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THE DAILY LIFE COMPONENT IN CIVILIZATIONAL ANALYSIS

GORDON W. HEWES

David Hume (1711-1776) in "A Treatise on Human Nature" (1739-40) had this to say about the study of daily life:

We must therefore glean up our experiments in this science from a cautious observation of human life, and then as they appear in the common course of the world, by men's behaviour in company, in affairs and in their pleasures. When experiments of this kind are judiciously collected and compared, we may hope to establish on them a science which will not be inferior in certainty, and which will be much superior in utility to any of human comprehension" [quoted in C. Madge and T. Harrisson, 1938.]

It seems clear that the majority of those who attempt to study civilizations comparatively are preoccupied with "grand" achievements such as philosophical systems, the fine arts, relations between states, and so on. Comparative historians seem to prefer the dramatic march of great events.

One can get a good idea of these preferences from the indexes to Toynbee's A Study of History - from the topics which are missing or practically unrepresented, among which I did not find: houses, clothing or costume, cooking or cuisine, tools, containers, funerals, fishing, hunting, feasts, and dozens more. There are exceptions - horses are often explicitly mentioned, as are camels, but not sheep or cattle.

I certainly do not claim that the addition of daily life information would be a magic key to understanding civilizational systems in some elegant theoretical fashion. Simply adding more such cultural elements will not rectify the situation, although the additions may make such accounts more interesting for the average reader. It is simply that existing habits of scholarship are not enough. There is often great popular interest in the daily life of people during times of great events - such as the French Revolution or the American Civil War, although how people lived during these episodes may not shed significant light on the causes of such revolutions or wars.

The criterion of civilization proposed by William Dennes (1941) that its cultural life "must be mediated by self-conscious history as well as articulate science" (p. 149,1 in V. F. Lenzen, et al. in their book Civilization) would find several of the acknowledged great civilizations of the past sadly deficient.
A major change occurred in the prevalent model of historiography in the mid-18th century, toward histories which would go beyond the splendid deeds of great men in the political and military spheres, exemplified by the material included by Voltaire in his *Essai sur les moeurs*, which considered the impact on society of new tools and processes, such as eyeglasses and contrasted the relative crudity of 14th century French life with that of his own more enlightened 1750's. Richard Payne Knight, whose long poem on the origin and progress of civil society (1796) generally neglects material culture, although on line 390 he surprisingly mentions the use of ice "to stop the process of putridity."

Social history slowly won out over traditional approaches. Edward Gibbon's *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* represented such progress (1776-1788), and by 1857-1861 Henry Thomas Buckle wrote, in his *History of Civilization in England* (vol. I, p. 3-7), regarding the narrow range of knowledge possessed by historians, of some historians who were ignorant of political economy, others of law, still others of statistics, physical science, and so on. Buckle devotes pages to the reforms in history-writing exemplified in the historical works of Voltaire. Still, those who wrote about civilization tended to view it mainly as a phenomenon of the West, ignoring or only grudgingly admitting that the Muslim world, India, or China constituted similar entities.

However, the even more scholarly development, demonstrated by Leopold von Ranke's emphasis on the critical use of original sources in history-writing had the effect of marginalizing evidence of daily life. Nevertheless, the concept of culture was emerging in the writings of early 19th century scholars concerned with ethnology, such as Gustav Klemm (1802-1867), who was among the first to describe the course of human history as the "general culture-history of mankind" (*Allgemeine Kulturgeschichte der Menschheit* (10 vols., 1843-1852). Klemm dealt chiefly with what were considered primitives. However, there had been some outstanding general histories of non-Western civilizations by the late 18th and early 19th centuries - for example, J-A. de Mailla's history of China (though largely translated from Chinese), 1785, 13 volumes. This ground had been broken still earlier by Juan Gonsalves de Mendoza, d. 1620, an Augustinian missionary in China, named in 1550 by Philip II as his ambassador to China, whose *Historia de China* appeared in 1580. The next survey of Chinese civilization by a Westerner was by J. B. de Halde, a Jesuit, whose *Description de la Chine* appeared in 1736 in four volumes. Educated Europeans no longer ignored China, as the well-known 18th century fashion of Chinoiserie shows. Chinese tea gardens, bridges, and even pagodas sprang up in several European places, and Voltaire admired Chinese government.

Also before the 19th century, a further step in the recognition of another great non-Western civilization was taken. Started mainly by Louis XIV's consul-general in Egypt, de Millet, whose *Description of Egypt* appeared in 1735, and by Volney, and then the work of a team sent by Napoleon along with his inva-
sion in 1798 (Description de l'Égypte, 1809-1822), ancient Egypt became a European sensation, well before Champollion's decipherment of hieroglyphs in 1828. Egyptology became one of the first new sciences of a major non-Western civilization. The impetus of ancient Egyptian research helps explain the success of Edward Lane's 1836 Manners and Customs of the Modern Egyptians, and the later book by Adolf Erman on ancient Egyptian everyday life (new editions as late as 1927). A voluminous account of the daily life of the Hindus soon appeared, Hindu Manners, Customs, and Ceremonies (1st ed., 1816), by the Abbé J. A. Dubois. Biblical archaeology also yielded new information about the everyday life of the ancient Semitic peoples, emerging from the work of Wellhausen, W. Robertson Smith, and other Old Testament investigators.

Detailed data on Mesoamerican everyday life had been recorded soon after the Spanish Conquest by Sahagún and others initially as an aid to the conversion of the Aztecs and other peoples. Sahagún's compilation can be regarded as a massive encyclopedia, well illustrated by the work of native artists, with attention to arts and crafts as well as religious and social life. Analogous documentation was also forthcoming for Andean civilization, also beginning in the 16th century.

During the 19th century, British and American, French, and German scholars managed to publish impressive quantities of primary documentary material on the historical past of many civilizations, often with rich detail on everyday life. Among the most impressive was the Pauly-Wissowa encyclopedia of Classical Antiquity, based on the entire corpus of surviving Greek and Roman writings, the first volumes of which came out in 1839, and was continued and enlarged after 1893.

The long neglected documents on early, mostly Germanic peoples, mostly recorded in Latin, were issued in the series Monumenta Germaniae Historica, first edited by Pertz in 1826. Huge compilations on "universal biography" were also published, starting in 1811. These works clearly include data on everyday life, even if organized around the careers of individuals. Another kind of biographical material, on several generations of the Paston family, rich 15th-century Norfolk landholders, in the form of personal letters, was also published in the mid-19th century.

Another source for the 15th to 18th centuries reflects the interactions of Europeans and other peoples of the world, as voyagers and merchants - which were the subject of Richard Hakluyt's collection issued from 1589. This material, still being published by the Hakluyt Society and others, contains data of inestimable value, much of it presented on a day to day basis. The remarkably preserved archives from the Cairo Geniza have also yielded information on the wide ranging trade managed by Medieval Jewish families, much of it in the form of letters.2

Quite a different body of evidence on some aspects of everyday life
exists in the petrological literature published in massive amounts by J. P. Migne, covering the first to eighth century. Though concerned with ecclesiastical affairs, these writings often deal with everyday life in its moral and social aspects; so also do the abundant acta of the Christian Church Councils, compiled by J.D. Mansi beginning in 1644, and continued until 1798, amounting to 31 folio volumes.

Turning to a sharply different kind of source on daily life, that of realistic pictorial illustration, we have genre painting, well exemplified by Dutch artists of the 17th century, but popular elsewhere in Europe. To this must be added the interest in reconstructions, through paintings, of historical events - with increasingly attention to accuracy in depicting costumes and other details (in considerable contrast to the Renaissance painters). Lest we condemn their mistakes too harshly, even modern cultural anthropological studies are not without flaws or disagreements on interpretations. Highly respected ethnologists like Malinowski and Margaret Mead have not escaped sharp criticism. A "thick description" is not automatically guaranteed to be accurate. Certain recent historical events, witnessed by hundreds or thousands, and recorded on camera, have generated intense controversy. The Zapruder film notwithstanding, sharply varying accounts of J. F. Kennedy's assassination are still current. Moreover, certain kinds of evidence about prominent personages are suppressed, sometimes long after their deaths. Sometimes such paucity of information comes from nothing more sinister than a lack of suitable writing materials, or other benign causes. The contrast of what we know about daily life in ancient Egypt and ancient Persia is a case in point. Some civilizations evidently considered a few tomb monuments and inscriptions sufficient, whereas others thrust texts, pictures, and sculpture on future generations with almost unbearable profusion.

One purpose in reporting how people live, and thus contributing to daily life information is the practical value of guidebooks for those planning to travel or reside in other countries and cultures. A chronicler might ignore such materials, not needing to find lodging, change money, or find a laundry. A good 19th century example is by A.D. Rowe, whose book on everyday life in village India (it was addressed to Western missionaries) in 1881 was probably more useful than the Bhagavadgita or the Puranas for the India-bound family of that era. The facilitation of data-collection in modern societies also led in the late 1930's in Great Britain to the mass-observation movement, and more recently, to public-opinion polling in a great many countries. Voting records are not only useful for political scientists; elections may yield important information about all kinds of issues affecting everyday life. The late Erving Goffman opened up a new subfield - that of the "presentation of self in everyday life." A more recent related area has the status of a social movement among many sociologists - Ethnomethodology.

A prosaic source, often deplored, provides data on frequently scatological, subversive, or otherwise unacceptable attitudes: graffiti, now a serious prob-

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lem in many urban places. Ancient graffiti, as at Pompeii, are now part of the valued archaeological record. Yet another productive field relevant to everyday life is the history of popular culture, which has its own journals and an expanding literature.

The history of everyday agrarian life is covered in many kinds of ways - in paintings (as in the Book of Hours of the Due de Berry (d. 1416), in innumerable Chinese and Japanese paintings and blockprints, in prose and verse - as in Thomas Tusser, on the activities of the annual round in English agriculture (Five Hundred Points of Husbandry, 1557, cf. Dorothy Hartley, 1979, Pantheon Books). This tradition is very old, of course, going back to Hesiod (fl. 700 BC), in his Works and Days, and far older Egyptian examples.

I have examined the size of the data-base explicitly identified as having to do with daily life, la vie quotidienne, la vida privada, Alltagsleben, and so on in published booklists. The Library of Congress classified such works under the rubric "Daily life and customs," recently revised to "Manners and customs." I have also compiled a world-distribution map of some of this specific daily life literature. The geographic dispersion is expectably uneven, with a concentration in Europe, but with some surprising exceptions. In the United Kingdom the most active publishing house for this category seems be B. T. Batsford, Ltd., later named the Dorset Press. The French firm producing the most such works is the Librairie Hachette, founded in 1826 (though its expressly "vie quotidienne" series titles are mainly from the last fifty years). In addition to the Hachette volumes, the journal Annales: Économies, sociétés, civilisations (it has had several slightly different names), received a strong impetus from French geography, and was for a long time principally associated with Marc Bloch, Lucien Febvre, and later Fernand Braudel. It was devoted from the start to collaboration between social scientists in several disciplines, not only historians. The five volumes of A History of Private Life, edited by Philippe Ariés and George Duby, grew out of the Annales School. The journal Comparative Studies in Society and History has been publishing similar material since 1958. There are two excellent reviews of the "Annales Paradigm," one by T. Stoianovich, 1976, and by Peter Burke, 1990.

German scholarly concern with everyday life (Alltagsleben) over the past century or so has tended to concentrate on German factory workers and miners. Alf Ludtke's The History of Everyday Life (1995; German original, 1989) does not venture into a worldwide consideration of the topic of his title. Courses on everyday life, in this framework, are frequent in German universities.

Daily life books usually deal with a specific period of time, personage, in particular places - certain regions or cities, rural areas, or specific classes or categories of people. Beyond this, accounts of daily life may focus on restricted aspects of human affairs - health and medicine, occupations, kinship and family relations, childhood, old age, and so on. Moreover, there are nuances in the meanings of "daily life," "everyday life," and "private life," at least in English and
other European usage. The most general, neutral term would seem to be "daily life," *la vie quotidienne*, Alltagsleben, although different authors choose to center that term on, for example, the daily life of ordinary working-class people, or non-members of the elite. "Private life" very often intentionally focuses on the non-public aspects of the lives of the elite or ruling class, and often carries the implication that some aspects of that private life are slightly reprehensible. Events taking place in the larger world of political, state affairs are sometimes excluded from the realm of "everyday life." Extraordinary events, such as political assassinations and natural calamities, are for some authors not considered a part of everyday existence. The sociologist Norbert Elias (1939) went so far as to say that the privatization of life was "consubstantial with civilization," denying in effect that private life, save perhaps for rulers and such, did even exist for ordinary people until recent times. Elias thus documents the growing repression of ordinary human bodily functions since the time of Erasmus, stemming from the diffusion of the rules of courtly conduct to the commoners.

This brings up the question of the purposes of studying everyday life - from the effort to make historical accounts more vivid or readable, to purely recreational goals, analogous to the function of gossip columns in the modern media. Michelle Perot, in the introduction to vol. 4 of *The History of Private Life*, edited by Ariès and Duby, 1987, notes that in earlier times, some aspects of private life were simply considered improper topics for historical discussion. This was especially true of works designed for young readers, who might be corrupted by learning some of the facts about everyday human life.

We may consider here the principal sources of daily life evidence. Some such data were familiar historians, although it remains uncertain how some of the most eminent ancient or classical historians gathered their purported facts. Archives, letters, memoirs, diaries, autobiographies, wills, customs records, and so on were rarely available. Archaeological data and art-historical studies were likewise generally non-existent. To be sure, writers such as Plutarch credit some of the details of their lively accounts to previous writers (thus, Thucydides on the career of Pericles). But much seems to derive from oral tradition, some perhaps from public inscriptions, from tombs or victory monuments. Details of daily life are buried in these accounts, but we rarely know how or why they came to be known. Such important matters as daily diets can be reconstructed only tentatively; ancient cookery is best documented from accounts of elite banqueting, or from archaeological remains.

Fortunately, for some restricted parts of the ancient world, we have better evidence. For early Pharaonic Egypt, we happen to have abundant pictorial information about the preparation of foods etc., particularly for the elite. For later times in Egypt, incredibly detailed written material in the papyri, mainly from the time when the papyrological evidence is mainly in Greek, in family archives of estates in Ptolemaic or Roman times. Other important ancient civilizations have
yielded relatively little data on daily life, or even on the great affairs of state, despite the existence of readable inscriptions. This is notably the case with Persia, prior to Islamic times. The abundant clay tablets of Mesopotamia, on the other hand, contain much prosaic information, often having to do with legal questions and conflicts. Societies with law codes and case reports thus yield valuable evidence about daily life, especially in its contentious aspects.

In more recent times, the evidence for everyday life has, in general, greatly increased in amount and diversity. The inventions of paper and printing were especially important, in permitting the multiplication of records, regarding the chances of loss. Less than 160 years ago, the invention of photography further improved the recovery of the daily life of the past, not simply because of the pictorial rather than verbal character of the record, but because the camera tends to register much incidental information which the photographer may not have intended to preserve. A photograph of a crowded street-scene, for example, may include a far richer registration of such details than a diligent observer could have committed to writing or regarded as worthy of note at the time. I need not expand upon this point with reference to still more advantages inherent in stereoscopic imagery, cinema, and current electronic reproduction of audiovisual information, or of other sensory data. A most significant channel for documentation of past cultural phenomena is of course the study of actual surviving objects - artifacts, structures, costumes, ornaments, weapons, and so on, many kinds of which are now physically datable without the need for written records.

Our purpose in reporting upon the facts of everyday life is especially likely to focus on some practical aspects which the standard historian is likely to neglect. This involves guidebooks or handbooks designed for persons who are planning to travel in or reside in foreign environments. While a chronicler might well ignore such matters as laundry facilities, concerns about health and sanitation, quality of food, problems with servants, tradesmen, and similar matters, the prospective traveller or immigrant may require such information. Books or brochures containing such useful advice, like phrase-books in foreign languages, often contain valuable cultural data on everyday life which might otherwise never be preserved.

The magnitude of the data-base for everyday life varies depending upon the level of literacy, formal governmental institutions, conditions for the preservation or destruction of archives, structures, and other remains. For most or all of the recorded past, this tends to favor the survival of evidence about the life of social elites, at least ever since social status began to be reflected in elaboration of burials, larger domiciles, or sumptuous goods.

I have examined the sources of daily-life information by means of online bibliographies organized both by subject and title, and for works in not only English but French, German, Italian, and Spanish, under rubrics such as Daily Life, la vie Quotidienne, la vida privada, and Alltagsleben. Many of these refer-
ences appear to be the product of careful scholarship. I have also attempted to make a world distribution-map of such works, which is not exhaustive, but indicates that no major civilization, past or present, has been overlooked, though there happens to be a Eurocentric preference in the choice of societies and historical contexts. There is also a bias toward urban population centers, and an emphasis on cultures of the last few centuries. The detail available for the past falls off precipitously, except for very well-studied segments of the historic past (notably that of Classical Graeco-Roman times). It is rare that we have, for example, such a detailed inventory of the uses of building space as was recorded for the plan of the great Swiss monastery of Saint Gall, in the year AD 820.

I did not discover any German publisher with specialty in regard to Alltagsleben titles, but the total amount in German is substantial, although centering more than in English or French on daily life in Germany in relatively recent times. In addition to the Dorset (Batsford) list, I should note an excellent series, primarily concerned with ancient (and thus heavily archaeological) civilizations, which also provide much everyday life detail: Ancient Peoples and Places (Thames and Hudson), generously illustrated, and filling many gaps in the comparative civilization shelves, on such peoples as the Sarmatians and the Georgians.

One of the main tenets of the Annales School is disdain for the conventional events-centered approach in writing history. Further, the Annales writers have emphasized the "long duration" view of historical phenomena, rather than the periodic blips of typical narrative. To be sure, neither Spengler nor Toynbee avoided the "longue durée" in their magisterial treatment of civilizations, but neither dealt significantly with everyday life. Some critics now regard the Annales School as effectively defunct, and even its representative journal reverts to political history and even biographical modes.

Concern with everyday life is not just a recent manifestation. None other than Karl Marx, in 1880, addressed an Enquiry to the French Working Class, a questionnaire of about 25,000 copies, seeking information on wages, factory conditions, and other aspects of everyday proletarian life. Bottomore reprints the protocol of this survey in Marx's Writings in Sociology and Social Philosophy in 1956 (Watts & Co., and McGraw-Hill).

Combining the listings of "everyday life" topic and subtopics from a wide array of promising sources, I gathered several hundred items or headings from such disparate sources as Books in Print, and above all from the indexes to the volumes on particular times and places. What is worth noting is that the indexes to many ethnographic studies tend to be much fuller than in historical works. Anthropologists appear to have a traditional respect for finer details of everyday life than historians.

The University of California Culture Element Distribution (CED) surveys, organized by A. L. Kroeber in the 1930's to analyze the rich material by
then accumulated by him and others, and first proposed by a Polish ethnologist, Stanislaw Klimek, carried out a massive fieldwork inquiry among the surviving native American informants with respect to the native cultures west of the Rocky Mountains to the Pacific Coast. Eventually, when the project wound down in the early 1940’s, data from about 250 different local cultural groups, from British Columbia to the American Southwest, had been recorded in incredibly fine detail, in a uniform, compact and readily comparable format. The hundreds of thousands of cultural facts thus thoroughly documented form an ethnographic account, much of it concerned with the activities of everyday life, for the indigenous inhabitants of about the westernmost fourth of North America north of Mexico, which has no parallel elsewhere in the world. Whereas the first lists, mainly from aboriginal groups in California, indexed an average of about 2,700 traits or elements, the later fieldworkers recorded many more, - for example, from the Pacific Northwest interior region, Verne Ray noted 7,621 elements. In contrast, the standard ethnographic reports by A. L. Kroeber, before he and his colleagues got into this more diligent search, had noted a total of about 800 such traits, for the entire area of aboriginal California.

The Human Relations Area Files were established for general anthropological use, with obvious advantages also for historians and geographers, rooted in the systematic search of written sources by the 19th century social scientist William Graham Summer, for his monumental Folkways, published in 1906. The plan of the HRAF compilers was to build up a far more complete and reliable file, consisting not of brief bits and pieces of the world ethnographic and historical record, but of entire works - whole books, monographs, articles, and as yet unpublished works, alleviating the burden for research. This ambitious project, which is still under way, owes much of its methods and purposes to the late anthropologist George Peter Murdock. Although the focus of the HRAF file was initially on small, primitive societies, it was never limited to them. The scheme envisioned similar detailed files of material on both ancient civilizations and recent or contemporary ones. Files that are essentially complete therefore include Imperial Rome, Tudor and Georgian England, and plans to cover the Ancient Hebrew, Homeric Greeks, Scythians, Ancient Egyptians, Han Dynasty Chinese, Sumerians, and many more.4

There are some drawbacks to the files in their present forms. I would mention, above all, the relative absence of illustrations, photographs and line-drawings, and good maps and plans (e.g., of cities and archaeological sites).

The British Mass-Observation Movement (or craze, as some regarded it) began in 1937. It envisaged data gathering, mainly by non-professional volunteers, about daily life in settings such as pubs and holiday resorts (Blackpool was one venue). The project drew great praise from Bronislaw Malinowski and from another anthropologist, Tom Harrisson, then becoming famous, along with journalistic and literary figures of note, such as Robert Graves, Kingsley Martin, and
Geoffrey Gorer, the last two without much enthusiasm.

Modern encyclopedias tend to devote a very large amount of space to certain aspects of daily life - chiefly popular culture, such as professional sports, cinema, and popular music. A recent Japanese encyclopedia, published in English (Kodansha's Japan, an Illustrated Encyclopedia, 1993) contains much information which would formerly have been relegated to guidebooks. On the other hand, persons interested in many features of daily life in the Islamic world would do better to consult Fodor's guides to Middle Eastern countries than the compendious but still scholarly Encyclopedia of Islam.

H. G. Wells once proposed a "great world encyclopedia project" in World Brain, issued in 1937. In contrast to his remarkable scientific prophecies, he could think of nothing more revolutionary regarding information storage than microfilm.

As a sometime archaeologist, I must speak up for the role of archeology as a major source of daily life data, which often reveals the routine life of ordinary people of the past.

Museums are another major sources of daily life data. The early museums, somewhat like conventional histories, emphasized the elite past - royal regalia, fine arts, collections of armor, and impressive religious images. Today, outdoor museums may preserve farmsteads and other humble materials.

To be sure, in the same 19th century, the art of painting historical scenes reached a peak of authenticity, which changing fashions in fine art have sadly largely abandoned today. Their achievements, however, in recreating historically accurate scenes of life in the past has been matched (or surpassed) by the famous Northern Sung Dynasty hand scroll of the Ch'ing-ming Festival, with its crowded streets and little shops by Chang Tse-tuan, which contains more daily life information than most sociological monographs.

Similarly detailed genre scenes were frequent in Tokugawa Japan - street scenes, public bathhouses, brothels, and rural landscapes. Roman everyday life depictions were often found in funerary sculpture, honoring the occupations of the deceased. Erotic behavior, certainly a part of daily life, was prominent also in Roman painting and small sculptures, as it was in the ceramics of Moche in Peru. Documentation of sexual behaviors appears in many art styles, whether or not recorded in history or literature.

More serious records of arts and techniques were included as an appendix to the great French 18th century Encyclopédie, whose elite readers in many cases might otherwise be quite ignorant of the skills and processes which sustained their way of life. The iconographic encyclopedia reached a high level of realistic representation of all aspects of human activity as well as the natural world in works such as Johann Georg Heck's 1951, with its thousands of detailed steel engravings (a modern edition is available, The Complete Encyclopedia of Illustration, Park Lane Press, 1979). This level of depiction of the world has been
attempted many times, but seldom so successfully. The inventions of photography, photo-engraving, and fine color-printing have surpassed this Bilderalas, but evidently nothing really comparable has been achieved in a compact pair of volumes.

It is worth noting that one of the first practical suggestions for the use of the new invention of photography by Daguerre was its use for recording by means of the camera of archaeological monuments and especially inscriptions, the latter especially liable to human copying error when done by hand. One of the fruits of photography was the huge expansion of photographic exploration, from Egypt to Yucatán. Matthew Perry's official expedition to Tokugawa Japan in 1853-54 appropriately carried two daguerrotypists to record the event and scenes of the country little known to the outside world. India, China, and the Holy Land became familiar to millions of Westerners, thanks to the conjunction of the magic lantern and glass photographic slide. Scenes of daily life were just as important in such slide shows as photographs of great monuments and scenic wonders. Another invention, the stereoscopic (three dimensional) photograph also became immensely popular. Halftone reproductions of photographs also made possible their proliferation in print.

A medium available much earlier in several civilizations - realistic fictional accounts of human life - was limited in earlier societies by the high cost of hand-written manuscript copies. With the diffusion of paper and printing, this obstacle progressively diminished, and millions of readers could enjoy vicarious accounts of the lives of other individuals, real or imaginary.

The portrayal of everyday life in fiction reached great heights in such authors as Balzac. In the early 20th century Balzac was surpassed, at least in sheer volume, by the novels of French life, chiefly in Paris, of Jules Romain, beginning in 1932 with the first volume of his Men of Good Will. Romain and his literary circle promoted an explicit theory of realistic fiction, notably presenting contemporary life with a recurrent cast of characters.

The geographical environment has played a major role in many theories about the history of civilization. It was so exalted in many schools of thought, particularly in the 19th century, that it eventually attracted withering criticism, such that most modern social scientists are wary of invoking geographical factors in their treatment of human societies. Yet geography, or rather the vicissitudes of weather, impact of regional climates, and the persisting features of topography, soils, and so on, affect human daily life in both obvious and subtle ways. There is not enough time to explore these matters, and to deplore their frequent deliberate neglect (not by the Annales School, however).

I came now to recommendations for improving the status of daily life phenomena in the comparative study of civilizations. To what extent would a thoughtful review of daily life studies improve the power of comparative civilizational analysis?
1. An effort should be made, in connection with a serious study of any civilization to determine if there have been serious efforts to investigate its everyday life aspects.

2. Scholarly aids in the search for useful daily-life evidence should be consulted, and if they are inadequate, remedied by means of bibliographies and examination of sources likely to have been overlooked.

3. Assuming that substantial information can be assembled on everyday life in the history of a given civilization, it would be worthwhile to check the evidence for systematic regularities or discontinuities. Thus, some historians have asserted that "private life" has only existed in civilizations, or perhaps only in comparatively recent ones. The "grand narrative" approach should be examined for possible deficiencies.

4. Some civilizations may exhibit marked differences in everyday life patterns from one region to another, rural and small towns to large cities, and especially from class to class, or different religious sects within a civilization, or from one age-group to another.

Beyond these general observations, when civilizations are being compared, explicit documentation of possibly significant differences in daily life - either by period or type of community etc., should be made, over and above the march of revolutions, economic changes, or political regimes. Obviously this can only go as far as the evidence permits. On the other hand, there have been few civilizations for which we lack information on house-types (for example).

Some specific suggestions have been made to improve our knowledge of certain important civilizations. Presumably similar proposals could emerge in other well-known fields. A recent article in the Ancient History Bulletin (vol. 6, no. 2, 1992) by L. S. B. MacCoull, is addressed to Classicists (defined as scholars who read Classic Greek) who should more firmly integrate their expertise with Graeco-Roman papyrological research, with the social sciences. MacCoull's appeal may apply to other intercivilizational projects, though most lack the everyday life capacity inherent in papyrology.

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Endnotes:

1. London, W. Bulmer & Co.; there is a copy in the library of the University of Cincinnati.


3. I should add that I made a small contribution to the literature of the Annales School, in the form of a world map which I had prepared, and a brief comment on it by Braudel himself, which appears on p. 26 of the Harper Colophon English translation of Braudel’s Capitalism and Material Life, 1400-1800 (originally in Civilisation matérielle et Capitalisme, 1967); in 1979 Braudel added Les structures du quotidien to the title.

4. As of 1994, the following earlier historic peoples were not available in the HRAF files of the University of Colorado, which is a member of the files system: Ancient Hebrew, Homeric Greeks, Babylonians, Scythians, Periclean Athens, Ancient Egyptians, Spanish Moors, Ancient Persians, Franks, Han Chinese, Byzantium, Florentines (Medieval and Renaissance), Baghdad Arabs, and Sumerians.

5. The Britannica, and the Encyclopedia Americana both have excellent articles dealing with the history of encyclopedias. The Britannica (15th ed.) also contains, in its so-called "Propaedia," (1975, pp. 273-279, an outline of contents dealing with "aspects of man’s daily life," which may quite accurately reflect the allocation of encyclopedia space to matters of leisure and play and even hobbies.

6. Chang Tse-tuan's painting of the streets (and bridge) of K'ai Feng, the Northern Sung capital (960-1127) was five meters long. It was not published until 1959.