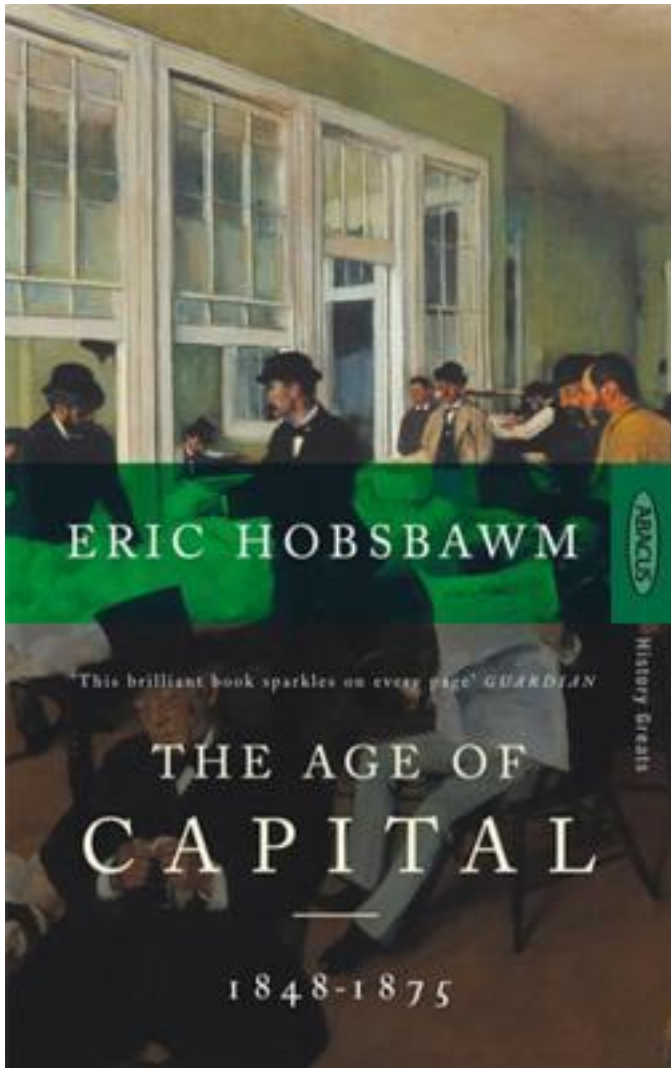

Eric J. Hobsbawm

The Age of Capital, 1848-1875 (Modern History #2)



Title: The Age of Capital, 1848-1875
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Description

A major treatment of the crucial years 1848-1875 - a penetrating analysis of the rise of capitalism through the world. In the 1860s a new word entered the economic and political vocabulary of the world: "capitalism". The global triumph of capitalism is the major theme of history in the decades after 1848. It was the triumph of a society which believed that economic growth rests on competitive private enterprise, on success in buying everything in the cheapest market (including labour) and selling it in the dearest. An economy so based, and therefore nestling naturally on the sound foundations of a bourgeoisie composed of those whom energy, merit and intelligence had raised to their position and kept there, would - it was believed - not only create a world of suitably distributed material plenty but of ever-growing enlightenment, reason and human opportunity, an advance of the sciences and the arts, in brief a world of continuous and accelerating material and moral progress.

Insightful reviews

Odhran: It's quite hard to tell, but I think this might be the best of the series. Only by a matter of degrees, mind. The same comments that apply to *The Age of Revolution* apply here - this is a thematic overview, and a companion text that deals with more straightforwardly narrative history would be ideal.

The usual caveats about overview historical works apply, too - no overview can cover everything, no scholar can know even a fraction of all the literature for such a broad period and area. And, of course, it's Eurocentric as all hell - partly excusable by the fact that capital and its development are the focus of the book, and that was pretty much a North Atlantic phenomenon. (The obvious counter-example, pre-conquest India, was destroyed around this period, so I don't think it's all that relevant to the development of the current world capitalist system.) Finally, on problems, is that is treatment of subaltern groups under the rule of capital, other than the male working class, is rather sparse.

howl of minerva: The chapter on the arts alone is worth several times the price of admission.

Among the many many things I learned: the origins of hipsterism. The phenomenon of bourgeois youth performing a brief, sterile, apolitical, highly stylised rebellion against the materialism of their parents by retreating into some dubiously artistic enclave and imitating the lifestyle of the working class is an invention of the Parisian bohème of the late 19th century. Like all the best insights, should have been obvious really.

Jorge Gómez: En esta segunda entrega de la Historia de la Modernidad de Hobsbawm, el Británico repite su formato de construcción de la historia. No relata, sino que subdivide toda la información disponible en una serie de capítulos, que dan como resultado dos grandes ejes: Las Causas y sus Consecuencias (Más una breve, pero exquisita contextualización sobre la revolución de 1848).

Al respecto, en este tomo, el autor resume el período posterior a la simultánea revolución

Europea de 1848, como el del avance -y la consolidación- de una democracia liberal, pero, en especial -y hace bastante énfasis al respecto-, del comienzo del formato de división del trabajo que caracterizó al mundo hasta la irrupción de las economías asiáticas en el último cuarto del siglo XX.

Aquel avance es lo más fundamental del escrito. El libro responde el como una serie de factores y de odiseas políticas, dieron como resultado un sistema-mundo (aunque el término no sea de este autor) con claros vencedores (Europa, algunas ex-colonias Británicas, y el singular Japón con su estructura social muy similar a la Europea Occidental) y con claros perdedores (Latinoamérica, Africa, y la ultrajada Asia). Y por supuesto, cuales fueron los resultantes en la cotidianidad y en la espectacularidad -el arte- surgidos de estas condiciones sociales.

En referencia a esto, Hobsbawm entrega ciertas luces sobre una serie de debate, mas lo que más impresiona, es la capacidad del libro de expandir su campo de acción geográfico -finalmente, Hobsbawm está escribiendo la historia de la consolidación del Capitalismo, por lo tanto, Europa-, a tal punto, que discute sobre debates latinoamericanos del siglo XIX, hace mención del extremo proceso de liberalización económica que emprendió la élite Colombiana (Pág. 44 de esta edición), frente a un proteccionismo férreo en los Estados Unidos (una tesis que Pacho O'Donnell se encargó de profundizar para el Rio de La Plata). Así de extenso es este tomo -extenso en cuanto a contenidos, ya que su lectura no es pesada, para nada-, y así de transversal su significancia para las sociedades insertas en esta economía-mundo.

Por cierto, en esta entrega la prosa se hace mucho más amena, por eso las 5 estrellas.

Colin Macdonald: it is a deeply not easy book. there is a lot of good historic details and engaging insights here, yet it is all buried in horribly convoluted writing. this can be coming from anyone who is beautiful pleased with 18th century enlightenment writers like Gibbon, Johnson, and Smith. i am happy with advanced sentence structure, yet this is often whatever else. it really is nearly stream-of-consciousness, peppered with digressions, asides, pointless details, caveats, exclusions, qualifiers, and elliptical references. I suspect the matter is that he understands his topic too well, and has difficulty adopting the viewpoint of somebody new to the material. i am yes there is a lot to be discovered from a sufferer and cautious interpreting of this book, yet boy, it would be a slog.

Soumya: special and Informative. quite places into viewpoint the improvement of Capitalism as a system.

David: amazing paintings as ever by means of the nice Marxist historian

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