



# HISTORICALLY SPEAKING

www.bu.edu/historic

SEPTEMBER 2003

Volume V/Number 3

Honor and the Middle East

Bertram Wyatt-Brown

The Legacy of Christopher Dawson

James Hitchcock and Dermot Quinn

Managerialism and Democracy

James Hoopes

An Interview with Joseph A. Amato and an Excerpt from his *Rethinking History*

Pattern and Repertoire in History: An Exchange

Bertram Roehmer, Ronald Fritze, and John Lukacs

The Enlightenment and Economic Growth

Joel Mokyr

The Silk Road: Part II

Alfred F. Andrea

ALSO: Essays by Jeremy Black • Padraic Kenney  
William Palmer • Clark G. Reynolds • and Barry Strauss

Preliminary 2004 THS Conference Program  
2004 THS Book, Article, and Dissertation Prizes

NONPROFIT  
US POSTAGE  
PAID  
BOSTON, MA  
PERMIT NO. 55

## PATTERN AND REPERTOIRE IN HISTORY: AN EXCHANGE

*CONTINUING A THEME begun in the February 2003 issue of Historically Speaking, this exchange once again addresses the relationship between historical scholarship and scientific methodology. In Pattern & Repertoire in History (Harvard University Press, 2002) Bertrand Roehner and Tony Syme*

*attempt to bridge the methodological gap between the social and natural sciences by advancing a case for "analytical history." Here two historians, Ronald Fritze and John Lukacs, offer their reactions to Pattern & Repertoire in History. Their essays are followed by Bertrand Roehner's reply.*

### A NEW REPERTOIRE FOR HISTORIANS?

Ronald Fritze

Roehner and Syme are two scholars seeking to formulate principles for the practice of historical sociology or socio-history by which they hope to create a discipline that combines the best of history and sociology. History will provide the detailed information about the past while sociology will provide the theoretical structure and empirical organization. Many scholars reject the possibility of such a truly scientific approach to the study of history. They argue rightly that major historical events like the French Revolution or World War II are unique phenomena. Roehner and Syme agree that a large event like the French Revolution is unique in its entirety. But they argue that such big and complex events can be broken down into simpler, component parts. These simpler and smaller scale events are not unique and so are susceptible to an empirical and scientific approach. In the 17th century René Descartes advocated such a process of simplifying complex phenomenon into smaller units with the goal of revealing underlying organization or patterns. This method is called the "modular approach," but Roehner and Syme have also labeled it "analytical history."

Applying the modular approach to the French Revolution, the authors proceed to break it down into simpler episodes or components, e.g., the meeting of the Estates-General, the insurrection of the people of Paris, and the confiscation of the Church's lands. Their contention is that the smaller episodes within a larger event are not particularly unique. A national legislative body has met to find a solution for a serious problem on a number of occasions in France and in other countries throughout history. The people of Paris have engaged in uprisings many times as have the people of other important capitals and metropolises. Church lands have

been confiscated more than once and in many countries. The point is that when a historical event is studied in terms of its component parts, it is possible to identify modules from other great events of the same type. As a consequence, valid comparisons can be made between such modules, and observations can be quantified.

From this "modular approach" to historical events, the authors introduce the twin concepts of "pattern" and "repertoire" that form the title of their book. "Pattern" is their term for regularly occurring events in history. "Repertoire" refers to forms of collective action that people take in response to various recurring historical situations. Societies develop collective responses to problems, learn which ones are successful, and those become part of their repertoire of collective actions. Once a society develops a satisfactory repertoire it will be slow to change, and innovation will be extremely difficult. Innovation and significant change are relatively rare in human history.

The proposition that history can be studied in a scientific way is highly controversial. Yet Roehner and Syme argue that history can be studied in a scientific manner that will in turn produce consistent conclusions which can be replicated or at least shown to be repetitive. To support their argument they introduce the concept of paronymy or "paronymic episodes." Although the term paronymy comes from linguistics and refers to words with very similar spellings, Roehner and Syme use it to refer to historical events that are very similar. People engage in many complex tasks, but as they repeat them again and again these tasks become easier. But Roehner and Syme point out that while individuals generally only tend to imitate and repeat successful actions and behaviors, soci-

eties repeat both successful and unsuccessful actions. They cite the example of Hitler, who, although well aware of Germany's strategic mistakes in World War I, proceeded to make the same mistakes as he led Germany into the debacle of World War II. Therefore analytical history becomes a search for recurrent events. Like paleontology, analytical history seeks to perform the simpler task of describing a sequence of events rather than the more complex task of explaining the interconnections and causality of those events in a structural sense. With these concepts, Roehner and Syme establish the case for a scientific methodology for the study of collective behavior and decision-making.

*Pattern and Repertoire* points out that politicians frequently use historical analogies and comparisons to justify decisions. Some leaders have been masters of that process and have used it quite successfully. Unfortunately, the use of historical analogy and comparison even more frequently leads to failure and defeat rather than success and victory. The fault lies not with the use of historical analogies. Instead, the problems arise when the historical analogies or comparisons used are inappropriate, inaccurate, or incomplete. Flawed policies wrap themselves in the protective robes of historical analogies which later turn out to be based on bad history.

One of the perennial questions of historical study is whether history repeats itself or not. Because they usually view historical events as unique, historians answer that question with an emphatic "No!" *Pattern and Repertoire*, however, argues that history does, in fact, repeat itself in meaningful ways that are subject to comparison and a certain degree of scientific measurement. As the authors assert, the rigid distinction between, on the one hand, the traditional scientific

method of controlled experimentation and social scientific and historical research on the other is a false dichotomy. No two scientific experiments using the same methodology, constants, and variables are truly identical. There are always subtle differences and variations. These differences and variations are not so great as to negate the conclusions, but they still exist. Roehner and Syme contend that the same is true for analytical history. Their conclusion is that researchers using scientific experimentation and analytical historians using the modular approach will produce results of equivalent reliability.

Obviously some scholars will reject the arguments of *Pattern and Repertoire*. But whether or not one agrees with them, Roehner and Syme have boldly presented an

intriguing portrait of analytical history and its possibilities. In a time when postmodern obscurantism is still influential, it is heartening that two scholars can work on an assumption that objective facts do exist in history. For them, knowledge of the past is not just a construct. It is also refreshing to find two scholars who propose a methodology that requires the synthesis of large amounts of secondary research. Historians continually produce more and more specialized scholarship, but comparatively little effort goes into making that scholarship accessible to anyone outside of a narrow circle of specialists.

It is too soon to say if Roehner and Syme are anywhere near correct but they certainly present a good case. More than 300 years ago Thomas Hobbes observed that "the best

prophet naturally is the best guesser; and the best guesser, he that is most versed and studied in the matters he guesses at, for he hath the most signs to guess by." While Roehner and Syme might not like Hobbes's use of the words "guesser" and "guesses," they would certainly recognize their own enterprise in Hobbes's description. Theirs is an endeavor that itself has a long history. The pattern of analytical history before Roehner and Syme has not been auspicious, but perhaps they have given historians a new repertoire.

*Ronald Fritze is professor of history at the University of Central Arkansas. His most recent book is New Worlds: The Great Voyages of Discovery, 1400–1600 (Sutton, 2003).*

## "SCIENTIFIC" HISTORY?

John Lukacs

This ambitious book is yet another breathless attempt to assert that the study of history can (and ought) to be made "scientific," since history itself demonstrates recurrent elements that follow the "laws" of natural science.

From beginning to end its assertions are unconvincing. The authors state: "We show that by breaking up complex historical phenomena into simpler 'modules,' it becomes possible to study the latter from the point of view of sociology. In this way, historical sociology can aspire to bridging the long-standing gap between history and sociology . . . we wish this book to be judged on the basis of new connections that it suggests, on the unexpected regularities that it discloses, and on the basic historical mechanisms that it highlights" (ix-x). And later: "[T]his book's ambition is to explore a new avenue in historical sociology" (48). Wait a minute. Isn't all sociology a part of history? First came society; then came the study of society; then came the study of society by men who attempted to apply the "laws" of natural science to that

kind of study, which they called "sociology." On the other hand, history is not necessarily sociological; but it is—even in the case of biography, the description of the life and the character of a single person—necessarily sociographical. *Sociographical*: it describes, it cannot but *describe*. Sociology attempts to *define*. (Samuel Johnson: "Definitions are tricks for pedants"—and, even at best, definitions tend to leak.) When people attempt to describe rather than define, so much the better. Hence we can learn more from the descriptions of a Balzac or a Trollope than from the definitions of many sociologists: the former give us a picture of a particular society at a particular historical period, not only what certain people did but how they talked and thought and desired.

Roehner and Syme gallop back and forth between taking natural science and social science as their models. In their first chapter, "Analytical History," there is this subchapter: "A Parallel Between Paleontology and Historical Sociology," which they describe as a "search of recurrent events" (25):

As a historical event the French Revolution is unique in the same sense that the horse is unique as an animal species. But horses did not appear all of a sudden; they had ancestors: Eohippus, Mesohippus, Merychippus. In the same way historical events can be traced back to a number of precedents and forerunners. A complex event such as the Revolution of 1789 is of course made up of a number of components and strata. In much the same way that a paleontologist would study the evolution of the horse's skull or teeth, we can consider a number of separate elements of the Revolution: the storming of the Bastille, the meeting of the Estates-General, and so on. These building blocks are the analogues of the horse's skull or teeth. What we want to discover is whether there are earlier fossils and what they look like.

"In search of recurrent events." "As a historical event the French Revolution is unique." The Revolution in 1789: was it a unique event? Or: was it a recurrent event? Either thesis may be argued, but not both. The authors try to sail around this: two events "are never identical but only similar. To

describe this form of similarity we use the word 'paronymic,' a technical term taken from the field of linguistics"(19). But then: "A telling illustration of the imitation behavior in the animal world is provided by the Antarctic tern . . . "(19). On the page after their "analogues" of "building blocks" there is a graphic illustration of the "building blocks" of the French Revolution: four of them (Figure 1.5a).

	"Number of Occurrences"
French Revolution	1
Storming of the Bastille	3
Meeting of the Estates-General	15
Parading of the governor's head	100+

Such a table attempts to show us something: but it tells us nothing. Yes, there are patterns in history, as there are patterns in the life of a single man. But these patterns consist of recurrent tendencies, not categories, since all human and historical events are, at least to some extent, unique; and, to convince us, such patterns must be properly described and illustrated. Now the illustrations of this book, filled as it is with tables and diagrams, are almost always wrong.

Its very first table (Figure 1.1)—two columns—bears the title: "Decomposition of a complex phenomenon into modules"(4). One column is "[the] Warming of a cup of [coca]cola." Its items: "Transformation of sunlight into heat. Propagation of heat in a solid/liquid. Convection created by a temperature differential. Diffusion of heat in the cola." The corresponding column bears the title: "French Revolution: Number of Occurrences":

How indebtedness weakened the power of the monarchy	10
Tactical alliance between the bourgeoisie and the clergy	5
Confiscation of Church estates	1
Insurrection in the capital city	5

This is absurd nonsense, because while 10, 5, 1, etc. are precise numbers (10 is not 9 and not 11) the phrasing of such "modules" is inevitably imprecise. "How indebtedness weakened the power of the monarchy." "How" obviously means "how often," poor phrasing to start with. And how often did this happen? Ten times, fifteen times, twenty times, or not at all? And when? And what does "weakened" mean? Or: "Tactical alliance between the bourgeoisie and the clergy." Which bourgeoisie? Which clergy? Necker and Sieyès? Pascalians or Gallicans? Jansenists or Jesuits? On page 22 the authors define the "inevitable" steps in organizing large demonstrations.

There have been many, many demonstrations that did not follow the definite steps of such a "module." On page 29 Table 1.3. lists "Analogies most frequently used in preparing the Vietnam decisions of 1965" in two columns: "Number of times used in public speeches." "Number of times used in private reports." Used by whom? And when? And how? On page 46 Figure 1.8 shows two strange drawings of spreading branches, illustrating "the successive stages of the Irish struggle for independence." "It took a number of steps to get from 1914 to the Easter Rising; at each, depending upon a huge number of factors, *history had to select* [my italics] one of several possible options." Does "history" select? "If we assume that there were eight steps and two equally likely options at each step, the actual trajectory (schematized by a thick line) has a probability of  $0.5^8 = 0.004$ ." On page 69 we read: "[R]evolutions are often triggered by public indebtedness." Illustrating this assertion is Table 2.3: "Parallel chronologies of the revolutionary periods in England and France," with the parallel items defined as "Financial difficulties in England: 1638-1640" and in "France: 1785-1789." Both of these periodizations are inadequate and imprecise. On page 89 Table 2.5 is entitled: "Dates at which the bourgeoisie succeeded in freeing itself from the domination of the Church, absolute monarchy, and nobility." It lists thirteen countries, among them Hungary in 1785 (Church). Both the date and the place are entirely wrong.

What we have here is a wholly false method, aiming to confirm imprecise, vague, and often inaccurate wordings of statements and definitions by seemingly (but only seemingly) precise and fixed numbers. About historical quantification the superb Dutch historian Pim den Boer wrote: "An approach able to combine a quantitative analysis with the choice of fitting examples" may be a legitimate one; but the examples produced by Roehner and Syme are not fitting.

Moreover, the same tendency of assertions via definite statements exists within the written text, too, throughout. "Observation shows that social revolution almost never succeeds in small countries"(58). Whose observation? "If the Sarajevo assassination attempt (June 28, 1914) against the Archduke Francis Ferdinand had taken place in winter, it would *certainly* [my italics] not have led to the outbreak of World War I"(243). Certainly? With regard to "Ignoring the Warnings before the German Aggression in 1939" (title of subchapter), the "common denominator was the unconscious desire to ignore the disturbing evi-

dence"(339-340). Unconscious? Was the desire to avoid another war *unconscious*? And was it "*the*" [again, my italics] "common denominator"? Here the authors lapse from numerology to psychoanalysis, again stunningly wrong.

Almost all of *Pattern and Repertoire's* examples deal with political history, the history of states (not exactly the main topic or theme of sociology). Toward the end of their book, the authors attempt to describe their method no longer in sociological terms but as "analytical history." "Qualitative history is concerned with the narrative of isolated events; analytical history implies quantitative analysis of a set of similar episodes" (377). Wrong again: the events of "qualitative" history are never isolated or described thus. The attempts and illustrations of the authors to explain the causes of events are, as we have seen, often inaccurate and crude; but they are also wrong because of their exclusive reliance on mechanical causality, where the same causes must result in the same effects. Moreover, as one of their statements shows, they are mistaken about causality itself. "For instance, when Durkheim (1951) observes that suicides are most frequent on Sundays, there can be little doubt about the direction of the causality"(15). Such coincidences are remarkable as tendencies, not as causalities: Sundays are not the *causes* of suicides.

Myriads of examples exist that disprove the simplistic application of the "laws" of "natural science" to history, indeed to the human mind. In the course of human events the human mind intrudes into and complicates the mechanical cause-effect relationship. This also happens in large-scale historical conditions, as Tocqueville noted in an important example: revolutions often break out not when the pressure of an oppressive regime is greatest but when it has evidently begun to lessen. It may be telling of the wanting standards of *Pattern and Repertoire in History* that Tocqueville's name appears in it but once, Figure 1.3, where he is paired with someone named Latin in a box entitled "Bridging the micro-macro gap." Would Tocqueville have understood what *that* means? I doubt it. Neither do I.

*John Lukacs wrote "What IS History?" in the February 2003 issue of Historically Speaking: The Bulletin of the Historical Society.*

<sup>1</sup> In his extraordinarily valuable study, *History as a Profession: The Study of History in France 1818-1914* (Princeton University Press, 1998), 356.

## PREDICTIONS AND ANALYTICAL HISTORY

Bertrand M. Roehner

When you visit your doctor because (for instance) you feel stomach pains, she will ask you a number of questions. Do you feel feverish? Do you feel pain immediately after your meals, and so on? Then your doctor will try to establish a link between the description framed by your answers and one of the recognized patterns of symptoms that have been recorded in the corpus of medical science. Depending on the symptoms she may diagnose a viral infection, an ulcer, or what have you. Three points need to be emphasized:

- There is never absolute certainty about the diagnosis. Not infrequently, starting from the same set of symptoms, two doctors would make different diagnoses. Each patient in some way is unique, and to some extent each illness is unique, too. However, both patients and diseases clearly share common features.
- Only new evidence can help to decide which diagnosis is correct.
- The ultimate test for deciding which interpretation is correct is to see which treatment is able to cure the patient.

Of what relevance is this to *Pattern and Repertoire*? For the sake of illustration, consider the example of price peaks in real estate. Today there is a hot debate in most developed countries regarding the future of real estate markets. Some economists claim that demand is strong and will remain so; others contend that there may be a small correction in the next two years. But surprisingly few researchers have tried to take a close look at former price peaks to better understand what may be in store. Yet readers in Boston, New York, or San Francisco may remember that thirteen years ago the bust of a housing bubble brought about financial troubles for many savings institutions. Will the same scenario repeat itself in the five or six years to come? Needless to say, the economic environment is not exactly the same in 2003 as it was in 1990; but, as we have seen, neither are all symptoms identical for two patients. Yet this does not prevent medical treatment from being successful. The only sensible attitude is to say: "Well, let's examine each prediction and see

which one proves correct in the next five years." One can find a prediction of that kind in the June 2003 issue of *Money*: real estate prices in San Francisco should climb by 10.7% between June 2003 and June 2004. I have published another prediction according to which prices in San Francisco should fall by 10% during the same period.<sup>1</sup> This prediction is based on a careful examination of all previous housing price peaks in the U.S. as well as in London, Paris, and Sydney. In the fall of 2004 when price data for June will become available, the readers of *Historically Speaking* will be able to see for themselves which approach works best.

As a matter of fact, a similar test can be mentioned in this connection. In May 2000, shortly after prices on the NASDAQ stock market began to fall, I made a prediction for the evolution of the NASDAQ Composite Index over the next six years. So far the prediction has proved fairly accurate. Needless to say, it was based on the observation of previous stock market crashes: the crash of the Paris stock market in 1881; the New York crash of October 1929; and the Tokyo crash in late 1989. In each case there were of course substantial differences in the overall business situation; nevertheless, the economic frenzy and imbalance were very much the same. It is precisely the fact that these price peaks were so huge which made prediction possible. The phenomenon is very similar in medicine: if John and Harry have a mild flu, they may present fairly different symptoms because their organisms may react in different ways, especially if John is twenty whereas Harry is seventy. However, for more severe infections their reactions might be more similar.

When we establish a parallel between two historical episodes, for instance the meeting of the Estates General in France in 1356 and 1789 (*Pattern and Repertoire*, 108), is such a parallel completely arbitrary? The answer is that it is no more (and no less) arbitrary than the link physicians establish between the sets of symptoms described by patients John and Harry. Unfortunately, in the case of the meetings of the Estates General there is no way to prove that the modular way of looking at history is more insightful than others; since the Estates General no longer exists there can be

no testable prediction in this respect. Failing that, the assessment will rely on how convincing or persuasive the comparison sounds; these are subjective notions, however. The same comparison might well be found enlightening by some readers but unconvincing by others. From a scientific point of view such a situation is certainly not satisfactory.

About interpretations one can argue indefinitely. But if we have the facts right we should reach the same conclusions. Whether or not a physicist likes Einstein's Theory of General Relativity is a matter of taste and education. However, the fact that this theory was able to predict the bending of light by the sun as observed by Eddington during the eclipse of 1919 cannot be disputed.

*Pattern & Repertoire* contains a "prediction" in Chapter 3. Actually, it is not really a prediction but rather an empirical rule; it states that "the conjunction of a vacancy of power, a climate of civil war, and external peril have often led to the summary executions of prisoners." Let's use the American Revolution to test this rule. Every time an area was invaded by the British, there was a shift of power. In the days preceding the invasion, once the Continental Army had departed there was usually a wane in the control exerted by the young republic; there was also fear among the patriot population; and finally there was a climate of civil struggle because the once "curbed disaffected" (the term used in Washington's letters to his commanders) regained strength at the approach of British troops. In short, all conditions were fulfilled which might lead to a rounding up of loyalists. The question is whether or not such events actually happened. Fortunately, the "prediction" gives us a clue as to the times and places where such episodes may have happened. Possible "candidates" are: New York in July–August 1776 (before the occupation of New York by the British); Philadelphia in August–September 1777; Savannah, Georgia, in November–December 1778; Maine, in August 1779; and Charleston, South Carolina, in March–May 1780.

Here I will examine three of these occurrences, namely Charleston (which is perhaps the clearest example), New York, and Maine. Robert Lambert has described what happened

in South Carolina: "The General Assembly reacted to the threatening British invasion by passing an Act to prevent persons withdrawing from the defense of the state to join its enemies. A special court was set up to the purpose of trying about 150 prisoners; the trials lasted from March 22 to April 12, 1779; twenty-two were sentenced to death of whom five were actually hanged."<sup>3</sup>

In June 1776 New York City was surrounded by the British Army. Rumor of conspiracy spread rapidly through the panicking city. Among the accused were: Thomas Hickey, who had served for a time as one of Washington's bodyguards and was now in jail for counterfeiting; William Green who had been a drummer in the Continental Army; Gilbert Forbes, a gunsmith; and the mayor, David Mathews. Governor William Tryon on a warship in the harbor was thought to be the mastermind of the scheme. The four suspects were tried along with several other men. They were accused of attempting to blow up the city's powder magazine and handing the city over to the British in the ensuing confusion, as well as planning to kidnap General Washington. There was virtually no evidence against the mayor, but he was nevertheless condemned to death before being reprieved. But the three others were hanged in a field in the Bowery in the presence of 20,000 spectators.<sup>4</sup> This example is interesting for it is often misrepresented even in late 20th-century accounts.<sup>5</sup> Usually, this episode is referred to as the Hickey plot and is presented as solely involving Thomas Hickey himself, thus leaving the collective fear reaction completely out of the picture. As a matter of fact, in order to get a more comprehensive view of the "loyalist scare" one would like to know the total number of the people who were arrested.

In Maine, following the Penobscot defeat and the impending arrival of British troops, the commander of the American force, General Solomon Lowell, wanted to rid the country of Tories. Within a week his patrols imprisoned a great number (again, more numerical precision would be welcome) of suspected loyalists.<sup>6</sup> Naturally, that move was quite sensible; leaving loyalists at large would have given them the opportunity to enlist in the British force. For the American commander, it would have been foolish not to prevent this from happening.

Apart from giving a clearer and more unified view of a series of what otherwise would appear as unrelated events, the empirical rule stated in Chapter 3 also gives historians hints for further research by telling them where to

look. The previous examples show that, at least for this kind of episode, there is a close relationship between what happened during the American and French Revolutions. Men are men and one should not be surprised that in similar situations they react in similar ways.

• • •

I do not forget that this is a forum. First of all, I would like to express my sincere gratitude to Ronald Fritze and, perhaps even more, to John Lukacs for taking part in this forum. Regarding new ideas, nothing is worse than indifference. Moreover, since it is no doubt less pleasant to review a book with which one disagrees, special thanks are due to John Lukacs for having taken up this job. His comments probably reflect the position of a sizable portion of the historical profession, and without his feedback the present forum would certainly have been less interesting.

My first comment is a reflection about taste, inclination, and subjectivity. Here are two seasoned professional historians, yet their reactions are so different that one may wonder if they really have been reading the same book. I would never have imagined that the spectrum of reactions could be so broad. This experience has convinced me that one must offer testable results and predictions. By restricting oneself to new interpretations, explanations, or perspectives, one will only be able to convince those people who, because of their turn of mind, are in sympathy with this approach. In order to convince skeptics, disbelievers, or doubters one needs more objective proof. This is why I devote so much attention to this point in this essay.

When I first read Lukacs's review, I was perplexed; there is such an avalanche of criticisms that I did not know where to begin. Then I took a long breath in order to look at it in a dispassionate and factual way. The review refers to eighteen passages of the book of which 72% belong to the first chapter. The word "wrong" appears five times; the expression "laws of natural science" appears three times; the expression "mechanical causality" (or a variant) appears twice. What do these data suggest?

First, Lukacs's frequent "wrong" pronouncements implicitly are a tribute to the fact that *Pattern & Repertoire* tries to be quantitative. About a book of a more qualitative nature one would probably be tempted to disagree or dissent. More specifically to the point, we indicated the sources of all our data; if some of them are disputed one has to go back to these references. Obviously, such a detailed discussion of

sources would be out of place in this essay.

Lukacs's frequent reference to the "laws of natural science" (a phrase that to my recollection we did not use in *Pattern & Repertoire*) is strange. Such an expression may have been appropriate in the 19th century, but few (if any) scientists would use it in 2003. The "laws of nature" are so diverse nowadays that without further qualification this expression no longer represents anything. From the deterministic Newtonian laws of astronomy, to the probabilistic laws of quantum mechanics or genetics, to the fuzzy laws of chaotic systems there is a very broad spectrum of laws. Moreover, with the possible exception of Newtonian laws, there is nothing in these laws which implies a deterministic or mechanical causality. In fact, my co-author and I never had in mind that history could be ruled by purely deterministic laws; everybody knows that even very simple nonlinear systems can assume chaotic behaviors which render forecasting almost impossible.

Finally, it is interesting to observe that Lukacs's essay comes as a confirmation and fulfillment of a prediction Charles Tilly made in his referee report: "Historians who prefer dense descriptions will all find something to disagree with or at least to complain about on almost every page."

When I first read Fritze's review, I was also perplexed. How is it possible that this historian was able to understand so well the ideas that we tried to develop in *Pattern & Repertoire*? It took us about ten years to organize a variety of reflections, historical facts, and comparisons into a (more or less) structured discourse. Yet in Fritze's essay everything was there expressed in his own (and often more articulate) words, unwinding with a logic and sense of necessity which I found amazing.

Drawing the modular approach to its logical conclusion, Fritze applies it to our endeavor as well. He observes that there have been already several attempts at developing one sort or another of comparative or analytical history. So far all of them have failed. In the last sentence of his essay, Fritze writes: "The pattern of analytical history before Roehner and Syme has not been auspicious." Sadly, this is the plain truth. And if we believe that former episodes are a guide to subsequent ones, it is likely that our attempt will also fail. Fritze's prediction helped me to understand that only by providing a number of testable predictions can we guard against similar failure.

• • •

Apart from the regularity of summary execu-

tions in troubled historical periods, there is one other successful prediction in *Pattern & Repertoire* about general strikes in France (see the message sent to Charles Tilly on page 170). That there are only two prediction instances in a book of about 400 pages is due to the fact that at the time of writing, making predictions was not on our agenda. We thought that it would be sufficient to show that the modular approach could provide a more unified view of many historical events. We now understand that we were wrong. What will be seen as a unified view by some will be seen by others as completely artificial connections between unrelated events. In short, whether the perspective we propose indeed represents progress is a fairly subjective issue. Only objective tests can determine if this approach has potential. This is the task that analytical history should pursue in coming years.

In which direction should we look? A parallel with meteorology can be enlightening. Meteorologists are unable to make weather forecasts more than a few days in advance and sometimes even these short-term forecasts turn out to be wrong. This shows how difficult it is to make predictions. Yet in some instances prediction is much easier. Every time a depression

hits New York City there is the same succession of events: first strong winds, then strong rain accompanied by turning wind direction and some residual showers. In history there are also "simple" events. For cases of that sort it should be possible to make predictions with a good level of confidence. To some extent the situation is the same as when astrophysicists have to wait for an eclipse or a new supernova in order to test their predictions.

Certainly we would not suggest that the modular approach can be useful to all historians. Although it may provide a more unified perspective in many fields, only in a few can it lead to testable predictions. For the time being it would be great if a few historians can keep these ideas in a corner of their minds in order to put them to use whenever they come across a case to which they can be applied with profit.

Although *Pattern & Repertoire* tries to offer a more "scientific" approach, the essays by Ronald Fritze and John Lukacs made us realize that we did not go far enough in this direction. This in itself is a crucial step forward and an important achievement of this forum.

*Bertrand Roehner is an econophysicist at the University of Paris's Institute for Theoretical and*

*High-Energy Physics. He has broad interest in the theory of financial markets and in comparative history. In addition to Pattern and Repertoire in History, co-authored with Tony Syme (Harvard University Press, 2002), he has published Theory of Markets (Springer-Verlag, 1995); Patterns of Speculation: A Study in Observational Econophysics (Cambridge University Press, 2002); and Separatism and Integration: A Study in Analytical History (Rowman and Littlefield, 2002).*

<sup>1</sup> Bertrand M. Roehner, "Patterns of Speculation in Real Estate and Stocks," Nikkei Workshop on Econophysics (2003), to be published by Springer-Verlag in 2003.

<sup>2</sup> Bertrand M. Roehner, *Hidden Collective Factors in Speculative Trading* (Springer-Verlag, 2001), 176.

<sup>3</sup> Robert Stanebury Lambert, *South Carolina Loyalists in the American Revolution* (University of South Carolina Press, 1987), 84.

<sup>4</sup> Richard C. Blanco, ed., *The American Revolution, 1775-1783: An Encyclopedia* (Garland, 1993), 761.

<sup>5</sup> Philip Ranlet, *The New York Loyalists* (The University of Tennessee Press, 1986).

<sup>6</sup> R.I. Hunt, Jr., "The Loyalists of Maine," Ph.D. dissertation (University of Maine, 1980).

## BECOME ACQUAINTED WITH THE LEADING SERIES IN DOCUMENTED HISTORY!

Anvil paperbacks give an original analysis of a major field of history or a problem area, drawing upon the most recent research. They present a concise treatment and can act as supplementary material for college history courses. Written by many of the outstanding historians in the United States, the format is one-half narrative text, one-half supporting documents, often from hard to find sources.

### THE NEW DEAL

by Justus D. Doenecke  
Orig. Ed. 2003 326 pp. ISBN 1-57524-083-1 \$26.00

### THE SECOND RECONSTRUCTION: A History of the Modern Civil Rights Movement

by Gary A. Donaldson  
Orig. Ed. 2000 162 pp. ISBN 1-57524-066-1 \$16.50

### THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION: A Short History

by Mary A. Y. Gallagher  
Orig. Ed. 2002 242 pp. ISBN 1-57524-073-4 \$19.95

### A SHORT HISTORY OF NATIVE AMERICANS IN THE UNITED STATES

by Howard Meredith  
Orig. Ed. 2001 182 pp. ISBN 1-57524-139-0 \$17.50

### BASIC HISTORY OF AMERICAN CONSERVATISM

by Robert Muccigrosso  
Orig. Ed. 2001 224 pp. ISBN 1-57524-070-X \$18.50

### PRESIDENTIAL POWER FROM THE NEW DEAL TO THE NEW RIGHT

by Herbert S. Parmet  
Orig. Ed. 2002 238 pp. ISBN 0-89464-837-3 \$19.95

### A HISTORY OF CITIZENSHIP: SPARTA TO WASHINGTON

by Peter Fliesenberg  
Orig. Ed. 2002 192 pp. ISBN 1-57524-132-3 \$19.50

### FIFTY MAJOR DOCUMENTS OF THE 20TH CENTURY, 1950-2000

by Taylor Stults  
Orig. Ed. 2004 204 pp. ISBN 1-57524-204-4 \$19.50

**KRIEGER PUBLISHING COMPANY**

P.O. Box 9542 • Melbourne, FL 32902-9542

(321) 724-9542 • FAX (321) 951-3671

1-800-724-0025 • e-mail: info@krieger-publishing.com

# E

## ERASMUS INSTITUTE RESIDENTIAL FELLOWSHIPS

The Erasmus Institute, supported in part by The Pew Charitable Trusts, offers residential fellowships for the 2004-05 academic year at its center on the campus of the University of Notre Dame. Senior/junior faculty, postdoctoral, and dissertation fellowships, both stipendiary and non-stipendiary, are available.

**Applications are due January 30, 2004**

### SUMMER SEMINARS

The Erasmus Institute also sponsors summer seminars at the faculty and graduate levels. In Summer 2004, they will be held on the campus of the University of Portland, Oregon, during the month of June.

**Applications are due February 17, 2004**

#### Faculty Seminar

- Justice: Philosophical and Theological Perspectives

#### Graduate Seminars

- The Cultural Context of Environmental Issues: Past, Present, Future
- Ethics and International Relations: The Role of Values and Beliefs in World Politics

For further information and application instructions, visit our web site:

[www.nd.edu/~erasmus](http://www.nd.edu/~erasmus)

Erasmus Institute  
1124 Flanner Hall  
University of Notre Dame  
Notre Dame, IN 46556-5611

