For a decade now there has been a growing chorus celebrating what has generally been understood as the start of a new epoch, the era of globalization, of information society for others, for millennial capitalism for yet others, even empire for a few. For at least a decade a number of anthropologists and historians and archaeologists and perhaps others have been insisting that this transition is very much an academic fantasy. There are others who have also attacked the discourse of globalization on different grounds, primarily that it is an ideology that tends to naturalize a social reality, one that is surely possible to control by the states involved, and states are very much involved, in order to argue for the necessity of across-the-board structural adjustment. Here, I think, the critique is overdrawn even if there are interesting aspects of the argument that should be heeded. Globalization in our approach is quite real as an economic process as are its numerous cultural and social concomitants. But this has happened before we argue, and not just once. We are not arguing that nothing has changed but that there are some fundamental properties of global systems that are part of the same family of phenomena even if there are also a great number of more or less important differences.
Notes on the Globalization Argument

The following notes are meant to try and clarify the issues that arise in the confrontation between the globalization framework and a more systemic approach for which we argue here:

1. A basic often-implicit assumption is that globalization is an evolutionary process that is today unifying the world, a phenomenon that has never before occurred in world history. As a process it consists in the transnationalization of flows of capital, people, technologies, information, and the like, an increase in the density of interaction between different parts of the world. This is one of the most generally conceded aspects of the phenomenon. Economic geographers like Harvey, cultural anthropologists like Appadurai, and most of postcolonial cultural studies are party to this assumption. But apart from geographers such as Harvey and Dicken and sociologists such as Castells, there is little in the way of empirical research in this area. How global are we? How dense are the networks? Is this the first time it has happened? For Harvey (1990), for example, the concept of “time-space” compression that has been borrowed by many cultural studies departments is in fact a purely Braudelian expression of the changing time-space scale of a global-system, that is, the time it takes to get from one end to the other. Harvey is clear that this is not a new phenomenon and actually treats the current period as a transition like others in the past; but as it is speed that is the primary parameter, the direction is unilinear and thus evolutionary. And, of course, there is a tendency to envisage technology and the motor of it all. Castells (2000), as well, sees the emergent global economy as a new historical phenomenon that is based on the speed-up related to information technology as well as the ways the latter leads to what he defines as Network Society. Another evolutionist in this realm of thinking is Roland Robertson who takes an explicitly culturalist position in which the world is also becoming smaller and more integrated as a cultural field, in terms of both consciousness and interaction (not merely economic interaction). The anthropologists in all of this have had precious little to contribute to the larger perspective, that is, the model of global change. They have by and large simply accepted as reality that we are now in the age of globalization. Their contributions are related to issues to be discussed below. While some of the work, especially that of the sociologists and the geographers, contains important analyses, one can, I maintain, criticize a crucial weakness of some of their assumptions. Harvey escapes some of this by maintaining a historical relativist position concerning globalization, but most of the others favor a technological determinist view of the phenomenon; this is, in my view, contradicted by the facts as well as illustrates the strongly ideological nature of this position. Braudel suggested long ago that globalization was not an evolutionary but a historical phenomenon, characteristic of periods of declining hegemony in which old centers finance the rise of new centers. The latter phenomenon is the key to understanding globalization as
a historical process. Such periods have occurred often in European history, in
the shift of hegemony from Italy to the Iberian Peninsula, then to Holland,
then to England, then to the United States (with Germany as competitor),
then in part back to Europe and to Japan, and now from the West as a whole
and Japan to centers in East Asia, to a lesser extent Southeast Asia, South Asia,
and parts of Latin America (Friedman 1999, 2002). The most sophisticated
interpreter of the Braudelian approach is Giovanni Arrighi at least as regards
the economic history of Europe (we would take this much further back in
history). The role of technology is certainly important in quantitative terms
but it is not clear that the nature of the global has changed because of the
introduction of computer and Internet technology. Yes, the world has become
smaller (this is perhaps better interpreted as localization) and network-like com-
munication has vastly increased (but this began long ago with slower technolo-
gies). Many argue for a technological revolution and a new plateau of produc-
tivity (Castells 2000), but this is not necessarily the case either as has been
shown by the economist Robert Gordon (2000) who argues that productivity
except for the actual manufacture of chips has continued to decline for the
most part since the 1970s. While it may indeed be possible to move capital
around the world in microseconds, this is not so much a question of real pro-
ductivity, not the introduction of fusion power, but an acceleration of the cir-
culation of financial instruments. And, we note, the same kind of phenom-
enon occurred in the last century when undersea telegraph cables accelerated
the movement of capital between continents in an equivalent way.

If this is an age of movement of capital, people, and goods, an age of
diffusion, then the turn of the last century, from 1870 to 1920 is an example of
the same kind of globalization. The export or international movement of capi-
tal rose to levels completely equivalent to those of today. Rates of international
migration were also equivalent. The discourse on technology, just as today, was
one of infatuation or hate: for the light bulb, the automobile, the airplane, the
international telegraph cables, and the telephone. There was a strong opposi-
tion between modernists and even futurists and traditionalists. The British, in
their industrial decline, were the undisputed single world military power; they
were (and still are) the world’s financial center and an exporter of English cul-
ture on a significant scale. Everything was not, of course, the same, but at a
certain level of analysis there are striking similarities.

2. Globalization within the assumptions stated above is about move-
ment, connections of a transnational kind, flows, or what I have referred to
elsewhere in terms of trans-x discourse (Friedman 2000, 2002). It is in a sense
strongly oriented to the behavioral, to the actual interactions across borders,
and to the things that move within those interactions. This is in theoretical terms
reminiscent of structural functionalism at least by contrast with structuralism in
its focus on the arena of observable relations rather than on the underlying
conditions that might account for their appearance. For example, the model of
the business cycle cannot be observed but it certainly does attempt to account for observable phenomena. The global systemic approach is concerned with the dynamic and thus historical structures of the global arena and thus with the conditions in which globalization actually occurs. It does not deny the importance of studying connections but it questions whether this can amount to anything more than description. Further, by historicizing the phenomenon, we can probe the degrees of similarity and difference in the latter and pose the fundamental question of historical continuity in global systemic history.

3. Cultural globalization approaches seem to share a certain bias that might be a reflex of an implicit evolutionism referred to above. This is related to their use of terms such as *modernity* to designate the contemporary world. Thus, in discussing widespread contemporary phenomena such as witchcraft, they go to great lengths to try to redefine the phenomenon as belonging to modernity and thus entirely discontinuous with the past. This discourse is also negative to anything that might be associated with historical continuity, even going so far as to say that we are all alike (culturally) today and that there are no longer the kinds of differences that may have existed in the past (e.g., Meyer & Geschiere 1999; Comaroff & Comaroff 1999, 2000). This is also in part a product of a culturalist understanding of social life and therefore of globalization. The latter consists of the spread of cultural meaning over the globe and the hybridization of cultures combining the West with the rest into a world creole culture in which local specificities are recreated in subsets of a world culture. No studies have ever been undertaken of this phenomenon but there has been a proliferation of assumptions, one of them being that modern culture, while still differential, consists of differences that are mere surface phenomena, like Pepsi and Coke, “structures of common difference” as Richard Wilk (1995) has put it. The global systemic approach does not accept this description of the contemporary world. We assume that there are very great differences in different people’s social realities that cannot be understood in terms of such superficialities. On the contrary, witchcraft is a very powerful structure of experience that is strongly embedded in an organization of life, of sociality, that cannot be simply neutralized by such discourse. On the contrary, one has to ask, what are the conditions of restructuring of experience that might produce similar forms of meaning production among different populations? The fact that such different modes of “being in the world” are linked in larger global processes is in our view the usual state of affairs in global systems where only certain regions or zones are assimilated to the center’s mode of experience, usually via massive transformations of family and other institutions of socialization. Modernity in this view is a structural rather than an evolutionary concept. It refers to a number of parameters related to processes of individualization, the transformation of or formation of a particular kind of public sphere. As a tendency it has occurred in the majority of commercial civilizations in world history, but, we stress, this must be understood as a
tendency. Even in Europe, modernity took a long time to emerge and some might argue that it never really made it (Friedman 1994; Sennett 1977; Campbell 1987; Latour 1993).

4. Notions of hybridity/creolization have been reborn as part and parcel of globalization discourse and the identity of those who are adepts of the discourse. This is also part of an evolutionary assumption: “before we lived in a world of separate differences, a mosaic, while today the cultures are flowing into one another across boundaries.” This is another example of trans-x discourse. It has been applied to the discussion of diasporas and transnational populations more generally, the idea being that such populations are postnational, transgressing the essentialism of the nation-state, the later being associated with all things bad, with nationalism, of course, but with racism and ethnicity—all dangerous and evil phenomena. The notion of hybridity contains two serious confusions: first, the necessary assumption of prior purity—otherwise how do we know that there is mixture; and second, which also conflates the position of the observer with that of the observed, making hybridity an objective phenomenon in the subjective sense, hybridity for me even if they don’t recognize it. The association of globalization with cultural mixture is a metaphorical representation that is based on the prior assumption of a mosaic. This is clearly at odds with Boas’s notion of culture. The latter was clear about the imported nature of the various constituents in any culture while stressing that what is specific about culture is the unique way in which such constituents are combined. Thus, what for the observer is perhaps juxtaposed, for the native is internally unified. The fact that Kwakiutl Indians could incorporate sewing machines in their potlatches did not change the nature of the potlatch.

5. I have suggested in several places that much of the ideology of multiculturalism and hybridity and most of trans-x (Friedman 2002) discourse is the product of an emergent cosmopolitan identity within the world-system. This is not a new identity but is particularly salient in periods of hegemonic decline when globalized elites emerge as major actors in the global arena. Cosmopolitan identity emerges at the same time as indigenizing identities emerge at the lower end of the declining hegemonic zone of the global arena. Thus cosmopolitan hybridity is countered by nationalist or localist identity that opposes itself to everything cosmopolitan.

6. The argument concerning globalization is that it has occurred previously, not merely in European history, but in world history as well. In Kajsa Ekholm Friedman’s chapter on the Bronze Age (ch. 2), it is argued that there are important similarities between the systemic properties of the system linking the Mediterranean, Egypt, and the Middle East and today’s world-system. Here there are the following phenomena: hegemonic competition, shifting hegemony, and a series of cycles of expansion and contraction that end with a final collapse. Thus the end of the Bronze Age is not a simple issue of technology but the final collapse of a particular world-system, in the empirical meaning of the term.
7. In the trajectories of global systems there is commonly a process leading from declining hegemony to attempted empire and then to collapse or rapid decline, accompanied by a longer-term shift in hegemony. This process is related to the cycle of centralization and decentralization of wealth accumulation. This has been discussed by our colleagues as well (Chase-Dunn & Hall 2000; Frank & Gills 2000) as the pulsating nature of historical world-systems.

8. The most salient social phenomena that we have found to occur transhistorically are as follows: national identity, ethnicity, cosmopolitan or imperial identity, class structures based on capital accumulation (slavery, wage labor, serfdom), individualist ideology, and the formation of “modernity” and therefore “tradition” (Friedman 1994, 1998, 2000). The general properties of global systems seem to be applicable to all systems based on some form of commercial or capital accumulation. The use of the term capital is here taken in a general Weberian sense as “abstract wealth,” which we have found to be much more widespread than some have been willing to concede. This is, of course, complicated and debatable, but it is a position that I would maintain for the time being. Accumulation of wealth is crucial to understanding the dynamics of such systems, whether this is led by military-based primitive accumulation or by a larger market engaging a significant portion of the population. Within these smaller global systems there is an extensive movement of people, the formation of transnational classes, and the complex development of systems of remuneration using abstract forms of wealth, at least for the purposes of calculation. There are usually a number of competing centers whose development at the same time implies the emergence of peripheries, trade states, and predatory tribute takers. In certain phases of competition there is also a tendency to empire formation, often the result of the failure to maintain hegemony. The actual combinations of these phenomena vary a great deal, but I would suggest that these are true variations and not totally distinct social formations.

Some Examples

*The ubiquity of the phenomena discussed above can be exemplified by the following comparative examples:*

a. The economy of classical Athens was very much based on export of silver and manufactured goods. The city at its height was a net importer of grain. The internal organization of economic activity shows clear signs of a capitalistic organization, signs that have often been denied in the substantivist approaches of Finley and others. Sometimes the word *slavery* is used to describe this economy, but a closer look at the actual relations involved reveals that “slaves” could be owned in large numbers for the sole purpose
of renting out (manpower), that slaves often received wages or produced for the market and paid interest to their owners, and that they often were quite wealthy and owned their own slaves. Thus, while this is not a system of wage labor, it is an entirely commercialized economy.

b. The issue of community identity in Athens is clearly comparable to national identity, at least for its citizens (but this was the case in Europe until very recently as well). Republican identity was strong and opposed to other similar and dissimilar identities. The notion of the modern also emerges in classical Greece and there is evidence of a debate between “Ancients and the Moderns” (Lovejoy & Boas 1948). The classification of the world that developed in this period is also interestingly close to the European model of cultural/ethnic differentiation and evolution (Cohen 2000; Hall 2002).

c. The Hellenistic era emerged out of the decline of the Athenian league. Hellenistic hegemony marks a period of turbulence, military expansion, and empire formation that immediately fragments into a number of smaller territorial states. A significant aspect of these states is what is best described as colonial class structure (see below), characterized by a continuum from native to Greek, a politics of assimilation and even of “hybridization” (seen from the top of the social order). The identity practices that emerge during this period are interesting for any comparative study of the phenomenon. S. Cohen (1991) argues that Jewish identity as an “ethnic” identity first develops in this period. The history of the diasporic organization of Alexandria provides interesting material on the dynamics of the system, one that begins with accommodation and assimilation within the dominant Greek society and ends with a process of ethnicization and conflict. This phenomenon, also occurring in the Roman period, seems to express a cycle of integrative expansion followed by disintegrative contraction. Declining hegemony is accompanied by political and cultural fragmentation.

*Hegemonic and System Cycles*

One particular aspect of global systems, noted above, is the following kind of trajectory: competition and shifting hegemony within a center, including occasional empires. The shifts of hegemony within the center are periods of “globalization” (not to be confused with colonization, which also has a diffusionist effect). These shifts are part of the expansion of the system as a whole, and there is a tendency for a more general decline to occur at the end of this cycle of shifting hegemony. This can be schematically represented as in figure 3.1. The decline of the Bronze Age and the decline of the Mediterranean following the Roman Empire are both phenomena that are referred to as “dark ages” and there are, of course, plenty of other examples. One interesting aspect of the long cycle is the tendency to formal empire formation at certain junctures,
often quite late in the process of shifting hegemony. In this sense the Roman Empire can be understood as the end point of the Hellenistic state system. This is a complex issue that I cannot deal with in any depth here, but it might be suggested that it is a logical outcome inherent in the combined and contradictory tendencies to centralization and decentralization within the system. Contemporary U.S. attempts to establish imperial hegemony might be discussed in such terms as well. The British Empire is a more complex phenomenon, but the relation between hegemonic decline and the elaboration of empire in the latter part of the nineteenth century can be understood in similar terms (ch. 7).

The Hellenistic period exemplifies the need for a structural analysis that takes account of the specific combination of historical circumstances in relation to more general logics of development. The Hellenistic states were the product of a rapid expansion by Macedon into the Middle East where it occupied the area previously under Persian dominion. This expansion itself has a historical background insofar as it was the latest in a conflict relation between the Greek world and the Persian Empire. The conquest achieved by Alexander, following the
general plan of his father Phillip, was short lived as an empire. What emerged as the result of the fragmentation of the empire was a regional system of states sharing similar political cultures and a strong elite identity. The Macedonian expansion in its turn must be understood in terms of the rise of a former semiperiphery to the Greek centers that was very much the result of the movement of capital in the form of wealth and craftsmen to the north, resulting in a process of productive development, urbanization, and growth of the Macedonian state. The emergence of the Hellenistic states comes in the wake of the decline of the Athenian-dominated city-state system. Macedon, while closely involved with the city-states and leader of the Corinthian League, was organized on a different basis. While it harbored a strong egalitarian ideology, the state was not a commercially based enterprise but a military one. The global arena of the Hellenists was identical to that of the classical Greeks. To describe the empire of Alexander as an expansion of Macedon is something of an exaggeration. Rather Alexander established the conditions for the development of Greek-dominated states in Asia, states that were largely independent even if Alexander and some of his successors tried to convert themselves, without success, into deified emperors. Macedon in this period was a secondary player in economic terms.

The Hellenistic era displays a great variety of state forms, from pure trade states to production/financial states. Rhodes is an interesting example of specialization within the larger system. It was an entrepôt that controlled much of the maritime trade linking the Middle East, Egypt, and Greece. It became famous for its successful control of piracy and its systematic policing of the maritime trade routes as well as its development of a significant body of maritime law. The island lived entirely on the proceeds of global trade. Egypt is perhaps the most “complete” of the Hellenistic states because it contains the entire gamut of institutions and relations typical of hegemonic centers—from mass production to central banking, to international trade. With a very strong agricultural, industrial, and commercial base, it was the dominant economy in the Hellenistic world. In fact, it is argued that Rome conquered Egypt primarily because of its negative balance of trade with that state (Préaux 2002: 507).

A Longrun Pattern: The Mediterranean (European)/Asian Global Arena

Beginning with Ekholm Friedman’s suggestions concerning the Middle and especially later Bronze Age (ch. 2), we can speak of a kind of political economic field established in the third millennium linking the Indus with the Mediterranean and even significant parts of continental Europe. The majority of the area seems to have been organized in the form of strong state-centered economies along a continuum from urban states to larger territorial states. The crisis of 2200 to 2000 is characterized by a rapid decline in southern and even northern Mesopotamia, Egypt, and shortly after, in the Indus valley, with the rise during this period of smaller centers of accumulation in Central Asia—the
latter is, of course, brief and is followed by a decline as well as a result of the
general decline in consumption power in the larger region (Karunaratne 2002).
The Middle Bronze Age takes off in 2000 with the establishment of a system
based on three major core areas: Egypt, Crete, and several states in the Middle
East. This is a period of massive development and competition, of military
conquest and expanding trade, as well as of a series of shifting hegemonies,
from east to west and then back. The year 1600 marks the end of the Middle
Bronze Age, a crisis in Babylonia, Egypt, and Crete. This is the period distin-
guished by the rise of the Mycenaeans, the conquest of Crete, the rise of the
Hittites and of northern Mesopotamian states such as Mitanni, while Babylonia
in the south declines significantly. This is a period of even greater intensifica-
tion both of production and increasingly of military activity. Egypt especially,
after the Hyksos hiatus becomes an aggressive military power. The competi-
tion leads to the progressive destruction of the workforce as rates of exploita-
tion apparently increase substantially throughout the area. Enslavement is
massive and economies appear to be severely strained. In ca. 1200 the entire
system enters a massive crisis of disintegration resulting in a collapse in trade
and the end of the Bronze Age, which was entirely dependent upon the main-
tenance of a global network of trade for ensuring transfer of base metals nec-
essary for bronze production. Out of this crisis emerges the “iron age,” which
might be best described as an expression of decentralization itself because iron
ore is plentiful and distributed widely. In the Mediterranean the decline is
often referred to as a Dark Age, the replacement of larger states by small units
more dependent upon subsistence economies. The Middle East in this period
is weakened significantly, as is Egypt, but there are occasional bursts of expan-
sion as well. The neo-Assyrian Empire is largely a military complex that lives
off the tribute it can accumulate from its own hinterlands, a control that for
the most part leaves the Mediterranean coast in a state of autonomy and per-
mits its rapid expansion. The Phoenician expansion occurs at a time when
Greece is still impoverished and politically fragmented. The eastern coast of
the Mediterranean from Ugarit to Jaffa is made up of a series of prosperous
commercial cities that are related linguistically and referred to as Phoenicians.
Phoenician trade and colonization spreads throughout the Mediterranean from
Greece itself to Italy, Spain, and to North Africa where Carthage is established.
The cities of the eastern Mediterranean coast, thus, witness an important
expansion in this period of weakened ex-imperial states in Egypt, Greece, and
Mesopotamia. The latter are succeeded by smaller entities often linked to a
particular city and associated with particular ethnic groups (Redford 1992),
often with tribal names: Samal, Cilicia, Gurgun, Carchemish, Hamath, among
many others. The Egyptian Delta is colonized by Lybian chiefdoms who ulti-
mately usurp power in the larger state, using the quite commonplace mecha-
nisms of gaining military office and marrying royalty. By the eighth century
Assyria is again on the rise as a military enterprise and Kush emerges from the
south as a successor to the Egyptian state. The competition between Egypt and Assyria for the control of the Levantine coast is a small-scale replay of earlier eras. The Assyrian military machine gradually weakens up until the end of the seventh century and Egypt begins to expand once more as a commercial/political empire. The Saite Empire, the twenty-sixth and last Egyptian dynasty, was very much oriented to the larger world, trading and then controlling the cities of the Mediterranean coast but also making use on a significant scale of Greek mercenaries and merchants. At one point a serious ethnic conflict develops with local residents of the Nile Delta prompting the king to found the enclave city of Naukratis for the Greeks. The trade is intensive—grain, papyrus, wine, pottery—linking a developing Greek mainland and Egypt.

The period 700 to 500 B.C. marks the return of Greece to a powerful economic and political position within this larger arena. Trade and military expansion combine, leading ultimately to the classical period in which urban leagues (especially the Athenian) become dominant actors and in which there is a remarkable accumulation of wealth in the new centers. The political organization of the city-states is quite different from many of the previous urban states. The Absolutist control of the Tyrannies is overturned and replaced by a democratic organization among those who are citizens of the state and who can be understood as its “people.” The city-state as a republic has sometimes been interpreted as a unique phenomenon for this early period although there are other historical instances from, for example, pre-Mauryan India. Class divisions both within the citizenry and in the larger slave-based polity are quite significant and they increase over time (De Ste. Croix 1981). The classical city-states are organized into competing alliances and their expansion eastward is met by the Persian Empire, which is the major external enemy block for the Greeks. A very high level of commercialization in which money transactions permeate most forms of exploitation and accumulation of wealth accompanies the vast colonial structure of their economy. The classical period enters into a prolonged crisis in the latter part of the fourth century that includes a vast export or globalization of “capital,” both investable wealth and specialized producers who move to the Syria-Palestine coast and to other regions including Macedon, a period characterized by the decreasing buying power of Athens and the tendency for peripheral substitutes to outcompete central production (Will, Mossé, & Goukowsky 1975: 159). Out of this situation emerges the Macedonian state and the very brief empire of Alexander, which hardly extends beyond the military campaign itself. Phillip, his father, had already voiced a desire to take the Persian Empire as his own and it is interesting that this is again the same arena as that which dates back to the Bronze Age. Alexander, thus, inherits this project from his father who was assassinated. He takes it all the way to India before settling down in Mesopotamia. It is important to note the specificity of this period. Macedon is not the center of this sprawling expansion but simply its historical point of
origin. The empire immediately following Alexander splits up into an *ecumene* of Greek rule in which a number of separate large states are paramount and in which mainland Greece continues to decline economically although Macedon itself holds its own rather secondary position in economic terms. Other areas, of course, rise to prominence, such as Rhodes, which becomes a maritime hegemon within the Mediterranean. The Hellenistic period is characterized by the formation of state-based commercial economies in competition with one another, where economic and geographical expansion are quite extraordinary, with exploits into northern Europe, *Thule* (Strabon 1978), West Africa, and India. From 250 B.C. Rome begins to expand within the same system and within a hundred years it becomes the dominant actor in the Hellenistic world. The establishment of a real formal and long-lasting empire ensues this and its eventual demise was followed by a general regional decline and a “new” development, again in the Middle East. It can be argued that Rome is very much the product of its incorporation as a periphery into the Phoenician and Greek commercial expansion and its gradual transformation into a center in the same larger region.

This summary is meant to highlight a pattern of geographical stability, one that includes internal shifts of hegemony as well as regional shifts among the different regions, but in the same political economic arena. There are, finally, interesting parallels between the Hellenistic period of centralist state economies and the Late Bronze Age palace-dominated economies.

As we shall be focusing on the Hellenistic era, it is useful to note Thompson’s interesting argument for a cyclical process of expansion and contraction in the first millennium (Thompson 2001), which has the following periodicity. From 1200–1150 there is a marked contraction in the entire region. This is the period of the Bronze Age collapse. Following this is a weak expansion from the ninth to the seventh century and seems to have continued and intensified until the fourth century (Thompson 2001: 8). It is this period that is characterized by political fragmentation and the appearance of new “ethnic” states. It bears witness to the Phoenician expansion but also the regrowth of the Assyrian Empire and the expansion of the kingdom of Kush into Upper Egypt. The former puts increasing financial pressure on Phoenicia until the mid-seventh century when it is absorbed into the empire but still maintained because of its importance as a source of imperial income. Greek expansion also occurs in this period with the establishment of colonies in both the East and the West. A growing trade system leads to the specialization of Scythians in agricultural production for the Greek market. After 520 the Persian Empire establishes an enormous peaceful realm of trade routes linking India to the Mediterranean. The expansion continues until end of the fifth century and then increasing competition becomes more evident. The decline of Athens and the subsequent rise of Macedon might be interpreted as a shift within the same trajectory and the transformation of city-states into territorial military state economies. It is suggested that the second crisis period of the first millennium dates from the fourth to the second centuries that would place the Hellenistic
expansion squarely within a period of decline. One might try to understand this in terms of the intensification of exploitation that characterizes the period. Intensive warfare, slave taking, extreme levels of exploitation, and class conflict marked the latter. This might be related to the failure to establish empire on the part of Alexander. It is noteworthy that the Macedonian expansion is not the formation of a centralized imperial political economy. The separate states are quite separate in all terms except cultural, their elites all being Greek. And the centers of gravity are primarily the Seleucids and Ptolemies, that is, Mesopotamia and Egypt. Thus even if one might speak of general worsening of conditions, the latter is overcome temporarily by increasing rates of intensification.

If there is a pattern here it is one of shifting centers of power within a larger region, primarily from the Mediterranean toward Mesopotamia/Iran and Egypt and then back again (although there are several possible configurations here). The end of the Bronze Age sees a gradual and quite partial return of accumulation beginning on the Levantine coast, followed by partial military developments in Assyria and Egypt. Assyria eventually is weakened and replaced by related states like Babylonia and then Persia, which becomes the next regional empire. In the Mediterranean, the Phoenician expansion might be said to induce the rise the Greek expansion and the emergence of a powerful imperialist economy centered on Athens and allied city-states. Another decline and the movement of accumulation toward the east followed this, but also on a smaller scale toward the north, that is, Macedon. However, the Hellenistic expansion was not itself a reconcentration of global accumulation in the Aegean. Rather Greek military activity reinforces the growth of both the Middle East and Egypt, Macedon remaining a weaker economic sector. It is only with Rome that there is a return of dominance to the Mediterranean, this time farther west as well. Just as Mesopotamian power had moved east to the Iranian plateau, so Greek power moved west to Italy. To recapitulate the model presented above, we might suggest the following set of embedded cycles (fig. 3.2).

Understanding the Structural Combinatorics of Global Systems: Hellenistic States

The Hellenistic period has been documented in great detail by a number of historians and archaeologists. It displays characteristics that seem familiar to students of contemporary globalization, but also to historians, sociologists, and anthropologists of European colonialism. In this period we find a globalized economy with strong tendencies to a worldwide currency and certainly a relatively integrated world market (Strabon 1978 XVIII, 13 = 798). One interpreter of this period is impressed by the scope of its economy.

The Mediterranean area became a world market for perfumes, spices, drugs, ivory and jewels from Central Africa, Arabia, and India; for gold, furs and
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forest products from Central Russia; for amber from the Baltic; and for metals from the British Isles and Spain. Among the most prized commodities of international trade were human beings. To the great international slave mart of Delos victims were brought from Britain, Ethiopia, south Russia, Morocco, Iran and Spain. They were distributed to Seleucia, Antioch, Alexandria, Carthage, Rome, Athens and Pergamum. Among them were not only laborers and prostitutes, but doctors, scientists, artists and craftsmen, who carried their ideas, traditions, and skills along wherever they went. . . . Aken merchant colonies could be found in every port. We read, for instance, of an Indian merchant, resident in Egypt, who actually held a priesthood there; of a guild of Syrian merchants who maintained a regular hostel on Delos providing lodgings, stoch-rooms, a council chamber, and a chapel; of Italiote bronze-worker who transferred his business from Lucania to Rhodes; and of a silk manufacturer from Antioch who died in Naples (Bozeman 1994: 99).

The Transition

The decline of the city-state structures and the rise of the Hellenistic era is a noteworthy example of hegemonic decline and globalization. The rise of Macedon consisted of the transformation of a periphery, exporter of wood for Athenian ship building and a producer of silver, to a dominant position within Greece. There are a number of indicators of the decline and shift of hegemony. The northern areas, Thrace, Macedon, and the kingdom of Bosporus, and those farther north and east, from Bulgaria to the Black Sea, are areas of increasing import substitution and declining Athenian imports. "L’archéologie a mis au jour en Bulgarie des objets grecs d’importation et des productions locales révélant la main d’artistes grecs ou hellénisés, cherchant à satisfaire les goûts des princes qui epousaient des
Grècques ou mariaient leurs soeurs ou leurs filles à des généraux grecs dont ils s’attachaient ainsi les services” (Mossé 1975: 76).

The same process occurs with respect to import substitution of wine, again marking the increasing strength of certain peripheral areas with respect to the Athenian core. At the same time Athens increases its production of silver in order to obtain grain and other products that are no longer exchanged for locally produced commodities such as vases and wine. During this period there is an increasing class polarization in the center, the formation of a “new” political class (Goukowski 1975: 243), and increasing pauperization. The level of conflict increases from this period and throughout the Hellenistic era. Production is increasingly capitalized for the market via an increase of credit. This all occurs in the fourth century in which Athenian decline is paralleled by the rise of Macedonian power. There is increasing class struggle and the appearance of “anti-capitalist” ideologies (Mossé 1975: 121). The disintegration of civil society is expressed in the cosmopolitanization of the elites adapting to the new global arena established by Macedon. “Les riches Athéniens tendront à se fondre dans la ‘bourgeoisie’ cosmopolite du monde hellénistique” (Mossé 1975: 122).

One might characterize these processes as expressions of a new era of globalization, one that is celebrated by Cynic philosophers such as Diogenes. The transition can be summarized as follows:

1. Economic decline of the Athenian core in the international arena;
2. Exhaustion of the state sector as a result of costs of warfare and military losses;
3. Increasing class polarization (themes that continue into the Hellenistic period):
   a. The cosmopolitanization of the upper class,
   b. Impoverishment of lower classes,
   c. Nativist movements (return to nature included as well);
4. Shift of hegemonic power to the north;
5. Demise of the city-state/republic and democratic rule;
6. Transition to oligarchy and central state rule; and

These are characteristics that are clearly comparable to the contemporary situation. The ensuing emergence of much larger political entities, following the attempt at empire, and intensified levels of exploitation based on a military economy are certainly not foreign to the contemporary world.

Hellenistic Civilization

There is a powerful process of cultural “diffusion” linked directly to the colonization process itself and the formation of Greek elite from India to the cities of the western Mediterranean. This elite is not merely a de facto product of the
expansion itself but a self-conscious project in which Greek culture or \textit{paideia} is consciously used to maintain and promote Greek identity in the form of schools and the maintenance of a single language, the \textit{koine}, a kind of global Greek \textit{lingua franca}. Travelers of all kinds, tourists, theater groups, authors, teachers, doctors, as well as mercenaries and bureaucrats could move freely among the different Greek establishments in a world where a vast network of communication and transport was expressly upheld. This elite builds its own enclaves or even entire cities separate from native populations who might be understood as colonized agricultural and labor-supplying populations. While Alexander envisions a single population based on the fusion of Greek and native elites, his project is never realized even if there are examples of references to certain “low-ranked” hybrid populations of Bactria and India (Polybius 1970: 73 in Dubuisson 1982: 11). Instead, a hierarchy emerges between colonists and colonized even where local elites are maintained. Persians who had been allocated governmental positions by Alexander are quickly dismissed following his death. Citizenship is defined primarily in ethnic terms, although there are examples of grants to loyal and important non-Greeks. In fact, as revealed in the philosophical discourses of the time, there are quite a number of positions involved here and the institutional relations form a hierarchy of membership and rights. There is a distinction between Greeks and \textit{Hellenes}, the latter being Greek by culture but not ethnicity. This is an important distinction that also highlights the emergence of a notion of culture separate from polity. Others allowed entry to the “city” are allied elites from other states, via a grant of \textit{proxenia}, and those granted asylum. All this is clearly comparable to the contemporary world and it is reinforced by the discourses concerning the relation between the subject and the state. Diogenes, of course, is famous for claiming to be a citizen of the world. His philosophy is dead set against the city-state as a political institution, interesting in itself as the expression of a period in which the latter is being replaced by a globalized imperial world, however contradictory. His cosmopolitanism might be compared to the elite contemporary version of the same. But this can be understood in terms of other debates on similar issues. There is a racial vision of the world, based largely on climatic determinism, but the Sophists adopt a cultural determinist position arguing for the centrality of education as the primary differentiating factor among peoples. In the states of Asia and Egypt ethnic ranking becomes predominant. The situation is clearly reminiscent of European colonial systems (Will, Mossé, & Goukowsky 1975) in which elite dominance is converted into a system of ranking and potential mobility defined in terms of degrees of civilization or assimilation to Greek identity and culture. There is also an elite mixing with natives that produces a category of people of mixed descent, an ambivalent category whose members can define themselves as superior ordinary natives and closer to the identity of those in power, or as elite representatives of the natives themselves. This ambivalence has historical significance in the waning of the Hellenistic era. The Hellenists, for
example, a kind of *mestizo* class at least culturally, who identified with the Greeks, have been described as follows:

in varying degrees, lived a life that straddled these two cultures and in many ways constituted the bridge between them. . . . Whereas the native populations in the Near East identified themselves mainly with their traditional heritages (hence Ptolemy was regarded as a Pharaoh), and the Greek stratum identified mostly with the Greek tradition (viewing Ptolemy as a Macedonian, or a Greek god such as Dionysus), the Hellenists created something between these two worlds. Their ideas of the state were thus a mixture of eastern and western concepts of statehood and nationality. For them the Hellenistic king was neither a Greek institution nor an eastern one. They lived in a world of religious syncretism and attempted to find the equivalents for Greek gods in the various pantheons available in the ancient Near East. Thus Toth became Hermes, Osiris became Dionysus, and Melkart, Heracles. In Egypt this group was even associated with the worship of a completely new Hellenistic deity called Serapis (Mendels 1992: 22).

And in cities like Alexandria, described again by Polybius as a city of “mixed-bloods” or *migades* (cited in Will, Mossé, & Goukowsky 1975: 298, Hall 2002: 222), there is evidence of ethnic mobility in the early part of the period. There is also evidence of “hyphenated” identities in the double personal names (Greek and Egyptian) found in demotic documents from this period (Hall 2002: 222). While ethnicity was defined by blood for Greeks, Hellenes were “those who have shared our education and not those who share our origin” (Isocrates in Modrzejewski 1993: 76). There is evidence that Jews in the early part of this era did not even form a community but were instead largely a population of individuals, although this changed later. It appears that the latter were increasingly integrated into the Greek legal and cultural world—even prayer was in Greek and the Bible was translated. Jewish mobility within the colony is quite significant and Jews often attained high positions in government and the military. Modrzejewski provides an interesting example of a certain Dositheus, son of a Jew, whose lifestyle becomes increasingly Greek culturally while he still is categorized as Jewish; he eventually ends up as a ship owner and a priest dedicated to Alexander. And it is a well-documented fact that the Jews were themselves quite divided among traditionalists and “modernists” (Hellenists) during this entire period. But this situation does not seem to have produced a confusion of identities. And it must be noted that all of this occurs under the dominant sign of Greek identity. The colonial history of Latin America is strikingly similar to the Hellenist world in this respect.

The question of ethnicity and of national identity is certainly an important aspect of practices that appear early in Greek history and that develop in ways similar to the modern world. Hall argues that the history of the Greek
world in the first millennium B.C. is a movement from city to regional identity, but also from a notion of ethnic origins to a notion of cultural practice, a tendency that comes to its full fruition in the Hellenistic period. There may be a tendency toward the culturalization of political identity especially in the classical and Hellenistic periods, but this is a complex and contradictory process, as suggested above. The very term *Hellenes*, for example, is primarily a reference to origins in the early classical era and was transformed in the direction of a combination of language and life ways in the Hellenistic period. Cohen, on the other hand, argues that the idea of nation is perfectly applicable to Athens and the larger territory of Attica even in the classical era (Cohen 2000). This is part of a larger argument suggested here that the political unit is not a mere contractual affair but that there is a strong element of shared cultural identity. While in many areas of mainland Greece the *ethne* was a collection of *poleis*, in Athens there is evidence of a fusion between the two so that the local units were very much dissolved in the larger polity (Cohen 2000: 31). Attica was a territory in which property was highly dispersed among individuals belonging to different demes and in which, because of extensive mobility and large-scale inclusion of foreign residents (*metics*) in the local spheres, the demes themselves were not homogeneous political units in any sense. If we may suggest that there was a process of dissolution of territorial subunits, then we might indeed speak of a reorganization of identity around the larger political center of Athens. This in itself can be understood as part of the separation of the cultural content of identity from ethnic origins, a process that is comparable to the formation of the nation-state in Europe.

**The Military/Commercial Complex**

In the above description we find a great many structures that are clearly comparable to the modern world-system, but there are also important differences. One important and equally interesting aspect of this period, as we have stressed, is the rapid imperial expansion of Macedon followed by an immediate fragmentation of political power. The result is a world of Greek-dominated states in which there is a single elite language and culture but where one cannot really speak of colonial empire because there is no imperial center and no transfer of wealth from the various Hellenistic states of Asia to Macedon. There is then an economic integration, part of an initial export of capital from Greece to the larger world, and the formation of a single transnational dominant class. This is closer to the phenomenon of globalization occurring at the end of hegemony (in this case Athenian hegemony). The processes taken in themselves, economic decentralization and the formation of colonial societies, are common in themselves but this is perhaps a historically specific combination. On the other hand, one might speculate on the tendencies of the current world-system toward a similar kind of internal colonial organization (Friedman 2002).
cious competition of this period, the rapid intensification of exploitation, and the key role played by warfare in the process of accumulation must also be considered when searching for parallels and differences. The Hellenistic states were veritable war machines. According to Préaux (2002: 295–357), the military can be considered the major industrial system of the period, based on accumulated monetary wealth—either by access to mines, by tribute, or by means of previous warfare—and on a labor force of mercenaries and even slaves produced by the massive marginalization and impoverishment that characterize the period. These soldiers are a true proletariat of the period whose entire survival depends upon the wage relation. When not in the service of some state, it becomes a truly dangerous sector of the population, prone to piracy and banditry as a means of survival. Warfare results less in the actual formation of a larger imperial state than in the massive transfer of wealth in the form of state and temple treasuries and enslaved populations. It is a relatively constant phenomenon throughout the period and it is so expensive that it is not able to maintain itself in the long run. This also indicates the interim nature of this period, perhaps best described as the logical development of the former city-state system, a development that can be understood in terms of intensification of accumulation, one that is destined to fail after a relatively short florescence. It is interesting to compare these state economies with that of the Romans. There are some striking similarities, not least the fact that the commercial sector develops within the massive accumulation initiated and reproduced by continuous military exploits. These economies are, one might say, based on a general process of “primitive” accumulation, one that is expensive to maintain in its own right, but which is at the same time the source of investment, labor power, and demand for the commercial economy. This is clearly expressed in Hopkins’s renowned article on the economy of towns in classical antiquity (Hopkins 1978) in a diagram (Hopkins 1978: 62) of the Roman economy that is the inspiration for the more generalized scheme in figure 3.3.

This sketch of interrelationships in Hellenistic state economies is meant to emphasize the interrelatedness of the commercial and military sectors and the dominance of the latter. Accumulation in the Hellenistic period leads to the intensification of competition, warfare, expenses, and the ultimate weakening of the state sectors that are necessary to the maintenance of the regional trade system (global market).

Decline

The weakening of the Hellenistic states is expressed in the form of decentralization of territorial power; increasing conflict and warfare, which is characteristic of the entire period but which intensifies toward the end; and by the intensification of exploitation. There is evidence of increasing conflict between natives and Greeks throughout the empire. This resulted in the gradual
usurpation of Greek-monopolized state power by the second-ranked Hellenistic elites, very much like modern anticolonial nationalist revolutions. The fragmentation of political control is expressed in the weakening of the Seleucids, the increasing power of the Armenians, the independence of the Bactrians, the division of Egypt into north and south (again), the rise and expansion of the kingdom of Pont under Mithridates, the revolt of the Maccabees, and all of this in the face of the eastern expansion of Rome. Throughout the second century, there are attacks by Scythians and other “barbarians” farther to the east, the Yueh-Chih, who are indirectly responsible for the end of Greek rule in Bactria. Piracy is rampant in the Mediterranean and is exploited at first by Rome to obtain slaves via Delos but then finally repressed by the expanding hegemon. It is significant that numerous ethnic and national identities become strengthened in this period beginning in the middle of the second century B.C. If the Jews can be said to have been very much integrated into Alexandrian society in the earlier part of this era, by the second century there is clearly a process of ethnicization and even a retrospective diasporization.

As detected through the process of revival of national anthroponymy, more especially through the taste evinced for Biblical names, the Jews of Egypt have thus been imperceptibly moving from the situation of an ethnic group settled in an alien milieu to a diaspora community, drawing its vitality not only from its numerous relations with the “metropolis,” but also from an
inner strength. The shift moreover implied the growing awareness of a particularism, that is, the formation of a diasporat situation perceived as such (Honigman 1993: 125).

The Greek mainland was itself never really integrated into the Macedonian realm and toward the end there are increasing tendencies to the breakdown of any semblance of unity. Rome exploits this systematically by making alliances with the cities against Macedon, in the name of liberation. Roman liberation quickly turns to exploitation via high levels of tribute leading to accentuated impoverishment. A significant part of the tribute is itself turned into loans to maintain the consumption of local elites. The tendency toward fragmentation is thus turned into expansive integration into the Roman imperial project. Farther east in Turkey, the Romans are so unpopular that Mithridates’, Parthian king of the kingdom of Pont, conquests were met in many cities with enthusiasm. “Rares sont les villes qui lui résistent, presque partout les portes s’ouvrent dans un enthousiasme qui permet de mesurer l’impopularité de Rome, de ses financiers, de ses magistrats véreux” (Will 2003: 478). This leads to the massacre of perhaps 80,000 Romans under the aegis of Mithridates in 88 B.C., making him a permanent enemy of Rome. In Greece, in the same period, there are similar attacks on Romans and Italians (e.g., Delos massacres). In Athens, philosophers debate the legitimacy of Roman imperialism. And the historian upon whom we are so dependent for documentation of the Hellenistic era exclaims, “For who is so worthless or indolent as not to wish to know by what means and under what system of polity the Romans in less than fifty-three years have succeeded in subjecting nearly the whole inhabited world to their sole government—a thing unique in history” (Polybius 1960 The Histories Book 1, 1: 4; in Dubisson 1982: 173).

In the second century there is an increase in the number of upheavals and revolts as well as a simultaneous increase in intradynastic struggles and interstate warfare. In Greece there is class struggle, often quite violent, while in the East the relations are primarily expressed in ethnic terms given the ethnic hierarchical nature of these states. There are also significant slave revolts in which the latter often simply disappear and, it might be suggested, enter the banditry and piracy that were so prevalent in this period, activities that depend in large measure on the recruitment of exsoldiers and slaves. There are even examples of exslave gangs often ruled by despots (Préaux 2002: 530), a phenomenon that is common even in the classical era. The entire Hellenistic era is one in which rates of exploitation seem quite extreme (Préaux 2002: 484–486) especially regarding agricultural producers, whether they, as in Egypt, are primarily state workers or, as in Greece, are dependent on private landowners. The standard description of Greek revolts recounts two basic demands: the elimination of debts and the redistribution of land. Both of these demands express the tendency toward the concentration of landed property and the impoverishment of the producers. The ideological ground for many revolts lies
in the egalitarian tendency in Greek political ideology. And often the elites themselves are involved in the events, either giving in to demands or leading revolutions of “return” to a previous state of existence. In 244, the twenty-year-old regent of Sparta instigated a return to the society of Lycurgus, egalitarian and truly spartan, to be based on an elimination of land concentration and reduction of debts to start but also a reorganization of the entire social order. The ideology of simplicity proposed by the Cynic philosophers was a crucial component of this project (Préaux 2002: 532–535). But this early “maoism” or, perhaps more precisely, primitivism, was an elite representation that was not shared by the poor themselves. “Il y a dans l’action de d’Agis un malentendu fondamental. Le pauvre ne veut pas l’austerité: il en est saturé. Il veut être plus riche et accéder ainsi à une vie plus facile” (Préaux 2002: 533). But the poor wanted more. They wanted vengeance and the humiliation of the rich (ibid.). The revolution never happened in any case so we will never know if it could have succeeded. In fact most of the sixty documented revolts of this era were failures or were solved by upper classes by means of concessions.

Let us summarize the characteristics of decline:

1. States confront increasing financial difficulties.
2. Polities begin to fragment into smaller entities that become independent and even attempt to conquer state power.
3. Cultural politics increases within the larger state and imperial orders. This is exemplified by the combined rise of Jewish nationalism in Israel and the diasporization of Jewish identity in Egypt.
4. There are invasions by “barbarians” from central Europe and Asia. It appears that unstable relations exist throughout the period, but there is evidence that the northerners, whether Celts/Gauls or Scythians, are engaged as mercenaries or specialist producers, as peripheral functions of the larger states in periods of hegemonic expansion. It is in the decline of such states, in situations where they cannot afford to pay mercenaries and to purchase peripheral goods to the same degree, that invasions become more aggressive and often successful.
5. Increasing internal conflicts take the following forms:
   a. Class conflict including slave revolts,
   b. Ethnic conflict in the eastern states,
   c. Intradynastic conflicts over succession, and
   d. Increasing warfare between states and within former states now fragmented into smaller entities.
6. There is an increase of oriental cults that fill the gap following the decline of the Olympian gods and the disintegration of “modernism” (Walbank 1992: 220).
7. It is interesting that of the many philosophies of the period, Stoicism is adopted by expanding Rome, representing as it does a kind of universalist
modernism whereas Cynicism and Epicureanism are closer to a postmodernist relativism. Diogenes, for example, while a cosmopolitan, was closer to the cultural version of that position in his relativistic openness to all differences. Similarly, neo-Confucianism in East Asia has embraced figures such as Habermas (Tran van Doan 1985) in its search for a common modernism while the West has imploded in postmodern tendencies. This is not to say that China is today’s Rome but simply that there is an interesting distribution of tendencies that needs to be understood.

**Conclusion**

The argument of this chapter is an extension of a more general exploration of the similarities and differences in the processes of global-system expansion and contraction and the cultural and social parameters of such processes. This is especially important given the tendency in the contemporary situation to focus on the current “transition” as if it were an evolutionary development. The latter is represented by the globalization discourse that we criticize in the first part of our discussion. Globalization can be applied to a great many historical processes but we have chosen to restrict it, for the sake of argument, to the phase of declining hegemony that is characterized by large-scale transfers of capital from old to new centers. We have discussed this in terms of the competitive shift of hegemonies within center/periphery structured fields and in terms of the decline or disintegration of the core as a whole. These systems are characterized by the centrality of abstract wealth accumulation and, in these particular historical systems, by the dominance of military-based “primitive accumulation” over commercial capitalist accumulation. We have seen that although globalization is a phenomenon that clearly characterizes the Hellenistic era, it is one that is accompanied by colonial expansion of a particular kind, leading as it does to the formation of a number of independent competitive territorial states. Its emergence in the decline of classical Greece is astonishingly like the contemporary period, a contradictory process of elite cosmopolitanization and class polarization, of elite identification with the larger world arena and neotraditionalist movements for the reestablishment of local/national orders or even of a noncapitalist social order. While the combination of processes and institutions is often historically specific, we can easily recognize the similarity among the separate processes in relation to the modern industrial capitalist global-system. Even the role of military expansion, it should be noted, was extremely important in the emergence and reproduction of European dominance. This is what imperialism was all about, of course, and it was rampant in the military campaigns of Early Europe as it was later in the wider world. Many of the differences are of degree rather than of kind, and the structural differences are often questions of particular combinations of processes and structures in particular historical conjunctures. Thus colonial states formed based not only on ethnic
hierarchy and ethnic division of labor, the extensive use of slave labor and wage labor, and the issue of imperial hybridity but also on the emergence of class struggle, revolts, and revolutionary ideologies. The Syrian cult of Atargis, once a fertility cult related to the definition of state power, became toward the end of the Hellenistic era an individualized cult of self-castration, a subjective transcendence of the secular world as well as its negation. Cult activity of this kind, just as with ethnic renaissance and class conflict, occurred primarily in the period of hegemonic decline. The longer-term philosophies were concerned primarily with defending or castigating secular modernity, the rights of individuals and cultures that were the basis of the identity space of the centers of this (these) era: Stoicism, Sophism, Epicureanism, Cynicism. We can submerge ourselves in cosmopolitan fantasies or primitivist projects, but we are all the same locked into the perspectives of the systems that we inhabit. All of this can be rediscovered in more recent modernities. So what have we learned from history: that our roots are in the Ancient Mediterranean or the Middle East? But this is an illusion that ignores the eradication of entire civilizations as well as the fact that it has all occurred in other geographical regions. There is no learning process here! On the contrary, it is more like a gigantic historical repetition compulsion. And if Freud is right, the driving forces of the unconscious mold our rationalizations to such a degree that we are not likely to be able to act to transform the latter in a rational way. Only with the psychoanalyst can we even grasp the extent of our neurosis. And if Marx could claim of history: First time, tragedy, second time comedy, then how should we characterize the third, tenth, and nth times?

Notes

1. The use of the word 'system' should not be misleading. In the abstract sense, where system refers to the properties of global process, the same system can be said to reappear many times, sometimes via long-distance geographical displacement, sometimes by self-reconstitution, most often by a combination of the two. In the sense used here, one can instead speak of the collapse of the bronze-based world-system and the disintegration of the larger world, from infrastructures to social relations, upon which it developed.

2. *Primitive accumulation* is the Marxist term for accumulation of wealth external to the production process, as booty, tribute, and the like, in which the cost of reproduction of that wealth is eliminated for the accumulator.

3. We distinguish here, as stated from the start, between colonial expansion, which is linked to expansion, and globalization (in the Braudelian sense), which is an expression of hegemonic contraction.

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