

In the Wake of Colonialism and Modernity

Biodun Jeyifo

Résumé

Le point de départ de ce texte, qui traite de l'articulation complexe du colonialisme et de la modernité, est la polysémie du mot *wake* contenue dans le titre : en dehors du sens évident, «dans le sillage », il fait également référence aux veillées funèbres traditionnelles en Irlande et en Afrique et à leur réappropriation littéraire par Joyce dans *Finnegan's Wake* et par Soyinka dans *Death and the King's Horseman*. La figure de la veillée funèbre, qui permet d'ironiser sur la prétendue antinomie entre la vie et la mort, offre ici une analogie avec les relations entre le colonialisme et la modernité qui devrait permettre d'affiner, de réviser et d'approfondir notre concept de la colonisation. Cette démarche vise à reconceptualiser le rapport entre le colonialisme et la modernité sous l'angle de ce que l'on peut appeler «la modernité vue par le bas ». Cette optique met en évidence et privilégie les expériences et les perspectives d'avenir des peuples, des nations et des groupes, en Europe et hors d'Europe, qui, dans l'ensemble, ont payé le prix pour les réussites spectaculaires de la modernisation et de la modernité.

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In the Wake of Colonialism and Modernity

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Le point de départ de ce texte, qui traite de l'articulation complexe du colonialisme et de la modernité, est la polysémie du mot wake contenue dans le titre: en dehors du sens évident, « dans le sillage », il fait également référence aux veillées funèbres traditionnelles en Irlande et en Afrique et à leur réappropriation littéraire par Joyce dans Finnegan's Wake et par Soyinka dans Death and the King's Horseman. La figure de la veillée funèbre, qui permet d'ironiser sur la prétendue antinomie entre la vie et la mort, offre ici une analogie avec les relations entre le colonialisme et la modernité qui devrait permettre d'affiner, de réviser et d'approfondir notre concept de la colonisation. Cette démarche vise à reconceptualiser le rapport entre le colonialisme et la modernité sous l'angle de ce que l'on peut appeler « la modernité vue par le bas ». Cette optique met en évidence et privilégie les expériences et les perspectives d'avenir des peuples, des nations et des groupes, en Europe et hors d'Europe, qui, dans l'ensemble, ont payé le prix pour les réussites spectaculaires de la modernisation et de la modernité.

Every hour that passes brings a supplement of ignition to the crucible in which the world is being fused. We have not had the same past, you and ourselves, but we shall have, strictly speaking, the same future. The era of separate destinies has run its course.

Cheikh Hamidou Kane, *Ambiguous Adventure*

Let me begin this talk on colonialism and modernity, on the complex, contradictory but fundamental articulation between colonialism and modernity, by posing a puzzle whose solution is so simple, as far as commonplace anthropological information goes, that no special commendation will be given to anyone who supplies the answer. The puzzle is: What is one sure to experience at a traditional Irish wake for the dead that one is also sure to experience at a traditional African wake? The answer is of course a lot of feasting and robust merrymaking.

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That a wake for a departed relative, friend, neighbor or colleague is traditionally an occasion for great festivity, even for hilarity, among the Irish and Africans is indeed a major structural and thematic inscription in two canonical works of, respectively, modern Irish and African literatures. These are James Joyce's masterpiece of modernist fiction, *Finnegan's Wake*, and Wole Soyinka's celebrated tragic play, *Death and the King's Horseman*. As is well known, the plot fragment which gives Joyce's great novel its central organizing motif is derived from an Irish-American ballad in which Finnegan, a mason who had died from an accidental fall while building a house, suddenly comes back to life at his own wake when the revelers get so drunkenly rowdy that they accidentally break a whiskey barrel and splash the « water of life » on Finnegan's corpse! In Soyinka's play, the wake motif is even more astonishingly rendered in that Elesin Oba's « wake » is held before his death by the ritual suicide demanded of him by his chiefly and religious obligations. What is more, at this « wake », which is for none other than himself, Elesin takes a new bride! This takes place in the play's most exquisitely crafted scene, the third scene of the drama. The mix of solemnity and gaiety in this scene is so intricate that one of the native informants of the colonial intelligence apparatus can only pass the following perplexed information about the « wake » for Elesin to the wife of the white colonial District Officer:

JOSEPH: Madam, this is what I am trying to say: I am not sure. It sounds like the death of a great chief and then, it sounds like the wedding of a great chief. It really mix me up.

I invoke the inscription in these two canonical works of modern Irish and African literatures of the « wake » as a figure of radical ironizing of the presumed antithesis of life and death because they seem to me to be particularly apt for analogizing the relations between colonialism and modernity, the subject matter of this talk. As we shall see, I will be using « wake » in more than one sense of the word, but for now let us stay with this particular incarnation of the term.

It is generally agreed that we are now in a postcolonial age, and many influential contemporary thinkers and critics assert that we are also in an epoch well beyond modernity, in an age and condition of postmodernity. If this is so, I wish to suggest, through my invocation of these particular texts of Joyce and Soyinka that postcoloniality is a « wake » that we, the formerly colonized, are holding over the « death » of colonialism, just as postmodernity might in this light also be seen as a « wake » for modernity that they are observing who, having once celebrated the life and times of modernity, have of late been proclaiming its demise for all who care to listen, or maybe even join them in that « wake ». But then several questions arise from this suggestion: Who are the differentiated subjects of these two « wakes », « we » who are gathered at the postcolonial wake over colonialism, and « they » who are the mourners and revelers at the postmodern wake for the demise of modernity? For instance, since I have invoked canonical figures of modern Irish and African literatures, where are the Irish and the Africans in these differentiated wakes? Are the Irish part of the wake for colonialism? And are the Africans welcome at the wake for modernity? Are there in fact two separate wakes, one separate and distinct for colonialism and one for modernity? These sets of questions obviously indicate

that some conceptual and terminological clarifications are in order at this point in my talk. Or, stated differently, what is the talk really about?

My talk this afternoon is a kind of report on a book project of mine which has the same title as the talk – « In the Wake of Colonialism ». What I wish to do therefore is give a report on some of my readings for this book project as well as offer some reflections on these readings, on my research for the book. The project is basically about what I call the colonial roots and legacies of modernity. I also describe the project as « modernity from below », that is to say looking at modernity from the perspectives of the groups, nations and peoples who have paid the price and borne the burden of the spectacular successes of modernity, mostly outside Europe but also within Europe itself. My central working hypothesis in the project is that colonialism was both a European and extra-European historic process and for this reason, it is at the heart of economic and cultural modernity. This contention or claim goes against the grain of most contemporary accounts of the place of colonialism in the constitutive projects of modernity; in most of these accounts, colonialism is granted only a very marginal role in the making of the modern world, in being and becoming modern. And precisely because my claim in this project goes against the grain of dominant discourses of both colonialism and modernity, part of my work-in-progress for the book is the identification of the most formidable objections that I can expect to be mounted against these contentions and claims of mine. Thus, while I am reading and researching ideas and arguments with which to test and affirm the validity of my working hypotheses, I am at the same time reading and researching around possible adversarial objections to these claims and contentions.

Obviously, this is a huge subject and I am sure that some of you are perhaps thinking « how is he going to stay on top of this huge project? » Every book project of course depends on the delimitation of scope, contents and methodologies that makes the project manageable. Thus, what I wish to do today is to offer a discussion of two moves that I am adopting to make this project manageable. One move entails a review of some classic and contemporary debates on the relationship between colonialism and modernity, together with some reflections of mine on these debates. This has the advantage of telescoping and condensing the vast intellectual terrain covered by this project. Additionally, these reflections will enable me to tease out my own contentions, my own claims on the relationship between modernity and colonialism. This move focuses on economic modernity and my objective in reviewing some classic and contemporary debates on the subject is to emphasize the persistence of the social and economic contradictions of early capitalism in the present period of late capitalism, even as this new period generates novel and challenging contradictions and alienations of its own.

The second move that I adopt to make this book project manageable involves a selective, focused and comparative review of the fundamental cultural projects, in Europe and outside Europe, which shaped and constituted what we now regard as distinctive « modern » identities and subjectivities. In Europe this project has generally been described as the « civilizing process », while in the colonies outside Europe it went by the name of the « civilizing mission ». In this book project, I

juxtapose these two processes so as to tease out the continuities and divergences between them.

In effect then, one move pertains to economic modernity and the other move concerns cultural modernity. The central idea, the organizing premise of this work-in-progress is the contention that colonialism was a fundamentally constitutive aspect of these two distinct but interlocking dimensions of modernity. This is what is suggested by the title of the project: our present and future prospects, perplexities and dilemmas come in the wake of colonialism and modernity. In my talk this afternoon, I will briefly touch on each of these two dimensions of the modern, first the economic, secondly the cultural.

First of all then, let me present some of these classic debates on the relationship between colonialism and modernity, debates which, I dare say, are now generally forgotten, debates on economic modernity.

The first debate took place in the first decade of this century within the European left. The debate was sparked off by a theoretical monograph written by Rosa Luxemburg on the relationship between the economies of the colonized countries and the advanced capitalist economies of Europe. The title of the monograph is *The Accumulation of Capital*. As far as I am aware, this was the first major theoretical inquiry into the place of colonialism in the constitution of economic modernity and it generated a tremendous debate within the European left on the relationship between the colonial economies outside Europe and the advanced capitalist economies of Europe. Nikolai Bukharin, among others, responded to the monograph, and so did Lenin, although indirectly in his own classic monograph, *Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism*.

The central argument of Luxemburg in this monograph is captured in her thesis that beyond the raw materials that the colonial economies supplied to Europe's industries, Europe needed the backward capitalism of the colonies in order to have available to it rates of super exploitation without which European capitalism would simply implode. In Luxemburg's view, it is the existence of the colonies and the rates of super exploitation they make available to Europe which makes it possible for Europe to successively negotiate the endemic « boom and bust » cyclical crises of advanced capitalism. Luxemburg's argument in this monograph is a fairly complex one, but basically, what she does is to deny that capitalism will ever be able to universalize itself as a single system of production throughout the world, even though it may actually globalize itself. In effect, Luxemburg was one the first theoreticians to make a distinction between globalization and universalization, and to insist that capitalism will never truly universalize itself because it will always need those zones of backward capitalism in the colonies to maintain the high rates of super exploitation which enables European capitalism to negotiate its cyclical crises and internal contradictions.

In recalling the debate generated by this monograph of Luxemburg, it is necessary to remember that the conventional view of colonial capitalism at this time was that the colonies existed primarily to provide cheap raw materials and dumping grounds for European manufactures. This was of course factually true, but Luxemburg raised this fact to the status of a more theoretically rigorous thesis

about the general nature of capitalism: it will always need those zones of backward capital in order for it to manage its internal and periodic crises and contradictions.

Bukharin's response essentially involved the contention that Luxembourge's monograph looked at capitalism as a static, abstract entity, not as an actually existing historical phenomenon or system. He argued that if one looks at capitalism as an actually existing system, one would see that there was no fixed, stable relationship between the spheres of advanced capitalism and those of backward capitalism, that things are constantly shifting between these zones, and that capitalism has demonstrated a tremendous resilience in negotiating, from within its own internal operations, the « boom and bust » cycles. Given all of these factors, Bukharin advanced the view that what was needed to engage this resilience of capitalism was intensified class struggles in Europe.

I read Bukharin's response as perhaps more theoretically rigorous, but also more ideologically Eurocentric than Luxembourge's thesis because, in arguing that capitalism needed the colonies as part of its general nature, she was linking class struggles in Europe to the so-called « native problem », that is the problem of the relationship between workers' struggles in Europe and the struggle for self-determination in the colonies.

Lenin's implicit engagement of Luxembourge in his classic monograph, *Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism*, considerably finessed Bukharin's thesis that capitalism is not a fixed and static phenomenon and therefore will not always have stable and rigidly defined and separated zones of backward and advanced capitalism. Lenin in fact goes on to develop this thesis to the claim that what we have in capitalism is a constant and perpetual division of the world into new configurations of advanced capitalism, semi-advanced capitalism and backward capitalism. This in effect means that things were far more fluid than Luxembourge had allowed. And indeed, if we look at recent shifts in the discourse of international political economy from « emerging nations », which was the common term a few decades ago, to « emerging markets », we would get a vindication of Lenin's fundamental thesis in the monograph, *Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism* of the constant re-division of the world into new configurations of advanced, semi-advanced and backward capitalisms.

That, in short, was the first debate on the relationship of the colonies to European capitalist modernity. All the participants in the debate recognized that the backwardness caused by the super exploitation of the economies of the colonies was a fundamental part of the general nature of capitalism, of economic modernity. This recognition for the first time led to the positing of the distinction between globalization and universalization: if part of the general nature of capitalism was a permanent need for zones of less developed capital, its globalization would never amount to universalization of its promise of fully rationalized and humane distribution and consumption.

The second major debate which I wish to revisit took place in 1992. It took place on the pages of a special issue of the journal *Political Geography*. And it involved such eminent political geographers and economic theorists as James Blaut of the University of Illinois at Chicago, Samir Amin, Andre Gunder Frank, and Peter Taylor. Now, it is interesting that although many of the disputants in this debate are

Marxist, none of them makes any reference whatsoever to the prior debate generated by Rosa Luxembourg. In a general sense this amnesia is symptomatic of the cavalier attitude toward past theorizations of the nature of the world system we live in that characterizes the intellectual culture of postmodernism.

At any rate, as we all know, 1992 is the five-hundredth anniversary of 1492, the reputed year of the discovery of the Americas by Christopher Columbus. That is why this debate focused on the place of the colonial plantations in the making of the modern world. Indeed, the contents of that special issue of the journal *Political Geography* have been published in a book with precisely the title, *Fourteen-Ninety-Two*.

The central article in that debate was by James Blaut. His contention is that while there is general agreement or consensus that the discovery and exploitation of the colonial plantations in the Americas played a crucial role in the transition from feudalism to capitalism in Europe and in the globalization of capitalism as the economic mode of the modern world system, there is a need to make more searching and far-ranging application of this consensus. For instance, this view of the importance of the colonial plantations of the New World drives the central thesis of Eric Williams' classic monograph, *Capitalism and Slavery*, that slavery played a decisive role in the emergence and early consolidation of the capitalist system. Blaut's contention is that much more has to be made theoretically and analytically of the significance of the colonial plantations in the Americas. He thus argues that both in terms of the sheer magnitude of profits that were extracted and repatriated to Europe from the colonial plantations in the New World, and in the very structure of the relationship between colony and empire, the colonial plantations constituted a far more important, far more decisive factor than internal accumulation in Europe itself in the transition from feudalism to capitalism. This in effect means that Blaut is arguing against dominant notions that a European exceptionalism, a European uniqueness, made possible the transition to the economic modernity we have come to see in the capitalist world system. In the light of these dominant notions of a European exceptionalism, there was something unique, something without precedent elsewhere that enabled Europe to make that transition before any other region of the world, indeed to globalize that system to the rest of the world. Against this view, Blaut argues that prior to 1492, there was absolutely nothing exceptional about Europe that gave it a head start over the rest of the world in the transition to capitalist modernity. Rather, argues Blaut, it was the discovery and exploitation of the colonial plantations in the Americas that gave Europe that head start. Specifically, Blaut argues against the view that the transition from feudalism in Europe depended primarily on processes of accumulation internal to Europe such as the so-called « primitive accumulation ».

So one aspect of my project in this book on the colonial roots and legacies of modernity is to go back to these debates – and to intervene retrospectively in them. Before I do so, I should report that Blaut's thesis on the crucial significance of the colonial plantations in the Americas for the transition to capitalism in Europe is vigorously contested in the book, *Fourteen-Ninety-Two*. One contestation is based on the question of Blaut's calculation of the magnitude of the capital, the profits extracted from the colonies in the Americas; some of Blaut's interlocutors in the

book contend that he didn't get his figures right, that his computation is wrong. More importantly, some disputants contend that the extraction of surplus from the so-called « primitive accumulation » – the process whereby peasants were driven off the land which was then « enclosed » and expropriated by the new class of agrarian capitalists, thereby proletarianizing the landless peasants – this process, it is argued, is far more important than the surpluses and profits extracted and repatriated to Europe from the colonial plantations.

Now, my contention, based on the premise that the relationship between colonialism and modernity is a fundamental one, is that we should revisit these debates and rethink their arguments, claims and counter-claims. In essence, I argue that the two processes of internal accumulation of capital in Europe through primitive accumulation, and the external process of accumulation and expropriation of capital from the colonial plantations are fundamentally linked; one is, in my view, the obverse of the other. In other words, I contend that rather than continue to focus on which process, the internal or the external, was more decisive in the transition to capitalism, we should see both processes as two sides of the same coin. We now know, for instance, that many of the wealthiest families and companies of Europe in fact participated simultaneously in both processes – primitive accumulation in Europe and accumulation and repatriation of capital from the colonies. Indeed, it is rather baffling why none of the disputants in the debate makes this point, that internal accumulation in Europe and external accumulation outside Europe are structurally and factually linked. I argue that we can see this link **ONLY** if we adopt the perspective of seeing modernity from below, from the point of view and interests of those who paid the price for the transition to economic modernity, whether they be victims of primitive accumulation in Europe – the peasants who were driven off the land and became proletarianized – or the slaves and peons of the colonial plantations in the Americas and elsewhere in Africa and Asia. One has only to read a novel like Charles Dickens's *Hard Times* to see the terrible social and human cost of the transition to industrial capitalism in Europe. The peons and slaves of the colonial plantations also paid the human and social cost of the transition to economic modernity through the magnitude of capital expropriated from their labor and repatriated to Europe. Indeed, there is a sort of grim, unintended irony in the distinction that neoclassical economic theorists make between the so-called « free » labor of the proletarianized peasants of Europe and the unfree labor of the slaves and indentured peons of the colonial plantations. The so-called « free » labor was free only to the extent that recently proletarianized peasants were « free » to withdraw their services from one capitalist and sell them to another if they so desired, but they were not free to the extent that they could not choose not to sell their labor at all, just as they were not free to control both the products of their labor and the conditions in which they had to labor. So they were in effect almost as enslaved in their theoretically and juridically « free » labor as the legally and factually enslaved peons of the New World. This is the perspective that I term « modernity from below »: it is a perspective which enables us to recast the terms of the historic debates on the transition from the feudal mode of production – which could never have globalized and « modernized » itself – to capitalism, the quintessentially

modern mode of production whose modernity resides precisely in the features and processes which enabled it to globalize itself.

This brings me to the second, perhaps more central aspect of this work-in-progress which I title « In the Wake of Colonialism and Modernity ». This is the aspect which pertains to the all-encompassing cultural project of modernity, in Europe and outside Europe. As I have stated earlier in this talk, in Europe this project goes by the name of the « civilizing process »; outside Europe it generally went by the name of the loaded and fraught term of the « civilizing mission ». One of my greatest surprises in my reading and research for this book project has been the failure, so far, to find any serious, sustained attempt to explore connections between these two projects. Where a link between the two is at all perceived, it is very tenuously made. My contention is that the « civilizing process » in Europe and the « civilizing mission » in the colonies are in fact fundamentally continuous and linked: one prepares the ground, the premises, for the other.

Now, what is the « civilizing process » in Europe? I must state here that my views on this topic are deeply influenced by the work of many cultural historians and philosophers, chief among who are Norbert Elias and Michel Foucault. In fact, Elias's book on this subject is titled, precisely, *The Civilizing Process*. Its English translation is published by Basil Blackwell; it is a monumental and seminal work. In my opinion, this is one of the most important books on the cultural projects of modernity; it is an absolute « must read » for anyone involved in cultural studies and cultural criticism at the present time. It meticulously describes and analyses the « civilizing » of manners, conduct and personality which began in early modern Europe and extends into the period of the emergence of capitalism and the formation of the modern nation-state in Europe. As Elias describes and analyzes it, this « civilizing process » is a comprehensive project which pervades every facet of subjectivity and identity, from the minutest details of daily life and bodily experience such as the management of bodily effusions and the evacuation of waste, to large-scale macro-political processes like the formation of states and the monopolization of power. What this gigantic project ultimately entailed is the formation of a certain type of personality which would be the ideal, prototypical « civilized » modern subject. At every level, this ideal « civilized » modern subjectivity is constituted in opposition to instincts, dispositions and expressions which are considered wild, unsanitary, spontaneous and carnal. Seen from this angle, Elias's work is supplemented by the work of Michel Foucault in such books and monographs as *Madness and Civilization*, *Discipline and Punish*, *The Birth of the Clinic* and *History of Sexuality*. In sum then, the « civilizing process » entailed the separation of what is considered « civilized », rational and modern from what is deemed savage, irrational and unmodern. It dovetailed with the economic processes of class formation in Europe as the transition from late feudalism to early capitalism took place, providing the cultural sanctions for the separation of the lower social orders from the middle and upper classes. One has only to look at the discourses of the « civilizing process » as it pertained to certain groups, certain nationalities, and even certain so-called « races » in Europe itself to see that nearly all of the stereotypes and phobic projections that were later applied to « natives » in the colonies in the course of the

« civilizing mission » had been formulated and given their gestation in the Europe's autotelic « civilizing process ». For instance, discourses about Gypsies, about Jews, about the Irish in connection with the colonization of Ireland by the English, discourses about southern Europeans in relation to northern Europeans, and even discourses about the working poor in Europe – all of these discourses had inherent in them notions of who was « civilizable » or not, who was educable or not. Those who were not deemed educable or « civilizable » provided the stereotypes which were later applied to the « natives » in the colonies. Indeed, when I say « later applied », this has to be qualified because, at a certain historical moment, both projects – the « civilizing process » and the « civilizing mission » – became parallel and directly continuous with each other. In fact, I argue in this book project that this is the missing element in Edward Said's seminal work, *Orientalism*, because Said ignores the fact that some of the stereotypes, some of the Orientalist constructions that were applied to the East, were also applied to certain groups in Europe itself in connection with this gigantic project of the so-called « civilizing process ».

A second contention that I make with regard to the overall project of the construction of cultural modernity as dialectically encompassed in the « civilizing process » and the « civilizing mission » is that while, on the whole, this project was successful in Europe, it had very limited, very partial success outside Europe. To simplify a very complex argument that I mount to prove this claim, I would say that the moral of the failure of the « civilizing mission » outside Europe is that there are more ways to being « civilized » and « modern » than the unitary, homogenized way touted by the European or Western project. This truth has in fact been demonstrated in Europe itself, which is why I said just now that the « civilizing process » in Europe was « on the whole » successful. For the fact is that there were and are large areas of successful resistance to this « civilizing process » in Europe. A book like E.P. Thompson's *The Making of the English Working Class* provides ample documentation of the creation of a distinct English working class culture which resisted the styles, idioms and identities of the « civilizing process ». But while this is true, while the process did not in every instance succeed, in Europe it did manage to consolidate a bourgeois subjectivity as the model of the properly « modern » and « civilized » subject.

Now, the opposite is true in the colonies: there the « civilizing mission » failed woefully, although again we have to acknowledge its successes in a few significant instances. One of the most widely acknowledged and discussed of these instances is that of the French colonial system of « assimilation ». As is well-known, the objective of this policy was the production of the so-called « évolué » or « assimilé » who was a replication of the properly « civilized » Western modern subject. But apart from such instances of the successful formation of the so-called black and brown « sahibs » and « memsahibs » of the colonized world, I contend that the « civilizing mission » failed in the colonies.

It failed for two reasons. One reason is simple but profound: the refusal of the « natives » to be « civilized » according to the master scripts of the « civilizing mission », itself a global projection of the European « civilizing process ». Many theories have been propounded to explain this refusal. One of the most powerful of

these theories is that of Amílcar Cabral which places a great weight on culture in the struggle against the political and economic aspects of colonial conquest and domination. As we all know, Cabral was involved with the political and military fronts of the struggle against colonialism. But side by side with these domains of the anti-colonial struggle, Cabral formulated a theory which emphasizes the privileged role of culture in the struggle against colonialism and imperialist foreign domination. For him, culture was the domain of the last redoubt against colonial domination and hegemony, especially the hegemony inherent in the « civilizing mission » and its project of producing Westernized subjects among the colonized natives who would be replicas of the ideal « modern » bourgeois subject. I have pondered long on this theory of Cabral and I would like to share my reflections on the matter with you.

One of the most intriguing aspects of Cabral's theory of cultural resistance is the rather startling claim he makes that history does not provide a single instance of the successful integration of political and economic domination with cultural domination.

I'll repeat this: there is not a single instance in the entire history of modern colonizations where there has been a successful integration, a successful harmonization of economic and political domination with domination on the cultural plane. And according to Cabral, this is not due to lack of effort on the part of colonizers to harmonize domination on all these fronts – economic, political and cultural: all colonizers know that harmonization of political and economic domination with cultural domination would consolidate hegemonic rule and make the use of force and coercion unnecessary. But Cabral insists that there is not a single instance in the entire historical vocation of colonialism where this has been successful. I suggest that Cabral's theory has proved productive in explaining the role of cultural resistance in the anti-colonial nationalist struggles of the former colonies of Europe; I suggest that it could also be productively deployed for exploring those instances where the « civilizing process » in Europe itself met significant resistances.

Now from these two sets of discourses that I have so far reviewed in this talk, one on economic modernity and the other on cultural modernity, I argue that we need to rethink, to reconceptualize the relationship between colonialism and modernity; I argue that the two are not as distinct and separate as they are generally thought to be and are indeed enormously intimately interconnected. In order to make this contention pertinent, if not vital to current discourses about globalization and the world system, I undertake a review of widely held conceptions of the nature of the relationship between colonialism and modernity, especially those conceptions with which my own claims are in serious opposition and tension.

The contemporary commonsensical view of colonialism – which cannot be faulted on factual or historical grounds – is that colonialism pertains largely and overwhelmingly to non-Western, non-European nations and peoples. And that is a fact of history. But if you look critically at the suggestion that the so-called « civilizing process » was a form of colonization of the lower social orders whose

legacy in fact later produced the actuality of colonization within Europe itself, then one can see that colonialism was both a European and extra-European phenomenon which paved the way for all of the economic and cultural projects of modernity. That is my central thesis in this book project. In other words, I am arguing for a more fundamental and more dialectical relationship between colonialism and modernity than most of the classic accounts of the relationship between the two have allowed.

This brings me to what I identified earlier in this talk as the formidable objections that I anticipate to this view of the necessary and inextricable link between colonialism and modernity. As I see it, there are two main objections to be anticipated, and part of what I am at the moment working on is the effort to finesse my arguments against these anticipated objections. This is necessary because these objections are not factually inaccurate or theoretically wrong-headed. It is rather that in the light of contemporary history and contemporary concerns world-wide, they are at this stage inadequate in meeting the challenges posed by late modernity. So I think they need to be rethought. That is my quarrel with them, not that these objections are faulty or inaccurate on factual and theoretical grounds, it is just that I think they are not adequate to engaging the challenges that we face at the present time of late capitalism or late modernity.

The first objection is one which, in my view, underspecifies and undertheorizes the relationship between colonialism and modernity. Basically, it takes the view that colonialism and modernity are like day and night, that there really is no organic or necessary relationship between the two. Now, the arguments advanced in asserting this position are, on the surface, impeccable. To sum up these arguments, it is held that if colonialism set out to modernize the colonies and produce proper « civilized », modern subjects among the natives, it did so with policies, practices and attitudes whose net effect was to subvert these projects in the colonies. In other words, because of racism, because of repression and autocracy, all of which deeply marked colonial rule and hegemony, modernization or « modernity » had to await the end of colonialism for there to be the possibility of its consummation. So colonialism and modernity, or in another formulation of the same point, colonialism and civilization, are like day and night and there are no organic, necessary connections between them. One person who has made this argument forcefully is Aimé Césaire in his monograph, *Discourse on Colonialism* where he asserts that colonialism worked to « de-civilize » both the colonizer and the colonized. This word, « de-civilize », is actually the very word used by Césaire in his monograph; on this account, colonialism set out with pretensions to « civilize » the colonized, but what it actually achieved was to brutalize and « de-civilize » both the colonizer and the colonized.

One other expression of this particular objection to my contention that colonialism and modernity are in fact deeply and inextricably linked is the view which holds that as a historical phenomenon, colonialism in many parts of the non-Western world was in fact a rather brief interlude in the modern history of these societies. This view is often extended to suggest that often, the consequences and legacies of colonialism on the non-Western, non-European peoples and societies are greatly exaggerated. This point is definitely often made in relation to Africa in particular; and it is definitely asserted in relation to the Japanese colonization of

Korea which lasted only forty years. And it is a rather strange mix of scholars and theorists who advance this particular view. For instance, it is made by the Marxist scholar, Aijaz Ahmad in his book, *In Theory*; it is also made by Anthony Appiah in his book, *In My Father's House*; and it has been made by Wole Soyinka in many of his essays and is indeed explicitly stated in the Preface to his play, *Death and the King's Horseman*. In this Preface, Soyinka states that the colonial factor is, in his own words, a « mere catalyst » and is not fundamental to the internal dialectic of Yoruba and Nigerian culture and society that Soyinka explores in the play. Appiah for his part states that altogether, colonialism in Africa did not last more than eighty years. This argument is often extended to the contention that the general application of colonial and postcolonial studies to all of the peoples and societies of the non-Western, non-European world(s) ignores the crucial fact that many societies and nations were never in fact colonized. This includes places like Turkey, Japan, Liberia, and Ethiopia. Taken together, all of these views add up to the objection to the suggestion that an organic, necessary connection links modernity to colonialism.

The second objection which I anticipate to my central claims in this book project does in fact admit that there is a relationship between colonialism and modernity, but it asserts that it is a very fraught, very problematic relationship. One person who makes this argument is Paul Gilroy in his book, *The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double Consciousness*. In advancing this position, Gilroy makes the following intriguing observation which indeed may be said to be symptomatic of this position: he says that the black diasporic communities in Europe and the Americas are in Western modernity but are not of it. They are in it by the sheer fact of having been transplanted to the West by the transatlantic slave trade, but on account of the legacy of racism, of slavery, of segregation and discriminatory practices, they did not, until very recently participate as full players in the projects of Western cultural and economic modernity. Hence the intriguing thesis: black diasporic communities are in Western modernity but are not of it. In effect, this view admits that a relationship does exist between colonialism or slavery and modernity, but it asserts that it is a highly fraught relationship shot through with all kinds of alienation.

This argument is also often extended to the colonized societies outside Europe to say that modernization or modernity first came to these societies via colonialism and for this reason took on the aspect of an alien, external force which produced many alienations, many negative and corrosive anti-modern ideas and attitudes. One recent book which implies this view in its central arguments is Mahmood Mamdani's *Citizen and Subject: the Legacy of Late Colonialism in Africa*. In this book, Mamdani argues that until the very last stages of colonialism in Africa, it was a fundamentally anti-democratic political regime. And for this reason, whatever colonialism brought as the « promise of modernity » was negated by the very fact that it was such a profoundly illiberal, undemocratic regime of political governance which laid the foundations of despotism and even anti-modernity in postcolonial Africa. In other words, this view admits that there is a crucial relationship between modernity and colonialism, but it must be acknowledged as deeply fractured, deeply problematic and deeply alienating.

As I have stated several times, these are all quite formidable objections which I do not hope to refute either on the basis of factual inaccuracies or even theoretical insufficiencies. My point about them is simply that they do not respond fully or even adequately to the challenges of late modernity. And here for want of time I will collapse many of these challenges into an overarching problematic of late modernity. This is the contention that one of the most important and challenging theoretical tasks of the present period is to account for the simultaneous coexistence of the worst social and economic contradictions of early capitalism with the contradictions of late capitalism. Some of the most brutal, the most degrading forms of exploitation and marginalization of entire social groups and peoples that were the specific features of early capitalism, say of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, some of these contradictions are still very much around today in three quarters of the globe. And they coexist simultaneously with new, more rarefied, more « refined » forms of exploitation and alienation. And in looking at the simultaneity of these contradictions of early and late capitalism, I would distinguish between what I would describe as the colonization of the body, of physical energies and capacities such as we find in the older modes of labor exploitation in the mines, in the migrant or seasonal labor exploited by small and large fruit and vegetable growers, and in women's and children's labor in the garment and textile industries in the United States and many parts of the world, and the colonization of the psyche in newer forms of late capitalist merchandising and advertising of products whereby what appears to be our deepest needs, our deepest desires are not really ours anymore, but obey the logic of the penetration of market forces into virtually every sphere of life. Some of these newer modes of alienation are so rarefied that at the present time, they appear only as virtualities and phantasms which we can only perceive very dimly. Examples of these are the potentialities for refashioning the human person at the very roots of conception, birth and growth that the combination of the new technologies of gene splicing and super scale computerization now makes possible. These new forms of reification are so deep and extensive that they include the determination of goals and priorities that we set ourselves as a species, both to maintain sustainable growth on our planet, and to ensure the survival and perpetuation of life – and its forms – as we know it and treasure it.

So my contention is that we have to account for the coexistence of these two forms of colonization, broadly speaking that of the body and that of the psyche. And how do we do this without revising and rethinking our discourses and conceptions of colonialism and its relationship to modernity?

I hope that it will be seen in the foregoing discussion that I have been anxious not to collapse our older and more established notions of colonization into the newer notions inscribed in the alienations and reifications of late, neoliberal capitalism. By and large, we must constantly remind ourselves that classical colonialism happened outside Europe and was perpetrated by Europe against non-European peoples. We must not lose sight of this historic fact and its legacies. However, we must revise and deepen our concept of colonization as I have tried to argue in my talk today. Doing so will enable us to perceive the equally historic fact that colonization, in its classical and neoliberal forms, applies to all parts of the globe – precisely because it

is at the root of modernity and continues to be part of its enduring legacies, inside and outside Europe.