

The core of the author's argument is that the syncretic unity of the medieval historical mind, one which held that revealed time was essentially seamless and sameness, became dynamic and supersessive by the eighteenth century. Beginning with Eusebius, medieval historiography rejected historical innovation as a denial of Christ's teaching. Augustine's universal history is thus "total" as well, despite his well-known engagement with the life of this world. Orosius completes the author's medieval triptych.

"The medieval mind would not tolerate the new . . . every work of literature or art must be a recapitulation of the universal atemporal unity of what is already known." The past is all that is most worthy; the Roman Empire never fell. The overemphasis on the Church Fathers here is only slight, and against them Kemp places the distinctive and rambunctious historiography of the Reformation, where men like Luther, John Foxe, and American Puritan leaders barbecued the Catholic Church as the betrayer of primitive (and correct) Christianity. "To sin is nought else than to despise unity, and to depart therefrom to multiplicity," Dante had said. But depart the reformers did; Luther believed Church tradition to be the Devil's work and saw a tremendous gulf, or difference, between his present and the primitive Church of his ideals. Foxe flayed Catholicism into bloody strips, and the much-admired Lorenzo Valla began by assuming that history was change, difference, and mutation.

Once the papacy was identified with antichrist, and once the notion that the bedraggled Holy Roman Empire was "neither Holy, nor Roman, nor an Empire" became common, the road to historical modernism was paved. In another overstatement, still not far off the mark, Kemp argues that the western perception of the past was reversed within a single generation. Reformation historiography brought the idea of historical supersession into the western imagination, and there it has remained, to the discomfiture of Henry Adams and, one suspects, of the author. Time became dynamic, but its appreciation had within its own tension: "The greatest fear of the supersessor is to be superseded."

Here is an excellent analysis, not least because the author includes copious documentation resting on original texts in classic Greek and Latin, as well as in vernacular German and Italian, all juxtaposed with excellent translations. His argument, however, despite its broad scope, rests not only on specific historians who prove his case, but also on his assumption that history is words only, a semiotic approach: "History is made of language and nothing else . . . the past has no perceivable existence beyond its literary expression." This assumption is simple, elegant, and beguiling; accept it, and the "estrangement of the past" is Q.E.D. Once this notion is believable, then history, according to Kemp, is "invented, although not consciously, to justify ideology."

The Estrangement of the Past is for graduate students only, an exceptional example of carefully-reasoned argument from clearly-stated assumptions and rigorously-marshalled evidence. Kemp's analysis, within these bounds, is insightful and remarkably suggestive.

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Walter L. Arnstein, ed. *Recent Historians of Great Britain: Essays on the Post-1945 Generation*. Ames, IA: Iowa State University Press, 1990. p. ix, 207. Cloth, \$24.95.

It is not surprising that historians, more than most professionals, are interested in their own antecedents. Scholars delving into uncharted waters must know what has been done previously, and the history and impact of historical scholarship has a fascination of its own. In the modern era varying methodologies have produced controversy and a history of their own. Ultimately the historian becomes grist for his own mill.

In response to such interests and in honor of Lacy Baldwin Smith, Walter Arnstein has collected historiographical essays about eight of the most influential students of modern British history. Included are Geoffrey Elton, Joel Hurstfield, Christopher Hill, Lawrence Stone, J.H. Plumb, E.P. Thompson, Norman Gash, and F.S.L. Lyons. To allay criticism--or perhaps lay the foundation for a sequel--Arnstein is at some pains to assure readers that the scholars chosen are by no means the only

significant figures in the field. He even offers an alternative list. The historians chosen for this volume, however, need no defense. Each has indeed made major contributions.

In one sense, the content of these essays is not remarkable. Without exception, the authors have provided readers with a clear, generally chronological outline of the major works produced by their subjects. Innovative interpretations--Elton's Tudor revolution and Hill's seventeenth-century class struggle, for instance--are effectively summarized. Methodological debates, such as that caused by Stone's plunge into and retreat from social science, are also given due attention. Since the contributors are all established scholars, competent essays were to be expected, and as far as this aspect of the book goes, it is to be recommended mostly to graduate students preparing for preliminary exams that will cover modern Britain.

What makes the book of interest to a wider audience, however, is that most of the authors have tied their subjects' personal lives into their interpretations of the past. The most dramatic such connection is made by Thomas Heyck, who links E.P. Thompson's love of Romanticism and respect for the common man to a relationship with an older brother. The brother read the romantics with Thompson, and then having parachuted into Bulgaria to fight with the anti-fascist partisans, died at the hands of Nazi torturers. Barrett Beer's association of Elton's childhood experience of fascist dictatorship with his tendency to dismiss the idea of a Tudor dictatorship is also deftly done. Alan O'Day, who does not treat F.S.L. Lyons in quite so personal a fashion, does use Lyons's career as a means to comment on the nature of British academe in the mid-twentieth century.

In only two cases do the authors fail to provide such personal insights. Robert Braddock gives us only a historiographical summary of J. H. Plumb, but given Plumb's relatively traditional approach to his work, the omission does not particularly jar. It does, however, in Cynthia Herrup's discussion of Christopher Hill. She drops occasional hints, such as her remark that Hill's doctrinaire Marxist interpretations became more flexible after his resignation from the Communist Party, but she fails to get to the reasons behind both resignation and flexibility. Although working with living subjects can make the collection of information particularly difficult, it is too bad that Herrup was unable to make the sorts of biographical connections that most of the other contributors did.

The weaving of personalities and scholarship makes this a book that will interest historians quite generally. It will also be useful reading for students, who should be aware of the influence that experience can have on even the diligent scholar's interpretations. I hope that the title, which makes the volume sound a bit pedestrian, will not dissuade those not particularly interested in British history from picking up the book.

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William Bruce Wheeler and Susan D. Becker. *Discovering the American Past: A Look at the Evidence.* Boston: Houghton-Mifflin Co., 1990. Second Edition. Volume I: to 1877. Pp. xi, 308. Paper, \$14.97.

This work is offered as a supplemental book for survey courses in American history. In the preface, the authors state that they believe their "doing history" approach effective for "seminars, small classes, and large lecture classes with discussion sections." Eleven episodes are presented for analysis: early explorer-Indian contacts, the religious trial of Anne Hutchinson in Massachusetts Bay (1637), a demographic study of social trends in the Massachusetts Bay colony, eye-witness accounts of the "Boston Massacre," the 1794 congressional election in Philadelphia, debates on manhood suffrage in the New York constitutional convention of 1821, the conditions and attitudes of girl workers in the textile factories of Lowell, Massachusetts, stories and songs of blacks under slavery, U.S. politics and diplomacy leading to the Mexican War, the question of black-soldier enlistment on both sides of the Civil War, and the work of New York cartoonist Thomas Nast. Pictorial or graphic materials are used in the Indian section, the social-trends study, the "Boston Massacre," the Philadelphia election, the "factory girls" study, and the Thomas Nast material. The topics are well