



"Knowledge, Power, and Politics:

The Role of an Intellectual in an Age of Transition"

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The relation of knowledge specialists, intellectuals, to persons of power, persons in power has always been an ambiguous one, fraught with tension and dishonesty. Intellectuals are essential to the ability of persons in power to remain in power. They illuminate the realities and the alternatives that exist. At the same time, they are dangerous to those in power, first of all because they can serve opponents, and secondly because they can expose the follies and the deceptions of those in power. On the other hand, intellectuals do not exist in a void. They need material support, which is difficult to obtain without at least the passive assent of those in power. And they need a public audience, which is difficult to maintain if they are merely the mouthpieces of the powerful.

I do not intend to review the history of these relationships nor do I wish to discuss in any detail these dilemmas. I make mine the basic lessons that Machiavelli and Gramsci bequeathed us, tempered by the sober reflections of Max Weber. The powerful seek to achieve legitimacy via the construction of the mental world of those they govern, using the production of the intellectuals. And the intellectuals, or at least the honest ones, try to skirt the siren call of those in power.

I believe, however, that this long-standing unhappy symbiotic relationship has taken a special turn in the era in which we are living because it is an era of transition. It is important to underline that eras of transition are rare but are very important. This is because in such periods we all operate in ways different from those we use in the much more frequent "normal" times. What I mean by normal times are times during which his-

torical systems function according to some set of rules and contain mechanisms that repeatedly restore some kind of equilibrium with a reasonable degree of success. So, let me start by explaining why these are not normal times but rather an age of transition.¹

¹ I have done this in greater detail in two places: Immanuel Wallerstein, *Utopistics, or Historical Choices of the Twenty-first Century*, New York: New Press, 1998; and Terence K. Hopkins and Immanuel Wallerstein, coords., *The Age of Transition: Trajectory of the World-System, 1945-2025*, London: Zed Press, 1996, esp. chs. 8 and 9.

1. *Structural Crisis of the Modern World-System*

I start with the assumption that all systems, and therefore all historical systems, have determinate lives. They are not eternal. They have a period of origin, followed by a longish period of development and the "normal" functioning, and finally a period of structural crisis which is also an era of transition. Systems have lives. This is because, in Hegelian language, all systems have contradictions. Or one could say, in the language of Braudel, systems exist in the *longue durée*, but never in the *très longue durée*, of which Braudel says: "If it exists, it can only be the time period of the sages."² And, if one uses the language of Prigogine and of the sciences of complexity, one would say that all systems move over time far from equilibrium; and when they move sufficiently far, they oscillate chaotically and then bifurcate. They thereby come to an end, moving then in one of at least two alternate paths, although which path they choose is inherently unpredictable.

The historical system in which we presently live is the modern world-system which is a capitalist world-economy. It came into existence in a part of the world some 500 years ago, its period of origin. It has developed and expanded to cover the entire globe. But it has now moved far from equilibrium and it has entered a phase of global anarchy; the system is bifurcating. That is, it is in structural crisis, and will therefore no longer exist 25-50 years from now, since out of chaos always comes order, but a new version of order.

² Fernand Braudel, "History and the Social Sciences: The *Longue Durée*," in P. Burke, ed., *Economy and Society in Early Modern Europe*, London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1972, 35.

The reason our present world-system is in structural crisis is that the three mechanisms it has used to maintain its equilibrium and to permit its guiding principle, the endless accumulation of capital, to prevail, have all created their own undoing, by limiting the long-term possibilities of accumulating capital. This is of course exactly what Hegel meant by contradictions - pressures to achieve objectives by acting in ways that achieve these objectives in the short run but which undermine the same objectives in the long run. There are three such contradictions in historical capitalism.

The first is the globally rising cost of personnel payments. The underlying reason for this is that the basic medium-run way to overcome increasing syndical demands has been the relocation of production activities in times of economic stagnation to lower-wage areas. What makes an area lower-wage has been the availability of rural workers, often largely outside the money economy, to migrate to new production activities and work, usually in urban areas, at wage-levels that are immediately interesting for the workers but which are nonetheless below the world norms and therefore interesting for the employers. The contradiction is that, every time this occurs, the world pool of such available rural labor is reduced. We have reached the point of a major deruralization of the world labor force, which is rapidly approaching completion. This then is exhausting the possibility of using the tactic of relocation to maintain profit levels.

The second is the globally rising cost of inputs for production. The reason for this is that the basic way to keep such costs down has been for the producer not to pay for a significant segment of them, a procedure that is discretely described as externali-

zing the costs. Producers externalize their costs when they do not pay for detoxification needed as a result of their production processes, for restoring the basic supply of the primary resources they use, or for their fair share of the costs of infrastructure essential to the production and marketing of their products. The contradiction is that the social costs of dealing with the effects of cumulative toxicity, the exhaustion of resources, and the necessary renewal of infrastructure have risen to the point that there has been a political pressure of considerable importance for producers to internalize these costs, which of course reduces the level of profits that can be obtained.

The third is the globally rising cost of taxation, which has resulted from the combination of rising costs of security and infrastructure with ever larger welfare benefits, which have been instituted in some measure everywhere in the world-system. The three fundamental welfare benefits have been education, health care, and guarantees of lifetime income. These costs first began to be assumed by governments in the nineteenth century. The costs have steadily expanded both because what is demanded and offered has risen and because the number of parts of the globe in which they are demanded and offered has risen. The benefits have therefore required more and more taxes, and this everywhere. Social welfare costs have been the price for the elites to limit opposition to the governments by offering what amounts to some limited redistribution of the accumulated capital. The contradiction is that this "democratization" of the world is not reversible but at the same time is ever more expensive, and therefore reduces profit levels, when its original idea was as a way to secure profit levels against too many popular demands.

It is the combination of these three structural pressures on the ability to accumulate capital - rising costs of labor, rising costs of inputs, and rising tax bills - that has led us to the present chaotic situation, which combines short-term efforts to rollback these costs and to acquire capital through speculation rather than production with a rising delegitimation of the political structures that gird the modern world-system. We therefore get global economic oscillations and global political anarchy. We are living amidst this situation.

2. Structural crisis of knowledge systems

The structural crisis of the modern world-system has been accompanied by a structural crisis in the systems of knowledge. What, you may ask, has the one to do with the other? What do the dilemmas of the producers have to do with the structures of knowledge, with the university systems of the world, with scholarly and scientific research? Everything! The structures of knowledge are not divorced from the basic operations of the modern world-system. They are an essential element in the functioning and legitimation of the structures of the system, and have emerged in forms that are most useful to the system. I wish to deal with three aspects of the structures of knowledge in the modern world-system: the modern university system; the epistemological divide between the so-called two cultures; and the special role of the social sciences. All three are essentially nineteenth-century constructions. All three are in turmoil today, as part of the structural crisis of the modern world-system.

We regularly talk of the university as an institution developed in western Europe in the Middle Ages. This makes a nice story, and permits us to wear lovely gowns at university ceremonies. But it is essentially a myth. The medieval university, a clerical institution of the Catholic Church, more or less disappeared with the onset of the modern world-system. To be sure, it survived in name from the sixteenth to the eighteenth centuries. But during this period it was virtually moribund. It certainly was not the central locus of the production or reproduction of knowledge at that time.

One can date the reemergence and transformation of the university from the middle of the nineteenth century, although there were beginnings of this process from

the late eighteenth century on. The key features that distinguish the modern university from that which we had in the Middle Ages is that it is a bureaucratic institution, with full-time paid faculty, some kind of centralized decision-making about educational matters, and for the most part full-time students. Instead of curricula being organized around individual masters/professors, it would come to be organized within departmental structures, which offered clear paths to obtaining degrees, which in turn served as social credentials recognized by state authorities.

By the end of the nineteenth century, these structures were not only in principle the locus of the reproduction of the entire corpus of secular knowledge but also the principal locus of further research and therefore of the production of knowledge. The new kinds of structures then either diffused from western Europe and North America to other parts of the world or were imposed on these other areas as a result of Western dominance of the world-system. By 1945 there were similar kinds of institutions virtually everywhere.

It was only however after 1945 that this worldwide university system reached its full flourishing. There was an enormous expansion of the world-economy in the period 1945-1970. This fact, combined with constant pressure from below to increase admissions plus growing nationalist sentiment in peripheral zones to "catch up" with leading zones of the world-system, led to an incredible expansion of the world university system - in terms of numbers of institutions, numbers of faculty, and numbers of students. For the first time, the universities became more than the reserved ground of a small elite and became truly public institutions.

The social support for the world university system came from three different sources: the elites and the governments which needed more trained personnel and more fundamental research; the productive enterprises which needed the technological advances that they could exploit; and all those who saw the university system as a mode of upward social mobility. Education was popular and, especially after 1945, the provision of university education came to be considered an essential social service.

The drive to establish modern universities and then to increase their number opened immediately the question of what kind of education would be offered within these institutions. By the middle of the eighteenth century, when this drive to recreate the university began, the secular humanism of the philosophers which had been struggling, more or less successfully, against the previous hegemony of theological knowledge came in turn under severe attack from new groups of scholars who came to call themselves scientists. Scientists (the word itself is a nineteenth-century invention) were those who insisted that the world was intrinsically knowable, but only via empirical investigation which would lead to general laws that explained real phenomena. From the point of view of these scientists, the secular humanist philosophers offered merely speculative knowledge that was not truly different (because not more empirical) from that offered by the previously dominant theologians. Speculative knowledge could never represent truth, since it was not in any way falsifiable.

The scientists used one principal claim in their efforts to obtain social support and secure social prestige. They were able to come up with kinds of knowledge that could be translated into improved technologies, something that was well appreciated by

those in power. Thus scientists had therefore every interest in advocating and achieving the so-called divorce between science and philosophy, a rupture that led to the institutionalization of what we would later call the "two cultures." The most concrete expression of this divorce was the split of the historic medieval Faculty of Philosophy into two (or at least two). The resulting names of faculties varied according to the university, but generally by the mid-nineteenth century, most universities had a faculty reserved to the natural sciences and one reserved to what was often called the humanities, or the arts, or *Geisteswissenschaften*. Some had still other faculties, although these others tended to die out as names and institutions.

We must be clear about the nature of the epistemological debate that underlay this separation into two faculties. Scientists insisted that only by using the methods they preferred - empirical research based on and/or leading to verifiable hypotheses - could one arrive at "truth." Practitioners of the humanities contested this assertion strongly. They insisted on the role of analytic insight, of hermeneutic sensibility, of empathetic *Verstehen* as the road to a truth, a kind of truth which they asserted was profounder than and underlay the generalizations (often seen as hasty) of the scientists. Furthermore, the practitioners of the humanities insisted on the centrality of values, of the good and the beautiful, in the pursuit of knowledge, whereas the scientists insisted that science was value-free. Since, they said, values could never be designated as being true or false, they insisted that values lay outside the concern of science.

The debate got more shrill as the decades went by, many on each side tending

to denigrate any possible contribution of those on the other side. It was a question of prestige (the hierarchy of claims to knowledge) and of the allocation of social resources. It was also a question of deciding who had the right to dominate the socialization of the youth through the control of the educational system, particularly the secondary school system. What can be said about the history of the struggle is that, bit by bit, the scientists won the social battle by getting more and more people, and particularly persons in power, to rank them higher, even much higher, than the practitioners of humanistic knowledge. After 1945, with the centrality of new, complicated, and expensive technology in the operation of the modern world-system, the scientists pulled very far ahead.

In the process of this long cultural battle, a de facto truce line was created. Scientists were given priority in, even exclusive control over, the legitimate assertion of truths. The practitioners of humanistic knowledge for the most part felt they had to cede this ground and to accept being in the gilded ghetto of those who sought, who merely sought, to determine the good and the beautiful. This, more than the epistemological divide, was the real divorce. Never before in the history of the world had there been a sharp division between the search for the true and the search for the good and beautiful. Now this divide was inscribed in the very structures of knowledge of the world university system.

Within the now separate faculties for each of the two cultures, there then occurred a process of specialization which we have come to call the boundaries of "disciplines." Disciplines are claims to turf, claims that it is useful to bound sectors of know-

ledge in terms of the object of research and the methods that are used to study these objects. We all know the names of the principal disciplines that came to be widely accepted - astronomy, physics, chemistry, biology among others in the natural sciences; Greek and Latin (or Classics), national (or linguistic zone) literatures (varying according to the country), philology, art history, philosophy among others in the humanities.

The organization of disciplines brought into being a further separation of knowledge over and above that between the two cultures. Each discipline became a university department. Degrees were awarded for the most part in a specific discipline, and faculty appointments were to a particular department. In addition, there grew up transversal organizational structures, cutting across universities. Disciplinary journals came into existence, which published articles primarily or only by persons in those disciplines, articles that concerned (and only concerned) the subject matter that these disciplines purported to cover. And then, first national, then international, associations of scholars in particular disciplines were created. Finally, and not least, by the end of the nineteenth century, the so-called great libraries began to create categories that were the mirror-image of the disciplinary organization, which all other libraries (and indeed booksellers and publishers) then felt obliged to accept.

In this carving up the pie of knowledge, we should note the special and ambiguous situation of the social sciences. The French Revolution had led to a general legitimation of two concepts not widely accepted prior to it: the normality of socio-political change, and the sovereignty of the "people." This created an urgent need for governing elites to understand the modalities of such normal change, and fostered a desire to de-

velop policies that could limit or at least channel such change. The search for such modalities, and by derivation social policies, became the domain of social science, including an updated form of history based on empirical research.

The epistemological question for social science was and has always been where its practitioners would stand in the battle of the two cultures. The simplest answer is to say that social scientists were deeply split on the epistemological issues. Some of them pushed hard to be part of the scientific camp. And some of them insisted that they belonged in the humanistic camp. What almost none of them did was to try to evolve any third epistemological stance. Not only did individual social scientists take sides in what some called the *Methodenstreit* but whole disciplines tended to take sides. For the most part, economics, political science, and sociology were in the scientific camp (with of course individual dissenters). And history, anthropology, and Oriental studies were for the most part in the humanistic camp. Or at least, this was the story up to 1945. After that, the lines became more blurred.³

As the modern world-system began to come into structural crisis, which is something I believe that began to play itself out in and after the world revolution of 1968, all three pillars of the structures of knowledge of the modern world-system began to lose their solidity, creating an institutional crisis parallel to, and part of, the structural crisis of the world-system. The universities began to reorient their social role amidst great uncertainty as to where they were heading or ought to be heading. The sanctified division

³ The story of the evolution and choices of the social science disciplines are spelled out in I. Wallerstein et al., *Report of the Gulbenkian Commission on the Restructuring of the Social Sciences*, Stanford: Stanford Univ. Press, 1996.

of the two cultures came under severe questioning from within both the natural sciences and the humanities. And the social sciences, which had flourished as never before in the immediate post-1945 years and had come to be full of self-confidence, became after 1968 scattered and fragmented, and everywhere we heard loud wailings of self-doubt.

The basic problem for the world university system was that it was growing in size and costs exponentially, while its socio-economic underpinnings were slowing down because of the long stagnation in the world-economy. This led to multiple pressures in different directions. The very top intellectuals in the academy became a scarcer phenomenon as a percentage of the total, simply because the numerator was far more stable than the denominator. The result of this was an increase in the bargaining power and therefore the financial cost of this top stratum, who used their situation to obtain massive reductions in teaching load and massive increases in research funds. At the same time, university administrators, faced with a decline in faculty/student ratio were seeking to increase in one way or another teaching loads and were also creating a two-tier system of faculty, with a privileged segment alongside underpaid, part-time faculty. This has had the consequence of a trend to what I call the "high-school-ization" of the university, a long-term downplaying of research combined with an increase in teaching responsibilities (particularly large classes).

In addition, because of the financial squeeze, universities have been moving in the direction of becoming actors in the marketplace - by selling their services to enterprises and governments, and by transforming research results of their professors into

patents they can exploit (if not directly, at least by licensing). But to the extent that universities have been moving down these lines, individual professors have been taking their distance from, even moving out of, university structures - in order either on the one hand to exploit their research findings themselves, or on the other hand out of distaste for the commercial ambiance in which they were finding themselves. When this discontent combines with the bargaining power which I have already mentioned, the result can be an exodus of some of the top scholars/scientists from the university system. To the extent this is occurring, we may be returning to the pre-1800 situation in which the university was *not* the primary locus of the production of knowledge.

At the same time, the two-culture divide began to become unhinged. There had arisen two major knowledge movements in the last third of the twentieth century – complexity studies in the natural sciences, and cultural studies in the humanities. While it seems on the surface - to participants in these movements, and to analysts of them - that they are quite different, and indeed almost antagonistic to each other, there are some important similarities between the two knowledge movements.

First of all, both movements were movements of protest against the historically dominant position in their field. Complexity studies was basically a rejection of what has been the normative basis of modern science for four centuries, the linear time-reversible determinism that prevailed from Newton to Einstein. What the proponents of complexity studies insist is that the classical model of science is actually a special case, and indeed a relatively rare case, of the ways in which natural systems operate. They claim that systems are not linear but rather that they tend to move over time far from

equilibrium. They claim that it is intrinsically, and not merely extrinsically, impossible to determine the future trajectories of any projection. They claim that science is not about reducing the complex to the simple but of explaining ever-greater layers of complexity. And they think that the idea of time-reversible processes is an absurdity, since there exists an "arrow of time" operating in all phenomena, including not only the universe as a whole but every microscopic element within it.

Cultural studies was similarly a rejection of the basic concept that had informed the humanities, that there exist canons of beauty and natural law norms of the good, both of which can be learned, taught, and legitimated. Although the humanities always claimed to favor the particular (as against the universalizing concepts of science), the proponents of cultural studies insisted that the traditional teachings of the humanities incarnated the values of one particular group - that of Western, White men of dominant ethnic groups - and claimed with no justification that it represented the universal. Cultural studies insisted on the social context of all value judgments, and therefore the importance of studying and valuing the contributions of all "other" groups, which had been historically ignored and denigrated. Cultural studies insisted on the demotic concept that every reader, every viewer, brings to cultural productions a perception that is different and valid.

Secondly, both complexity studies and cultural studies have each, starting from different points on the spectrum, concluded that the epistemological distinction of the two cultures is intellectually meaningless and/or detrimental to the pursuit of useful knowledge.

Thirdly, both knowledge movements ultimately placed themselves on the domain of social science, without explicitly saying so. Complexity studies did this by insisting on the arrow of time, on the fact that social systems are the most complex of all systems, and by insisting that science is an integral part of culture. Cultural studies did this by insisting that one cannot know anything about cultural production without placing it within its evolving social context, the identities of the producers and of those who partake of the production, and the social psychology (mentalities) of everyone involved. In addition, they insisted that cultural production is a part of, deeply affected by, the power structures in which the producers find themselves.

As for social science, it found itself in an ever-increasing blurring of the traditional disciplines. Virtually every discipline had created subspecialties that added the adjective of another discipline to the name of the discipline (e.g. economic anthropology, social history, historical sociology, etc.). Virtually every discipline had begun to use a mix of methodologies, including those once reserved to other disciplines. One could no longer identify archival work, participant observation, or polling as methods reserved to particular disciplines.

In addition, new quasi-disciplines emerged and even grew strong in the past 30-50 years: area studies of multiple zones, women's and gender studies, ethnic studies (one for each group politically strong enough to insist on it), urban studies, development studies, gay and lesbian studies (and other forms of studies revolving around sexualities). In many universities, these entities have become departments alongside the traditional ones, and if not, they have been designated at least as so-

called programs. Journals and transversal associations have developed parallel to the older disciplinary associations. In addition to adding to the swirl of the social sciences by creating every more overlapping boundaries, they have also made more acute the financial squeeze, as ever more entities compete for essentially the same money.

It seems to me clear that, if one looks 20-50 years ahead, three things are possible. It is possible that the modern university may cease to be the principal locus of the production or even of the reproduction of knowledge, although what would or could replace it is scarcely being discussed. It is possible that the new epistemologically centripetal tendencies of the structures of knowledge may lead to a reunified epistemology (different from both of the two principal existing ones) and which I think of, perhaps provincially, as the "social scientization of all knowledge." And it is possible that the social science disciplines will collapse organizationally and be subject to a profound reorganization (perhaps forced into by administrators), whose outlines are most unclear.

In short, I believe the structures of knowledge have entered a period of anarchy and bifurcation, just like the modern world-system as a whole, and whose outcome is similarly anything but determined. I believe the evolution of the structures of knowledge is simply a part of, a very important part of, the evolution of the modern world-system. The structural crisis of one is the structural crisis of the other. The battle for the future will be fought on both fronts.

3. The Role of the Intellectual

The intellectual operates necessarily at three levels: as an analyst, in search of truth; as a moral person, in search of the good and the beautiful; as a political person, seeking to unify the true with the good and beautiful. The structures of knowledge which have prevailed for two centuries now were unnatural, precisely because they edicted that the intellectual could not easily move between these three levels. The intellectual was adjured to segregate these activities. The intellectual was encouraged to restrict him or herself to intellectual analysis. And in the case that he/she could not hold back from feeling moral and political compulsions, the intellectual was told to segregate rigidly the three kinds of activities.

Such segregation, such separation is extremely difficult to achieve. And it is no accident therefore that most serious intellectuals failed to achieve the segregation, even if and when they preached its validity. Max Weber is a good case in point, and his two famous essays, "Politics as a Vocation" and "Science as a Vocation" reveal the nearly schizophrenic ways in which he wrestled with these constraints, and ratiocinated his political involvement to make it seem as it were not contradicting his commitment to value-free sociology.

Two things have changed in the last thirty years. As I have tried to show, the hold that the concept of two cultures has had on the structures of knowledge has weakened considerably, and with it the intellectual underpinning of this pressure to segregate the pursuit of the true, the good, and the beautiful. But as I have also

argued, the reason for the massive questioning of the concept of the two cultures is precisely linked to the developing structural crisis of the modern world-system. As we have moved into this era of transition, the importance of fundamental choice has become more acute, at the same time that the meaningfulness of individual contributions to that collective choice has grown immeasurably. In short, to the extent that the intellectual sheds the constraints of a false value-neutrality, he/she can in fact play a role that is worth playing in the transition within which we all find ourselves.

I want to make myself very clear. In saying that value-neutrality is both a mirage and a deception, I am not arguing that there is no difference between the analytical, the moral, and the political tasks. There is indeed a difference and it is fundamental. The three cannot simply be merged. But they also cannot be separated. And our problem is how to navigate this seeming paradox, of three tasks that cannot be merged and cannot be separated. I would say in passing that this effort is one more instance of the only kind of epistemology that holds hope for the reunification of all knowledge - a theory of the unexcluded middle.⁴

Of course, this dilemma exists for everyone, not just the intellectual. Is there then something special about the role of the intellectual? Yes, there is. What we mean by an intellectual is someone who devotes his/her energies and time to an analytic understanding of reality, and presumably has had some special training in how best to do this. This is no small requirement. And not everyone has wished to become a specialist

⁴ I have argued the case for the unexcluded middle in more detail in "Time and Duration, the Unexcluded Middle: Reflections on Braudel and Prigogine," *Thesis Eleven*, No. 54, August 1998, 79-87.

in this more general knowledge, as opposed to the very concrete particular knowledge we all need to perform any task competently. The intellectual then is a generalist, even if his general scope is in fact limited to a particular domain of the vast world of all knowledge.

The key question today is how we can apply our individual general knowledge to an understanding of the age of transition in which we live. Even an astronomer or a critic of poetry is called upon to do this, but *a fortiori* this is a demand that is made of social scientists, who claim to be specialists about the mode of functioning and development of the social world. And by and large, we the social scientists have been doing it badly, which is why we are on the whole held in such low esteem by those in power as well as by those opposed to those in power, but also by the vast numbers of working strata who feel they have learned little of any moral or political use from what we have produced.

Our first need is the historicization of our intellectual analysis. This does not mean the accumulation of chronological detail, however useful that might be. And neither does this mean the sort of crude relativization that asserts the obvious fact that every particular situation is different from every other, and that all structures are constantly evolving from day to day, from microsecond to microsecond. To historicize is quite the opposite. It is to place the reality we are immediately studying within the larger context, the historical structure within which it fits and operates. We can never understand the detail if we do not have some idea of the pertinent whole, since we can never otherwise appreciate what is changing, how it is changing, and why it is

changing. Historicizing is not the opposite of systematizing. One cannot systematize without seizing the historical parameters of the whole, of the unit of analysis. And one cannot therefore historicize in a void, as though everything were not part of some large systemic whole. All systems are historic and all of history is systematic.

It is this sense of the need to historicize that has led me here to put so much emphasis on the argument that not only do we find ourselves within a particular unit of analysis, the modern world-system, but that we find ourselves within a particular moment of that historical system, its structural crisis or age of transition. This, I hope (but who can be certain?), clarifies the present, and suggests the constraints on our options for the future. And this is of course what most interests those in power, those opposed to those in power, and the vast numbers of working strata who are living their lives as best they can.

If intellectuals pursue the tasks they are called upon to pursue in an age of transition, they will not be popular. Those in power will be dismayed at what they are doing, feeling that analysis undermines power, especially in an age of transition. Those opposed to those in power will feel that intellectual analysis is all well and good, provided it feeds and encourages those involved in political opposition. But they will not appreciate hesitations, too much nuance, and cautions. And they too shall try to constrain intellectuals, even those who claim to be pursuing the same political objectives as those who oppose those in power. And finally the vast numbers of working strata will insist that the analyses of intellectuals be translated into language that they can understand and with which they can connect. This is a reasonable demand, but not one

always easy to fulfill.

Despite all these doubts about the worth of the intellectual, his/her role is crucial in the transition. A transition is always a difficult process. There are many shoals against which the process can scrape and crash. Clarity of analysis is often blurred by the chaotic realities and their immediate emotional tugs. But if intellectuals do not hold the flag of analysis high, it is not likely that others will. And if an analytic understanding of the real historical choices are not at the forefront of our reasoning, our moral choices will be defective, and above all our political strength will be undermined.

So, we must all simply persist in trying to analyze a world-system in its age of transition, to make plausible statements about an inherently chaotic process. We must continue to try to clarify the historical alternatives available and thereby the moral choices we have to make. And finally, we need to try to illuminate the possible political paths that might move the world in the direction to which we are committed by these moral choices. In the words of the ancient sage Hillel, if not we, who? And if not now, when?