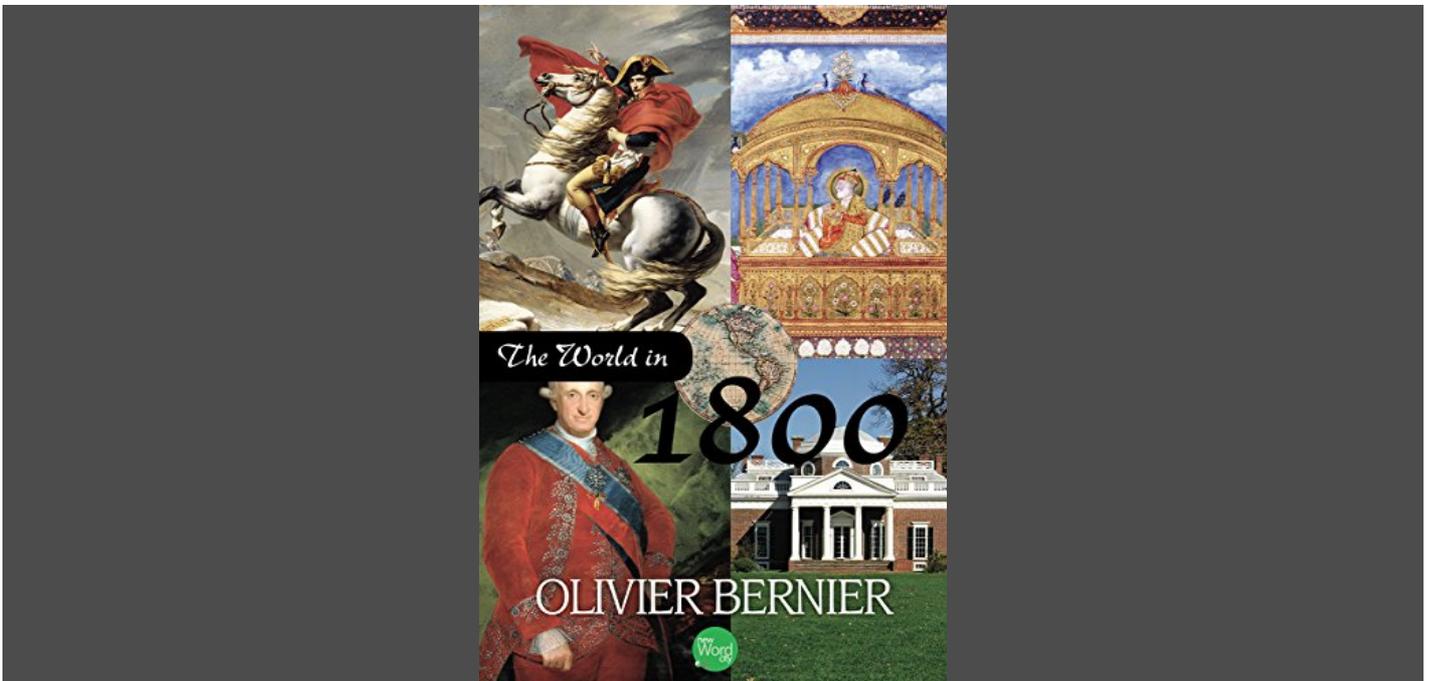


PDF | The World in 1800

by Olivier Bernier



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"Olivier Bernier's richly detailed, engaging, and elegant books offers a splendid refresher course on a pivotal moment in world history - the dawn of the modern era."
- Francine du Plessix Gray

In the year 1800, almost everyone lived very much as their ancestors had, going back countless generations. In the countryside, illiterate peasants - the majority of the population - still scratched out a living from the soil, while in the cities, merchants hawked their wares in open-air market stalls and nobles led lives of opulent leisure. Yet everywhere were unmistakable signs that all of this would soon change forever. Spread by France's seemingly invincible citizens' army, the seeds of republicanism had been planted throughout Europe. In the Americas, the United States had proved to the world the feasibility of a government of, by, and for the people, and Mexico was threatening to follow its lead. And while it still took four months for an official dispatch to travel from London to Calcutta, Europe's leading nations - France and England - had established global empire-building strategies. In the year 1800, the world suddenly found itself enmeshed in a web of money, war, and political intrigue, out of which a new world - our world - was struggling to be born.

Bringing all his talents as a first-rate storyteller to bear, Bernier takes us inside the courts and parliaments of the major powers to listen in on the political discourse of the day. He leads us into the boudoirs and ballrooms of the rich, the cramped homes of the middle class, and the hovels of the poor to provide an intimate glimpse of the private lives of the first modern men and women.

A spellbinding account of one of the most momentous chapters in the story of civilization, *The World in 1800* is a singular achievement by a premier historian and an irresistible read.

[Amazon.com Review](#)

The world two centuries ago was much unlike our own--but closer in spirit to our own time than to the century that preceded it. Across the globe, writes Olivier Bernier, a sense had spread that it was possible for individuals of whatever social station to be free and make their own place in life; although everywhere there was still "a radical separation between the well to do and the rest of the population," the example of revolutionary America and revolutionary France set in motion forces that would lead to the growth of democracy and internationalism alike. Bernier charts this growth and the parallel rise of empires, nationalism, and world trade. He offers some surprising, and fresh, interpretations of history along the way. For instance, he suggests that the restaurant as we know it was the outgrowth of the French revolution, when chefs previously employed by aristocratic households opened their kitchens to anyone who could afford a meal. (The same revolution, he adds, introduced the metric system and the concept of civil marriage to the world.)

Bernier occasionally swims against the tide, arguing, for instance, that Thomas Jefferson did not father children by Sally Hemmings, a slave on his Monticello plantation. (The best evidence suggests otherwise.) But his wide-ranging view of a time when the affairs of one country could influence events thousands of miles away makes for constantly fascinating reading. --*Gregory McNamee*

Product Description

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