

Against this theoretical background, *On the Uses of the Humanities* turns to applied models in various fields, particularly biomedicine and the social and policy sciences. As the report states, “a fundamental purpose of the humanities is to reflect upon the human conditions, to explore questions of ends, meanings, interpretations, justifications, past memories, and present purposes” (p. 45). With these goals in mind, the humanities cannot fail to contribute something of value to the formation of public policy.

Finally, *On the Uses of the Humanities* discusses the academic preparation and disciplinary standards of the applied humanities. While the authors acknowledge that special training is required of those studying the applied humanities, they assert that traditional training should not be sacrificed in order to acquire practical skills. Moreover, professional standards inherent in the humanities should not be compromised through instrumental applications. Practices of good scholarship must be applied by humanists working outside of academia as well as within it, with the purpose of advancing both academic and applied knowledge.

On the Uses of the Humanities provides a summary of general answers to broad questions. Perhaps this accounts for its superficiality. The papers generated from the conference were no doubt much more thoughtful and penetrating; the ensuing debates must have been lively. The field of history was well represented in the editorial group (by James M. Banner, Otis L. Graham, and Fred Nicklason) and at least fourteen more historians contributed papers or participated in meetings for the Hastings Center project. The several pages addressing public history issues offer nothing particularly notable, however. While it may be useful to new scholars in the field, established public historians who missed *On the Uses of the Humanities* when it was published in 1984 have little reason to go back to it now.

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Thinking in Time: The Uses of History For Decision Makers by RICHARD E. NEUSTADT and ERNEST R. MAY. New York: Free Press, 1986; xxii + 329 pp., tables, appendices, index; clothbound, \$19.95.

In the first sentence of their preface, Richard Neustadt and Ernest May declare that their book “is addressed to those who govern—or hope to do so” (p. xi). *Thinking in Time: The Uses of History For Decision Makers* is “not a history book”; the focus is on the uses and misuses of history by decisionmakers and especially on “how they might do better for themselves in their own terms” (p. xxii). *Thinking in Time* derives from a professional school course, taught jointly by Neustadt and May, labeled “Uses of History.”

Thus, the double-entendre in the title is presumably intended. Neustadt and May do endorse the claim that wide knowledge of the past can aid us generally in the present, though they regretfully report that the claim does not carry “conviction” (p. 232). More to the point, however, the authors also accept the conditions under which decisionmakers operate: that they must act (or not) within a certain context and that relevant

information and ideas often must be marshalled under deadlines. Accordingly, alongside the authors' critical evaluations of specific decisions, there lies an implicit sympathy for the decisionmakers and a welcome absence of a "how could they have been so stupid?" tone that too often pervades tracts from scholars in the advice-to-policymakers genre.

Within that genre, the authors advance the utility of history. They do not want to displace other methodologies, but rather aim to "give slightly more systematic form to the components usually lumped together as 'experience' or 'common sense' or 'judgment'" (p. 240). To accomplish this, they offer a set of "mini-methods": for example, separating the known, the unclear, and the presumed; examining historical analogies for likenesses and differences; asking "what's the story?" instead of "what's the problem?"; using standard journalists' questions (where, what, when, etc.); and "placing" individuals and institutions in their own histories.

Case studies (mostly "horror stories," p. xiii,) illustrate the need for and application of these tools. The stories are apt and well-written. Most involve the presidency and many concern foreign policy issues (e.g., the Bay of Pigs, 1961; the Mayaguez rescue, 1975; the Soviet Brigade brouhaha, 1979; Social Security "reform," 1983). This makes for exciting reading, but it does remove the lessons from the orbits of lesser mortals. The didactic effort to explain and advocate the mini-methods is occasionally less graceful, perhaps reflecting the difficulty of translating successful classroom technique into book form. Twenty pages of appendices summarize the mini-methods, describe the case studies developed for the authors' course, outline other, related courses, and present a glimpse of students' evaluations of the course.

It is more difficult to accept the hypothesis that better staff work could have resulted in a different decision in cases that seem closely trapped by their contexts (e.g., the expansion of the American role in Vietnam), than in cases (like the Swine Flu Scare of 1976) that resemble patches upon, rather than parts of, the "seamless fabric" of the past (p. xv). Of course, different folks see different fabrics. Moreover, the authors warn that their approach may be "intellectually painful" (p. xv) for scholars trained to view the past as seamless. Herein lies a significant challenge for people concerned that history and those who know it will be influential or at least involved in policymaking: their focus must be at least as clearly on the decisions—on the uses and the users of history—as on the history.

The success of *Thinking in Time*, taken on its own terms, depends on the mini-methods: whether they should, can, and will be used. Surely these methods warrant consideration by decisionmakers and their staffs and by teachers in professional schools. Neustadt and May have struggled to transform their conceptual insights into practical, methodological terms; this is the salient achievement of their work. On the other hand, this accomplishment represents a beginning, not a culmination. It lays a credible claim for history in the broad effort to improve decisionmaking. But, for example, the mini-methods vary in the extent to which they are distinctively historical. While the wise use of analogies is venerable historians' advice, the attempt to tug out presumptions from a cluster of "facts" is similarly venerated, but by a much larger flock of advice-givers.

Neustadt and May have written a book that is significant for public historians as well as for "those who govern." Although they focus on the

White House, their approach could be emulated by those concerned with improving the quality of decisionmaking in other areas. Moreover, several national magazines have reviewed the book, possibly stimulating broader interest in the purposes of public history. Finally, the issues and challenges the authors raise deserve the close attention of those who would marshal the past in order to secure and improve the future.

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Reflections on History and Historians by THEODORE S. HAMEROW. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1987; xiii + 267 pp., tables, appendices, index; clothbound, \$25.00.

Every so often, a historian steps back from research and teaching to reflect upon the craft and condition of historical studies. Few accomplish the self-appointed task with the balance, grace, and sense of irony that Theodore S. Hamerow, a distinguished historian of nineteenth-century central Europe at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, has brought to it.

Hamerow's chief concern in *Reflections on History and Historians* is "the crisis in history," by which he means the loss of stature formerly assigned by society to historical studies, the decline of belletristic and genuinely popular historical writing, the galloping fractionization of historical research and teaching, and the employment crisis among younger historical scholars. Rather than writing either an elegy on the old academic history or a bitter screed about its passing, however, he assesses both the strengths and weaknesses of old and newer forms and fields in history and is alternately resigned and hopeful about the future of our calling. The great strength of this work lies in the fact that Hamerow keeps before his readers the complex causes of history's predicaments and of its present difficulties.

In reviewing the professionalization of historical learning, Hamerow astutely points out that "of all the branches of learning, none had had a longer or more fruitful existence as an independent intellectual pursuit than history. . . . For history, then, even more than for other fields of study, the transition from avocation to profession meant a basic change in structure and spirit" (p. 45). Not surprisingly, therefore, those who led this transition earlier in the century could not foresee the consequences to which it would give rise. The cost of raising the quality and comprehensiveness of historical research and knowledge, Hamerow concludes, "has come at the expense of spontaneity and breadth of view; it has encouraged routinization and conformity" (pp. 52-53).

Hamerow holds historians and the realities of professional development responsible for these losses and gains. Among the chief causes of this constriction of spirit and the dessication of tradition, according to the author, have been the policies of charitable foundations. In what comes closest to outright cynicism and direct indictment in these pages, Hamerow, in an analysis to my knowledge distinctive in the literature, arraigns the major foundations for supporting the new at the expense of the tradi-