

Student B:

This week's readings shared much in common with the Annales paradigm and E.P. Thompson-style labor history. Both Dower and Genovese generally emphasize social forces over events. Interestingly, while Genovese uses social forces as the principal objects of historical analysis in ways similar to Braudel, Dower's focus on race is as much a study of how racism appears in different historical contexts as one of race itself. Still, the emphasis of both authors' analyses tends towards social trends and facts over events. When issues seen in previous readings showed up in this week's readings, they were on the whole treated remarkably similarly. In particular, I found Genovese's portrayal of slave religion as an 'opiate' reminiscent of E.P. Thompson's discussion of Methodism. However, Genovese equally details the other role of religion, as a tool to shape a group's worldview and empower its members through spiritual freedom. Faced with Genovese's relatively even-handed treatment of slave religion, Thompson's vicious account of Methodism seems like a glaring weak point of his otherwise well-argued analyses.

I found the sections assigned from *Roll, Jordan, Roll* provocative and Genovese's arguments plausible. After reading the *Lingua Franca* article on Genovese's life, I was slightly confused by the apparent lack of polemics or radical conclusions in *Roll, Jordan, Roll*. I'm still not sure whether the book was radical for its time and is now accepted (at least in its main points), or whether Genovese is more measured in his academics than in his politics. I found Genovese's analysis fascinating but never shocking, so I'd be interested to know what's made the book such a lightning rod. Methodologically, Genovese focuses on the broad topic of how slaves and masters 'made' their world through interactions with it and each other, with particular emphasis on the slaves and their religion. His emphasis on long-term social structures and shorter term cultural conjunctures to illustrate a thesis seems to be in good Annales tradition. I thought Genovese built on previous Annales-influenced analyses we've read by not only using contemporary sources and opinions as his objects of study, but using them to reinforce a conclusion that is completely foreign to what the writers of the sources probably would have thought. The example I have in mind is his use of letters describing the shock of the slaveholders at the 'betrayal' and 'disloyalty' of their slaves during and after the Civil War, following hundreds of years of heartfelt paternal sentiment. Genovese neatly uses these letters of surprise to illustrate the culmination of the delusion slaveholders had long been living under. This seems to me the next step from Thompson's use of contemporary sources to illustrate a point contemporary writers would have agreed with (for example the use of diaries of industrial workers to demonstrate the real 'quality of living' as perceived by the workers, rather than through statistics).

I found the Dower articles interesting because of the way Dower uses the concept of 'race'. At first, I thought that the widespread prejudices and cultural chauvinisms Dower laid out only demonstrated that two cultures in conflict consistently used the same epithets to define an Other and negate themselves from it. Dower did not seem to concretely show that a notion of 'race' stood behind all the phenomena he noted. But I now think that Dower's mode of analysis is actually a fine demonstration of how the idea of race operates in one's mind. All the

examples of discrimination and prejudice he puts forward seem to be linked by something definite, but if race is not invoked it is unclear what. Race operates in our minds as a dimension along which we structure ourselves internally and against others, so that while 'race' itself can refer to various aspects of another people (white Jews are often called a separate race, white Spaniards are lumped in with Hispanics, etc.) and is hard to define, racism is clearly felt by those discriminating and those being discriminated against. That race is addressed through racism in Dower's essays is, I think, no accident.

On a similar note, I was struck by how little race was addressed directly in this week's readings on 'race history'. Points that Dower and Genovese made specifically regarding race often seemed vague to me. Rather, race seemed to come up as a sort of structure, a long-term social classification that plays an important role in understanding the history of the Old South and U.S.-Japan relations.

For example, Dower shows how a certain set of stereotypes and cultural differentiators were used by the U.S. and Japan both during the 80's trade wars and World War II. Though such rhetoric as the Japanese as a pure race (on the Japanese side) and the Japanese as monkeymen (on the American side) seem explicitly race-driven, they are in fact shown to be continuations of long-standing modes of group identity relative to an Other. In the context of U.S.-Japan relations, race is the structure used to manifest these stereotypes, which are considerably easier to understand historically in this way. Genovese shows how mob justice, sustenance farming, violent stereotyping and other postbellum social phenomena often immediately associated with Southern blacks in fact only attained a racial aspect after the Civil War. In Genovese's view, race functioned as a structure for these social phenomena largely only after it had been brought to the fore during the war years.

Lastly, I found it interesting that 'paternalism' played a significant role in both Dower's and Genovese's discussions. The two paternalisms have as many distinctive features (the economically dominant slaveowners as father figure vs. the economically soon-inferior U.S. as father figure) as they have common ones (the childlike, dishonest, and inferior stereotypes of the slaves and Japanese), yet seemed remarkably similar in their actual operation. I would conjecture that though race doesn't figure prominently in the exposition of either kind of paternalism, their racist nature is what makes them recognizable as parallel phenomena.