**Reading Reflection**

**How does postmodern history constitute a fundamental historiographical paradigm shift?**

I think that we can see that postmodern history does constitute a fundamental paradigm shift and one of the main things we have to look at with postmodern history is the emphasis of fragmentation that occurred during this time. In the readings we see after WW2 that historians were putting great emphasis and importance on ***Social History*** or the History of common ordinary people as opposed to the wealthy or politically powerful. In Europe we see it with the ***Annales School***in France and in the US, we see it in the “***new” social history***. One of the leading Historians of the ***Annales School***Fernand Braudel went on to challenge the concept of history being a linear process. Braudel brought the idea of ***multiplicity of time***where we see history divided into 3 different levels to get to a ***history totale***this was very different from different interpretations of the past because Braudel wanted to put the recordings of wars and political conflicts as the events which were least important. He believed these to be flash points or even distractions to humanity on the quest for greater historical truth. He put unchanging geographic structures like mountains and rivers at the top level and stated that these structures had a great impact on how societies unfolded throughout history. On the American side we see “***New” Social History*** where we see a ***“from the bottom up”*** approach to the historical narrative. This meant that Historians were giving attention to previously marginalized groups like women, African American’s, and Native Americans. By looking at these groups these historians could show diversity and the thought was a greater equality to emerge. These Historians were quite political and ascribed to the the title of ***“New Left Historians”*** and they were involved with the student protests of the 1960’s and the civil Rights movement. Jesse Lemisch was one of the leading American Historians who thought that past historians ***“distorted”*** past reality and said that a ***“sympathy for the powerless brings us closer to objectivity.”*** So Lemisch didn’t see a problem with being political as long as he was getting closer to objective truth.

**Why should we see postmodern changes in historical practice as more evolutionary than revolutionary?**

I agree with this assessment that it has been more evolutionary than revolutionary because the historical practice of History was fragmenting and changing and getting more perspectives on a smaller cellular level. As we see in postmodernism the inclusion of more perspectives from ***social history*** and the use of different disciplines are creating a more complete historical narrative. We also see how ***anthropology*** had a big influence on Cultural historians and the emergence of ***Microhistory*** where Historians were looking at single community’s or events to show or highlight something greater about the overall culture. Postmodernism seems to me like a greater dissection of History and the inclusion of History that had not been seen before or that had been pushed aside in the past but is now being brought to the forefront in order to be able to see the whole historical picture more clearer.

**Question/s**

TIs ***fragmentation*** in the historical narrative good or bad for the writing of a national history? Or is it too divisive?