

conflict with their role as women? And were the views of the married, non-working women in the Women's Co-operative Guild, for example, at odds with those of women trade unionists?

Because the context for discussion is limited to particular women's sections in the labour movement, it is hard to assess just how far the celebration of labour women's achievements is justified. For example, Oonagh McDonald would have us believe that labour women made the questions of nutrition, family allowances and maternal mortality political issues in the 1930s. She ignores the pressure exerted by an all-party committee of women organized by May Tennant to reduce maternal mortality, the influence of the Children's Minimum Committee and the Family Endowment Society (both included MPs of all parties and were organized by Eleanor Rathbone, an Independent Liberal), the Committee Against Malnutrition (an organization of radical male physicians and Medical Officers of Health) and the BMA. It is also worth noting that the motivations of the people involved in these groups differed widely; some put a premium on better nutrition and family allowances as a means of increasing the birth rate. When applied in a different context, for example in the fight for access to birth control information, this worked against labour women.

The first six chapters of the book give an optimistic account of labour women's progress. Sheila Lohead sets the tone at the end of her Introduction with the comment: "Perhaps now our focus must concentrate more on psychological equality than on the political and social standing we have virtually succeeded in achieving." However, the last three chapters reveal this to be far too complacent a view. Here the authors have to admit that the results of the Equal Pay and Sex Discrimination Acts have been disappointing and that women in the labour movement have made little progress since World War II, no more, say, than in the Conservative Party. What this book does not attempt to explain is 'why?'

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MAURICE MANDELBAUM. — *The Anatomy of Historical Knowledge*. Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1977.

Since the Second World War, there has been a remarkable surge of interest in problems of historical knowledge and inquiry on the part of British and American philosophers working within what could broadly be characterized as an analytical and empiricist tradition. Professor Mandelbaum was in at the beginning of this development — indeed, he somewhat anticipated it in his *The Problem of Historical Knowledge*, published in 1938 (reprinted in 1967 as a Harper Torchbook). His new book, which, like the first, has as a central objective the elaboration of a case against historical relativism, but which in style and content reflects the very large changes undergone by English-speaking philosophy in the interval, is a distinguished addition to the growing monographic literature of its genre. More than most, it presents itself as a philosopher's response to what he finds historians actually doing: still somewhat at a distance, perhaps, since no detailed analyses are offered of any historical theses or controversies; yet historians who read the book will surely do so with a sense of recognition.

In the first of three parts, Mandelbaum seeks to clarify what gives all historical investigation a kind of unity that makes it appropriate to regard it as belonging to a single discipline, while at the same time emphasizing important differences between “modes” of historical reconstruction, failure to recognize which he believes to have vitiated much recent critical philosophy of history. The unity of history is traced in quite a fresh and illuminating manner to its concern with the particular, this “idiographic” bias being operative even at the most general level of historical analysis, and equally present in comparative studies. History’s diversity is expounded first with reference to a distinction between what Mandelbaum calls general and special histories, as exemplified by histories of countries or institutions and histories of technology or art, and then a further distinction between three very different sorts of structure which historical works may possess, which he calls sequential, explanatory, and interpretive. Both distinctions are deployed to great effect throughout the book, and in connection with the second Mandelbaum develops a powerful critique of the notion of narrative as central to historiography — one that those who disagree with him on this point will hardly be able to ignore.

The book’s second part is devoted to an elucidation of the concept of causation as it functions in history. A main target is a notion of cause and effect as a relation between discrete events — a notion going back to Hume — which Mandelbaum regards as especially inappropriate to historical inquiry. His own emphasis is on causal *process* and on the delineation of functional relations between facets or aspects of events; and although he is no crusading anti-positivist, this brings him into conflict at a number of points with the popular “covering law” theory of historical explanation. At the very least, he would insist, the relationship between causes and laws is much more complicated and much less direct than has generally been allowed by the champions of that theory. Mandelbaum’s analysis of causation leads him also to attack the contrast often recognized, at least implicitly, by historians, and made much of by some recent philosophers of history, between causes and mere background conditions in causal explanation. Given the overall concern of his book, Mandelbaum’s suspicion of this contrast is understandable enough, for the tendency of historians to differ strongly on how it should be applied in particular cases has often been cited as a way in which value judgments or other subjective factors find a place in historical work.

In the third part, the problem of the possibility of objectivity in history is addressed more generally, Mandelbaum endeavouring to avoid some of the confusions into which he sees both philosophers and historians as prone to fall, by distinguishing initially three quite different ways in which the question whether history is objective is commonly understood. The first is whether it is free of mere opinion or prejudice; the second, whether it is about publicly observable happenings rather than subjective processes; and the third, whether it makes claims regarded as either true or false, and thus not deniable with impunity. It will surprise some readers to find Mandelbaum most concerned to establish the objectivity of history in the third of these senses; yet he is surely right to suggest that what is commonly said about the compatibility of different accounts of the same historical subject from different points of view often seems to put objectivity in this sense in question. Mandelbaum explores the problem of how histories may in fact supplement and contradict each other with subtlety and skill. It is of interest, in this connection, to find him representing even periodization as a procedure which can be objective in all three of his senses — it being unusual enough for a philosopher of his tradition seriously to discuss the concept of “period” as an interpretive category at all.

In a short review, scant justice can be done to the rich texture of Mandelbaum's discussion, the interlock of problems and doctrines being outstanding; and no justice can be done at all to his arguments, which are presented non-technically as well as clearly. The book should receive a warm welcome from students of the theory of historiography.

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The book's second part is devoted to an elucidation of the concept of causation as it functions in history. A main target is a notion of cause and effect as a relation between discrete events — a notion which itself is based on Mandelbaum's explicit or implicit opposition to historical regularity. His own analysis is an causal process and on the definition of functional relations between events or aspects of events, and although he is an avowed anti-positivist, this brings him into conflict at a number of points with the popular "scientific" theory of historical explanation. At the very least, he would insist, the relationship between order and law is much more complicated and much less exact than has generally been shown in the chapters of that theory. Mandelbaum's analysis of causation leads him also to attack the central idea of regularity at least implicitly, by historians, and make much of the same for political scientists of history, between causes and their background conditions in causal explanation. Given the overall context of the book, Mandelbaum's rejection of the functional is understandable enough, for the tendency of historians to differ strongly on how it should be applied in particular cases has often been cited as a way in which value judgments or other subjective factors had a place in historical work.

In the third part, the problem of the possibility of objectivity in history is addressed more generally. Mandelbaum's endeavour is to show some of the conditions under which he sees both objectivity and historicity to be possible, by distinguishing initially three quite different ways in which the question whether history is objective is commonly understood. The first is whether it is true of some opinion or judgment; the second, whether it is about publicly observable processes rather than subjective processes; and the third, whether history is to be regarded as either true or false, and thus amenable with impunity, if willfully, to some readers to that Mandelbaum's usual concern to establish the objectivity of history in the first of these senses, yet he is surely right to suggest that when it is commonly said about the impossibility of objective accounts of the human past, the subject from different points of view often seems to be differently in this sense in question. Mandelbaum explains the problem of how history may in fact be objective and consistent with what we know and what it is not, in this connection, to find his answer in the concept of "value-free" history which can be objective in all three of his senses — if being "value-free" for a philosopher of his tradition certainly is beyond the concept of "value-free" as an objective objectivity in all.