

**The Modern/Colonial/  
Capitalist World-System  
in the Twentieth Century:  
Global Processes,  
Antisystemic Movements,  
and the Geopolitics  
of Knowledge**

*Ramón Grosfoguel  
Ana Margarita Cervantes-Rodríguez  
Editors*

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of Knowledge*

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*Edited by*  
Ramón Grosfoguel and  
Ana Margarita Cervantes-Rodríguez

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# Contents

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Acknowledgments	ix
Introduction. Unthinking Twentieth-Century Eurocentric Mythologies: Universalist Knowledges, Decolonization, and Developmentalism	xi
<i>Ramón Grosfoguel and Ana Margarita Cervantes-Rodríguez</i>	
The Twentieth Century: Darkness at Noon?	xxxix
<i>Immanuel Wallerstein</i>	
<b>I. Global Processes, Power Relations, and Antisystemic Movements</b>	<b>1</b>
1. Globalization and the National Security State Corporate Complex (NSSCC) in the Long Twentieth Century	3
<i>Thomas Ehrlich Reifer</i>	
2. Bucking the System: The TimeSpace of Antisystemic Movements	21
<i>Richard E. Lee</i>	
3. Some Initial Empirical Observations on Inequality in the World-Economy (1870–2000)	33
<i>Roberto Patricio Korzeniewicz, Angela Stach, David Consiglio, and Timothy Patrick Moran</i>	
4. Transnationalism, Power, and Hegemony: Review of Alternative Perspectives and Their Implications for World-Systems Analysis	47
<i>Ana Margarita Cervantes-Rodríguez</i>	

5.	Mass Migration in the World-System: An Antisystemic Movement in the Long Run? <i>Eric Mielants</i>	79
6.	Twentieth-Century Antisystemic Historical Processes and U.S. Hegemony: Free Trade Imperialism, National Economic Development, and Free Enterprise <i>Satoshi Ikeda</i>	103
<b>II.</b>	<b>Women's Studies, Feminist Theory, and World-Systems Analysis</b>	<b>125</b>
7.	Commodity Chains and Gendered Exploitation: Rescuing Women from the Periphery of World-Systems Thought <i>Wilma A. Dunaway</i>	127
8.	Revisioning Social Change: Situated Knowledge and Unit of Analysis in the Modern World-System <i>Nancy Forsythe</i>	147
9.	Intersecting and Contesting Positions: Postcolonial, Feminist, and World-Systems Theories <i>Shelley Feldman</i>	171
10.	Writing on Gender in World-Systems Perspective <i>Sheila Pelizzon</i>	199
<b>III.</b>	<b>The Aftermath of the Colonial System, Coloniality, and the Geopolitics of Knowledge</b>	<b>213</b>
11.	The Genesis of the Development Framework: The End of Laissez-Faire, the Eclipse of Colonial Empires, and the Structure of U.S. Hegemony <i>Fouad Makki</i>	215
12.	The Convergence of World-Historical Social Science, or Can There Be a Shared Methodology for World-Systems Analysis, Postcolonial Theory, and Subaltern Studies? <i>Santiago Castro-Gómez and Oscar Guardiola-Rivera</i>	237
13.	Making "Africa" in Brazil: Old Trends and New Opportunities <i>Livio Sansone</i>	251

14. The Convergence of World-Historical Social Science: “Border Thinking” as an Alternative to the Classical Comparative Method <i>Khaldoun Subhi Samman</i>	267
Index	287
About the Contributors	303





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This volume has its origins in the 24th Annual Conference of the Political Economy of the World-System (PEWS) section of the American Sociological Association, held at Boston College on March 24 and 25, 2000. The contributors to the volume have engaged in serious thinking about processes, relations, and trends that are at the core of world-systems analysis, or those that should gain greater centrality in the perspective. They have done so through rigorous and committed analyses of the issues explored and through cooperation and camaraderie throughout the entire process, from the organization of every detail for the conference in Boston, to the painstaking editorial process leading to the publication of the volume. Their criticism of conservative lines of thought as distorters of history, their efforts to improve world-system analysis through conceptual refinement, and the erasure of borders with other perspectives with which it shares important commonalities constitute the Confucian thread of this volume. Other than that, this work is far from reflecting uncritical linearity in the course of thought. Rather, intellectual cooperation and overlapping have gone hand in hand with the elaboration of divergent points of view on issues pertaining to antisystemic movements, the ways through which world-systems analysis should incorporate alternative perspectives, and the usefulness of such combination for advancing our knowledge on the most general processes and the subprocesses of the world-system. We hope that this volume will represent an important building bloc for further advancing our understanding of these processes. We also hope that our graduate students, seasoned scholars and intellectuals all, in the Gramscian sense, will find the insightful chapters presented here useful for their respective academic endeavors and emancipatory projects.

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## *Introduction*

# Unthinking Twentieth-Century Eurocentric Mythologies: Universalist Knowledges, Decolonization, and Developmentalism

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*Ramón Grosfoguel and  
Ana Margarita Cervantes-Rodríguez*

Throughout the twentieth century, the world-system has operated through some mythologies that mold the way we conceptualize the world today. There are three mythologies that we would like to address in this introduction: objectivist/universalist knowledges, the decolonization of the modern world-system, and developmentalism. The three are intertwined with each other and tied to Eurocentric forms of thinking and knowledge production. The developmentalist myth cannot be fully understood without awareness of the myth of decolonization, and neither of them is comprehensible unless we identify their connection with the myth of universality in the production of knowledge. To be sure, Occidentalism, or the discourse about the superiority of the West, has been the common denominator of the three myths in question. Occidentalism and its corresponding mythologies serve the function of concealing the root causes of European/Euro-American power and privilege systems in the global hierarchy of the world-system and the global designs upon which they have been erected. They have also been efficient in silencing the “Other”; historically defined throughout several centuries of European colonial expansion. Consequently, these myths have perniciously controlled our imagination and eclipsed our representations of alternative ways of life, political options, and epistemologies.

## THE MYTH OF OBJECTIVIST AND UNIVERSALIST KNOWLEDGES

It is important that we, as scholars, recognize that we always speak from a specific site in the gender, class, racial, and sexual hierarchies of a given

region in the modern/colonial world-system. Our knowledges, as the feminist thinker Donna Haraway (1997) contends, are always already “situated.” Following Quijano (1993) and Mignolo (2000), we can add that the colonial difference produced by the coloniality of power in the modern/colonial world-system frames the situatedness of our knowledges in important ways. The notions of “coloniality of power” (Quijano 1991, 1993, 2000) and “colonial difference” (Mignolo 2000) have become crucial to geopolitically situating the forms of thinking and cosmologies produced by subaltern groups in relation to dominant ones. Major constitutive elements of the coloniality of power are the racial classification and reclassification of the world’s population (for which the concept of “culture” has been instrumental), and the development of the corresponding Eurocentric institutional structures (state apparatuses, universities, church) and epistemological perspectives to reinforce the global racial/ethnic hierarchy associated with such classification (Quijano 1998; Mignolo 2000). Historically, the coloniality of power is entangled with the rise of capitalism and its consolidation through European conquest and colonization in the Americas. Thus, coloniality of power is enacted by the “colonial difference” or the Eurocentric “classification of the planet in the ‘modern/colonial’ imaginary.” Such dichotomy has been forcefully articulated through the “Occidentalism” metaphor (Mignolo 2000: 13; also Arrighi 1994; Quijano and Wallerstein 1992).

The capitalist world-system was formed by the Spanish/Portuguese expansion to the Americas in the long sixteenth century (Wallerstein 1974). This first modernity (from 1492 to 1650) built the foundations of the racist/colonial culture and global capitalist system that we are living today. The expansion to the Americas in 1492 and the expulsion of Arabs and Jews from Spain in the name of “blood purity” (*pureza de la sangre*) were contemporaneous processes. Thus, the “internal border” meant to keep Arabs and Jews at arm’s length was built simultaneously to the “external border” separating the peoples from peripheral geographical zones (Mignolo 2000). The Spanish and Portuguese expansion to the Americas was crucial for the construction of the racial categories that would later be generalized to the rest of the world (Quijano and Wallerstein 1992). Racial designations such as White, Negro, and Indian were instrumental in the European colonization of the Americas. In addition, the formation of a global racial/ethnic hierarchy was contemporaneous with the development of the international division of labor. As Quijano asserts, there was no “pre” or “post” in their joint constitution. Christianity was also central in the constitution of the colonial imaginary of the world-system during the first century of European colonization. The myth of the “superiority” of the “civilized” Westerners/Europeans over the “uncivilized” non-Europeans, based on racial narratives on “superior/inferior” peoples and cosmovisions was constructed in this period. This is why it has been suggested that “Occidentalism” (the

dominant discourse of the first modernity) is the socio-historical precondition for the emergence of “Orientalism” (the dominant discourse of the second modernity) (Mignolo 2000).

During the second modernity (1650–1945), the core of the world-system shifted from Spain and Portugal to Germany, the Netherlands, England, and France. The emergence of Northwestern Europe as the core of the capitalist world-system continued, expanded, and deepened the “internal imaginary border” against the Jews, Arabs, and Gypsies and the “external imaginary border” built during the first modernity against the Americas and later expanded to include other geographical zones such as Africa, the Middle East, and Asia (Wallerstein 1980; Mignolo 2000). However, the second modernity added a new border, this time between Northwestern Europeans and Iberian peoples. Hispanic/Latin Southern European cultures were constructed as inferior to the Northwestern Europeans. This hierarchical division within Europe would extend to encompass North America where, under the Anglo-Saxon-Protestant hegemony, the Euro-Americans of Spanish descent were regarded as an inferior “Other.” Specifically, the Hispanic/Anglo border would be reenacted in the context of the U.S. imperial expansion in 1848 (Mexican-American War) and 1898 (the Spanish-American War). Despite the disparate forms adopted by the outcomes of such events (annexation of half of Mexican territory, political annexation of Puerto Rico, and the formation of a protectorate in Cuba), these two imperial wars set the foundations of the prospective coloniality of power by setting the regional grounds of what would constitute U.S. global hegemony. Equally relevant, by redrawing “the early division between Anglo and Latin America” these two events would mark “the historical core of an ethnic conflict, regardless of the place of origin of those called ‘Hispanics’ or ‘Latino/as’ ” (Mignolo 2000: 136). From there on, within the context of the United States, “Hispanic cultures” of the Americas were subalternized, and the notion of “Whiteness” would be further distanced from its meanings in Latin America.

Latin American independence, achieved in struggles against Spain and Portugal, was hegemonized by Euro-American elites. It was not a process of social, political, cultural, or economic decolonization. White creole elites continued to dominate the power relations of the newly independent republics of South and Central America in the nineteenth century. Blacks, mulattoes, Native Americans, and people of color remained in subordinated and disenfranchised positions, now under an emerging coloniality of power that did not need colonial administrations for its enactment. However, as was outlined above, in the context of the U.S. expansion, White Spaniards (or their “criollo” descendants) were excluded from the notion of “Whiteness” in the United States, and “Hispanics” were constructed as part of the inferior “Other” and excluded from the superior “White,” “European” races. Eventually, the American notion of Whiteness would expand to in-

clude groups that were internal colonial subjects of Europe under Northwestern European hegemony (e.g., the Irish, Eastern Europeans, and the Jews), which would emphasize class as a major social marker within these groups, while the Indians and the Blacks would continue to be racial/colonial subjects. However, the supremacy of the White over the Black and the Indian did not exhaust the multiple strategies of “Othering” deployed as the United States further expanded its global power. The history of the second modernity is crucial to understanding the present tendency to racialize immigrants from Latin America and their descendants.

The second modernity represents a milestone since the capitalist world-system expanded to cover the whole planet (Wallerstein 1979). European (understood not merely in geographic terms but in the broader cultural and political sense of White European supremacy) and Euro-American processes of nation building, such as the struggles for citizenship rights, development of parliamentary regimes, and the definition of the official languages, were also part and parcel of a global colonial/racist imaginary that established “internal” and “external” borders (Quijano 1993; Mignolo 2000). The invisibility of global coloniality (Quijano 2000) in the process of building modern nation-states in nineteenth-century Europe and the Americas reflects how powerful and ingrained its colonial/racist culture was and still is. While categories of modernity such as citizenship, democracy, and nation building were acknowledged for the dominant Northwestern Europeans, the colonial “Others” were submitted to foreign military presence, forms of political tutelage, coerced forms of labor exploitation, and subjected to authoritarian rule in their countries as a way of granting the systemic equilibrium required for the development of the intertwined processes of nation building and global expansion. While sociobiology or eugenics were knowledges produced in the name of science to justify or articulate “biological racist discourses,” under the more recent forms of coloniality, “biological racism” has been gradually replaced by what is called the “new racism,” or “cultural racist” discourses. Yet the complicity between “science” and “racism” manifests more bluntly today in the “scientific” articulation of the “neo-culture of poverty” approaches. Ultimately, these approaches tend to blame the culture of racialized groups for the perpetual cycle of impoverishment in which they have been trapped throughout generations. “Cultural racist” discourses do not contend that the failure of “colonial/racialized” groups is due to “inferior genes” or “inferior IQ” (although this is still a pervasive and popular perception and we are witnessing renewed academic attempts to revive it), but rather to “improper” cultural habits and/or an “inferior” culture.

However, the trajectories of coloniality and the colonial difference(s) have not been linear or unproblematic from the perspective of the construction of knowledge under “Occidentalism.” The works of Chicana and Chicano scholars such as Gloria Anzaldúa (1987), Norma Alarcón (1981), José

David Saldívar (1998), and Walter D. Mignolo's (1995, 2000) explicit critical dialogues with Darcy Ribeiro's early [1960s] notion of "subaltern knowledges" as well as Foucault's [1976] "subjugated knowledges," remind us that the colonial experience leads to complex translocal scenarios that shape the production and dissemination of knowledge, including "subaltern knowledges." The notions of "subjugated knowledges," "subaltern knowledges," and "border thinking" (Mignolo 2000) eloquently illustrate this point. "Border thinking" in particular manifests itself through knowledge produced by people who move transnationally between former colonizing countries and their respective colonies, and also among people "around whom the world moved" (locus of enunciation) (Mignolo 2000). "Border thinking" refers also, perhaps principally, to the "in-between" location of subaltern knowledges, critical of both global hegemony (global coloniality) and local power relations corresponding to local histories (internal coloniality). From this perspective, the "colonial difference(s)" are thus the "house where border epistemology dwells" and where the Eurocentric critique to Eurocentrism yields to critiques of Eurocentrism from the subaltern side of the colonial difference (Mignolo 2000: 37). The notion is also intended to call our attention to the "double critique" (to both Occidentalism and other forms of fundamentalism) implicit in "border thinking" which ultimately relies on "spatial confrontations between different concepts of history" (67). Thus, the conceptual triada of "coloniality of power," "the colonial difference," and "border thinking" helps to situate, geopolitically, our understanding of power relations as manifested in dominant metaphors and discourses that shape our knowledge of society today. Altogether, such conceptual apparatus is meant to improve Gramsci's notion of "subalternity"—understood as a power structure molded around class relations—by incorporating the role of colonial/racial relations and non-Western religions in shaping subalternity.

If the modern world is constituted by a colonial difference, if there is no modernity without coloniality, and, therefore, we still live in a modern/colonial world, then knowledges are not produced from a universal neutral location. Thus, we need to epistemologically account for the geopolitics of knowledge production. The question remains: From which location in the colonial divide are knowledges produced? Nationalist and colonialist discourses are articulated from a power position in the colonial divide of the modern/colonial world, while subaltern subjects articulate thinking and discourses from the subordinate position of the colonial difference. Colonialist discourses reproduce the North-South global colonial divide, while nationalist discourses reproduce an "internal" colonial divide within national formations. The knowledge, critical insights, and political strategies produced from the subaltern side of the colonial difference serve as a point of departure to move beyond colonialist and nationalist discourses. In other words, rather than exclusively acknowledge the subalterns, we need to ac-



knowledge that their cosmologies, thinking processes, and political strategies constitute foundational elements to dismantle and transgress dominant perspectives in the process of knowledge production.

The authors included in Part III of this volume explicitly deal with the myth of universal knowledges and their corresponding hegemonic designs, and search for alternative ways of looking at world-historical processes and their corresponding forms of agency. Khaldoun Samman (Chapter 14) specifically argues that despite the differences that exist between world-system analysis and subaltern and postcolonial studies, they all share a “common thread”: “their understanding of how one should study society, nation, and civilization . . . they all are attempting to overturn the traditional methods that have dominated social sciences over the past two centuries.” Altogether, these perspectives constitute a “world-historical field.” Santiago Castro-Gómez and Oscar Guardiola-Rivera (Chapter 12) offer a radical postcolonial critique to the new forms of global designs and Eurocentric knowledges in the present “globalization” era, which they conceptualize as new forms of global coloniality: “Today, neither the nation-state nor the group function organically but only as ways of coding, decoding, and re-coding the activity of agents that are now treated as merely another space or value-creative force that can be colonized. The result is a process of colonization in which there are only colonies and no colonizer countries as such, since the colonial character of power acquires yet another form: it does not come from the (organic) nation-state but from global and ideological state apparatuses.” Their argument is central for the analysis of the reproduction of global coloniality and the understanding of the invisibility of colonial relations today. Livio Sansone (Chapter 13) shows the global cultural exchanges across the Black Atlantic and the different meanings that “Africa” acquires according to the diversity of local histories. The different “essentialistic” attempts to fix the meaning of “Africa” and to build global designs about Africans and the African diaspora are confronted with the different colonial histories and the resistance of Black people as colonial subjects of the capitalist world-system. This is what underlies Sansone’s statement that “the case of Brazil and of the transatlantic *fluxes et refluxes* of people, commodities, symbols, and ideas linking South America with North America, Europe, and Africa—the Black Atlantic—is evidence that the icons have become more genuinely global than their shared meaning. It also shows that there have been very powerful ‘localizing’ forces in the ways things African have been classified and ranked.”

The process of “Othering” peoples has operated through a set of oppositions such as the West and the Rest, civilized and savage, intelligent and stupid, hardworking and lazy, superior and inferior, masculine and feminine, pure and impure, clean and dirty, and so on. There are world-systemic historical/structural processes that constitute these narratives, which are schematically designated as the relationship between European

modernity (e.g., citizenship, nation building, democracy, civil/social rights), European colonial expansion, colonial modernities, and White/masculinist supremacy. However, as some contributions to this volume explicitly illustrate (Chapters 4, 7, 8, and 9), the process of “Othering” occurs in everyday life and through intermediate processes. As such, it is informed by several power/empowering logics that require specification. Drawing on feminist analyses’ concern with essentialism, Shelley Feldman (Chapter 9) warns us that world-historical analyses are not insulated from the Enlightenment trap, which, she emphasizes, also manifests in the reduction of the “Othering” problematic to the “West/Rest” dichotomy. On this line, Feldman invites us to examine the “post” perspectives more carefully, including “postcolonial studies,” and their basic assumption that difference and heterogeneity matter: “Recognizing difference, however, is not invoked from the point of view of a struggle for sameness, which is the position of the developmentalist project where the West serves as the mark and direction of a linear path to progress. Nor is difference invoked to express the move from the pre-political to the liberal democratic. Rather, difference in the post-tradition represents plurality, non-homogeneity, complementarity, and contradiction that do not depend on a presumption of radical relativism.”

Nancy Forsythe (Chapter 8) argues in favor of “a feminist world-systems analysis” on the grounds that “the world-systems study of long-term, large-scale social change is helpful in advancing our understanding of and politics of embodiment and multiplicity.” She also notes that women’s movements will also benefit from world-systems analysis since the relationality among body, social status, and science as integral components of social change has a TimeSpace dimension “that roughly corresponds to the modern world-system.” For her, such a cross-fertilization is possible insofar as world-systems analysis does not assume a lack of correspondence between the long term and the large scale, on the one hand, and spatial and temporal boundaries of the study of long-term, large-scale social change, on the other. Such a dialogue between feminist theory and world-systems analysis, she argues, requires a more careful attention to the issue of the unit of analysis. For this, Forsythe contends, the key for world-systems analysis is “establishing, rather than assuming, the meaning of, and then, the rationality among, the conceptual, spatial and temporal dimensions of the topic at hand.” Forsythe and Feldman agree that world-systems analysis lacks a sound theorization on the issue of empowerment. For Feldman, however, the understanding of political practice must antecede, analytically, the issue of women’s empowerment. She finds Terence K. Hopkins’ comprehension of intersectionality and causality particularly useful for this endeavor. Building upon Hopkins she argues that “gender, caste, sexuality, and ethnic relations” should be revisited, “not viewed as derivative of accumulation practices.” Arguing for the gendering of the analysis of political action, she

notes that “gender differentiation not only is a consequence of particular economic relations but actually contributes to their structuring.”

In a parsimonious critique of the neglect of women in world-systems analysis, Wilma Dunaway (Chapter 7) advocates the “engendering” of the households, the commodity chains, and the very notion of exploitation. She takes issue with the way in which world-systems analysis conceptualizes household processes whose understanding is pivotal in the study of the household as a major institution of the world-economy. For example, in her critique of the notion of “income pooling,” she contends that “resource pooling” instead of “income pooling” better grasps “the fact that nonwage and unpaid labor is the pivotal thesis of the world-systems model of households.” She is also troubled by the lack of theorization on the issue of “the power struggles and inequalities within households.” Dunaway also envisions the global commodity chains conceptualization as a promising research area through which world-systems analysis can integrate women and households, but this will only happen, she argues, if “everyday life” moves to a more prominent position in the global commodity chains conceptualization. Dunaway, Feldman, and Forsythe convincingly contend that the neglect of women in world-systems analysis relinquishes women’s issues to the wrong epistemological and political hands.

Through a mapping of how the link between transnationalism and power relations is conceptualized from different perspectives, Ana Margarita Cervantes-Rodríguez (Chapter 4) encourages the critical engagement of world-systems analysis with current studies of transnationalism, particularly those developed through conceptual apparatuses that defy modernization, political realism, and the neo-classical dogma. Cervantes-Rodríguez argues that the incorporation of insights from studies of the link between transnationalism and power relations that specifically focus on issues such as transnational migrations, social movements, strategies of accumulation, advocacy networks, and terrorist networks help frame the analysis of power relations beyond the nation-state frontier. Her contribution illustrates how such approaches help improve our understanding of the complex interplay of class, ethnicity, gender, religion, national origin, and citizenship, in shaping systems of hegemony and power relations that span borders. An innovative integration of such insights into world-systems analysis, she argues, constitutes a prerequisite for a better grasp of the link between power and production strategies following the global commodity chains conceptualization, the analysis of power regimes related to household strategies under the current dynamics of the world-economy and current migratory regimes, and the study of the antisystemic potential of transnational processes.

Sheila Pelizzon (Chapter 10) also deals with the issue of a dialogue among perspectives but, different from the ones outlined above, employs world-systems analysis as the predominant argumentation “locus”: “By

studying gender in world-systems perspective, world-systems analysis gained a new structure that explains a lot about ways that elites—whether the state and its agents, local elites, or capitalists, keep social control and why households as we know them were formed in the first place.” She also argues that by studying gender in world-systems perspective, “political economy could have gained more complete insights into the relationship between state, capital, and labor. Even the orthodox Marxists would have gained new insight into the class struggle” while “feminists could have seen that patriarchy has been part of a structural component of capitalism, not a holdover from a remote past.”

All these works confirm in one way or another that the global, hegemonic, colonial culture involves a very intricate and uneven set of gender, racial, and sexual narratives with long histories that are reenacted in the present through the emergence of complex sets of mediations. Simultaneously, they also show that counter-narratives are making significant inroads in knowledge production and that there is no objectivist, neutral, god-eye view above and beyond the geopolitical “situatedness” of knowledge production in the colonial horizon of modernity.

## THE MYTH OF DECOLONIZATION

The politico-juridical decolonization of the periphery in the capitalist world-system was finalized in the twentieth century as a result of the anticolonial struggles of “Third World” peoples and the concomitant transformation of direct colonial rule into a costly, unfeasible hegemonic project. This has led to the creation of a new, pervasive mythology according to which we are now living in a “postcolonial” era. The epistemological conclusion is that the “old language” of “core-periphery” relationships is obsolete to account for global inequality and poverty. This argument is linked to the developmentalist assumption that each nation-state is independent from each other and that they are all evolving toward self-determination and progress. In some cases, the assumption is that as nation-states have emerged out of the “former” colonies, there is no reason to continue talking about metropolitan exploitation or domination. The questions at stake are: Did the world decolonize with the end of colonial administrations in the second half of the twentieth century? How do we make sense of the demise of the colonial administrations in the periphery of the capitalist world-economy in the presence of an ever-growing gap between rich and poor nations? What new global forms of power relations have been created to discipline and control the periphery of the world-economy in the process of surplus extraction, in the absence of direct colonial rule as the dominant form of core-periphery relationships in the world-system?

The distinction between colonialism and coloniality opens a promising

conceptual route for the analysis of these issues without falling for the seductive “postcolonial” myth (Quijano 1991, 1993, 1998). Since its formation in the sixteenth century, that is, for over 450 years (1492–1945), the modern/colonial capitalist world-system enacted colonialism as the dominant form of core–periphery relationships (Wallerstein 1974; Mignolo 1995). Colonialism was central to the formation of an international division of labor and an inter-state system structured into core, peripheries, and semi-peripheries. It was also central for the formation of a hegemonic Eurocentric global culture that shaped values, knowledge production, status, concept of beauty, education, art, politics, and so on. The formation of an international division of labor, as mentioned before, was contemporaneous with the formation of global racial/ethnic hierarchies but also gender and sexual hierarchies (Grosfoguel 2002). Thus, the European colonial expansion not only formed a capitalist world-system, where capitalist accumulation became the driving force of the system, but it also embodied the simultaneous formation of a global hierarchy of European/non-European, male/female, and heterosexual/homosexual with its respective geoculture of racism, sexism, and homophobia (*ibid.*). To be sure, the contemporary dilemma of which comes first, capitalist accumulation or gender/sexual/racial oppression, is a false dilemma. Historically, these hierarchies have gone hand in hand with their corresponding systems of dominance. These forms of oppression, under the scope of Occidentalism, are not merely instrumental to, but constitutive of capitalist accumulation processes on a world scale. Sexual, gender, and racial hierarchies are intertwined with capitalist accumulation hierarchies in the world-system. The European colonial expansion was predominantly a European-capitalist-heterosexual-male expansion. Wherever Europeans colonized, they imposed the values, hierarchical order, and privileges corresponding to their particular sexual, gender, class, and racial/ethnic loci. The particular values of European-capitalist-heterosexual-males were made the “universal truth,” “world rationality,” and “global common sense” of the modern/colonial world-system through colonialism.

Core–periphery inequalities and asymmetries inherent to the international division of labor; the inter-state system; the racial/ethnic, gender, and sexual hierarchies; and Eurocentric culture/knowledge production have not been significantly altered following the end of colonial administrations. This does not mean, however, that systems of hegemonies and power regimes informed by such continuity manifest exclusively between the core and the periphery, nor that coloniality of power is the only logic shaping power relations. What we are trying to emphasize, and emphasis implies simplification for the purpose of argumentation, is the subjacent continuity that characterizes capitalist, cultural, and geopolitical relations on a global scale after the collapse of “global colonialism” in the post-1945 era. Anibal Quijano (2000) captures such continuity in his concept of “global coloni-

ality.” The notion points out that core states in the international division of labor continue to be located primarily in Western Europe and/or countries with predominantly European-descendant populations, while the peripheral zones are mainly populated by non-European people. The only exception to the rule is Japan, which is the only non-European country in the core of the capitalist world-economy. However, as is widely acknowledged in world-systems analysis, Japan was never colonized or peripheralized by the West and participated in the West’s colonial expansion by building its own modern/colonial empire.

The historical precondition for the emergence of “global coloniality” is “global colonialism.” Without 450 years of “global colonialism” there would be no “global coloniality” today. The point is that global inequalities and asymmetries are still informed by the strongholds of the Eurocentric imaginary, and shaped by the continuities of colonial relations on a world scale without the existence of colonial administrations. Production has reached unprecedented decentralization levels, and global financial flows, ignited by new technological paradigms, play a fundamental role in the transfer of wealth. However, these processes have also gone hand in hand with the hyper-concentration and centralization of capital and wealth in core states, and within them in global cities (Sassen 1991), and with the pervasive role of labor in the process of value making (Castells 2000). The transfer of surplus value from periphery to core, from non-Europe to Europe/Euro-America, has been instrumental in these dynamics. The subordination and exploitation of the periphery continues to be a central axis of the capitalist world-economy. Important changes have occurred, however. On the one hand, new disciplinary institutions of global capitalism, such as the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank, and the World Trade Organization, have replaced colonial administrations in the deployment of direct economic intervention in the periphery. The global media also play an important role in the diffusion of values, consumption habits, and systems of beliefs that reinforce the racial/ethnic/gender/sexual global hierarchies. Moreover, core-controlled military organizations such as the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and “virtual wars” are increasingly employed as mechanisms of punishment and control of subordinated populations.

Thomas Reifer’s contribution (Chapter 1) is crucial for the understanding of the historical connections between the WASP (White Anglo-Saxon Protestant) establishment, U.S. hegemony, and the resurgence of high finance and heavy industry in the late twentieth century. Reifer shows how capitalist accumulation has been entangled with militarism and White supremacy. Reifer argues that the concept of “the geopolitical economy” “provides the real missing link between state and capital, capital accumulation, social classes, and geopolitics, as well as structure and agency, that has haunted historical sociology. Corporate lawyers, investment bankers and allied in-

dustrialists played key roles in America's wars, from World War I to the present, through groups like the NSL and the Cold War Committee on the Present Danger." In his view, these corporate groups constitute the bourgeoisie's "organic intellectuals" of the capitalist world-system.

The imbrications of gender inequality with racial/ethnic hierarchies also play an important role in shaping the new forms adopted by the international division of labor. Recruitment practices, and externally induced political turmoil have given way to the "free" mobility of labor to the core, sometimes under extreme xenophobic situations that have led to attempts at blocking immigrants' access to social services and citizenship rights. Non-European women constitute the main source of cheap labor for multinational corporations. The rapid expansion of the Export Processing Zones in Northern Mexico, the Dominican Republic, southern China, Malaysia, India, and Central America is part of this trend. From a subaltern perspective, contemporary academic debates in terms of what determines in the last instance the "economy" or the "geoculture" are also chicken-egg dilemmas. The unprecedented use of "Third World" labor in core societies is another important feature of the world-economy.

The postwar processes of nation building in the vast majority of the periphery of the capitalist world-economy are still informed by the colonial legacies and by the colonial/racial culture built during centuries of European colonial expansion. The Eurocentric colonial culture as an ideology is not geographically limited to Europe, but rather constitutes the geoculture and imaginary of the modern/colonial world-system. Hence, modernity is always constituted by coloniality. However appealing the notion "post-colonial" may be, it proves to be empirically inadequate. Colonial relations are not merely an institutional phenomenon. Current evidence on forms of political and cultural domination and economic exploitation suggest that the coloniality of power is not historically limited to the period of colonial rule. Despite the rhetoric of their power brokers, the new institutions of global dominance that emerged in the second half of the twentieth century are not meant to promote a "postcolonial" order based on democracy, development, and "self-determination" in the periphery, but have rather functioned as strongholds of the long-lasting colonial imaginaries, identities, and symbols upon which global capitalism has erected its system of domination and exploitation since the sixteenth century. The myth that we live in a decolonized world needs to be challenged since it has crucial political implications in terms of how we conceive social change, struggles against inequality, scientific disciplines, knowledge production, utopian thinking, democracy, and decolonization itself.

## THE MYTH OF DEVELOPMENT

It is hard to think of a concept with a greater centrality in the episteme of power than the concept of development. Development, in its most com-

prehensive form, is rationalized as a three-dimensional process that includes “self-sustained” economic growth, the consolidation of institutions to protect and further consolidate democracy and the respect for individual rights, and greater access to social benefits for the population at large. As such, the concept of development has been used as a powerful tool to advance social projects rooted in emancipatory ideals. However, the concept of development has also predominantly acted as a “comprehensive concept of control.”<sup>1</sup>

The “development system” was an important political innovation of the second half of the twentieth century. Since then, Craig Murphy (1990) reminds us, the issue of “development” has moved to the top of the agendas of “every one of the postwar global intergovernmental organizations, including agencies like the IMF, the International Telecommunications Union, the communication satellite agency (INTELSALT), and the World Intellectual Property Organization,” among others. According to Murphy, the “development system” has performed multiple valuable functions for the core states. One of the most salient functions has been to match the rationality of private investors with capitalist expansion (Craig 1990). According to him, other major functions have been the replacement of colonial institutions at a lower cost; to protect the international financial system from fiscal crises in peripheral states; as a deterrence mechanism against Soviet and Sino expansionism in the periphery; and as a populist tool to support authoritarian regimes in the periphery with which the core controlled both the marginalized and the privileged groups that eventually became the main benefactors of development programs through clientelism (Craig 1990). Satoshi Ikeda (Chapter 6) refers to the challenge that protectionist policies that promoted “national” enterprises occasionally represented for U.S. corporations, but emphasizes that there were important compensatory rationales: “The idea of national economic development was not necessarily in contradiction with the system of free enterprise as long as the U.S. enterprise could operate freely within a given national border. . . . Even though the project of ‘national’ economic development was somewhat contradictory to the earlier design of world-economy, the U.S. accepted this strategy as a countermeasure against Communist expansion.” More recently, after the collapse of the Soviet bloc, the incorporation of vast zones of the periphery and semi-periphery, including China, into the “maquiladora system” has relied on a new global design: the neoliberal project, which to a large extent has pushed deregulation in the periphery.

Fouad Makki (Chapter 11) highlights that while the concept of development is hardly a novelty of the postwar period, developmentalism as an ideology “represented a historically specific power-knowledge nexus that emerged at a particular conjuncture.” Such historical conjuncture, Makki argues, manifested a transition in the nature of the colonial relation and was framed by three historical processes: the attempt to form “national economies” in the aftermath of the Great Depression and the obsolescence



of the notion of “self-regulating markets,” decolonization movements, and the consolidation of U.S. hegemony. Makki further explicates the interplay of the temporal/spatial dimensions of the developmental project. His contribution supports the thesis that “development” became a crucial concept in the transition from a hegemonic discourse, based on what can be regarded as the originary forms of “Othering” the colonial subjects at the onset of colonization (e.g. “civilize” vis-à-vis “primitive”), into a universalizing discourse: “‘Development’ was in this respect crucial in reconfiguring the global identity of ex-colonies in a way that was incorporative and universalistic, yet still hierarchical. It not only defined the terms in which colonial exploitation and relative inequality were understood but also provided the promise of a future beyond colonialism.” By mastering the historical processes involved in the formation of the developmentalist project throughout his chapter, Makki argues that “globalization” emerges as the new concept candidate to suit the universalizing discourse under current conditions characterized by actual processes of transnationalization and the embracing of neoliberal ideas. His contribution illustrates one of his most salient conclusions: “The history of the development framework, with its displacements and reversals of an earlier imperial process of globalization . . . permits us to think more critically on this late twentieth-century process of globalization.”

Developmentalism as an ideology reinforces the autonomous illusion of peripheral nation-states and the evolutionary notion of progress (Wallerstein 1992a, 1992b). The central idea is that each peripheral nation-state is “independent” and will pass through the same “stages” of the core states, and that sooner or later the former would mirror-image the latter in the modernization path. The developmentalist fallacy induced practitioners and theoreticians in the periphery to focus their political efforts toward development, more frequently than not narrowly defined as economic growth and technological improvement but strategically conceived as a realizable goal in each nation-state of the periphery and semi-periphery. Thus, while the world-economy was being organized around global capital flows within a hierarchical international division of labor informed by the global racial/ethnic hierarchy, politics was being fragmented in an array of nation-states, each one organized around false premises such as the premise of developmentalism (Wallerstein 1984, 1995). On this line, Richard Lee (Chapter 2) argues that “[t]he decline of the ‘old,’ state-oriented nationalist and class-based movements was a result of the realization of their failure to deliver on promises of progress and paralleled the collapse of the East-West confrontation and the renewed awareness of the North-South split.” Lee shows the complicity between structures of knowledge and the limits to imagining alternative worlds beyond developmentalism and the nation-state as the privileged site for political action. Developmentalist illusions contributed to channeling the antisystemic movements’ political efforts in

the periphery in national state policies with the objective of achieving development by means of overlooking the global political-economic relations of inequality and the global racial-ethnic hierarchy linked to the former that stand in the way of "national development." Ultimately, the fallacy of "national development" was crucial to concealing the persistence of global colonial relations in the "postcolonial" world-system. When antisystemic movements were channeled through the path of taking over the nation-state, they reproduced the old colonial hierarchies disguised as "postcolonial" under the assumptions that the elimination of a colonial administration was enough to eradicate colonial relations, and that the country in question could "nationally develop" without foreign intervention. The idea about the possibility of "national development" without global structural changes is one of the greatest myths of the twentieth century. In Chapter 3, Roberto Patricio Korzeniewicz, Angela Stach, David Consiglio, and Timothy Patrick Moran tear down the developmentalist illusion with an analysis of inequality trends throughout the twentieth century. Their work relied on a painstaking methodological procedure with which they question the accuracy of adjusting income data for purchasing power parities, which gives the false impression that the levels of inequality have declined in recent decades. They conclude that income inequality has grown in recent decades to the point that "by the mid-1990s world inequalities were at their highest recorded level over the past two centuries." Their work confirms that none of the three variants (Communist movements, social-democratic movements, and national liberation movements) through which the "Old Left" seized power throughout the twentieth century (Wallerstein 1995) altered the fundamental dynamics of world income inequality. The global income inequality trend, the authors sustain, will be reduced only by the implementation of two sets of reform: (1) a massive transfer of resources from wealthy to poor countries and (2) the elimination of restrictions to labor mobility "designed to enhance the bargaining power of the poor by opening up markets that would truly make a difference in the lives of the poor." They do not place so much hope, however, in actual implementation of such reforms.

The developmentalist fallacy affected the scope of antisystemic movements. Instead of fighting the systems of oppression at all levels, within and beyond the structures of the nation-state, major progressive groups exhausted political efforts in the administration of the nation-state following a developmentalist illusion. Neither socialist and social-democratic developmental attempts nor national liberation movements could escape its bizarre results (Wallerstein 1995). Enchanted by the developmentalist promise, "Third World" leaders believed that by taking over the nation-state, they could achieve "real" sovereignty and development and reduce the inequality gap between their economies and the economies of the center. Radical social movements became bureaucratized and metamorphosed into

conservative forces once they took over the state apparatus and focused on the goal of “development.” In the name of “national development” both “socialist” and “capitalist” regimes justified oppression, including flagrant repression of labor movements and violations of labor rights. They evoked endless sacrifices and harsh austerity measures toward the working classes and paved the way for their submission to global capitalism while there was a process of elite reaccommodation, which under socialist regimes adopted the form of “the new class.” It is increasingly acknowledged that the “socialist” regimes based their structure in state capitalist forms of production and consequently tended to maximize state power, while the “capitalist” regimes tried to imitate mechanisms employed in the center for the maximization of profits. They were different forms of productive organization within a capitalist world-system organized around a single international division of labor (Wallerstein 1979). However, the promised land of development remained an illusion. Paradoxically, despite the revolutionary jargon and developmentalist rhetoric of socialist movements in the periphery, they did not lead to significant changes in the peripheral locations in the international division of labor. Cuba, which has experienced one of the most radical revolutions of all “Third World” revolutions, constitutes perhaps one of the saddest cases because of the dramatic detachment that the radical “sovereignty” and “developmentalist” discourses have had with the needs and changing expectations of the population on the one hand, and world-systemic forces, on the other. The island’s growing dependence on U.S. labor markets through the escalating dependence of thousands of Cuban households on the *migradollars* sent by relatives residing in the United States, the de facto dollarization of the Cuban economy after the collapse of the Soviet bloc, and unfulfilled labor, women’s, and ethnic minority expectations or the steady reversal of some of the previous achievements in these directions indicate that taking over the state apparatus combined with a developmentalist agenda has represented, at best, an unpaved route toward emancipation.

The recent *Zapatista* armed struggle in Chiapas represents an effort to provide an alternative response to the failure of national liberation and socialist movements in the twentieth century. The *Zapatistas* are usually portrayed as the first post-developmental, post-national, and postcolonial guerrilla movement, critical of the traditional guerrilla movements in the region as a way out of oppression. They have challenged global capitalism and global coloniality. They decentered the struggle from the goal of administration of the nation-state and refocused the struggle toward a global strategy through transnational forms of agency, including the use of the Internet, against modern/colonial capitalist forms of exploitation. We do not know the results of this struggle yet, but so far they have been quite successful in challenging the old coloniality of power of the Mexican state without falling into the temptation of administering the nation-state. In

addition, antisystemic movements may also manifest through acts of resistance of subjugated subjects of the “global South” in core societies and even as the unintended consequences of the extremist conservative agendas. The significant growth of Latino/as in recent decades has run into the surge of racism and xenophobia. The question is to what extent such attitudes are intrinsically antisystemic on their own. In Chapter 5, Eric Mielants addresses this question. He calls our attention to the limits that racism and xenophobia addressed against immigrants have for the stability of the system. He does so by distinguishing what he sees as two antisystemic gradients of “mass migration.” One refers to the “antisystemic pressure” that “mass migration,” and particularly population movements related to ecological crises put “on the inter-state system.” The second, to the antisystemic character of the racial agenda: “it is important to acknowledge the increasing significance of the far-right, with a racial anti-meritocratic agenda, as a possible anti-systemic movement in itself, instead of treating it as nothing more than an accidental outburst in national elections or a pure local phenomenon within a nation-state in a period of economic recession.” Mielants’ point challenges traditional conceptualizations of anti-immigrant xenophobic and racist movements in the core. The effects of these movements on the different dynamics of the modern/colonial world-system as a whole remain to be seen in the coming years.

## (IN)CONCLUSION

The importance of a systematic analysis of the outlined mythologies is that they contribute to concealing in the present “postcolonial administrations” modern/colonial world-system the continued hierarchical/unequal relations of domination and exploitation between metropolitan/European/Euro-American centers and non-European peripheral regions. Developmentalism, Eurocentric universalist knowledges, and the myth of decolonization form part of the colonial/Eurocentric imaginary of the modern/colonial world-system. The new dominant globalization discourse assumes a horizontal, equal, non-exploitative world where everybody can make it if they work hard enough, while it also opens up the local economy to international financial institutions and transnational corporations. In the meantime, poverty is hyper-concentrated in the South and in the periphery within the core, while wealth is hyper-concentrated in the North and in the core within the core. While the periphery is globally fragmented in multiple nation-states, corporations are organized at a world scale, which keeps reproducing a global colonial hierarchy in the so-called “postcolonial” era (the last 50 years). Under these circumstances it is relatively easy to place the responsibility of peripheral mass poverty in the periphery itself and dismiss European/Euro-American responsibility. The new face of developmentalism is global neoliberalism. Although the outcome of the neoliberal

policies has been to dismantle the developmentalist states, global neoliberalism still operates under a basic developmentalist premise: that by applying market liberalization at the nation-state level, each country would sooner or later achieve economic growth and development. This has led to a ferocious competition among peripheral states in terms of selling their resources most cheaply to transnational corporations while millions of workers suffer irreversible traumatic experiences as migrants in the core, where they try to secure a family income, which is increasingly hard to find in the periphery.

In sum, developmentalism, Eurocentric universalist knowledges, and the myth of decolonization have been crucial ideologies in concealing European/Euro-American responsibility in the fate of peripheral regions around the world. The world needs a second decolonization more profound than the juridical-political decolonization experienced in the last 50 years. This second decolonization should address the global class, gender, racial, sexual, and regional asymmetries produced by the hierarchical structures of the modern/colonial capitalist world-system. Definitely, a global problem cannot have a “national” solution: it requires global solutions (plural).

## NOTE

1. Bode (1979), cited and further analyzed in van der Pijl, *Transnational Classes and International Relations*. London and New York: Routledge, 1998.

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# The Twentieth Century: Darkness at Noon?

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*Immanuel Wallerstein*

In the middle of the twentieth century, Arthur Koestler wrote a novel about the Soviet regime and its show trials, which he entitled *Darkness at Noon*. I would like to take this as my metaphor for the entire twentieth century, not just the Soviet regime. But at the same time, the century was in many ways also “Bright Sun at Midnight.” Indeed, the way that we think about this century, so difficult to assess, has depended very much on the place from which and the moment at which we observe it. We have been on something of a roller-coaster ride. We should remember that roller-coaster rides end in one of two ways. Usually, they return to their starting point, more or less, although the riders may have been either exhilarated or very frightened. But sometimes they derail.

Henry Luce called the twentieth century “the American century.” He was unquestionably right, although this is only part of the story. The rise of the United States to hegemony in the world-system started circa 1870 in the wake of the beginning of the decline of the United Kingdom from its erstwhile heights. The United States and Germany competed with each other as contenders for the succession to the United Kingdom. What happened is well known and straightforward. Both the United States and Germany greatly expanded their industrial base between 1870 and 1914, both surpassing Great Britain. One, however, was a sea/air power, and the other a land power. Their lines of economic expansion were correspondingly different, as was the nature of their military investment. The United States was allied economically and politically with the declining erstwhile hegemonic power, Great Britain. Eventually, there were the two world wars, which one can best think of as a single “thirty years’ war,” essentially be-



tween the United States and Germany to determine hegemony in the world-system.

Germany tried the path of transforming the world-system into a world-empire, what they called a *tausendjähriges Reich*. The path of imperial conquest has never worked as a viable path to dominance within the framework of the capitalist world-economy, as Napoleon had previously learned. The world-imperial thrust has the short-term advantage of its military vigor and precipitateness. It has the middle-term disadvantage of being very expensive and uniting all the opposition forces. As the constitutional and quasi-liberal monarchy of Great Britain had rallied autocratic, tsarist Russia against Napoleon, so the quasi-liberal representative republic of the United States rallied the Stalinist Soviet Union against Hitler, or, rather, both Napoleon and Hitler did good jobs in uniting the two ends of the European land mass against the voracious power structure located between them.

How shall we assess the consequences of this struggle? Let us start with the material outcome. In 1945, after incredibly destructive warfare everywhere on the European continent and similarly destructive warfare in East Asia—destructive in terms both of lives and of infrastructure—the United States was the only major industrial power to emerge unscathed economically, even strengthened as the result of wartime buildup. For several years after 1945, there was actual hunger in all the other previously economically advanced regions, and in any case there was a difficult process of basic reconstruction of these zones.

It was quite easy in such a situation for U.S. industries to dominate the world market. Their major problem initially was not too many competitive sellers but too little effective demand, too few buyers worldwide because of the decline of purchasing power in Western Europe and East Asia. This required more than relief; it required reconstruction. However profitable such reconstruction would be for U.S. industry, it was costly from the point of view of U.S. taxpayers. Meeting the short-run costs posed an internal political problem for the U.S. government.

Meanwhile, there seemed to be a political-military problem as well. The U.S.S.R., despite the destruction, loomed large as a military power, occupying half of Europe. It proclaimed itself a socialist state with a theoretical mission to lead the whole world to socialism (and then, in theory again, to Communism). Between 1945 and 1948, so-called popular democracies, under the aegis of the Communist Party, were put into place, one by one, in the zones where the Red Army was to be found at the end of World War II. By 1946, Winston Churchill spoke of an “Iron Curtain” that had fallen on Europe from Stettin to Trieste.

In addition, in the immediate post-1945 years, Communist parties showed themselves to be extremely strong in a large number of European countries. We tend to forget today that Communist parties won 25–40%

of the vote in the early postwar elections in France, Italy, Belgium, Finland, and Czechoslovakia—the result both of their previous strength in the interwar years and of their wartime role in animating a good part of the resistance against Nazism/fascism. The same was true in Asia. In China, the Communist Party was marching on Shanghai against a Nationalist government that had lost its legitimacy. Communist parties and/or guerrillas were remarkably strong as well in Japan, the Philippines, Indochina, and the Dutch East Indies and not negligible elsewhere.

Communist movements had, as the French say, *le vent en poupe*. They claimed that history was on their side, and they acted as though they believed it. So did a lot of others believe it, ranging from conservative movements to center-left movements, most particularly, the majority of the social democrats. These others were afraid that, in a few years, their countries, too, would become popular democracies. And they didn't wish this to happen. More emphatically, they were ready to resist actively what now was rhetorically called a Communist menace to the free world.

In the last 30 years, there has been a large amount of revisionist historiography, coming from both the left and the right. The left revisionists have tended to claim that the so-called Communist menace was a bogeyman, erected by the U.S. government and world right forces, both to ensure U.S. hegemony in the world-system and to put down (or at least limit) the strength of left and workers' movements in the Western liberal states. The right-wing revisionists have tended to claim, especially since the availability of Soviet documents after 1989, that there was indeed a worldwide network of spies for the Soviet Union, which did indeed have every intention of subverting non-Communist states and transforming them into popular democracies.

The fact is that both the left and the right historiographical revisionists are probably largely right in their empirical assertions and fundamentally wrong in their historical interpretation. No doubt, both sides asserted both publicly and even more in private what the revisionists said they had asserted. Probably, most individuals in the key agencies of each side believed the rhetoric, or at least believed much of it. No doubt, too, both sides engaged in actions that went in the direction of carrying out the rhetoric, and no doubt finally, both sides would have been delighted to see the other side collapse and were for the most part even hoping for it.

Still we need a little *sangfroid* and a little *realpolitik* in our appreciation of what really went on. It seems clear, in retrospect, that the Cold War was a highly restrained, carefully constructed and monitored exercise that never got out of hand and never led to the world war of which everyone was afraid. I have called it a minuet. Furthermore, in retrospect, nothing much happened, in the sense that the boundary lines as of 1989 were pretty much the boundary lines as of 1945, and there was in the end neither Soviet aggression in Western Europe nor U.S. "rollback" in Eastern Europe. Fur-

thermore, there were many points at which each side showed restraint above and beyond the call of rhetoric. Of course, we can say that none of this was the intent, merely the result of a stalemate, and to some extent that may be true. Still, stalemates are abetted by lassitudes that result from tacit intents.

Such a historical scenario calls for caution in assessing the motives and the priorities of each side. Let us look at two code words: Yalta and containment. Yalta was the name of a meeting of the heads of state of the United States, the U.S.S.R., and Great Britain in February 1945. Yalta ostensibly fixed the boundaries of the prospective postwar garrisoning of troops and therefore of geopolitical influence, as well as the modalities of constituting governments in liberated countries. Containment was a doctrine invented by George Kennan a few years later. Kennan, speaking for himself but indirectly for the United States establishment, advocated just that, containment by the United States of the Soviet Union—not, however, containment in place of welcome but containment in place of rollback, a cold war that would not and should not become a hot one. Before John Foster Dulles became secretary of state under Eisenhower in 1953, he had advocated, against Kennan, rollback. But, once in power, Dulles in fact practiced containment (most notably in 1956 in relation to the Hungarian Revolution), and rollback was relegated to the discourse of marginal politicians.

What Yalta/containment achieved (who will ever know the inner motives of all the actors?) is quite clear. The Soviet Union had a zone under its absolute control (most of what we call East and Central Europe). The United States claimed all the rest of the world. The United States never interfered in the Soviet zone (except by propaganda). See U.S. actions (or rather inaction) in 1953, 1956, 1968, and 1981 in response to various versions of what later came to be called the Brezhnev Doctrine—the right claimed by the U.S.S.R. to maintain forcibly within its bloc any state that was part of it. On the other hand, the U.S.S.R. never really interfered in any zone outside its sphere with more than political propaganda and a little money, with the sole serious exception of Afghanistan (a big mistake, as they were to learn). To be sure, some countries ignored this nice bilateral U.S.–Soviet arrangement, and we will come to that.

What had Yalta to do with the issue of U.S. world-economic priorities in the immediate postwar period? As we have said, the United States needed to create world effective demand; however, the United States did not have unlimited money with which to do that. In the allocation of its resources, the United States gave priority to Western Europe for both economic and political reasons. The result was the Marshall Plan. The Marshall Plan, let us nonetheless remember, was offered by Marshall to *all* the allies. Did the United States really want the Soviet Union to accept? I doubt it very much,