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## Geographic Models of Imperialism

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### i

Imperialism, as I speak of it here, is white exploitation of the non-white world, a plague that began some 500 years ago on the West African coast and spread across the globe. It has not been cured by emancipation, by decolonialization, or by economic development (which suffers from the same disease). It *has* been cured at times by revolution, for instance in China and Cuba. One such cure is now underway in Indochina. But a deadly pattern has emerged which we see in Indochina and elsewhere: no revolution may run its course without armed intervention by the white world, the West. This pattern is grounded in the logic and beliefs of imperialism. Here are two allegories:

“Those gooks *can't* win.” If P, then not Q. This statement enjoys the status of axiomatic certainty. There is no possible logic of withdrawal that follows from such a self-verifying axiom. “The gooks can't win,” so we escalate. Thus we come to fight the gooks and the chinks and the niggers as well.<sup>2</sup> “But those gooks didn't win, did they? Now those chinks and gooks and niggers *together* can't win ...” So the air-tight logic flows on, and so we enter World War III.

The second logical sequence begins benignly enough, “No sane man<sup>3</sup> wants violence.” Is it therefore insane to sanction the incessant violence that a Black South

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<sup>1</sup> Reprinted with permission from Richard Peet.

<sup>2</sup> Editors' note: The author uses politically incorrect language deliberately. It is not intended as an insult but a stylistic strategy to convey the position of the imperialists.

<sup>3</sup> Editors' note: At the time this article was written, sexist language of this kind was common. We decided not to correct the original use of language to ensure that the text remains readable.

African endures? But this, of course, is not violence. It is merely a high mortality rate from disease, starvation, and suicide. We blame it on the Population Bomb or on Their Own Stupidity, never on our own Chase Manhattan debentures. But when their revolution begins – that is termed “violence,” and violence is insane. So we send in the marines: “peacekeepers” who never even heard of *Apartheid*. When Black troops arrive from East and West Africa, we defend the territorial integrity of South Africa against these *invaders*, these perpetrators of “violence.” Next to arrive are the gooks and the chinks ... And so we enter World War III.

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These allegories express a proposition that is the foundation stone of this paper. I can state the proposition in two ways, one of which will seem trite and the other perhaps mystical or foolish. First: all things can be rationalized. Second: all of Western science and historiography is so closely interwoven with Western imperialism that the former can only describe and justify the latter, not predict it or explain it or control it – not even when human survival is at stake, as may now be the case. The second form is easily confused with the “east is east and west is west” form of cultural relativism, an argument which has some predictive use in linguistics, but otherwise merely expresses the fact that cross-cultural communication is always difficult, always imperfect, but never truly impossible. I am trying to say something rather more specific. At this point I need a felicitous term.

The word *ethnoscience* has been used for the past few years to designate an interdisciplinary field on the common border of anthropology, linguistics, geography, and psychology. That field tries to analyze the cognitive systems – the beliefs about reality – which are characteristic of a given cultural-linguistic universe, and to theorize about such matters on a cross-cultural basis (Conklin, 1962). I will speak of “an ethnoscience” and mean thereby the total set of explicit and implicit terms, relations, and propositions which circulate among the members of a culture or group of cultures.

Some propositions will be axiomatically true by common consent. Some will carry different truth-functions for different individuals. Some will contradict some others. Concepts will vary in much the same way. This universe of discourse will be said to possess the following defining characteristics:

- (1) It includes propositions about unique events as well as general propositions. Thus it extends over all of history, all of science, and all of practical knowledge as understood by the members.
- (2) It is absolutely comprehensive. If a given phenomenon is known to the members of two such groups, it will be incorporated into both ethnosciences.

- (3) An ethnoscience does *not* include the judgments of value, preference, virtue, or taste which the members hold. This is of course a tricky point. In Western science and history, for instance, the notion of value-free statements is viewed as a fiction, sometimes useful and more often not. In epistemology it is difficult even to imagine a statement or thought, however mundane, that is value-free. All I require here is the possibility of crudely splitting off a value-statement from a corresponding knowledge-statement, and *only* to the extent that the latter can be stated as a distinct proposition, *relatively* clear of valuation. The statement, “I see the lovely chair” must then become “I see a chair” + “I judge the chair to be lovely.” The former is explicitly within the ethnoscience. Though still not wholly value-free, it can be used as a relatively independent variable (i.e., the fly on Napoleon’s horse’s nose).

This separation is needed to distinguish the universe called “an ethnoscience” from the larger universe embracing all thought and expressed by terms like “world view,” *Weltanschauung*, cosmology, and so on. Only in this way can we get at the interactions between ethnoscience variables and non-ethnoscience variables. The crucial interaction is the effect of Western imperialism, as a set of interests and norms, upon the two most relevant portions of Western ethnoscience; first, historical “truisms,” or conventional beliefs about what happened in history; and second, social science “paradigms,” or clusters of accepted social-science theory (Kuhn, 1959).

- (4) Any two ethnosciences can be mapped on one another, by way of comparing them. Each can be a different state-of-knowledge for the same culture. Each can be from a different culture. One can be from a specific culture and the other from a group of related cultures in which the first is included. The pair with which I will be concerned in this paper is, first, the whole of Western science and history, and second, a theoretical ethnoscience that I create by modifying the first in one respect: I withdraw the more glaring rationalizations for imperialism.

An ethnoscience has two additional properties which are axiomatic but testable. The first describes the relations among statements within the system. The second describes the relation between an ethnoscience and a corresponding value system.

We can think of Western science and history at a given time as containing a certain number of persistent theoretical paradigms and historical reconstructions. This population of scientific and historical beliefs can be assumed to have an overall structure, however loose it may be. I will speak of a relation of “compatibility” between pairs of beliefs, meaning simply that they can co-exist. A pair in widely

separated disciplines can no doubt contradict one another and still co-exist, and there are rare cases of this sort within single disciplines: e.g., particles vs. waves.

The general rule would seem to be that accepted paradigms are likely to reinforce one another – by using common elements, for example – or at the very least be essentially unrelated. Compatibility on these terms is no problem. The same should hold true for pairs of historical beliefs and for mixed pairs, as in psychoanalytic history, for instance. This should also hold for paramount beliefs in public policy: e.g., the putative views of the electorate.

Obviously, the concept of compatibility is probabilistic in specific cases and becomes axiomatic only when we deal with beliefs in aggregate. The axiom is best stated in the same form: in a given ethnosciences, through a given epoch, it is unlikely that any basic, important beliefs, scientific, historical, or public-policy, will be sharply and embarrassingly incompatible with any other such belief without a resolution of the conflict taking place relatively quickly. This axiom is closely analogous to the theory of cognitive dissonance, i.e., incompatible beliefs tend to get in one another's way. The axiom will let us deal with each ethnosciences as a system, and it lets us connect together various distant beliefs – distant in subject, time, and space.

The second axiom is more crucial to my argument: a fundamental belief in the ethnoscientific system associated with a given society is not likely to fall into or remain in conflict with a fundamental value or norm that is held by the members of the society or by the policy-making elite if the society is highly stratified. In other words, crucial beliefs should conform to crucial precepts: the true should also be the good. If there were no such conformality between ethnoscientific system and value system, we would have science proving that religion is false, history undercutting patriotism and the like – dissonances that a culture certainly cannot tolerate in high degree.

### iii

I think I can identify a single ethnosciences that is characteristic of the European nations (or elites) which have participated directly or indirectly in the imperializing process. This ethnosciences spans the entire European culture world through five centuries of its history. This level of generality would be too broad to be useful in most other contexts, but that is not the case here, for two reasons. First, the span is quite normal for studies in the history of scholarly ideas. Second, whatever the variations among the national (or national-elite) ethnosciences, all should have a basic similarity in matters pertaining to imperialism, to relationships between Europe, with its set of wants, and the rest of the world, where the wants are to be fulfilled.

This [w]hite, or Western, or European, ethnosciences is the intellectual underpinning of imperialism. It includes within it the varying paradigms of Western science and the propositions of history. Allowing for necessary variations, this is the

common, general system of scientific and historical ideas in which we White, Western social scientists are working. Its growth has paralleled and supported the growth of imperialism, and it has become for us an almost irresistibly strong current of thought, pulling each new theory and interpretation in the same direction as the old: toward compatibility with the policies and goals of Europe and empire. There is nothing mysterious about this force, and some of us succeed in swimming against its pull (else there would be no [journal] *Antipode!*<sup>4</sup>). But it has produced a general drift of bias in those parts of Western ethnohistory which are closely involved with imperialism. I will show in later paragraphs how this bias works its way through the chinks in scientific and historiographic method.

European ethnohistory, like every other, is perfectly comprehensive in scope. Hence it contains a set of historical beliefs and social-science generalizations about the Non-White world as well as the White. I noted earlier that long-run consistency must be maintained between the ethnohistorical system and the value system. The governing system of values in European ethnohistory is that of the White world alone: the imperialists, not the imperialized. To fit this ethnohistory to an anti-imperialist value structure requires quite drastic changes, even if this structure is a limited set of normative propositions and not the entire value system of a specific non-European culture. Even more drastic changes are required to incorporate the findings of Third-World social scientists and historians (to the extent practicable).

The European model has to be examined very closely for biased and questionable historical statements dealing with the Third World, with imperialism, with European affairs relating to the Third World, and for social-science models and generalizations which are comparably biased or questionable. Each of these must be deleted. In some cases I will very deliberately introduce alternative statements with biases tending in a Third-World direction and build models to generate new hypotheses, however improbable these may seem. If I call the end product a sketch of Third-World ethnohistory, nothing impressive is implied. This is not the ethnohistory of an entire culture. Nor is it that of a synthesis of cultures. It is best described as an attempt to broaden Western ethnohistory by removing its more flagrant imperialistic biases and enriching it with Third-World data. Many Third-World social scientists and historians, perhaps most of them, are engaged in essentially the same enterprise.

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<sup>4</sup> Editors' note: The journal *Antipode* was established as an alternative, radical geography publication, some of whose recurring concerns are racism and imperialism.

iv

The argument turns now to the sphere of method, since a crucial point is the vulnerability of scientific method and historiography to bias. If the drift of bias in Western scholarship is in the direction of congruency with imperialism, the one most pervasive and persistent interest of Western culture as a whole, then methodology will not check that drift. Even the most careful, disciplined, expert, and perceptive scholarship will be unable to do so, although without such care and expertise matters would be worse.

The problem is most acute in history, but most easily diagnosed. Visualize the historian's job of pursuing information along a chain of documentary reports, each document adding its quantum of value bias, imperfect perception, incomplete description, subjective categorization, and so on. These are normal hazards of the trade, and negotiate them as best can. Always seek to overcome these difficulties of concrete, artifactual data and, as it were, enter the subject's mind.

Consider now the problem faced by a European historian trying to gather data on, say, the history of a colonial possession of his own country. One set of sources derives from those individuals whose participation in the events under study would ordinarily persuade the historian to rely most heavily on them for primary data. But they write in Non-Western language and script, convey the beliefs and values of a Non-Western culture, and are likely to evince rather consistently negative bias against the occupying power, its agents and their actions. By contrast, there is an abundance of easily available records written in the historian's own language by a group of his own countrymen whose ordinary bias is inflated by racial, cultural, class, and patriotic prejudice. The historian must thus choose between two kinds of account, each with an opposing bias. Not surprisingly, he is likely to accept the bias of his own countrymen, whose material he can deal with in terms of known means of judging evidence. He can, as it were, enter their minds. However carefully he may avoid contaminating his work with his own attitudes, the bias has entered it even so.

The shelves of colonial and Non-Western history contain rather few works by Europeans who are familiar with the Non-Western language and culture of their area, and fewer still by colonials themselves. Instead, we have a vast literature written by colonial administrators-turned-historians, with titles like "My Ten Years among the Dyaks". There is also an abundance of strongly biased writings by trained historians from the occupying nations, works very aptly described by Van Leur (1955) as history "written from the deck of the ship". Hence we see the importance of a handful of studies written by Non-Western historians, mostly after independence has been attained, studies which present a counterfoil to the European view, a different

interpretation, and often a body of new and important data.<sup>5</sup> Until this literature has grown very much larger, we must assume that the basis for reasonably objective judgment of the colonial and pre-colonial past has not as yet been laid. Thus we must garnish the bulk of existing data and review all the evidence behind the most crucial generalizations about the nature and evolution of imperialism.

Science has proven as vulnerable as history in the matter of resisting imperialistic bias – of breaking out of the paradigms which assert that, for any hypothesis P, P is true of the Third World if P is useful to imperialistic policies and false if not. My concern is with lacunae in scientific method, specifically in the methodology of pure and applied social-science research being carried out today in neo-colonial countries, independent areas which maintain one or another form of colonial economy. (Much more will be said about neo-colonialism later.) Nearly all of this research has the stated goal of contributing directly or indirectly to economic and social development, and those who conduct the research accept by and large the goal and honestly follow the canons of scientific method. Yet the results continue to fit the old paradigms.

We notice to begin with that the probable direction of bias can be predicted from the roles, values, and reward system that are typical of the investigators. Much of the research is carried out by White social scientists from North America or Europe with financial support from their own government or a corporate foundation. Most are inclined to accept the ideology of their own culture in at least skeletal form – would not receive the financial support if they did not, in most cases – and this ideology is compatible with the paradigms in question. These paradigms assert that any P is untrue, unworkable, or wrong if P leads to radical, social and political change, or merely to political instability. Investigators who are nationals of the neo-colonial country itself usually are government employees, participants in a system that provides faster promotion and like rewards for findings which do not point to governmental errors and contradictions at any level, from the small development project to the national policy of neo-colonialism. University research is only slightly less constrained, and professors in any case have little opportunity to do any. It should be added that government and university social scientists are usually recruited from the class that benefits from neo-colonialism. If many of them oppose it nonetheless, they tend not to do so in the context of sponsored research. Hence we find the potential for bias toward the paradigms of imperialism at the start of research. The potential is enhanced by the fact that nearly all investigators ingested these paradigms at the time they were trained.

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<sup>5</sup> The following may be mentioned as examples written in or translated into English: Aguilar (1968), Dutt [1908], Fei (1953), Freyre (1946), Gopal (1965), Sanchez (1965), James (1962), (1969), Ortiz (1947), Panikkar (1959), Thapar (1966), Williams (1961/1944).

Scientific method is relied on to ward off systematic bias, but it cannot do so in a neo-colonial situation such as we are describing. It merely disguises the bias behind a facade of spurious objectivity. The facade is most impressive when formal models are used and when masses of quantitative data are processed. However, these approaches seem to confer no greater immunity than do others (Myrdal, 1968, 16-26). Most of the models are drawn from Western theory. Given that other models are likely to provide equally good fit in a typically complex system, the systematic choice of a Western model adds to the probability that the system will be wrongly subsumed under an inappropriate paradigm. The same systematic error recurs in the choice of assumptions.

A special problem arises when simulation models are developed specifically for mass data-processing. The choice of variables is conditioned by the availability of statistics. These, in turn, reflect the information needs of the prior colonial epoch (or present large-scale commerce); hence, the simulation becomes a caricature. One must see this problem in the context of theories that explain so little of the variance – when they are tested at all – that a bad model or bizarre assumption is almost never rejected for reasons that have anything to do with scientific method or results. The favored models are congruent with views, values, and interests which would not be abandoned in any case.

Empirical research fares no better than theoretical: it is hobbled by the same biases. Implicit Western models tend to govern the selection of problem, field-work area, sample design, data categories, and the like. Interview biases are monotonous in their congruence with the hypothesis and purpose of a study. Perhaps the most serious problem in empirical research is the tendency to read into a given situation some truism dredged up from European history – about which more will be said later.

Thus it appears that Western science, like Western history, has been methodologically incapable of controlling its own tendency to interpret the Third World in terms of the paradigms of Western ethnoscience and the interests of imperialism. For this reason, one must adopt an attitude of systematic skepticism toward theories about the dynamics of the Third World. The predictions from such theories suggest strategies, e.g., for economic planning, but one finds very often that the predictions are merely restatements of the assumptions originally chosen for a model that has not really been tested. The assumptions themselves turn out to be epigrams of imperialism. So economic development can become a way of phrasing imperialist strategy, not an alternative to imperialism.

Few of us believe in the possibility of a perfectly objective science or history, so the foregoing argument should not be, in principle, unpalatable. If it gives some discomfort, this may be a symptom of the difficulty we have in swallowing the proposition that our lack of objectivity is not a random error, nor even a class or national bias, but a systematic tendency of Western thought, tied to [...] Western imperialism. The tendency is rather slight at the level of individual research: an unconscious value-loading of adjectives; a not-absolutely-random sample; a project selected because research funds are available for this sort of thing and not that. The

cumulative effect, like the Coriolis force and the solar wind, is no less powerful for being unnoticed. Hypotheses that clash with imperialism simply do not rise to the status of paradigms or truisms. Hence, over the decades and centuries, we maintain a body of belief that is truly the ethnoscience of the Western world; not, as it claims to be, the universal science and history of the world as a whole.

v

We can now compare the geographic models of imperialism which emerge from Western and Third-World systems of belief. I have said nothing thus far about the content of these ethnoscientific systems. Instead I gave an elaborate methodological fanfare, the aim of which was to raise some doubts in advance about the seeming self-evidence of the one set of beliefs and the seeming improbability of the other. I will discuss these beliefs only to the extent that each underlies or enters into its respective geographic model, but their basic form will emerge quite clearly as we proceed. I speak of the models as “geographic” because space and resources are perhaps their main dimensions. They span some 500 years of human history, but they also span the globe. This scope is routine in historical geography. Note that the Western model is non-Marxist. A Marxist model of the classical or European type – something of an intermediate case – will be examined briefly at a later point. The Western model will be given rather cursory discussion in any event, since it is a collection of all-too-familiar truisms. It will in fact be treated very shabbily, and used mainly as a foil for the Third-World model, toward which I admit a favorable bias.

It should be said at this point that my use of the term “model” in this discussion is intended to emphasize not only the fact that we are simplifying process to a bare structure for analytic purposes, but also to emphasize a property of models which is vital to this kind of discourse. Models are not reality. They can be as improbable and outlandish as one may desire, so long as the model world and real world remain separated. Some of the historical statements in the Third-World model are so thoroughly contradictory to the truisms of Western history that they may not even seem plausible. My task is to clothe them with just supporting evidence as conveys their plausibility. Historians must carry the burden from there.

“European civilization arose and flowered, until in the end it covered the face of the earth.” These words by Marc Bloch (1962, xx) sum up the Western model quite nicely. They convey the root belief in an ineffable European spirit, a *sui generis* [Latin: of its own kind] cause of European evolution and expansion. A small number of such beliefs are the basic truisms of imperialism, generating those arguments which justified imperialism during its evolution and those which (I claim) disguise it today. The following truisms seem to be crucial:

- (1) Europe is a spatio-temporal individual, clearly demarcated and internally coherent – a “civilization”. It has been such since the Middle Ages or

before, although the boundaries have extended to Anglo-America and beyond. This conception gives the model a simple domocentric form,<sup>6</sup> with a distinctive geometry: an inner space, closed and undifferentiated (all portions have the property “European”); an outer space, also closed on the spherical surface; and a boundary between them which has finite width and important internal properties.

- (2) The rise of European civilization throughout this period has been generated mainly by inner processes. non-European peoples and areas have had no crucial role in epochal events: the Reformation, the Enlightenment, the Industrial Revolution, and so on. Whenever events outside of (topological) Europe assume significance, as during the ages of exploration and mercantilism, Europeans themselves play the active role. Here we have the first property of the boundary: selective permeability. Major forces in cultural evolution cannot filter through it in a centripetal direction, although raw materials can do so; likewise Aztec gold.
- (3) All non-European cultures are more or less primitive, at the time of colonization, by comparison with Europeans in the abstract and by comparison with the particular Europeans who colonize a given area and pass judgment on its inhabitants. All such cultures are unprogressive. All are either standing still or declining at the time of colonization. (China is usually conceded to have barely reached the “European” civilization level of pre-Enlightenment times, but is the very model of decadence.) All such cultures are barbarous and heathen. In sum, the non-European world is less strong, less intelligent, and less virtuous than Europe. Hence there is a kind of osmotic differential in power, knowledge, and righteousness.
- (4) The outward expansion of Europe, like the rise of Europe itself, is *sui generis*, a product of internal forces and motives. It is a “striving outward”, an “urge to expand”. There is self-generated evolution within the boundaries of Europe and there is osmotic pressure across the boundary. The result is unidirectional flow: a diffusion process, not an equilibrating system. (By no coincidence, classic diffusionism in European social science was imperialistic, ethnocentric, and often racist in tone [...]) As a corollary, any given part of the non-European world gains its important attributes from the European impact. Therefore the non-European world as a whole – excepting the areas depopulated and settled by Europeans, thus becoming pseudopoda [projections] of Europe itself – displays the pattern created by a decay function: the farther one gets from Europe (in the sense of connectivity, not true distance), the less intense the attribute. This can be described in part as a series of age-area

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<sup>6</sup> The term “domocentric” is adapted from Shemyakin’s usage.

or wave-diffusion bands, and in part as a continuous cline. Thus, whenever non-European areas display qualities indicative of importance, progress, and the like, they do so as a result of Europeanization and in proportion as they have received the European impact. Thus also, the process of imperialism becomes a matter of giving civilization while taking resources.

These historical truisms provide some of the major elements in a structure of ideas that underlay European imperialism throughout its course and underlies it still. A double standard of morality was accepted by which piracy, brigandage, privateering, slave-raiding, slave-trading, and slavery itself were permitted so long as the venue were extra-European – indeed, the Enlightenment in Europe rather coincided with the age of slavery beyond the boundary. Colonialism acquired the status of a natural and inevitable process, almost foreordained by the internal evolution of Europe and developing smoothly and continuously from the first voyages of Henry the Navigator to the final partition of Africa. The establishment of large-scale capitalist enterprise in colonies and former colonies was equally inevitable, a matter of finding better and higher uses for land and labor than the natives themselves were capable of achieving. In the twentieth century, discomfiting events like Japanese militarism and the growth of Chinese communism were cognized as effects of European ideas. Were it my intention to elaborate fully the Western model, I would attempt to show how these and like processes are, and have been in the past, cognized in terms of the few basic persistent truisms (not all of which have been mentioned, of course), which serve as assumptions in the model. At all stages in modern history, Europeans have drawn these truisms from Western ethnohistory whenever the need arose to justify events past, current, or planned.

The same holds true today. The conception of non-European peoples as inferior in strength, intelligence, and virtue – that is, a national power, technological innovativeness, and justifiable aspirations – is still basic to the international policies of the West, although rarely stated in explicit terms and perhaps not even drawn out into the conscious decision-making process. Before pursuing this matter further, we had best present the alternative model, that of the Third World.

## vi

Somewhat earlier, I characterized Third-World ethnohistory in a highly simplistic way, calling it Western ethnohistory with one constraint removed: its support of imperialism. But if that one constraint is removed, the shape of historiography and social science must change. Fanon makes this blunt assertion: “What the West has in truth not understood is that today ... a new theory of man is

coming into being” (Fanon, 1967, 125). Whether he is literally right or not, this is clearly the program for a Third World ethnohistory.

The model, as I build it here, goes well beyond existing scholarship (as any model should). Where my own speculations are woven into the fabric, the design remains in harmony with the whole. This design has one basic motif: basic skepticism with regard to any truism or paradigm of Western ethnohistory which seems to reinforce imperialism: by derogating a part or property of the Third World; by asserting a dependency on the West; by claiming that some form of Western enterprise in the Third World is *a priori* [i.e. derived from reasoning] logical, proper, or necessary; by rationalizing the use or potential use of Western force in a Third-World region; or simply by asserting that European history is *sui generis* – that cultural evolution is a European monopoly. Skepticism leads to criticism, and thus the fabric is unraveled and rewoven.

This model asserts a body of propositions, most of which are simple denials of one or another part of one or another Western truism. I will draw these propositions together into a schema of the historical geography of imperialism, somewhat arbitrarily divided into three space-time stages. Very little will be said about the geometry of this model since its most fundamental quality is (or can be expressed as) the absence of ethnocentrism, domocentrism, and therefore nodality.

Stage I can be called the Slave-Based Industrial Revolution, with bounds extending from Atlantic Europe to the West African coast; thence to the Atlantic coast of South America; thence northward along that coast to the West Indies; thence back to Europe. This period lasts very roughly from 1450 to 1750. To deal with it adequately, one would have to discuss events occurring in Asia at the same time, but I will content myself with one proposition: the impact of Europe on Asia throughout this period was very light; the model itself suggests why this was so (Panikkar, [1959]; van Leur, [1955]).

The period begins with privateering – chartered piracy – on the Guinea Coast by Portuguese merchant and naval vessels. Small-scale slave-raiding occurs. Equally small-scale sugar planting begins on several Atlantic islands (e.g. Sao Thome), using captured slaves and producing for the European market. Iberian seamen continue to probe southward, less concerned with rounding Africa than with preying on her coast. As profits and experience increase, ships grow sturdier; eventually the orbit enlarges to the point where a landing is made in the New World, and Iberian interest shifts in part to New World privateering (“conquest”). Meanwhile, the Portuguese open a lucrative trade in the Indian Ocean, beating Arab competition mainly through high-seas piracy on the smaller Arab vessels. This trade interests us mainly because it leads to settlement on the Brazilian coast, whose warfare and European diseases, combined with slavery, quickly destroy Amerindian competitors for land. Planters move across the Atlantic, vastly increasing plantation acreage and stimulating the slave trade. Now Europe hits the jackpot and commences the true explosion of imperialism: massive expansion of commercial, slave-based agriculture in the New World.

The acquisition of disease-emptied land in limitless quantities was the *one* major advantage which Europeans managed to wrest over the civilizations of Africa and Asia. In this model Europe had no “urge to expand” not shared by these other civilizations; nor did Europe have any technological advantage, save ships that were slightly more sophisticated as a result of the prior epoch of African piracy; nor did Europe display any other distinguishing sign of cultural advancement or achievement-motivation in the fifteenth and early sixteenth century. She merely got to the New World first, and obtained its lands in exchange for genocide.

The Third-World model can therefore postulate that Europeans had *no* innate superiority, nor even the power to conquer old-world civilizations. This power was only gained in the eighteenth century, 250 years after Columbus, as a result of the industrial revolution, which began not in Europe but in the West Indies, thereafter diffusing (outward? inward?) to Europe (James, 1970, 119-164, 122-123; Williams, [1961/1944]; Orbitz, [1947]). To make this last assertion plausible, we need a subsidiary model, a microgeographic system-model of the slave-based plantation, showing its homology to subsequent factory industry. Such a model would show that, in level of machine technology (mill and field), level of capital, scale of labor input and production, organizational complexity, multiplier-generating effects, and other attributes, the sugar plantation was equal to the level of the early English textile mill, which it long preceded. The overwhelming difference was slavery.

The Third-World model here invokes alternative propositions. The first is an anthropological truism: every culture has rules, or laws, which limit the degree to which any one participant in that culture can exploit any other, but no such rules need apply to outsiders. Beyond the bounds of Europe, a heathen alien could be murdered or enslaved at will. With fresh land and a brisk market, moral scruples were brushed aside. The second proposition is cultural-geographic: new technology is extremely costly in its earliest phase. Third is the basic Marxist proposition that power must be employed to extract surplus from labor – surely most feasible under the guns of a slave colony. Thus we have rounded out the argument for a slave-based, extra-European origin of the factory system – indeed, of capitalism itself if one accepts Marx’s distinction between merchants and capitalists (Marx, 1967, 325). In our model, the factory system had to evolve under slavery to the point where labor’s return was, literally, enough to keep the laborer alive; only then could the system be transferred from the colonies to Europe, and from the southern U.S. to the north; then reconstituted as a new kind of mill, with semi-free labor and child labor forming a transition.

This model of the origins of industry and industrial capitalism is reasonably strange in the context of Western ethnoscience. In the Third-World system, the model may be poor but it is far from strange. C. L. R. James [1970, 122], one of the greatest of Third-World historians, says simply: “There is no question today that the resources which initiated and established (the factory system) ... resulted from the Atlantic slave-

trade and the enslavement of Africans in the Americas.”<sup>7</sup> The slave-trade itself, in this model, was mostly brigandage on the West African coast: involvement of African kingdoms came relatively late, responding to one of the fruits of the European industrial revolution: cheap guns.<sup>8</sup> One must add the input of profits from Spanish enterprise in the New World – plunder, mining, and a bit of agriculture – as well as the profits from mercantilism in Asia. The Asian element, however, is much overrated. Europeans controlled no significant territory prior to the mid-eighteenth century, and had nothing much to sell the Asians until slave-based industry had triggered off European industrial revolution.

Stage II in the evolution of imperialism, as portrayed in this model, is classical Colonialism, or large-scale territorial conquest, mainly in areas with sophisticated state organization. This period commences slowly in the early eighteenth century. By the end of the nineteenth, colonial control has spread at least nominally over nearly all of Africa and Asia, Japan has joined the colonizers, and China has become a giant colonial condominium. The stage is brought to an end almost everywhere, by a formal grant of independence and a change of color on world maps, in the two decades following World War II. In the model, it ends by a gradual re-occupation of territory and gradual crumbling of colonial political control over a period of perhaps 80 years.

The initiating conditions for Stage II are in essence also the terminating conditions for Stage I. These conditions can best be understood in terms of the geometry of the model. Initially, the Old World is a single uniform region dotted with mercantile cities, not a nodal region centered on Europe. We assume no initiating condition within Europe itself which might destroy the relative spatial equilibrium among Old-world cities, and we assume (with Polányi) that merchants throughout the archaic world are subservient to or portions of the state apparatus – that dual, competing power poles are unstable and hence inadmissible (Polányi, 1957). We explain the acquisition of power by European merchants as a boundary process between the Old World and the New. Two vital ingredients of a capitalist society were thus drawn into Europe: first, the system of industrial capitalism which (in this model) evolved under slavery; and second, the profits – from plunder, slavery, Asiatic trade, and new markets in North America and other pseudopoda of Europe – which were needed by the merchant (now capitalist) class to acquire political power and thus legitimize itself. By the end of Stage I, capitalism and the State were again a single focus of power, but West European states were adapting themselves to capitalism, not vice versa. In this way political and legal authority was obtained to create a semi-slave

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<sup>7</sup> James [...] contrast[s] the views presented in, e.g. Ashton (1948), Deane (1969), Hartwell (1967). E. Wrigley, a geographer, discusses “The Supply of Raw Materials in the Industrial Revolution” in Hartwell (1967, 97-120), without mentioning a single non-European area, and the southern United States only once – a feat of myopia.

<sup>8</sup> Cf. Polányi (1966) for a discussion of this economic relation.

proletariat in Europe itself by widening the limits of allowable exploitation within the society, and to redefine the territorial conquest of non-European areas as an affair of state, not of private Chartered Company (although the transition from one to the other was slow).<sup>9</sup>

Thus we derive the three initiating conditions of Stage II, or Colonialism. First, the European country has already become a capitalist – not simply mercantilist – society, and colonies are therefore sought as extensions of the European marketing and raw-material sphere. Second, industrialization and mercantilism together have advanced to the point where both the technology and capital needed for large-scale conquest are at hand. And third, since the first condition is best encountered in a potential colony which possesses a strong pre-existing state organization and large population, formal and informal procedures will be followed to forge an alliance between the imperialists and the colonial power structure – an alliance with genuine advantages for the colonial participant since it offers him a share of the economic and political spoils. This, you will note, is a redefinition of the “divide and conquer” precept. In our model, the precept reads: imperialism should be fitted into the pre-existing forms of exploitation so that the same classes are exploited, only more vigorously. I shall have occasion to return to this proposition in a modern context.

At the close of World War II, the colonial system was dismantled with the speed of a traveling circus, and in most places independence was achieved without violent revolution and at the stated initiative of the imperial power, rather than on presentation of an ultimatum. The Western Model uses these facts as evidence that imperialism is on its deathbed. The Third World model interprets these facts quite differently: twentieth century without overt political control. This is neocolonialism, Stage III of our model. To understand the homology between these two stages, and to understand the nature of neocolonialism – a crucial matter for the Third-World analysis of economic and social development programs – we must focus for a moment on certain structural properties of an ideal-typical colony as delineated by our model.

The colony as a whole can be described as a feudal state, a three-tiered society consisting of a gentry or landlord class above whom are the state aristocracy and below whom are the peasants, with an imperialist superstructure added as another tier above – and indeed trickling through all the economic interstices at the state and gentry level as well. The Colonial bureaucracy is usually self-sustaining with tax revenues which are generally paid directly or indirectly by the peasants. The bureaucracy supports a large corps of not always vitally needed Europeans. It has the additional tacit function of providing a source of decently paid employment for the sons of lesser gentry. It is

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<sup>9</sup> On the Chartered Companies and colonialism, see Coornaert, (1967). On colonialism, see Memmi (1965); Puthuchery (1960); and various works by G. Padmore.

indeed a significant element in the spoils system; hence, the bureaucracy may be an exploitative structure if its technical services do not redress the balance, as may or may not occur.

The main exploitation, however, comes from private business, the functions of which are kept scrupulously separate from those of government. A large, diversified colony, however densely populated, will have at least some European-owned plantations (if only tea gardens above the food cultivation zone), some European-owned mines, a host of European-owned import-export agencies which usually feed into locally managed distribution networks, and other such enterprises. Almost all manufactured goods are brought in from the colonizing country. Local manufacturing may be suppressed overtly, as happened to India's cotton textile production and export during the Company era and later to sugar refining in the West Indies, or local industry may be unable to face competition from factory-produced imports (Jathar and Beri, 1945; Dutt, [1908]; Gadgil, [1938]; Myrdal, 1957, 60). In any case, a massive loss of income occurs as a result of this process, wiping out incipient manufacturing industries, depriving urban artisans of a livelihood (but benefiting merchants), and reducing peasant family income (Fei, [1953]; Jathar and Beri, [1945]).

To sum up these structural features: the colonial bureaucracy provides welfare and infrastructural services and maintains an exceedingly large police or military establishment, roughly at cost. The private European sector profits by exporting plantation and mine products and importing manufactured goods. The landowning gentry continue as always to collect rent or share from the peasants, while their kinsmen maintain an elite status in new roles, bureaucratic or business. The peasants find their burden growing slowly but steadily, generation by generation, and the class of landless laborers increases in proportion. Population growth may be a contributing cause to their problem – I will argue to the contrary below – but the primary cause is exploitation: heavier charges placed on farmers who always have limited land supplies and rarely have access to yield-raising inputs.

The colony thus created is dualistic, but not in the sense of an economy in which European enterprise is distinct from and cannot integrate with peasant economy, if such is even possible (Boeke, 1953).<sup>10</sup> The dualism here is between government and economy [market]. This is a fundamental feature of capitalist societies; it permits unrestricted economic activity within a broad area of legally permissible actions. The same dualism is constructed, for the same reason, in our colony. After a firm network of ties has been established between metropolitan and colonial enterprise, and the latter has acquired a corps of managers and shopkeepers from the local elite, then, in theory, independence need not interfere with business as usual. In pre-colonial society, this kind of dualism is rarely seen. Land ownership, for instance, may have as many political-territorial attributes as it does economic [attributes]. But colonialism bribes

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<sup>10</sup> A more realistic analysis of indigenous-alien dualism is given by Myint (1954).

the old elite into assuming a new role, part economic bourgeoisie, part bureaucratic functionary. If peasants and laborers have not been pushed to the point of full-scale revolution, then the new elite will almost always be found in the vanguard of the less extreme independence movement. But if the colonizers refuse to leave, many from this group will turn revolutionary overnight, as happened in Indonesia, Algeria, and elsewhere. One need not entirely dismiss the significance of imperialistic beliefs when noting that almost all the imperialist countries chose to ignore such beliefs and free their colonies without fuss. So the terminating conditions for Stage II and initiating conditions for Stage III are bound up in the colonial process which creates an economic fief and secures it against all political dangers short of socialism.

“Neo-Colonialism” is the most widely used term for what our model identifies as the third stage of imperialism. Nkrumah characterizes an independent nation as neo-colonial if “its economic system and thus its political policy is directed from outside” (Nkrumah, 1965, ix; Fanon, 1967). In the present model, a neo-colonial state is given five defining properties. First, its economy is connected to European capitalism in the colonial manner. Second, its internal political structure is effectively controlled by an elite group of the sort I described for Stage II colonies, a group of businessmen, civil servants, or both, committed by self-interest or ideology to maintaining the colonial economy. Third, it may have economic connections with more than one European power. Fourth, the state lies under a permanent threat of invasion or some other hostile act if European economic interests within its territory are not properly protected; hence, its sovereignty is contingent. And fifth, since exploitation in the neo-colonial mode is much like that of classical colonialism, neo-colonialism has much the same need to be backed up by military power if the citizens grow restless. Accordingly, the neo-colony is customarily given substantial military assistance to insure internal security, while its European partner stands ready to airlift troops into the country if they are needed.

Note that the first two of these properties, a colonial economy and a bureaucratic-mercantile elite, are the two most fundamental features of Stage II colonies, aside from European rule itself. Note also that the third of these properties suggests a plausible reason why imperialist powers might find their interests best served by granting independence to their colonies and converting them into neo-colonies. To begin with, if all the major powers de-colonize at about the same time – exactly as happened – then the Common Market principle takes effect: each gives up its trade protections in a small colonial market, gains access instead to a vastly larger one, and still retains the fat pickings of neo-colonialism in the original. The second imperialist excuse for de-colonization is a military one. Given the state of war technology in the 1950s as compared, say, with the 1900s, military airlifts and roving navies may have come to provide greater reserve power than colonial garrisons maintained (at great expense) throughout the empire. From a Third-World point of view there is every reason to believe that imperialism is still very much alive.

The proposition that imperialism still holds sway in the new guise of neo-colonialism leads to a pervasive skepticism about Western policy in the Third World today. It also raises doubts about the pronouncements of Western ethnoscience on matters of peace, equality, and economic development in the Third World. Take the following propositions as examples. First, given the propensity to define non-European movements in European terms, will it ever be possible to stage a revolution against any form of exploitation in the Third World without having that revolution defined and responded to as Marxist – as a subset of Western thought? Second, will the West be able to accept the possibility that Third World nations can defeat it militarily – that conflict resolution in places like Southeast Asia must follow the same principles as elsewhere? Third, can the Third World accept the thesis that any major economic development program is not merely a part of the process of imperialism? For instance, is there any real difference between economic aid programs and former colonial technical services? Do both serve as pattern-maintenance or welfare services to permit smooth functioning of private exploitation? Fourth, are population-control efforts really designed to assist the Third World or are they simply another dimension of imperialism? After all, it is as reasonable to argue that high peasant birth rates are a function of exploitation as it is to argue the current Western view, which assumes incredible ignorance on the part of peasant families and, to many non-Whites, carries overtones of racism. If time permitted, I would continue with many other skeptical propositions of the same sort. Perhaps the Third World is truly coming to the conviction that peace, justice, and development must emerge from a new ethnoscience: “a new theory of man.”

Systems of belief are by no means immune to change, but they are less likely to foretell external events than to explain them after the fact. This is notably true when a culture is losing control over such events. Reality, for that culture, is changing; the belief-system is signaling “no change”; the members of the culture believe and act on the signal; and sooner or later the gap between belief and verification becomes too great to be ignored. Unfortunately, that discovery may occur during the millisecond before a nuclear holocaust. Let me be more specific: Western ethnoscience defines the geography of the present-day world in a way that is so grossly unrealistic that we can only hope for a change in belief that occurs in time to save us, or a slow enough intrusion of reality so that beliefs may somehow respond in time. The Western model has persuaded the West that imperialism is under control, that economic development is just around the corner, and that peace is only a matter of right thinking. The Third-World model, on the other hand, describes a world in which imperialism is far from dead – instead, it has changed from colonialism into neo-colonialism, a cooperative enterprise of the European world as a whole – and that resistance to imperialism is mounting throughout the world. If the real world bears any resemblance to this model, then we are on the brink of disaster.

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