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NEW ORDERS?

Political sovereignty is but a mockery without the means of meeting poverty and illiteracy and disease. Self-determination is but a slogan if the future holds no hope.

That is why my nation, which has freely shared its capital and its technology to help others help themselves, now proposes officially dedicating this decade of the 1960s as the United Nations Decade of Development. Under the framework of that Resolution, the United Nations' existing efforts in promoting economic growth can be expanded and coordinated. Regional surveys and training institutes can now pool the talents of many. New research, technical assistance and pilot projects can unlock the wealth of less developed lands and untapped waters. And development can become a cooperative and not a competitive enterprise – to enable all nations, however diverse in their systems and beliefs, to become in fact as well as in law free and equal nations.

My country favors a world of free and equal states. We agree with those who say that colonialism is a key issue in this Assembly. But let the full facts of that issue be discussed in full.

On the one hand is the fact that, since the close of World War II, a worldwide declaration of independence has transformed nearly 1 billion people and 9 million square miles into 42 free and independent states. Less than 2% of the world's population now lives in 'dependant' territories.

I do not ignore the remaining problems of traditional colonialism which still confront this body. These problems can be solved with patience, goodwill, and determination. Within the limits of our responsibility in such matters, my country intends to be a participant and not merely an observer, in the peaceful, expeditious movement of nations from the status of colonies to the partnership of equals. That continuing tide of self determination, which runs so strongly, has our sympathy and our support.

But colonialism in its harshest forms is not only the exploitation of new nations by old, of dark skins by light, or the subjugation of the poor by the rich. My nation was once a colony, and we know what colonialism means; the exploitation and

subjugation of the weak by the powerful, of the many by the few, of the governed who have given no consent to be governed, whatever their continent, their class, their color.

President John F. Kennedy, Speech to the United Nations,
25 September 1961, New York

This chapter will consider the cultural ways in which the end of the colonial period was understood. It will focus particularly on fears about the 'closing' of the world, which takes us back to Joseph Conrad's thinking about the romance of difference, and to the rise of new understandings about the relationship between the west and the rest, especially the concept of 'development'. This period saw the shifting of dominance from Europe to the USA and was heralded by an optimism about the possibilities for a better world. However, how much did really change?

THE END OF BLANK SPACES ON THE MAP

In the early twentieth century, fears arose about the fact that all of the world had been colonised and had become known to Europeans because this meant that there were no more dark spaces on the map to explore, conquer or convert. After the 'scramble for Africa', where Europeans raced to lay claims on the continent from around 1880 until the First World War, there was little territory for Europeans to compete over. As we have seen at various points throughout the book so far, colonialism was driven by issues of reason and science, but throughout this it was also shot through by issues of romance, whether for the 'noble savage' or the mysteries of unexplored places. Romance is designed to satisfy the desire for adventure, danger, excitement and otherness. As Said has explained so convincingly, the Orient provided this space of romance for Europe for centuries but there was a feeling that by end of the nineteenth century, with the global reach of European colonialism achieved, that this had come to an end. There were no blank spaces left on the map, no unknown dangerous places within which heroes could prove themselves, no unknown others to meet.

With exploration and then the apparatus of colonial rule the world was divided into the safe, known world and that of the non-west, with the latter characterised by magic and mystery, disorder and otherness yet to be discovered. Processes of colonialism and imperialism open up otherness by domesticating and ordering it. This, however, rids it of its otherness, exoticism and excitement. By end of the nineteenth century it seemed that this romance had come to a close and we saw the emergence of a theme that will run through post-colonial culture: a sense of loss. Global modernisation was being driven by colonialism and was eradicating otherness and exotic 'elsewheres'. Some

then saw imperialism as the threat to the romance of otherness, bringing homogeneity and safety to all places. They perceived that the adventure had gone.

For example, if we return to Joseph Conrad looking at maps of Africa, we can see that he epitomised this disappointment by arguing that as everything was named and known – all the blank spaces on the map had been filled in – this had robbed the continent of its mystery:

Now when I was a little chap I had a passion for maps. I would look for hours at South America, or Africa, or Australia, and lose myself in all the glories of exploration. At that time there were many blank spaces on the earth, and when I saw one that looked particularly inviting on a map (but they all look like that) I would put my finger on it and say: When I grow up I will go there. The North Pole was one of these places, I remember. Well, I haven't been there yet, and shall not try now. The glamour's off. Other places were scattered about the Equator and in every sort of latitude all over the two hemispheres. I have been in some of them and ... well, we won't talk about that, But there was one yet – the biggest – the most blank, so to speak – that I had a hankering after.

True, by this time it was not a blank space any more. It had got filled since my boyhood with rivers and lakes and names. It had ceased to be a blank space of delightful mystery – a white patch for a boy to dream gloriously over. It had become a place of darkness. (Joseph Conrad, *Heart of Darkness*, 1899)

Whether for better or worse (the opening optimism of John F. Kennedy or the disappointment of Conrad), the end of the colonial period seemed to herald a change in the world order. On the surface it would appear that the binary structure had gone and instead post-colonialism saw a shift into a new world order where the Orient was refigured as the Third World. And yet, as we have seen, Said argues that the binary geography of Occident-Orient has persisted to the present day. In this chapter, we will first consider the conventional stories about decolonisation and then seek to understand the nature of the emerging post-colonial world order.

DECOLONISATION

The colonial state relied heavily on the power of knowledge as discussed in Chapter 3 – the idea of knowing the natives in order to control them. This was achieved through the establishment of a modern state which created order within the space of the colony: through defining and classifying the space in maps and patterns of land ownership, by counting populations in censuses, by standardising weights and measures to make trade and commerce efficient and rational and through learning about local languages and customs. This micro control of the state took a great deal of daily work;

dreary middle-management jobs that did not attract the Europeans who travelled to the colonies. Thus, in certain contexts – primarily south Asia – schools were run for the native elite in order to train them to run the lower and middle level governance of their country. This reinforced and naturalised the colonisers' values as right and proper.

Ironically, it has been argued that this process facilitated the establishment of anti-colonial movements. The establishment of colonial governance required the introduction of civil services, print capitalism, a unified language of state and education, railways and maps. While this was vital for effective and efficient governance by the colonial power, it also facilitated the imagination of an alternative – a post-colonial **national identity**. For the first time, it allowed a previously diverse or disparate population, or at least the elite members of that population, the possibility of imagining themselves as a community with a common interest, history and identity. This was particularly the case in India where British colonisers linked the country together physically through the introduction of the railways and linguistically through the introduction of English as a common language of governance. Maps of India allowed people in previously unconnected places to see their common predicament; the English language allowed the various elites to communicate more easily where they had previously been hindered by the existence of many different indigenous languages; the railways allowed news and experiences to travel across the continent. Education taught the Indian elites European concepts of reason. They were educated to believe in Enlightenment values, values that they wanted applied to themselves and their own people. The colonisers had introduced a conceptual and actual language through which these elites could articulate their case for independence.

This is the conventional story. Are we happy with this story?

There is certainly evidence, particularly for India, that this did indeed happen. However, there are those who have challenged this version of events, including Indian historian Partha Chatterjee. Chatterjee has argued that the problem with this explanation of events is that it is still the west that is the hero of the story. It was the enlightened values of the western colonisers, communicated to the indigenous elite, which stimulated the end of colonial rule. The colonised society remains passive in this story, not only awaiting the arrival of the colonists to 'develop' their society and bring reason in the first place, but also to provide the mechanisms of resistance to this regime to hasten its end. Chatterjee (1993: 5) suggests that it is as if the Europeans

... have thought out on our behalf not only the script of colonial enlightenment and exploitation, but also that of our anticolonial resistance and postcolonial misery ... Even our imaginations must remain forever colonised.

Instead, Chatterjee offers a different version of the story wherein the colonised society creates its own domain of knowledge, value and sovereignty before

establishing a challenge to colonial power. He suggests that under colonial regimes, social life was divided into two domains:

- 1 *The material*. This was the public space outside the home where the economy, statecraft, and science and technology were dominated by the colonial powers. Colonised leaders recognised the superiority of the colonisers in this sphere and studied this knowledge with the intention of replicating it.
- 2 *The spiritual*. This was the private space of the home and the traditional cultures of the colonised society which were repressed during colonialism. Such values have been preserved in the hidden spaces of private life (out of sight of the colonial powers), in the face of colonial attempts at change and, argues Chatterjee, have also been nurtured as the basis for anticolonial resistance.

It is in the spiritual domain that 'nationalism launches its most powerful, creative, and historically significant project: to fashion a "modern" national culture that is nevertheless not Western' (Chatterjee, 1993: 6). This leads to hybrid forms by mixing European ideas of governance and democracy with the cultural values of the spiritual domain (**hybridity** is the mixing of two separate things to make a new, third thing, and is a very important concept in postcolonial theory and culture, as we shall see later in the book). However, this is not an argument favoured by all postcolonial theorists. Frantz Fanon warned against the 'pitfalls of national consciousness' wherein the indigenous elites, having absorbed too much of colonial ways, simply replaced the colonisers at the top of the social, political and economic hierarchy. This ensured that for the vast majority of the population, there were no significant changes to the real conditions of existence. This is something we see replicated throughout sub-Saharan Africa and elsewhere. (We will discuss Fanon's more radical arguments later in the book.) Various political alternatives have been considered and attempted as a way of organising post-colonial societies (see the box below).

But the global geography that has come to dominate imaginations is one apparently different from the binary geography of the colonial period – the idea of the three worlds. But as we will see, the logic is not so different from the Orientalism that had dominated the colonial period.

THE THIRD WAY AND TRICONTINENTALISM: ALTERNATIVE WORLD ORDERS

Initial attempts at an organised, alternative, post-colonial world order were first seen in the 'non-aligned movement' of the 1955 Bandung Conference at which there were representatives from a number of Asian and African countries, most notably India, Egypt,

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Indonesia and Ghana. They sought to establish an alternative political, economic and cultural organisation rooted in the experience of Africa and Asia, presenting a 'third way' which was modern but which followed neither the capitalistic US model, nor Soviet socialism. Many would see the Bandung Conference as marking the beginning of postcolonialism as a conceptual position and as a form of politics.

In Havana, in 1966, a more radical version of postcolonial political philosophy was articulated at the Tricontinental Conference. Robert Young (2003) argued that tricontinentalism is a more appropriate term than postcolonialism, as it describes something that it *is* (the bringing together of the interests of the three continents of the global south; Asia, Africa and Latin America) rather than what it *is not* (after colonialism). Delegates attended from Guinea, the Congo, South Africa, Angola, Vietnam, Syria, North Korea, the Palestinian Liberation Organisation, Puerto Rico, Chile and the Dominican Republic. From this conference emerged a journal, *Tricontinental*, published by the Organisation of Solidarity with the People of Asia, Africa and Latin America (OSPAAAL), and which brought together both theorists and activists including Frantz Fanon, Che Guevara, Ho Chi Minh and Jean-Paul Sartre.

Other post-colonial political organisations and identities operated at the continental scale. Pan-Africanism sought self-determination for African people, arguing that it was meaningless for one African country to achieve its independence while other countries were still colonised. The imagination of African unity has held power within the continent and in the African-American population of the USA which has also had to contend with slavery and subsequent official and unofficial expressions of racism. Authors such as W.E.B. Du Bois, C.L.R. James, Aimé Césaire and Léopold Senghor helped to bring anti-colonialism and ideas about African unity to a global audience. The international linkages inherent to pan-Africanism were expressed in the writing of US civil rights leader Malcolm X and through the music of Bob Marley.

'Arab nationalism' has similarly sought to create an Arab identity but this runs alongside a vague sense of cultural belonging to a political belief in the possibility of establishing an Arab state. In the 1950s and 1960s a number of political movements came to openly support the idea of Arab nationalism, perhaps most prominently Egyptian leader Gamal Abdel Nasser, and the concept gained particular power in opposition to the establishment of the state of Israel in Palestine in 1948.

NEW WORLD ORDERS

Said has argued that the structure of difference between the Occident and Orient remained constant throughout those centuries he examined. Some have critiqued him for the lack of historical awareness that this exhibits, although, as we shall see in future chapters, there are many similarities between colonial and post-colonial cultures. Shohat and Stam (1994) have

reworked Said's theory further to argue that in the middle of the twentieth century we witnessed a significant shift in the nature of the Occident as the USA rose to hegemonic dominance, having unparalleled influence on the political shape of the world but also in terms of cultural production.

Orders of Orientalism were reconfigured as modernisation theory and development. There have been various different variants of this, but most famously coming from Rostow's (1960) book *Stages of Economic Growth: A Non-Communist Manifesto*. The title of the book makes clear the new context for the post-colonial world order – the Cold War. Rostow's vision was of development which was driven by capitalism rather than communism, and thus it provided an alternative ideology to that followed by the Soviet Union and its allies. This was seen as a new, positive, post-colonial world order, one in which the differences between rich and poor would decrease and every country could make good. As we can see from the opening quote for this chapter, it was a period of great optimism. US President John F. Kennedy confidently proclaimed the 1960s the 'Decade of Development', and insisted that within ten years the differences between levels of economic development between the west and elsewhere could be overcome.

This then was an image of a truly post-colonial world order. The USA had been such a strong advocate of de-colonisation that the image it presented of the new US-centred world order was one based around equality. Looking back at this period from the vantage point of hindsight, to us this now may seem incredibly naïve and perhaps rather cynical. Certainly the 'Decade of Development' was not quite what it seemed.

Firstly, despite its egalitarian protestations, the USA desired the end of colonialism primarily to destroy trade relations between colonisers and colonies. The US economy was growing rapidly, producing goods for an American consumer society. However, while north America was a large continent it remained a limited market, and to ensure that growth could continue the USA needed to ensure a larger market. Therefore, it wanted a global free market, unimpeded by these special relationships between countries and their former colonies which made US goods more expensive in these countries. At the end of the Second World War, the USA had given vast amounts of aid to Europe in the form of the Marshall Plan. This was the first ever example of development aid. There were arguments related to altruism, but the main driver behind this was to ensure that Europeans would be able to afford US goods. The economies of European countries had to be rebuilt so that US goods could be sold and, without dynamic markets in Europe, US industrial growth could not be maintained. Thus, some have argued that development programmes to the ex-colonies were similarly targeted at developing markets for US consumer goods. At the same time, a weak economy was seen to offer a situation that would make a country vulnerable to take-over by the USSR. American geopolitics therefore suggested that it was important to bolster the economies of post-colonial countries to ward off the dangers of communism.

Secondly, and despite an apparent break from the past, the worldview of development was still based on a hierarchical and patronising model of the world: that there were developed and developing nations. Rostow and others presented the world as if all its countries could be located along one linear path to development, with the USA in the present and other countries located somewhere behind but aspiring to achieve the same heights.

From our vantage point at the beginning of the twenty-first century, of course, we can see that such development has not happened. Instead, differences in wealth have become larger.

THE THREE WORLDS CONCEPT

Nevertheless, the post-colonial world represents the emergence of a new configuration of global geography which seems to make the Orientalist model more complex by replacing a binary geography with one based on three spaces – the first, second and third worlds. However, as Carl Pletsch (1981) has argued, this new world order is in fact still based on binaries. The first binary is between the first and second world:

- 1 **The First World**, led by the USA, is based around free market capitalism and political freedom in democracy. It is taken by western theorists to be the natural expression of modernity, in that things are presumed to follow their own course without any intervention.
- 2 **The Second World**, led by the USSR, offers an alternative model of development, one which western theorists view as being distorted by ideology, the intervention in the market by the state, and the control of freedom also by the state. The Second World was understood to be modern but it was contaminated with a mixture of ideology that prevented it from being efficient, rational or natural, thus drawing on a colonial binary of the rational/irrational.

Both of these modern worlds were in opposition to:

- 3 **The Third World**, which is what was leftover!

The world is still based around binaries as Pletsch's diagram demonstrates but these operate at two levels. As with Said, Pletsch's first binary recognises the division of the world into the 'traditional' and the 'modern', but he also includes a second tier of binaries whereby the modern is divided into 'communist' and 'free'. Modernisation theory simply links these: all countries should inevitably modernise but will follow either path if swayed by one or other spheres of the modern.

So, what is it that unites the Third World? As the subtitle of Rostow's (1960) work suggests, this concept is primarily geopolitical. The Third World is no more than a residual category of the unaligned objects of the competing

The population of the world

The Modern World		The Third World
Technologically advanced, but ideologically ambiguous		Underdeveloped economically and technologically, with a traditional mentality obscuring access to science and utilitarian thinking
The First World	The Second World	
Technologically advanced; free of ideological impediments to utilitarian thinking, and thus natural	Technologically advanced, but burdened with an ideological elite blocking free access to science and utilitarian thinking	

Figure 4.1 Pletsch's Three Worlds concept

policies of the first two worlds. This residual-ness was challenged by the Bandung Conference which attempted to propose a third way for non-aligned countries to avoid either form of western modernisation – a positive sense of an alternative to the west – but this was a very loose group of states that produced a rather superficial sense of identity. Some have indeed sought to reclaim the 'Third World' as a positive term, referring to the political stance of the alternative 'third way' (neither US-capitalism nor Soviet-socialism), and it is still sometimes used today as a political position, notwithstanding the end of the Cold War which had heralded the term originally.

Like Said, Pletsch sees this imagined geography as stretching beyond the confines of international politics or other political representations of the world. It is not just a theory about geopolitical relations between the USA and the USSR. He claims that these binaries also run through academic relations so that there is a post-colonial division of labour that differs from that which exists under colonialism. Again, we see Pletsch's links to Said's work. During colonialism and even before it, Orientalists were experts in certain systematic aspects of the Orient – language or literature or politics or art. Now, Pletsch argues, there is a clearer division between disciplines.

Those who studied the Third World were anthropologists and they only studied the Third World once the effects of modernisation had taken hold. Traditionally, anthropologists are area specialists. In their training, there is an important rite of passage where fieldwork must be undertaken in as strange or different a society as possible, so that the anthropologist can divest him or her self of their preconceptions and fully enter into the life of the subjects of the research. When they return they must write ethnographies – detailed descriptions and explanations of the life of those in the Third World – to make sense to westerners of a random set of instances of otherness. Traditionally, anthropology is a discipline that accumulates its knowledge in case studies rather than theoretical propositions, trying to make sense of the