

## The dynamics 21st Century Globalisation:

Diasporic initiatives from below and the defensive reconstruction of national boundaries

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Current developments in globalisation can only be understood in the *longue durée*. The first phase, based on long distance trade around the Indian Ocean through South-East Asia reached its apogee early in the fifteenth century in the form of the global exploratory voyages undertaken by the various components of Admiral Zeng He's fleet. Although largely ignored in China as a result of regime-change, his discoveries encouraged European mariners to follow in his footsteps, although in this case the *conquistadors'* priorities focused on conversion/armed hegemony, in sharp contrast to their Chinese predecessors.

Although these voyages of armed discovery marked the beginning of the second (Eurocentric) phase of globalisation, it was not until the beginning of the nineteenth century that those initial objectives began to be fulfilled, in the sense that Euro-America's manufacturing capabilities (largely based on mechanised versions of Asiatic technologies) began at long last to outclass those of the Asiatic competitors – with the result that the apogee of the second phase of globalisation was achieved in the first decade of the twentieth century.

However by then the seeds of a third phase of globalisation – marked by the successful destruction of a Russian Fleet by the Japanese in 1905, and yet further reinforced by the destructive impact of the First World War, and even more so that of its successor – were already being sown. Hence whilst the indigenous population of Euro-America enjoyed the fruits of a credit-driven boom during the course of the latter part of the second half of the twentieth century, they very foundations on the edifice on which they so hubristically relied were crumbling beneath their feet. Besides outsourcing huge chunks of their manufacturing capabilities back to India and China, they also overlooked the consequences of the vast negative balance of trade to which this transfer gave rise, such that Euro-America is now vastly indebted to the countries whose inhabitants it had grown used to regarding as helots, thanks to the benefits of the position of hegemonic privilege which Europeans – no less in their Diaspora than in their original home base – had come to enjoy during the course of the second phase of globalisation.

## The contemporary world order

However it is becoming clear that the beginning of the third millennium marked a further shift in global tectonics: the processes whose advent was signalled by the sinking of the Russian Fleet in 1905 are now in full flood, such that any thought that history had come to an end has been rendered entirely specious. Thanks to recent developments, the global balance of power is swinging ever more firmly away from Euro-America, and instead relocating itself back to the historical norm, in which China, India, the Middle East and the civilizations of the Andes were the powerhouses of global economic activity.

Suddenly everything we had learned to take for granted – no less in conceptual than in more concrete terms – is up for grabs. If recent events in Copenhagen demonstrated that the United States could no longer hope to insist that the global order should be ordered as it pleased, it also revealed that China, India and Brazil were still fumbling as they tried to come to grips with how best to deploy their new-found positions of power and influence. But it is not just the newly empowered who currently find themselves at sixes and sevens. Loss of power and privilege is an even more disturbing experience than its acquisition. Not only does it herald the prospect that the new-found losers find their standards of living beginning to fall away, rather than following the inexorable upward rise which they had come to take for granted. Worse still they suddenly find themselves faced with a world in which their cherished ideological principles – which in the Euro-American case can largely be traced back to the enlightenment – are at best ignored, and at worst actively trashed by those who prefer to deploy alternative premises to their own.

So just where do we currently stand as the 21<sup>st</sup> century opens up before us? The basic lineaments of our current position are not difficult to detect. At a global level Euro-America's hegemonic position in manufacturing has evaporated, and despite its huge investment in armaments with which to confront the Soviet Union, its power to command in military terms has run into the sands in the face of asymmetric warfare from below: Star Wars technology has provides no answers to those whose weapons of war include box cutters, IEDs and cavalry-men wielding Kalashnikovs from the back of Suzuki motor bikes. Meanwhile the Masters of the Universe on Wall Street and the Square Mile have turned out to be paper tigers; the basis on which they sought to call the economic shots on a global scale have turned out to be no more than a mathematical fiction, whose principal output was a series of increasingly destructive speculative bubbles.

### **Euro-American reactions**

So how are Euro-Americans reacting to these developments? The prospect of system failure is always hard to confront: it is so much easier (and emotionally comforting) to conclude that a little judicious tinkering will sort the problems out, such that the engine of socio-economic prosperity will swiftly be restored to health. However, since systems necessarily take time to fix, such initiatives are invariably accompanied by a search for more proximate causes – for scapegoats in other words. Such processes are already vigorously in train.

In these circumstances scapegoats fall into two broad categories: on the one hand external enemies seeking to undermine the whole enterprise from without, and on the other their even more alarming counterparts who are held to be busily subverting everything from within. A host of beefed up Departments of Homeland Security have consequently come into being throughout the Euro-American world during the course of the past decade, all tasked with addressing these allegedly burgeoning threats. So just who are the ‘enemies’ so targeted, and just what kind of threats to the integrity of the Homeland are they are held to pose?

Euro-America’s current ‘enemies without’ are easy enough to identify. Following the demise of its previous politico-economic and ideological foe, the Soviet Union, two separate categories of bugbear of emerged: firstly the manufacturing powerhouses of East and South East Asia whose superior capabilities have not only created urban rust-belts throughout Euro-America, but also precipitated a pattern of unequal exchange which has left the US Treasury hugely indebted to suppliers of energy, and above all to the suppliers of manufactured goods of all kinds. Secondly, and most remarkably, Euro-America has allowed itself to be drawn into a yet another ideological conflict: in this case a surely unwinnable ‘War on Terror’. Although envisaged as a fight to the death between the forces of virtuous civilization and those of mindless fanaticism, Euro-America’s opponents probably portray it rather more accurately when they suggest that that the conflict is better envisaged as being waged between re-enactors of the Crusades and dedicated warriors of an equally millennially oriented vision of globalised Islam.

### **Homeland security**

These external contradictions have emerged – or perhaps more accurately have been constructed – in parallel to an equally serious set of contradictions within. In consequence ‘Homeland Security’ in all its various jurisdictional formats invariably has two complementary dimensions, one of which is directed at controlling the inward passage of

persons across jurisdictional borders, whilst the other is directed at promoting a condition which the United Kingdom has illuminatingly chosen to identify as ‘community cohesion’. So at just what categories of person do these initiatives seek to exclude? And just what kind of threat do policies of community cohesion seek to counter?

Paradoxically enough, these restrictive activities are a direct consequence of globalisation: but in this case of globalisation in a new format: 21<sup>st</sup> century globalisation from below. Hitherto Euro-Americans have viewed globalisation as a top-down process border-removal operating in their favour. Hence as far as they are concerned, barriers to transjurisdictional mobility and residence have virtually disappeared, and any prospect that their liberties in this respect might be curtailed is a cause immediate outrage. It follows that that the restrictive regimes of border security and community cohesion in no way apply to people like ourselves: rather they deliberately target aliens – at persons who differ so comprehensively from ourselves that their unadulterated presence in our midst would constitute a threat to our prosperity, and worse still to the integrity of civilization itself.

In my view, our increasingly paranoid reactions on these fronts can only properly be understood as defensive reactions to the dynamics of the third phase of globalisation, one of whose most important socio-political manifestations is not so much economic as demographic in character. Hence what we are currently witnessing is the mass mobilisation of diasporic networks from below – inexorably powered by shortages of unskilled workers willing to undertake the menial tasks out of which the indigenes of the Euro-American world have backed *en masse*. The outcome of these developments – which are as much entrepreneurial as they are transgressive – are now plain to see: substantial ethnic colonies that settlers of non-European origin, together with their locally born offspring, have established throughout the Euro-American world. Worse still (at least as far as the articulators of Homeland security are concerned), many members of the new minorities have now gained local citizenship, and hence a right to roam as freely around the globe as their more indigenous counterparts.

Hence one the most fundamental objectives of contemporary border security the construction of immigration regimes which will restrict such new comers rights of access to full scale citizenship, most especially when they ‘abuse’ their privileges by bringing in loads of kinsfolk from overseas, who in turn promptly apply for citizenship. But at the same time they are up against the fact the most developed economies are desperately short of labour – above all to fill jobs of a kind that the indigenes are either unwilling or unqualified to undertake. As

a result a further backstop is emerging, and currently finding much favour: to grant entry to such ideologically unwanted migrants on a conditional basis as denizens, whose civil rights – most especially with respect to issue of residence – are far more restricted than those of fully-fledged citizens. Whilst this may well work in the short term, such efforts to put off the evil day are unlikely to do so for long: the contradictions around which such two-tiered societies are constructed invariably renders them unstable. Indeed the consequences of the construction of this citizen-denizen disjunction have already begun to manifest themselves.

Those who find themselves ascribed to a position of institutional subordination rapidly become disgruntled, and in the midst of societies which otherwise claim to be open and egalitarian, they soon become outraged. In these circumstances conditional offers of acceptance – such that access to citizenship is rendered dependent on denizens setting aside their ‘alien’ lifestyles aside in favour of a comprehensive commitment to the indigenous socio-cultural norms – cut very little ice. Instead, they are beginning to generate rising feelings of outrage especially amongst the locally born.

#### **The conceptual foundations of Euro-American exclusionism**

Most contemporary Euro-American commentators – and most especially those of a socially and liberally minded persuasion – find these developments difficult to cope with. On the basis of assumptions whose roots can be traced back to the enlightenment, they take it for granted that such exclusionistic practices – most especially when they target hereditary forms of differentiation such as ‘race’ – are the outcome of patterns of bigotry which are the premises of modernity on their head. Those who take such a stance soon find themselves driven to make strenuous efforts not so much to explain the roots of contemporary patterns of exclusionistic practice, but to explain them away.

One currently favoured way of doing so is to mount a moral high horse, from where one can set about condemning the beliefs which precipitate such unacceptably racist practice as a product of a combination of ignorance and outmoded tribalism, which have been stirred up to boiling point by the antics of shock jocks and Fox news.

But even if there is a degree of substance to such arguments, they tell us very little about why the shock jocks' arguments are proving to be so attractive, the underlying structural forces into which the advocates of exclusionism have managed to tap, and still less about the way in the resultant processes of polarisation might in due course be unwound. At best such

arguments are little more than screams of anguish about the way in which the promise of modernity is going badly gone wrong in the contemporary world.

We will have to dig much deeper into Euro-American history to reach the bottom of this one.

#### **The resurgence of Westphalian jurisdictional closure in the post-modern world**

From the very outset of their discovery of the new world, European adventurers took it for granted that they had a right – and indeed a duty – to pacify, and in doing so establish hegemony over, what they preferred to regard as *terra nullius*, all in the name of Christ. During the next four centuries of diasporic expansion, they were remarkably successful in fulfilling those objectives. But in a remarkable but little noticed paradox, in doing so the leading European powers expanded the Westphalian principles of jurisdictional closure far beyond the relatively parochial statelets whose autonomy they initially guaranteed, and in due course applied them to the globally extensive empires which they went on to construct during the course of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Each of these empires was consequently conceptualized as a single jurisdiction, subject to a single central authority, under whose aegis their citizens (or subjects, as the case may be) were entitled, at least in principle, to travel where they pleased within the limits of each Empire's jurisdictional boundaries. Hence whilst the second phase of globalisation owed a large part of its success to the way in which the imperial powers took advantage of ever more active processes of (European) diasporic expansion to extend, and then to institutionalise, their jurisdictional claims on a global scale, the Westphalian conceptual foundations of their enterprise still lurked firmly in the background.

This had far-reaching consequences: the application of these principles on a global scale was largely responsible for bringing all these enterprises successively to their knees during the course of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The core reasons for this were twofold. Firstly the contradictions between the interests of rival imperial networks became unmanageable, especially when the cake of ‘terra nullius’ had been so comprehensively divided that there was no further space into which late-comers such as Germany could hope to expand; and secondly because those whom they had succeeded in colonising articulated their demands for self-government – and ultimately for sovereignty – in terms of those self-same Westphalian principles.

Hence in what can only be described as a spectacular instance of historical irony, the political and ideological vision of autonomous, internally homogeneous, and sovereign (but implicitly mutually competitive) states on which the signatories of the Peace of Westphalia agreed in 1648 CE in an effort to bring a century of internecine religious war across the length and breadth of the European archipelago to end, was in due course deployed not just to provide the conceptual foundations around which the second phase of globalisation was constructed, but was subsequently borrowed by its subjects as a means of undermining the whole enterprise 'from below'. From that perspective the dreams of unrestricted internationalism which emerged as the second phase of globalisation reached its apogee at the beginning of the nineteenth century can now be seen to have been a false dawn, largely because the parochial premises which underpinned were negotiated in 1648 had quietly been exported on a global scale as part and parcel of the whole imperial enterprise.

So it was that whilst the treaty's key operational concept, that of states as bounded, territorially demarcated, religiously homogeneous and jurisdictionally sovereign socio-political entities was initially utilised as a means of bringing Europe's wars of politico-religious difference to an end, that self-same trope was subsequently deployed for quite different purposes: as a vehicle for the hegemonic incorporation of ever wide range external territories – and hence of their inhabitants – into a small number of Imperial jurisdictions. Hence by the end of the nineteenth century the Imperial powers not only established a global order which everyone (and most especially persons of European origin) could not only travel freely within the bounds of each of their respective Imperial jurisdictions, but also one in which persons of European origin cross these jurisdictional boundaries – of which there were many fewer then than there are today – with relative ease.

However two successive periods of global warfare between the Imperial changed all that. From the middle of the twentieth century fiercely defended jurisdictional boundaries became the order became the order of the day. As every European Empire successively collapsed (the Soviet Union was the last to go), an ever growing number of neo-Westphalian jurisdictions made their appearance on the world stage. By no means all these entities had an easy birth: many were a product of extremely bloody wars of ethno-national partition – as in the case of in India and Yugoslavia, for example; others – such as Somalia – failed to gel, and in due course collapsed completely. Nevertheless the fact that such failures are regarded as catastrophic underlines a fundamental point: by the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century Westphalian, jurisdictions had become the global jurisdictional norm. Moreover as the global

order has become steadily more competitive, the participants in almost all such jurisdictions have begun to close ranks do defend their parochial interests, and hence have begun to define and to guard their boundaries ever more tightly in ethno-national terms – even as all manner of ethnically driven dissident movements began to erupt within them.

In the immediate aftermath of decolonisation many observers assumed that the increasing salience of ethno-national parochialism in post-colonial jurisdictions was a manifestation of pre-modern forms of 'tribalism', and that as they advanced into the future more rational attitudes would begin to prevail. Such assumptions now look exceedingly threadbare. Whilst ethnic disjunctions become ever more salient within these newly decolonised 'nation' states – of which Sri Lanka is the most egregious recent example – such developments have proved to be far from unique: instead precisely parallel disjunctions have also begun to come to the fore in the metropolitan heartlands of Euro-America.

Those disjunctions can in turn be divided into two broad categories: on the one hand those in which members of Europe's institutionally marginalised indigenous minorities, as well as those belonging to formerly ignored First Nations throughout the New World began to coalesce much more actively than they had hitherto been able to do; however there are good reasons for suggesting that the principal powerhouse behind developments of this the twenty-first century is coming from elsewhere: namely the ever-increasing force of transgressive diasporic initiatives 'from below'.

But just how are Euro-American jurisdictions currently reacting to these developments? In my view the answer is as depressing as it is clear: rather than seeking to introduce policies which might begin to assuage the result patterns of minority discontent, virtually all contemporary jurisdictions currently appear to be moving in precisely the opposite direction: besides imposing ever tighter restrictions on the passage of immigrants across their borders, they are also putting ever greater pressure on those who have already established themselves within them to abandon their ethnic distinctiveness. The basic driving force behind these developments is easy enough to detect. In the face of the entrepreneurial activism of these diasporic initiatives from below, and the burgeoning ethnic colonies which those involved have gone on to construct in the aftermath of their arrival, a new consensus has emerged amongst the indigenes: that their prior condition of socio-cultural homogeneity (however fictional that premise might be) is being subjected to ever more outrageous challenges, so much so serious challenges in the jurisdictional order have been, so much so that the integrity of the entire socio-cultural order on which the jurisdiction is grounded is in danger of

evaporating. Hence bringing further immigration to a halt is the jurisdiction's most urgent priority.

### **Has modernity reached a dead end?**

These developments highlight a fundamental paradox. During the course of the second phase of globalization it was routinely assumed – at least in Euro-American contexts – that Westphalian premises with respect to the role and character of the state, further reinforced by the visions of personal liberty articulated by the savants of the enlightenment during the course of the eighteenth century, marked out the only viable route to progress and modernity. All other possible routes were rejected as inherently retrogressive. Moreover it was premises of precisely this kind which were utilised to legitimate ever more extensive exercises of Imperial expansion during the course of the nineteenth century, on the grounds that the elimination of unnecessary obstacles to ‘free trade’, and the ever more widespread acceptance of the premises of the enlightenment would in due course bring modernity – in the sense peace, prosperity and justice – to the inhabitants of the entire globe.

But just what remains of this vision of modernity as we enter the twenty-first century?

At least in formal terms that vision appears in principle to be as firmly in place as ever in Euro-American contexts. But as the transgressive forces being unleashed by the third phase of globalisation have become steadily more salient, so the underlying tenor of the arguments stemming there from has undergone a substantial change. In the face of ever more active challenges from below, the confident manner in which Euro-Americans once routinely sought to export their vision of civilization – and hence of modernity and progress – to the benighted inhabitants of the remainder of the globe has begun to look seriously anachronistic.

To be sure those values still in place as powerful Euro-American Totem: but in the aftermath of 9/11 the way in which it has been deployed has changed dramatically. No longer is it proudly displayed as a symbol of their hegemonic superiority over the barbarians: instead it is one which serves to validate both the War on Terror and efforts to generate a more comprehensive condition of Community Cohesion, and hence has become a means of *defence*, in which it has consequently become a key component strategies currently being deployed against those who are regarded as being engaged in a subversive effort to destroy civilization itself.

In a bewildering turn-around, during the course of little more than a decade ‘modernity’ has ceased to be the necessary destination of his historical progress, but a vision and a set of values which must be defended at all costs, not just against the barbarians outside the gates, but also against their Trojan counterparts who have already surreptitiously established themselves within the jurisdiction.

As a result the past decade has witnessed ever more strenuous efforts raise the drawbridge in such a way as halt the inflow of migrants inappropriate origin, to ensure that those who have managed to gain entrance are restricted to the status of denizenship, and whilst doing so to introduce equally radical measures aimed at denying legitimacy to, and wherever possible to criminalise the alien – and indeed barbaric – religious, cultural and familial premises which these transjurisdictional entrepreneurs and their offspring have routinely deployed as they have set about carving niches in for themselves in their new and (to them) equally alien environment.

But with what consequences? Are these strategic initiatives achieving the desired result? Can they be expected to produce any greater degree of success than those when progressively minded administrators of Britain’s Indian Raj made similar efforts to introduce their unruly new subjects’ similarly ‘progressive’ notions modernity and civilization during the latter part of the nineteenth century? Or will the conceptual contradictions which of necessity still underpin contemporary efforts to promote the assimilation of Euro-American behavioural and conceptual conventions undermine the whole exercise, so much so that they prove to be just as counter-productive – at least in terms of their articulators’ aims – as those which were deployed in colonial contexts a century ago?

### **The empirical dimensions of post-colonial post-modernity**

In my view it is time to face up to the facts. Thanks to globalisation from below, the condition of unchallengeable modernity that Euro-Americans once believed they occupied, and which they routinely promoted with hubristic confidence, is being rendered steadily more passé. If the contemporary world is consequently becoming steadily more post-modern in character, its empirical features are by no means necessarily congruent with those predicted by philosophically oriented savants such as Foucault, Barthes and Baudrillard. As I see it, one of the central consequences 21<sup>st</sup> century globalisation – at least as it has so far manifested itself – has been to precipitate a *de facto* abandonment of most of the principles universalism which lay at the heart of – or which were at least presumed to lie at the heart of – Euro-

America's eighteenth century enlightenment. From this perspective our currently emergent condition of post-modernity can be seen to have developed not so much as a counter-reaction to, but rather as an alternative to, two interconnected vectors which have long lain at the heart of the modernist project.

Firstly a resurgence of the statist, parochial and anti-pluralistic premises around which the Westphalian settlement was constructed, and which had only been placed in nominal abeyance during the course of all of Euro-America's eighteenth and nineteenth century revolutionary Risorgimentos, and which has since been played out in spades by virtually every successful anti-colonial movement; and secondly the steady realisation – especially amongst those scrutinising the hegemonic character of the Imperial order from below – that the 'progressive', 'rational' and hence allegedly universally valid principles of radical individualism promoted by the Enlightenment, were profoundly Euro-centric in character. But if the ardent promoters of progress were blind to their own myopia, and very largely remain so, it did not take long before the scales began to fall from the eyes of their millions of colonial subjects. To be sure many young scholars were initially intrigued by the ideological promise of enlightenment – but all such hopes were discarded when the penny eventually dropped. In the hands of Imperial regimes 'progress' had become a flagship for the institutionalisation of hegemony, which was routinely deployed as a means of disparaging, and ultimately for rendering illegitimate, the allegedly intrinsically inferior religious and cultural traditions of their new found subjects.

But if some of the most powerful contemporary challenges to the premises of modernity are currently being articulated from below – if only because underlying dialectics of the whole exercise – the principal result, so far at least, can only be described as conceptual and ideological chaos. In the face of all this one of the most salient features of the contemporary global order world is the extent to which the simplistic nostrums of neo-fundamentalism are proving hugely attractive to those on both sides of the fence: no less to members of over privileged population groups who feel (quite realistically) that their interests are under threat, right though to those at the opposite end of the spectrum who are hoping for more. So it is that whilst examples of mass-mobilisation by social class in anything like the classical Marxist sense have grown increasingly rare in the contemporary world, this is most certainly not because social movements aimed at challenging (or defending) their positions in historically rooted contradictions have disappeared.

So it is that ethnicity (and its close cousin nationalism) is proving to be a far more vigorous source of competitive mobilisation – whether in the United States, in the still fragmenting Soviet Empire, in the Indian sub-continent, in China, all over Africa, and last but not least here in Canada – than is class in the Marxist sense. This has major consequences. Even though the vast majority of 'progressive' thinkers in Euro-America still find themselves inspired by the principles of the enlightenment, the time has now come to recognise that Humpty has suffered a disastrous fall, and that there is no prospect putting the pieces together again – and most especially not in anything like their initial arrangement. If so, it follows that we have little alternative but to start over, especially since nobody, but nobody, appears to have an immediate remedy to the impasse into which our commitment to modernity has run the contemporary world.

But that does not mean we will have to begin again from scratch. If one has run into a *cul de sac*, the best way forward is to back out sufficiently far to be able to pursue an alternative route. As we enter the third phase of globalisation, it is clear that humanity has achieved a great deal, especially in material and technological terms. Rather our contemporary difficulties are ideological and socio-political in character: despite our unprecedented condition of affluence in an ever more tightly interconnected world, we have found ourselves less and less able to maintain – or to rediscover – a viable means of living with difference on an equitable basis. Hence whatever benefits the world may have gained from the visions of modernity which were constructed around the premises of the Euro-American enlightenment (and there can be no doubt that some of those benefits have been considerable), they have proved hopeless at resolving the most salient source of socio-political fractures in the contemporary world: the disjunctions which have exploded, and continue to explode, around patterns of religious, cultural and linguistic plurality.

Until recently it was fashionable to suggest that these explosions were a product of a resurgence of ancient hatreds. Although still vigorously supported by neo-fundamentalists on all sides, in analytical terms almost all such arguments must now be regarded as analytically specious. Whilst all such disjunction invariably have a history – social phenomena rarely if ever appear out of the blue – there is rarely much congruence between the just-so 'histories' constructed to justify arguments sustained by Westphalian premises, and those which have been generated on the basis of more careful historiographical studies of the past conducted on the basis of a scholarly, as opposed to an ideologically driven agenda.

Contrary to vast quantities of Imperially-inspired myth, it is now quite clear the lives of the 'barbarians' whom they incorporated into their overseas Empires were far less nasty, brutal and short than those who introducing them to 'civilization' sought to convince themselves (and their new-found subjects) must of necessity have been the case. Those who have exploded the conquerors' Totemic myth have not only regularly shown that the civilizations thus subjugated were just as sophisticated as those of their conquerors, but also that their parallel their alleged prior condition of endless inter-ethnic warfare was equally fictitious: on the contrary it was much more of a carefully constructed trope which the new Imperial hegemon routinely deployed in order to legitimise their strategies of divide and rule.

However this also raises another crucial historical issue. Were the ideological premises of those responsible for the second phase of globalisation typically of *all* such politically driven hegemon? Or were they specifically associated with *European* Imperial constructions?

To my mind it is now becoming increasingly clear that ideologically driven, as opposed to politically-driven, hostility to the very existence of religio-cultural difference is a historically specific phenomenon, whose ideological roots lie in the ideological theological premises of Roman (as opposed to Greek, Syrian and Coptic) Christianity. Indeed I would argue that it is precisely to the anti-pluralistic premises of Augustinian theology that we can trace the ideology of the crusades – a trope which continues to inspire Euro-American political policy a millennium after they were first initiated; moreover it is precisely the same kind of unilateralist thinking – in this case between Catholics and Protestants – which underlay Europe's century-long Wars of Religion, and which the peace of Westphalia was designed to settle.

So it was that in the paradox which I have already sought to highlight, whilst European entrepreneurs systematically utilised what can perhaps best be described as this anti-pluralistic ideological weapons-system as a means of justifying their new-established position hegemony both to themselves, and to their new-found Imperial subjects, those subjects eventually went on to utilise these selfsame weapons – now articulated as the basis for an anti-colonial nationalist revolt – to throw Imperialists out again.

But as Harjot (and many others have emphasised), such nationalist movements also turned out to have developed in such a way as to include an exceedingly nasty sting in their tails: anti-pluralistic attitudes which led them to systematically trash long established local patterns of symbiotic inter-ethnic and inter-religious pluralism. The result of all this can only be

described as tragic: frequent re-runs of Europe's Wars of Religion in the post-colonial period. If my argument is correct, it follows that all such developments – from the Taliban to the Tamil Tigers – must be regarded as quintessentially modern phenomena. They are in no sense pre-modern.

### **Post modernity**

But if ethnic polarisation – or to put it more graphically, Wars of Religion – constitutes the most serious challenge to socio-political order in virtually every jurisdiction in the contemporary world, there can be little dispute that the poison which the sting in the tail of this dimension of modernity is capable of exuding has become steadily more lethal with the passage of time. But if this is indeed the case, where should we look for remedies?

If it is indeed the case that it is precisely the premises of modernity that have led us construct such an Elephant trap, it follows that the last thing that we should do is to keep digging. But if that is indeed the case, where should we look for ideological inspiration for strategies which might enable us to enter less fractious waters, of kind that could be justly be identified as a condition of *post*-modernity?

History may provide us with an answer to that one, always provided that we get our focus right. Given that the enlightenment version of history was comprehensively Whiggish in character, it presented the past as an inevitable progression away from an inferior condition of unmitigated barbarity, and towards a condition of an ever-greater degree of enlightenment and personal liberty, which were in turn identified as necessary prerequisites for constitutional government and liberal democracy. Within that framework the past was by definition *passé*: that which had been, and deserved to be, left behind.

But has the globe had one history, or many histories? More specifically, is it the case that all others were bound in the long run bound to fall in with a 'normative' Euro-American trajectory – rooted as is Judaeo-Christian and Roman premises – such that the those of all other civilizations, which were bound in due course to fall into comprehensive abeyance? If so, then God help us: on the face of things, present evidence suggests that we are set on our way to a Hobbesian future of war of all against all, given our modernistic incapacity to tolerate difference. But if this is indeed the case, where are the seeds of a more viable post-modern global future most likely to be found?

In this context I would like to present you with yet another paradox: namely that whilst the dialectical developments precipitated by contemporary processes of diasporic expansion from below are precipitating some of the contemporary world's most alarming manifestations of dialectically driven manifestations of ethno-national conflict, they can also provide us with some particularly illuminating insights into the route which we might follow towards to a more viable post-modern future.

At first sight, such a proposition might seem extremely odd: the tectonic shifts which the third phase of globalisation is precipitating is the principal driving force behind popular demands for the construction of all manner of walls, fences and border controls to keep the barbarians at bay. But even if financial (and ideological) investment in the articulation of such exclusionary measures is rising exponentially all around the globe, there is every reason to suppose that these measures will fail to fulfil their objectives, given that:

- i. At no point in global history has long-distance travel been cheaper or more accessible
- ii. The demand for additional resources at both extremes of the labour market – highly skilled and unskilled – has never been greater
- iii. The pass has already been sold: substantial ethnic colonies have long since been established behind those exclusionary barriers, where they routinely offer both succour and sanctuary to newcomers of similar origins to themselves.

But if external borders are proving to be inescapably porous in *de facto*, if not in *de jure* terms, this has not led to the erosion of ethnic disjunctions: rather the resulting inflows have simply has the effect reinforcing and extending existing patterns of plurality *within* each of these increasingly fenced off jurisdictions.

However there is one further crucial feature of globalization from below which also needs to be inserted into our analytical model: the cultural traditions which the intruders have brought with them are *not* grounded in the conceptual foundations of the Euro-American enlightenment. That is not to suggest that the newcomers are either unwilling to, or incapable of, borrowing some of those premises as a strategic means of reordering their lives in an alien environment. But in doing so we must be careful not to beg the most crucial question of all: namely just which slice of Euro-American cultural DNA have they chosen to borrow in which circumstances? And along with that, to which of its dimensions are they proving to be equally deeply resistant?

One part of that answer is now becoming quite clear, especially in the case of the younger generation: in the face of modernistic chauvinistic exclusion, they have chosen to play their excluders back in their own money, just as Marx remarked in the case of Irish Catholic immigrants in nineteenth century industrial England. From that perspective the contemporary young Fenians are the *muhajirun*, the *khalistanis* and parallel Hindu neo-fundamentalist groups who are not only dissing each other, but also scaring the pants off their European hosts. But that is all a manifestation of modernity, I'm afraid.

So where should we look for *post*-modernity? As far as I am concerned, the answer is becoming increasingly obvious. It is certainly not to be found amongst the antics of arch modernisers such as Al-Qaida and the Taliban. Rather it is to be found right at the opposite end of the spectrum of ideas and practices which have been irretrievably inserted into the Euro-American socio-political world as a result of the dynamics of 21<sup>st</sup> century globalisation: namely the firmly pre-modern premises of kinship reciprocity and age and gender hierarchy, of the capacity to utilise the potential of these premises to build self-sustaining networks of mutual trust and cooperation which can readily be extended across jurisdictional boundaries of all kinds, and last but not least a well-earned capacity to engage in cross-cultural navigation, so enabling members of such networks readily to establish trading relationships with members of neighbouring communities, even when the conceptual premises which their neighbours deploy to order their everyday lives differ significantly from their own.

But, you may well ask, is there any evidence to support my thesis that the crowds of would-be immigrants currently hammering at the gates of Euro-America are pre-modernistically oriented, or that their counterparts who have already established themselves within the gates are carriers of any kind of post-modern potential? After all, at least on the face of things modernisation appears to be the order of the day. All we hear about them is tales of neo-fundamentalist sympathisers of all sorts waving guns, Muslim women donning the *hijab* and the *niqab*, and Sikhs demanding to carry bigger and bigger swords. But although all this generates an enormous amount of sound and fury, especially on Fox News, just how representative is this of what is really going on? Or have those who take a more liberal perspective, and who consequently argue that the vast majority of newcomers simply want to settle down, work hard and join the Euro-American dream, who have got the right answer? And if both answers are at least partially true, how can the contradictions between them be meaningfully resolved?

## Success

One of the most striking features of the process of reverse colonisation which has taken place during the course of the past half century is the degree of upward mobility which settlers 'from below' – and most especially their offspring – have achieved as they have established in the metropolitan heartlands of Euro-America. This is not to suggest that either the speed or the direction of those processes of mobility has been uniform, either within or as between each such diasporic network. But despite having started, of necessity, right at the bottom of the pile, and having encountered all manner of exclusionary obstacles along the way, their direction of travel has invariably been firmly upwards, and often dramatically so. Just how is this pattern of success to be accounted for – especially in the light of the fact that members of the more indigenised sections of the Euro-American population who are similarly disprivileged by class and/or race have largely flat-lined during this period? The answer is critical when it comes to understanding the significance, and the consequences, of the third phase of globalisation.

Remarkably enough, serious exploration of the roots of these developments has for the most part been eschewed by Euro-American sociologists, largely, I suspect, because they run so strongly counter to the narrowly determinist character of their preferred analytical models. The result of all this must by now be plain to see. Precisely because those models focus so heavily on the negative impact of all manner of external constraints, whether of class, of gender, of disability, or of race, it follows that they tend to treat differences of religion, of language, of culture and more broadly those of ethnicity in exactly the same way: as handicaps. Whilst there is frequently a good deal of substance in that view – if only because those in positions of power and privilege frequently react to such differences by deploying strategies of marginalisation – it is a great mistake that those subject to such strategies are helpless pawns in the face of such tactics: on the contrary they routinely develop all manner of counter-strategies by means of which to subvert them.

With this in mind incoming migrants – and most especially those arriving 'from below' in the midst of a post-colonial world – have turned out to have an immense advantage over members of more indigenised minorities: their capacity to think 'outside the box' of the currently conventional Euro-American conceptual and behavioural assumptions. In my view it is precisely the capacity of members of the new diasporas to tap into the resources of an alternative conceptual universe, and hence to develop strategies – no less at a collective than at an individual level – which are unconstrained by the conventional assumptions routinely

deployed within the wider social order – which best accounts for their capacity to overturn established expectations, and to so rapidly ahead, regardless of the obstacles that they find strewn in their paths. In other words it their very *alterity* which constitutes the secret of their success.

From this perspective their most valuable assets are two-fold in character. Firstly their refusal to take 'no' for an answer; had they done so, diasporic initiatives would not have taken off in the first place; and their capacity to tap into the resources of the conceptual kitbags all along the way, and also to their success in passing the most critical aspects of those resources their overseas-born offspring. By doing so they developed a remarkable capacity to leap-frog their way over the obstacles which would have otherwise have kept them restricted to the bottom of the pile should.

So just what kind of alteric resources have they relied upon in developing the capacity to perform these remarkable feats? My own experience suggests that one of the most valuable of all has proved to be their capacity to utilise reciprocities of kinship to build extended networks inter-personal kinship reciprocity not just as between themselves, but also *on their own terms*, and such that they have been able devise collectively grounded – and indeed semi-corporate – strategies by means of which to overcome the challenges, and to make the most of every available opportunity they could identify, in the new environments in which they found themselves. It should therefore come as no surprise that those whose heritage included extended systems of kinship reciprocity – as was the case for most migrants of Asian origin – have frequently proved to be arch-entrepreneurs. Considerations of this kind go a long way towards explaining how migrants of peasant origin – amongst whom such networks tend to be most strongly elaborated – have proved to be particularly adept at the art of pulling themselves up by their own bootstraps, no matter how limited their initial financial resources may have been

Even so, that is still only half their secret. Contrary the myopic assumptions of outsiders, the ethnic colonies which such settlers have constructed around themselves are far from being the inward looking ghettos that they are often assumed to be. To be sure such colonies frequently develop thriving internal economies: however closer inspection frequently reveal that these are local manifestations of much more extensive transjurisdictional diasporic networks. But at the same the existence of such colonies is in no way autonomous of their wider local. To be sure external observers regularly view them as such, partly because they relatively rarely cross the ethnic boundary; moreover if and when they inadvertently do so,

regularly find themselves wholly at sea, since they lack both the linguistic and cultural competence on the basis of which to make sense of what is going on. Such experiences all too easily precipitate negative reactions of anger and dismay on the grounds that 'no-go' arenas have been illegitimately and transgressively been constructed in territory which should properly be 'theirs'.

But whilst inward movement across such boundaries is relatively rare, outward movements are commonplace. That this should be the case was inevitable: such colonies have been integral components of the wider economic order right from the outset, if only because the vast majority of settlers have always relied on external employment as their principal source of income. Moreover as colonies expanded in size and sophistication, so border crossing activities became ever wider, as children went to school and college, as their parents sought medical treatment, and as everyone went shopping and for walks in the park. Do such developments signal the onset of assimilation? They might do, of course. However before jumping to such conclusions it is worth taking a much closer look at just what is going on in such circumstances.

If members of hegemonic majorities find minority ethnic boundaries impenetrable, they only have themselves to blame: the central reason why they find themselves at six and sevens in such circumstances is that they have failed to acquire the cultural competence which would enable them to act and react appropriately in the arena in which they have found themselves. Of course most settlers had exactly the same experience when they first arrived; but given that necessity them to make the reverse passage on an everyday basis, they rapidly gained the basic cultural and linguistic competence which enabled them to participate in majoritarian arenas; meanwhile their children have become comprehensively multi-lingual and multi-cultural, such that they can express themselves fluently in a wider range of differently structured arenas.

On the basis of developments of this kind, many observers concluded that ethnic boundaries are being eroded, and that a new dawn of assimilation lies just around the corner. However in my view this conclusion is mistaken: careful inspection swiftly reveals that the boundary itself has not been eroded at all. Boundaries of this kind are best understood not so much as wall, but as semi-permeable membranes. From the perspective of those within them, that has always been self-evident. The principle obstacle to their participation in arenas outside the boundary was their lack of the relevant degree of linguistic and cultural competence. Once that was acquired – and for the most part they did so quickly – participation in the 'outside

world' quickly became extensive. But that certainly did not mean that such cultural navigators abandoned their ethnically distinctive roots. Not only did the natives frequently remain hostile, especially when push came to shove, but the arena within which they conducted their personal, familial, and leisure activities for the most part remained firmly located within the bounds of the ethnic colony.

In consequences there are two complementary senses in which it is quite wrong to describe contemporary ethnic colonies as being 'parochial' in character. In the first place it should always be remembered that the diasporic networks of which they are a local manifestation are invariably *global* in extent; no communities are more avid consumers of cheap overseas phone cards, of the services of Emirates Air, or of global satellite channels serving people of similar origins to themselves – than members of contemporary diasporas. Secondly, and perhaps even more importantly, their members are in no sense cut off from the surrounding social order: on the contrary they participate in it, and sustain interactions with members of the indigenous majority on a daily basis.

If so, it follows that the population group whose members can most appropriately be described as 'cut off' and 'isolated' in the context of the 21<sup>st</sup> century global order are not the inhabitants of such ethnic colonies, but rather those who have failed to gain – or more precisely have *refused* to gain – the cultural and linguistic competence which would enable them to operate with any degree of fluency outside their own familiar conceptual order. Contrary to popular suppositions amongst the benighted, plural societies are in no sense a novel phenomenon: on the contrary they were a routine feature of every pre-modern socio-cultural order. Nor are the boundaries between those who differ impermeable – other than to those who presumptuous enough to refuse to learn the skills and understandings which are a prerequisite for successful cross-cultural navigation. In other words it is not diversity, nor the consequent presence of ethnic boundaries, which are the principal sources of tension in our ever more globalised world. The problem lies elsewhere. Plurality is a given. It is a manifestation of our very humanity, and hence unlikely to disappear in any kind of foreseeable future – let alone in the context of a global order within which all manner of radical processes of rebalancing are taking place.

Rather our contemporary problems must be understood as being intimately related to that process of rebalancing itself. Indeed if my analysis is correct, it follows that one of the principal ideological obstacles in the way of facilitating that process of rebalancing on a non-conflictual basis can be traced back to the most sacred cows of Euro-American civilization:

those aspects of the principles of enlightenment, and ultimately of western Christianity which I have found it necessary to subject to critical scrutiny in this essay.

### The future

If this is indeed the case, the hole into which we have dug ourselves, no less in global than in more localised arenas, is a large one. Given the way in which Westphalian premises of homogeneity, autonomy and sovereignty were exported to the remainder of the world as the only legitimate basis for the construction of a modern state during the second phase of globalisation, so an ever wider range of ethno-national states have fallen into the same elephant trap. Faced with the ever-present 'threat' of ethnic plurality, no less from within than from without, virtually all contemporary states find themselves battling to maintain a largely imagined condition of autonomy and homogeneity in order to defend their own parochial vision of 'civilization' against the machinations of all others, regardless of whether that which is to be defended is conceptualised in terms of essentialised visions of Euro-American, Confucian, Hindu, Buddhist or Islamic ethno-nationalistic distinctiveness. It is, of course, precisely this perspective which underpins Samuel Huntington's influential monograph *The Clash of Civilisations and the Remaking of World Order*; if his conclusions are accurate, there is little prospect that the dynamics of the third phase of globalisation will differ significantly from those we experienced during the second phase, but for the fact of the entry of many more ethno-national entities into the game, and eruption of further patterns of polarisation within almost all of them. In the absence of a change of course there appears to be every prospect of our finding ourselves on the brink of waging yet another hundred years war, this time on a global scale, which will only come to an end if and when the exhausted contestants finally come together to replace the flawed premises of the Treaty of Westphalia, so enabling us to chart a truly post-modern future.

But do we really have to wait so long? And in any event, just what shape might we expect such a post-modern future to have? In a paper entitled "Living with Difference: an ancient art in urgent need of revival?"<sup>1</sup> I argued that our pre-modern ancestors had developed strategies with to cope with conditions of plurality on far more sophisticated basis than anything which we moderns appear to be capable – at least if Huntington's conclusions are correct – in the midst of our increasingly globalised world. It for this reason that 'back to the future' may

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.casas.org.uk/papers/pdfpapers/difference.pdf>

well prove to be a highly effective strategy – especially if those carrying conceptual frameworks grounded outside the narrow principles of the enlightenment, and of its unilateralist one-way-forward vision of progress rooted in the theological principles of Western European Christianity begin to actively to show the world an alternative way forward.

Last but not least the world's first truly post-modern state, South Africa, may well be in a position to show us the way forward. One of its first initiatives the post-*Apartheid* era was to formulate a new constitution, this time founded on explicitly pluralistic principles. Hence paragraph 9 of the Constitution, headed Equality, is quite explicit as to just what that entails in a post-*apartheid* era. Hence whilst the first sub-paragraph is unexceptional in global terms, even if it rips up the premises of the apartheid era insofar as it proclaims that

- Everyone is equal before the law and has the right to equal protection and benefit of the law.

The sub-clauses that follow are much more explicit about the precise kind of equality which the authors of the Constitution had in mind:

- Equality includes the full and equal enjoyment of all rights and freedoms. To promote the achievement of equality, legislative and other measures designed to protect or advance persons, or categories of persons, disadvantaged by unfair discrimination may be taken.
- The state may not unfairly discriminate directly or indirectly against anyone on one or more grounds, including race, gender, sex, pregnancy, marital status, ethnic or social origin, colour, sexual orientation, age, disability, religion, conscience, belief, culture, language and birth.
- No person may unfairly discriminate directly or indirectly against anyone on one or more grounds in terms of subsection (iii). National legislation must be enacted to prevent or prohibit unfair discrimination.

Nor was this the end of it. In an early and influential ruling of the Constitutional Court in *Lawrence et al v. The State* (a case in which a white Christian shopkeeper sought support from the authorities in his efforts to prevent a Hindu rival from engaging in an unfair competitive practice by opening his business on Sundays), Judge Albie Sachs went on to fill out the implications of these principles as follows:

[148] To my mind, read in the context of all of the above provisions and of the Constitution as a whole, this section was intended at least to uphold the following principles and values:

- South Africa is an open and democratic society with a non-sectarian state that guarantees freedom of worship; is respectful of and accommodatory towards,

rather than hostile to or walled-off from, religion;

- acknowledges the multi-faith and multi-belief nature of the country; does not favour one religious creed or doctrinal truth above another;
- accepts the intensely personal nature of individual conscience and affirms the intrinsically voluntary and non-coerced character of belief;
- respects the rights of non-believers;
- and does not impose orthodoxies of thought or require conformity of conduct in terms of any particular world-view.

The Constitution, then, is very much about the acknowledgement by the state of different belief systems and their accommodation within a non-hierarchical framework of equality and non-discrimination. It follows that the state does not take sides on questions of religion, it does not impose belief, grant privileges to or impose disadvantages on adherents of any particular belief, require conformity in matters simply of belief, involve itself in purely religious controversies, or marginalise people who have different beliefs.

[151] Not only did the state require observance of certain aspects of the Christian religion, it also refused to recognise the validity of marriages that did not conform to the Christian prototype. The identification of Christianity with what a judge called “civilized peoples” emphasized the role of the Christian religion as a specific source of values for the interpretation and development of the law. The hurt caused by the non-recognition of Hindu and Muslim marriages by the courts has been well documented. Comparing the old situation to the new, Farlam J recently indicated his agreement with the proposition that:

“ . . . it is quite inimical to all the values of the new South Africa for one group to impose its values on another and that the Courts should only brand a contract as offensive to public policy if it is offensive to those values which are shared by the community at large, by all right-thinking people in the community and not only by one section of it.”

[152] The marginalisation of communities of Hindu and Muslim persuasion flowed from and reinforced a tendency for the norms of “Christian civilisation” to be regarded as points of departure, and for Hindu and Muslim norms to be relegated to the space of the deviant “Other”. Any echo today of the superior status in public law once enjoyed by Christianity must therefore be understood as a reminder of the subordinate position to which followers of other faiths were formerly subjected.

The message sent by state endorsement of religion to non-adherents to the effect that they are outsiders and not full members of the political community, has special resonance in South Africa. Religious marginalisation in the past coincided strongly in our country with racial discrimination, social exclusion and political disempowerment. Similar although not identical observations may be made about anti-semitism, which targeted members of the Jewish community for disadvantageous treatment in the public as well as the private sphere.

Thus, any endorsement by the state today of Christianity as a privileged religion not only disturbs the general principle of impartiality in relation to matters of belief and opinion, but also serves to activate memories of painful past discrimination and

disadvantage based on religious affiliation.

[153] Finally, we should remember that the movement for freedom of belief has preceded every other in the history of the struggle for human rights and fundamental freedoms, while conversely, religious persecution, sectarian strife, and ideological totalitarianism have undermined democracy and respect for fundamental rights in many parts of the world. State enforcement of a particular belief or ideology can in an extreme case do more than marginalise citizens and block free debate, it can threaten the whole system of constitutional democracy. The present case ... highlighta how sensitive these matters are, and how potentially deep the implications of apparently harmless provisions may be. Painful history in our country and abroad reminds us that the values [enshrined in the Constitution]

[160] [In doing so] the functional impact of the law may be marginal, and its symbolic effect muted, yet the communication it makes cannot be disregarded...

One of the functions of the Constitution is precisely to protect the fundamental rights of non-majoritarian groups, who might well be tiny in number and hold beliefs considered bizarre by the ordinary faithful. In constitutional terms, the quality of a belief cannot be dependent on the number of its adherents nor on how widespread or reduced the acceptance of its ideas might be, nor, in principle, should it matter how slight the intrusion by the state is.

The objective of [all this] is to keep the state away from favouring or disfavouring any particular world-view. So that even if politicians as politicians need not be neutral on these questions, legislators as legislative drafters must.

It is, of course an open question as to just how far South Africa has actually managed to live up to the pluralistic premises which Albie Sachs outlined at such length. In cases where those on both sides of the tracks are locked into the premises of modernism – as was undoubtedly largely the case by the time that *apartheid* collapsed – there was undoubtedly a powerful temptation simply to turn the hour-glass the other way up. Nelson Mandela and his close associates – of whom Albie Sachs was one – resisted that temptation, and instead insisted that in the new South Africa equality should be sought in the context of a negotiated *modus vivendi* as between all the many components of its profoundly plural population. Their adoption of such a course – which Archbishop Tutu rightly described as profoundly African – offers a lesson to us all, no less in strategic than in moral terms.

*Apartheid* could all too easily have come to an end in the midst of comprehensive ethnic polarisation along a multitude of vectors, and thence to bloody – and typically modern – civil war. Unless we all begin to develop the capacity to broker diverse (and until recently strongly hierarchically organised) patterns of religious and ethnic diversity as successfully as South Africa has so far managed to do, the prospect that we will be able to tap into the post-modern future which 21<sup>st</sup> century globalisation demands appears to be remote.