

## Preface to the Second Edition

I introduced this volume ten years ago with the question, "Why unthink?" My answer was that the presumptions of nineteenth-century social science, "once considered liberating of the spirit, serve today as the central intellectual barrier to useful analysis of the social world." We now have reached the twenty-first century and the barrier is still there, if under siege. The resistance to change is profound. There is resistance even to serious reflection on the underlying epistemological, metaphysical, and political issues. The debate, one should say the debates, are furious.

In the twenty years following 1945, the social sciences were, or at least seemed to be, flourishing – productive, self-confident, achieving public recognition for the first time. The future was considered bright. In the last quarter of the twentieth century, the social sciences have been full of turmoil – perhaps still productive, but not at all self-confident, and now arousing public controversy as to their very worth. This radical shift is of course the product of dramatic changes in the world-system in this period. This book explores the transformations that led to the reopening of many of the questions that the social sciences had not so very long ago considered settled, to the view that nineteenth-century paradigms have reached their limits, as the subtitle of this book suggests. Not everyone agrees, to be sure; hence the harsh debates, hence the so-called culture wars.

Since this book first appeared, I served as chair of an international commission that was convened to study these issues – the Gulbenkian Commission on the Restructuring of the Social Sciences. This group of ten scholars from around the world – six social scientists, two natu-

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ral scientists, and two scholars from the humanities – issued a report in 1996, *Open the Social Sciences*, which has been widely discussed and is now available in some twenty languages. The report analyzes the historical construction of the social sciences from the eighteenth century to today, reviews the major fundamental debates within the social sciences, and asks where shall we go from here? It concludes with the assertion: “What is most important, we repeat, is that the underlying issues be debated – clearly, openly, intelligently, and urgently.”

*Unthinking Social Science* seeks to be a contribution to this debate. I’ve tried to show that two fundamental concepts of the social sciences – development and the categories of time and space – have misdirected our attention and our analyses. Development has been the mantra of politicians and scholars all over the world since 1945, but it goes back of course to the root idea of the “industrial revolution.” The concept seems to provide us with agency but, in fact, it does the opposite.

Time and space are even more hazardous concepts. Their current usage goes back to the transformations of scientific thought in the seventeenth century, and they are presented to us not as concepts but as self-evident realities – a mode of thought that precisely makes it impossible to ask the relevant questions about what I call the Time-Space constructions of our historical social system.

I ask readers to revisit (not reread and not rethink, but revisit) Marx and Braudel with eyes more open and to discover in their writings much that is neglected and much that is useful in the effort of unthinking nineteenth-century social science, of which of course they are both part and yet not part. Finally, I seek to show how world-systems analysis has sought to find a way out of the morass. I do not claim it has succeeded – yet. If it had, I would not have needed to write this book, which is an invitation to unthink *collectively* what is in our deep, and often hidden, intellectual underpinnings.

I have no illusions that such unthinking will be easy. It will be scoffed at, ignored, and misinterpreted. Indeed, it has been for a long time now. But reality keeps catching up with all of us. We argued long before 1989 that the USSR was an integral part of the capitalist world-economy, a country or a zone engaged in mercantilist withdrawal, soon to be fully reintegrated into the worldwide division of labor. We have argued for thirty years that the world revolution of 1968 was the signal of the revolt against the limited capacity of the traditional antisystemic movements to transform the world. We have argued from the beginning that what was recently discovered to be “globalization” is nothing but the basic operating principle of the capitalist world-economy.

And, we have been arguing for some time that the world of knowl-

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edge has been facing a basic epistemological challenge, that of overcoming the artificial divide of the "two cultures" and of creating a new, reunified epistemology of *scientia/philosophia*. In the decade to come this will turn out to be, I believe, the central intellectual issue of the world of knowledge and will lead not merely to new intellectual constructions, but inevitably to new structures of knowledge and a radical revision of the cultures that inform the life of the academy.

This is a task that is collective, and the collectivity must embrace the entire world in a meaningful way. This requirement is not a political, but an intellectual imperative. Once done, it will necessarily have political implications. It will bear on our worldwide debate on the historical choices that face us in the chaotic atmosphere of an historical system, the capitalist world-economy, in structural crisis. Where we will come out in the end is intrinsically uncertain. What is certain, however, is that the sum of our inputs will be what accounts for the final restructuring – of the world-system and of the world of knowledge. But to make those inputs intelligent, we need first to unthink our intellectual fetters.

## Introduction: Why Unthink?

I have entitled this book, “unthinking social science” and not “rethinking social science.” It is quite normal for scholars and scientists to rethink issues. When important new evidence undermines old theories and predictions do not hold, we are pressed to rethink our premises. In that sense, much of nineteenth-century social science, in the form of specific hypotheses, is constantly being rethought. But, in addition to rethinking, which is “normal,” I believe we need to “unthink” nineteenth-century social science, because many of its presumptions – which, in my view, are misleading and constrictive – still have far too strong a hold on our mentalities. These presumptions, once considered liberating of the spirit, serve today as the central intellectual barrier to useful analysis of the social world.

Let me be very clear from the outset. I am *not* proposing here a new paradigm for our collective work in what I prefer to call the historical social sciences. Rather, I am trying to expose what I consider to be highly dubious and narrow-minded in the dominant viewpoints. I hope thereby to encourage the search for a new paradigm which will take considerable time and effort by many to construct. I see this book as part of an effort to clear away the underbrush of a very dense and organizationally quite well-defined forest which is blocking our vision.

No doubt many will disagree with my description of the epistemology of nineteenth-century social science, and with my analysis of the social history of this epistemology. I have the sense that

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the defenders of the existent dominant epistemology are neither self-effacing nor timid in the expression of their views. I have the sense as well that those who criticize the existing dominant epistemology, even when their criticisms are serious and pertinent, often remain nonetheless less than fully liberated from the *Weltanschauung* they renounce. I feel I am not exempt from this back-sliding myself. This has only confirmed me in my views of how strong a hold these methodological assumptions have on us, and therefore how critical it is to "unthink" these assumptions.

I have divided these essays into six themes. The first deals with the social history of the epistemology in question. I seek to locate the invention of the historical social sciences as an intellectual category within the historical development of the modern world-system. I seek to account not only for why the historical social sciences became institutionalized as a mode of knowledge in the nineteenth century, and only in the nineteenth century, but also why they developed the particular epistemology they did, centered around what I think of as the false nomothetic-idiographic antinomy. I then seek to account for why, in the last 20 years, and only really then, this epistemology has begun to come into question, presenting us with the intellectual dilemmas of the present.

Once the historical context is argued, I turn my attention to what seems to me the key, and most questionable, concept of nineteenth-century social science, the concept of "development." To be sure, the word "development" only became commonplace after 1945, and then initially in what seemed the marginal realm of explicating current developments in the "Third World," or the peripheral zones of the capitalist world-economy. I believe nonetheless that the idea of development is simply an avatar of the concept of an "industrial revolution," and that this idea in turn has been the axis not only of most historiography but of all the varieties of nomothetic analysis. Here is an idea which has been eminently influential, highly misleading (precisely because, in its partial correctness, it has seemed so persuasively self-evident), and consequently generative of false expectations (both intellectually and politically). And yet there are very few indeed who are ready truly to unthink this central notion.

I then shift from development, which, if misleading as a concept, is at least widely discussed, to time and space, or to what I call TimeSpace. One of the most remarkable achievements of the epistemology that has dominated social science has been to eliminate TimeSpace from the analysis. It is not that geography and chrono-

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logy were never talked about. Of course they were, and quite extensively. But they have been considered to be physical invariants, and hence exogenous variables, rather than highly fluid social creations, and hence variables not merely endogenous but critical to the understanding of social structure and historical transformation. Even today, we rarely consider the multiplicity of Time-Spaces that confront us, and therefore rarely concern ourselves with which ones we use, or should use, in the deciphering of our social realities.

Having attempted to show the limits of the concept of development central to the nineteenth-century paradigm(s), and the absence therein of what ought to have been a central concept, TimeSpace – the two things being logically and intimately related – I then turn my attention to two major thinkers who may be of some assistance in liberating us from the constraints of nineteenth-century social science: Marx and Braudel.

Karl Marx was of course himself a major figure of nineteenth-century social science. He has been called – with some justice, in my view – the last of the classical economists. He shared a very large part of the epistemological premises of the European intellectual world of his time. When Engels said that Marx's thought had its roots in Hegel plus Saint-Simon plus the British classical economists, he was confessing as much. And yet Marx claimed to be engaged in a "critique of political economy," a claim that is not without some serious basis.

Marx was a thinker of his time who sought to rise above the limitations of his time. I am not concerned here with assessing the degree to which Marx did or did not succeed in this task. Rather, I observe that Marx's ideas have entered into our common discourse, largely in the version that was assembled by the Marxism of the parties, and that this version, rather than pursuing the critique of political economy, participated in the dominant epistemology fully. I am concerned here with revisiting the other Marx, that Marx who resisted the dominant perspectives of nineteenth-century social science.

I believe it is also useful to revisit Fernand Braudel. Braudel was a very different figure from Marx. He was not self-consciously a "theorist" or a "methodologist." He was a historian engaged in archival research out of which he hoped to build a "*histoire pensée*." He seldom talked of epistemological issues per se. But he had sure instincts which led him in fact to question historiographical verities, and thereupon (sometimes explicitly, sometimes only

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implicitly) to indicate new ways out of old dilemmas. I have revisited him, to see to what degree he helps us to unthink nineteenth-century social science, and in particular to arrive at an understanding of capitalism in the *longue durée* that is not based on the premise of "development" and the absence of TimeSpace.

Finally, I turn to world-systems analysis, as a contemporary perspective on the social world, one that makes central the study of long-term, large-scale social change. World-systems analysis intends to be a critique of nineteenth-century social science. But it is an incomplete, unfinished critique. It still has not been able to find a way to surmount the most enduring (and misleading) legacy of nineteenth-century social science – the division of social analysis into three arenas, three logics, three "levels" – the economic, the political, and the socio-cultural. This trinity stands in the middle of the road, in granite, blocking our intellectual advance. Many find it unsatisfying, but in my view no one has yet found the way to dispense with the language and its implications, some of which are correct but most of which are probably not.

Perhaps it is that the world must change some more before the scholars are able to theorize it more usefully. But I am convinced that it is this conundrum which ought to be preoccupying us, before any other, and that overcoming this aporia, unlocking this mystery, unthinking this metaphor is essential if we are to reconstruct the historical social sciences.

**Part I**

**The Social Sciences:  
From Genesis to  
Bifurcation**

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## The French Revolution as a World-Historical Event

The significance or importance of the French Revolution has usually been analyzed in one of two ways: as an "event" in French history which has its course and consequences; or as a phenomenon which had a specific influence on the history of other countries. I wish in this essay, however, to view the French Revolution as a world-historical event in the very specific sense of its significance and importance in the history of the modern world-system as a world-system.

As we know, the literature on the French Revolution of the last 30 years has reflected a gigantic intellectual battle between two principal schools of thought. On the one side, there has been the so-called social interpretation, of which Georges Soboul has been the central figure and which traces its lineage to Lefebvre, Mathiez, and Jaurès. This viewpoint has built its analysis around the theme that the French Revolution was essentially a political revolution of the bourgeoisie who were overthrowing a feudal *ancien régime*.

A second camp has emerged in "revisionist" criticism of the social interpretation of the French Revolution. This second camp has no accepted collective name. The two leading exponents of this view have been first Alfred Cobban and then François Furet. This camp rejects the concept of the French Revolution as a "bourgeois" revolution on the grounds that eighteenth-century France can no longer be meaningfully described as "feudal." Rather, they suggest that it can better be described as "despotic"

and the French Revolution seen as a political explosion of anti-despotic libertarian demands.<sup>1</sup>

The key difference this makes in the analysis of the actual events revolves around the interpretation of the political meaning of the insurrection of August 10, 1792. For Soboul, this insurrection was a "second revolution" ushering in a democratic and popular republic. For Furet, it was exactly the opposite. It was the closure of the path leading to the liberal society. It was no doubt a second revolution, but one that represented not the fulfillment of the first but its *déravage*. Thus, for Soboul, Robespierre and the Mountain represented the most radical segment of the French bourgeoisie and therefore a force for liberation; for Furet, Robespierre and the Mountain represented a new (and worse) despotism.

In this debate, the lines are clearly drawn and are certainly familiar ones in terms of twentieth-century European politics. Indeed, as has often been said, this debate is as much an argument about the Russian Revolution as it is about the French Revolution. It is important nonetheless to see what premises are *shared* by the two camps in rhetorical battle. They both share a model of history which is developmental and which assumes that the units that develop are states. (The Atlantic thesis also shares this model.) For the social-interpretation school, all states go through successive historical stages, the most relevant transition in this case being that from feudalism to capitalism, from a state dominated by an aristocracy to one dominated by a bourgeoisie. Ergo, the French Revolution is simply the moment of dramatic or of definitive transition, a moment that was, however, both necessary and inevitable. For the "liberal" school, the process of modernization involves the renunciation of a despotic state and its replacement by a state founded on liberal principles. The French Revolution was an attempt to make this (not inevitable) transition, but one that was abortive. The drive to freedom remained latent in the French polity and would be resumed later. For Soboul, since the revolution was bourgeois, it was the point of departure of liberal democracy in

<sup>1</sup> The so-called Atlantic thesis is an amalgam of these two perspectives, although it was presented initially prior to the revisionist work. The Atlantic thesis is that the French Revolution was both bourgeois and antidespotic. It is furthermore world-systemic in that its origins and that of the other more or less simultaneous "Atlantic" revolutions were in the common fount of Enlightenment thought. One can see this as marrying either the best or the worst of the other two theses.

France. For Furet, after the *dérapiage* the revolution became itself an obstacle to liberal democracy.

It is interesting to see how therefore each side treats the long war with Great Britain that began in 1792 and continued (with interruptions) until 1815, that is, long past the Jacobin period. For Soboul, the war was essentially launched from abroad by the French aristocracy, who, losing the civil war, were hoping to recoup their position by internationalizing the conflict. For Furet, the war was desired by the revolutionary forces (or at least by most of them) as a way of pursuing the revolution and strengthening it.

No doubt one can make a plausible case for each of these explanations of the immediate origins of the war. What is striking is that there seems to be, in these analyses, no consideration of whether or not a Franco-British war might not have occurred at this time in the absence of anything resembling an internal French revolution. After all, there had been three successive major wars between Britain (or England) and France over a period of a century, and from the perspective of today we might think of the 1792–1815 wars as simply the fourth and last of these major wars in the long struggle for hegemony in the capitalist world-economy.

I shall briefly summarize here an analysis expounded at length in chapters 1 and 2 of vol. 3 of *The Modern World-System* (1989b) without the supporting data found in the book. I do this merely as background for the argument I wish to make about the ways in which the French Revolution as a world-historical event transformed the world-system as a world-system. I start with the assumption that the capitalist world-economy existed as a historical system since the “long” sixteenth century with boundaries that from the beginning included England and France, and that therefore both countries had been functioning for all this time within the constraints of a capitalist mode of production and had been members of the interstate system that emerged as the political framework of the capitalist world-economy.

Such a “world-systems perspective” leaves little room for the most fundamental assumptions of the two main scholarly schools concerning the French Revolution. The French Revolution could not have been a “bourgeois revolution” since the capitalist world-economy within which France was located was already one in which the dominant class strata were “capitalist” in their economic behavior. The “capitalists” in that sense had no need of political revolution in particular states in order to gain *droit de cité* or to pursue their fundamental interests. This of course does not exclude

that fact that particular groups of capitalists might have been more or less happy with the public policies of their states and might have been willing, under certain conditions, to consider political actions that ended up by being in some sense "insurrectionary," thereby changing the structures of given state institutions.

On the other hand, the world-systems perspective gives equally little place to the underlying assumption of the revisionist school (or schools), who take as central a putative macrostruggle between the tenets of political despotism and the tenets of political liberalism within each state, and see a sort of vector of modernity in the drive for liberalism. "Liberalism" in a world-systems perspective is seen rather as a particular strategy of the dominant classes utilizable primarily in core zones of the world-economy and reflecting among other things a lopsided intrastate class structure in which the working classes are a much lower percentage of the total population than in peripheral zones. At the end of the eighteenth century, neither England nor France yet had effective "liberal" institutional structures, and neither would have them for another century or so. The *dérapiage* of 1792, if that is what one wants to call it, had no greater long-run significance than what might be thought of as the parallel *dérapiage* of 1649 in England. Seen from the perspective of the twentieth century, Great Britain and France are not significantly different in the degree to which "liberal" political institutions prevail in the two centuries. Nor are they significantly different from, say, Sweden, which had no dramatic set of events comparable to the English or French revolutions.

What can be noted about England and France is that, once Dutch hegemony in the capitalist world-economy began to decline in the mid-seventeenth century, these two states were the competitors for the hegemonic succession. The competition could be seen in two principal arenas: in their relative "efficiencies" of operation in the markets of the world-economy, and in their relative military-political strengths in the interstate system.

In this long competition, 1763 marked the beginning of the "last act." The Peace of Paris marked Great Britain's definitive victory over France on the seas, in the Americas, and in India. But, of course, it simultaneously laid the bases for the acute difficulties that Great Britain (and Spain and Portugal as well) were to have with their settler populations in the Americas, and which led to the process of settler decolonization which originated in British North America and spread everywhere.

We know that the American War of Independence attracted

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eventually a French involvement on the side of the settlers which, in the 1780s, greatly aggravated the fiscal crisis of the French state. To be sure, the British state also faced great budgetary dilemmas. But the 1763 victory made it easier for the British to resolve these difficulties in the short run than for the French state. Witness, for example, the role of "Plassey plunder" in relieving British state indebtedness to the Dutch.

The French state found it politically impossible to solve their fiscal problem through new modes of taxation and had no access to the equivalent of Plassey plunder. This explains their willingness to enter into the Anglo-French Commercial (Eden) Treaty of 1786 to which the French king agreed in good part on the grounds that it would create new sources of state revenue. Its immediate impact was in fact economically disastrous and politically unnerving. The *cahiers de doléance* were full of complaints about the treaty.

If one looks at the comparative efficiencies of French and British agricultural and industrial production in the eighteenth century, it is hard to make a case for any significant British lead. As of 1763, the French were if anything ahead. But despite the fact that the economic realities were very similar, at least up to the 1780s when Britain was perhaps doing a little better, it is true that there was an (incorrect) perception in France after 1763 of France falling behind. This was probably an illusion whose elaboration became a rationalization for the military defeat of 1763. There seems to have been a similar illusion prior to 1763 among the English that they were behind France, an illusion apparently effaced after 1763. In any case, this sense on the part of the French educated strata helped also to create the justification for the Eden Treaty.

When the king convened the Estates-General, the general atmosphere (the defeat of 1763, the fiscal crisis of the state, the error of agreeing to the Eden Treaty, all compounded by two successive bad harvest years) created the political space for the "runaway" situation we call the French Revolution, a "runaway" situation which basically did not end until 1815.

One could say that the period 1763–89 in France was marked by an unwillingness of French elites to accept defeat in the struggle for hegemony with Great Britain, exacerbated by a growing feeling that the monarchy was unwilling or unable to do anything about the situation. The wars of 1792–1815 were therefore part of the fundamental logic of the French revolutionaries, seeking to restructure the state so that it would be capable of finally overcoming the British foe.



From the strictly relational perspective of the Franco-British struggle in the interstate system, the French Revolution turned out to be a disaster. Far from permitting the final recouping of the defeat of 1763, France was beaten militarily more definitively in 1815 than it ever had been, because this time the defeat was on land, where French military strength lay. And far from allowing France to overcome the previously largely fictive economic gap with Great Britain, the wars created this gap for the first time. In 1815 it was true to say, as it had not been in 1789, that Great Britain had a significant "efficiency" lead over France in the production of goods for the world markets.

But were there not at least significant internal economic transformations in France as a result of the revolution? When the dust settled, it turned out that the transformations were less startling than is often asserted. The larger agricultural entities for the most part remained intact, although no doubt there was some change in the names of property owners. Despite the presumed "abolition of feudalism," such constraints on "agricultural individualism" (to use Marc Bloch's phrase) as *vaine pâture* and *droit de parcours* survived until late in the nineteenth century. The yeoman class (such as the *laboureurs*) emerged stronger than before, but largely at the expense of the smallest producers (such as the *manoeuvriers*). The agricultural reforms were at times noisy, but they fit into a slow steady curve of parallel change in much of western Europe over several centuries.

As for industry, guilds were abolished to be sure. And internal tariffs disappeared, thereby creating a larger unfettered internal market. But let us not forget that before 1789 there already existed a zone without internal tariff barriers, the Five Great Farms, which included Paris and was approximately the size of England. The revolution did of course revoke the Eden Treaty and France once again, quite sensibly, returned to protectionism. The state did acquire a new administrative efficiency (the linguistic unification, the new civil code, the creation of the *grands écoles*) which no doubt was very helpful to France's economic performance in the nineteenth century.

But from a strictly French point of view, the balance sheet of the French Revolution is relatively meager. If it was the "exemplary" bourgeois revolution, this doesn't say much for the value or the force of such revolutions. As a struggle against despotism, we have the word of the theorists of this position that it did not turn in a stellar performance. Of course, we could celebrate it on Tocquevilian grounds: the French Revolution was France's fulfillment of its

state creation, the achievement of bureaucratic centralization that Richelieu and Colbert sought but never quite completed. If so, one might understand French celebration of this event as the incarnation of French nationalism, but what could the rest of us celebrate?

I believe there is something for the rest of us to note, and perhaps to celebrate, if somewhat ambiguously. I believe the French Revolution and its Napoleonic continuation catalyzed the ideological transformation of the capitalist world-economy as a *world-system*, and thereby created three wholly new arenas or sets of cultural institutions that have formed a central part of the world-system ever since.

We must begin with the perceived meaning of the French Revolution to contemporaries. It was, of course, a dramatic, passionate, violent upheaval. In what might be called its primary expression, from 1789 (the fall of the Bastille) to 1794 (Thermidor), the Great Fear occurred, "feudalism" was abolished, church lands were nationalized, a king was executed, and a Declaration of the Rights of Man was proclaimed. This series of events culminated in a Reign of Terror, which finally ended with the so-called Thermidorian Reaction. However, of course dramatic events did not cease then. Napoleon came to power and French armies expanded throughout continental Europe. They were greeted originally in many areas as carriers of a revolutionary message, and then came to be rejected later in many areas as bearers of a French imperialist drive.

The reaction everywhere in Europe among the established authorities was one of horror at the undermining of order (real and potential) represented by the French revolutionary virus. Efforts to counter the spread of these ideas and values were implemented everywhere, and most notably in Great Britain, where a very exaggerated view of the strength of possible sympathizers led to an effective repression.

We should note in particular the impact of the French Revolution (including Napoleon) on three key zones of the "periphery" of the world-system: Haiti, Ireland, and Egypt. The French Revolution's impact on St-Domingue was immediate and cataclysmic. The initial attempt of White settlers to capitalize on the revolution to gain increased autonomy led rapidly to the first Black revolution in the world-system, a Black revolution which, over the succeeding decades, all other players (Napoleon, the British, the White settler revolutionaries in the United States and in Latin America) sought in one way or another to destroy or at least contain.

The French Revolution's impact on Ireland was to transform

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what had been an attempt by Protestant settlers to gain autonomy (as had the analogous group in British North America) into a social revolution that for a time drew together both Catholics and Presbyterian Dissenters into a common anticolonial movement. This attempt, hitting at the very heart of the British state, was turned aside, undermined, and repressed, and Ireland was all the more closely integrated with Great Britain by the Act of Union of 1800. The result, however, was to create an endemic internal political issue for Great Britain throughout the nineteenth century, its equivalent *mutatis mutandis* of the US political issue of Black rights.

In Egypt, the Napoleonic invasion resulted in the emergence of Egypt's first great "modernizer," Mohammed Ali, whose program of industrialization and military expansion seriously undermined the Ottoman Empire and almost established a powerful state in the Middle East capable eventually of playing a major role in the interstate system. Almost, but not quite – Mohammed Ali's efforts were eventually successfully checked, as were all similar efforts in the periphery for a century.

To all of this must of course be added the settler decolonization of the Americas. No doubt, this was not the doing (alone) of the French Revolution. The American War of Independence predated the revolution. But its sources lay in the same post-1763 restructuring of the geopolitics of the world-system, and it made appeals to the same Enlightenment doctrines to legitimate itself as did the French Revolution. The Latin American independences of course then came in the wake of the same geopolitical restructuring, reinforced by the successful models of both the American and French revolutions, plus the devastating political consequences of Napoleon's invasion of Spain in 1808 and the abdication of the Spanish monarch.

All in all, it added up to a political whirlwind of a kind that had never been known before in the modern world. Of course there had been previous periods of turmoil, but their impact had been different. The English Revolution no doubt shared many features with the French Revolution – in England. But its effect outside of England was quite limited, in large part because there was no "Napoleonic" conquest associated with it. And no doubt the Reformation-Counter Reformation turmoil was every bit as wrenching as the French revolutionary turmoil. But it was not focused around issues of political order, and the ultimate outcome, while involving real political restructuring, seemed not to raise questions about political legitimacy of rulers and their structures per se.

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I think the bourgeoisie, or if you prefer the capitalist strata, or if you prefer the ruling classes, drew two conclusions from the "French revolutionary turmoil." One was a sense of great threat, not from what might be done by the Robespierres of the world, but from what might be done by the unwashed masses, who seemed for the first time to be contemplating seriously the acquisition of state power. The French Revolution proper had several times almost "gotten out of hand" not because some "bourgeois" were seeking political changes but because some "peasants" or some "sansculottes" or some "women" began to arm themselves and to march or to demonstrate. The Black slaves of St-Domingue did more than demonstrate; they actually seized state power, a political development that turned out to be even more difficult to contain and turn back than the rebellions in France.

These "uprisings" might of course be assimilated analytically to the recurring food riots and peasant uprisings of prior centuries. I believe the world bourgeoisie perceived that something different was occurring, that these "uprisings" might better be conceived of as the first truly antisystemic (that is, anticapitalist system) uprisings of the modern world. It is not that these antisystemic uprisings were terribly successful. It was simply that they had occurred at all, and that therefore they were the harbinger of a major qualitative change in the structure of the capitalist world-system, a turning point in its politics.

The world bourgeoisie thereupon drew, I believe, a second and very logical inference. Constant, short-run political change was inevitable and it was hopeless to maintain the historical myth used by previous world-systems, and indeed even by the capitalist world-economy up to that point, that political change was exceptional, often short-lived, normally undesirable. It was only by accepting the normality of change that the world bourgeoisie had a chance of containing it and slowing it down.

This widespread acceptance of the normality of change represented a fundamental cultural transformation of the capitalist world-economy. It meant that one was recognizing publicly, that is, expressively, the structural realities that had in fact prevailed for several centuries already: that the world-system was a capitalist system, that the world-economy's division of labor was bounded and framed by an interstate system composed of hypothetically sovereign states. Once this recognition became widespread, which seems to me to have occurred more or less in the period 1789-1815, once this discourse prevailed, three new institutions emerged as

expressions of and responses to this "normality of change." These three institutions were the ideologies, the social sciences, and the movements. These three institutions comprise the great intellectual/cultural synthesis of the "long" nineteenth century, the insitutional underpinnings of what is sometimes inaptly called "modernity."

We do not usually think of ideologies as institutions. But this is in fact an error. An ideology is more than a *Weltanschauung*. Obviously, at all times and places, there have existed one or several *Weltanschauungen* which have determined how people interpreted their world. Obviously, people always constructed reality through common eyeglasses that have been historically manufactured. An ideology is such a *Weltanschauung*, but it is one of a very special kind. It is one that has been consciously and collectively formulated with conscious political objectives. Using this definition of ideology, it follows that this particular brand of *Weltanschauung* could be constructed only in a situation in which public discourse accepted the normality of change. One needs to formulate an ideology consciously only if one believes that change is normal and that therefore it is useful to formulate conscious middle-run political objectives.

Three such ideologies were developed in the nineteenth century – conservatism, liberalism, and Marxism. They were all world-systemic ideologies. It is no accident that conservatism was the first to emerge institutionally. It is clear that the new recognition of the normality of change posed urgent dilemmas to those of a conservative bent. Edmund Burke and Joseph de Maistre saw this clearly and quickly. They saw they needed to make an intellectual case for the slowest possible pace of change. But more importantly, they realized that some kinds of change were more serious than others. They gave priority therefore to preserving the structures which in turn could serve as brakes on any and all precipitate reformers and revolutionaries. These were of course the structures whose merits conservatives lauded: the family, the "community," the church, and of course the monarchy. The central motif of conservative ideology has always been "tradition." Traditions are presumed to be there, and to have been there for an indefinitely long time. It is argued that it is "natural" to preserve traditional values because they incarnate wisdom. Conservative ideology maintains that any tampering with traditions needs strong justification. Otherwise, disintegration and decadence follow. Hence conservative ideology is the incarnation of a sort of Cassandra-like cultural pessimism, inherently defensive in nature. Conservatives warn against the dan-



gers of the change that now has become considered normal. The short-run political implications may vary enormously, but in the middle run conservatism's political agenda is clear.

Liberalism is the natural ideology of normal change. But it needed to become an ideology only after conservatism had emerged. It was English Tories who first called their opponents "liberals" in the early nineteenth century. To be sure, the idea of the individual's right to be free from the constraints of the state had a long history that predates this moment. The rise of the absolutist state brought in its train the advocates of constitutional government. John Locke is often considered the symbolic incarnation of this line of thought. But what emerged in the nineteenth century was liberalism as an ideology of consciously enacted reform, and this did not really exist in the seventeenth or eighteenth centuries. This is also why I believe the oft-cited difference between early-nineteenth-century "minimal state" liberalism and late-nineteenth-century "social state" liberalism misses the point. The exponents of both had the same conscious political agenda: legislative reform that would abet, channel, facilitate "normal change."

Marxism then came along quite late as the third ideology of the nineteenth-century world. Perhaps some would prefer to think of socialism as the third ideology. But over time the only variety of socialist thought that became truly distinguishable from liberalism as an ideology was in fact Marxism. What Marxism did, as an ideology, was to accept the basic premise of liberal ideology (the theory of progress) and add to it two crucial specifications. Progress was seen as something realized not continuously but discontinuously, that is, by revolution. And in the upward ascent to the good or perfect society the world had reached not its ultimate but its penultimate state. These two amendments were sufficient to produce an entirely different political agenda.

It should be noted that I have not discussed the social bases of these different ideologies. The usual explanations seem to me too simple. Nor is it at all clear that the emergence of these three ideologies depended on specific social bases, which is not to say that there has been no historic correlation between social position and ideological preference. What is important is that the three ideologies were all statements about how politically to deal with "normal change." And they probably exhausted the range of possibilities for plausible ideologies to be institutionalized in the nineteenth-century capitalist world-economy.

Political agendas are only one part of what one needs to deal

with "normal change." Since these agendas represented concrete proposals, they required concrete knowledge of current realities. What they needed, in short, was social science. For if one didn't know how the world worked, it was difficult to recommend what one might do to make it work better. This knowledge was more important to the liberals and Marxists since they were in favor of "progress," and thus they were more prone than the conservatives to encourage and frequent social science. But even conservatives were aware that it might be useful to understand reality if only in order to conserve (and restore) the status quo (ante).

Ideologies are more than mere *Weltanschauungen*; social science is more than mere social thought or social philosophy. Previous world-systems had social thinkers, and we still today benefit by reading them, at least some of them. The modern world-system was of course the heir of a so-called "Renaissance" of (especially) Greek thought and built on this edifice in many ways. The rise of the state structures, and in particular of the absolutist state, led to a special flourishing of political philosophy, from Machiavelli to Bodin to Spinoza, from More to Hobbes and Locke, from Montesquieu to Rousseau. Indeed, this was a stellar period in the production of such thought, and nothing quite matches it in the post-1789 era. Furthermore, the middle and late eighteenth century saw the emergence of work in economic philosophy almost as rich as that in political philosophy: Hume, Adam Smith, the Physiocrats, Malthus. One is tempted to add: Ricardo, John Stuart Mill, Karl Marx.

But none of this represented the institutionalization of social science. Social science, as it came to be defined in the nineteenth century, was the empirical study of the social world with the intention of understanding "normal change" and thereby being able to affect it. Social science was not the product of solitary social thinkers but the creation of a collective body of persons within specific structures to achieve specific ends. It involved a major social investment, which was never previously the case with social thought.

The principal mode of institutionalizing social science was by differentiation within Europe's traditional university structure which, by 1789, was virtually moribund. The universities, which at that point in time were scarcely vital intellectual centers, were still largely organized in the traditional four faculties of theology, philosophy, law, and medicine. There were, furthermore, relatively few universities. In the course of the nineteenth century, there occurred a significant creation of new chairs, largely within the faculty of philosophy, to a lesser extent within the faculty of law.

These chairs had new names and some of them became the forerunners of what today we call "departments."

At first it was not clear which "names" of putative "disciplines" would prevail. We know the outcome, however. By the end of the nineteenth century, six main "names" had survived and more or less become stabilized into "disciplines." They had become institutionalized not only within the university system, now renewed and beginning again to expand, but also as national scholarly associations, and in the twentieth century as international scholarly associations.

The "naming" of the disciplines – that is, the structure of the presumed division of intellectual labor – reflected very much the triumph of liberal ideology. This is of course because liberal ideology was (and is) the reigning ideology of the capitalist world-economy. This also explains why Marxists were suspicious of the new social science, and why conservatives have been even more suspicious and recalcitrant.

Liberal ideology involved the argument that the centerpiece of social process was the careful delimitation of three spheres of activity: those related to the market, those related to the state, and those that were "personal." The last category was primarily residual, meaning all activities not immediately related to the state or the market. Insofar as it was defined positively, it had to do with activities of "everyday life" – the family, the "community," the "underworld" of "deviant" activities, etc. The study of these separate spheres came to be named political science, economics, and sociology. If political science was the last name to be accepted, it was primarily the result of an archaic jurisdictional dispute between the faculties of philosophy and of law, and not because the operations of the state were deemed less worthy of study. All three of these "disciplines" developed as universalizing sciences based on empirical research, with a strong component of "applied science" attached to them.

Parallel to this, the "name" history was manifestly redefined. This is the great transformation represented by the work of Ranke. Ranke's great critique of what had been previously produced under the "name" of history is that it was too "philosophical," insufficiently "historical." This is the import of writing history *wie es eigentlich gewesen ist*. History had really occurred. What had happened could be known by turning to the "sources" and reading them critically. The history that now became institutionalized was rigorously idiographic.

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What is to be noted in the emerging institutionalization of these four so-called disciplines, as they developed in the nineteenth century, are three things. One, they were concerned empirically primarily, almost exclusively, with the core countries of the capitalist world-economy – indeed, primarily with just a few of them. Two, almost all scholars worked on empirical materials concerning their own countries. Three, the dominant mode of work was empirical and concrete, even though for the three so-called nomothetic disciplines (economics, sociology, political science) the object was said to be the discovery of the “laws” that explained human behavior. The nationally based, empiricist thrust of the new “disciplines” became a way of circumscribing the study of social change that would make it most useful for and supportive of state policies, least subversive of the new verities. But it was nonetheless a study of the “real” world based on the assumption that one could not derive such knowledge deductively from metaphysical understandings of an unchanging world.

The nineteenth-century acceptance of the normality of change included the idea that change was normal only for the civilized nations, and that it therefore was incumbent upon these nations to impose this change upon the recalcitrant other world. Social science could play a role here, as a mode of describing unchanging customs, thereby opening the way to understanding how this other world could be brought into “civilization.” The study of the “primitive” peoples without writing became the domain of anthropology. The study of the “petrified” peoples with writing (China, India, the Arab world) became the domain of Orientalism. For each field the academic study emphasized the elements that were unchanging, but was accompanied by an applied, largely extrauniversity domain of societal engineering.

If the social sciences became increasingly an instrument of intelligent governance of a world in which change was normal, and hence of limiting the scope of such change, those who sought to go beyond the limits structured by the world bourgeoisie turned to a third institution, the movements. Once again, rebellions and oppositions were not new. They had long been part of the historical scene, as had been both *Weltanschauungen* and social thought. But just as *Weltanschauungen* now became ideologies and social thought became social science, so did rebellions and oppositions become antisystemic movements. These movements were the third and last of the institutional innovations of the post-1789 world-



system, an innovation that really emerges only after the world revolution of 1848.

The essential difference between the multiple prior rebellions and oppositions and the new antisystemic movements was that the former were spontaneous, short-lived, and largely uncoordinated beyond the local level. The new movements were organizations, eventually organizations with bureaucracies, which planned the politics of social transformation. They worked in a time frame that went beyond the short run.

There were, to be sure, two great forms of such antisystemic movements, one for each main theme of the "French revolutionary turmoil" as it was experienced throughout the world-system. There were the movements organized around the "people" as working class or classes, that is, around class conflict, what in the nineteenth century came to be called first the social movement, then the socialist movements. And there were the movements organized around the "people" as *Volk*, as nation, as speakers of a common language, what came to be known as the nationalist movements.

This is not the place to recount the arduous but effective institutionalization of socialist and nationalist movements as state-level organizations seeking state power within the states in which they were located or which they intended to establish. It is the place to note that, despite their appeal to "universal" values, the movements as they were constructed were all in effect state-level structures, just as the social sciences, despite their appeal to "universal" laws, de facto studied phenomena at the state level. Indeed, it was only the ideologies, of the three new "institutions," that managed to institutionalize itself somewhat at the world level.

What then can we say has been the true legacy of the French revolutionary turmoil? It clearly transformed the "cultural apparatus" of the world-system. But it did so in an extremely ambiguous way. For, on the one hand, one can say that it permitted the efflorescence of all that we have come to associate with the modern world: a passion for change, development, "progress." It is as though the French revolutionary turmoil allowed the world-system to break through a cultural sound barrier and permit the acceleration of the forces of "change" throughout the world that we know occurred.

But, on the other hand, the French revolutionary turmoil, by creating the three great new institutions – the ideologies, the social sciences, the movements – has created the containment and



distortion of this process of change, and simultaneously has created the blockages of which the world has become acutely conscious in the last twenty years. The post-1789 consensus on the normality of change and the institutions it bred has now, perhaps, at last ended. Not, however, in 1917, but rather in 1968.

If we are to clarify our options and our utopias in the post-1968 world-system, perhaps it would be useful to reread the trinitarian slogan of the French Revolution: liberty, equality, fraternity. It has been too easy to pose liberty against equality, as in some sense the two great interpretations of the French Revolution have done, each interpretation championing if you will one half of the antinomy. Perhaps the reason the French Revolution did not produce either liberty or equality is that the major power holders and their heirs have successfully maintained that they were separate objectives. This was not, I believe, the view of the unwashed masses.

Fraternity, meanwhile, has always been a pious addition, taken seriously by no one in the whole long post-1789 cultural arena, until in fact 1968. What the "normality of change" has been interpreted, by all and sundry, to mean has been the increased homogenization of the world, in which harmony would come out of the disappearance of real difference. We have of course discovered the brutal fact that the development of the capitalist world-economy has significantly increased the economic and social disparities and therefore the consciousness of differences. Fraternity or, to rename it in the post-1968 manner, comradeship is a construction to be pieced together with enormous difficulty, and yet this fragile prospect is in fact the underpinning of the achievement of liberty/equality.

The French Revolution did not change France very much. It did change the world-system very much. The world-scale institutional legacy of the French Revolution was ambiguous in its effects. The post-1968 questioning of this legacy requires a new reading of the meaning of the popular thrusts that crystallized as the French revolutionary turmoil.