Between Past and Present: An Essay on History. By Nathan Rotenstreich. (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1958. Pp. xxix, 329. Index. $5.00.)

This essay focuses the light of recent thought on the nature of historical knowledge. Martin Buber notes in the Introduction that savants from Vico down to the present time have examined the essential character of history, but "a critique of historical reason is still unwritten." Buber goes on to comment that Vico was the first to ask why there was no science of human history, yet neither Vico nor Kant suggested the kind of knowledge this science was to be built upon. And Hegel, for all of his fame, got no nearer historical realities. In fact, Hegel wrote, "We must take history as it is." Ranke founded the objective school and for him history was "the living memory of the human race" (p. v), but he did not interpret or explain. Comte, father of Positivism and sociology, believed in a history of man's opinions. And Marx interpreted everything in history as arising from man's economic condition. In the past half century a number of scholars have been working toward a comprehensive epistemology of historical knowledge. Among these is Nathan Rotenstreich, Dean of Humanities and Chairman of the Department of Philosophy at The Hebrew University in Jerusalem. The Jerusalem circle, under the leadership of Hugo Bergmann, has been working since 1941 in a common effort of philosophical thinking in the fields both of mind and of nature. *Between Past and Present* is one result.

Rotenstreich, like Vico, begins with the proposition that the essential feature of the domain of history is identity of subject and object. But, unlike Vico, he goes on to examine the difference between the poles of subject and object, which indicates for him that on the one hand there is an objective course of action called " 'history' and on the other a story of this action called 'narration' " (p. xi). This difference between the *res gestae* and their narration can be shown in the directions of time. The author generally recognizes, along with the modern German school of philosophy, the difficulty of measuring values with any precision when the valuer himself is part of the stream of history, as every historian is. On objectivity he writes, "There is no point in stressing the objectivity of knowledge when the very knowledge itself becomes datum" (p. 37).

The author's analyses of the factors of time, causality, and history and social science are germane. Prediction of the future is not history for him and so he rejects Toynbee's "immutable laws." Marxism, he notes, is the best known example of the doctrine that one domain of historical activity has exclusive causative power. Marx completely disregarded the cumulative character of history and tried to make man exclusively an historical being. Rotenstreich adds, "This is an example of the illegitimate introduction of sociological concepts into historical investigations" (p. 308). Since "historical knowledge puts the principle of causality into effect immediately, without the mediating link of the material laws" (pp. 297-298), the author cannot accept material laws in application to history. And because of the assumption of material laws necessary to "evolution," he also rejects this term as applicative to history.

In conclusion, Rotenstreich finds that history is meaningful because meanings are bestowed by human action. It is perpetually created and is at no place or time a totality closed in itself. It is also rational because of the structure of time. And man is historical because he is more than historical, for as a philosopher the author places reason above historical knowledge.

This closely written analysis of historical knowledge merits the earnest attention of historians. Marxists and historicists will challenge many of the conclusions, as indeed will others. But the questions raised, particularly in relation to time, causality, and the interdependence of the social sciences are pertinent and worthy of discussion. The work is stimulating and illuminating, a notable effort to clarify the nature of historical reason. Perhaps the author would agree with Pieter Geyl who opined in his essay on Ranke, "History is infinite. It is unfixable. We are trying all the time to reduce past reality to terms of certainty, but all that we can do is to render our own impression of it. . . ." (Pieter Geyl, *Debates with Historians* [New York, 1956], 1).

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The Old Regime, 1713-63. Edited by J. O. Lindsay. *The New Cambridge Modern History,* Volume VII. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1957. Pp. xx, 624. Index. $7.50.)

This is the second volume to appear of the *New Cambridge Modern History,* designed to replace the original series planned sixty-five years ago by Lord Acton and published in the decade between 1902 and 1912. The new series is edited by a supervisory committee of three senior British scholars. Each volume is edited by one scholar—this one by Mrs. J. O. Lindsay, Fellow in Girton College and Lecturer in Modern History at the University of Cambridge—with each subject or chapter treated by a specialist or expert. For this volume, all of the contributors are English, and Mrs. Lindsay herself wrote five of the twenty-four chapters.

The series is designed as a standard general account of European history since 1450. This volume, like its predecessor in the original series, emphasizes political, military, and diplomatic affairs, which is probably inevitable and proper for a period as stormy as the one covered. Generally speaking, the approaches in the two volumes on this period from the two series are remarkably similar, and this volume in particular has not been notably affected by current fashions or even by new schools and methods. Probably the principal change is that seven of the chapters in this volume—almost a third of the total—treat Europe as a whole. The most distinguished chapters are those by Professor A. Cobban on France, by Professor W. R. Brock on England, and by Professor D. B. Horn on the Diplomatic Revolution. Most of the chapters on military conflict are quite superior. Some chapters are quite weak, and C. A. Macartney was so carried away by his enthusiasm for Hungarian history, in which he is without a peer in Western Europe, that he devoted two-thirds of the chapter on the Habsburg Empire to Hungary.