

2. Hayden White, *Storia mistica*

The crucial question for historical knowledge is whether history should be considered as a science or it remains a discourse on the historical past. Responding to the transformations of the second half of the 18th century, politically and socially dominant groups featured modern history as a form of taming the past, while in the first half of the 20th century it was reduced to ideology. In the '70s, within the large French debate on history and the crisis of Structuralist historiography, the work of M. de Certeau played an important role. The turning point was May '68, together with an analogy between mysticism and the comprehension of that part of the human past which remained untold. Combining psychoanalysis and ethnology, de Certeau has elaborated a post-Structuralist theory of history which spatializes the past, thematizes the absent and aims, like Freudian psychoanalysis does, at recovering the instrument of fictional imagination.