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	Sommario/riassunto	When this book was published in 1984, it reframed the debate on the French Revolution, shifting the discussion from the Revolution's role in wider, extrinsic processes (such as modernization, capitalist development, and the rise of twentieth-century totalitarian regimes) to its central political significance: the discovery of the potential of political action to consciously transform society by molding character, culture, and social relations. In a new preface to this twentieth-anniversary edition, Hunt reconsiders her work in the light of the past twenty years' scholarship.