

## **CHAPTER FIVE: THE IMPERIAL IMPULSE**

### **Introduction**

The imperial impulse means being absolutely determined to be top dog. It means an unswerving intention to exercise absolute command and control from the top of a socio-political hierarchy. It means making it clear to everybody that you intend to get your way. It means being prepared to humiliate others and having the capacity to do so.

### **President Bush and King Hammurabi**

Here is President George W Bush speaking to the American nation and the world shortly before the invasion of Iraq in March 2003:<sup>i</sup>

‘(The) only way to reduce the harm and duration of war is to apply the full force and might of our military, and we are prepared to do so. If Saddam Hussein attempts to cling to power, he will remain a deadly foe until the end... Should enemies strike our country, they would be attempting to shift our attention with panic and weaken our morale with fear. In this, they would fail. No act of theirs can alter the course or shake the resolve of this country. We are a peaceful people -- yet we're not a fragile people, and we will not be intimidated by thugs and killers. If our enemies dare to strike us, they and all who have aided them, will face fearful consequences...

‘As we enforce the just demands of the world, we will also honor the deepest commitments of our country. Unlike Saddam Hussein, we believe the Iraqi

people are deserving and capable of human liberty, and when the dictator has departed, they can set an example to all the Middle East of a vital and peaceful and self-governing nation. ....Good night, and may God continue to bless America.'

President Bush is saying to his enemies: I can humiliate you. He is standing in a long tradition. Since we are speaking of Iraq, located in ancient Mesopotamia, let us also listen to the words of Hammurabi, who once ruled most of Mesopotamia. These words were written approximately four thousand years ago, in about 1770 BC.

'Hammurabi, the protecting king am I.....

With the mighty weapons which Zamama and Ishtar entrusted to me,

with the keen vision with which Ea endowed me,

with the wisdom that Marduk gave me,

I have uprooted the enemy above and below,

subdued the earth,

brought prosperity to the land,

guaranteed security to the inhabitants in their homes;

a disturber was not permitted.

'The great gods have called me,

I am the salvation-bearing shepherd, whose staff is straight,

the good shadow that is spread over my city;

on my breast I cherish the inhabitants of the land of Sumer and Akkad;

in my shelter I have let them repose in peace;

in my deep wisdom have enclosed them.

That the strong might not injure the weak, in order to protect the widows and orphans.....'

Hammurabi anchors himself between heaven and earth. He borrows god-like power and authority from above, from figures like Marduk, the great Babylonian divinity. At the same time, he reminds his people that he, Hammurabi, makes their lives more peaceful and secure. The ruler's message is

- The gods have endowed me with benefits.
- I, in turn, endow the Babylonian people.
- I am and should be your ruler.
- You shall and should obey me.

Compare Hammurabi and Bush. The first claims to express the strength and wisdom of the god Marduk who has chosen Hammurabi to represent his will. The second claims (in using the word 'we') to express the strength and wisdom of the American people who have, likewise, chosen the President to represent their will.

At the heart of Bush's speech is Hammurabi's own assertive message.

- I can kill you but I will protect you if you obey my rules and commands;
- I am wise, omnipotent and all-seeing;
- I shall bring justice to those who deserve it and punish evil enemies.

In the United States, the part played by the god Marduk has been taken over by another god, Demos; in other words, the American people. When God blesses America, He is asking and allowing the American people to do His work in the wider world through their agent, the American state.

The American public judges its politicians and, if they do not pass the test, it throws them out. In fact, it is more complicated than that because the mass media play a huge role in shaping public opinion. This is a crucial function.

- In ancient Mesopotamia, the priests of Marduk interpret the god's will.
- In modern America, the servants of Murdoch interpret the will of Demos.

In Hammurabi's time, a king who stayed close to the priesthood, satisfying its wishes or dominating it by charisma, bribery or fear, could hope to have great influence upon the voice of the god, making it say the right thing. In modern times, the dynamics of the relationship between the state and the 'priesthood' remain crucial. <sup>ii</sup>

### **Terror and care**

The image of the shepherd used by Hammurabi is highly significant. Empires were often made or conquered by leaders of nomadic tribes.<sup>iii</sup> These typically bred horses or camels and herded sheep or goats. It was shepherds within such a

tribe who supposedly brought up the legendary figures of Romulus and Remus, mythical founders of Rome.

Like the state, shepherds administered both care and terror. They combined two functions: looking after their flocks and repelling potential aggressors. Herdsmen were armed and warlike, ready to defend their animals and themselves against potential predators. The biblical angel who disturbed the shepherds watching their flocks by night was lucky not to have its wings torn off.

There is a larger point, which is that long before the invention (or 'discovery') of human rights rulers boasted about their ability in two areas:

- their capacity to humiliate others, including their subjects; and
- their capacity to protect themselves and their subjects from humiliation.

In the first respect, the state is like Leviathan, the monstrous sea-beast in the Old Testament, 'king of all the children of pride' (Job 41, 34, cited in Hobbes 1996, 284). Prouder and more powerful than any of its subjects, the state inspires terror in the human beings it controls.

In the second respect, the state applies the practical lesson that populations are easier to manage if the humiliations they impose are balanced by tangible benefits. Not just peace and order but also some opportunity to fulfil normal human desires such as the wish for material comfort. Hammarabi reminded his

subjects that he had not just 'guaranteed security to the inhabitants in their homes' but also 'brought prosperity to the land.'

### **Hierarchy and humiliation**

There was a time when the question of how rulers and subjects should deal with each other was not on the agenda of humankind. For over ninety per cent of human history, men and women lived in scattered hunter-gatherer bands. Every adult in such a band depended on all the others. There were no rulers except insofar as the whole group ruled all its members.<sup>iv</sup>

In such societies, humiliation was something groups sometimes imposed on individuals, perhaps by killing or excluding them. It may have been, so to speak, a 'nuclear' option, deployed only when routine shaming of 'offensive' people failed to bring them back into line.<sup>v</sup> However, as more powerful technologies developed, based on the use of irrigation, digging sticks, ploughs, wheels and draught animals, human groups began to produce a material surplus. This increased the possibilities for specialization, trade between groups, and the development of socio-political hierarchies.

Human societies gradually became fixed in specific territories and families found themselves tied to particular plots of land and, in many cases, to particular masters. Farming meant a loss of freedom. Then humiliation became routine, as normal as stormy weather. Some hunter-gathering bands turned into nomadic tribes. These continued a wandering life with vast herds of animals.

Farming and herding increased the amount of food that a given amount of people could grow and rear. Two things changed: the surplus, the amount left over when everyone had been fed enough to survive, increased;<sup>vi</sup> and this surplus could be stored more easily, for example as grain in storehouses or on the hoof as herds of livestock.

A surplus could be fought over. In tribal societies, this took the form of stealing animals and the consequence was continual feuding, each revenge attack leading to another in the opposite direction, with no single tribe or dynasty being left permanently better-off or in charge. However, when producers were shackled to the soil, unable to run away easily, ambitious power-mongers started to get substantial results. They could get control of the surplus, use it to build up their own strength, and use that strength to get their own way within society.

Farming brought with it social hierarchy, through which the rich and powerful dominated the poor and weak. Hierarchy, in turn, helped to spread agriculture, forcing many reluctant hunter-gatherers or nomadic tribes-people to take part, often as serfs or slaves. Who would volunteer to fill the lowest places within such unequal regimes? Social hierarchies often had to be imposed by force, sometimes with the deeply reluctant acquiescence of people who saw their only other choice was death through massacre or starvation, or who were fooled into thinking things might be better than they turned out to be.

Humiliation and hierarchy are closely linked. Ibn Kaldhun<sup>vii</sup> criticised the humiliation that hierarchy brings into societies where everyone had previously enjoyed the solidarity of tribal brothers sharing equal conditions. Writing in the fourteenth century CE, Ibn Kaldhun gave many examples of how the strong group feeling that holds together a dynasty and its tribal followers gradually collapses as the central power gets more luxurious, arrogant and corrupt:

‘When the natural luxury of royal authority makes its appearance, and when the people who share in the group feeling of the dynasty are humiliated, the first to be humiliated are the members of the ruler’s family and his relatives who share with him in the royal name. They are much more humiliated than anyone else. ...They become sick at heart when they see the ruler firmly established in royal authority. His envy of them changes to fear for his royal authority. Therefore he starts to kill and humiliate them and to deprive them of the prosperity and luxury to which they had in large measure become accustomed’ (Kaldhun 1969, 246). In Ibn Khaldun’s view, the end result is the weakening of the unifying factor of group feeling and, eventually, the disintegration of the dynasty. Present-day Iraq, before, during and after the regime of President Saddam Hussain, provides many examples of Ibn Kaldhun’s insights into the relations between the tribe, whose members stress the equality and unity of the group in conflict with other tribes, and the ruling dynasty, hungering for hierarchy and fearing rivals.

Obedience and resistance to the secular hierarchies of government were central themes of Thomas Hobbes’s *Leviathan*, published in 1651, and John Milton’s *Paradise Lost*, which appeared in 1667.<sup>viii</sup> Hobbes and Milton were on opposite



sides in the English Civil War.<sup>ix</sup> Hobbes was on the royalist side. Milton was on the side of Oliver Cromwell and the parliamentary forces.<sup>x</sup> At the time they wrote their works, each was on the losing side.<sup>xi</sup>

They were both concerned about how thinking people with lives to preserve (Hobbes) or souls to save (Milton) could navigate their way through a world in which anarchy and tyranny competed as the most frightening prospects. How much humiliation could be stomached in return for the benefits brought by political hierarchy? Not much, says Milton. Quite a lot, says Hobbes.

For Milton, the fate to be avoided was having an ungodly and wasteful king with a vicious royal court in charge of society. Milton was a republican, a 'masterless man.'<sup>xii</sup> He sympathised with just the kind of rebellious person that Hobbes wanted to keep under control. Milton's Satan, the glamorous rebel who swash-buckles his way through *Paradise Lost*, has the very characteristics Hobbes sees as causing a perpetual condition of violent conflict in the state of nature before Leviathan is established. Satan wants to be admired, praised and revered; he is greedy; he is aggressive; and he tries to get his own way by force and fraud in turn.<sup>xiii</sup>

For Milton, human beings should give their assent to a hierarchy of the following kind:

- at the top of the hierarchy is Christ the liberator who personified all humankind by descending to Earth and accepting humiliation on their behalf;

- the earthly part of the hierarchy has at its head the most virtuous and talented people in the country who act in the best interests of all; and
- the structure of political power is as decentralised as possible.

Hierarchy without humiliation of the people would be the result.

For Hobbes, the priorities are different. He argues that it is best if people assent to a hierarchy of the following kind:

- at the top of the hierarchy is a ruler who has the capacity to impose humiliation on everyone below him, thus forcing all subjects to behave peacefully;
- the ruler personifies all his subjects in the sense that they have assented to his acting on behalf of them all, even when he is humiliating them; and
- the ruler should, as a matter of rational prudence, enforce natural law, allowing subjects to organise their lives in ways that aid their comfort and material happiness, bearing in mind that subjects who are denied this will be liable to rebel, returning society to a warlike state of nature.

According to Hobbes, subjects should be prepared to acquiesce in humiliation by the ruler in return for peace and the possibility of comfort and prosperity.

By contrast, over two centuries later, in the 1880s, Friedrich Nietzsche argued that in past times aristocrats, the masters of society, took guilt-free pleasure

from humiliating others. It was the essence of high culture: 'Not so long ago,' he wrote 'a royal wedding or great public celebration would have been incomplete without executions, tortures, *autos da fé*...To behold suffering gives pleasure, but to cause another to suffer affords an even greater pleasure' (Nietzsche 1956, 198).

The aristocracy assumed that whatever they did, however cruel, was 'noble' (and therefore 'good') simply because they did it.<sup>xiv</sup> Nietzsche observed, with some regret, that democracy was levelling society: 'The lords are a thing of the past, and the ethics of the common man is completely triumphant' (169). One result was a 'slave revolt in morals' (168) driven by the resentment of the common people against their noble masters.<sup>xv</sup> This slave morality preached equality and peace.<sup>xvi</sup>

In the 1970s, Elias Canetti concluded from his own study of the deep structure of human groups that 'Anyone who wants to rule men first tries to humiliate them, to trick them out of their rights and their capacity for resistance, until they are as powerless before him as animals' (Canetti 1973, 245). Such a ruler may enjoy to the full the pleasure we all take 'in relegating something to an inferior group, while presupposing a higher group to which we ourselves belong' (346).<sup>xvii</sup>

### **The theatre of empire**

At the top of imperial hierarchies one can relish the exercise of 'empire.' At the emotional heart of this term is the actual pleasure of making conquests, issuing commands to the vanquished, and disposing of them as one decides, in other

words, the pleasure of showing that one is capable of achieving and exercising total dominion. Thorstein Veblen, writing over a century ago, caught this feeling of joy in conquest and mastery, putting it at the heart of modern capitalism, linking it to the spirit of the medieval knight lusting for battle.<sup>xviii</sup>

In ancient Rome, the title 'imperator' or emperor was given to rulers whose generals were victorious in battle. By the time of Emperor Vespasian (CE 69-79) it was the normal title of the Roman Empire's first citizen.<sup>xix</sup> As is well known, prominent captives from battle were brought back to Rome to be put on display in public recognition of the successful general's triumph. Triumph for the general meant humiliation for the captives, many of whom were slaughtered in entertaining ways. The others were turned into slaves.

Seen from this perspective, imperialism is a theatrical stage on which rulers and generals show what they are capable of. Empire-builders humiliate others, sometimes through *force majeure*, sometimes through seduction, as a way to magnify themselves. Absolutist hierarchies are created by making conquests, imposing one's will on others in spite of their resistance, issuing commands to the vanquished, disposing of them as one decides, and putting them where you want them, not where they think they should be.

The 'theatre of empire' is mainly concerned with displaying the grandeur, high status and honourable superiority of the lord, leader, people, nation or 'race' concerned. It has existed for millennia, reaching back to the time of Hammurabi

and before. The theatricality of the Nazi regime was a latter-day expression of this form.<sup>xx</sup>

### **Fighters, traders, settlers and citizens**

The imperial impulse took more than one form. For example, there were dynastic empires, settler societies and two kinds of nation-state-empire.

*Dynastic empires.* If empire is, originally at least, about the *éclat* of conquest, then imperial Roman represents one version of its pristine form. In this case, military expansion was a proving ground for ambitious military cliques linked to rich and powerful families. The great exploits of individual commanders strengthened the social and political position of the dynasties they served, their own and the emperor's. In fact, many successful generals were themselves ambitious to be Roman emperor.

Dynastic empires expressed the dynastic interest's 'outward reach,' its capacity to project its dominant influence outward from within an impregnable and well-established homeland. The main agent of this 'outreach,' the one that delivered the punch then opened the fist to grasp the prize, was the military 'man on horseback' or in his chariot.

In practice, the warrior made room for other interests besides his own. Take the case of Spanish dynastic imperialism in America during the sixteenth century. The Church was hungry for new souls and quick to hitch a ride across the Atlantic. Franciscan friars were in Mexico City a mere five years after Hernán Cortes began his conquest of the Aztec empire in 1519. Religious interests

continued to weave themselves into Europe's imperial fabric during the following few centuries <sup>xxi</sup>

Many of the original Spanish *conquistadors* were *hidalgos*,<sup>xxii</sup> minor nobles or gentleman keen to put their fighting skills to use in getting rich enough to get feudal estates of their own. They had aristocratic pretensions. What they needed was an aristocratic income. Using slave labour to dig gold and silver directly out of the earth was the most direct route to great wealth. Later, ranching or establishing a plantation of some kind was another way of turning seized territory into personal riches. This meant staying in the colony to supervise the enterprise especially if it was the main source of income. When that happened in a big way, another kind of imperial project was in play.

*Settler societies.* Unlike dynastic empires, which projected power capacity outwards from an existing homeland, settler societies founded *new* homelands abroad. The Boer settlers in South Africa fall into this category. So do the Protestant settlers in Northern Ireland, the English settlers in North America and the Jewish settlers who established Israel.

This is a very interesting category.<sup>xxiii</sup> Founding a new homeland is a daunting and dangerous exercise. The pioneers may often find themselves 'on their own,' with little external economic and political support for their intentions and considerable local resistance to them. Why would anyone undertake such projects? One possible reason is desperation, the desire to escape unacceptable conditions that were suffered previously. Another possible reason is a strong

desire to make a society that reflects the settlers' view of how the world should be and how they should fit into it. In other words, settlers want a world they can shape and dominate. Many other reasons, motives and causes are involved but the two just mentioned, the wish to escape and the desire to dominate, are especially relevant, as I will argue later. However, there are two other types of imperial project to consider.

*European nation-state-empires.* By the late nineteenth century, all the major class interests had a stake of some kind in Europe's imperial enterprises. The way the empires were managed reflected the particular social and political power balances in their 'headquarter' societies. All these societies were affected by the technological and organizational revolutions brought by modern industry and the growth of large cities, pulling peasants away from the countryside. All of them had to cope with the turbulent consequences of the democratic and nationalist ways of thinking that had spread across Europe, and deep into other continents, following the American and French revolutions.

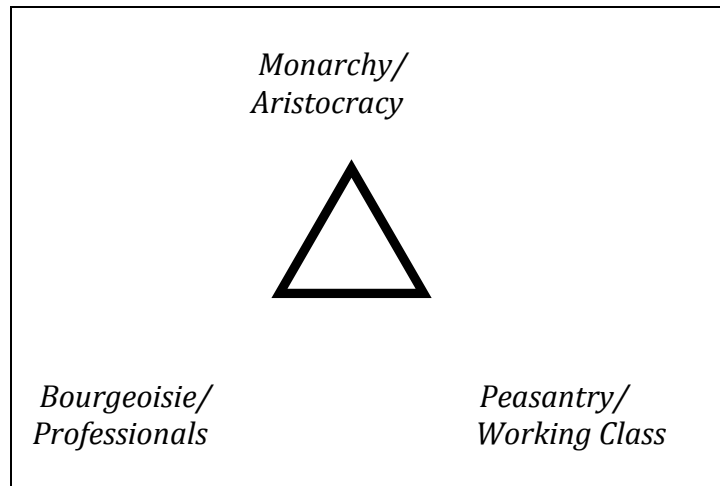
Table One  
Four types of imperial project

<p><i>Dynastic Empires</i></p> <p>Mainly before late 18<sup>th</sup> century</p> <p>Mixture of military imperialism and business (eg trading, plantations, mineral extraction); some religious missionary work</p> <p>eg Spanish empire, Portuguese empire</p>	<p><i>Settler Societies</i></p> <p>Medieval and modern epochs</p> <p>Overseas settlements founded by pioneering migrants who take possession of territory for economic and/or religious and/or other reasons.</p> <p>e.g. American colonies (later USA), the Boer Republics (later part of South Africa), Ulster, Israel</p>
<p><i>European Nation-State-Empires</i></p> <p>Late 18<sup>th</sup> century to early/mid-20<sup>th</sup> century</p> <p>Increasingly democratic 'headquarter' society exercising imperial control over colonial dependencies</p> <p>e.g. British and French empires</p>	<p><i>Global Nation-State-Empires</i></p> <p>Cold War 1948-1989</p> <p>Militarily-dominant nation-state exercising imperial control over other nation-states, all claiming to be democratic.</p> <p>i.e. 'Free World' and 'Communist Bloc'</p>

Within each of the headquarter societies, rising urban-industrial and declining rural-agrarian interests battled for influence. Empires played their part in these struggles. For example, imperial possessions bolstered the prestige and authority of aristocratic and court circles. This was a significant factor in societies where peasants supplied the main body of army recruits and where the officer class was largely drawn from noble or genteel families, or at least shaped in that tradition.



Figure One  
Main Socio-Political Actors in Europe, approximately 1850-1914



Propertied families in city and countryside poured funds into imperial ventures. There were enormous, if risky, profits to be made by exploiting 'inferior' races, especially if military force could be called upon when 'inferior' peoples began to protest and get out of hand. Back home in the headquarter society, conflicts between capital and labour in the manufacturing cities could be alleviated by banging the patriotic drum, emphasising the loyalty of both workers and employers to the national flag proudly flying over the nation's imperial possessions.

The European empires were based on compromises between the ambitions and obsessions of landed, trading and working-class interests (see figure 1). Beneath these compromises lurked a contradiction. It was, in the end, practically impossible to combine imperialism with democratic citizenship. European governments were gradually forced to concede civil, political and social rights to

their citizens. As a result, the old dynastic-cum-trading empires were turned into 'European nation-state-empires.' In other words, the headquarter societies, Britain, France, Germany and so on, gradually increased the range of citizenship rights given to their national citizens while trying to retain absolutist systems of rule as far as possible in the colonial dependencies.

Nation-state-empires were built on a contradiction. The idea of empire is absolutist. In other words, it 'wants' complete domination, absolute difference between superiors and subordinates, and an unbridgeable gap between them. By contrast, nation-states typically incorporate the idea of citizenship. Citizenship 'wants' equality. A citizen is someone with universal rights, held by all, that the state must recognise and fulfil. A subject within an empire is someone whose task is to serve, demonstrating absolute subservience and giving complete obedience. A proper citizen could not also be a proper subject. Whose claims should take priority? This matter had been argued out violently during the American and French revolutions.

Table Two  
Continental and Sea-borne European empires

Continental Empires	Russian Empire Austro-Hungarian Empire Empire	German Empire Ottoman (Turkish) Empire
Sea-borne Empires	British Empire Dutch Empire Spanish Empire	French Empire Belgian Empire Portuguese Empire

It was difficult for the citizen of a nation-state or the would-be citizen of a would-be nation-state to be at the same time the subject of an imperial dynasty. There were plenty of people around ready to point out the contradictions and remind people of the humiliation they were confronting: Gandhi, for example, in India, and Michael Collins in Ireland.<sup>xxiv</sup> In practice, these irrational arrangements survived for a while, in India, Ireland and elsewhere, lasting half a century or so, but they led to bloody conflict in the end.

The nation-state empire was a kind of political 'mule.' In other words, it was a hybrid with a reasonable life expectancy that could not reproduce itself. It was, so to speak, time limited, even though the 'use by' date was obscure. The modern European nation-state-empires were destined to disappear from the moment they were invented. This fate was, so to speak, 'in their genes.' Disappear they did, gradually, after World War I, but then they were resurrected in an even stranger form.

*Global nation-state-empires.* After 1945, the Cold War pitted two world empires against each other. Moscow took over, in large measure, the old continental empires shattered in 1918 (see table 2). Stalin's regime not only reclaimed much of the previous Russian Empire in Eastern Europe but also imposed its influence over European territory previously held by the German, Austro-Hungarian and Ottoman empires, all, like the Russian empire, shattered by World War I. For a while, it seemed to have great influence over Asia's greatest empire, China, an empire that had made great progress in transforming itself into a nation-state.

Meanwhile Washington settled into nests vacated by the old European sea-borne empires. The US government had already, early in the nineteenth century, asserted that Latin America, once under Spanish and Portuguese imperial control, was its own exclusive sphere of influence. After 1945, it moved into world regions that the British and French used to think of as their own, such as Africa, the Middle East and Indo-China.<sup>xxv</sup>

The global nation-state-empires differed from their European predecessors in three ways:

1. Most of the countries belonging to each empire, and not just the 'headquarter' nations, were officially described as democracies with citizenship rights or 'protectorates' of various kinds en route for democracy; in other words, they were empires constructed from nation-states.
2. The centre of gravity shifted away from Western Europe towards the East (Moscow) and West (Washington).
3. Instead of one very big empire (the British) alongside a number of medium-sized and smaller ones, now there were two very large empires (American and Russian).

### **How modern empires pass away**

To summarise, imperialism in the form of nation-state-empires has passed through European and world history over the past century in two large waves:

- the wave of European nation-state-empires, which hit its peak in the late nineteenth century before crashing down during and after World War I; and
- the wave of global nation-state-empires, which hit its peak in the mid-1960s before losing its force during the 1990s and early twenty-first century.

The crashing down of these waves after they had passed their peak can be described in terms of three phases in each case. These phases are: intensification of competition between empires, partial system collapse, and succession contest. Let us start with the European nation-state empires.

*Phase one: intensification of competition between empires (1898-1917).* In 1898 European imperialism suffered a severe blow to its prestige when the Americans destroyed the Spanish fleet. This was echoed seven years later, when the Japanese defeated the Russian navy at Port Arthur (Korea). By that time, military competition between the stronger imperial powers, especially Germany and Britain, was intensifying. Meanwhile, there was growing insubordination within the British Empire: especially in South Africa, Ireland, and India. The British establishment suffered a number of humiliating setbacks, notably the disastrous Galipolli landing in 1915.<sup>xxvi</sup>

*Phase two: partial system collapse (1917- c 1931).* By the end of World War I the great continental empires of continental Europe, with capitals in Moscow, Berlin, Vienna and Constantinople, were all in smithereens. The British Empire, left standing, seemed larger by contrast. In fact, it grew bigger by picking up remnants of the Ottoman Empire, including Mesopotamia (Iraq).<sup>xxvii</sup> During the

1920s the British Empire had never looked larger or less troubled by rivals. It governed one fifth of the world, roughly the same proportion as the Chinese government in the early twenty-first century.

The Treaty of Versailles (1919) after World War I apparently left the British Empire in a commanding position. Where were its competitors?

- The German empire was in ruins.
- The Russian empire was torn by revolution and civil war.
- The Ottoman empire was gone
- The United States was much less hostile than it had been forty years before, and was in any case mainly preoccupied with its own internal affairs.

Despite its lonely global pre-eminence, the British Empire still had to cope with insubordination. There was resistance to its rule in Ireland, Iraq and India and increasing restlessness in the 'white dominions.' Canada, New Zealand, Australia, the Union of South Africa and the Irish Free State all got their formal 'independence' in 1931.<sup>xxviii</sup>

These internal difficulties did not prevent the British Empire from putting up a good front. During the 1920s, Edward, Prince of Wales (later, briefly, Edward VIII) was, arguably, the most famous man in the world. He circled the world repeatedly making several highly-publicized royal visits; for example, to the West Indies, New Zealand, Australia, India, the Gambia, the Gold Coast, Nigeria,

South Africa, Kenya and Uganda. These visits were all designed to maintain a high pitch of enthusiasm, loyalty and respect for the imperial idea and the Crown, both within the British Empire and outside.

*Phase three: succession contest (c 1931- c1965).* However, by the mid-1930s both Germany and Russia were rapidly getting stronger. Furthermore, within twenty years the British Empire was caught up in a bitter fight for its very existence. The Second World War left the United Kingdom impoverished and exhausted, unable to resist the demands of its colonies for independence. During the two decades that followed the victory of 1945, India won its freedom, the African colonies were liberated, the British Empire broke apart and Britain’s global position was thoroughly undermined. The victory and prizes won in 1918-19, and the apparently unchallenged supremacy enjoyed during the 1920s had both been thoroughly deceptive.

Table Three  
Phases of imperial decline

	Phase 1	Phase 2	Phase 3
Main characteristics of the phase:	Intensification of competition <i>between</i> empires  Insubordination <i>within</i> empires	Partial collapse of the imperial structure  One survivor empire remains prominent although insubordination persists within the empire	Competition and/or negotiation about the successor global order.  This occurs within the global framework that the survivor empire’s continued existence provides
European			

nation-state-empires:	c. 1898-1917	1917-1931	c.1931 - 65
Global nation-state-empires:	c. 1965-1989	1989-2001	2001 - 2035?

### **Biting back**

During the middle third of the twentieth century the British Empire provided a convenient global framework and a stable reference point while a ferocious battle went on between its would-be successors in Germany, Russia and the United States.<sup>xxix</sup>

In each case the contender for global leadership tried to make their potential supporters feel

- they had been subjected to humiliation by their old masters,
- they should revolt and strike back violently, and
- if they were to do this a brighter future would be available to them.

The Nazis in Germany drew deeply on the ideas of Gobineau and Nietzsche, who both deeply regretted the decline of the aristocracy in Europe. World War I had been a humiliation for the German aristocracy, which, along with the Kaiser, had been forced to leave political life. From one point of view, this lifted a tremendous burden off the backs of ordinary Germans. Hitler took another approach. He taught the German people that the surrender in 1918 and the Versailles peace settlement of the following year were an insufferable humiliation, not just for the aristocracy but for all true Germans.<sup>xxx</sup>



Hitler 'dignified' and 'raised up' his audience by talking this way. He told them that they, the ordinary German people, were important enough within the German nation to be able to share in its humiliation. Furthermore, they had a right to revenge. They were not underlings of little account. On the contrary, they were a 'master race,' absolutely superior to all others. They were to be, so to speak, a global aristocracy.

Meanwhile, in Russia, Lenin and the Bolsheviks looked forward to bringing about the 'dictatorship of the proletariat,' uniting urban workers and peasants under the banner of state socialism. They would march towards true communism under the leadership of the party. Once in power, Lenin repeatedly reminded Russians of 'the oppression, humiliation and the incredible torments of penal servitude' they had suffered under the Czarist regime.<sup>xxx1</sup> Many of his party looked to a utopian future when the working class would take possession of the whole world.

Finally, in the United States, the capitalist market was glorified.<sup>xxxii</sup> Here the central figures in the socio-political drama were business leaders, those who succeeded in building up massive private fortunes and large corporations.

During the 1930s and 1940s, two changes occurred, bringing the American experiment into line with the Soviet and Nazis experiments. Firstly, the state was brought into action through the New Deal. Tax income was used to protect the existing business order against the market itself by making sure there was work for the people and money in consumers' pockets. Secondly, during and after the Second World War, capitalist democracy, the American system of business and government,

began to take up a global role and perspective. The delivery of Marshall Aid to Europe and the forced restructuring of Japan began the work of reshaping the world so that it was safe for international business and finance.

There is another way in which American leaders adopted similar tactics to their counterparts in Germany and Russia. Like them, politicians in the United States encouraged others to realise how deeply they were being humiliated and to seek a brighter future by following a better way that was on offer. In fact, the Americans had been adopting this strategy for a long time. Since 1886, the Statue of Liberty had made its direct appeal to the world's 'wretched refuse,' the 'huddled masses, yearning to be free.' America told the world's people that the 'Mother of Exiles'<sup>xxxiii</sup> offered liberation and succour for down and outs everywhere.

A quarter of a century earlier, the proclamation emancipating American slaves in 1861 had been, in part at least, a calculated attempt by the North to stir discontent within the South and undermine its ability to resist the North during the American Civil War.<sup>xxxiv</sup> The United States adopted the same strategy in Europe by issuing what were, in effect, international versions of the Emancipation Proclamation, respectively Woodrow Wilson's 'Fourteen Points' speech in 1918 and Franklin Roosevelt's declaration about the 'Four Freedoms' made in 1941.

For his part, Wilson was cultivating the discontents of the colonised peoples of Europe by his rhetoric about freedom and justice.

Roosevelt 'globalised' the same message. His call for liberation from tyranny was directed against the Germans and Japanese but it was also a shot across the bows of the old imperialist enemy in Western

Europe. The message was calculated to appeal to the millions of colonial subjects who felt humiliated

### **Cold War and after**

By 1945, the contest for the succession to European imperialism had narrowed down to two contenders. Moscow and Washington both proclaimed egalitarian ideologies and declared they were hostile to imperialism. When Britain and France, in secret league with Israel, invaded Egypt in 1956, hoping to overthrow President Nasser and regain control of the Suez Canal, the United States made sure the European imperialists were roasted alive in the United Nations. The Russian invasion of Hungary in the same year gave the United States another opportunity to present itself as the proud and righteous spokesperson for humiliated satellites, colonies and ex-colonies everywhere. At that time the Americans could look around them with a degree of satisfaction no less than, say, the British in the 1880s.

But the Cold War brought a second wave of empire building.<sup>xxxv</sup> The 'Free world' and the 'Communist bloc,' to use phrases commonly employed in the West at that time, were global (not merely European) empires. This raises an obvious question: is this second wave passing through the same three phases as the first? There is some evidence that it is (see table 3).

*Phase one: intensification of competition between empires (1965-89).* By the 1960s the Soviet Union had achieved a rough parity with the United States in some aspects of its military capability.<sup>xxxvi</sup> From the late 1960s onward, there was intensified competition between the two sides, a little like the British and Germans before World War I. Both the Americans and the Russians played a humiliation game, trying to

make the other side look inadequate, incompetent and cruel. The deep embarrassments of the Vietnam War, fought against allies of China and Russia, was paid back by deliberately drawing Moscow into a hopeless invasion of Afghanistan.<sup>xxxvii</sup>

Meanwhile, like the European nation-state-empires before World War I, both the Soviet Bloc and the American empire faced insubordination within their own ranks. In the West, colonial liberation movements in Africa coincided with protests by African-Americans against segregation. They were soon followed by student militancy against the Vietnam War, the rise of feminism and the harsh blow of oil price rises imposed by OPEC, the non-Western cartel of producers. Religion played a key role in mobilising resistance to the Soviet Union, not just by Islamist warriors in Afghanistan but by shipyard workers in the Polish Solidarity movement.

*Phase two: partial system collapse (1989-2001).* The collapse of the Berlin Wall and the break-up of the Soviet Union were not unequivocally ‘caused’ by the West. The Russian collapse was at least as unexpected as the sudden German surrender in 1918 had been.<sup>xxxviii</sup> Its causes are complex and still not understood. However, whatever the causes, the United States was the beneficiary of the ending of the Cold War, rather as the British benefited in 1918 when the remnants of the German fleet sailed into the Firth of Forth.<sup>xxxix</sup>

Like the British Empire in the 1920s, during the 1990s the United States stood alone, prominent on the skyline. Where were its competitors?

- The Soviet Union was in ruins.

- The Japanese were tearing themselves apart with political infighting and were no longer the economic threat they had seemed to be in the 1970s and for most of the 1980s.
- The European Union was proving incapable of coping with a dangerous civil war in ex-Yugoslavia on its South-Eastern borders and had to rely on American help.
- China were much less hostile than it had been forty years before, and was in any case mainly preoccupied with its own internal affairs.

The US government carried out the first Iraq invasion (1991) and the Kosovo war (1999) almost as if they were playing exhibition matches. The American soldiers with their superb equipment were like the Harlem Globetrotters on a world tour, showing off their abilities to admiring foreigners.

However, like Britain between the wars, the United States after 1989 had to cope with the problem of 'subordinate' nations within its empire. At the start of the 1990s, the Maastricht Treaty signalled that Europe's leaders wanted a European Union that was strong, state-like and independent, eventually capable of counter-balancing America.<sup>x1</sup> The profound disagreements some leading European states had with US foreign policy were laid bare when France and Germany both opposed America's planned invasion of Iraq.

This European spirit of independence was an ironic consequence of the fact that for over four decades after 1945, the United States had been a firm but benevolent emperor within the 'Free World'. In this role it had sent Marshall Aid

to Western Europe and forced the main Western European powers into economic cooperation. Washington kick-started the movement that led to the European Union. The Americans also restructured Japanese economic and political life so that Japan became a thriving modern capitalist democracy.

This was not simply altruism. The American economy had avoided a painful post-war downturn by strengthening its overseas business in terms of trade and investment. It wanted those investments to be safe. It wanted its business people to be working in friendly environments.

Table Four  
The decline of imperial systems: succession contest

Phase 3	1931-65	2001-2035?
Imperial system in decline:	European nation-state-empires	Global nation-state-empires
Remaining imperial power:	Britain	United States
Would-be successors:	United States, Germany, Russia, Japan,	China, European Union, Japan, India
Struggling giant:	China	Russia

After 1945, the United States 'Americanised' much of the world. Business increased in social status, becoming highly respectable and professionalised. American-style business schools grew up everywhere. These are modern version

of the theological schools of medieval Europe, which provided the Church with the key managers who made society 'work' at all levels.

Like the medieval theologians before them, business school gurus train highly skilled and dedicated managers, providing them with ideologies and working routines that justify and guide their work. Trading partners and governments in both Europe and Asia learned quickly and well from the Americans, helped by the rising tide of prosperity running through the 1950s and 1960s. Their economies grew and their governments became more powerful.

*Phase three: succession contest (2001 - ?).* The EU and Japan are now playing in the same league with China and India coming up fast. The result is that the United States no longer has economic preponderance in the world.

The United States can still have a profound effect on the global economy and the fate of particular national economies. For example, it has claimed the leading voice and a powerful veto in those global institutions it has shaped, such as the IMF, the World Bank, WTO and the UN. However, this preponderance is not so easily asserted in some other very important bodies such as the EU, ASEAN and OPEC.<sup>xli</sup> The gradual loosening of institutional control is matched by the rising influence of non-American transnational corporations. The top one hundred transnationals owned \$2,453 billion in foreign assets in 2000. Only 28 per cent of those assets were in American hands.<sup>xlii</sup>

The United States became militarily strong because it was both rich enough to pay for the technology and skills needed and sufficiently worried about its own security to wish to acquire them. Other large states are now moving into the same situation. The European Union, China, Japan and India are all much richer than they were in 1945. Russia is benefiting from the income provided by its abundant supplies of gas and oil. These countries are also beginning to feel much more insecure. Until 1989, global security was provided by the Cold War nuclear stalemate.<sup>xliii</sup> Now, over a decade and a half after the end of the Cold War, the climate of international relations is strongly affected by

- increasing fear of terrorism,
- the spread of nuclear weapons,
- the destabilising consequences throughout Eurasia of the collapse of the Soviet Union
- the divisions between leading Western powers surrounding the Iraq war of 2003 and its aftermath, and
- concerns about the increasing strength and assertiveness of China.

If these anxieties deepen, and if inter-state relations become increasingly uncertain and unpredictable, then it is feasible that the world's leading economic powers will build up their military strength. This could happen very quickly, especially if citizens are sufficiently frightened to accept tax increases. If, or more likely when, that happens, the world will cease to be uni-polar, as it was for a while after 1989. Instead, it will be multi-polar in both economic and military terms.



When the configuration of global forces in the first third of the twenty-first century are seen in retrospect, they will probably have an uncanny resemblance to the mid third of the twentieth century. In other words:

- an imperial system that has half-collapsed, leaving the dominant empire still standing though increasingly troubled by internal dissent;
- a collection of increasingly powerful competitors who have dissimilar ideas about how the world should be run; and
- a struggling giant (in the first case, China, in the second case, Russia) that is trying to restructure itself and re-build its strength.<sup>xliv</sup>

Meanwhile, we are in the middle of a ‘war on terrorism.’ A basic element in the strategy being adopted by the West is to show it can deliver even greater humiliation against its enemies than its enemies can themselves deliver. This response betrays a deep underlying anxiety. It is the response of an empire that fears belittlement and sees its rivals growing more powerful.<sup>xlv</sup>

The danger is that in the decades to come rival contenders for global leadership may once again, as in the 1930s, try to make their potential supporters feel

- that they have been subjected to humiliation by their old masters,
- that they should revolt and strike back violently, and
- that if they do this a brighter future is available to them.<sup>xlvi</sup>

### **Culture of resentment**

The signs are not good. Bin Laden’s greatest ‘success’ has been to transfer the atavistic politics of the Middle East upwards to the global level. Since 2001

international relations, in other words, the politics of global society, have been increasingly framed in terms of humiliation, resentment, and revenge. In other words, striking our against tormenters, then preparing for the answering blow. Permitting this to happen has been a bad move, one the West did not need to make. The long-term consequence of perpetuating this political atmosphere is to undermine the credibility of all political authority. In fact, this process has been underway for a long time.

Consider how much sustained training in feelings of humiliation and resentment the fascist, communist and capitalist contenders for the global crown have given to the whole world's population during the twentieth century. Not just to Muslims who felt a bitter chill after the collapse of the Ottoman Empire and the end of the caliphate after World War I, but to almost everybody.

Over the past few generations, the forces contending to succeed the old European imperialists have all promised their followers a better life. They have all said that to get this better life the people have to overthrow those who are humiliating them.

For most of the twentieth century, hope and hatred were vigorously mixed together. This mixture was fed to the people in large doses during two hot wars, one cold war and the anxious periods in between. We are now living with the consequences of this forced feeding.

In recent decades this mixture has been made even more volatile. During the late 1960s and early 1970s, the 'student revolution' in the West coincided with the Cultural Revolution in China, and young people learned to have contempt for

teachers, bureaucrats and politicians. During the late 1970s and early 1980s, popular uprisings in Iran, Afghanistan and Poland boosted the prestige of religious organisations, sending the message that assertive expressions of faith were at least as meaningful and effective as voting for conventional political parties, a practice in decline throughout the West. During the 1980s and 1990s, the market was heavily promoted as a supposedly superior alternative to the public sector, which was stereotyped as being corrupt and inflexible.

As a result of this century of sustained training in disaffection, almost all authority now seems illegitimate, a harsh and insulting imposition from above. Almost. Why was the funeral in Rome of Pope John Paul II in April 2005 such a massive media event? Why were over two hundred presidents, prime ministers and royal representatives present? <sup>xlvii</sup> In order to bathe themselves in the waves of authority surging out of the Vatican. They hoped some of that authority would rub off on them. They all wanted some of that papal aura.

Compared to religious authority, ‘naked’ political authority has acquired a different aura, not good but very bad. It is subject to two attacks simultaneously:

- from the statist ‘left,’ for neglecting its duty of care, its responsibility to protect the people from avoidable humiliations; and
- from the neo-liberal ‘right,’ for imposing itself on the people, subjecting citizens to humiliation.

The central state and local government now have the kind of aura that emanates from the legendary Sheriff of Nottingham. The kind that makes you think of garlic, not

incense. The Sheriff of Nottingham, you will remember, is the cruel and wicked opponent of Robin Hood, that European medieval folk hero who, like the Pied Piper, became known to the whole world through the films of Walt Disney.

The Pied Piper, as everyone knows, was the seductive and glamorous stranger who used his amazing magic flute to rid the town of Hamelin of its troublesome rats. When the townspeople refused to pay him, he played his flute again and led their children away, never to be seen again. We will meet him again in the next chapter.

In the Robin Hood legend, the Sheriff of Nottingham is an unwelcome despot imposing himself on the local people. His power in Nottingham derives from the Norman kings, French invaders who placed their yoke upon the English at the time of William the Conqueror. Like his French masters, the Sheriff of Nottingham has imposed himself from above without being invited. He is not the 'good' sheriff of classical Wild West mythology, one that supposedly looks after people's interests. On the contrary, he is a 'bad' sheriff: a greedy tax-collector, a ruthless enforcer, a corrupt official acting for a despotic government that does not care about the people. For many decades now the world's population has been taught to feel frustration and resentment. Who are they to blame for their condition? Contemporary political rhetoric offers up two main candidates, two damning stereotypes:

- one is *big business*, which supposedly resembles the Pied Piper, that Satanic seducer who gets his victims under his control, exploits them, steals their most valuable possessions, ruins their communities, leaves, and takes no responsibility for the destruction he causes; and

- the other is *big government*, which supposedly resembles the Sheriff of Nottingham, brutally imposing the will of an unloved and unwanted evil empire, taking as much as he can, giving back as little as he can.

In the days of the Cold War, the following dialogue could be regularly heard, here translated it in terms of the two legends just discussed:

*Washington to Moscow:* You are an evil empire, imposing your tyrannical will on others, sending your wicked Sheriffs of Nottingham with armed guards to inflict terror on people wherever you can, forcing them to pay tribute;

*Moscow to Washington:* Rubbish. In fact, you are a global conspirator, sending out Pied Pipers with conjuring tricks to seduce and trick people wherever you can, using them for your own exploitative purposes.

Washington to Moscow: Rubbish. You are an evil empire.....(etc).

The force behind each of the two accusations – ‘you are the exploitative Pied Piper,’ ‘you are the wicked Sheriff of Nottingham’ – was much diminished when it met the other accusation coming in the other direction, so to speak. The two opposing winds blew each other out, greatly reducing their effectiveness.

The collapse of the Soviet Union means the dynamics of this political rhetoric have shifted. Since 1989, both winds have begun to blow in the same direction. They are both directed against the United States, which is now seen as an amalgam of the Pied Piper, whose symbolic base is (or was) the World Trade Center, and the Sheriff of Nottingham, resident in the Pentagon.

The attackers on 9/11 scored a direct hit on them both.

The United States, now the one-and-only global Sheriff of Nottingham, has brought into existence a global Robin Hood whose name is Osama bin Laden. Nor is Al Qaeda an accidental creation. During Russia's Afghanistan war, the CIA armed the Islamic resistance fighters. In doing so, they were giving strength to people such as Osama bin Laden and Mohammed Omar who would later form the kernel of Al-Qaeda and the Taliban regime. The US government evidently did not anticipate that this fanatical force might be directed against themselves in the future.

From the point of view of the Sheriff of Nottingham and those who shelter behind his castle walls, Robin Hood is a terrorist. However, Robin Hood receives protection from the crowd beyond the walls. The crowd is deeply suspicious of Pied Pipers that try to hypnotise it. But a Robin Hood that enacts the crowd's own secret fantasies is a very different matter.

### **Summary**

In this chapter we have: considered the parts played by terror and care in the working of the state, ancient and modern; noted the interplay between ruler and priesthood (or mass media); considered the relationship between humiliation and hierarchy (with reference to Ibn Kaldhun, Milton, Hobbes, Nietzsche, and Canetti); acknowledged the theatricality of empire; distinguished between dynastic empires, settler societies, European nation-state-empires, and global nation-state-empires; discovered a common pattern in the decline and fall of the

two forms of nation-state empire; recognised that a culture of resentment against political authority has developed in the twentieth century; and seen that this was part of a wider pattern of hostility to big government (the Sheriff of Nottingham) and big business (the Pied Piper).

## Conclusion

**Where have we arrived in our development of the book's argument? We are making our second circuit of the triple helix, this time in reverse order, more slowly, and in greater depth. We have completed our examination of the imperial impulse and we are about to investigate the second generator of humiliation driven by the dynamics of globalization: the logic of the market.**

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<sup>i</sup> The speech was on 17<sup>th</sup> March 2003. The invasion began the following day.

<sup>ii</sup> For some documentation of Rupert Murdoch's close relationship with the neo-conservatives, see Halper and Clarke 2004, 184-90.

<sup>iii</sup> The classic example is the 'Mongol horde' led by Genghis Khan (1167-1227 CE). See Man 2005.

<sup>iv</sup> See, for example, Panter-Brick *et al* 2001.

<sup>v</sup> 'Shaming' involves exposing rule-breakers to signs of the strong disapproval of the collectivity to which they belong. The reason is that they have failed to maintain standards which, as members of that collectivity, they are supposedly committed to maintaining. One object of shaming is to make rule-breakers reform their ways. By contrast, the object of deliberate humiliation is to displace offenders from their old position within the collectivity. Where there is no hierarchy, the only possible forms of displacement are death or separation from the group, which in the case of a hunter-gatherer band, means virtual death. Shaming that unintentionally becomes unbearable for the victim, for example, by making further contact with the group too painful for them, may turn into humiliation because of its 'unbearability.'

<sup>vi</sup> Although some hunter-gather bands were 'affluent' See Sahlins 1972.

<sup>vii</sup> Ibn Kaldhun (1332-1406) was an active court politician in North Africa and Islamic Spain. Like Hobbes and Milton he saw politics and war at close hand..

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<sup>viii</sup> For a vivid statement of Milton's political views in 1660, see his letter to General Monk calling for the election of a permanent general council of talented men to exercise government in England. Milton 1660.

<sup>ix</sup> On Hobbes and Milton see also Kow 2004; Lewalski 2002; Malcolm 2002. Hobbes is a key figure for neo-conservatives, influenced by Leo Strauss (Strauss 1952). For a different perspective, see Skinner 1978; Skinner 1997. See also Hobbes 1998.

<sup>x</sup> Milton was an urban man through and through, born in London and making his career there. By contrast, Hobbes, the son of a country vicar, came from Malmesbury in the Cotswolds, the oldest borough in England, and spent much of his life working in great country houses, tutoring the aristocracy.

<sup>xi</sup> By 1651, the parliamentary side had won the civil war. Hobbes presented an argument that was relevant both to his defeated royalist colleagues, faced with pressure to swear allegiance to the government, and to the new regime. That same year, Milton became secretary for foreign languages in Oliver Cromwell's government. In that capacity, he wrote a number of works to advance and defend the parliamentary cause. Sixteen years later, the crown had been restored and Milton was writing in retirement. He wrote *Paradise Lost* (published in 1667) to give an account of the rationale implicit in the way God dealt with humankind, or, as Milton puts it, 'to justify the ways of God to Man.'

<sup>xii</sup> See Walzer 1965.

<sup>xiii</sup> See Hobbes 1996, 62-75.

<sup>xiv</sup> Nietzsche 1956, 160-65.

<sup>xv</sup> Compare Scheler 1961.

<sup>xvi</sup> Its most prominent expression was Christianity, although he also attacks Judaism as a precursor of Christianity and modernity. Fired up by slave morality, the masses, 'impotent and oppressed' but 'full of bottled-up aggressions' (Nietzsche 1956, 172) took symbolic revenge on the rich and powerful. They condemned their 'evil' ways for which they would be punished in Hell. For their own part, the poor and weak lived lives of 'quiet virtuous resignation' (179), becoming 'expert...in ...self-depreciation, and in self-humiliation' (172).

<sup>xvii</sup> He adds that 'Whatever the good is, it is there to be contrasted with the bad. Man has a profound need to arrange and rearrange in groups all the human beings he knows or can imagine...The frontiers



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of goodness are marked out exactly and woe to any of the bad who cross them. They have no business among the good and must be destroyed' (Canetti 1960, 346-7).

<sup>xviii</sup> Veblen 1965. On Veblen, see, for example, Smith 1988, especially 47-74; Smith 1990, 77-97.

<sup>xix</sup> August preferred the title *princeps*. See 'Res Gestae Divi Augusti,' (written in approximately 14 CE), to be found in Davis 1912-13, 166-72.; Wells 1992.

<sup>xx</sup> Hitler and his associates were trying to build a new European, and possibly world, order glorifying the supposed superiority of the 'Aryan race.' As Hannah Arendt argued in *Origins of Totalitarianism* (Arendt 1951), this approach took to an extreme limit the bureaucratic enforcement of 'white supremacy' within the European colonial empires..

<sup>xxi</sup> Christian missionaries were not especially welcomed by pragmatic traders but they fought back. See, for example, Ferguson 2004, chapter 3.

<sup>xxii</sup> A *hidalgo* is the 'son of somebody,' a man of genteel breeding.

<sup>xxiii</sup> See, for example, Stasiulis and Yuval-Davies 1995.

<sup>xxiv</sup> See Coogan 1991 (on Collins); Parekh 2001 (Gandhi).

<sup>xxv</sup> See May 1975; Thorne 1979; Thorne 1986

<sup>xxvi</sup> For a readable account of these conflicts see Ferguson 2004. On Galipoli, see Carlyon 2003.

<sup>xxvii</sup> As a result of the Versailles peace settlement after the First World War, the British Empire acquired an additional 1.8 million square miles of territory and about thirteen million new subjects. Ferguson 2004, 315.

<sup>xxviii</sup> For details, see Taylor 1965, 253-4.

<sup>xxix</sup> It would be an exaggeration to say that its global role was a little like that played by the Holy Roman Empire in Europe during the seventeenth century, but the comparison is suggestive.

<sup>xxx</sup> In fact, each of the three contenders had an ideology that drew upon ideas associated with one of the three key interests within the old imperial compromise (see figure 1). The Nazis had a vision of the Aryans as a kind of global aristocracy. The Bolsheviks trumpeted the forthcoming dictatorship of the proletariat. The United States put its faith in the global mission of big business allied to big science, both acting as the vanguard for Demos.

<sup>xxxi</sup> V I Lenin, 'Speech at the First Congress of Economic Councils, 26 May, 1918' in Lenin 1972, 408-15. Also at <http://www.marxists.org/archive/lenin/works/1918/may/26b.htm> (July 6 2005)

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<sup>xxxii</sup> Criticizing the market's bad social consequences was a risky business, requiring skill and tact. For a successful attempt to do this, see work by the sociologists of the Chicago School, discussed in Smith 1988.

<sup>xxxiii</sup> In her poem 'The New Colossus,' Emma Lazarus contrasts the Colossus of Rhodes, a symbol of conquest and oppression from the ancient world, with the Statue of Liberty, a 'mighty woman with a torch' whose 'beacon-hand glows world-wide welcome' to the 'homeless' and 'tempest-tost' See <http://www.libertystatepark.com/emma.htm> (October 24, 2005).

<sup>xxxiv</sup> There was high principle involved, of course, and the cause was a good one, but there was the added advantage that it would stir up the slaves and cause disruption in the enemy camp.

<sup>xxxv</sup> See, for example, Williams 1980.

<sup>xxxvi</sup> See, for example, Porter 2005, chap 1.

<sup>xxxvii</sup> See Coll 2005.

<sup>xxxviii</sup> See Johnson 1998 on the unexpected end of World War I.

<sup>xxxix</sup> The German navy deliberately sank five cruisers and thirty-one other ships at Scapa Flow as the war finished. See [http://www.firstworldwar.com/features/scapaflow\\_scuttling.htm](http://www.firstworldwar.com/features/scapaflow_scuttling.htm) (Oct 15, 2005).

<sup>xl</sup> For a discussion, see Baun 1995; Middlemas 1995.

<sup>xli</sup> For a recent expression of American concerns in respect of ASEAN, see Dillon and Tkacik 2005 at <http://www.heritage.org/Research/AsiaandthePacific/bg1886.cfm>.

<sup>xlii</sup> 49 percent of those assets were held in the European Union plus another 4 percent in Switzerland. Japan held 11 percent. See Smith and Braein 2003, 20-21.

<sup>xliii</sup> The two great powers mainly used their military might to overawe rebellious governments on their own side and fight proxy wars against clients supported by the other side, as in Vietnam and Afghanistan. These military adventures always carried a very heavy cost in terms of the big power's international reputation.

<sup>xliv</sup> Russia after the fall of the Berlin Wall has been much less destabilised than China after the fall of its Empire in 1911. There has been no civil war and no foreign invasion in the recent Russia case. There is little doubt that, like China, Russia can be a

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'comeback kid.' It will probably take Russia a much shorter time to recover than it took China.

<sup>xlv</sup> The aftermath of New York in 2001 has an uncanny resemblance to the aftermath of Gallipoli in 1915: Gallipoli was a case of humiliation being caused by the failure of the British state to make a decisive incursion into the territory of a Moslem enemy who is considered to be weak and who turns out to be far stronger and more organised than had been suspected; 9/11 was a case of humiliation being caused by the failure of the American state to prevent a decisive incursion into home territory by a Moslem enemy who is considered to be weak and who turns out to be far stronger and more organised than had been suspected. In both cases, the threatened imperial power tried to rescue their position with spectacular victories in Iraq. In both cases, the 'easy victories' turned into a prolonged humiliation cycle in which the 'conquering' army was sometimes the victim, sometimes the perpetrator.

<sup>xlvi</sup> See, for example, Sardar and Davies 2002.

<sup>xlvii</sup> This was 'the biggest gathering of world leaders in history', according to Rossella Lorenzi of Discovery News on April 4<sup>th</sup>, 2005, reporting the words of Rome's mayor, Walter Veltroni. 'Pope's funeral gathers world leaders,' <http://dsc.discovery.com/news/briefs/20050404/popefuneral.html>