

## 1: Historicizing Theory

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The list could go on. Once I noticed the pattern, my first question was why? The western creative imagination consistently expects disaster, apocalypse, and rebellion should we ever create a life form that is fully self-directed “ intelligent, creatively reasoning, learning, and independent, something that thinks as we can think. Blake, however, does not yield his own theoretical lens. Blake conceptualizes his philosophy and theology in aesthetic terms: So in practice, my book attempted to simultaneously theorize history and historicize theory. Damon or Yeats, or Erdman vs. Frye seem to represent irreconcilable approaches to Blake. What I wanted to discover was a way to consciously theorize history while historicizing theory, to discover principles guiding a Hegelian synthesis of these two processes. Added to these considerations has been my experience teaching upper division literary theory classes over the last several years. I have always been drawn to both literature and philosophy, and as you see my work combines both along with history , but I chose literature as my field over philosophy because I believe that the concrete and particular is more real than the abstract and conceptual. However, when I teach theory, the difficulty of the material along with the seduction of learning advanced concepts often effaces the literature that theory is meant to illuminate. Furthermore, students tend to invest so much time and effort mastering the difficult texts presented in my theory classes “ I teach from primary texts even in upper division undergraduate classes “ that they never evaluate them critically. I have also been bothered by the tendency of theoretical approaches to reduce literature to a series of conceptual templates yielding pre-determined results, erasing the particularity and individuality of the most sophisticated literary works, even in published scholarship. I believe that a cure for many of these ills is to historicize theory. I do not seek to trivialize theory by reducing it to its historical contexts, but to recognize that its development was motivated by human beings acting in response to very specific cultural and historical pressures. But more often it is much less so. I seek by historicizing theory to rehumanize literature: I am not advocating here for a return to authorial intent as a guiding principle for textual interpretation. Historicizing theory leaves theory intact, which therefore continues to function independently of any literature not written with theory in mind. However, I have for the present abandoned the hope for a Hegelian synthesis in favor of Blakean contraries: I look forward to what more I can learn from contributions to this volume.

2: Historicizing Theory: [www.enganchecubano.com](http://www.enganchecubano.com): Peter C. Herman: Libros en idiomas extranjeros

*Historicizing Theory provides the first serious examination of contemporary theory in relation to the various twentieth-century historical and political contexts out of which it emerged. Theory "a broad category that is often used to encompass theoretical approaches as varied as deconstruction, New Historicism, and postcolonialism" has often.*

Hegelian[ edit ] G. Hegel " Hegel viewed the realization of human freedom as the ultimate purpose of history, which could only be achieved through the creation of the perfect state. And this progressive history would only occur through a dialectical process: However, because humans are often not aware of the goal of both humanity and history, the process of achieving freedom is necessarily one of self-discovery. Hegel also saw the progress toward freedom being conducted by the "spirit" Geist , a seemingly supernatural force that directed all human actions and interactions. Yet Hegel makes clear that the spirit is a mere abstraction, and only comes into existence "through the activity of finite agents. Popper referred to this "Hegelian" philosophy of history as Historicism. Consequently, their essence can be sought only by understanding said history. Hegel did not use these terms, although Johann Fichte did. Yet another contrasting model is the persistent metaphor of a social contract. Hegel considers the relationship between individuals and societies as organic, not atomic: It thus preserves the culture of the past in thousands of half-forgotten metaphors. To understand why a person is the way he is, you must examine that person in his society: The Zeitgeist , the "Spirit of the Age," is the concrete embodiment of the most important factors that are acting in human history at any given time. This contrasts with teleological theories of activity, which suppose that the end is the determining factor of activity, as well as those who believe in a tabula rasa , or blank slate, opinion, such that individuals are defined by their interactions. These ideas can be interpreted variously. Hegelian historicism is related to his ideas on the means by which human societies progress, specifically the dialectic and his conception of logic as representing the inner essential nature of reality. Hegel attributes the change to the "modern" need to interact with the world, whereas ancient philosophers were self-contained, and medieval philosophers were monks. In his History of Philosophy Hegel writes: In modern times things are very different; now we no longer see philosophic individuals who constitute a class by themselves. With the present day all difference has disappeared; philosophers are not monks, for we find them generally in connection with the world, participating with others in some common work or calling. They live, not independently, but in the relation of citizens, or they occupy public offices and take part in the life of the state. Certainly they may be private persons, but if so, their position as such does not in any way isolate them from their other relationship. They are involved in present conditions, in the world and its work and progress. Thus their philosophy is only by the way, a sort of luxury and superfluity. This difference is really to be found in the manner in which outward conditions have taken shape after the building up of the inward world of religion. In modern times, namely, on account of the reconciliation of the worldly principle with itself, the external world is at rest, is brought into order " worldly relationships, conditions, modes of life, have become constituted and organized in a manner which is conformable to nature and rational. We see a universal, comprehensible connection, and with that individuality likewise attains another character and nature, for it is no longer the plastic individuality of the ancients. This connection is of such power that every individuality is under its dominion, and yet at the same time can construct for itself an inward world. It would be considered by Nietzsche , John Dewey and Michel Foucault directly, as well as in the work of numerous artists and authors. The Romantic period emphasized the ability of individual genius to transcend time and place, and use the materials from their heritage to fashion works which were beyond determination. Post-structuralism would argue that since history is not present, but only the image of history, that while an individual era or power structure might emphasize a particular history, that the contradictions within the story would hinder the very purposes that the history was constructed to advance. Anthropological[ edit ] In the context of anthropology and other sciences which study the past, historicism has a different meaning. Anthropological historicism [6] is associated with the work of Franz Boas. His theory used the diffusionist concept that there were a few "cradles of civilization" which grew outwards, and merged it with the idea that societies would adapt to their circumstances, which is called historical particularism. The

school of historicism grew in response to unilinear theories that social development represented adaptive fitness, and therefore existed on a continuum. While these theories were espoused by Charles Darwin and many of his students, their application as applied in social Darwinism and general evolution characterized in the theories of Herbert Spencer and Leslie White, historicism was neither anti-selection, nor anti-evolution, as Darwin never attempted nor offered an explanation for cultural evolution. However, it attacked the notion that there was one normative spectrum of development, instead emphasizing how local conditions would create adaptations to the local environment. Julian Steward refuted the viability of globally and universally applicable adaptive standards proposing that culture was honed adaptively in response to the idiosyncrasies of the local environment, the cultural ecology, by specific evolution. What was adaptive for one region might not be so for another. This conclusion has likewise been adopted by modern forms of biological evolutionary theory. The primary method of historicism was empirical, namely that there were so many requisite inputs into a society or event, that only by emphasizing the data available could a theory of the source be determined. In this opinion, grand theories are unprovable, and instead intensive field work would determine the most likely explanation and history of a culture, and hence it is named "historicism. New Historicism Since the s, when Jacques Lacan and Foucault argued that each epoch has its own knowledge system, within which individuals are inexorably entangled, many post-structuralists have used historicism to describe the opinion that all questions must be settled within the cultural and social context in which they are raised. Answers cannot be found by appeal to an external truth, but only within the confines of the norms and forms that phrase the question. This version of historicism holds that there are only the raw texts, markings and artifacts that exist in the present, and the conventions used to decode them. This school of thought is sometimes given the name of New Historicism. The same term, new historicism is also used for a school of literary scholarship which interprets a poem, drama, etc. Stephen Greenblatt is an example of this school. Modern[ edit ] Within the context of 20th-century philosophy, debates continue as to whether ahistorical and immanent methods were sufficient to understand meaning—that is to say, "what you see is what you get" positivism—or whether context, background and culture are important beyond the mere need to decode words, phrases and references. While post-structural historicism is relativist in its orientation, that is, it sees each culture as its own frame of reference, a large number of thinkers have embraced the need for historical context, not because culture is self-referential, but because there is no more compressed means of conveying all of the relevant information except through history. This opinion is often seen as deriving from the work of Benedetto Croce. Recent historians using this tradition include Thomas Kuhn.

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