Second, social history, ever since the 19th
century shift from political to sociological emphasis, has
been written in very general terms, practically by definition.
The move away from hyperparticularism, in the description of
military and dynastic changes ad nauseum, has given way to
a similarly exaggerated extolling of the "flavor of the
period", etc., in homage to Kulturgeschicte. Therefore the
most useful modern historical sources, those that conscious-
ly include sociological reflections, are invariably a mixed
blessing, on one hand taking cognizance of social forces and
cultural styles, but on the other, often Hegelianizing their
areas of interest with overly diffuse, sometimes mystical
characterization of Zeitgeist. If Thucydides is at times a
bore because of inordinate enumeration of disconnected
detail, then Alfred Weber (inter alia) for my purposes is
equally useless because of his distaste for stating the
nonsociological in favor of more suitably specific and
psychological statements, which of course typify earlier
historians. The fact remains that "social change" is a very
short term for a most luxuriously rich and complex gathering
of phenomena. And a reading of history with any but chron-
ically over-sociological eyes presents disparate data, many
of which cannot adequately be dealt with through sociology
alone. Although this thesis is written by a sociologist,
since its aim is to predict (after considering the past in
broad terms), I have had to consider information from his-
torians which often chafed and forced me to recognize

realities which fall outside the familiar terrain of my discipline.

Connected with this is the key problem: how to utilize heavily sociologized descriptions of the past in the interests of the individually-rooted theory I am defending. LaPiere chose the most obvious route in pursuing the data of technological advance, easily attributable to particular people, but what of the organizational and ideological components? My solution to the important quandry is only marginally satisfying, but necessary in order to facilitate the completion of the task. Simply this: I immersed myself in historical treatises and after a good deal more reading than I could present, I decided with some qualifications, that the history of Western development over the past millenium is largely the record of the activities of thousands of innovative souls who operated in the one major culture that at times promoted and stimulated their work. (At least in comparison with the repressions typical of Eastern social structure.) A complete documentation of this insight would require not 60 pages but several thousand. What is offered here instead are the rudiments to that documentation, an outline with some specifics interspersed, the assumption being made that "there's a lot more where that came from". The contours of innovation are therefore being detailed rather than the more perfect but less workable project, to specify point by point this critical input to social change. The "contradiction" - to generalize the specific - is more

apparent than real.

Introduction

This section will constitute a necessarily
abbreviated statement regarding that grouping of phenomena
known under the rubric "social change", as it has appeared
in (principally) Western history since the Middle Ages.
Obviously, because I make no pretense of being an historian,
all of what follows depends upon the general consensus of
professionals in that discipline, the varying opinions of
which I have synthesized into sociologically relevent
statements.

As is well known among students of historio-
graphy, there are inherent in all historical study countless
potential difficulties and confusions, depending upon how the
data are comprehended and presented. For example, in this
particular case extreme care must be taken not to mistake
the "great-man theory" of history, of late held in deserved-
ly low esteem, with the Barnett-LaPiere theory of the inno-
vator in the processes of change. When in the 19th century,
historians of romantic sentiments began the apotheosis of
historical notables, there had just been on the European scene
a number of extremely impressive and effective political
leaders, the names of whom are the first the young student
understands to be "History". The fact that men make times
and times make men is no longer an astonishing, controversial
issue. New, however, is the fact that complex society is

much less supportive of the great-man idea, due to plethoras of critical variables, most of which elude the control of any single figure. Although the media persist in elevating the actions of individuals into the limelight, this has more to do with the nature of mass entertainment than with empirical reality.

However, it is immediately obvious from an examination of Western culture that particular men at particular times with outlandish ideas have affected pervasively the technological, ideological and organizational systems. This has been true from the beginnings of civilization, yet it is seldom mentioned that many of the "great men" have no names: the innovators of the wheel, a multitude of 15th century trade practices, and so on. "History" for centuries was the work of court-paid scribes who under severe censorship lionized their employers and friends while disparaging enemies and ignoring the other 99% of civilization. Whether those important souls whose innovations genuinely aided in the debarbarization of the West should be considered "great" is more a moral-aesthetic than historical judgement. My point is that those men usually considered members of the pantheon are in many cases no more significant than the unnamed vis a vis the totality of social change over the past millenium.

I did not happen upon this view of social history merely to conform to LaPiere and Barnett, or solely through their work. One of the more esteemed "generalist" historians

of the current era, Herbert J. Muller, has made the point

most clearly, although his reflections relate specifically

to technological development. (However, it should not be

understood that his remarks are irrelevant to ideological or

organizational innovation. The reason that technology has

been stressed whenever independent creativity is the point

of discussion as mentioned above rests in the fact that

other elements of social change are far more difficult to

attribute in their origin. While we know that in 1500 Fra

Luca Paciolo invented double-entry bookkeeping, revolution-

izing business life, we can not so precisely assign respon-

sibility, for instance, to those who made England the

"mother of parliamentary government", or America the "birth-

place of jazz". This has less to do with the nature of

change than with the problems of post-facto analysis

regarding innovational approaches to reality, whether tech-

nological, ideological or organizational.)

Muller:

> In thus anticipating the European genius for tech-
> nology, these craftsmen also foreshadowed another
> major theme - the importance of the creative individual.
> In prehistory such individuals are perforce anonymous,
> at best being commemorated in some later myth like that
> of the master craftsman Daedalus, and their inventive-
> ness is obscured by the slow pace of change, the gradual
> diffusion of new skills, and the conspicuous uniformity
> of artifacts. Today their importance is commonly
> minimized because of our awareness of their dependence
> on culture, and of the deep, unconscious, involuntary
> processes of historic change. Yet nothing would seem
> plainer than that every new invention must have been
> the work of some individual - not the automatic outcome
> of an impersonal process, nor the product of a committee
> of embryonic organization men. Even the very gradual
> improvements in skills or changes in styles were due to

minor innovations that could only have been the work of
individuals. The diffusion of new arts and skills
itself required exceptional men bold enough to break
the cake of tribal custom, perhaps defy the patriarchs
or head magician. Hence the faster pace of innovation
in prehistoric Europe meant among other things that
there was now an increasing number of enterprising,
imaginative, more or less unconventional men. We may
doubt that their works were always welcomed or that
their tribal societies were eager for change; but at
least these societies were growing more disposed to
accept change, encourage the innovator, and thereby
were anticipating a civilization that would provide
more opportunity and incentive for the creative indivi-
dual than had any of the great Eastern societies.
(Note to the same page): In Change and History Margaret
Hodgen has made a pioneering study in this field: a
detailed history of technological innovation in England,
shire by shire, parish by parish, over its entire hist-
ory. Three major periods of innovation - ... - reflect
the larger "movements" made familiar by historians and
illustrate the ... impersonal processes of historic
change that the innovators may be quite unconscious of.
But a close study of these periods, as of the whole span,
gives much more prominence to the work of individuals
other than the few famous inventors. Thus it was not
strictly "England" that produced or underwent these
innovations: they occurred primarily in certain
regions, more specifically in certain towns or parishes,
and always were the work of particular men, who in the
16th century begin to be identified by name in the local
records. Of the more than 12,000 parishes in England,
down to 1900, fewer than 20% ever took up a new craft
or industry, and most of these ventured upon an innova-
tion but once. Most of England, in other words, remain-
ed a traditional agricultural society, at most adopting
improved tools made by more enterprising men elsewhere. (61)

This has been quoted at length because of its implications

for sociological investigation of past eras, the specifics

for which more often than not are dispensed with in favor of

"periods", "trends", and the like. There is no sense in mini-

mizing the interdependence of creator and culture, but because

of our current historical proclivities, with the boom of demo-

cratic, sociologized sentiment, to suggest that an individual

mind shares little responsibility for a particular develop-

ment, is to verge on the heretical, gaining professional responses of "great-manism" or simply "psychologism". (The cold reception of LaPiere's Social Change sustains my suspicion that sociologists' rancor is most stimulated by those in the fold who honor the specifically individual and/or unique - as opposed to the patterned, consensual or integrated - for some analytical purposes in preference to the more comfortably diffuse and general developments of Man.) The following pages will attempt to walk the narrow line between blindly sociological vs. romantically individualistic accounts of innovations and change in history.

Along with recognizing the innovator's role, one must also realize that particular types or "styles" of purposive social change have been possible and effective only under certain historical conditions. It is intuitively clear that modes of change under the Pharoahs, within the Greek polis, and in Charlemagne's Europe were all decidedly different. Somewhat less obvious are the enormous differences between successful innovating behavior in the epoch before 1789, in the 19th century and during the sixties in this country. Styles of change which made great sense within certain social structures made none in others, and the mark of the innovator-leader (if they were one and the same person) was the ability to determine when a social change device had become antiquated, and institute a more effective one.

Furthermore, social change is often characterized as having to do with those elements of a culture which are

conspicuously alterable: political leadership, changes in attire, distribution of goods and services, and so on. I propose that a fresh look offers different data, that social change in fact will begin to escape the notice of those analysts who are prepared and/or capable only of understanding change in anachronistic terms. It was announced during the sixties that no "real" change obtained because the "movement" was ill-organized, the goals diffuse and the "revolution" merely emotional. For 30's radicals it was a disheartening affair with no party ideology, cells, secret codes of thought and behavior and the rest of the package.

A corrective to this view is easily provided. Social change in the past two hundred years has been predominantly structural. Marx was not the only thinker who doggedly tied men's thought and actions to a particular status and role. The fallacy involved here has been pointed out too often to require repetition. Today the Weltanschauungen of millions have become, for sociological purposes, indistinguishable from one another although the compared individuals operate within entirely separate strata of the power/privilege hierarchy. It is not as easy to predict the values and related activities of the laborer today as it was in 1848 or 1871. The swollen middle class has taken over the traditional role of the elites as trend and fashion setter (something which bothered the old-school, e.g., Karl Mannheim's "The Democratization of Culture"). And because of regularized affluence for increasing numbers of the citizenry,

demands for structural and distributional modification reminiscent of the early 20th century have subsided a great deal. Put succinctly, the social analyst of change must begin looking not so much for dramatic rearrangements of social institutions, but for equally important, more difficultly detected shifts in values and processes.

I have dispensed for the most part with Eastern history since it followed such radically different contours until Westernization began in the 18th and 19th centuries. Thereafter it has been subject to similar situations and outcomes with those of Europe, given that certain idiosyncratic features, very often of religious nature, have left their mark.

Now that the basic premises are clear, I may offer, by way of recapitulation, a heuristic breakdown of the last millenium which has been employed by many current historians, although they characteristically stop short of purely sociological analysis. Before the high middle ages of the 12th century, in those centuries somewhat mislabeled "Dark" by 19th century scholars, what change took place (especially organizational) seems to have been the handiwork of individual strongmen whose hegemony was extremely local and whose interests were consequently particularistic. With the creeping growth of secularism and the merchant mentality which surfaced after the 12th century renaissance, social change took the form of conflict between liberalizing mercantile interests and the reactionary sentiments of the Papacy and some of the ruling

elites, those who failed to utilize the "soiled" capital of
the traders. With the advent of proto-rationalism through
Kepler, Copernicus, Galileo, Luther, Erasmus, Descartes and
later Locke, the stage was set for a new mode of change,
although again of a largely individual nature. This mode of
change has been popularized as the extremely atomistic
behavior of "renaissance men" and reformation zealots.
As economies and concomitant political arrangements finalized
in the 17th and 18th centuries, completing the shift from
feudalism to early industrialism, the reactionary and liberat-
ing forces met head on and popular revolution became the
"norm". This proved successful beyond the wildest hopes of
early libertarians, but with Metternich and the return of the
pendulum (cf. Henry Kissinger's The World Restored), revolu-
tion began to produce diminishing returns for those who sought
to employ it within rapidly industrializing areas. The forces
of counter-revolution mushroomed; the Bolshevik enterprise of
the 20th century was in many ways 100 years too late in any
country but Russia.

What must be kept in mind is the fact that these
dialectical processes of progress and reaction were carried
on at varying rates throughout Europe. Since Britain was the
first to have a modern political revolution (1640), the first
to industrialize thoroughly and the first to become essentially
a culture of nongovernmental complex organizations (early 19th
century), it may be compared with late-blooming Russia or
Germany only to emphasize differences at given times, not

similarities. But each country went through roughly similar changes (which is not to say there is anything "inevitable" or "necessary" about such regularities), given that some advantages accrued to, for example, Bismarck, through the fatal lesson of Louis XVI. If the masses were scorned in 1770, by 1870 rulers began employing both stick and carrot, and the birth of cooptation was at hand. Socialism could not be repressed to death in any country, and the masses were quick to learn that the social movement was their only reliable weapon against poverty and frozen social position.

We now move abruptly from conventional historiography to the realm of hypothesis, the point of this thesis. The social movement in all post-modern cultures (which eliminates from comment the Third World) is no longer appropriate if genuine, penetrating and durable social change is sought. It has repeatedly been shown, in 1848, the Paris Commune, innumberable peasant revolutions in Russia and other European countries, in American labor-management warfare from the Molly McQuires on, etc. that the forces of oppression and cooptation, the social control facilities accessible to the ruling interests, have made not only political revolution, but also the social movement impractical. Whereas revolution is precluded by the sheer strength of state coercion, the social movement has been vitiated rather by the growth of knowledge on the part of the masses. A definition of self which permits "whole-hog" movement support is not terribly sophisticated, and certainly not relativistic regarding values. Absolutistic

thinking and social movements (historically) are inextricable and necessary to each other. Thus we see that the likelihood of mass support for ideologies and cell participation is inversely related to the general level of education (used in a specific sense not related to indoctrination or citizenship training) and the inevitably ensuing critical consciousness, which has played havoc with political leaders since the French Revolution. In short, the world's worst follower is the man who thinks independently of ideologically proffered thought-patterns and values.

So in whirlwind fashion I have outlined the growth of various forms of change in modern history. Moving further into the hypothetical, we arrive at present-day Europe and the U.S., the relatively uninhibited areas of post-modern development.

It is an irony of history that the innovator again comes to the fore as the most efficient and probable exponent of change, after sharing the limelight with collective action for the last three centuries. Given the relativism of the age and the intense, irrevocable coercive powers of the state (largely due to telecommunications and similar technology), the lone-wolf innovator stands a much better chance of altering the status quo than easily recognizable and repressible mass demonstrations of intent.

There are connected with this thought both happy and unfortunate correlates. A necessary if not sufficient reason for the existence in large numbers of highly rational,

independent, relativistic social actors, is both affluence
and the availability of higher education for other than the
traditional elites. With the diminution of supernatural
systems, ideologies of various sources and related oppressive
features of older cultures, the modern situation has provided
the potential innovator with means, ability and willingness,
three key components which in earlier epochs were often
absent, either singly or altogether. However, the current
period of history is anomalous because of virulent absolutism
living in uncanny proximity with Weimar-like relativism
vis a vis personal lives and commitments, or lack of same.
Historically an analogous situation obtained in 14th century
Rome when merchants and other radicals carried on their lives
within sight of the Vatican. And, as in that time, there are
frequent clashes between those whose allegiances vary with
calculation and those whose are invariably stable because of
emotional, nonlogical ties. The innovator, for whom feudal
behavior is anathema, has learned (because of inquisitors up
through McCarthy) to protect himself from zealous, feudal
minds seeking consistency and predictability in those about
them, by carefully clothing questionable acts and thoughts in
a veneer of compliance. This runs counter of course to all
conservative morality regarding the supposedly Goodness of
the monolithic self, but it has proven itself the single
reliable road to survival for those increasing numbers who
practice change.

　　　With some repetition coupled with the addition of

new remarks, we have gained the required position from which
to make a swift review of history, and in so doing pointing
up two related facts: (1) social change has been largely
due to independent innovators; (2) collective action under-
taken in the interests of altering social reality will sub-
sequently meet with marginal success.* (N.B.: In supporting
the view of social history which casts the innovator as
numero uno, I am, again, not denying the cumulative nature
of culture and the disparate abilities of different societies
to aid or hinder the aspiring, inevitably present innovator.)

The Middle Ages

Since most sociologists get their knowledge of the
medieval second-hand - (a few of the more fortunate read
Bloch's Feudal Society) - the "stagnant feudal social struc-
ture" of Europe from 600 to 1200 has become a professionally
ritualized conception. Revisionist historians like Sylvia
Thrupp have been proving our static interpretation to be
fallacious, and they cite numerous, newly discovered instances
of purposive, violent and/or innovative behavior on the part
of medieval people. It has been pointed out, for example,
that legalism prevailed as one of the spirits of the age, and
even the otherwise ignorant serfs committed to memory their
privileges and responsibilities along with the many nonlogical

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*The following will rely heavily upon the 18-volume "Rise of
Modern Europe" series, edited by Langer, which has been repeat-
edly mentioned to me by professional historians as the finest
and most succinct generalist study of modern social history.
Also of value was Herbert Muller's trilogy, Freedom in the
Ancient World, Freedom in the Western World, Freedom in the
Modern World.

components of mental life. This fascination with the legal realm provided constant conflicts between lords and peasants, and it is heartening to encounter the tenacity with which the underdogs often fought the improprieties of their masters through the court system (62).

I knew enough about the medieval to avoid complete acceptance of the discipline shorthand: feudal Europe equals unmitigated repression and changelessness. But after conculting some of the more reliable interpreters of the period (63), for my purposes here, it is more safe than not to characterize the era as _relatively_ undynamic, in LaPiere's terms, "statically congruent". I allow myself this somewhat begrudgingly, for if one performs too many "heuristics", the data become so compromised as to mean nothing at all. Reading reputable studies in medieval social history (of which there are an amazing number) leaves the reader with the wry impression that these people, although unlearned and ridden with superstition, nevertheless exhibited an enormous capacity for resilience and rebellion - perhaps in the search for new stimuli - in careful disregard for constraining social structure. Modern social theorists use the manorial system as a foil to complex society and with good reason. When compared to the variety we take for granted, the manor was indeed a limited scenario in which to carry out all of life's functions. But to write the entire epoch off as Dark, changeless and sterile, "waiting" for the Renaissance, is foolishness.

Traditionally, the year 476 ushered in the "dark

ages" by way of a cataclysmic defeat of the Romans at the hands of northern Barbarians. This is not quite accurate. Less dramatic, but more in keeping with the facts, we find that the invasion from the north had taken several centuries and was not a rapacious onslaught, but a quiet usurpation of power and status by upwardly mobile foreigners. Roman culture was recognized by the outsiders as superior to their own, and its lack of vitality allowed their primitive robustness to "conquer"; but, as in so many other meetings of peoples, the more simple were readily assimilated into the older, more richly endowed culture (64).

However, by the time of Pope Gregory the Great (540-604) there were indeed regularized and ferocious attacks on the remnants of Roman grandeur, along with famine and disease throughout Italy. Rome was preserved from utter destruction only by the diplomatic skill of Gregory, for he placated the Lombards and more by accident than design, initiated the hegemony of the Church over Europe for the next millenium. The 8th century showed little improvement in the lives of the "Europeans", with the Arab invasions as far as Spain; and the miniscule Carolingian renaissance died with Charlemagne leaving Europe in a 10th century of appalling despair and pessimism throughout. The year 1000 approached to no chorus of joy, for as many prophets of the age proclaimed, it seemed that Western man would not survive his first millenium.

Strangely perhaps, technological advance did not

seem to be inordinately affected by such organizational and
ideological chaos. Lynn White describes the birth of the
stirrup, three-field crop rotation and similarly explosive
inventions all of which preceded the 11th century by several
hundred years (65). This anomaly, the continuing progress
of material innovation within a social structure either
static or declining, from this point forward begins to
typify the West much more than the East. The static congru-
ence of later Rome and the early Medieval gave way gradually
to incongruence, and then, much later, to the dynamic incon-
gruence of today (of course varying in quality and speed over
different regions). While the divine monarchs of Eastern
civilizations assured that technology was restrained and
applied principally to art, the Western leaders with their
pugnacious acquisitiveness never tired of employing novel
devices to further their power. However, to continue in the
realm of sociocultural paradox, the East developed quite
early, amidst less material poverty than is often thought,
conceptions of human spirituality and sensitivities which
were utterly and forever foreign to the West, yet at the same
time failing to rival Europe in mechanical achievements. Thus
the ideological element grew into degenerate complexity and
subtlety in the East, the technological component flowered
without remission or conscience throughout the modern epoch
in the West, and organizational developments lagged in both
areas (but to different degrees), even now creating the most
problems for both worlds. We may assume from this that

individual creativity may readily find an outlet in either the Eastern or Western directions, but that those who would radically alter social organization (e.g., Cromwell, the philosophes, Lenin, etc.) chose for themselves by far the most difficult arena in which to innovate. As students of complex organizations we find this unsurprising, but in seeking a characterization of social change through history as relying heavily upon individuals, the trichotomous distinction must constantly be kept in mind. It will not do to dismiss the LaPiere-Barnett theory on grounds that large-scale organizational changes have in the past century been the result of many small increments rather than "great man" achievements. Complex organization is new in world history and unless we wish to become completely temperocentric, it is essential to recognize that as early as Gregory the Great, the individual (leader, adviser, soldier, or inventor) had far more difficulty in rearranging social relations than in coming up with novel mechanical devices or mental concepts. This is the nature of social change. Luther rather easily concocted a radicalized theology; he had tremendous difficulty in establishing a viable non-Catholic church which could successfully compete with Rome. Within less than a century after his 95 theses were proclaimed, over 180 Protestant sects had blossomed, the vast majority of which would have met with no approval from their "founder". Examples of this sort are rife through Western history. The fact then is clear: we have been very proficient at thinking up both new

apparatuses and intellectual explanations, but, as in other civilizations, our ability to sensibly organize social relations is nearly always out of step, either somewhat ahead ("open marriage") or behind (feudal demands within contract relations). This seems to hold constant even without regarding the problems of power and privilege, the "who gets what, when, how" dimension of change.

Between Charlemagne and 1100, "history", as chronicled by contemporary observers, remained tied to small and frequent baronial battles. More important for my analysis, the actual distances between levels of the stratification system were usually slight. As Europe climbed its way out of the socio-political chaos left by the complete infiltration of the Roman system by northern peoples and the concomitant dissolution of classical order, there existed insufficient opulence for anyone to exploit very much. However, out of the destruction two positive consequences were in evidence, the conversion of Norsemen into Christian Normans (responsible for major creative input later in history) and the tenuous understanding among the populations that a "Europe" was in the making. (The 9th century historian Nithard first used the term when assessing Charlemagne's impact (66).) From my reading of the period, it seems that key figures working in decidedly innovational roles propelled the West away from Roman decadence and the onslaughts of both Islamic and barbarian invaders. One can say with more certainty about this epoch than of any subsequent one, that

early Europe was the handiwork of specifiable innovators,
hardheaded and foolishly courageous types who could look
forward to brief and bitter existences, whether or not they
sought to inject change into a dismal era.

Among these relatively few but essential figures
are the leaders of the Church, generally considered the single
force which made any concerted effort to maintain the social
fabric of the civilization. This is not the corrupt and
heavily entrenched Church of the pre-reformation, but a
young and still supple social force, hardly yet deserving of
the name "organization". Among these early purists was of
course St. Benedict. St. Odo, Abbot of Cluny in the 10th
century, while preserving the shredded remnants of Western
tradition, also began a militantly altruistic monastic move-
ment on the basis of the Benedictine Rule, formulated 400
years earlier. It has been noted that this essentially proto-
social work role of the early monks found no counterpart in
the East, and before degeneration set in, monasteries served
as centers for learning - purely intellectual and secular -
and security throughout the troubled times. Moreover, the
stigma attached to manual labor so typical of previous
civilizations, was almost completely eradicated under the
influence of this order, which, as Sombart pointed out, was
very likely the root of bourgeois values: hard work, punctu-
ality and thrift. If any organization ever worked in direct
contradiction to the sentiment of the culture, it was this
one, for it was said that if 99% of the monks were destroyed,