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Emmanuel Le Roy Ladurie

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Emmanuel Le Roy Ladurie
"The Techniques of Total History" (Lecture 1)
October 22, 1979
Portland State University

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HOST: ...Portland State University. One of a number of public events noting the University's 25th anniversary, this series continues a Portland State tradition of bringing leading scholars to our campus. This lecture series was established by Burke and Alice Anne Morden in memory and tribute to their son Charles Keith Morden, a young man whose life, even at age 23, was exceptionally enriched through study and his personal involvement in international education.

Through this series of lectures, the Mordens, whose commitment to the furtherance of international education and understanding make it possible to bring distinguished scientists and scholars from abroad to the Portland State campus. Previous Morden lecturers were Nobel Prize winners: the art historian Sir Ernst Gombrich, scientist Sir Peter Medawar, and tonight, a lecture by one of the world's foremost historians, Professor Le Roy Ladurie.

In no area are international boundaries less inhibited, less relevant, than in scholarship and research. The value of the Morden lectures, therefore, is not limited to contributing an increased understanding of different disciplines, but extends to exposing our students, faculty, and members of the community to scholars with different backgrounds communicating across different cultures. The unique contribution, therefore, of the Morden lectures, is the example they provide and the possibilities and values of international communication. I am sure you'll join me in expressing our appreciation to Burke and Alice Anne Morden for providing us with

this enriching experience. I should like now to call on Dr. Michael Reardon, historian and director of our University Scholars program, to introduce our distinguished lecturer. [applause]

MICHAEL REARDON: For historians, the names of Marc Bloch and Lucien Febvre and Fernand Braudel signify not only great moments in historical scholarship in the 20th century, but also signify a redefinition of the field of history. Our speaker tonight, Professor Emmanuel Le Roy Ladurie, participates in that signification. As Laurence Stone said in his most recent review of Professor Le Roy Ladurie's work, "He is indeed one of the most, if not *the* most, inventive and creative historians in the world today." His work is ranged over a very far field, and his use of different methodologies in the reconstruction of the past has been indeed creative and imaginative. From the work that he did on the history of climate, through the studies that he has done of peasant society, and to the more recent work that he has turned to, where he has shown us equally his skill at eliciting from a manuscript a very vivid reconstruction of the human experience, most notably in his work "Montaillou," and his soon to be published book *Carnival in Romans*. Professor Le Roy Ladurie has indeed not always been received warmly by his fellow historians; his indictments of political history, of the history of events, of biography, have challenged, have threatened, and indeed have angered. But there is no one in the community of historians, certainly in the Western World today, who would not recognize and admit immediately that Emmanuel Le Roy Ladurie is emerging as a giant in the territory of historians. So with that, I would like to introduce our speaker for tonight. [applause]

EMMANUEL LE ROY LADURIE: The title of the lecture is "The technique of total history," but actually it's a bit general. And I want to apologize for the character of my lecture, which will be not very specialized. I will get out of the limited framework of early modern French history, which is supposed to be my personal field of research, if not a contribution to science, in order to display for you the works of some of my most important colleagues and compatriots.

I consider myself a kind of peddler, or commercial traveler for French history, which because of the language problem is not very much known here, at least in the general public. I will not speak very much on the writing of history in North America, because it's supposed, of course, to be known here. I will also escape the narcissistic temptation to speak basically of myself. [laughter] So, you will allow me to give some general but very partial view of French historical activity in the last year, decade, or even in the last decades, since when we deal with history by historians who have to deal also with some sort of long duration or long term.

I will focus on some privileged directions, most fertile fields of research. Let me mention for instance in the area of history of *mentalité* or mental attitudes or consciousness; let me mention the history of mythology or ideologies with the names of authors like Georges Dumézil

and Duby. A good example of French historiography to start could be a summary of Dumézil's work, which will lead us to the history on mental attitudes on the problems of hierarchy and equality.

Georges Dumézil, a retired professor of the Collège de France and now a member of the French Academy, has studied the Indo-Europeans: ancient people, as you know, whose languages are connected to each other. They now include as regards their descendants people in Northern India, in Iran, Slavs, the Baltic nations, the Germans, the Scandinavians, the Greeks, the Celts, the Latins, and of course the French, as Latins alternated with German people and the Anglo-Saxon as Germany [...] contaminated by Celts and Norman invaders. Not to speak of more recent mixtures. [laughter] Of course, I will neglect—as Dumézil does—the political exploitation that has been made of the Indo-Europeans called "Aryans" by National Socialist ideology between 1930 and 1945. Today, we are dealing—I hope, at least—with real knowledge, and not with the propaganda that was both intellectually worthless and morally disastrous.

Dumézil is now considered one of the greatest historical minds of our time, at least from a French viewpoint, a viewpoint which may be challenged by you. Dumézil has mentioned the geographical and chronological point of departure of the Indo-Europeans, that is to say 3000 B.C., on the huge plains, geographically, the huge plains of Southern Russia. The historical work of Dumézil and compared mythology of Indo-Europeans has to do with linguistics, since those different people, nation tribes, or ethnic groups shared at the beginning a common language or at least a family of Indo-European language, and this connection between language is still obvious, as you know, in English, French, Russian... well, this kinship can still be seen. Of course, what is most interesting for the French or American historian of old regime Europe in Dumézil and Duby's work is a famous and common ideology of the three functions that have been rejuvenated by a recent book by Duby. The three functions: priests, warriors, and peasants. In Latin: *oratores, bellatores, laboratores*: those who pray, those who wage war, those who plow land. This is, of course, very important for the historians when you are thinking of the three estates only two centuries ago in 1788 France: clergy, nobility, and a third estate, whose last breath of the three estates took place with the last meeting of the Estates General in 1789.

Anyway, from the origin was the Indo-European conception of the world. The three functional structures was a description of social and human activity but also a way of exploring, arranging, and regulating world and culture. There's three functions; the first function: the priest, they take care of the religious management of the world. They have to do with royal sovereignty with magics, law, and science. Second function, the warriors; they symbolize physical strength, warlike or marshal virtues, of course, heroism, and even sacred rage or *amok*, the famous Teutonic fury or rage, which has been used in a questionable way from 1870 to 1945. The third

function, peasants, are marginally fecundity and fertility. Concept of fecundity: health, productivity of crops and cattle, food; moreover, not only production of output but also reproduction of human beings, which implies sexuality, sensuality, pleasure, and physical beauty. Should we say first function the head, second function the heart and chest, third function belly and underbelly. [laughter]

Do those three functions correspond or correlate with a system of three or more hereditary castes, as is the case in India, or merely with privileged order of estates like in France before 1789, or even simply with social classes or social groups? In ancient India, of course, it may have correlated with a system of castes. After the Aryan invasion of India, according to Dumézil, there may have been a parallelism between social structure and religious structure. There was a group or caste of brahmins, priests; of warriors, kshatriyas, and finally of farmers or stock breeders. It was one of the origins of the Indian contemporary, or at least recent, system of castes, but this system during two or three millennia has been gradually complicated and diversified up to the point where it does not have much to do anymore with the primitive three functional system of Dumézil.

The legendary origins of Ivan also mention a primitive division in three social groups, the same ones. As we got the Celts and Gauls, there is a famous text by Julius Caesar when he arrives in Gaul in the first century B.C. He sees a population that is dominated by druids, that is to say people who know, who see, priests; then by knights, riders, horsemen, *equitum* in Latin, the second function, noble warriors who ride the horse; the last one are the great animals who have been domesticated, long after, the oxen and sheep, and a little bit before, the turkey. [laughter] The horse which he meant a kind of attribute, a monopoly sometimes for the noble groups from the Iron Age though the Middle Ages through Celtic times. Finally Caesar, Julius Caesar, finds in Gaul a kind of peasantry which, under druids and knights, was held in a state of semi-bondage by people that he called clients. Those three groups can also be found among the Celts of Ireland, even in the high Middle Ages, if we admit the testimony of Irish epics.

The big problem for us French historians and more generally for historians of Europe is obviously the one of continuity, continuity of the three functional Dumezilian structures up to the three estates of the Middle Ages and early modern era until 1789, and even a little bit beyond. Clergy, nobility, third estate. As a matter of fact, to come back to the problem of continuity of the three estates, society has seen the Celtic age up to 1789 through the Middle Ages, there are several interpretations. For a person like Dumézil himself or his pupils, this continuity seems to be a more or less accepted fact. In German medieval epics, the hero accomplishes actions that are first sacred, second warlike, military, and third commercial ones.

Those actions show that according to Dumézil that the Indo-European mental attitudes had persisted up to the medieval period even after 1000 A.D.

According to Duby, the situation was different; the dying scheme of the three functions was salvaged by some French priest, maybe two of them, around the year 1000 A.D. from some obscure Irish or Gaelic recollections of a remote quest. Then it was used as a theoretical model or weapon to justify the normal procedures and functioning of feudalism. In this case, Indo-Europeans become negligible and the three orders seem to be more an enunciation of Marxism than a leftover of total history. But, three-functional order is a way for us historians to metamorphose what seems to be pure historiography into comparative mythology. The example of the Roman historian Livy from this viewpoint is fascinating, as seen by Dumézil.

Well before [the] Middle Ages, ancient Rome had been acquainted with the three-function as it was described by the first historian of human origin like Livy. Livy's history, according to Dumézil, tells us much more about Indo-European myth than it relates the real history of the birth of a city like Rome. Livy says that the three primitive tribes were sharing together the formation of ancient Rome, and actually sharing Indo-European recollections, that was... the three tribes were the Ramnes, who were the companions of Romulus and Remus and were in charge of government and worship, the sacred sector; the Luceres, who were the progeny of the Etruscan warriors, second function; and the Titian sect or Sabines of Titus Tatius, wealthy stock breeders; third function, of course. From this same viewpoint, the list of the first four Roman kings as given by Livy should not be read by us as real royal genealogy, but as a succession of embodied symbols. First, sacred power, where Romulus impersonates magics and numa below; second, military strengths and warriors' courage are located in Tullius Hostilius' personality; third, economic prosperity is brought by Ancus Marcius.

On this point, we have to accept various historiographical tendencies among different Indo-European people. The Indians of former times used to write sheer epic poems in their primitive three-functional structures, whereas the Romans tended to code the same original myth as if they were real events in factual history. However, the Indo-European structures are not a fatal thing, and they can evaporate after some times in some more inventive or more forgetful culture.

Ancient Greece is a most imaginative culture among the ones that have sprung up from the common background of Indo-European culture. That's why classical Greece seems to have liberated itself so very early from the yoke of three functional structures. Only some remnants of them survive in Plato's thought, and also in the primitive tribes, priests, warriors, farmers, and craftsmen, that were supposedly established when Athens was founded. A big problem

that historical sociologists are also well aware of, as regards the 18th century, was already [...] as: where should the craftsmen be classified or located? In the third estate, as one of the peasants, like in the Middle Ages? Or in a fourth, specialized group like in ancient India, or in primitive, mythical Athens? It seems that those craftsmen were not foreseen at the original point of departure of the whole system around 3000 B.C. In the same way, Duby has raised the issue of the situation of the bourgeoisie in connection with the peasants inside the third estate. Generally speaking, it is true that it is difficult to insert trade, exchange, and bourgeoisie in the aggregate framework of the three functions: priests, warriors, and peasants; since bourgeois are not foreseen.

In the Middle Ages and even during the French 18th century, the third estate, including the peasants, was also the headquarters of the bourgeois and commercial classes. Third estate in 1788 was even monopolized by the bourgeoisie. But, at the origins, 4000 or 5000 years ago, according to the great linguist Benveniste, exchange, barter, gift, and counter-gift belonged more to the second function, the one of warriors, activities, and exchanges, that were also pertaining to ritualized sport and athletic exchanges.

The synthesis of the three functions was accomplished by the person of the king. He was both a noble, warrior, priest, and farmer of his own kingdom. The ritual of enthronement of a king as they were preserved at both ends of the Indo-European huge area in India and in Celtic Ireland, have maintained this triplicity. The king, who will inaugurate his reign, wears a white dress, which symbolizes his character as a sacred priest. His hand holds a bow or a spear, which is a warrior attribute or emblem. Finally, at the foot of the new king, there is a shoe, the leather of which comes from a wild boar, and links him to the obscure forces of fertility, as they derive from Mother Earth. The shoe can also be made of silver, with an even more obvious symbolism; would you imagine your or our president putting on a silver or boar-leather shoe in order to prove the fecundity of U.S. agriculture? Or to exorcise the devils of two-digit inflation?
[laughter]

Apart from the kinship problem, three functional structures are also to be found among gods, triads of gods; those systems of three gods are even the first embodiment of those triadic structures. I'm not thinking of course, of the Holy Trinity, which is not Indo-European anyway, but of triads of Indian gods that Dumézil has studied in his *Mitra-Varuna* books; Iranian gods; the three primitive Roman gods: Jupiter for sovereignty, Mars for war, Quirinus for fertility, and among ancient Germans and their Scandinavian cousins: Odin, equivalent of Jupiter for sovereignty, Thor for military strength, Freya for fecundity. This Scandinavian triad was not entirely dead in our high Middle Ages; it was still described in accounts and narratives by the travelers about the great temple of Uppsala at the last time of Paganism in Scandinavia, which

was, as you know, much more long-lived than our own Paganism in Gaul or British Isles. According to Adam of Bremen, a chronicler at the end of the 11th century.

Those German, Scandinavian legends of gods, especially about Odin, god of sovereignty, which is divided into Odin, again, and Tyr, protector or patron of earth; it is about those Gods that Dumézil has given one of his most remarkable comparisons. Once more as historians were shifting from what seems to be vulgar event history, to much more interesting, symbolic, and mythical history. And this, I think, has a general value for historical research even for historians specialized on much later periods. This confrontation is the following one: the one-eyed Odin—Scandinavian—is compared with the Roman hero Horatius Cocles, whose unique eye—he is one-eyed too—concentrates a power that is able to paralyze the enemy. And Tyr, who will become one-armed or one-handed, will sacrifice his right hand in the mouth of teeth in the wolf, the same way the Roman hero Mucius Scaevola puts his right hand into a fire. In both cases, as a pledge for a false statement. It is another way to say that Cocles and Scaevola, those heroes are for scholarly initiation to Latin studies, are not persons who have really existed, but mythical Indo-European characters.

Anyway, for Dumézil, the triad of gods in a given Indo-European culture, a Roman or Germanic one, form the complete general staff for the management of the whole world. Three-functional ideology has left its mark on all kinds of social aspects, psychological, political, juridical aspects of life, among ancient Indo-Europeans. So in old Iran or Ireland, they could speak of triads of calamities; maybe you are thinking of the famous sentence from *Plague, Famine, and War*: "Please protect us, O Lord." But above all in Iran, as Benveniste has shown, Darius asked the god Ahuramazda how he protects his country from war or danger, second function; from agricultural disaster, third function; and from violation of the sacred, first function. Literally from enemies' army, from bad year, and from cheating or imposture. In medieval Ireland, which is a remarkable Indo-European repository, you have an analogous text. See also the eulogy in honor of a king in India or Ireland, a king that secures good behavior, first function; protection, second function; and food, third function, for his country. See also the list of crimes or bad actions of a hero in Indo-European epics, for instance Scandinavian epics as described by Saxo Grammaticus. The hero Starkad, Scandinavian, has been exemplary in all his actions except in three occasions, where "Being in service of a Norwegian king, he criminally helps Odin," first function, "to kill his master. Then, in service of a Swedish king, he yields or succumbs to panic," which is a violation of the second function, pertaining to military courage. "Finally, being in service of a Danish king, he assassinates him in exchange for a big amount of gold," which is corruption, and the sector of the third function, the economical one. At the end, the hero dies as an explanation for the three violations of Indo-European values that have been coded by the three classical northern countries, Norway, Sweden, and Denmark.

In the same way, Hercules committed three sins in succession: the first one is an outrage, an insult to Zeus, first function; the second is a cowardly and treacherous murder of Iphitus, again, the second function, the one of courage; then finally about the third function, the one of fertility/sexuality, Hercules, by chasing women, starts sinning by sexual lust of the flesh. He will atone for it by becoming the victim of a degenerated tragic mistake, and by putting on Nessus' poison tunic, which causes unbearable sufferings to Hercules. Finally, like his Scandinavian and Greek twins, Starkad and Hercules, the Indian hero-warrior of Vedic India, Indra, sins also three times by killing a Brahmin, first function; by substituting deception of [...] to military force, again that's the second function; and finally seducing an honest woman into adultery. Thanks to a strategem, the hero appears to this woman in the false physical shape of this lady's husband. Consequently, the hero successively loses his spiritual majesty, first function; his physical strength; second function, and his corporeal beauty; third function.

Moreover, in the field of epics, old Indo-European theme, which underlines the superiority of the first two functions, sacred and war, or clergy and nobility, compared with the third one, peasants or third estate, or if you prefer, the theme of the gap between the first two functions and the third one: this theme is exploited by Scandinavian epics and also by so-called positivist history by Livy, of Roman origins, and finally by Indian theology. In this case too, the literary expression used by each ethnic group is linked with very different categories or literary genres. But the story that is told is basically the same one. Among Scandinavians, the fight takes place among the mythical race of the Aesirs—in Rome the Ramnes—who impersonate the first and second functions, and the Vanirs—in the Romans, the Sabines—are stock breeders. In both cases, a voluptuous woman caused intoxication with gold amongst Scandinavians and [...] among Latins, first symbolizes the danger that the third function gains the victory. Then an invocation to Jupiter, first function, among the Romans, and the fact of throwing Odin's javelin, first function, amongst Scandinavians, creates panic respectively among Sabines or Vanirs, and reestablishes the equilibrium which results into a necessary compromise of [...] between the three functions. This equilibrium or compromise will make possible harmony in social or religious life the same way as with the gods of India. Some of our popular revolts could be studied, also, in this spirit.

I will also mention with Dumézil the three Indian medicines: the one by incantation formulas, sacred ones; by knife, [...] or lancet, warriors; and the one by plants, agrarian medicine. The three types of juridical acts like *Indo-European Marriages*, that was the last book written by Dumézil, who has written fifty books, and reads forty languages—although I don't know if he speaks English—like *Indo-European Marriages in Ancient India and Ancient Rome*, the first type corresponds to the fact that a girl is given in a religious way by her father, who is a Brahmin, to

his prospective son-in-law; in the second type of marriage is the woman is kidnapped by military violence; finally the third function, peasant and economy, has invented, of course, marriage by purchase, the woman being symbolically sold by her father to her intended husband. The three functional approach can also be applied to wills. "In Rome," Dumézil writes, "a will could be made with the same value in the three cases. In a religious meeting presided over by the great pontiff," sacred; "or on the battlefield before the soldier, or through a fictitious sale."

In psychology, we have seen the example according to Dumézil of ancient Indian philosophy and of Plato, one of the few Greek authors who preserved the idea of ancient Indo-European three functional structures. He mentions the three virtues: wisdom, bravery or gallantry, and temperance or moderation; each of the three being attributed to the three classes of the Platonic republic: philosophers who would govern, warriors, and producers of wealth.

I have emphasized—with some oversimplification, which I am giving apologies for—I have emphasized the work of Dumézil, on which you have an American book by Scott Littleton; I hope you find it in the library. Although Dumézil's work is completely foreign to my own specialty, I think that it illuminates in an original way some of the most interesting work that has been recently accomplished in France in the fields of social history. Does Dumézil's work have an impact on the historiography of more recent periods? Especially as regards such important questions as the history of hierarchy, cooperative absolutist society, three-estates society, or society of estates, or society of orders in general, equality and egalitarianism? This is not a purely academic question, since the debate on the new right and socio-biology in France has given the present interest to those problems, even though personally, as a citizen and as an academic, I am quite opposed to the anti-egalitarian ideas of the new right. Maybe I'm on the right, but not on the new right.

The French society until 1789 was a society of three estates, but also more generally a society of estates, of bodies, of corporate bodies or bodies of community called the community, as people used to say. This has been studied more or less in the Dumézil line by medievalists like Duby and also by scholars like [...], et cetera. The basic distinction being between first, the social class, in Marxist terms, being based on unequal access to capital, to means of production, to money; but, however, equal rights between citizens, between all people; the rights of man and citizen. In other fields, the second category is a social or corporate estate or order, *der Stand* in German, like for instance the order of nobility, of clergy, of peasant communities or guilds, et cetera. Where people are classified according to their belonging to such or such estate, nobility or clergy, and where there are various degrees of inequality when you step down from one high estate to a lower one. What Tocqueville called *cascade de mépris*, the waterfall of scorn. An

estate... a society of orders like France before 1789 is based, as you know, on estate privileges which differentiate one order from the other one. Privileges regarding taxes or exemption from taxes, et cetera. And third, the most extreme case is of course constituted by the hereditary caste of India, where you cannot change castes and pass from one caste to another one. Caste division being almost but not totally, of course, like race divisions.

Since in old regime France we have to deal with estates, not with castes, some of the most interesting work that has been done in this respect is concerned with the history of the nobility in the old regime. I could refer to work like the ones of Mayeur on Britain and nobility, published one decade ago, but also to the books of Chaussinot-Nogaret on French nobility in the 18th century, Jean Nicolas on *savoie, bourgeoisie*, and nobility in the old regime. The result seems to be that in many regions of present France, the nobility was a relatively open social group that allowed commoners to penetrate into its ranks. But some regions like Brittany were more closed than others. Brittany was much more closed as regard to nobility than the south of France, where a successful commoner could fast enough be considered a noble de facto, an actual noble, if not a theoretical one, after some decades of success according to fresh work. Some periods were more open than others, like for instance the 16th century, maybe until 1600 or up to 1640. Then, the economic growth of renaissance and the higher mortality of epidemics and wars produced a very intense social turn over which made the access to nobility easier, whereas during the 18th century, things may have been a little bit harder, especially because the bureaucratization by the state and the writing down of lists of noblemen exempted from state taxation had automatically closed the ranks of nobility. The nobles first were furious to be put on a list, but after that they were very glad because it prevented other people from entering the list.

Another way of dealing with nobility is to study the spread and decline of noble values like honor, military courage, that can come near to physical violence. A scholar like Yves Castin who has studied the archives of the Toulouse Parliament has shown how southern France's occident society, even in the 18th century, were still permeated among commoners too, with the noble values of honor like in Spain today, which was going to give way only gradually to the more recent and bourgeois values of honesty, which was preached by the new school system. In spite of his extremely obscure style and approach, Monsieur Castin here seems to have a good point. Another problem, especially in the south, is that honor and violence were linked with the system of primogeniture, which emphasized, even among commoners, the role of the eldest son, like with the nobles. Elizabeth Clavery... for instance, the eldest son was milked with the breast of his mother, while youngest sons had only goat milk. Elizabeth Clavery in an unpublished Ph.D. thesis on the [...] and undeveloped department of [...] has shown that peasant primogeniture, even in the 19th century, were a cause of bloody fights and crimes

between eldest and youngest children. Moreover, [...] being an essentially peasant and classless society with very little industry, bourgeoisie, and urban sectors, class struggle was not existing or not much existing and was, if I dare say, replaced by sheer physical violence, which opposed a peasant household against another peasant household on unequal terms, like the Capulets and the Montagues in [...]. In spite of those interesting analyses, the trend according to more or less recent historical work seems to be clearly oriented toward the diminution of violence and an increase, or at least a relative increase, of theft from the 17th to 18th and 19th century. Thereas, it has been largely documented by the research of [...], including a bright Canadian young historian—at least he was young 10 years ago—Mr. Morgenson, and more recently by Pierre Morant, working on military archives of Languedoc. So the lions have become foxes; noble values of warlike violence have yielded to bourgeois values of acquisitive delinquency or theft. [laughter] This may be strange, since now we are confronted with an increasing violence in the U.S. and also in Europe, but there has been a long period where education seemed to be good to fight against violence, which is no longer the case now for various reasons.

As regards to church, another corporate body of the old regime, the research in progress has been more centered in a quantitative history of mental attitudes toward religion, like the one of [...] and [...] Catholics in [...] then on a structural study of the clergy itself as a social body. The study of wills seems to provide the historian with an index which allows him to measure the intensity of religious piety and influence of the church. According to the number of invocation to saints, to Virgin Mary, and to God; according also to the number of masses and possibly candles that you find mentioned, ordered, or paid for in the wills for the salvation of the soul of the man who is going to die. Those studies are also linked with the study of death, the flourishing industry of death history, that has been undertaken by people like Ariès, [...], Chaunu, and their pupils for Provence, Paris, et cetera. According to this research, it seems that the influence of the Catholic Church as one of the major corporate bodies in *ancien régime* France starts to diminish in a substantial way after 1750. This can be linked not only to the influence of philosophy and enlightenment, but also to the one of Jansonism, a kind of semi-Calvinistic brand of Catholicism, with an emphasis on faith and grace and not on good works. It has helped to undermine the visible hierarchy of the church, the influence of pompous and baroque liturgy, of clergy wealth, and it has gone toward a more detached, more spiritual and less spectacular brand of religiosity. In this respect, Voltarian philosophy and Augustinian Jansonism have both helped to undermine the church and in particular, and the society of orders and of estates in general.

In this respect, recent research has confirmed that more ancient work, like the one of Daniel Mornet on the intellectual origin of the French Revolution, was demonstrated in a purely qualitative basis, a process of relative de-Christianization, or at least intellectual secularization

in second half of 18th-century France. And Furet, in his book "Book and Society," which has made an analogous job, arrived at the same conclusion by using quantitative evidence of the study of thousands of titles of books to show—with a computer, of course—how lay books have replaced to a great extent religious books around the 1780s compared with the 1700s. More generally, it's a problem of the transition of the society of estates in the Dumézilian sense in the 1700s to the society of classes in the 1780s or the 1800s, that has been tackled by some important or at least interesting French historians. Furer has used for this purpose the work of French historians of revolution before the First World War, and has shown in a book on the French Revolution how the societies of thought have expanded like Freemasonry, provincial academies, societies of higher culture, where each member, whether noble or commoner, is the equal of other members. The societies of thought have helped to destroy the society of estates and corporate bodies in 1789, and they are the precursor or forerunners of more modern structures, like the club of Jacobites in 1793 or, more recently, our own contemporary political parties.

I have briefly dealt with the problem of society of orders and with disappearance, or at least decline. Of course, the most important group, at least in demographic terms, inside the society of orders is constituted by the old regime peasants, which has been the source of many big books [...] in recent French historiography. This predominance of the peasantry during the 18th century makes it a possibly more interesting field of research, in a sense, than urban population. In other terms, let us say that the average city dweller of [...] is less exciting to envisage than either Voltaire on top of the enlightenment society, or the average peasant at the bottom. As regards the influence and importance of people like Voltaire and Russo, obviously it does not need to be demonstrated. As regards a peasant, his importance is well established as regards to French Revolution, which like the Russian and Chinese one was very much influenced by peasant collective action. But even when you study earlier periods, like let's say the 14th to the 18th century, it may be good sometimes for the historians to leave the cities, since, after all, they contain only 10 to 20 percent of the whole population. Then the historian has the opportunity to become immersed into peasant society. This agrarian group offers you at this stage a coherent view of a new Malthusian paradigm, with a stable or simply fluctuating demographic and ecological history. It's rather fascinating, in our era of demographic explosion, to see a former French population which was basically a rural one leveling off at the ceiling of 18 to 21 million inhabitants from the 14th to the 17th century. That was zero population growth, as many people would like to see it happen on the earth now. But it was obtained, of course, by cruel means like famines, wars, and epidemics. All these means however were not ferocious; some of them, like late marriage, could also be milder than the others. [laughter]

Data like [...], division of land, were controlled from 1320 to 1550 and to 1720 by the Malthusian contrast between a fixed amount of available, arable land, and a mobile figure of population. French peasant demography, as you know, dives into a deep collapse from 1340 to 1450, then goes up again and simply recovers its 1340s level around 1550. This process of sheer demographic reproduction among the peasant population that had been half destroyed by the Black Death and successive plagues, then reconstituted afterwards in the post-plague century of 1440, 1450 is very different from our contemporary ideas of continuous demographic growth. It does not prevent, of course, as Lawrence Stone has underlined in a recent issue of *New York Review of Books*, that some very important changes took place from 1320 to 1720 in the Atlantic Ocean and America, or in the brains of Luther, Calvin, and their followers. But for the average peasant lineage of [...] *centrale* and Bavaria, it seems to me that the basic fact of their multiseular fate are more dictated by the long-term fluctuation of demography, epidemics, and wars than by institutional change or even by great discoveries. Don't misinterpret what I'm going to say. I'm not going to compare peasants in general with animals, since, on the contrary, I consider them as fine human beings. But from the quite particular viewpoint that I'm considering now, it seems to me that the fate of those French peasants from 14th to 17th centuries in a sense is closer to the fate of colonies of ants or penguins that are periodically disturbed and decimated by natural disasters, and not formally transformed by cultural change. They are closer to that pattern than they are to the bright destiny of the rapidly changing world of culture, state, politics, cities, et cetera. And after all, were not peasants the big majority of the population. Were not they more typical of ancient mankind than great intellectuals or even simply city dwellers were.

As regards history of social classes, and not only of social orders or estates, we could address ourselves to the field of urban history, a well-known field in the U.S., and it has also produced some interesting work in France. Like the thesis of Jean-Claude Perrot on Kant in the 18th century, Maurice Garden on Lyon, et cetera. It seems to me nevertheless that Perrot and his colleagues, however great their merits are, were not able to define a consistent urban paradigm for the old regime like the one we have actually for agrarian history. Maybe simply this importance derives from the fact that such a task was impossible to accomplish. I see Perrot's excellent and gigantic book, and Maurice Garden's book on Lyon, more like enormous department stores of two thousand pages where you find all kinds of concepts such as growth, social mobility, crises, demography, culture, but without any strong link between all those scattered phenomena.

In the same respect, as regards the history of social classes, and not only of estates or orders, fertile concepts have been brought by Michel Foucault. They are concerned with punishment and probation, with the new disciplining and control exercised on lower class masses through

repression and education. However, did not Foucault push this argument on repression during the early modern era a little bit too far? Is it really possible to speak of great *enfermement*, great shutting up, or great confinement for madmen, soldiers, syphilitic people, beggars, or tramps, at a time when barbed wire and concentration camps had not yet been invented? Those two great discoveries will take place only in the fortunate 19th and 20th centuries, when American farmers find out the device of barbed wire for shutting up their cows around 1850, and when concentration camps are used for the first time against the boers in South Africa, before World War I.

To go back to the society of orders, it has not totally collapsed in France with the revolution of 1789. It has not totally surrendered or yielded to our modern society of classes. This total collapse or this appearance of a society of orders would be probably more true as regards American society, which is both capitalistic on the one hand, democratic and populist on the other hand; a society which is anyway generally different from the old regime models. In France, however, we still have some remnants of the societies of order. Not only the Catholic clergy, which of course has authentic legitimacy, and also the surviving nobility which is not recognized as such by the state, although Mr. [...] was ennobled in 1922, [laughter] but also institutions like the order of notaries, of medical doctors, the [...] resurrection, by the way, or creation, an American scholar, Ezra Suleiman, has studied the influence on French society of corporate bodies like mining engineers and engineers of the bridges and roads, *ponts et chaussées*. The latter have been founded under the reign of Louis XV. This influence is still enormous as corporate bodies, and is now closely associated with the one that is exercised by the powerful alumni of the National School of Administration, who control the government majority parties and even some parts of the socialist party. A joke was that the pope was right not to allow marriage for priests, because soon all the bishops would be alumni of the National School for Administration. [laughter]

Another interesting issue may be briefly raised here. The society of orders has been exemplified by the work of scholars like Dumézil, Duby, and Mousnier. A question is asked: has this special kind of society been resuscitated to some extent after the collapse of capitalism in communist countries like Russia? This may be considered, of course, an indecent statement, even though it is accompanied with a question mark. However, a man like Roland Mousnier in his book *Le société d'ordres* has made some comments on this subject. Mousnier, who was greatly learned on societies of estates in old regime Europe, wonders also in his book if present-day communism is not also based on the privileged order, the communist party, accompanied by external structures such as high-ranking officers in the police and in the army. This is a famous problem of the privilege nomenclature, a secret list of favored big wheels or big shots of the party, who have access to special shops, particular tribunals like officialities in French old

regime for the clergy. This problem of the privileged order in communist countries has been treated extensively, not by French historians, apart from Mousnier, but by young dissident Hungarian sociologists Konrád and Széleányi in a fascinating book recently translated in French.

Starting from Dumézil, I have dealt with the history of hierarchy. Three functional structures, societies of order, estates, and also societies of classes, et cetera. I have not much time left now to discuss along the same lines a history of anti-hierarchy. A history of equality as French historians could possibly practice it now. I should, however, mention the work of a French sociologist and historian, Louis Dumont. He is both a great specialist of Indian thought and society—see his book *Homo hierarchicus*—and also one of our best historians of equality. Of course, he has emphasized... his book is *Homo equalis*. Of course, he has emphasized the economic and capitalistic development in which the idea of equality with a man like Adam Smith has been firmly rooted in those capitalistic structures as soon as the 18th century. On the other hand, Dumont and other historians have underlined the Christian environment, or more precisely, both Jewish and Christian background, in other words, Biblical culture which has encouraged the spread of equalitarian concepts as soon as the end of the Middle Ages.

Dumézil, even unwillingly, has linked the concept of hierarchy with our Indo-European roots. In the same way, although in conflicting terms, the idea of equality is connected with Biblical and Semitic roots, which are so important in the Christian tradition that has permeated the whole Western culture, even though unfortunately Christians were often anti-Semites. It is altogether quite clear for the French and British historians like Wolfe, Muller, and Rodney Hilton, who have dealt with the popular revolt of the 14th and 15th centuries, especially the great British rebellion of 1381. There, you have the famous motto, "When Adam delved and Eve span, who was then the gentlemen?" This theme of the uniqueness or unicity of the first human couple Adam and Eve, as defined by the Genesis, was absolutely basic to finally eradicate the Pagan and Indo-European idea, according to which the nobility was a separate group enjoying a separate God, the one of the second function. The noblemen, like the commoners, have the same original father and mother, Adam and Eve. They were similarly stained by the original sin and saved by the blood of Jesus Christ. Of course, this was not felt from the beginning of Christianity, since the church was inserted in the superior order of priests of the three-estate society, but starting from Franciscan thought, 13th, 14th century, then Protestant thought, that is from 16th century onwards, this idea of Biblical equality has been more, more, and more strongly felt.

If you allow me here just for one time to quote myself as a historian, I would say that I've rediscovered the same ideas in the text written by French southern lawyers of the 1600s, who have to argue in favor of the commoners and against the nobles in an obscure problem of

taxes. As you know, the nobles were exempted from state taxes and the commoners had to pay for them, which created a great frustration, and a longing for equality. The commoners' lawyers, in those circumstances, don't hesitate to remind the noble of the theological and Biblical data that I've just mentioned. The nobles are descended from Adam and Eve like the commoners. Both social groups have the same bones and same flesh. Both have to equally contribute to the same taxes in proportion with their individual wealth. Louis Dumont, who has simultaneously considered the Indo-European and the Semitic or Biblical tradition, also stresses the equalitarian role of Protestantism, with its emphasis on the Bible. German Protestantism of the 16th century, with Luther, who considered that all men are priests, therefore are equal people whether noble or commoners, which is independent of course of the anti-peasant stand of Luther in the peasant war. French Protestantism which destroys the three-estate structure by setting up Calvinistic, democratic, theocracy is directly inspired from the Bible. English Protestantism of John Locke and moreover of the Liberals will think that before Christians are equal, all British people, and even all men should also be equal. This will lead us of course to the Swiss and secularized Protestantism of Jean Jacques Rousseau, who is the direct father of our modern ideas on equality.

Of course, those ideas on equality, whether Biblical or secularized, are always based on some transcendental values. They may have conflicted in the course of the 19th and 20th centuries with new theories of inequality between men, races, et cetera, based on genetics and very often, phony genetics, and biased and distorted facts. It seems to me in this respect that the historian in those circumstances does not act professionally as a vulgar slave of fact, but as a standard bearer of equalitarian values that are precisely part and parcel of our historical heritage. [applause] Thank you.

[some background talk between LADURIE and REARDON]

LADURIE: Should I add... ? [to the audience] If there are questions, informal ones, or... ?

REARDON: [to audience] Since we can't see you, perhaps what would be best is we'll break, and if any of you do have any questions, you might come down to the front. We'll spend some time doing that tomorrow night after the lecture; we have have a more formal question-and-answer period.

LADURIE: OK.

[program ends]