

Present Humanism & Understanding from New Imperialism and Globalization

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As we saw in the last session, there were different versions of nationalism which developed from the ideas of the Age of Revolution (1774-1865) and beyond. We considered these matters in detail for Australia, but all nations had their own versions of the national story. In those collections of what is to be a citizen of the nation 'x', there were common economic, political and social narratives across the globe. The fact is that nationalist isolationism, the kind of which the United States experimented within the first half of the twentieth century, has never worked. The cosmopolitanism from the days of Herodotus has meant that countries or nations or any other states, and the way of life inhabited, has existed like John Donne's continent or interconnected island chain.

*No man is an island entire of itself; every man
is a piece of the continent, a part of the main;
if a clod be washed away by the sea, Europe
is the less, as well as if a promontory were, as
well as any manner of thy friends or of thine
own were; any man's death diminishes me,
because I am involved in mankind.
And therefore never send to know for whom
the bell tolls; it tolls for thee.*

How landmasses are connected, how people are connected, and how ways of living are connected, across different attitudes of social psychology and sociology. Other cultures, each from the perception of their own, can either be exotic, appropriated, marketed, exported, imported, reduced, enlarged, threatened, wiped out, fossilized, or integrated, hosted, fostered, respected, and in some way cosmopolitanised. How we can all live together, sustainably and flourishing, is surely the biggest of questions in modern history.

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Therefore, we need to track how we got to where we are today, in even less than the last hundred years. In this paper we track the great changes in philosophy that guided the movement from the New Imperialism of the late nineteenth century (the first steps to true globalism) to the globalisation since the 1990s.

New Imperialism

Wars and conquests have been the long-held policy since Herodotus' histories, but the great modern turn came in what is the historian's term, 'New Imperialism'. The term is understood quite differently from the nineteenth century, and the first decades of the twentieth century, first, because it was demarked as new and ennobling, and secondly, it quickly became a contested term, with new theorists who lay bare its destructive force. In fact, this is the age of the great critiques of imperialism even as it was popularly and conventionally practiced. It was much like the way that late eighteenth and the first half of the nineteenth century was the era of both slavery and emancipation, and a fight between those socio-political forces. And in many ways, the fight for and against slavery was very much linked to the latter fight between for and against colonisation.

So, imperialism, to provide a definition, is to create colonies and tie those colonies to a central power with economic, political, social, and even cultural, force. It was 'new' in the nineteenth century because its advocates denounced the cruelty and inhumanity of the old imperialism, the first wave of European colonization between the fifteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Their new imperialism was a "civilizing mission" (*mission civilisatrice*). This was the idea of Jules Ferry (1832-1893). The argument was that colonialization extended to peoples of the world the highest standard of civilisation, which was argued had evolved as western European culture; that is, modern dress, religion, food, art, and everything else in French, Belgian, British, Dutch, German, Italian ways of living. Each colonising nation had slightly something different to offer and interpreted the civilizing aspects slightly differently. Germany saw itself as providing education, engineering, and a militarist code to Turkey and Japan. The Belgians saw things differently. King Leopold II created the International African Society, which was supposed to be international scientific and philanthropic association, but in reality it was a private holding company owned by Leopold. Through the company Leopold held land named as the Congo Free State. The Berlin Conference of 1884-1885 had been established to deal with the underhanded economic competition which imperialism had created between the European powers. Under the conference agreement, Leopold was allowed his Congo lands but on the provision

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that he suppress the East African slave trade, promote humanitarian policies, guarantee free trade, and encourage missions to Christianize the people of the Congo. As we clearly understand now, the whole system worked as ennobling veneer with great economic and social exploitation of human beings. Of all the colonies, the human rights abuses of the Congo Free State were considered the worst. In contrast, in 1901, the Dutch Queen Wilhelmina announced that the Netherlands accepted an ethical responsibility for the welfare of their colonial subjects. This became known as Dutch Ethical Policy (*Ethische Politiek*). It was very imperfectly practiced, such that it cannot be said that their colonies flourished according to the ideal, the Dutch East Indies being a prime example. However, the policy did create educated indigenous elites who were able to articulate and eventually establish independence from the Netherlands. The educative factor was an important element also in the British version.

The English-speaking colonializing nations had their own abuses, but there were number factors which led to either a certain moderation in the colonial experience, or led to anti-imperialist policies and actions within the colonializing societies. As mentioned, the backlash to mercantile slavery in the United Kingdom and the United States was an important factor. This progressivist middle-class movement combined with the emerging urban working class in the fight against the Corn Laws, which represented the fight against British mercantilism and for British industry free trade. These events isolated and marginalised the power of aristocratic land-ownership in the United Kingdom. Here we have the stranger twist in the British use of the term, Imperialism. The term was originally introduced into English in its present sense in the late 1870s by opponents of the allegedly aggressive and ostentatious imperial policies of British conservative Prime Minister Benjamin Disraeli; the anti-imperialist criticism coming from Disraeli's nemesis, the liberal William Gladstone. Disraeli, a Jew, was also highly sensitive in his politics to prevent imperial exploitation of minorities, and so imperialism was designated a policy of idealism and philanthropy. Rudyard Kipling's poem, 'The White Man's Burden: The United States and the Philippine Islands' (1899), was addressed to the American version of imperialism in the American-Spanish War (1898):

Take up the White Man's burden—

In patience to abide,

To veil the threat of terror

And check the show of pride;

By open speech and simple,

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An hundred times made plain

To seek another's profit,

And work another's gain.

It was a sentiment President William McKinley would have adjoined into the imperialism, since the war, from the American perspective, were wars of national independence against imperialist powers. He was joined by Theodore Roosevelt, Vice President of the United States to McKinley, and then President at the time of McKinley's assassination. In Roosevelt's 'New Nationalism', his Progressive political platform during the 1912 election, we had a strange turn of populism-becoming progressivism and an imperial United States which repudiate foreign entanglements. The American-Spanish War had been constructed within the United States in the populist movement of 'yellow journalism'; although (and contrary to Jean Baudrillard) Cuba and The Philippines, the colonised sites, were places of real violence and exploitation, not virtual. The conflict was also an extension of the earlier Monroe Doctrine (1823), which had declared that the Americas was within the sphere of the United States in foreign affairs and decisions on international arrangements, as opposed to the European colonializing powers. However, the crushing occupation of The Philippines made such justification hollow. As against McKinley's and Roosevelt's American 'civilising mission', the American Anti-Imperialist League was formed in 1898 at Boston, Massachusetts. Among its members were the cream of American intelligentsia, politics, and industry:

Charles Francis Adams, Jr.	Theodore L. Cuyler	Henry U. Johnson
Jane Addams	John Dewey	Reverdy Johnson
Felix Adler	Finley Peter Dunne	David Starr Jordan
Edward Atkinson	George F. Edmunds	William Larrabee
George S. Boutwell	Edwin Lawrence Godkin	Josephine Shaw Lowell
Donelson Caffery	Samuel Gompers	Edgar Lee Masters
John G. Carlisle	William Dean Howells	William Vaughn Moody
Andrew Carnegie	Henry James	Hazen S. Pingree
Grover Cleveland	William James	Carl Schurz

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John Sherman

Morrison I. Swift

Mark Twain

Moorfield Storey

William Graham Sumner

Oswald Garrison Villard

These thinkers were those who could see the new imperialism and war for what it was: a grandiose grab for international power and economic resources, dressed-up by William Randolph Hearst's newspapers in sensational war heroism.

Those on the other side of Disraeli's and Roosevelt's politics would document and analysis the facts of imperialism to show that Disraeli's benevolent views were false. These were the two leading works:

- John A. Hobson's *Imperialism: A Study* (1902); and
- Vladimir Lenin's *Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism* (1917).

The 'accumulation theory' adopted by John A. Hobson, Karl Kautsky, and popularized by Vladimir Lenin, centred on the accumulation of surplus capital during and after the Industrial Revolution: restricted opportunities at home, the argument goes, drove financial interests to seek more profitable investments in less-developed lands with lower labour costs, unexploited raw materials and little competition. Against these different arguments of the Left, 'free-traders' generated early arguments for imperialism. One of the pro-imperialist works came famously to highlight economic benefits (in contrary terms from those earlier free-traders who opposed mercantilism):

- John Robert Seeley's *The Expansion of England* (1883).

In the late twentieth century, and the early twentieth-first century, the arguments on imperialism and culture have become far too technical for its own good, generally turning on the finer points of which specific groups benefited and the measure of the benefits between the colonisers and colonised:

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- John Gallagher and Ronald Robinson's 'The Imperialism of Free Trade' in *The Economic History Review* (1953);
- John M. MacKenzie, *Propaganda and Empire: The Manipulation of British Public Opinion, 1880-1960* (1985);
- Peter J. Cain, and Anthony G. Hopkins' 'Gentlemanly Capitalism and British Expansion' in *Economic History Review* (two-part articles, 1986-1987);
- Bernard Porter, *The Absent-Minded Imperialists: Empire, Society, and Culture in Britain* (2004).

In contrast to the 'accumulation theory', these latter views reflected the core argument of the 'World-Systems theory' approach of Immanuel Wallerstein which sees imperialism as part of a general, gradual extension of capital investment from the 'core' of the industrial countries to a less developed 'periphery.' The argument here becomes one of protectionism and not free-trade. These largely academic arguments are too comfortable from both sides of politics; either too comfortable from the perspective of the economics or too comfortable within the cultural perspective. Two works, however, stand out with better analysis. They each represent the two sides of the politics but there is a greater honesty about both culture and economics:

- Edward Said's *Culture and Imperialism* (1993);
- Niall Ferguson's *Empire: How Britain Made the Modern World* (2003).

Said has a more precise definition of imperialism: 'the practice, the theory, and the attitudes of a dominating metropolitan center ruling a distant territory'. He argued that although the Age of Empire ended with World War II, imperialism continues to exert considerable cultural influence in the present. Ferguson's politics is to the Right, but his conclusions have a strong contrariness. Ferguson, in the preface of his book, *Civilization: The West and the Rest* (2011), stated, his second wife, Ayaan Hirsi Ali, 'understands better than anyone I know what Western civilisation really means – and what it still has to offer the world'. Ayaan Hirsi Ali is the Somali-born, Dutch politician, and well-known critic of Islam and its African cultural practices. Critics have accused her works of using neo-Orientalist portrayals and of being an enactment of the colonial 'civilizing mission' discourse. So, today, the discussions on imperialism present ambivalence and entanglement with very different issues and different minority and elite groups.

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The complexity of the present thinking on imperialism also reflects the inconsistency in alignment on both political sides. Generally, American Progressivists and British Fabians opposed colonializing policies but at the same time they often affirmed the rightness of their empires and resisted radical movement for nationalisation, proclaiming that the indigenous population was not ready for self-governance. The complexity also laid in the major changes of late nineteenth and twentieth century philosophy where a-political areas of learning became political tools.

The Idea of Global Evolution

If the Copernican Revolution (Tycho Brahe, Johannes Kepler, Galileo Galilei) began the great shift in Early Modern era of the Scientific Age of Discovery, the Darwinian Revolution (Charles Darwin and Alfred Russel Wallace, with an alternative and earlier version of evolution from Jean-Baptiste Lamarck) began the great theorization, the scientific realism, of the Late Modern Era. Of course, biology was only the heart of a great return to ancient evolutionary thinking. It became possible through the advancements of both cosmology and geology in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries which completely changed our sense of time and space, and would change ideas of physics. It was, nevertheless, learning evolutionary pattern of life that refigured our political and sociological vision. There were two outcomes in the process. The first outcome was the highly negative categorizations of human beings into hierarchical points on an evolutionary tree of life. The second outcome was the very opposite vision, to see a unity among all human being as members of one species with no substantive racial differences. The first direction was the Social Darwinism of Herbert Spencer, Thomas Malthus, and Francis Galton (the founder of eugenics). The second direction is impossible to describe as one intellectual movement, but its common feature was humanism, understood as broad and varying, interconnected, secular and religious traditions. Often these movements came as opposition to political forces that sought to divide humanity on lines of religion, race, gender, and politics itself. However, it has to be noted that these pushes for a common humanity, and a common human decency, was not always for equality and could also be hierarchical and conservative. The clearest example is the doctrine of a multiracial British Empire, and the later Commonwealth system that sought to hold a better equality among peoples than the past, even as it holds ceremonially the old imperial ties.

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Modern Logic, Analytic Philosophy and Logical Positivism

Next to the humanism of various forces that sought to unite humanity against racial categorisations, there was, in the first decades of the twentieth century, also the resurgence of rationalism as an antidote to old idealism and its romanticised nationalism, e.g. British Ideal or the German Ideal of 'Man'. Bertrand Russell led the great revolt against philosophical idealism. He also championed anti-imperialism. These philosophical and political stances are not necessarily connected; however, there was the opportunity, in the rise of the new 'modern logic', under Gottlob Frege, Bertrand Russell and A. N. Whitehead, to find modern rationalisation which would head into one of two sociological outcomes. These were the same types of outcomes as seen in evolutionary theories in the half century before. The same rationalising ideas in the movements of Analytic Philosophy and Logical Positivism led to both organic and machine-like sociological visions. The advantage of the logically-orientated analytics and positivistic arguments was that it demonstrated the universality of mind across the human species, at least in the capacity for critical thought. The disadvantage appeared when such rationalisation became less organic and more machine-like, reducing phenomena to mathematical explanation. This was the principal criticism of the philosophical Phenomenology movement of the same decades. Martin Heidegger was the leading critic of logicism, and its inability to describe (not explain) what it is to be human. But then it was Heidegger who was the Nazi Rector of the University of Freiburg, and Russell the Nobel Prize for Literature awardee. Neither logic nor phenomena, reason or ideal, the individual atomic component or the undividable and ever-present being, could provide an unproblematic vision of how we can learn to live together. Nevertheless, if all these insights of logic and phenomena are held in tension, and not discounted against each other, we can see how the global movement of cooperation came together.

Theories of Relativity, and New Philosophy of Science

In many ways that was the achievement of Albert Einstein. The machine-like ideas of physics with tightly controlled force and regularity was replaced— not with an inexplicable and arbitrary mystery but – by mathematical complexity that had more room for human choice and imperfection in reasoning. More importantly, the theories of Einstein emphasized the relational. Like Russell, Einstein was well-known for his advocacy of world peace, and Einstein was a close supporter of Mahatma Gandhi. He was also an active supporter of the First Humanist Society of New York, the Rationalist Association, which publishes *New Humanist* in the United Kingdom, and the New York Society for Ethical Culture. Again, these

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philosophical and political stances are not necessarily connected; the 'New Physics' also was able to end up as one of the two sociological visions. In many ways the new philosophy of science movement of the 1950s and 1960s, greatly inspired by the new physics, fragmented humanity into different sociological or epistemological groupings. Post-structural theories argued that different cultured peoples thought differently to each other, and there was nothing compatible between different ethnic societies. There was a rationalisation (or irrationality) that *if* there were structures placed above each group of humanity, such structure would be 'imperial', existing only for the abusive control from a hierarchical position.

Linguistic Turn and Language

The failure of logical positivism or logicism, especially in Ludwig Wittgenstein's *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus* (1921), with his alternative solution in the *Philosophical Investigations* (1953), is largely to blame for this fragmented worldview. As we seen in the program, philosophy is a continual fight between the blaze of the systematisers (e.g. St. Paul, Kant, and Hegel) and the candle-lighters of aphorisms (e.g. Jesus, Nietzsche, and Wittgenstein). Not only can the early systemising Wittgenstein be placed against the latter skeptical Wittgenstein, but Wittgenstein's argument that language works as solos, or games, with unrelated sets of rules, comes against Noam Chomsky's theory of Universal Grammar. The arguments of structuralism and post-structuralism are very much alive today. Indeed, from Wittgenstein and Chomsky, we have a medieval argument, back to the conflict between nominalism and realism. Chomsky is the great critic of what he describes as American imperialism and arguments about how language works is at the heart of the political critique (i.e. *Manufacturing Consent: The Political Economy of the Mass Media*, 1988).

Theory (Critical Theory, Structuration Theory, and World-Systems Theory)

Maybe surprising for some, theory then has taken a lead role in the advocacy and criticism across the eras of New Imperialism and Globalisation.

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Critical Theory

The term 'Critical Theory' was developed in the Frankfurt School, founded as the Institute for Social Research in the Weimar Republic (1918–1933) at Goethe University Frankfurt. The theories were an amalgam in critical investigation, working from Freudian, Marxist, and Hegelian premises of idealist philosophy, as well as methods of antipositivist sociology, of psychoanalysis, and of existentialism. The pertinent works of Immanuel Kant, Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, and Karl Marx, of Sigmund Freud and Max Weber, and of Georg Simmel and Georg Lukács, featured in the various syntheses. Key members of the School have been:

Herbert Marcuse	Erich Fromm	Alfred Schmidt
Theodor Adorno	Friedrich Pollock	Axel Honneth
Max Horkheimer	Leo Löwenthal	Siegfried Kracauer
Walter Benjamin	Jürgen Habermas	Otto Kirchheimer

Critical theory is the reflective assessment and critique of society and culture by applying knowledge from the social sciences and the humanities. In more precise terms for the Frankfurt School, critical theory is the expression of structuralism, that reality is not simply chaos, but has form or structure, and for the Frankfurt School, this is generally taken as an economic base and a social superstructure, from Marx. Poststructuralists, or those more commonly known as 'post-modernists', oppose the idea of an imposing structure over cultural groupings. In the postmodern argument, cultural ways of life provided their isolated sets of rules (structure) without theoretical overlays. Structural arguments are accused of being imperialistic, imposing western cultural 'epistemology' upon other peoples who do not need to conform to the rules of 'western' critical thinking. From a rigorous philosophical perspective, one quite adaptable to all cultures, the argument does not hold up, not unless all cultural groupings retreat into isolationism and that has never been possible in human history. In contrast, it is the post-structural argument which aligns well with the 'divide-and-rule' strategies of imperial powers. If there is no shared sense of common humanity, a form above culture, then it difficult to reason for equality of treatment between and among different cultured people.

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Structuration Theory

In contrast to the analytic, individual component view of the social science, for Communitarians, and others who hold holistic outlooks, there are alternative theoretical approaches to how we organise human beings in society. Structuration Theory was proposed by sociologist Anthony Giddens in *The Constitution of Society* (1984). It is a social theory of the creation and reproduction of social systems that is based in the analysis of both structure and agents for a reasonable balanced relationship. It is influenced by phenomenology, hermeneutics, and social practices, and focuses on the inseparable intersection of structures and agents.

The theory rejects objectivism's focus on detached structures, which lacked regard for humanist elements, and it also rejects subjectivism's exclusive attention to individual or group agency without consideration for socio-structural context. In doing so, it fits the better insights, put together, from Auguste Comte, Karl Marx, Max Weber, Émile Durkheim, Alfred Schutz, Robert K. Merton, Erving Goffman, and Jürgen Habermas. Thinking then about imperialism, nationalism, internationalism, and globalisation, we can see structuration theory as a way between Scylla of Structuralism and Charybdis of Post-Structuralism, and thereby avoiding the terrors of imperialism and of nationalistic tribalism.

World-Systems Theory

As mentioned above in relation to the discussion on imperialism, Immanuel Wallerstein developed World-Systems Theory at McGill University, described in *The Modern World-System I: Capitalist Agriculture and the Origins of the European World-Economy in the Sixteenth Century* (1974); and much later, *The Modern World-System II, Mercantilism and the consolidation of the European world-economy, 1600-1750* (2011). It is really not a theory as a single approach, in the way Critical Theory and Structuration Theory is designed. It really is an interconnected multidisciplinary, macro-scale approach to world history and social change which emphasizes, not nation states, but the study of the world as a holistic system. It is different to Structuration Theory, in that it draws from three large and very different socio-political traditions. The first is the history discipline's *Annales* School tradition (represented most notably by Fernand Braudel) which focuses on long-term processes and geo-ecological regions as unit of analysis. Secondly, there is the Marxist tradition with a stress on social conflict, a focus on the capital accumulation process and

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competitive class struggles, a focus on a relevant totality, the transitory nature of social forms and a dialectical sense of motion through conflict and contradiction. Thirdly, there are pro-business economic theories from Karl Polanyi, Nikolai Kondratiev, and Joseph Schumpeter (research on business cycles and the concepts of three basic modes of economic organization: reciprocal, redistributive, and market modes).

Unlike Critical Theory and Structuration Theory, there are much less ethical and political judgements. Rather world systems are focused on the questions of how the 'machinery' of human history and society works. The approach is as an objectivist science on the past, not concerned with policies for the future and its values. The criticism then from the alternative theorizations is that the world systems approach loses sight on the actual personable (individual) experience of human beings.

Globalization

There is no agreement on when the Age of Globalization began. The Age of the New Imperialism, with my own approximate dating of 1884 to 1919, marked the first stage of evolution of modern globalization, a combination of colonialization and industrialisation. It is said that this first stage of a modern form of the global perspective collapsed with the end of World War I, replaced in a second stage of a new international order (exemplified in the League of Nations and its axillary organisations). This is followed in a third stage of another new international order (exemplified in the United Nations and its axillary organisations). And we have seen, from the 1990s, a fourth stage of yet-another new international order (exemplified as the Age of Neo-Liberal economics and the 'War on Terror').

The theorization, noted above, had its part to play in creating these messy waves of global thinking. If one was tempted to apply a Hegelian analysis, it could be said that imperialism and anti-imperialism produced the synthesis of modern globalisation, but the problem is that there is no real synthesis. Ironically, arguments on globalisation, from both the Left and Right, spin from both pro-global and anti-global propositions. It depends on the nature of the global model advocated or criticised – corporate globalism or social justice globalism. It is often thought that the Left is against globalisation but then there are doctrines of Global Democracy and Global Civics from this side. Equally, it is often thought that the Right is for globalisation, but then conservatives are successfully reviving traditional-types of

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nationalism, and the far-right pushes the buttons of domestic/local concerns among impoverished communities in rust-belts and 'western' suburbs.

In these first decades of the twentieth-century, two issues are paramount, each to the Right and Left. The key point here is that the two issues are not at all equal in reason and sound judgement. On the Right, is a very old fear about the idea of a world government, and there are fringe organisations, particularly in the Christian far-right, who see almost any proposition for international cooperation as a conspiracy for global tyranny. The irony is that movements, during the twentieth century, for world government were weak and are almost non-existent today. One of the reasons for the weakness of the 'one-worlders' is that members of the Left and of Centrist-Conservative alliances also opposed the idea of a world government. However, as an alternative, they came up with the World Federalist Movement. The organisation began in 1947 for the establishment of a global *federal* system of strengthened and democratic global institutions subjected to the principles of subsidiarity, solidarity and democracy. Advocates of world federalism included Albert Einstein, Mahatma Gandhi, Martin Luther King Jr., Rosika Schwimmer, Albert Camus, Winston Churchill, Garry Davis, Emery Reves, Wendell Willkie, Jawaharlal Nehru, E. B. White and Lola Maverick Lloyd. On the Left, Global Environmentalism has been one of the primary *casus belli* since the 1950s; but usually dated back to Rachel Carson's *Silent Spring* (1962). Of course, it must not be forgotten that large environmental issues have also been a primary concern with enlightened conservatives and liberals, seen in the national estates, national forests, and rural-defence movements. Those are movements with histories going back to the nineteenth century.

In the twentieth-first century, those conservation movements, although traditionally focused around national values, are moving also into global alliances. This means that the intellectual neo-conservative and populist far-right organisations are much marginalised, although they have found favour and political power from maverick politicians, exemplified by Donald Trump. Here, I then offer a conclusion. Warren Harding's post-war American isolationism did not work. It will not work for the Trump administration either. We each inescapably are encapsulated in a world beyond our local evaluation. Our thinking is always global, even as we often fail to be aware of its global history. Days will come that the hurting general populations will start to understand.