

German, seems originally based on this reference to kinds rather than degrees of ability, though in later use it often means only the latter. The word is now so widely used to describe any and all kinds of exceptional ability that survivals of the older sense of characteristic disposition are often ambiguous. A good test case is 'the English genius for compromise'.

See CREATIVE, ORIGINALITY

H

HEGEMONY

Hegemony was probably taken directly into English from *fw egemonia*, Gk, *rw egemon*, Gk – leader, ruler, often in the sense of a state other than his own. Its sense of a political predominance, usually of one state over another, is not common before C19, but has since persisted and is now fairly common, together with *hegemonic*, to describe a policy expressing or aimed at political predominance. More recently *hegemonism* has been used to describe specifically 'great power' or 'superpower' politics, intended to dominate others, (indeed *hegemonism* has some currency as an alternative to *IMPERIALISM* (q.v.)).

There was an occasional early use in English to indicate predominance of a more general kind. From 1567 there is 'Aegemonie or Sufferaignie of things growing upon ye earth', and from 1656 'the Supream or Hegemonick part of the Soul'. *Hegemonic*, especially, continued in this sense of 'predominant' or of a 'master principle'.

The word has become important in one form of C20 Marxism,

especially from the work of Gramsci (in whose writings, however, the term is both complicated and variable; see Anderson). In its simplest use it extends the notion of political predominance from relations between states to relations between social classes, as in *bourgeois hegemony*. But the character of this predominance can be seen in a way which produces an extended sense in many ways similar to earlier English uses of *hegemonic*. That is to say, it is not limited to matters of direct political control but seeks to describe a more general predominance which includes, as one of its key features, a particular way of seeing the world and human nature and relationships. It is different in this sense from the notion of 'world-view', in that the ways of seeing the world and ourselves and others are not just intellectual but political facts, expressed over a range from institutions to relationships and consciousness. It is also different from *IDEOLOGY* (q.v.) in that it is seen to depend for its hold not only on its expression of the interests of a ruling class but also on its acceptance as 'normal reality' or 'commonsense' by those in practice subordinated to it. It thus affects thinking about *REVOLUTION* (q.v.) in that it stresses not only the transfer of political or economic power, but the overthrow of a specific *hegemony*: that is to say an integral form of class rule which exists not only in political and economic institutions and relationships but also in active forms of experience and consciousness. This can only be done, it is argued, by creating an alternative *hegemony* – a new predominant practice and consciousness. The idea is then distinct, for example, from the idea that new institutions and relationships will of themselves create new experience and consciousness. Thus an emphasis on *hegemony* and the *hegemonic* has come to include cultural as well as political and economic factors; it is distinct, in this sense, from the alternative idea of an economic *base* and a political and cultural *superstructure*, where as the *base* changes the *superstructure* is changed, with whatever degree of indirectness or delay. The idea of *hegemony*, in its wide sense, is then especially important in societies in which electoral politics and public opinion are significant factors, and in which social practice is seen to depend on consent to certain dominant ideas which in fact express the needs of a dominant class. Except in extreme versions of economic *DETERMINISM* (q.v.), where an economic *system* or *STRUCTURE* (q.v.) rises and falls by its own laws, the struggle for *hegemony* is seen as a necessary or as the

decisive factor in radical change of any kind, including many kinds of change in the base.

See CULTURE, IMPERIALISM

HISTORY

In its earliest uses *history* was a narrative account of events. The word came into English from *fw histoire*, *F*, *istoria*, *L*, from *rw istoria*, *Gk*, which had the early sense of *inquiry* and a developed sense of the results of inquiry and then an *account* of knowledge. In all these words the sense has ranged from a *story* of events to a narrative of past events, but the sense of *inquiry* has also often been present (cf. Herodotus: '... why they went to war with each other'). In early English use, *history* and *story* (the alternative English form derived ultimately from the same root) were both applied to an account either of imaginary events or of events supposed to be true. The use of *history* for imagined events has persisted, in a diminished form, especially in novels. But from C15 *history* moved towards an account of past real events, and *story* towards a range which includes less formal accounts of past events and accounts of imagined events. *History* in the sense of organized knowledge of the past was from IC15 a generalized extension from the earlier sense of a specific written account. *Historian*, *historic* and *historical* followed mainly this general sense, although with some persistent uses referring to actual writing.

It can be said that this established general sense of *history* has lasted into contemporary English as the predominant meaning. But it is necessary to distinguish an important sense of *history* which is more than, though it includes, organized knowledge of the past. It is not easy either to date or define this, but the source is probably the sense of *history* as human self-development which is evident from eC18 in Vico and in the new kinds of *Universal Histories*. One way of expressing this new sense is to say that past events are seen not as specific *histories* but as a continuous and connected process. Various systematizations and interpretations of this continuous and connected process then become *history* in a new general and eventually

abstract sense. Moreover, given the stress on human *self-development*, *history* in many of these uses loses its exclusive association with the past and becomes connected not only to the present but also to the future. In German there is a verbal distinction which makes this clearer: *Historie* refers mainly to the past, while *Geschichte* (and the associated *Geschichtsphilosophie*) can refer to a process including past, present and future. *History* in this controversial modern sense draws on several kinds of intellectual system: notably on the Enlightenment sense of the progress and development of CIVILIZATION (q.v.); on the idealist sense, as in Hegel, of world-historical process; and on the political sense, primarily associated with the French Revolution and later with the socialist movement and especially with Marxism, of *historical forces* – products of the past which are active in the present and which will shape the future in knowable ways. There is of course controversy between these varying forms of the sense of process, and between all of them and those who continue to regard *history* as an account, or a series of accounts, of actual past events, in which no necessary design, or, sometimes alternatively, no necessary implication for the future, can properly be discerned. *Historicism*, as it has been used in mC20, has three senses: (i) a relatively neutral definition of a method of study which relies on the facts of the past and traces precedents of current events; (ii) a deliberate emphasis on variable historical conditions and contexts, through which all specific events must be interpreted; (iii) a hostile sense, to attack all forms of interpretation or prediction by 'historical necessity' or the discovery of general 'laws of historical development' (cf. Popper). It is not always easy to distinguish this kind of attack on historicism, which rejects ideas of a necessary or even probable future, from a related attack on the notion of any *future* (in its specialized sense of a better, a more developed life) which uses the lessons of history, in a quite generalized sense (*history* as a tale of accidents, unforeseen events, frustration of conscious purposes), as an argument especially against hope. Though it is not always recognized or acknowledged as such, this latter use of *history* is probably a specific C20 form of *history* as general process, though now used, in contrast with the sense of achievement or promise of the earlier and still active versions, to indicate a general pattern of frustration and defeat.

It is then not easy to say which sense of *history* is currently