

「アフリカ史叙述の方法にかんする研究」 (2013年度第2回研究会)

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場所：本郷サテライト7階会議室

報告者1：栗田禎子(千葉大学)

報告タイトル：「スーダンなきあとに『スーダン史』は可能か？—『スーダン史』脱構築／再構築をめざして—」

報告者2：Frederick Cooper (New York University)

報告タイトル：”Writing African History in a Time of Liberation and Beyond

報告1 栗田禎子「スーダンなきあとに『スーダン史』は可能か？—『スーダン史』脱構築／再構築をめざして—」

2011年7月の南スーダン分離独立をもって、1956年以来存在していた「スーダン」(スーダン共和国)という国家の枠組みは消滅した。これにより、「スーダン人」「スーダン・ナショナリズム」、あるいは「スーダン史」といった概念自体が、根本的な見直しを迫られていると言える。本報告では、いわば「スーダンなきあとにスーダン史研究はあり得るのか」という問題に、暫定的問いを与えようとする試みである。

「スーダン史」を捉え直す際にまず重要と思われるのは、「スーダン」を固定的・静態的に捉えるのではなく、むしろ19世紀以来、そこでコロニアリズム(およびそれに対する民衆のたたかい)が展開してきた「場」として動的に捉えることである。注目すべきなのは、スーダンにおける支配や抵抗が、絶えず同国を取り巻く、より広い地域的広がりにおける動向と密接不可分に連動してきたことであり、この文脈で、特に19世紀から1940年代にかけての反帝国主義闘争においては「ナイル河谷」(エジプトおよびスーダン)という概念が決定的重要性を持った。また20世紀後半以降のスーダン史を考える際には、そのアメリカの中東・アフリカ戦略のなかでの位置づけ(=「コンゴ革命の北の門」)や、「アフリカの角」といった概念が重要になる。スーダンの歴史は、より広い、中東・アフリカ全体におけるコロニアリズムの展開の中に絶えず位置づけ直す形で捉えられねばならない。

同時に重要なのは、現在のアフリカの多くの国同様、スーダンは植民地主義的征服・支配の過程でこそ形成された国家であり、植民地主義的な支配・被支配の関係(中心=周辺構造)をその内部に埋め込まれ、植民地主義をいわば内在化したとも言える、「コロニアル国家」であるということである。先に、「スーダン史」を捉え直すにあたり、より広い地域広がりを目配りし、「スーダン」をいわば「外」に向かって開く必要性に触れたが、この文脈では、逆にスーダンの「内」に向かう視線、「スーダン」を一枚岩の存在として捉えるのではなく、その内部に存在する中心=周辺関係(「内国植民地状況」)を捉える視座が重要となる。これは言うまでもなく、従来ともすればエリート中心に描かれてきた「スーダン・ナショナリズム」の内容を再検討すること、さらにはイギリス支配からの独立(1956年)後の現代スーダン国家が抱えてきた矛盾を直視することと直結している。

上記のような問題意識に基づいてスーダン史を脱構築した上で、これをいわば「下から」再構築しようとする試みは、過去十数年間、(国家の抜本的民主化をめざす政治運動とも連動する形で)スーダン国内でも粘り強く行なわれてきた。本報告の報告者もこうした動きに触発されながら、スーダンにおける反帝国主義闘争の歴史を「下から」捉え直す試みを、特にこうし

た運動（19世紀末のマフディー運動や第一次大戦後の「1924年革命」など）におけるスーダン国内の「周辺化された諸地域」（もしくはこれらの地域出身者、具体的には奴隷出身者となる）の役割に焦点を合わせる形で行なってきた。

「周辺化された地域」の代表格とも言える存在であった南部の分離独立、「南スーダン」成立という展開は、しかしながら、上記のようなアプローチに内在するある種の危険性を示すものともなっている。「周辺化された地域」に焦点を当てた歴史叙述は、それがそれ以外のさまざまな民主的運動と取り結ぶ関係を捨象して行なわれるならば、「アイデンティティ・ポリティクス」を称揚・煽動する言説にたやすく転化する。今なお中東・アフリカを取り巻くコロニアルな構造のなかでは、それは「宗教」「エスニシティー」別の対立・分断を引き起こすことで地域に対する帝国主義的支配を再編しようとする「国際社会」の動きを利する機能も持つであろう。

報告者自身は、今後スーダン史の研究を続けるにあたり、①「周辺化された諸地域」（あるいはその出身者）の動きに注目しつづけると共に、②それ以外の諸勢力・運動との関係性に注意すること、特に（独立後のアフリカの国家において、いわば形を変えて続けられる反帝国主義闘争とも言える）民主化運動、労働運動、女性運動等の重要性を認識すること、③（②とも関連するが）「反乱」「蜂起」といった武装闘争ばかりに着目するのではなく、非暴力的なさまざまなたたかひの歴史・系譜にも注意すること、そして、④今に至るまで中東・アフリカ地域のゆくえを規定し続けている要因としてのコロニアリズムの問題を忘れないこと、を今後の指針としたいと考えている。

報告 2 Frederick Cooper "Writing African History in a Time of Liberation and Beyond"

The trajectory of African history as a field of study closely follows the trajectory of Africa from a continent of colonies to a continent of independent states. Both these histories are recent. Most African countries became independent between 1957 and 1965, and it was from the mid-1960s that African history began to be taught in universities in the United States, Great Britain, and France.

An important transition took place in the career of one of the first Africans to receive a Ph.D. in history. Kenneth Onwuka Dike studied "imperial history" at the University of London. In his 1956 book, Trade and Politics in the Niger Delta, he made a case for a new, Africa-centered approach to history, while still drawing on the legitimacy of archival research that his mentors in London had taught him. In the preface to his book, he made a plea for looking at African history in African terms, and in the text he demonstrated how African institutions interacted with British merchants and consuls.

The publications of Roland Oliver, Philip Curtin, and Jan Vansina in the 1960s mark the break from an imperial history to African history in the English speaking world. In French-speaking academia, the pioneers of an Africa-centered history—also emerging out of an earlier tradition of French actions overseas—were Yves Person, whose chef-d'oeuvre was published in 1968 and Catherine Coquery-Vidrovitch, who received her doctorate in 1970.

The existence of African history as a field is short enough that my own career spans most of it, including its twists and turns. Rather than pretending to be eternally youthful, I want to give a frank old man's talk, a mix of reminiscence and scholarly engagement. I can speak as a witness, not just as an historian.

The first course I took on Africa was in 1967 when I was a student at Stanford

University, and I had the good luck—which I was not at the time able to appreciate—to have taken this course from a political scientist named David Abernethy, who was engaged in something young scholars are supposed to do: attacking the paradigm of his mentors. At this time, that meant modernization theory. But more important, 1967 was the beginning of the Biafran war, it was one year after the coup d'état in Ghana that overthrew Kwame Nkrumah, so anyone studying Africa then had to come to grips not only with changing scholarly fashions but with changing Africa, particularly the shattering of illusions about the inevitability of progress in the aftermath of decolonization. Historians were then a little behind political scientists. They were trying to explain to their colleagues that Africa really had a history, that was not a world of timeless culture

But what was the relationship between theoretical reconfigurations and social and political change at the time? Knowledge, historians and philosophers of science tell us, is nested in society. That means in relations of power, including the structures of scientific and university communities, but also relations of power in the world. African studies and African politics were linked. But the link was complex. It was not as simple as western scholarship being the handmaiden of imperialism. On the contrary, John Lonsdale, a distinguished historian of Kenya, described in 1981 students of Africa as the "Committee of Concerned Scholars for a Free Africa."

That nicely describes my own attraction to studying Africa as a young person in the late 1960s. I was a student during the Vietnam war and became increasingly interested in movements for emancipation from oppressive governments. My thinking, unimpeded by knowledge, was that southeast Asia was in bad state because of US imperialism and Latin America was in a bad way because of its class structure. But Africa, having repudiated a colonial past, seemed like a tabula rasa—young nations, young leaders, mobilized populations. And behind it all, at a time when the US Civil Rights movement was in the news, was racial

liberation.

Here is where one must understand the context in which modernization theory became attractive during the 1960s. It is easy to dismiss it as a cold war ideology, as imposed Americanization. That's not wrong, but it's one dimension. Behind the theory—most explicitly in the work of Talcott Parsons, applied to Africa by David Apter and many others--was the idea of a grand, global transition from tradition to modernity. Modernizers believed that the key variables in society moved together: transitions from subsistence to market economy, from extended to nuclear families, from hierarchical status systems to achievement-oriented status systems, from religious to secular world views, from ascriptive to participatory political systems. Modernization in Africa was possible because colonial rule had fallen, and it implied that the future was open to black people, not just whites.

African leaders themselves talked a language of modernization, even if it was sometimes complemented by evocations of cultural authenticity. A modern political party would lead a nation to economic growth; education was one of the top priorities of most early independence-era governments; most governments distanced themselves from chiefs as embodiments of status-bound culture and collaboration with colonial regimes; instead some mix of democratic politics and a vanguard party would carry the nation forward.

Much later, after research in colonial archives, I argued that there was an implicit modernization theory that developed in French and British administrations during the late 1940s and 1950s. Having to find a new basis for legitimacy—and needing colonies to become more productive—they convinced themselves that their prior emphasis on the peculiarity of African society was no longer viable. Instead, if one acted as if the African was just like anyone else, perhaps he would become so. In thinking about wage labor, for example, British and French officials wanted to fit Africans into the general, cultureless category of worker. A working class had to be separated from the backward countryside—that is from all that was

African about social life. Such ideas originated in the colonial bureaucracy even before they were formalized in the social sciences by in the late 1950s. As Britain and France realized that such projects were not only too expensive but gave rise to as much conflict as they appeased, the modernization idea allowed officials to convince themselves that Africans would continue to seek western-style institutions even in their absence. Decolonization made sense in a modernization framework; earlier, when Africa was seen as a continent of tribes, it was unimaginable to European elites that Africans could govern themselves.

What is important about the modernization paradigm in the 1960s was its multiple uses. African trade unionists and politicians seized on the arguments of development-minded officials: if you want us to be like a modern, European worker, they said, pay us like one. Give our children good schools. For officials, modernization meant new means of control, but for social and political movements modernization meant demands—ultimately demands for equality in every dimension of social life.

For young social scientists after World War II, like the French anthropologist Georges Balandier, such ideas had yet another meaning: a way out of the stifling rigidities of colonial structures. Balandier's trajectory is interesting. He went from France to Senegal in the late 1940s to do a traditional anthropological study of fishermen. But in Dakar he met African intellectuals and discovered an Africa his teachers had not told him about. He learned about their political activism, their criticisms of colonial government. In 1951 he published an essay that treated colonial society the way anthropologists might have treated an Africa tribe, whose social structure was based on force and whose culture on racism.

But Balandier didn't follow through on that approach. He became fascinated with African cities and the complex, often unintended, effects of government policy's to shape a modern urban society. He lost interest in analyzing how colonial societies functioned, because he saw them being replaced by something else, something more interesting

sociologically. Other scholars—like W. Arthur Lewis, himself from the British West Indies—developed theories of economic modernization. Lewis was also a critic of colonialism, and he saw that if Africans got rid of it, their societies could converge toward a European standard of living and a European way of doing things. Other scholars, including Balandier, were skeptical of convergence, more concerned with the dislocations of social change and the inventiveness of Africans moving between different worlds.

There was yet another vision of modernization among theorists and policy makers, particularly in the US. They saw the end of colonial rule and modernization as possibly bringing about convergence toward western models, but also opening the door to communist movements or intrigue by the Soviet Union or Communist China. Walter Rostow's 1960 book Stages of Growth theorized this approach in a way that was on one level quite abstract—universalistic patterns of social and economic change—and on another quite specific, as its subtitle made clear, A Noncommunist Manifesto. But even this cold war version of modernization reflected a repudiation of colonialism and of racism: everyone could and should become modern. The question was would they would be modern in the right way.

By the time I took my first political science course in 1967, two more strands were emerging. One was a pessimistic variant of modernization theory, exemplified by Samuel Huntington: many societies were not capable of modernizing, he asserted, and failure was dangerous. The US and its friends had to be vigilant—and in some cases repressive. Huntington practiced what he preached, advising the US military in Vietnam and dictatorships in Brazil and South Africa. The second tendency was the one my professor, David Abernethy, exemplified: a critique within the methodologies of his discipline. Such an argument was based on the critical potential within positivist social science. Theories are supposed to be falsifiable; empirical research at that time was valued within political science. Some students of politics were finding that the convergence of Africa and the West predicted

by modernization theory was not occurring. Economic growth was not producing, for example, secularism or participant politics. Traditional elites could use modern technologies. Indeed, neither tradition nor modernity could be defined in a consistent and non-tautological manner.

There were, of course, many scholars and policy makers who stuck to modernization theory: too much was at stake intellectually and politically. In other words, scholars' engagement with social theory in the 1960s was not uniform. People could read a theory in different ways: as a claim on resources, as a way of organizing the conflict with communism, as a means to analyzing society in a post-colonial situation. Modernization theory remained attractive even when it could not explain what was happening. And some of its central ideas—and many of its fallacies—reappeared in the 1990s with the concept of globalization.

What about historians, in this exciting but increasingly problematic period after independence? Lonsdale's characterization works rather well: historians got caught up in the project of inventing a usable past for new, free nations. When I was in graduate school, that meant two things: studying precolonial history, particularly of a kingdom or of an ethnic group, and studying resistance to conquest. Colonial history was out; it was too white. South Africa was marginal too. We were, it seems, following the Nigerian historian Jacob Ajayi's dictum that colonialism was "an episode in African history," no more important than any other, an interlude between two periods when Africa was independent. Colonialism had denied that Africans had a history, and the mere fact of doing African history put one on the side of progress. Or so it seemed.

Around 1970, historians in Africa itself took different directions and people began to speak of two schools. The "Ibadan school," after Nigeria's leading university and inspired by Ajayi and Dike, fit in the nationalist conception of things, although both these historians were rather less nationalist in their empirical work than in their pronouncements; both wrote good,

solid archive-based books about European-African interaction. The other wing was the "Dar es Salaam school." It resonated with the more radical turn that Julius Nyerere's government in Tanzania took after 1967—its rejection of foreign economic models, its embrace of African socialism, its emphasis on a distinctively African culture. It was, at the same time, the most cosmopolitan of African schools, having attracted leftist academics, white and black, including such people as Terence Ranger and most importantly the Guyanese historian and political activist Walter Rodney, who taught in Dar for several years. Rodney's How Europe Underdeveloped Africa brought Latin American dependency theory to Africa. The origins of dependency theory go back to the late 1940s, when Raul Prebisch, working for the Economic Commission for Latin America, began to publish an alternative analysis to the economic orthodoxy that presumed that markets optimized economic behavior. He argued that exchange was fundamentally unequal: the rich got richer and the poor got poorer as terms of trade increasingly favored manufactured goods over raw materials. When Prebisch first wrote, development economics was still in its infancy. So there was an anti-orthodoxy coming out at the same time as an orthodoxy.

The Prebisch thesis came to Africa with Rodney in 1972. The timing was right—not just because of what scientists were saying to each other, but because African economies were not following the script toward modernization and development. Political liberation was not leading to economic liberation, and the reason, in this line of argument, was in the nature of global capitalism. The roots of underdevelopment extended back even before colonization, especially to the slave trade. The process created a virtually irreversible distinction between center and periphery. Colonization made the situation worse but did not fundamentally change it; nor did decolonization. The alternative was to get out of the world system.

The Ibadan school focused on the internal nature of African societies, on African

agency. The Dar school focused on external constraints. Both schools were calling for the decolonization of historical knowledge—to get out of modes of thought associated with European claims to superiority, whether it be to emphasize the autonomy of African forms of knowledge or to point to the ways in which Africa had become entrapped in a global, imperialist system. The appeal of one or the other variant wasn't just in Africa. They made sense to a younger generation of intellectuals in North America and Europe, who wanted to distinguish itself from their elders, to get at basic truths that had been obscured, to celebrate liberation where it could be celebrated and to condemn inequality, exploitation, and repression at whatever level was most relevant.

The Ibadan approach was consistent with what some called "Africanism," an area-focused approach. And here we get to another case of multiple origins and multiple meanings to scholarly trends. What about area studies—which boomed in the 1960s—in regard to Asia and Latin America as well as Africa? Area studies has been subject to two sorts of critiques. One was that it was a cold war notion: the government, not least the American military, needed to know more about the places it might want to invade. More basically, one could say that with the end of colonial empires, western institutions needed new ways of organizing knowledge of the world, to contain the world intellectually if not militarily. The second critique was that Africanism was a variant on orientalism, an older European view of Middle Eastern or Asian societies, that stressed their esoteric nature, and the need for European specialists who understood them. Orientalism and Africanism both celebrated and condescended to the object of their study.

There were Africanists who fit into one or the other of these conceptions. But there was a much larger number of scholars from outside Africa who were fascinated by the place, who were puzzled by it, who wanted to understand and explain. But there was nothing intrinsic to area studies to say that one had to study only one area. Most Africa specialists

also had disciplinary homes and colleagues who used similar methodologies to study other places—historians, anthropologists, linguists, political scientists. There was some great work done in the 1960s that was explicitly comparative.

When it comes down to it, the rationale for area studies is that it is good to know something about someplace. That logic was true in the 1960s and it is true today. If fashion now dictates that one should study connections, across oceans as well as across continents, so much the better. But there is no need to exaggerate—area studies was never as insular as its critics made it out to be. And people who now try to do "global history" without knowing something about someplace are likely to do it badly.

The limitations of nationally-focused—or even continent-specific—research became salient not so much through debates internal to the academy as through changes in Africa itself. The first African governments were not without their accomplishments. The increasing rates of literacy and the declining rates of infant mortality across much of Africa in the 1960s and 1970s, both of which owed much to state action, are evidence—even better than GDP growth—that development had positive effects. African governments had turned development from a colonial to a national project, but they did not have the resources to fully accomplish a task that had proved too much for British and French regimes, which had had more resources. Revolutions in agricultural production proved elusive, and the most ambitious projects for substituting control by a modernizing state for the supposedly backward usually failed. Industrialization fell victim to crony capitalism within states and competition from outside—providing African consumers with inferior products at higher prices and failing to produce the kinds of linkages that development economists thought would follow. There were relative success stories—mostly coming from what scholars called "middle peasants"—people who adapted to the demands of external markets, but did so in their own ways, organizing economic life in a great variety of ways. African farmers often understood the ecosystems in

which they worked better than supposed experts.

But the extent of the problem became evident only when external forces changed the game: the world depression of the mid-1970s revealed that few African states had produced the kind of national, self-sufficient economy that leaders had sought. If one can cite examples of bad policies—such as the damage Nkrumah's government did to the cocoa economy of Ghana in the 1960s—the longer term problem was that Africans' adaptability to external markets trapped them a cyclical pattern that few were able to escape. Governments depended on external connections—import-export revenue as well as foreign aid—for the ruling elite's welfare, and pushed the externally-oriented nature of the economy as hard as had colonial regimes beforehand. When the crisis hit, it made African governments even more extroverted, for their fiscal crises made them dependent on IMF bailouts. The IMF insisted on conditions that made escape from the vicious cycle even harder, above all cutting government expenditures for social services. Whatever the IMF was preaching, ruling elites were more reluctant to give up their patron-client politics than to cut social services; privatization often meant public goods becoming private goods in the same hands as before. And conflict for the fruits of controlling resources became more acute as the fruits became more limited, worsening regional, ethnic, and clan-based rivalries.

The argument that the problem of Africa lay not specifically in colonization, but in the longer-term development of a capitalist world economy—an idea pioneered at Dar es Salaam by Rodney—became more pertinent in these circumstances. But with variations. The debate in the 1970s was about the degree of determination that could be ascribed to the world economy and the degree to which a path—or different paths—to capitalist development were taking place in Africa. I witnessed some of the debate in Nairobi, where I spent much of the academic year 1978-79; it was an exciting time to be there. Kenyan scholars like Peter Anyang N'yongo, Apolo Njonjo, and Atieno Odhiambo began what became known as the

Kenya debate, on the question of whether a class of Kenyans was actually becoming capitalist. The dependency-oriented school, following Rodney, saw the nearly-complete domination of foreign capital, with local elites as mere agents. The more classically Marxist argument focused on control of the means of production. As a byproduct of the land-stealing by white settlers in the colonial era, a process of capital accumulation in land had taken place in Kenya more than in other African countries, and since independence, Africans connected to the regime had moved into the place of whites. They were also using the state to push their way into industrial and commercial capitalism, through joint partnerships or protected industries. So while positions in the government were the source of the development of a capitalist class, the direction of change was toward such a class acquiring the resources to make private accumulation into a real force.

As in most attempts to understand the real world, the conditions for a decisive experiment were not present. The time I was in Kenya was not the beginning of a long debate, but its high point. The debate had begun shortly after the death of Jomo Kenyatta, Kenya's first president, and it was Kenyatta's cronies—Kikuyu from Kiambu, and only the well connected among them—who constituted the embryonic capitalist class of the Marxist theorists. Kenyatta's successor, Daniel arap Moi, not only set about dismantling the Kiambu political and economic network, but seeing himself threatened, clamped down on dissent generally. He played a dangerous ethnic politics to keep his rivals unsettled. Because there were protests at the University of Nairobi, there was a crackdown on independent-minded faculty, notably the participants in this debate. Some were tortured, others were driven out of Kenya. And the Moi regime's tactics seemed to resolve the debate in favor of the dependency argument, not necessarily because of its merits as theory but because the Moi regime destroyed the budding capitalist class that the Kenyatta regime had started to build. Some have tried to find other examples of a dynamic form of capitalism in Africa—in Zimbabwe

after its liberation for example—that have also proven problematic. The case can still be made for South Africa, which much more than anyplace else in Africa, produced a racialized version of capitalist development beginning in the 19th century. After liberation in 1994, it gave way to a society that is not so neatly divided racially, but is one of the world's most unequal societies. It has a landless working class that now faces the problem of not having enough work.

As I've argued in my own work, the classic Marxist analysis of how capitalism came into being—the alienation of the majority from the means of production—is relevant to Africa, provided one looks at specific trajectories. How does accumulation of the means of production take place, by what mechanisms, against what countervailing forces, with what social and political consequences? Theory can help us pose good questions, and it might suggest that one look for many different answers rather than the one answer that fits the entire world. Arguably one cannot understand capitalism only by understanding its "best" cases.

So what of scholarship in the era of economic crisis and imposed policies of dismantling the state's role in economic and social development? Wide disagreement, theoretical as well as empirical. One thread, prevalent among American economists and international financial agencies, said that Africans were the cause of their own problem. Governments were corrupt and made bad economic decisions. There was certainly evidence to support this point of view. The second argument went further: governments should not try to develop economies but leave change to the market. Economists in that school kept trying to find a good example of what they called the "miracle of the market." The trouble was most miracles did not last very long. The Côte d'Ivoire was a favorite example for awhile, until its economy collapsed in the 1990s.

The opposite argument put the blame on the IMF and the World Bank themselves. There was a plausible argument that the international financial institutions were seeking less

to reform African economies than to write them off as no longer necessary to a capitalist world economy--and to justify abandoning them to their fate. A few orthodox Marxists argued that Africa was underexploited. They point to all the surplus labor that was not being used. Still others tried to fit a new label on old arguments: Africa was the victim of "globalization" or of "neo-liberalism."

By the late 1980s the question was how African intellectuals, foreign scholars, and ordinary people could come to understand a crisis that seemed to have no end. Some Africans called themselves "Afro-pessimists." Some saw Africans giving up on politics and taking refuge in religion, possibly versions of pentacoastal Christianity that linked failure to a lack of faith or to the workings of evil forces, and saw material as well as spiritual possibilities if one lived within a new religious framework. Or might the Islamic brotherhoods of Senegal offer both a set of meanings and of community that neither states nor a supposedly modernizing society had to offer? Was there a youth culture growing that knew through media connections about world-wide cultural trends, but had only indirect access to them, moving between self-indulgence and nihilism—or creative expression of disillusionment?

More recently, scholars have wondered how they should interpret the export boom in some African commodities, stimulated by demand from China and India. Some think a new era of growth is at hand. My historians' instinct is to say—this looks familiar. It sounds like the 1950s again—development, yes, but driven not by a generalized pattern of growth but by specific commodity chains, yet another of Africa's many growth spurts. There are signs now of improved public services and more efficient markets in some countries, but unless one finds political activism comparable to that of the 1950s, there is a danger that most of the gains will be appropriated by a small elite, African and foreign.

Africanists shared in the fashions of a wider academic world. One of the favorite expressions of the 1990s was "cultural turn" or "linguistic turn." These variants expressed a

certain desire to get away from economic or sociological determinism, but the "turn" metaphor seemed to suggest that we were all supposed to follow a route together, and anyone who didn't take the cultural turn was going down a dead end. Eventually, some leading scholars published a collection of essays entitled "Beyond the Cultural Turn." Of course the cultural turn was a reaction to the previous economic turn and the need to get beyond the cultural turn was another reaction—a U-turn.

The "turns" exemplify one of the problems of academic life, even in a context such as American universities, where many professors have enough job security to take intellectual risks. One can call the problem the conformism of the avant garde. While the study of culture is—and always was—an essential dimension of historical or social science inquiry, cultural studies tended to privilege a particular stance: that of the critic interrogating cultural objects, be they literary, visual, musical or whatever. Saying clever things about what the critic observed got a lot of mileage. It did not tell us what people other than the critic thought of these objects of study—that took a lot more work.

The irony of the temporary adoption, especially by ex-leftists, of culturalist paradigms in the 1990s was that a much stronger force was gathering on the right: rational choice theory. It became—and I fear still is—as hegemonic in political science as cultural studies was in literature. This isn't the place for a full critique of either tendency, so just let me say that I think cultural studies and rational choice theory deserve each other. Neither can come to grips with the actual forms of social or political life.

The good side of scholarly trends toward studying modes of thought and representations has been a return to some of the questions that Balandier was asking about colonial societies in 1951, but with a broader conception of how colonial states functioned. My own work turned in that direction in the late 1980s, in part thanks to a collaboration with the anthropologist Ann Stoler. We had both written books that started out in the tradition of

Marxist political economy, but found that much of the story of agriculture in the early 20th century did not follow from some impersonal workings of "the economy" but were shaped by the interventions of colonial states, imposing models and confronting anxieties that had to be explained. I was by then working on a microstudy of dockworkers in the East African port of Mombasa and finding that I needed a macroanalysis to make any sense of my microstudy. The problem of labor in 1940s Mombasa had less to do with Mombasa than with the British empire. For these reasons, the possibility of thinking about colonialism in comparative and global perspective was quite appealing. We began a collaboration that resulted in a conference in 1988 and our edited book Tensions of Empire in 1997.

We were far from alone. The 1980s and 1990s witnessed a spate of interest in colonial questions. Discovering the work of Partha Chatterjee, Dipesh Chakrabarty, Gyan Prakash, and others working on India was eye-opening for me and other scholars, extending modes of explanation, opening up possibilities of cross-regional comparison. Interestingly, neither postcolonial theory nor subaltern studies had the influence in African studies that they have had in South Asian studies. I suspect that the difference lies in different historical trajectories: India was put together by Moghuls and British to an extent that Africa never was, and "India" has been more a concept that South Asianists wanted to deconstruct, while Africans were more concerned with constructing Africa. The critique of modernity took root among South Asianists in the 1980s and 1990s; Africans were more likely to say, show us a little modernity, a little development, and we'll tell you whether we like it or not.

Whatever its problems, colonial studies has shown that colonization was no mere sideshow in the national histories of Great Britain, France, Portugal, or other European countries, but was an intrinsic part of what made them what they are. At the same time, colonial studies has pointed to the difficulty of analyzing colonialism using concepts that are rooted in the colonization process itself. The epistemological critique has had a particularly

salutary influence in a situation where paradigms seem to come from the North in rapid succession, with everybody from the South expected to hop on board. The impact was institutional as well as intellectual—notably through the organization of SEPHIS to foster South-South dialogue, CODESRIA to encourage social science research in Africa.

The question is how one is going to use such insights. One tendency has been to push to a high level of abstraction, to posit "coloniality" as a defining phenomenon of the period from 1492, when Columbus "discovered" America, until the present. The aim of such a move is to break into the narrative of progress, centered on Europe, and to show that over and above any specific historical trajectory lies the dark side of progress. Such a move has its uses, but also its weaknesses. It deprives of all agency not only colonized peoples, but the colonizers, who are merely embodying a script that was written by nobody in particular.

And while the broader trend of historical scholarship that focuses on and criticizes Eurocentrism, one has to watch out for a tendency to reproduce Eurocentrism with the values inverted—no longer the agent of progress, but the determinant of what is wrong with the world. But can one, to borrow Dipesh Chakrabarty's book title, provincialize Europe? The contents of Chakrabarty's book goes in the opposite direction of the title—to suggest that one cannot provincialize, except in certain bounded domains of life, because Europe has set the terms in which we consider all such questions. But I think one can provincialize Europe—as long as one accepts that the problem of deploying the categories of late 20th social science isn't just that they don't fit Africa or Asia but that they don't work for Europe either.

I had the benefit of an in-house critique on the limits of colonial studies, from my spouse and colleague Jane Burbank, a specialist in Russian history, who complained quite correctly about two features of the colonial studies project in which I was participating: that it was limited to third and first worlds, forgetting about the second, and that it was relentlessly modernist, paying little attention to anything before the 19th century, except for some who

assimilated everything since 1492 into the same category. It was in response to these considerations that Jane and I, with support from the University of Michigan, initiated a graduate seminar alongside a speaker series in 1999-2000 on the theme of "empires, states, and political imagination." The last phrase was an indirect criticism of Benedict Anderson, whose "Imagined Communities" had revived an older narrative that put the world on a relentless and necessary path from empire to nation-state. The work of our seminar underscored the extent to which imaginations—in Europe as much as elsewhere—were multiple, some of them persistently imperial.

Enlarging the scope of inquiry beyond the specific form of the colonial empire permitted a wider engagement with the politics of difference. In most of human history, people have not lived in homogeneous societies; they have not necessarily been ruled by people who were "like" them. There are many ways in which polities have dealt with difference—from treating it as an ordinary fact of life to drawing on different communities to contribute differently to imperial authority to assimilation to genocide. Difference is not as simple as black and white—and black and white are not so simple themselves, as recent studies of racial thought in Great Britain and France by Helen Tilley and Alice Conklin are making clear.

Studying empires in the wider sense also forces confrontation with the coexistence in a single time frame of different forms of empire: for example Ottoman and British in the late 19th century, Soviet, Nazi, and French in the 1930s. And it raises questions about the apparent—quite recent and quite problematic—generalization of the nation-state form into the norm for global political organization, for in the mid-20th century there were different trajectories out of empire that seemed to be politically possible.

In the 1940s and 1950s—and this is the object of my current research—few French African politicians thought turning individual colonial territories into independent nation-

states was a viable alternative; they advocated federation among African territories and confederal relations with France. They sought to turn colonial subjects into French citizens, with all the rights that went along with that status. African politicians took advantages of France's weakness after World War II to insist that the Constitution of 1946 extend the rights of citizens to the empire. Afterward, they turned citizenship into a means of making claims—for equality in a social as well as political sense with all other French citizens. One reason why France was willing to give up its colonies was that demands for equality were proving too effective and too costly. And while French leaders tried and failed to maintain former colonies within a wider structure that would remain French, they decided they liked the idea of confederation for themselves—but with other European states, not with African territories. Before Europe, French leaders had tried to create "Eurafrica," combining two sorts of connections beyond the nation—with former colonies and with other European states. The failure of Eurafrica has left a wall around Europe that keeps out the sons and daughters of people France had once tried to keep inside its imperial borders.

The European Union is not the only example of a post-imperial structure that looks beyond the nation-state. When the Soviet empire broke up in 1991, the biggest part of it became the Russian Federation, recognizing within it different nationalities, themselves the products of a long history of political imagination, within specific regions, across the vast steppes once dominated by the Mongols, by the expansionist tsarist state, and within the system of national republics put in place by the USSR. We can also ask about the enduring effects of the imperial trajectories of the United States—which did occupations often and colonizations rarely—and China, where the space that goes by that name today was defined by the Yuan and Qing dynasties and where the integration of Tibetans and Muslims remains a difficult question.

Will there be limitations and blind-spots in casting the net this wide? Yes. And the

entire subject may get tiresome in a few years. But a great deal of interesting work is now being done on the co-existence of multiple empires; the recent boom in Ottoman studies for example has countered the tendency to see the 19th and early 20th century versions of this empire as a weird anachronism, as if its leaders should have known they were obsolete. After all the Ottoman empire lasted 600 years. The British or French empires in Africa, more like 80. Maybe there are ways of provincializing Europe within the long sweep of history.

I've traced theoretical shifts, mostly focused on Africa, over the course of a single professor's hopefully not completed career, one person's intellectual life over a 45 year period. As you see, there were many different ways of thinking about Africa in play, some directly opposed, some overlapping, some adjusting subtly to new perspectives. All of them existed in the world—in a politics of academic knowledge related in ways that are not easy to analyze to a politics of international relations, of unequal economic relations, of elite consolidation and fragmentation within African countries, of people making careers, of people trying to make sense of things that puzzle them. African history over the past 50 years or so has had to confront the fact that much of the world was changing fundamentally, and no-one knew how the story would turn out. We bring our empirical knowledge and theoretical training to solve puzzles, but we still run into issues that we do not understand at all. One of the biggest dangers scholars face is conformism, thinking that everyone has to jump on the latest bandwagon. Empirical rigor and theoretical engagement are only part of what makes scholarship interesting and useful. The other important ingredient is imagination.

Bibliographical Note

This talk draws on and synthesizes work I have been doing over several decades. I have listed below some of my publications that focus on questions of historiography and social theory in the study of Africa and colonial situations more generally. They include more detailed discussions of some of the issues in this talk and references to relevant literature.

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