

**Thesis on the Itinerary of XXth Century Western Historiography
An Approach From the '*Longue Durée*'.**

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To try to explain the immense problem of the profiles that the history of the twentieth century historiography itself have had from a *longue durée* perspective, implies taking into account, as Braudel (1) proposed, the great evolutionary curves and the great lines that define the collection of advances that historical studies have rendered precisely throughout the course of this twentieth century. This also entails the fact of centering attention most of all on the great transformations, on the truly profound modifications that have gone on to radically redefine the task of historiography during this period of the twentieth century.

In order for us to introduce ourselves into this problem, it is therefore pertinent that we ask ourselves what has occurred with world historiography over the last hundred and fifty years. And if we refer to a period of one hundred and fifty years and not of one hundred, it is because we have assumed as a valid perspective set forth by French historiography that states that *historical* centuries *never* coincide with simple *chronological* centuries (2). Thus, in our opinion, current historiography has not begun to define its profiles in 1968, nor in 1945, nor in 1900 either. It began to define its fundamental profiles, precisely during the period of 1848 to 1870, that highly privileged critical climate in European history. And, as it is quite evident, we are not referring to innocent or random dates: 1848 is the date of the great European revolutions, whereas 1870 is the essential date of the Paris Commune experiment. Therefore, if we seriously ask ourselves the date when, what we today know as contemporary historiography began to be constructed, the most pertinent answer would obviously be 1848. The reason is that starting with the mentioned date, the elements that *are in effect today within* the historiographic scenery, have begun to define themselves (3). Hence, if we observe the historiography of these last one hundred and fifty years in more detail, from 1848 to this date, we could recognize four great moments, four great stages that seem to define these elements, and that are essential in contemporary historical studies.

These are four different stages that contemporary historiography shall have reviewed throughout its recent long and complex journey, and that are to give, if they are seen as a whole, the totality of the "inheritances" or of the traditions and forms of practicing the historian's craft, and that it is possible today to find within the different areas of national historiographies of the entire planet.

Thus, and traveling this route of contemporary historiography with "seven league boots", it is quite clear that this route began with a circumstantial climate or moment of *foundational* rupture that goes from 1848 to 1870. This circumstantial climate or situation, being at the same time a very important period for the general history of Europe itself, has given birth to the *first* systematic and organic intent to found a *true science of history*, through the critical project of original Marxism. This was a first stage of contemporary historiography, that was to be followed by a second period, from 1870 to approximately 1929, when a *first historiographic hegemony* was formed. Having located its center of essential radiation towards the European German speaking environment, this first hegemony served as general

“model” for the series of remaining historiographies of Europe and of the western world of that period.

However, this second cycle or moment of recent historiography was to come to an end with the terrible crisis unleashed in German culture due to the tragic rise of Nazism, thus giving way to a third stage, that was to be characterized by the emergence of a *second historiographic hegemony*, located now, in general terms, within the space of the French hexagon. This was a second hegemony or general model that has served as an inspiration and a required reference for all of the historiographic spheres of that period and that in turn has brought to an end with the revolution of 1968, that profound *cultural revolution*, of worldwide implications and of major civilizing consequences.

Finally, and crowning this entire and complex course of contemporary historic studies, a fourth and last stage has unfolded, the direct offspring of the great and profound transformations that 1968 has conveyed in all of the *mechanisms of cultural reproduction of modern social life* and in which historiographic hegemony no longer exists, rather to the contrary, there is a new and unprecedented situation of *polycentrism* in the innovation and in the discovery of the new lines of progress in historiography, that has extended over to our days. We must then try to approach, with utmost care, these four essential moments of the contemporary itinerary of recent historiography (4).

If we very briefly define the features that characterize these four main stages, we shall observe that at the same time they are the definition of those fundamental elements that allow the understanding the different types of history that currently share the historiographic scene, the different types of history that are being developed at present, not only in Germany or in France, but also quite clearly in all of Europe and all over the western world. It means the different forms of practicing the historian’s craft that turns more and more complex, as well as more and more fascinating every day.

The point of departure of the historiography that we can genuinely call *contemporary*, is therefore located in that specific circumstantial period of 1848 to 1870, which is the period also of the birth and first assertion of Marxism. Marxism is born between 1848 and 1870 and, as one important French Marxist of the peak of structuralism once said, it was defined as the moment of birth of the continent “History” within the spectrum of human sciences, as the beginning of the modern project of the foundations and initiation of a true science of history (5). Regarding the problem that we are dealing with here in relation to the origins of the current profiles of twentieth century historical studies, the previous means that Marx and Engels’ critical project is in fact the moment in which history emerges from that extremely extended period in which it had lived during centuries and even milleniums, and in which it could be confused without much conflict with myth, legend and the world of fiction and literature, in order to finally pass to the effort of trying to become a true “well-reasoned undertaking of analysis” (6), in a real science, where the subject of study is the critical reconstruction of the different evolutionary curves traveled by human societies, within the vast arch of time during which these societies have unfolded. This is the moment of the foundation of a new science or of the opening of a new space within the system of contemporary

scientific knowledge, which at the same time inaugurates this particular history of what today is *contemporary historiography* (7).

And there is no doubt that without the consideration of Marxism, we would have difficulty understanding what twentieth century historiography as well as current historic studies are. It is clear that in spite of postmodern disenchanting visions, and in spite of the enormous and at times, massive change of direction in the sensitivity of public opinion, and also, of the change of direction of the sensitivity of large sectors of the formerly critical *intelligentsia* all over the world; a change of direction from the leftist positions that had so much strength and support in the sixties and seventies, towards the more conservative positions, those of renunciation, that characterize the eighties and nineties, it is impossible to understand the historical studies of today if we do not take into account the influence and echoes that Marxism had in the *entire* history of historiography since 1848 to the present date (8).

This is evident if we think, for instance, of all of the openly *Marxist* historiographic tendencies, that today are essential in historic studies, such as the tendency of the journal *Past and Present* of Eric Hobsbawm and all of his group of traditionalist Marxists, or also of the work of E.P. Thompson and of Perry Anderson and of the contributions of his journal *New Left Review*, as well as in the socialist and critical historiography of Raphael Samuel and of his *History Workshop*. The same happens with authors such as Pierre Vilar or Immanuel Wallerstein, who are openly Marxist even though at the same time they are capable of incorporating within their different historical or historiographic contributions, the most interesting contributions and developments of other intellectual perspectives or horizons. Also, it is the complex but extremely interesting case of certain historians, who, in the origins of their preparation had a strong Marxist stamp, which was later able to evolve and mix with other elements and produce such original and interesting historiographic works and results as in the case of the works and methodological essays of Carlo Ginzburg, or the innovative works of Giovanni Levi (9).

It is also the case of all that vast range of histories and historiographic tendencies that at one time pretended to develop under the name of Marxism, as was the case of Soviet or Polish or Hungarian or Rumanian historiography, and also of Chinese, Albanian and Vietnamese, that is, that entire diverse and multifaceted collection of the different historiographies in all of the countries of the so –called “Socialist” world throughout the brief *historical* twentieth century that runs from 1914 – 17 to 1989. And finally, within this vast spectrum of inheritances and presence of Marxism of contemporary historiography, the results produced by the enormous impact that Marxist cosmology had upon Mexican and Latin American historiography of the seventies and eighties must also be considered, that is added to all the different nuclei that over the length and breadth of the capitalist world and during all of the periods we have mentioned previously, maintained different historiographic projects and efforts equally illuminated by the perspective of Marx and his different followers. Because even though after 1989, this impact *would seem to be* slightly more distant, we are in fact referring to a superficial appearance derived from one single immediate experience, that in addition is refuted if we go back for only a period of ten to fifteen years.

Marxism therefore, also saturated profoundly and radically, all of Latin American historiography after 1968, and it is for this reason, among others, that without consideration of this Marxist component and of the multiple traditions and schools that this marxist component helped to create, all of which are derived from that foundational moment of the modern project of the construction of a science in history, it is not possible to properly understand the complex facade of the most contemporary historiographic scenery (10).

Aside from this, it is clear that the date of the starting point of the modern project for the constitution of a historic science, and in consequence, of the profiles of historiography that is currently in effect, a date associated with the European revolutions of 1848 and the birth of Marxism is by no means accidental. Because 1848 is the *historic point* when the global and secular curve of modernity *changed its course*, the moment when the long *ascending* phase of this modernity, that began in the XVIth Century, becomes exhausted, to give way to the *descending* branch of that same modernity, that unfolded from the 1848 / 70 period until today. This therefore signifies that all contemporary historiography has developed, at its different moments, within the horizon of that descending branch of modernity, and, in consequence, within a space marked by the possibility of advancing in a *critical* route, in a direction opposite to the traditional conceptions that were dominant during the ascending phase of that same bourgeois and capitalist modernity (11).

And it is precisely this fundamental change of course of the long vital cycle of modernity, that reaches its climax during that 1848 – 1870 period, that shall doubly explain, both the complex process of the *birth* of Marxism –the *negative – critical* expression of that same modernity--, as well as the project of the radical criticism of the old fashioned ways of conceiving history, and the initial and simultaneous construction of that project that is currently still in effect and still in the course of construction of a true *scientific* perspective for historical studies. And it is in this exact sense that the systematic criticism of the main variants of the old style of addressing history; that is, of any and all possible philosophy of history, a criticism that found – and not by chance- its first systematic model in Marxism itself, as well as all of the historical discourses, widely disseminated previously, be it as narrative or empirical discourses, or also as mythical or legendary discourses regarding history, equally deconstructed and transcended by that very same Marxism. From this point of view, Marxism lays the foundations for *all* of the modern *ulterior projects* of the construction of a science of history.

And in the same way that Marxism in general, as a cosmovision of the world and as a school of thought that has illuminated several political and social movements, but also different intellectual courses and tendencies in the vast field of the social sciences, has suffered a complex process of pluralization and of readaptation to the most heterogeneous and dissimilar experiences and circumstances –going from its conversion into a dominant ideology and its reduction to a series of simplified apothegms, to its true critical recovery and its creative and innovative deeper analysis— thus, the historiographies that have reclaimed themselves as “Marxist” throughout this itinerary of twentieth century historiography, have equally covered a most varied and diversified range of possibilities, that cover exercises that are very sophisticated and very intricate intellectually (like for example in the case of the Frankfurt School), or efforts of a

very adequate level that always nourish the critical and marginal lines and perspectives of historiography (like the works already mentioned of Carlo Ginzburg or of Immanuel Wallerstein), to very elemental applications of a rather more simplified and even “vulgar” Marxism, that having reduced the complex vision of Marxism to a series of “handbook” formulas, have produced works that are very schematic and lacking in originality (12).

The second moment is formed after 1870, around the progressive assertion of a first historiographic hegemony, the hegemony of the German speaking universe. A hegemony that by combining into one coherent historiographic proposal all of the progress that historical studies had achieved between the French Revolution of 1789 and that 1848 – 1870 period, was to represent to a certain extent, a sort of regression in regard to the previously explained founding moment.

Because with the defeat of the Paris Commune, that revolutionary situation that had given birth to Marxism was closed, thereby giving birth to a new stage within European history that was to be marked by the aggravation of nationalisms and the emergence of a certain intellectual “counteroffensive” against the critical movements and the intellectual positions of challenge. And in tone with this, the new historiographic hegemony that was to form within the space of the German culture, was to nourish a vision of historic facts that intends to be exaggeratedly “objectivistic”, at the same time that it throws itself towards functions of civic and nationalistic education and it forgets to some extent the principal inputs that had been discovered and conquered during the previous period (13). This, together with the fact that during these periods, Marxism had never penetrated within the academy nor within the university environments, remaining more linked to the social and political revolutionary movements of the Europe of those times.

It is at this time, and within this intellectual climate, with an inverse sign to that of the previous 1848 – 1870 period, when that second cycle of contemporary historiography shall prosper, at this point marked by the emergence of a system in which a nation or an intellectual space or area functions as the main center of historiographic innovation and the rest of the historiographies imitate it or follow it, at a closer or more distant range, to become different ‘peripheries’ of ‘semiperipheries’ of that same center. Actually, viewed in a broader perspective, it is clear that approximately between 1870 and 1930, it was almost always the German speaking world that played that role of hegemonic dominance within European and western world historiography. Without any doubt, it is a fact that nine times out of ten, all avant-garde research, main themes, principal debates and most innovative historiography in 1880, 1900 and 1920 was generated by German or Austrian culture of those periods. On the eve of the First World War and immediately afterward, the most important authors of western world historiography are once again, in an overwhelming majority, either German or Austrian.

It is therefore perfectly logical that it was to the interior of this German speaking historiography, that was to hold historiographic hegemony or dominion within historic studies between 1870 and 1930, where the renowned polemics regarding the *Methodenstreit* were to be carried out and in which the entire discussion regarding the differences between natural sciences and sciences of the spirit (*Geistwissenschaft*) were to take place. And it is also within this cultural

universe, with that German hue, where the *Kulturgeschichte* and other different lines of the then innovative German and Austrian (14) social history were to prosper, as well as did this type of historiography dominant in certain environments that have reached our days and that have been classified under the agnomen of “positivist”. And even though it is quite clear that the agnomen of positivist historiography is not the most adequate, in view of the abuse that it has been subject to and also of the diverse number of heterogeneous significances that have been made to come under its statement, it is however true that that term of positivist historiography has an important significance that we must preserve, because it refers to that type of originally German historiography that was *dominant* first in the German – speaking Universities to later rapidly become, by means of that already described scheme of the first historiographic hegemony, the widely disseminated and even generally in effect model in all of the European and Western world Universities.

Since we have already stated above, this dominant historiography that we can well label Rankian or positivist –recognizing however that Ranke himself, who formulated his ‘battle cry’ stating to “narrate things exactly as they happened”, does not fully adjust in his work to what this denomination implies—and that in its essence unfolds between 1870 and 1929, was to a certain extent the condensed result of certain important processes that occurred in European historiography between 1789 and 1870. Because it is known by all that it was for the first time in 1789 that the French Revolution democratized in a surprising fashion, a truly enormous amount of information, that as of that date was to form a regular part of the basic raw material of contemporary historiography.

Because, if before 1789, the Archives of all of the European States were State secrets, after this same date, historians had at their disposal absolutely everything that had to do with those States, as well as with the Departments and even the Parishes. Among its many and beneficial consequences, the 1789 Revolution, also implied the immense opening of a truly important quantity of new information, now accessible to the eye and most of all to the work of historians, a fact which explains why it is precisely during the XIXth Century when that interesting project of the *Monumentae Germaniae Historicae* is developed, in that German –speaking world to which we have referred, at the same time that in France a project prospers, such as the historiographic task of Augustin Thierry, who dedicated his entire life to collecting the documents and to making the history of the french Third State. Positivist historiography, that was to be characterized, among other important features, by a fetishistic and exaggerated cult in regard to texts (15), which it considers the *only and exclusive legitimate* source of historic work, and in fact condenses an entire century of document collection, a century of classification and updating of the information that previously *was not* accessible to historians.

And it is clear that this positivist historiography, that at the same time condenses the great progress that *historical erudition* reached during that XIXth Century after the French Revolution, but that retreats in regard to the enormous revolution that Marxism had implicated in the field of history, is going to possess certain important virtues, linked to the fact that it insists upon the importance of learning the patient task of the search for sources, and the distinction between

historic source and literary source, showing us also the customary procedures of the external criticism and the internal criticism of the documents and the texts, showing us also how to distinguish a true document from a false one. In sum, instructing us in regard to everything that has to do with the *erudite* dimension of history, this positivist Rankian history that has also nourished, at times excessively and with a surprising strength and tenacity, the entire group of historiographic scopes and of the national historiographies of the most diverse parts of the world (16).

But, as we have already stated before, the limit of this positivist historiography of history, that in general terms was dominant during the 1870 – 1930 period, depends upon the fact that it is a historiography that is based on only one type of source. And also, on the fact that, basically, it is more an abbreviated expression of the main progress that history was able to conquer during that XIXth Century that was called the “Century of History”, and in consequence, it is more a *strictly old - fashioned (nineteenth - century)* type of history, that nevertheless has survived itself to become integrated as a still present component within twentieth century historiography. And in the same way that Marxism, developed during the chronological XIXth Century, it is in fact a clear *anticipation* of many of the most profound features of that twentieth century historiography, and therefore positivist history is going to operate as a sort of still living “*anachronism*” throughout this last century of life of contemporary historic studies. This also explains why that positivist history, in its eager search of a very strict and only apparently possible “objectivity” in the face of historic facts, has finally lead to a clear renunciation of the entire interpretative and explicative dimension of historic science, a dimension that had instead been underscored as nuclear by the Marxist project of the already analyzed previous period, to later become one of the most characteristic stokes of all of the diverse historiographic trends of the last century.

And these were, among many others, the limitations that once inside the same 1870 – 1930 stage provoked the most radical criticisms to this positivist version of history, within the German – speaking universe itself, as well as outside it. Because very well known, for instance, is the harsh criticism made by Marc Bloch, Lucien Febvre and the entire group of the “First Annals” against that celebrated assertion that can be found in the amply disseminated French Manual by Ch. Langlois and Ch. Seignobos, published in 1898, under the title of *Introduction to Historical Studies*, which manual is otherwise, only a French variation of the same Rankian positivist historiography: “History is made with texts and a serious historian would never dare state that which he (she) cannot back up with a written document”. And this statement has been taken seriously to such a degree, that it can be found in the origin of a distinction that today is clearly *obsolete*, but that continues to be in effect and applied within our customary historical conceptions and teachings: the traditional distinction between history and *prehistory*, and that particularly marks the beginning of the former, which is precisely the invention of writing. Then, and following this same logic, no serious historian would turn to study those societies where writing did not exist because they had no written texts, and therefore it would be impossible to solidly reconstruct their history.

And the authors assume the value of this statement so radically that they seriously set forth the question of knowing what is going to happen once historians have exhausted and interpreted all of the written documents that are available, to which they emphatically and without hesitation respond that then the historian's craft shall come to an end. However, in order to immediately calm all historians, they state that happily, there are still hundreds of patient and meticulous years of work left ahead.

This positivist historiography is then the history that, based on one sole source shall concentrate in a limited manner on the study and examination of only certain dimensions of the social weave, of the biographic, political, diplomatic and military facts. And it shall also be, as we stated before, a history that shall have a very memoristic, very nationalistic, and even "chauvinistic" function, closely relating to the interests of the State and to its visions and objectives of those times, of preparing "good citizens" and of reinforcing in them a nationalistic and even patriotic conscience. And finally, this same history that has dominated the teaching of the European and western world Universities in the last decades of the XIXth Century and the first quarter of the XXth, has also been a history that has been very *descriptive*, very *narrative*, very *erudite* and very enclosed or confined within its very own and limited visions of the social and historical problems (17).

This, however, does not prevent the fact that, as we have already stated before, it would be impossible to understand the scenery of current historic studies, without taking into account the contribution of this positivist historiography. Because it is clear that there cannot be history without *erudition*, even though it is also evident that history is never reduced to its sole condition of erudition, and that in order to rise to it, it is necessary to transcend the simple condition of "antiquarian" or lover and collector of "curios of the past", exactly as it is indicated to us by the most advanced historians since the beginning of this century (18).

And it is clear than in characterizing this positivist history, only the *dominant* line of this German – speaking historiography is addressed. Because also well known is the fact that between 1870 and 1930 within this same universe of German cultural hue, a whole complex and diverse series was displayed of *other* historiographic positions and of *other* intellectual traditions within history, as in the case of the Marxist historiography of authors such as Karl Kautsky, Heinrich Cunow, Otto Bauer, etc., and latter the works of the Frankfurt School, or subject to another trend, as in the case of the *critical academic historiography* of Max Weber, of Alfred Weber or of Karl Lamprecht, or Norbert Elias, among others. And also, the case of those interesting debates and acute polemics regarding such central questions as that of "comprehension" in history (the theme of the *Verstehen*), or regarding the specificity and special statute of the "sciences of culture" of W. Dilthey, of G. Simmel, of Rickert, etc. And even though in all of these cases it is always in regard to *marginal* lines, in the face of the dominant, hegemonic, tendency of this positivist variation of a precisely Rankian hue, it is clear that it is not possible to adequately understand this same German – speaking hegemony without also considering these rich and stimulating historiographic contributions coming from these marginal and critical lines of the German and Austrian universe of those periods (19).

Thus, after asserting this historiographic hegemony upon Europe and the West, it is well known that Germany lost the 1914 War, to go on to have the most difficult tragedy of its history, which was precisely the ascent of Nazism. This tragical experience of the years 1933 – 1945, show us what dictatorships are capable of doing to culture. This hegemonic historiography of the German – speaking world came to an end under the successive blows of the First World War, and later with the upsurge of Nazism. Afterwards, with the finishing stroke of the Second World War, German culture suffered the blow from which it has not yet totally recovered. Because Germans have not yet completely digested what Nazism was within their history, and German historiography has not yet recovered from what this terrible blow of Nazism was to them.

It is clear too, that this hegemony was not linked only to the task of historiography. It is now possible to recognize that this dominion or hegemony takes place in the entire *field of social sciences*: the time of this hegemony in historiography is exactly the same period during which Freud's psychoanalysis was developed, and it was the period of the Vienna Circle and of the work of L. Wittgenstein, and it is too the times of the Frankfurt School and of all of that immense wealth of the German and Austrian culture that continues to surprise us to this day.

The third stage derives directly from the mentioned crisis of the second stage. After these consecutive blows, a *second* and different European and Western historiographic hegemony shall be established. And if we ask ourselves who dominates the historiographic field in 1950, then the answer is that nine out of ten times, the most innovative and most relevant authors of the historiography of those days were now French – speaking historians. Because it is precisely the French hexagon that has by this time become *hegemonic*, by means of a new dominant project which is the project that is known as the trend of the 'Annals School'. It is a fact that the French Annals are to dominate the historiographic field between 1929 and 1968, approximately (20). And this occurs, stemming from a project that establishes itself as the *perfect counterpoint* of the previously referred dominant positivist historiography. And it is not only because the Annals are going to directly and explicitly, criticize that Rankian history, but also because in the face of that history which is only concentrated on the military, the biographic, the political and the diplomatic, the new Annalist perspective proposes a history of the social weave in *its sum total*. And then, instead of only studying the great men and the great battles and treaties that constitute the resonant events of history, the Annalist historians shall begin to study the civilizations, the economic structures and the social classes, popular collective beliefs or modern capitalism, from a new analytic and epistemological position.

Because in the face of positivist history, that maintains that the subject matter of study for those followers of Clio must be exclusively the past, and in addition, the past that is registered in written sources, the authors of the Annalist trend shall recover the famous definition that the historian's subject is 'all human trace existing in any time', and therefore, that history is a *global* history, the dimensions of which encompass from the most distant prehistory to the most current present, additionally containing absolutely all of the different manifestations of man, within the entire complex array of realities: geographic, territorial, ethnic,

anthropological, technological, economic, social, political, cultural, religious, artistic, etc., etc. Therefore, in order to form or constitute itself, one history cannot then be limited to one unique source, namely, the written source, but rather it must necessarily propose a multiplicity of sources, thus recovering, for instance, the technique of dendrochronology, the use of iconography, as well as the aërian photography, the analysis of pollen or the carbon 14 technique, among so many others.

And facing the predominantly narrative, monographic and descriptive history that it is confronting, the project of the *Annales d'histoire économique et sociale*, is going to propose instead a fundamentally *interpretative, problematic, comparative* and *critical* history. That is to say, a history that while systematically playing with the benefits of the application of the comparative method, is at the same time capable of permanently establishing the singularity and specificity of the phenomena it studies, as well as its common and universal elements, thus interweaving complex dialectics of the particular and the general within the great evolutive curves of the analyzed human processes. And, it is also a history that, making conscious efforts towards the construction of general explanation models and in the making of general concepts, theories and hypothesis, renounces at the same time to the naive and impossible search for the historian's 'absolute' objectivity. Instead of this illusory task, the Annals shall distinctly express the paradigm of the '*histoire problème*', that on the contrary states that any serious historical research begins precisely by setting the limits of the 'questionnaire' or of the survey that must be answered, that in some measure *determines* the work of erudition itself. Since given that 'you only find what you are looking for' and stemming from 'texts speak depending on how they are interrogated', then all true history is relative and all historiographic results are also susceptible of deeper delving, enriching and at times, even of total and radical revision (21).

Thus, the German – speaking historiographic hegemony, between 1929 and 1968 was replaced precisely by Marc Bloch, Lucien Febvre and Fernand Braudel's project of the *Annales d'Histoire Economique et Sociale*. This project that at the same time that it established and disseminated French historiography as the dominant historiography within Europe and within the West, opened up the new fields of quantitative history, of history of mentalities, of history of material life or civilization and of the new forms of economic, demographic and social history.

And then, by developing at the same time those new paradigms of compared, global, problematic, open and *longue durée* history that we have briefly referred, as well as their original models of interpretation regarding feudal society, the XVIth Century, the Reforms or capitalism, this historiography of French and Mediterranean matrix was able to determine, between 1929 and 1968, the main lines of historiographic innovation, as well as the great debates, themes, developments and the main fields of European and Western World historians.

And perhaps it is not necessary to insist excessively upon the evident fact that, it would also not be possible to understand the current profiles of contemporary historical studies, without considering this whole vast collection of contributions of the Annals, contributions that today are common knowledge to all serious historiography in our own times (22).

Finally, the fourth stage encompasses the period that goes from the Cultural Revolution of 1968 to the present. Because after 1968 we are again going to close the chapter of French historiographic hegemony, to continue on to the situation that dominates the current historiographic scenery. What is it that occurs after 1968?. It is a fact that 1968 is a definitive fracture in all forms of the *cultural reproduction of modern life*. It is not then a simple student's movement, nor is it a movement of generational differences. It is more a *cultural and civilizing revolution* of the main forms of cultural reproduction of all present modernity. This has been well studied by Fernand Braudel and especially by Immanuel Wallerstein (23).

Because after 1968 we passed on to another situation: the page changes again and then a radically different historiographic situation is created. And if in 1900, the dominant historiography is the German – speaking one, and in 1950, the dominant historiography is the French historiography, which then is the dominant historiography in 1990 or in 2001?. The answer is as much original as it is, in principle, quite puzzling: the answer to this question is *none*. Because by 1990 or by 2001 *no hegemonic historiography exists* and then the “School” of the Italian “*Microstoria*” is as important as the fourth generation of Annals, as well as the British socialist historiography, the critical perspective of ‘world-system analysis’, the Russian historic anthropology, the Latin American regional history (24), or the German *Neue Sozial Geschichte*, among others.

After 1968 something important was broken, and that regime of the *longue durée* of historiographic hegemony of a cultural space or of a national space came to an end, and then the new modality was created of the functioning of historiography, the unfolding of which we attended within the current situation. *Today no one is hegemonic within contemporary historiography*, which summons us all to participate in the historiographic innovation. Because today we are experiencing a situation of *polycentrism in historiographic innovation*. And also of polycentrism in cultural innovation as well.

A conclusive idea is important. When we speak about the regime of historiographic hegemony coming to an end, we delve into a *much more profound* problem, that we have not studied sufficiently, and that makes reference to the fact that after 1968 almost *all types of centrality* in society and at a global level also ended. Because before 1968 we all knew well that the social subject par excellence that should carry out the revolutionary change was the working class, but after 1968, we know well that the social change will be made by several social subjects, including the feminist, the ecologist, the pacifist, the indigenous, the antiracist and the diverse social minorities movements, among others.

Before 1968, the economic basis was predominant in the protest of social movements of dispute, but now all levels have become politicized and are fundamental in the antisystemic social movements of dispute. Before 1968 we knew there were dominant economies in the bosom of Western economy and in the bosom of the world–economie, but after '68, none of this exists any longer and we are entering into a polycentric situation in all levels. What is important to finish this first and open conclusion, goes in the direction that perhaps humanity is going through a stage of “historical bifurcation” (25) and that we are then in the antechamber of a change that is so monumental that it would therefore be causing

the formation of a new pattern of functioning, evidently not only in historiography and not even in all cultural space, but rather in social functioning in its globality.

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NOTES.

(1) Regarding this braudelian perspective of the historical *longue durée*, cfr. Fernand BRAUDEL, "History and Social Sciences. The '*longue durée*'" in *Social Sciences Information*, num. 5, Paris, 1971. Also to be consulted, by Carlos Antonio AGUIRRE ROJAS, "La larga duración: *in illo tempore et nunc*" in the book *Braudel a Debate*, JGH Editores, Mexico, 1997, "Die '*longue durée*' im Spiegel" in the Journal *Comparativ*, vol. 6, num. 1, Leipzig, 1996, and the book *Fernand Braudel und die modernen Sozialwissenschaften*, Leipziger Universitätsverlag, Leipzig, 1999, chapter 2.

(2) Only two examples of this position of the French historians: Fernand BRAUDEL was to speak of a "long XVIth Century" that would go from 1450 to 1650 in several of his texts, for example in his essay "European expansion and capitalism. 1450 – 1650", in the book *Chapters in Western Civilization*, Columbia University Press, New York, 1961, whereas Emmanuel LE ROY LADURIE refers to a "long XIIIth Century" in his book *Montaillou, aldea occitana de 1294 to 1324*, Ed. Taurus, Madrid, 1988.

(3) In spite of the enormous relevance of the theme, up to now there are few *global studies* of twentieth century historiography. Therefore, this essay only has the nature of a *first approximation* to the problem. Regarding this historiography cfr. Georg G. IGGERS, *New directions in European historiography*, (revised version), Wesleyan University Press, Hanover, 1984 and *Historiography in the twentieth century*, Wesleyan University Press, Hanover, 1997, Francisco VAZQUEZ GARCIA, *Estudios de teoría y metodología del saber histórico*, Ed. Universidad de Cadiz, Cadiz, 1989, Josep FONTANA, *Historia. Análisis del pasado y proyecto social*, Ed. Crítica, Barcelona, 1982, Jurandir MALERBA (coord.), *A velha historia*, Ed. Papirus, Sao Paulo, 1996, Guy BORDE & Herve MARTIN, *Les écoles historiques*, Ed. du Seuil, Paris, 1997, Anna GREEN & Katheleen TROUP, *The houses of history*, New York University Press, New York, 1999, Elizabeth FONSECA, *Historia. Teoría y métodos*, Ed. EDUCA, Costa Rica, 1989, Elena HERNANDEZ SANDOICA, *Los caminos de la historia*, Ed. Síntesis, Madrid, 1995, Collective Book, *La historia y el oficio de historiador*, Ed. Imagen Contemporánea, La Habana, 1996 and Carlos Antonio AGUIRRE ROJAS, "Rethinking current Social Sciences: the case of Historical Discourses in the history of Modernity" in *Journal of World-System Research*, Vol. VI, Number 3, 2000 and the books *Itinerarios de la historiografía del siglo XX*, Ed. Centro Juan Marinello, La Habana, 1999, and *L'histoire conquérante*, Ed. L'Harmattan, Paris, 2000.

(4) It is clear that it is a very general schematization, and that it refers only to the principal lines of evolution of this historiography of the last one hundred and fifty years, considered as a whole and from a global viewpoint.

(5) Regarding this idea, cfr. Luis ALTHUSSER, *Pour Marx*, Ed. Francois Maspero, Paris, 1965.

(6) Exactly as defined by Marc BLOCH, in his beautiful unfinished book *The historian's Craft*, Manchester University Press & Alfred Knopf, Manchester, 1954.

(7) In regard to the current validity of Marxism, and in relation to its history during the twentieth century cfr. Immanuel WALLERSTEIN, "Marxism After the Collapse of the Communisms", in *After Liberalism*, Ed. The New Press, New York, 1995, and Bolivar ECHEVERRIA, *Las ilusiones de la modernidad*, UNAM – El Equilibrista, Mexico, 1995.

(8) Regarding this importance of Marxism for history cfr. Carlos Antonio AGUIRRE ROJAS, "El problema de la historia en la concepción de Marx y Engels" in *Revista Mexicana de Sociología*, vol. XLV, num. 4, Mexico, 1983, "Economía, escasez y sesgo productivista" in *Boletín de Antropología Americana*, num. 21, Mexico, 1991, and also the article "Feudalismus" in the *Historisch-Kritisches Wörterbuch des Marxismus*, Band 4, Ed. Argument, 1999.

(9) Interesting in this regard is Jean-Paul SARTRE's thesis that defines Marxism as "the unbeatable horizon of our own times" in his essay on "Questions de Méthode" included in his *Critique de la raison dialectique*, Ed. Gallimard, Paris, 1960.

(10) It is important that we insist on the fact that several of the most important historiographic trends today are, either openly Marxist, as is the case of the British Marxist historians of *Past and Present Journal*, as well as of the *New Left Review*, or of a clear Marxist origin, as in the case of the Italian microhistory or of North American Radical History.

(11) We have developed this idea at greater length in Carlos Antonio AGUIRRE ROJAS, "Convergências e divergências entre os Annales de 1929 a 1968 e o marxismo: ensaio de balanço global" in the book *Os Annales e a historiografia francesa*, Ed. Universidade de Maringá, Maringá, Brasil, 2000.

(12) Regarding these multiple Marxisms of the twentieth century cfr. Immanuel WALLERSTEIN, "Fernand Braudel, Historian, 'homme de la conjoncture'" in the book *Unthinking Social Sciences*, Polity Press, Cambridge, 1991, and Carlos Antonio AGUIRRE ROJAS, "Marxismo, liberalismo y expansión de la economía – mundo europea" in the book *Breves Ensayos Críticos*, Ed. Universidad Michoacana, Morelia, 2000.

(13) A synthesis of the features of that German model of historiography can be found in Francisco VAZQUEZ GARCIA, *Estudios de teoría y metodología del saber histórico*, cit.

(14) Regarding this item cfr. Gerhard OESTREICH's article, "Le origini della storia sociale in Germania" in *Anali del Istituto Storico-tedesco di Trento*, num 1, 1977.

(15) As Lucien FEBVRE has accurately pointed out in his *Combats pour l'histoire*, Ed. Armand Colin, Paris, 1992.

(16) The handbook that is to condense these contributions, within the French horizon, shall be the book by C.V. LANGLOIS and C. SEIGNOBOS, *Introduction aux Etudes Historiques*, Ed. Kime, Paris, 1992. It would be worthwhile to begin a more serious and systematic survey and research in regard to the reasons of the survival of this type of history, that is more old-fashioned (nineteenth century), which is positivist history, which reasons are to some extent linked to its character that tends to be inoffensive and non – critical in the face of the dominant powers.

(17) This is the official history, 'glorious' and auto – celebratory that also, at its given moment, is to be criticized by Michel FOUCAULT, who shall oppose the 'counter – history' and the 'counter – memory', that are criticisms derived from his archaeological – genealogical approach. Cfr. for example his book *"Il faut défendre la société"*, *Cours au Collège de France. 1976*, Ed. Seuil – Gallimard, Paris, 1997.

(18) Cfr. Henri PIRENNE, "What are historians trying to do?" in the book *Methods in Social Science*, Chicago University Press, Chicago, 1937, and also Henri BERR, *La synthèse en histoire*, Ed. Albin Michel, Paris, 1952.

(19) To mention only one possible example, think about the interesting works of Norbert ELIAS, *The Civilizing Process*, (Ed. Basil Blackwell, Oxford, vol. 1, 1978 and vol. 2, 1982) and *The Court Society*, Basil Blackwell, Oxford, 1983. Regarding this cfr. Carlos Antonio AGUIRRE ROJAS, "Norbert Elias, historiador y crítico de la modernidad" in the book *Aproximaciones a la modernidad*, Ed. UAM Xochimilco, Mexico, 1997.

(20) Regarding this tendency of the French Annals School, cfr. Francois DOSSE, *L'histoire en miettes*, Ed. La Découverte, Paris, 1987, Peter BURKE, *The French historical Revolution. The Annales School 1929 – 89*, Polity Press, Cambridge, 1990, Matthias MIDDELL & Steffen SAMMLER, *Alles Gewordene hat Geschichte. Die Schule der Annales in ihren Texte*, Ed. Reclam Leipzig, Leipzig, 1994 and Carlos Antonio AGUIRRE ROJAS, *L'histoire conquérante*, cit.

(21) We have developed this argument more extensively in Carlos Antonio AGUIRRE ROJAS, "Between Marx and Braudel: making History, knowing History", in *Review*, vol. XV, number 2, 1992.

(22) In order to observe, the current presence of the thinking of Fernand Braudel, confront the books *Primeras Jornadas Braudelianas*, Ed. Instituto Mora, Mexico, 1993 and *Segundas Jornadas Braudelianas*, Ed. Instituto Mora, Mexico, 1995. See also Carlos Antonio AGUIRRE ROJAS, "Synchronisation et désynchronisation des mouvements historiques: un essai d'explication braudélienne de la rupture historique de 1989" in *Social Science Information/ Information sur les Sciences Sociales*, vol. 35, num. 4, Paris, 1996, and the book *Ensayos Braudelianos*, Ed. Manuel Suarez Editor, Rosario, 2000.

(23) Regarding the profound significance of this 1968 Cultural Revolution, cfr. Immanuel WALLERSTEIN, "1968: revolution in the world-system" in the book *Geopolitics and Geoculture*, Maison des Sciences de l'Homme & Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1991, Fernand BRAUDEL, "Entretien" in *L'Express*, Paris, nov. 1971, Françoise DOSSE, "Mai 68: les effets de l'histoire sur l'Histoire" in *Cahiers de l'IHTP*, num 11, Paris, 1989, and Carlos Antonio AGUIRRE ROJAS, "1968: la gran ruptura" in *Breves Ensayos Críticos*, cit.

(24) About this Latin American Historiography, see Carlos Antonio AGUIRRE ROJAS, "Métier d'Historien en Amérique Latine. Assimilation et retentissement d'un texte majeur" in the journal *Cahiers Marc Bloch*, num. 5, Paris, 1997.

(25) In the sense developed by Immanuel WALLERSTEIN in his book *After Liberalism*, cit.

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