understanding those intellectual movements of the past which appear to lead nowhere, which conflict with

modern assumptions, and yet which undoubtedly stirred the imaginations of earlier generations. Thanks to the work of many researchers we are beginning to appreciate that the revival of serious intellectual interest in magic in the sixteenth century was an important movement of thought - as influential in the early history of science as Baconianism.'

(Hill 1973).

We suspect that there are other such lapses of perspective and that there is a need to have the counter-trends firmly included into a general interpretation of Western history.

The search for lost alternatives in history may lead to nostalgia. On this point Robin Horton gives a note of serious warning:

'Having noted this fascination with non-Western cultures, we must go on to ask which of their supposed characteristics provoke it. The following, perhaps, are the most important: the organic community, in which the individual never finds himself set over against his group; communion with nature; predominance of feeling over reason; predominance of art over science. One striking thing about this list of supposed salient features of non-Western cultures is its similarity to a list that might be drawn up of the supposed salient features of pre-industrial culture in the earlier West. Given the Western intellectual's awareness of the many parallels between contemporary traditional cultures and earlier phases of Western culture, the desire for contact with such cultures is revealed as being, in essence, a desire to be reunited with one's own lost heritage.....

...Thus if we make a list of the various unfilled yearnings and malaises of which the modern Western intellectual complains, we shall find that this image displays itself unmistakably as a compensatory fantasy in which every frustrated yearning of the West finds fulfilment and every malaise of the West is banished...'

(Horton and Finnegan 1973, p.292)

We fully recognize the danger of "compensatory fantasies", but all the same: One might possibly find it useful, necessary and interesting to undertake a critical analysis of structures and values in Western history without entertaining ideas of obtaining any unio mystica with our hardly merry premodern past.

4. The Classical theory of Western uniqueness

(1) The problem

'Um 1400 war das Gesamtleben Europas, Indiens, Chinas zivilisatorisch wohl auf ähnlichen Niveau. Was aber seit dem 15.Jahrhundert geschehen ist, die Entdeckung und Prägung durch Europa, lässt die Frage entstehen, wodurch das geshah, was in Europa das Neue und Eigentümliche ist, das ihm diese Entwicklung ermöglichte, und welche Schritte es waren, die es dahin führten. Diese Frage wird zur universalgeschichtlichen Grundfrage. Denn es ist ein einmaliger Bruch im Abendland geschehen und in seinem Gefolge für die ganze Welt, ein Bruch dessen Ergebnisse unsere Situation ausmachen, und dessen schliessliche Bedeutung heute noch offen ist.'

(Jaspers 1952, p. 102.)

(2) The theory

'Europeans were not content to rest their claim to historical uniqueness on power and wealth alone. They found a major source of strength and self-confidence in their distinctive cultural tradition. As they compared their philosophies and religions with those of other civilizations, they were struck above all by the variety of the European scene, and by a culture that mirrored the landscape, presenting the same picturesque contrasts as the continent's heavily indented coastline and sharp changes of scenery. In contrast to the vast sameness that China and India - and later the Americas - presented to the European eye, the geography and culture of that little continent consentrated in a restricted space an infinite succession of achievements and possibilities.'

(Hughes 1971, p. 2.)

As Geoffrey Barraclough points out,

'The concept of European history which underlies all standard accounts in England and Germany (though perhaps not so dominantly in France) goes back to the great German historian, Leopold von Ranke.'

(Barraclough 1955, p. 169.)

In his first major work Ranke analyzed an important phase (1494-1535) in the history of

'the racially kindred nations either of Germanic or Germanic-Latin descent, whose history is the core of all modern history.'

(Ranke 1885, p. V)

The interconnected development of the nations of Ranke conceived as a unity in diversity, and - to quote Barraclough again -

> 'the practical means by which this free interplay is secured is the system of Balance of Power - - -'

Thus the political history of competing European nations became the general model for interpretations of western civilization.

Since Ranke eastern Europe has been fitted into the picture - as much as it could: The very monomania of using the nation-state as the only really basic unit both precluded a full understanding of eastern Europe and led directly to the shattering experience of the First World War, putting a definite end to Old World Charm.

Since Ranke's time the concept of a pluralistic structure has been carried to other aspects of history, and it has come to be considered almost a common denominator of all Western developments.

Even the Western historical consciousness itself has been interpreted in terms of a pluralistic experience:

> 'And so we come to the heart of the paradox. Historical research began because scholars perceived a problem which faced no other civilization - the problem of the Quality of Eurpoe's past, its conflicting ideologies and of their different interpretation of human destiny.'
>
> ---
>
> ---'no society, primitive or advanced, has suffered such ideological fractures as Europe.'

(Plumb 1969, p.136 and p.115)

In contrast to China where the central bureaucracy monopolized historical material and historical study,

> 'the new universities of Europe never attempted to bureaucratize history; hence historical criticism had a far freer soil in which to develop, ---'
>
> ---
>
> 'The historians of the Enlightenment could discover with delirious joy the antique past, that beckoned them in Greece and Rome; the multiplicity of historical worlds that rose above their intellectual horizon - Egypt, Persia, India, China - gave them new stimulens, fresh ideas, and a deep sense of recovery, of escape into a fresher, more viable historical understanding.'

(Plumb 1969, p.122 and p.139.)

Very often the Italien city-states and ecpesially, ancient Greek have been invoked as prefigurations of the general structure of European diversity, above all conceived as cultural inheritance. In this inheritance the Greco-Roman element

> 'was supremely important because it helped to create and stimulate the spiritual tension which carried the European spirit to dazzling heights never before attained. This, precisely this, is the European inheritance: not concrete achievements, --- but the spiritual exaltation, the incomparable soaring of the human spirit, the opening of new horizons ---'
>
> (Barraclough 1955, p.166.)

Many scholars lay a particular stress on the productive tension arising from the conflicting tendencies:

> 'Die Entschiedenheit --- die die Dinge auf die Spitze treibt, zur vollsten Klarheit bringt ---'
>
> ---
>
> 'Die Entschiedenheit kommt zur Erscheinung in den konkreten geschichtlichen Spannungen, in die fast alles, was im Abendlande wirkt, hineingezwungen wird, so zum Beispiel die Spannungen von Christentum und Kultur, von Staat und Kirche, von Reich und Nationen, von romanischen und germanichen Nationen, von Katholizismus und Protestantismus, von Theologie und Philosophie.'
>
> (Jasper 1952, p.000.)

With regard to such Spannungen, the author of the 'Rise of the West' observes that

> '--- Yet these polar antitheses were built into the very fundament of European society and have never been either escaped or permanently resolved.
>
> Quite possibly western civilization incorporated into its structure a wider variety of incompatible elements than did any other civilization of the world; and the prolonged and restless growth of the West, repeatedly rejecting its own potentially "classical" formulations, may have been related to the contrarieties built so deeply into its structure. Coming late to the scene and inheriting such incompatibles, the high civilization of the Far West has not yet come to rest but has revolutionized itself three times over. No other civilized society has ever approached such restless instability, nor exerted such drastic influence upon its fellow all round the world. In this, far more than in any particular intellectual, institutional, or technological expression that western Europe has from time to time put on, lies the true uniqueness of Western civilization.'
>
> (McNeill 1963, p. 539.)

In this most recent book William H. McNeill employs more explicitly and in greater detail concepts of ideological pluralism and shifting configurations of metropolitan centers to account for the unique

process of permanent cultural innovation in Europe (McNeill 1974.)

(3) A short critique of the classical theory

Applied to the problem of political and religious history of the Germano-Romanic nation states, Ranke's idea if unity in diversity could be linked to the fairly concrete phenomenon of the system of Balance of Power.

The practical (or very often impractical) workings of this system naturally called for historical and theoretical perspectives, and this limited aspect of the classical theory rests therefore on the seemingly solid ground of ample research.

But as the system itself had evident weaknesses, so had the research conducted by most of its admiring students. They were prone to make the value of Balance absolute and to regard other social and political values merely as instrumental. In practice this meant the apotheosis of cosmopolitan, diplomatical history associated with the politics of social status quo, e.g. (Kissinger 1956).

These historians often failed to see that the traditional system of Balance was completely dependent on certain social and economic structures whose development sooner or later would bring about entirely different systems of coexistence. Through the myopic eyes of their diplomatist heroes they considered the System to be universal and at the same time a closed unit. Their research became very much a game theory neglecting strategic factors outside the European game. A notable example is Ranke himself:

> 'Ranke writing in the "Indian Summer" following the Napoleonic wars, regarded the defeat of Napoleon at the hands of England and Russia as a confirmation of the old system, and failed to see that the French Revolution within and the preponderance of extra-European without represented the first stage in its collapse.'
>
> ---
>
> 'Contrary to the views popularized by A.J. Toynbee, for whom "western society", taken alone, is "an intelligible field of study", it is the connexion of Europe with the wider world that we shall see as the decisive factor shaping European history; without this impact from outside no phase of European development, still less of western European development, would be intelligible. That is true not merely in the present, as all of us can see, and in the recent past, but throughout European history.'
>
> (Barraclough 1955, p.180 and p.177 For concrete examples : pp.173-182.)

Geoffrey Barraclough also actualizes the perennial problem of any "System of Balance", and that is that it is always in imbalance: It cannot escape the imminence of hegemony (Dehio 1948). In Barraclough's words again:

> 'The maintenance of the European political system, and of the values which that system of counterbalancing power guaranteed, have depended always upon the fact that Europe was only part of the wider world, and that forces could always be recruited from beyond Europe to maintain the European equilibrium.'
>
> (Ibid., p. 182.)

Throughout European and Western history forces of hegemony have upset - and redefined - the Balance. These forces have been represented above all by entities that according to their nature transcend the carefully wrought equilibrium of nation states: Papacy, Empire, Commonwealth, Confederation.

As J.H. Elliott reminds us,

> 'Few people would doubt that diversity has been one of the most distinctive characteristics of European civilization, and that the acceptance - whether voluntary or constrained - of different points of view has been critical for the nuturing of the fragile plants of freedom and toleration in European soil. But pluralism, like Edith Cavell's patriotism, is not enough. The unitary ideal has also been a powerful driving force in European history, and much of the inner dynamic of that history may well spring from a continuous and creative tension between the drive to unite, which tend to be checked before it comes all-embracing, and a pluralism that tends to be checked before it produces disintegration.'
>
> (Elliott 1974.)

In Elliott's context the "inner dynamic" of the "unitary ideal" (or drive for hegemony) and "pluralism" is interpreted as the general tension in European history. Applied to the question of territorial organization this dynamic can, theoretically, be mediated in the alternative structure of confederalism or - more integrated - federalism, which Western civilization, in order to its contradiction, seems to have approached for at least two hundred years:

> 'Obviously quasi confederal, quasi alliance and protectorate systems of some permanence preceded the evolution of genuine federal systems. The United Netherlands (1579-1795), the North American Confederation (1776/77-1787), the Rheinbund (1806-1813), the Swiss Confederation (1811-1848), the German Confederation 1815-1866), the Confederation of the American Southern States (1861-1865) are generally considered to be models of historical confederations. None of them has stood the test of times well; they were either converted into federations or they disintegrated altogether. The one of longer duration,

> the Dutch, was for a century prior to its conversion in full decline. The most outstanding modern example, the British Commonwealth, represents probably the lowest common denominator of confederal coherence within this group.
>
> The type of federal system emerging with the United States Constitution of 1787 on the other hand has spread and is still and with increasingly speed spreading over five continents. Undoubtedly this type has proved to be more in line with the contingencies of modern political relations---'
>
> (Kann 1965, pp.40-41.)

Alas, even the Balance of Power transformed into advanced super systems of federation adds little to our understanding of Western civilization, except that Federalistic systems are possibly a little more flexibly framed than nation states to deal with ethnic conflicts. But pluralism as a conventional theory of territorial organizations says singularily little about the nature and direction of Western civilization because it remains largely an abstract, although well-defined juridicial idea, with little or no connection to socio-economic structure.

Similarily the much looser concept of cultural pluralism fails to provide a detailed causal framework for the understanding of such central processes as the rise of liberal "liberty", individualism, Zweckrationalität, industry, and capitalism in the West.

Between the lofty level of "spiritual tensions" etc., and the concrete events of Western Daily Life, there is a vacuum of middle-range explanations.

Let us take the famous contrast between the Chinese Indo-African expeditions and Columbus' voyages as case in point:

> 'Au XV^{e} siècle, les escadres chinoises accomplissent d'étonnants voyages, sous la conduite du grand eunuque Tscheng Hwo, un Musulman natif du Yunnan. Une première expédition le conduisit avec 62 grosses jonques dans l'Insulinde (1405-1407); une seconde (27 000 hommes, 48 navires, 1408-1411) se termine par la conquête de Ceylan; une troisième (1413-1417) par la conquête de Sumatra; une quatrième (1417-1419) et une cinquième (1421-22), pacifiques, aboutissent à des échanges de présents et d'ambassadeurs, celle-là dans l'Inde, celle-ci jusqu'en Arabie et sur la côte d'Abyssinie; une sixcième, rapide porte une lettre impériale au seigneur et maître de Palembang à Sumatra; la septième et dernière, la plus sensationelle peut-être, part du port de Long Wan le 19 janvier 1431; le reste de l'année la flotte mouille dans les ports plus méridionaux du

> Tché Kiang et du Fu Kien; en 1432, le voyage se poursuit par Java, Palembang, la péninsule de Malacca, Ceyland, Calicut, enfin Ormuz, but du voyage où la flotte, le 17 janvier 1433, débarque un ambassadeur chinois d'origine musulmane, lequel aura peut-être gagné La Mecque. Elle était de retour à Nankin le 22 juillet 1433.
>
> Ensuite, arrêt total à notre connaissance.'
>
> (Braudel 1967, p. 309)

Why were these expeditions suddenly stopped? Why did not the Chinese use their enormous (as compared to Colombus's) expeditions to colonize "new-worlds"? It is impossible to contemplate these comparable Chinese and Western ventures without being reminded of the great differences between the two.

Whereas the one was an official act of the monolithic Chinese state, the other was a small private enterprise made possible by Portuguese navigation technique, Genovese bankers and the patronage of the Spanish court (Cipolla 1967). If any of these contributions had failed, there were alternatives - other bankers, other courts, other techniques.

In the Chinese case there was no alternative to the patronage of the one Chinese Celestial court. If a Chinese Columbus had had his request for state support rejected, as the Western Colombus experienced in Portugal, he would have had no other possibility within Chinese civilization: "arrêt total". And we may be entitled to believe that among the 27 000 participants of the second expedition there were many embryonic columbuses whose aspirations were in practice cut off after July 1433.

In this sense the much more polycentric Western state system offered greater chances for enterprising explorers. This explains a part of the "question of Columbus". We can also evoke the second type of Western polycentrism, that of cultural pluralism. As Cipolla and other point out, Columbus's expeditions were unthinkable without the successful combination of northern European and Mediterranean shipbuilding and the combination of highly contradictory cartographical traditions since Antiquity.

But these features of pluralism do not account for Columbus's motives or for his being part of a whole movement of enterprising explorers. Either the classical theory of pluralism has to be abandoned as offering too restricted insights, or it must be completed as a theory of geographical, social and economic structures as

well as one dealing with only competing nation states and conflicting cultural traditions.

Even a more comprehensive theory of pluralism cannot eliminate the problem of the "unitary ideal" and hegemonic trends. As J.H. Elliott (ibid.) indicates, Renaissance humanism represented diversity and eclecticism as compared to Medieval scholasticism, but: "Did not adherence to humanistic ideals itself encourage a high degree of conformity?" Certainly it did, and the nature of this conformity, the essence of humanism, can only partly be explained in terms of pluralism. The same applies to other dominant Western structures such as Christianity and Capitalism. The theory of pluralism says something about the way in which dissimilar elements co-exist, the degree to which they are subordinated or coordinated, and how they mutually develop with tensions and proneness both for mixing and hegemonic drives. But it says nothing about the essence of the elements involved in a pluralistic structure. Thus pluralism is largely a <u>formal</u> theory of game structures.

The importance of this theory is nevertheless indubitable. Pluralism is always relative. No civilization has complete unidimensionality. All civilizations are to some extent multidimensional, polycentric, pluralistic. But some are more pluralistic than others. Therefore the crucial questions seem to be:

(i) In what ways are Western Civilization singularily pluralistic, if it is?

(ii) How much has the internal Western pluralism contributed to its previous position of world dominance?

In concordance with the assumptions above I would argue that the special missionary and expansionist drive of Western Civilization is hardly any consequence of <u>an advanced pluralistic structure as such</u>. It is a consequence of tendencies inherent in some of the <u>elements</u> in the structure, viz. Christianity and Capitalism. But the extreme (if extreme it is) degree of competition and tension within the structure must have <u>heightened</u> the drive for expansion, be it political, commercial or religious.

On an other level, it is also possible that <u>within the element of Christianity itself</u> (or Capitalism) there exist an unusual degree of pluralistic tension. Without much knowledge of

the comparative study of religion I would assume that Christianity contains a high degree of very paradoxical (though not necessarily unbelievable) oppositions between extreme transcendence and extreme immanence, between one God and a Trinity of godness and plurality of saints, between total salvation and total damnation and so on. The same sub-theory of pluralism may also apply to Capitalism, whose very system of reinvestment makes expansion and instability a law. This creates i.a. an unprecedented opposition between old and constantly new structures, and since Hobbes its anarchical tendencies, its bellum omnium contra omnes have been widely recognized. Such sub-theories must be explored.

However, our main theme is the general theory of pluralism. If it is to account for such a strategic event as the expeditions of Columbus, it must provide some understanding of his and his followers' Christian and (pre-) Capitalist special longings for God and Gold. Why spices could not be cultivated in Europe, this theory cannot explain. But in the next chapter I shall try to say something about the meaning of spices in the light of different Western pluralistic sctructures and needs:

> 'Alors le merite de l'Occident, bloqué sur son étroit "cap d'Asie", serait-il d'avoir en besoin du monde, besoin de sortir de chez soi? Rien n'eût été possible, répète un specialiste de l'histoirechinoise, sans la poussée alors des villes capitalistes d'Occident ---- Elles ont été le moteur, sans quoi la technique eût été impuissante.'
>
> (Braudel 1967, p. 313.)

Climate, Spices, towns, Capitalism, - these are entities which have a very unclear position in most theories of Western pluralism. Before I shall rather sketchily attempt to connect these and other phenomena to the pluralistic perspective, I want to start the next chapter by presenting some very rough ideas on the prehistory of diversity in the West.

5. Depths and limits of Western pluralism

> 'The root of this fateful difference [between China and the West] is to be found in the unique characteristics of the new Western civilization - pluralistic, adaptable, and free of the shackles of tradition that bound all the other Eurasian civilizations.'
>
> (Stavrianos 1971[b], p. 324.)

(1) The prehistory of diversity

> 'Compared to the civilized societies of Asia, European civilization exhibited marked instability. Rising to an extraordinary peak in classical times, it declined in equally extraordinary fashion following the fall of the Roman empire in the West. By contrast, Chinese, Indian, and even Middle Eastern history presents a far smoother curve. Despite marked changes in modes of religious, artistic, and intellectual expression, the civilized peoples of Asia always maintained a fairly stable institutional base on the local level. Complex social structures, involving both economic and cultural specialization, survived all the disturbances of time from the second millennium B.C. onward (from the third millennium in the Middle East). Save perhaps on the easterly face of the Iranian plateau, such complex societies never retreated for any long period of time from any extensive geographical area.'
>
> (McNeill 1963, p. 538.)

Modern Western civilization being one of the off-shots of the original civilizations of the Middle East, has an important pluralistic heritage which was more typical of these civilizations than of the Indian or Chinese ones:

Mesopotamian civilization is to-day regarded as the oldest one, beginning about 3500 B.C. From this origin civilization spread to the Nile and Indus valleys. Civilization in China developed later in a much more isolated environment, whereas geographical accessibility made frequent interaction between especially Mesopotamian and Egyptian civilizations possible.

One result of this interaction, which to a far lesser degree existed between the individually remote Indian and Chinese civilizations, was inevitably cultural pluralism, competition and mutual stimulation through comparison.

Another result was the rise of adjacent civilizations on the interaction lines between the two original centers. Thus Middle East became filled up with an increasingly multi-centered variety of

interacting and congenial, but often independent civilizations which cross-fertilized each other.

In other words: I would argue that the early exitence of two mutually accessible civilizations in the Middle East implied a creative structure of cultural opposition and continuing efforts at synthesizing, both in each of the two original centers and, especially, in the new ones, situated in-between

Thus a specialist on the Phoenicians speaks of

--- 'the innate disposition of all the Levant people to copy the art and culture of others, particularly Egypt and Mesopotamia, and to fuse them together into an amalgam, ---'

(Harden 1962)

--- 'if other geographical factors are equal, the key to human progress is accessibility and interaction.'

(Stavrianos 1971^{b}, p. 6.)

In this way a dialectical process of new fusions and new oppositions took place in the Middle East area, - cultural innovation through interaction and comparison within a communication system of related, but different civilizations. A process of this kind did not establish itself in either India or China.

My next point of comparison between the Middle East and the Indian and Chinese civilizations also regards geography: the instability in the geographical basis of proto-Western civilization which first moves around the Mediterranean basin and then creeps northwards in Europe, far away from the original centers.

One can easily imagine how this extensive geographical movement implied a continuous consumation and accumulation of cultural impulses, of the conflicting traditions in the heritage of the civilized Middle Easterners and the different "barbarian" traditions within Mediterranean Europe, which in turn becomes integrated into a very diverse Greco-Roman structure. In the millenia before the "historic fusion" between this civilization and the Germanic and Slavonic worlds a complex structure of opposition-fusion-opposition based on cultural-geographical differences had established itself as an essential factor in the heritage of the Middle Eaterners. The Hellenistic fusions of cultures in the wake of Alexander's conquests represent typical features of this cultural-geographical dialectic - a very limited phenomenon in acient India and China whose civilizations retained their geographical base and thus were ensured a greater cultural homogeneity.

Well, what are we to make of this difference if it has been as basic as several authors assume? I would suggest two problems:

(i) How can we assess the(general) causal value of the proto-Western and Western structure of relative heterogeneity as a distinctive and permanent mark of the Mediterranean civilization? What did it mean for religious thinking, for politics and economy? Heterogeneity as a mode of thinking?

(ii) What is the special relationship between this general structure and the typically Western tradition of religious-political schisms and opposition? To what extent did the permanent situation of schisms generate or contribute to an increased popular participation which "in economic, cultural, and political life was far greater in western Europe than in other civilizations of the world." (McNeill 1963, p.558.)

The same point is made by Nehru in his World Histroy, e.g. his letter of 4th August 1932

I assume that social theories of mass movements and conditions favourable to their development will include i.a. such factors as splits within elites who appeal to lower layers for support etc.

We could connect such social theories with a theory of organic schisms built into the very core of Western tradition. What I would like to stress in this connection is the new element induced by Christianity which could give a minimal local issue universal significance and thus enhance the heat of the conflict to a phenomenal degree.

The importance of conflicting ideological traditions as a mechanism for mass mobilization, splits within elites, and legitimatization of new ideas is shown in the English Revolution:

> 'Although the revolution ostensibly failed, there survived ideas about religious toleration, limitations on the power of the central executive to interfere with the personal liberty of the propertied classes. and a policy based on the consent of a very broad spectrum of society. They reappear in the writings of John Locke and find expression in the political system of the reigns of William and Anne, with well-developed party organizations, the transfer of far-reaching powers to Parliament, a Bill of Rights and a Toleration Act, and the existence of a surprisingly large, active, and articulate electorate.
>
> It is for these reasons that the English crisis of the seventeenth century can lay claim to being the first "Great Revolution" in the history of the world, and therefore an event of fundamental importance in the evolution of western civilization.'
>
> (Stone 1970, p. 108.)

(2) The meaning of destruction:
the breakdown of the Western Roman Empire

The spectre of the declining Roman Empire has again and again been looked upon as a most tragic event in European history, and the political decline of the modern West has during the last fifty years been dramatized in rather fatalistic and similar tragic terms. It will be argued in this essay that the pervasive breakdown of the Roman Empire far from being a permanent impediment to the growth of Western civilization rather must be regarded as one of the most liberating and most decisive factors leading to the various modernizations of the West.

The most important thing about this breakdown consisted in its being so radically pervasive. Thereby, in addition to the accumulated heritage of different shades of pluralism, it introduced the idea of a qualitatively new system of society.

As L.S. Stavrianos observes, all the great Eurasian civilizations of Antiquity were ravaged by nomadic hordes, but only the western Roman Empire succumbed for ever.

This breakdown had several important consequences of which I shall stress a few:

(i) Relatively speaking, the center had to leave the periphery to itself. The onerous burden of a brilliant, but parasitic bureaucracy and cosmopolitan upper-class were eliminated. This meant that economic surplus, although it shrank because of the general economic decline, was not canalized to a remote Imperial capital, but remained largely within the producing region. In the long run this must have had a salutary effect on local economic and social development.

(ii) Whereas the entrenched systems of caste and mandarins survived together with much other traditional structure in India and China, nothing of the like survived in the West. Thus the social bearers of unbroken tradition became non-existent. This meant a separation of social ideas from social institutions: Tradition, no longer incorporated in concrete institutions became less tangible and therefore more changeable and debatable ideas: What the Western historical horizon lacked in traditional institutions, it

compensated by a variety of freely flying ideas. After the fall of Rome Western Civilization developed as a Mecca for opposition groups: Tradition was no longer the privilege of the present Establishment. Rather it provided alternatives for social criticism.

Of course, any ruling class tries to expropriate the past for its own legitimitazion. But in the West, as compared to all other civilizations, it is a question whether this has not been more successfully done by opposition groups and the modern ideologies originating from opposition:

> 'Not the least of (modern) ideology's paradoxes is that the most radically transformative belief system, being the least mere reflexes of experiences, make the most use of tradition.'
>
> (Peel 1973), (Shils 1971.)

(iii) The internal Roman crises contributing to the final collapse prepared the ground for a remarkably quick conversion of the Roman aristicracy (Grant 1972). This meant that the proletarian, millenarian religion of oppressed minorities in less than perhaps fifty years was transformed into the political religion of a still dominativy super power. What this social and religious transformation implied in terms of compromises, paradoxes,and profound ambiguities still remain to be clearly analyzed.

When the Empire collapsed, its official Church did not. Thus a probably unparalleled situation came into existence: In the vacuum of permanent state power the new Christian Church established itself as a semi-independent political power. In this separating development many scholars have seen the beginning of both Western secularization and liberalization, e.g. (Stadtmüller 1965). In order to define itself as an organism secluded from the State, the Church eo ipso defined the State as belonging to a sphere for which the supporters of the State could claim a similar autonomy.

This early separation of the realm of secular politics and the realm of religion did not necessitate a chain reaction by itself, but it provided a model which the exponents of economy, science, and art could use as a political weapon against the Church when they tried to carve out autonomy

for themselves. The resulting sectorialization of the different realms of culture was a new Western structure of competing pluralism, which engendered the different consciousnesses of businessmen, priests, artists, politicians etc.
The interplay between these individuated realms can illuminatingly be interpreted as part of the modern role specialized, individualistic universe. (Dumont 1971).

(iv) The collapse of central power led to the decline of towns, which mainly had served administrative and military functions. Towns declined, but when economic life regained vitality, towns, relatively unimpeded by the burden of bureaucracy, were regrouped and integrated themselves in the agricultural economy. Thus a basis was laid for the primacy of economic functions of towns.

(v) The breakdown of the Western empire, the continued existence of the Eastern one and the rise of Islam as the dominating Mediterranean power divided the Greco-Roman heritage in three parts which cultivated in separate ways. This the old Middle Eastern process of civilizational off-shots repeated itself: the new Western civilization begin to develop with the Byzantine and Arab civilizations as cross-fertilizing, closely related neighbours, all of which worked on a common Greco-Roman basis. This made 'the dual heritage' even more polycentric and multi-dimensional.

(vi) The supreme importance of Rome as a staring point for modern Western Civilization is demonstrated in the apparently trivial and arbitrary question of frontiers. The divisions of Eastern and Western Europe, of France and Germany, of South German and North Germany, of England and Scotland - all these divisions remains today as deep structures of cultural differences. Thus the nucleus of the rational and cultural pluralism of Europe originated in the (fortunate) failure of the Roman Empire to resist breakdowns and expand with equal influence all over Europe.

(3) Climatical, geographical, and agricultural pluralism.

The diversity of the European climate and soil requires a special attention. Too often the geographical factors are taken for granted.

> 'We have noted the main characteristics of the Mediterranean countries: a collection of small stretches of comparatively level land, hemmed in by the sea and the mountains; much sunshine, little rain, moderate seasonal variations of temperature. Continental Europe, the original home of the Barbarians, is almost exactly the opposite: an endless plain, well provided with water and ill favoured by the sun, with prolonged cold winters and scorching summers. Left to itself, the heavy soil will bring forth tall trees and fodder for the wild or tame animals of any kind; cultivation requires none of the ceaseless rampening demanded by the Mediterranean lean earth, but a concentrated effort with powerful tools' .
>
> (Lopez 1971, p. 15).

The Mediterranean basin was relatively overpopulated and 'overcultivated'. This meant unfavourable conditions for livestock, hence a constant problem of manure and ecological balance.

Since the barbarian days of the Germanic tribes cattle-breeding had been a speciality in the North, and vegetation was well fit for livestock. As Lopez and others have indicated, the real problem consisted in developing a new, heavy agricultural technology which was adequate for the heavy Northern soil. This was a very slow process, starting with the generation of more efficient three-field system in the eight century, the use of the heavy-wheeled plow, of horsepower made more efficient through horseshoes and the new harness, the use of watermills and windmills.

Until well into the thirteenth century 'frontier conditions' existed almost everywhere in the middle and northern Europe, and the relative scarcity of labour made labour-saving methods imperative. Thus at the time of the Doomsday Book there were about 5000 water-mills in England, and several scholars assume that for the first time in history civilization was upheld 'not on the sinews of sweating slaves and coolies but primarely by nonhuman power.' (White 1968,p.71) also (Lopez 1971, p.42).

> 'Nowhere else in the world did farmers develop any analogous agricultural implement. Is it coincidence that modern technology, with its ruthlessness toward nature, has so largely been produced by descendants of these peasants of northern Europe?

This same exploitive attitude appears slightly before 830 A.D. in Western illustrated calendars. In older calendars the months were shown as passive personifications. The new Frankish calendars, which set the style for the Middle Ages, are very different: they show men coercing the world around them - ploughing, harvesting, chopping trees. butchering pigs. Man and nature are two things, and man is the master.'

(White 1968, p.84.)

The early Western preoccupation with mechanical power is also reflected in the work of a prominent intellectual like Roger Bacon, who in the middle of the thirteenth century formulated ideas which again and again recurred after him in Western history:

'Machines may be made by which the largest ships, with only one man steering them, will move faster than if they were filled with rowers; wagons may be built which will move with unbelievable speed and without the aid of beasts; flying machines can be constructed in which a man may beat the air with mechanical wings like a bird, ---- machines will make it possible to go to the bottom of seas and rivers.'

Roger Bacon, quoted from (White 1968, p.70).

One could comment this vision of machines with Spengler's dictum:

'Die Kraft ist im mechanischen Naturbilde des abendländischen Menschen, was der Wille in seinem Seelenbilde und die unendliche Gottheit in seinem Weltbilde ist.'

(Spengler 1969, p. 501.)

Equally important as the Western mechanization of agriculture was the commercialization of it. Again a pluralistic structure seems to be involved as a decisive factor:

'The uneven development of soil types made it possible, sometimes even necessary, to exchange food of different kinds between different districts. Regional exchanges of certain agricultural products - cereals, livestock, and wool - developed merchanting institutions in medieval times and made possible a moderate growth of towns, whose burghers grew less and less of their own food.'

(Jones and Woolf 1969, pp.5-6).

Long before the industrial revolution western Europe had become dependent on grain from eastern Europe. That such an essential product became commercialized, constrasts sharply with China, where rice was not normally an important commodity in trade.

The very monoculture of rice also contrasts with the Western pluralistic systems of crop rotation and mixed farming:

'Farming for the market reached unprecented heights of intensity around the textile towns of late medieval Flanders. These towns represented the largest concentration of manufacturing in northern Europe, initially working wool from England and elsewhere into cloth for parts of Germany, which in return exported cereals.'

'The strategic innovations in Flanders - subsequently transferred to England - involved the growing of forage crops (legumes and roots) in place of fallow, which allowed the raising of herds and flocks on farms without any reduction of the grain acreage - indeed, with an actual increase of grain yields resulting from the increased production of organic manure.'

(Jones and Woolf 1969, p. 7).

---'cette rupture de travail agricole au bénéfice de l'élevage et de l'emploi des bêtes, cette association qui est l'originalité évidente des campagnes d'Occident et de Méditerranée, ---'

(Braudel 1969, p. 88.)

This unique system of mixed farming had several important effects

(i) It created conditions for an extensive use of animal power in agricultural work.

(ii) It meant a more differentiated agricultural commodity production and a more comprehensive basis for specialization and exchange. This availability of exchangeable agricultural products facilitated the growth of a Western mass market:

'The staples of European commerce were not luxury goods designed for the wealthy few, as tended to be the case in Asian civilizations, but such common items as grain and herring, wool and coarse cloth, metals and timber - all destined for a much wider class of consumers.'

(McNeill 1963, p. 558)

(iii) It made a possible substantial production of meat which had been part of the Germanic diet since the days of nomadism. As Braudel (ibid.-, p.79) ascertains, Europe was the only part of the world where meat played a relatively important role in the diet, especially of the upper and middle classes, hence the enormous need for spices in Europe.

(iv) 'Nearly all of the (improved agricultural implements) called for a larger use of iron or steel' ----
'Advances in farming equipment were interdependent with the multiplication of forgers in the following centuries.'

(Lopez 1971, p. 45.)

Thus before heavy technology of warfare developed, Europe had already taken a lead in mining and tool production.

(v) The commercial system of mixed farming was more prone to experiments and innovation than Oriental monoculture. Ample supply of organic manure and rotation of crops secured better ecological balance and efficiency of production. By the time of the agricultural revolution of the eighteenth century England had developed the most efficient agricultural system of the world, -- financially and demographically a precondition for the first industrial revolution. (Deane 1969).

A last emphasis should be given to the degree to which the most traditional sector of production was commercialized in the West already in the medieval period. It is fitting to recall this process since the next section will deal with the Western towns, whose general importance has been consistently overstated by town-dwelling historians:

'Western European societies, ... were polycentric, , with fragmented sources of authority and initiative. Within their agricultures, particularly in the Low Countries and England, independent and market-oriented farmers had been able to arise out of the breakdown of communal farming in the depression of the late Middle Ages. In western Europe areas reclaimed and settled were similarly characterized by separate farms occupied by independent producers. There were thus scope for considerable diversity of economic action and response.

(Jones and Woolf 1969, p.5.)

(4) The pluralist structure of Western towns.

The consequent outcome of a developed market economy is the "autonomization" of capital and the formation of the "capitalist spirit" (Sombart 1913). But this did not happen before Europe broke an old impediment:

'En fait, le miracle, en Occident ce n'est pas exactement que tout ayant été d'abord anéanti, ou peu s'en faut, avec le désastre du Ve siècle, tout ait rebondi

> a partir du IX^{e}. De ces lents allers et retours seculaires, de ces expansions, naissances ou renaissances urbaines, l'histoire est remplie : la Gréce du V^{e} au II^{e} siécle avant J.-C., Rome si l'on veut, l'Islam ápartir du IX^{e} siecle, la Chine des Songs. Mais chaque fois au cours de ces remontées, il y a deux coureurs, l'État, la Ville. D'ordinaire, l'Etat gagne, la Ville reste alors sujette et sous un lourde poigne. Le miracle, avec les premiers grands siecles urbains d'Europe, c'est que la ville ait gagné pleinement, au moins en Italie, dans les Flandres et en Allemagne. Elle a fait, pour un assez long temps, l'experience d'une vie á part entiére, colossal événement dont la genese ne se cerne pas avec sureté. Mais d'énormes conséquences sont visibles.
>
> (Braudel 1967, p.394.)

Whereas towns in the other civilizations generally were economically parasitic capitals, with a heavy bureaucratic blocking, the small Western towns developed in the wake of the West-Roman collapse as economically creative centers. Typical of the Western town structure is the emergence of a lot of middle-sized towns, each generally developing an economic network of smaller towns around itself.

(The role of the middle-sized or middle-placed units generally seems to be particularly important in the West: middle towns, middle classes, middle territories: nation states as neither empire nor village or tribe. The mediating middle units, "not too big, nor too small" are at the core of Western pluralism: A theory of Western pluralistic structure of middle units could be based on the Aristotelian idea of via media. Aristotle's Politics can be read as a middle class manifesto.)

The semi-autonomy of the Western towns gives them free reins to explore the possibilities of business. The essential point is not that the economic environment of the towns stimulated capitalistic mentalités and structures, but that so many towns were left free to make these structures become predominant: The interests and calculating rationality of business could be developed systematically without the arbitrariness and traditional blocking of political powers outside those of business.

The urban liberties and privileges of autonomy had to be fought for, and in the medieval ages towns represented an in-

dependent military power. The autonomy of the first commercially revolutioned Italian towns rested firmly on naval power, acquired from the Western struggle with Muslim forces in the Mediterranean. In 1176 even the lord of Italy - Emperor Frederick Barbarossa was defeated by a league of Lombard towns. We may well ask whether such an event was even thinkable in other parts of the world.

"Stadtluft macht frei". This was not the case in India or China, where the traditional social structures existed in the towns as well:

> "Dans les Indes, le systéme des castes divise, émiette à l'avance toute communauté urbaine. En Chine, le culte des gentes s'oppose à un mélange comparable à celui qui a crée la ville d'Occident; celle-ci, vrai machine à briser les anciens liens, à placer les individes sur un même plan,.... "
>
> (Braudel 1967, p.403.)

The lack of any traditional system comparable to that of castes meant the first rise of the meritocracy. Neither political power from without nor social structure from within could prevent the logical outcome of the freest market economy of the world: individualism. This was not a mere individualism of the upper class. On the contrary: Its importance consisted precisely in its being an ideology of personal liberation belonging to all urban classes over the level of the "Lumpenproletariat". This is not the place to spell out the different religions, political, and economic implications of such a conviction. But against all elitist conceptions of Western history this point can hardly be overstated: Western civilization was the first one which could draw on the active political, religious, and economic initiatives of liberated "lower middle classes".

With the advent of stronger princely power and the heavy warfare technology of the later middle ages towns and princes became involved in a symbiotic relationship, which, however, generally in Europe resulted in a new preponderance of bureaucratic state apparatuses, except in Holland and England, where the political revolutions secured the relatively unimpeded action of business interests. Therefore these countries became the bases for the conse-

quent development of modern capitalism.

(5) Social pluralism: the class connecting all other classes.

One of the greatess impediments in the mutual development of science and technology has been the social division of labour: science as an occupation for upper-classes, technology in the form of manual work as an occupation for the lower classes. Among other things, the contempt for manual work prevented the Greco-Roman aristocracy from caring for any fruitful cooperation between science and technology:

> "Plutarch tells us that Archimedes was ashamed of the machines he had built. Seneca remarks that the inventions of his time, such as stenography, were naturally the work of slaves, since slaves alone were concerned with such things. In the classical tradition there is scarcely a hint of the dignity of labour."
>
> (White 1968, p.64.)

The three following factors may account for the slow process of bridging the gap between science and technology:

(i) The rise of "proletarian" Christianity whose unequivocal respect for all kinds of honest work is well established, indeed there are strong elements in Christianity approaching an apotheosis of work. This was reflected in the monastic regulae laid down by St. Benedict of Nursia :

> "The provision of Benedict, himself an aristocratic, that his monks should work in fields and shops therefore marks a revolutionary reversal of the traditional attitude toward labour; it is a high peak along the watershed separating the modern from the ancient world....."
>
> "The monk was the first intellectual to get dirt under his fingernails. He did not immediately launch into scientific investigation, but in his very person he destroyed the old artificial barrier between the empirical and the speculative, the manual and the liberal arts, and thus helped create a social atmosphere favourable to scientific and technological development.'
>
> (White 1968, p.64 and p.65.)

Although one can earily overstress this point, forgetting the first element in Ora et labora, there were certain conspicuous results of this monastic attitude, even important commercial ones :

'Les abbayes cisterciennes fondées au XI^{e} siècle, c'est-a-dire à une epoque ou commencaient à se manifester les premiers symptomes de la rupture de l'equilibre traditionnel, montrent en revanche une administration économique d'un genre inconnu jusque-là.'

(Pirenne 1969, p. 60.)

Roger Bacon's vision of machines is also representative of the practical tendencies in Western monasticism.

(ii) The slow, but steady rise of new social groups prevented manual labour from being exclusively associated with slave labour:

'Ancient Rome had richer aristocrats and more comfortable free farmers (than the barbarian age), but was beset by landless proletarians and depended on slave labour... The long depression of the barbarian age fostered the growth of an intermediate group, made up of degraded freemen and promoted slaves, all of whom were substantially free in their relations with third parties but unfree in their relations with a master or lord.'

- - -

'Just as slaves were slightly upgraded because they were getting rare, so did skilled workers and merchants cut a more respectable figure than their better equipped but commonplace Roman predecessors. ... The most striking case in point is that of the moneyers (manufacturers of coins), who rose from the unenviable condition of harddriven workmen in the Roman imperial mints to that of independent entrepreneurs or high officials of the barbarian governments.'

(Lopez 1971 p. 17 and p.21.)

Such were the very slowly emerging nuclei of a new social order which came to triumph in the increasingly role specialized urban population. The economic rather than bureaucratic character of the Western towns made the commercial classes prevail to the extent that they in many cases, notably in Italy, were able to take possession of full political

power.

In towns where the greatest development of industry occurred, the most enterprising group was not the merchants, but the merchant-craftsmen. Their powerful guild system became a model of the medieval organizational pluralism, of which the semi-independent, competing universities were a part. The early struggle for independence by guilds, universities and towns mobilized patriotic sentiments and energies which Braudel (p.395) perceives as the most important prefiguration of national patriotism.

Already in 1293 the most powerful guilds - the Arti Maggiori - gained power in Florence, where the values of property and business could reign unimpeded by princely or ecclesiastical encroachment. It was precisely this immunity of capital which in the end made it virtually impossible for kings to encroach upon private money except through regular taxes.

Thus when the City of London lost confidence in Charles the first, and the Scottish war required money, he had to have the Parliament assembled, although this was seen as an enormous humiliation for him at that time. Braudel provides an illuminating example of the immunity of capital even under a so-called absolutist monarchy :

'De même, si Louis XIV ne réussit pas à fonder une "banque royale", malgré divers projets (1703, 1706, 1709), c'est que les marchands "avaient peur... que le Roi ne nût la main sur les dépots de la Banque". '

(Ibid., p.396.)

In Spain, however, the position of the commercial middle classes was much more similar to that of Chinese, Indian or Muslim merchants :

'La faute rédhibitoire de l'économie impériale de l'Espagne a été d'aboutir à Séville, à une ville surveillée, pourrie par des "fonctionnaires" prévicaricateurs, dominée depuis longtemps par des capitalistes étrangers, non pas à une ville puissante, libre, capable de fabriquer à sa guise et d'assumer, à elle seule, une véritable politique economique.'

Thus the failure of the Spanish commercial classes to gain urban control was also a failure to develop modern capitalism in Spain and the failure to abolish the predominance of aristocracy and narrow aristocratic ideals of work.

(iii) The long-term process of commercialization of knowledge produced in the industrial phase of capitalism the really intermediating social groups in modern Western society: first independent lawyers to deal with conflicts and engineers to organize efficient work, then all kinds of other university - educated 'technicians' facilitating, still in a more or less authoritarian way, relationships across the manual/non-manual labour axis of power and prestige.

(6) A final symbol of Western commercialized pluralism: fashion.

During the years 1400 - 1450 a common royal fashion of cloths emerged in all Europe, and since then the varietis of Western fashion have been legio. Fashions changed according to centers of metropolitan preponderance: Italy, Spain, France... From the royal level the obsession with fashion spread down the social ladder. By 1700 it had become institutionalized in the great fashion houses of Paris. Since that time we have had an ever-accelerating change of fashion.

In most, if not all, 'traditional' societies in which differences of cloths exist, special cloths are the privilege of the most prestigeous groups. There are still rudiments of this custom in the West today (e.g. in the Church and in the Army), but the interesting social point about Western fashion is precisely that fashionable cloths can be acquired by everyone, provided he or she has enough money to buy them. Thus fashion is both a symbol of Western social mobility and a reminder of the commercial inegalitarian terms of Western freedom and pluralism. As the French structuralists would say, these values have been inscribed in commercialism.

6. Towards a new history of liberation

No historian can avoid having a feeling, however ambivalent, of optimism or pessimism towards the future. Western historians of this century have generally had a feeling of pessimism, except in textbooks. The peak expression of this feeling has undoubtedly been the works of Spengler and Toynbee in spite of their being almost universally rejected by the corps historique.

It seems to be three different consequences of pessimism as relevant to conceptions of history: The first implies the reversal to the cyclical view of birth and death of civilizations, with a special attention to the death phase. The second is the historicist attitude of nostalgia, implying regression from some chosen period of history, e.g. la Belle époque. The third is the nihilist theory of the Century of Uncertainty, the elevation of doubt and scepticism as the supreme virtue of historians. There are many and understandable sources of these pessimistic attitudes. The most understandable ones derive from the prospects of a thermonuclear war and/or an extinctive ecological imbalance. These are prospects which today cannot be ruled out by anyone.

Some other sources are to be found in the decline and (self-) destruction of the West and what are taken to be the Western values in the world.

There is no doubt that the spatial aspect of what Spengler called "das Pathos der Ferne" - the open, ever-expanding "frontier" in Western history has been closed. The final stage of it was the closing of the American open frontier from the 1890's. The West has since then reached its geographical point of saturation and even contraction. Economic penetration of other parts of the world still continues and will continue for some time. This may give those directly profiting from it some feeling of quantitative progress, but it gives less comfort to most others.

To the extent that identification with the collective fate of the West really influence people's sense of history, the internal state of Western Civilization itself seems to be more important to most people than its dominance over the non-Western world.

Therefore it is a disturbing fact for all enthusiasts of Western civilization that the sense of general deterioration during the last ten years has come to appear more common than a sense of general progress

Here is one example of a typical 1974 balance sheet:
Now, let us put in the left-hand column undoubted benefits of progress, and in the right-hand column the losses incurred through progress, and then look closely at the balance. (The table below, needless to say, does not list all the advantages and disadvantages of progress; it concentrates rather on representative items.)

THE LEGACY OF PROGRESS

(1) We have better medical care We have eliminated contagious diseases and altogether cope better with illness.	(1) We have destroyed other cultures. We have either treated them as barbarian or savage and therefore unimportant, or we brought them our technology thereby disrupting their ways of life without giving them our standard of living
(2) We live longer. We have reduced infant mortality and expanded the individual life.	(2) We have depleted natural resources. We have heedlessly exploited the resources of the entire world as if they were infinite or easily replenishable.
(3) We live better. We have a higher standard of living; we live much more comfortably, we eat better, we dress better	(3) We have caused ecological imbalancees. Our superior scientific understanding did not prevent us from radically misreading the behavior of Nature.
(4) We travel faster, communicate faster. We have more access to things: planes, cars, books, records, reproductions.	(4) We have created unhealthy, if not insane ways of life. We have disengaged the individual from the variety of interaction with nature and other people in which he was naturally engaging in former ways of life.

(Skolimsky 1974).

Whether these points are right or wrong do not matter. What matters is that they and other similar points express a widely, today perhaps generally held assumption about the state of Western life.

What is all too evident in this situation is that the old progress of liberty, which the liberals of the nineteenth century could see as the main trend of history, has not come to fulfillment in spite of the existence of parliamentary democracy and middle-class culture of individualistic emancipation.

The strains and stresses in our own societies remind us that changes in political structure (or in Eastern Europe: basic changes only in the economic structure) have not been sufficient for the realization of the old Western ideas of liberty.

Perhaps these insufficiencies and limitations were inherent in the liberal ideas and the old liberals themselves. In spite of the fascinating depth of pluralism in Western geographical, economic, political and cultural structures, the whole ideology of Western

"liberal" pluralism as the basis of liberty had severe limitations and unidimensional aspects. I shall not try to deal with all these limitations here, and I shall not weaken the point that pluralism as a general denominator was unique and an essential element in the dynamism of Western history. But now we are looking at the present and the future and it is necessary to recognize those necessary limitations of the past which should not be prolonged into the future.

Let us, as an indication, start with the pluralism of daily life; the Western products of food, clothes, houses. As Braudel (1967) makes abundantly clear, the impressive Western pluralism of these things was until recently almost completely a pluralism of the upper and middle classes. According to the criterion of material and dietal pluralism, the lower classes of the West shared the conditions of the East. By the upper classes this was realized to the degree that peasants simply could be defined as non-Westerners, as Orientals, as even as animals, which did e.g. Gibbon. Such definitions have been quite common (and still are in many theories of mass psychology etc.), and I shall give only one telling example provided by Braudel:

> 'Jean-Batiste Say écrit, en 1828: "Je vous avou que je n'ai aucun attrait pour les modes immobiles des Turcs et des autres peuples de l'Orient. Il semble qu'elles prêtent de la durée à leur stupide despotisme. Nos villageois sont un peu Turcs à l'egard des modes el l'on voit de vieux tableaux des guerres de Louis XIV ou les paysans et les paysanne représentés avec vêtments qui diffèrent peu de ceux que nous leur voyons aujourd'hui." '
>
> (Ibid., p. 236.)

Neither the lower classes nor women belong completely, if at all, to Western civilization as conventionally defined. Their weak point is their lack of Western rationality and enterprising spirit. The women are defined as passive and emotional. Therefore they come pretty close to the definitions of Oriental and - worse - Primitive people.

The images of women found in Western history constitute one of those catalogues which can be read as history of psychopathology. There are few who would doubt that if we concentrated historical research on the actions and achievements of women, "typical Western values" would appear rather different. Today it is an important task for historians of both sexes to transcend the kind of research where women are, in Sheila Rowbotham's words: "hidden from history"

We are now able to see that the prodigeous rise of Weberian Zweckrationalität and mechanization of work, and the hegemony of this mechanization as a criterion of general progress, have presupposed and conditioned an almost complete privatization of those aspects of life which cannot so easily become mechanized. Thus the fateful dualisms of mind and body, reason and emotion inherent in the Platonic tradition have so to speak become institutionalized in the process which, say, since the sixteenth century has separated men from women and privatized emotions and ideals of personal happiness.

This fateful dichotomy of public and private life exiled several moral and emotional values to private life and legitimated a public ruthlessness and one-dimensionality which few would endorse in private life. But this separation - or specialization - of values laid the basis for the excesses and perversions of e.g. Western military and industrial growth.

Of course there is nothing new in this kind of Kulturkritik. Western dualism has been criticized since the beginning of it, and Rousseau and de Sade have long since pointed on the sterile and dangerous limitations of traditional Western rationality as a general attitude. Today the results of these limitations are only too evident. But are these excesses and shortcomings sufficient to proclaim the end of "progress".

Surely we do not lack indications of doom, and perhaps no generation has seen so concrete reasons for taking on apocalyptical attitudes. But if it in this situation is possible to limit our scope to the level of social development, one thing seems to be clear: Liberty is not a stage of human life which Western Civilization has "achieved" through its relatively pluralistic structure. The profound unidimensionality of even this pluralism shows us that the history of liberation has hardly begun. In the West it has begun as an ambiguous process combined with uncontrolled economic and commercial expansion, and with the privatization of exactly those values which could have reduced the ambiguity of this process. There is still a need for the Western and Baconian idea of non-fatalistic reform of human conditions. But the accumulated experiences of Western perversion of this idea indicate that we are very far from being "free". This should be a starting point for non-chauvinist Western histoiography.

7. Bibliography.

1. Acton, Lord, 1952 Letter to contributors to the Cambridge Modern History, in: Lectures on Modern History, London.

2. Bakhtin, Mikhail, 1968 Rabelais and his world, New York.

3. Barraclough, Geoffrey, 1955 History in a changing world, Oxford 1961 Universal History, in: H.P.R.Finley, Approaches to history, London.

4. Braudel, Fernand, 1969 Écrits sur l'histoire, Paris 1967 Civilisation matérielle et capitalisme (XVe-XVIIIe siecle), Tome 1er, Paris

5. Bottomore, T.B. 1972 Sociology. A guide to problems and literature, New York

6. Centre international de Synthèse, 1930 Civilization: le mot et l'idée, Paris.

7. Deane, Phyllis, 1969 The first industrial revolution, Cambridge

8. Dehio, Ludwig, 1948 Gleichgewicht oder Hegemonie. Betrachtungen über ein Grundproblem der neueren Staaten-geschichte.

9. Durkheim, Emile, and Mauss, Marcel, 1913 Note sur la notion de civilization, in: L'Année sociologique, XII, Paris.

10. Dumont, Louis, 1971 The individualistic universe.

11. Engel - Janosi, Friedrich, 1973 Die Wahrheit der Geschichte. Versuche zur Geschichtsschreibung in der Neuzeit, München.

12. Elvin, Mark, 1973 The pattern of Chinese history, London.

13. The English Historical Review, 1886 London.

14. Galtung, Johan, 1974a Deductive thinking 1974b Two ways of being Western. Oslo

15. Gottschalk, Louis, 1964 Projects and concepts of world history in the twentieth century, in: 1964 Comité international des sciences historiques.

16. Horten, Robin and Finnegan, Ruth, 1973 Modes of thought. Essays on thinking in Western and non-Western Societies.

17. Hazard, Paul, 1934 La crise de la conscience européenne, Paris.

18. Hill, Christopher, 1973 Seeing the invisible, in: The New York Review of Books, October 4, 1973.

19. 1859 Historische Zeitschrift, München 1859

20. Hughes, H. Stuart, 1958 Consciousness and Society: The reorientation of European social thought, 1890-1930, New York. 1971 Contamporary Europe: A history, New Jersey.

21. Huizinga, Johan, 1967 The waning of the Middle Ages, London.

22. The international Society for the Comparative study of civilizations 1964 The problem of civilizations. Report of the first synopsis conference of the S.I.E.C.C. Salzburg, 8 - 15 October, 1961, The Hague

23. Jones, E.L. and Woolf, S.J. 1969 Agrarian change and economic development, London

24. Jaspers, Karl, 1952 Vom Ursprung und Ziel der Geschichte, München.

25. Kann, Robert A., 1964 Federation and the federal state in history, in: Comité international des sciences historique 1964

26. Kissinger, Henry 1956 The Congress of Vienna. A Reappraisal. in: World Politics 1956

27. Levenson, J.R. (ed.) 1967 European expansion and the counter-example of Asia, 1300 -1600 , New Jersey.

28. Littré, Emile, 1961 Dictionnaire de la langue francaise, tome 2, Paris.

29. Lopez, Robert S. , 1971 The commercial revolution of the Middle Ages, 950 - 1350, New Jersey.

30. Needham, Joseph, 1954 Science and civilization in China, Cambridge.

31. McNeill, William H., 1963 The rise of the West. A history of the human community, Chicago and London. 1967 A world history, London. New York. Toronto. 1974 The Shape of European history, London.

32. Parmelee, Maurice, 1960 The history of modern culture, New York.

33. Peel, J.D.Y., 1973 Cultural factors in the contemporary theory of development, in: Archives européenne de Sociologie, tome XIV 1973, Numéro 2.

34. Pirenne, Henri, 1969 Histoire economique et sociale du moyen age, Paris.

35. Plumb, J.H., 1969 The death of the past, Oxford.

36. Pope jr., Harrison, 1974 The road East. America's new discovery of Eastern wisdom, Boston.

37. Randa, Alexander, 1969 Mensch und Weltgeschichte, Stuttgart

38. Ranke, Leopold von 1885 Geschichte der romanischen und germanischen Völker von 1494 bis 1514, third edition, Leipzig 1888 Weltgeschichte Leipzig .Quotation from Stern, Fritz 1970.

39. 1876 Revue Historique, Paris

40. Shils, E., 1971 Tradition, in:Comparative Studies in Sociology and History, XII.

41. Skolimowski, Henryk, 1974 The scientific world view and the illusions of progress, in: Social Research, an international

quarterly of the social sciences, Vol.4/No.1, New York.

42. Sorokin, Piterim A., 1937-41 Social and cultural dynamics.

43. Spengler, Oswald, 1918-22 Der Untergang des Abendlandes, München. Umrisse einer Morphologie der Weltgeschichte, München. - Quotations from the 1969 edition.

44. Spranger, Eduard, 1928 Wilhelm von Humboldt und die Humanitätsidee. Berlin

45. Stadtmüller, Georg, 1965 Grundfragen der europäischen Geschichte, München/Wien.

46. Stavrianos, L.S., 1971a The World to 1500. A global history, Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey. 1971b The World since 1500. A global history, Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey.

47. Stern, Fritz, 1970 The varieties of history. From Voltaire to the present, London and Basingstroke.

48. Stone, Lawrence, 1970 The English Revolution, in: Robert Forste and Jack P. Greene, Preconditions of revolutions in early modern Europe, Baltimore and London.

49. Toynbee, Arnold J., 1934-61 A study of history, London 1972 A study of history. The new one-volume edition, illustrated, London.

50. Tylor, E.B., 1871 Primitive Culture London.

51. Yates, Frances, 1974 The Rosicrucian Enlightenment, London.

52. Weber, Alfred, 1935 Kulturgeschichte als Kultursoziologie, Leiden. 1961 General Economic History, New York

53. White jr., Lynn 1968 Machina ex Deo: Essays in the dynamism of western culture, Cambridge, Massachusetts and London, England.