

Cultural Hegemonic Discourse: From Imperialist Eurocentrism to Homogenizing Americentrism

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Abstract

This paper is a Saidian reading of the concept of Americentrism as a continuum process of Eurocentrism. Culture as a symbol of one's identity is being constructed by the global cultural politics. World cultural, political and economical charters, organizations and committees are Western dominated agencies. This internationally oriented system is nothing but a continuation of the previous centuries of Western imperialism yet in a new attire. If the nineteenth century cultural imperial enterprise was based on repressive tools of direct rule and invasion, the contemporary global system of cultural hegemony takes the form of economic and intellectual consent as a means for the same end. Similarly, if the politics of place was the corner stone of the imperial project, the idea of homogenized place is the yardstick of the homogenous and hegemonous neo-colonial system. This new geopolitical and cultureo-economical venture operates both on personal and collective identity levels, reinforcing the localized colonial rule wherein the local and the national are assimilated within the operative mode of the global West.

1. INTRODUCTION

Culture is a determining force of one's personal and national identity. It signals a personal choice and freedom as a way of living distinct from one another. Furthermore, identity and ethics are culturally based, and, hence, any universal, homogenous or monolithic code is likely to "disinherit some from their cultural base and therefore be perceived as an attack on their identity" (Mark, 2001,p.1186). With the emergence of the global identity, culture becomes more of an assimilated entity, threatened by new waves of homogenizing forces that propose the loss of diversity of culture between two or more cultural groups and the entailment of a polar cultural system. This is not different from the nineteenth-century Eurocentric cultural imperialist project where national identity was silenced, overlooked and erased by dominating European colonial identity. According to Appradurai "globalization is itself a deeply historical, uneven, and localizing process" whereby modernization is nothing but "vernacular" labeling of globalization. (1997, p.10)

It is commonly argued in the postcolonial critical and cultural circles that there is an organic unity between Eurocentrism and Americentrism as politico-cultural concepts. The latter has evolved as a contemporary term from the former. Ameli (2006) wrote: "Eurocentrism and Americanism are two interlinked concepts which explain parallel

disciplines of thinking embodied in 'globalism' and 'Westernism'" whereby "globalization can be understood simply as the global diffusion of Western modernity, that is, Westernization." "World system theory," Ameli continued, "has equated globalization with the spread of Western capitalism and Western institutions." According to this view, globalization is synonymous with Westernization. In the words of Beyer (1998, p. 82), "[g]lobalization is a Western imposition on the non-West". The West, he asserted, "is more global and the non-West more local". Globalization, in this view, is Western imperialism whether economic, political, technological or broadly cultural. As stated by Ameli (2006)"Westernization might serve as a substitute term for 'modernization' and thus continue as a legitimatising ideology for the Westernization of the world, obscuring cultural differences and struggles". Several sociologists and cultural critics believe that globalization "is a continuation of imperialism, which displaces focus on the domination of developing countries by the developed ones or national and local economics by transnational corporations". (Cvetkovich and Kellner, 1998)

2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Located with the Saidian critical framework, the paper attempts to probe into the very genesis of the cultural terms of Eurocentrism and Americentrism as a twin of the same cultural lineage. Genetically speaking, one is the offspring of the other or the extension of the same. Each of them is associated with the emergence of an ideologically cultural phenomenon. Hence, any reading of imperialism without understanding its underlying Eurocentric cultural underpinnings will be doomed to a shallow inscaping of the concept. Similarly, the homogenous and hegemonic globalizing process is culturally rooted in the very idea of Americanization and Americentrism. Epistemologically, both imperialism and globalization are products of Western theory and history of ideas. As such, Said's theory of Orientalism and cultural imperialism afford the basic tenets of this article. Critical and theoretical postulations of Fanon, Hall, Foucault and Gramsci serve as a supplementary theoretical approach of the paper.

3. EUROCENTRISM: IMPERIALISM AND CULTURAL HEGEMONY

According to *Encyclopedia of Global Justice*, Eurocentrism is generally defined as

a cultural phenomenon that views the histories and cultures of non-Western societies from a European or Western perspective...“the West,” functions as a universal signifier in that it assumes the superiority of European cultural values over those of non-European societies...it presents itself as a universalist phenomenon and advocates for the imitation of a Western model based on “Western values” ... as a cure to all kinds of problems, no matter how different various societies are socially, culturally, and historically.(n.p)

There are several instances where Eurocentric worldview has been normalized. Here are some, to mention just a handful. Firstly, the regional names around the world are named in honor of European travellers and are in the orientation of a Eurocentric worldview; the Middle East describes an area slightly east of Europe; the Orient or the Far East is east of Europe, whereas the West is Western Europe and the Americas. Secondly, World History is told only through the European and American eye with no reference to the pre-colonized culture or civilization. Thirdly, the history of science and technology is often taught as having begun with the Greeks, then moving on with the Romans, then stopping during the Dark Ages, before continuing with the Renaissance and the Industrial Revolution. Less mention is made in European or American schools of the various achievements of Indian, Chinese, Ancient Egyptian, Moorish or other Muslim thinkers. "The effects of Eurocentrism

create a self-sustaining belief that Europe and Europeans are central and most important to all meaningful aspects of the world's social values, and cultural heritage." (Pop, p. 1)

Therefore, Eurocentrism and Westernization process as a means of facilitating the development of Western Empire, bringing in to the forefront European cultural and political policy which was based predominantly on the belief in Western cultural heritage without any acknowledgement of the contributions made by civilizations in other parts of the world (Dussel, 1998 pp. 147, 155, 183; Mazrui, 1998; Stam, 1995). Based on this, history and civilizations without the West are meaningless. Lowy (1995, p.714) observes,

Eurocentrism signifies that Europe and European values became a foundational source of meaning through which individuals, groups, and nations from the continent can develop attitudes based on proposing ideologies of racial, religious, cultural, or ethnic supremacy over the various indigenous peoples that they encountered during the period from about 1450.

For Amin (2009, p. 185), Eurocentrism poses "a false universalism that does not uphold humanity in real historical terms". Amin charges Eurocentrism with "inability to see anything other than the lives of those who are comfortably installed in the modern world", and therefore, "brought with it the destruction of peoples and civilizations who have resisted its spread". He argued that Eurocentrism constitutes both a historical and structural formation of material forces and social relations and an ideology through which the European agents of conquest and destruction could rationalize, justify, and excuse the nature and meaning of their deeds. Eurocentrism, he asserted, is an essential dimension of the capitalist ideology, whose manifestations would be characteristic of the dominant attitudes of all of the societies in the developed capitalist world, the centre of the world capitalist system. Eurocentrism can be retrospectively viewed in the context of the Renaissance: "It is the product of an ideological construction that claims Greco- Roman Antiquity to have been familiar with the principle of modernity" (p. 66).

In its neocolonial framework, Eurocentrism is a discursive residue or precipitate deposit of imperialism, the process by which the Western powers reached positions of economic, military, political and cultural hegemony in much of Asia and Africa. According to Shohat and Stam, "Colonialism is ethnocentrism armed, institutionalized, and gone global" (1994, p.16). Shohat and Stam affirmed that Eurocentrism is an ideological substratum common to colonialist, imperialist and racist discourse. It is a form of vestigial thinking that permeates and structures contemporary practices and representations even after the formal end of colonialism.

The contemporary American neocolonialism is a replica of European imperialism. "Western governmental, commercial, military, and religious interests are still controlling international markets, capital flow, commercial ownership, and cultural identities." This hegemony "constitutes a serious challenge for developing nations and traditional cultures because it locates the power for molding national policies and decisions . . . to assimilate and to conform to the dominant culture." (Marsella, 2005, p. 2) Edward Said refers to this fact at the debut of Orientalism, quoting Disraeli's words "the East is a career" (1978, p.1). This statement is loaded with a plethora of latent references. Said's Orientalism details the subtle elaboration of French and British colonial systems to which culture in general and literature in particular contributed to a great extent. Said directs attention to the discursive and textual production of colonial meanings, of the creation of a structure of attitude and reference, and of a consolidated vision of colonial/imperial hegemony.

Similarly, in *The Wretched of the Earth*, Fanon decries the imperial/colonial design, quoting Monsieur Meyer, the representative of the French imperial power in Algeria, who described the native as:

"the enemy of values, ... the absolute evil . . . the corrosive element, destroying all that comes over him: ... the deforming element . . . the depository of maleficent powers, the unconscious and irretrievable instrument of blind forces. (1963, p.40)

Said postulates a unique understanding of colonialism and imperialism as the cultural attitude which accompanies the habit of ruling distant territories. This vision is reiterated in *Culture and Imperialism* (1994) where he writes:

Neither imperialism nor colonialism is a simple act of accumulation and acquisition. Both are supported and perhaps even impelled by impressive ideological formations that include notions that certain territories and people require and beseech domination, as well as forms of domination ... the vocabulary of classic nineteenth century imperial culture is plentiful with such words and concepts as 'inferior' or 'subject races', 'subordinate peoples', 'dependency', 'expansion' and 'authority. (p.8)

The imperialist cultural discourse claims epistemologically privileged singularity. According to Dussel, Weberian theory stipulates, "in Western civilization, and in Western civilization only, cultural phenomena have appeared in a line of development having universal significance and value." This means that Europe possessed exceptional internal characteristics that allowed it "to supersede, through its rationality, all other cultures". This reiterates the Hegelian view of the centrality of "the spirit of Europe" as "the spirit of the New World" and as "the absolute truth that determines or realizes itself through itself without owing anything to anyone". For Dussel, Eurocentrism embodied "the culture of the centre of the world system, of the first world-system, . . . and as a result of the management of this centrality" (1998, pp.3-4).

Eurocentrism, therefore, is a cultural phenomenon in the sense that it assumes the existence of an irreducibly distinct cultural variant that shapes the historical paths of different peoples. On the other hand, Eurocentrism is a force of global hegemony. It is also an anti-universalistic phenomenon since it is not interested in seeking possible general laws of social evolution. But it does present itself as universal, for it claims that imitation of the Western model by all peoples is the only solution to the challenges of our time. Huntington's speculation on civilizational clash is an immediate cultural aftermath of a long journey of centrism –European or American. This view sees all the creations, phenomena, innovations and general thinking theories in all the sciences as being Western. In such an atmosphere, the great human civilizations, which have ancient historical records of accomplishment, are neglected and forgotten.

To argue further, "the representation of spatial identity in the Western popular culture reflects the deep-seated spirit of Orientalist/ colonialist discourse that treated the "Other" as a verminous threat that should be exterminated and cleansed away" (Al-Mahfedi, 2011, p. 6). Located within the Gramscian concept of hegemony, the social construction of cultural imperialism is "The entwining of communications, media and the politics of identity in the production of geopolitical knowledge and the nation . . . not only represent external "Others" who can be portrayed as a threat . . . , but function to establish a series of subjectivities through which such threats can be resisted (Dalby and O` Tuathail, 1996, p. 453).

Hence, Said's notion of hegemony and domination is premised on a Eurocentric articulation of the accelerated unification of the world under the forces of global capital. As a result, all parts of the world will be drawn into the atmosphere of a general culture of a

predominantly European type. This formulation of the connection between European culture and the global strategies of domination and conquest reasserts the concept of the hegemony of Western culture over the whole world culture. The cultural image of the imperialist West is shaped by the geographical image of the "Mother Land," and the hegemony to maintain its relation to its "Daughters" (colonies) in order to assure the means of conquest and domination. (Said, 1994, p. 242) Hence, heartland thesis is an extended argument for welding the British nation to its imperial system. What gives the "geographical pivot of history" strategic interest, after all, is not the fixed position of the state within a set global order, but rather the very instability of political forms in a changing international "balance of powers" (Mackinder, 1951, p.43). What is most revealing here is the consequences with which the Eurocentric imperative for hypothesizing the connection between European culture and the cultural development of human history as a whole. According to such a view, Europe had become the center of equilibrium between the forces of the human race.

Cultural imperialism, therefore, can be described as a sort of theatre where various economical, political and ideological causes engage one another to produce a culture that justifies the imperial geopolitical expansionist system that entails the creation and maintenance of an unequal economic, cultural and territorial relationship based on domination and subordination. As remarked by Said, imperialism is closely affiliated with colonialism (1994, pp. 9, 152, 173, 245). Both processes are intrinsically geographical dynamics that involve the extension of the sovereignty of a ruler over the land and lives of an alien people through a mixture of military conquest, colonial settlement, the imposition of direct rule, and creation of informal empires of trade and political supervision. This is grounded on compelling discourse that had profound cultural material consequences. The demonic configuration of non-European lands and peoples as uncultivated or backward, and hence in need of domestication and rule, is an intrinsic feature of colonial and imperial mappings. Said observes, while "direct colonialism has largely ended; imperialism . . . lingers where it has always been, in a kind of general cultural sphere as well as in specific political, ideological, economic, and social practices." (1994, p.9)

Said's projection of the historical scholarship of Orientalism and the cultural representations of imperialism is quite apt in reading the present-day scenario. Neither European imperial hegemonization nor American global homogenization is a simple act of accumulation and acquisition. Both, to quote Said's words "are supported and perhaps even impelled by impressive ideological formations that include notions that certain territories and people require and beseech domination, as well as forms of knowledge affiliated with domination" (1994, p.9). Porch, a British scholar, in his acclaimed book, *Wars of Empire* (2000), noted parallels between the turn of the century of European imperialism and much of what is transpiring. He writes:

Through imperialism, poverty would be transformed into prosperity, the savage would be saved, superstition would vanish into enlightenment, and order would be imposed where once only turmoil and barbarism reigned. . . . The peace operations and humanitarian interventions of the late twentieth and twenty-first centuries may be seen as a revival, albeit in less violent form, of yesterday's "savage wars of peace." The ultimate goal was similar: fling open markets to the global economy, bring government to the hitherto ungovernable, end tribal conflict and ethnic cleansing, and recruit converts for the Western way of life (p.16).

Hegemonic imposition of values, therefore, promulgates "a way of life that [is] alien and offensive to many people throughout the world, even residents in Western cultures." This entails the pressures "to assimilate and to conform to the dominant national culture. . . . and prejudices against diversity". Consequently, the prejudices against cultural diversities

are institutionalized (e.g., institutional racism) and human cultures fall prey to "commercialization and commodification." (Marsella, 2005, p. 2) Historically, the imperial West started its hegemonic triumphalism discourse over the rest since Western geographical excavations that began at the onset of the sixteenth century and continues to sustain it through the contemporary global cultural warfare. The West has struggled to be omnipresent throughout history. It is often argued that wars have always resulted in winners imposing their ways on losers. The maxim that 'To the victor belongs the spoils!' has proved true to the hegemonic cultural discourse where hegemony is cherished as "a kind of Darwinian survival of the fittest applied to cultures, societies, nations, and civilizations." (2005, p.3)

4. AMERICENTRISM: GLOBALISATION AND CULTURAL HOMOGENIZATION

Within the global distribution of power relations and cultural admission, the asymmetries in the availability of, and access to, production of knowledge lead to a structural bias that favors some producers at the expense of others. This bias brings to mind a system of colonialism, and notions of cultural colonialism. Such a cultural context based on mono-centric ideology is the main reason for social conflict, cultural and political confrontation and total war. Americanization, being a contemporary correlative of Westernization, has been injected with a projective expansionist process that relies on an ideological philosophy called 'Americanism'. For Abu-Rabi, the history of the United States from the very beginning is "marked by an extreme tendency toward expansion" (1998, p.28). The American literary as well as politico-cultural histories were founded on the concepts of American exceptionalism and American dream. This orthodox American cultural belief was historically established and contributed literarily, politically, and economically to the making of Americanization and Americentric world culture.

The realities de facto make it clear that globalization is "a story of cultural homogenization in which Americanization stands as the key to many practices." Americentrism or Americocentrism is defined as the bias to judge other cultures and nations by American standards or to assume a higher relevance of American standards than those of other countries. It refers to the practice of viewing the world from an overly US-focused perspective, with an implied belief, either consciously or subconsciously, in the pre-eminence of American culture (NI, 2008, p. 78).

Globalization, therefore, becomes the economic-cultural carrier of Americanism. Ritzer and Douglas (2003, p.539) identify cultural homogeneity of globalization as some form of cultural imperialism as the concept of globalization is not isolated from the question of ethnicity, identity and culture.

Taken from a Gramscian perspective, globalization is a form of hegemonic discourse that exercises power through economical and intellectual consent. If cultural imperialism is described as the imposition of the dominant culture via repressive measures and direct colonial rule, globalization is the injection of the same in a form of homogenous cultural consent. For Hall (1997), globalization is a form of imperial discourse in which relationship between the formation and transformation of the world market and its domination by the economies of powerful nation-states . . . constituted the era within which the formation of English culture took its existing shape." He further argues, "Imperialism was the system by which the world was engulfed in and by this framework, and also in this period, culturally, one sees the construction of a distinct cultural identity" (p.20).

In such constructed realities, globalization could be materially realized and conceptually formulated according to the ideological propagandas. This may explain Levitt's

view (2001, p.4) of globalization as, “an increasing level of interdependence between national systems by way of trade, military alliance and domination, and cultural imperialism”. This Gramscian view is also noted by Armand who recognizes globalization as “one of those tricky words, one of those instrumental notions that, under the effects of market logics and without citizens being aware of it have been naturalized to the point of becoming indispensable for establishing communication between people of different cultures” (2000, p.97). Armand emphasizes that globalization has a dominant role in organizing and decoding the meaning of the world. Beck (2000) describes globalization as “the processes through which Sovereign national states are criss-crossed and undermined by transnational actors with varying prospects of power, orientation, identities and networks” (11). Beck goes to assert that globalization is the “intensification of transnational space, events, problems, conflicts and biographies” (87). Ritzer argues that “we are witnessing the emergence of the hegemony of capitalist world market and the neo-liberal ideology that under pins it” (2000, p.572). An example is the huge multi- national corporations, which even own capitals more than some countries.

Defined as a capitalist system, globalization then is an established akin to or an offspring of cultural imperialism since both of these hegemonic systems are based on creating tension between cultural identity issues and economic rationalist imperatives. Mark (2001, pp.1178-1179) believes that, “[W]hile pro-globalists believe globalization leads to a harmonization of transnational systems, detractors point to the danger of homogenization of culture and identity.” Mark identifies the U.S. dollar and the English language as “the factors” that “most likely encourage homogenization”. They have become “the dominant vehicles for commerce in the world.” The global powers have dictated their codes of cultural behavior on the local agents in sweepingly broad statements which would have little local utility. Thus “a global code would almost certainly be written so as to send reassuring signals to . . . transnational corporations . . . to advance the[ir] interests.

Globalization is thus hegemonic because of its control and dominance by powerful individual, national, and multinational corporations whose policies, plans, and actions are threatening cultural and biological diversity and promoting the rise of global monoculturalism. In this global homogenization of culture, the values and institutions of Western ways of life are being distributed across the world via a score of powerful globalization venues such as trade, investment, tourism, alliances which claim pan-human values of liberty, democracy, human rights, and justice. In fact, these seemingly human appeals often become the trodden pathways for cultural incursion and domination of global Western forces. As stated by Marsella (2005, pp. 1-3), “If the sources of globalization are concentrated in the hands and pocketbooks of a few powerful individuals, nations, and organizations, and if the parameters are oppressive because of their extent, focus, and intent, then the potential for the destruction of cultural and biological diversity is high.”

Many authors have considered cultural integration to be a “new wave of cultural imperialism brought by globalization. KirstinaWoff in the Blackwell Encyclopedia argues that “globalization has created a new vehicle through which cultural imperialism is occurring often with little resistance or knowledge that it is happening” (2007, p.907). Therefore, trying to make a sense of what cultural integration is, some scholars have tried to sort some definitions for it. Ervin and Smith talk about cultural homogenization as an aspect of cultural globalization (2008, p.35). Cultural integration refers to the reduction in cultural diversity through the popularization and diffusion of a wide array of cultural symbols—not only physical objects but also customs, ideas and values (Barker, 2008, pp.159–162; Jennings, 2011, p.132). O'Connor refers to “the process by which local cultures are transformed or absorbed by a dominant outside culture” (2006, p.391). Cultural homogenization has been called “perhaps the most widely discussed hallmark of global

culture" (Jennings, 2011, p.132). In theory, homogenization could result in the breakdown of cultural barriers and the global assimilation of a single culture. Cultural homogenization can impact national identity and culture, which would be "eroded by the impact of global cultural industries and multinational media" (Kirby, 2000, 407). The term is usually used in the context of Western culture dominating and destroying other cultures (Berger, 2000, p.271). The process of cultural homogenization in the context of the domination of the Western (American) capitalist culture is processed through McDonalidization, coca-colonization, Americanization or Westernization, and criticized as a form of cultural imperialism and neo-colonialism. (see Alon,2006, p. 45; Hopper, 2007, p.91; Willis,2013, p.193; Kramarae,2000, p. 933)

Within the socio-political scale, globalization becomes a greasy tool of subjugation wherein identity loses its self-representation and cultural presence. The impact of global cultural homogenization increases "when the nation-state begins to weaken, becoming less convincing and less powerful" (Hall, 1997, p. 20). Instead, we come to talk of a floating identity, a plasmic entity of colorless cultural root. Perceptively, globalization "has to do with a new form of global mass culture" whereby "the cultural identities . . . have entered directly into the reconstitution of popular life, of entertainment and of leisure. (p.27) As a form of cultural reproduction of identitarian ideology which claims exclusive European cultural ancestry, globalization is an ethnocentric discourse which has recalled the cultural hegemony of the West by means of those new forms of cultural communication and cultural representation" with a hegemonized linguistic tool "in a homogenizing form of cultural representation [that] recognize and absorb those differences within the larger, overarching framework of what is essentially an American conception of the world" (Hall, 1997, pp.28-9).

This homogenous and hegemonous global system is paradoxically a process of inclusive cultural exclusiveness. According to Hall (1997, pp.28-9), this is "very powerfully located in the increasing and ongoing concentration of culture and other forms of capital" operated globally through the local capitals and rule alongside and in "partnership with other economic and political elites". Homogenously, "it does not attempt to obliterate them"; hegemonically, "it operates through them". To put it differently, to quote Hall, "it has to hold the whole framework of globalization in place and simultaneously police that system" which eventually, would engross everything in the world and translate everything in the world "into a kind of replica of itself, everywhere; that all particularity would disappear". No wonder, then, to have yourself within and without your cultural identity in a world lived by commodity culture that increases the danger of homogenization rather than harmonization.

Pothecary (2008) offers an interesting reading of how globalization enters into the making of empire. Pothecary attempts a comparative reading of the contemporary imperial/globalized world and the ancient Roman Empire by examining the Roman mindset through a writer of the early empire, called Strabo (born around 60 BCE, died in 23 CE or later).She pinpoints that "Strabo's work holds some interesting lessons for the modern-day student of international relations". (2008, p.1) Pothecary concludes by stating that the "problem of cultural bias" once dominated the Roman mindset is still controlling the "contemporary ideas". (2008, p.7)

Global Culturalism is not different from other constructivist processes of Orientalism, colonialism and imperialism, for all of them work out on strategies of ambivalence to exercise their power over the "Other" epistemologically, culturally, economically and ontologically. The same centric notion of culture reproduces itself in a new form of centrism, of homogenization and absorption, and of the dominant cultural system. The subject race of the local, of the margin, "can only come into representation by,

as it were, recovering their own hidden histories". (Hall, 1997, p. 35) The pro-American New world Order which epitomizes globalization in its dimensional scope brings to the mind the idea of the Commonwealth as an exhibition of English imperialism both of which are to be linked together under the hegemonic rubric of culture. These monolithic cultural symbols assigned themselves, representatives of the global communities, to speak about us, to tell us and on behalf of us whereby our differences and diversities of life are all threaded together by the dominant guardian of the world culture. The history of the European imperialism and Americanization uses cultural terrain to enforce their presence and ensure Other's absence, to define themselves by setting the image of the Other in the margins. Barlow (2001) asserts that "One of the principal concerns about the new globalization of culture that is supposedly taking place is that it not only leads to a homogenization of world culture, but also that it largely represents the 'Americanization' of world cultures."

The most devastating result of globalization, however, is its erasure of cultural authenticity, or even that it dilutes the purity of a given culture. For example, "[C]orporate logos replace authentic local cultures as the primary source of personal identity" (O'Meara, 2000, pp. 454-60). On his part, Steger (2003, p.71) decries McDonaldization and asserts that "[I]n the long run, the McDonaldization of the world amounts to the imposition of uniform standards that eclipse human creativity and dehumanize social relations." Pascal "We are all Americans now, like it or not" (Millett n.p). Barlow (2010, p.135) proclaims that "Governments and people around the world are increasingly concerned about a global cultural homogenization dominated by the American and Western values and lifestyles carried through the massive U.S. entertainment-industrial complex." In "The Global Monoculture" (2001), Barlow remarks, "Many societies, particularly indigenous peoples, view culture as their richest heritage, without which they have no roots, history or soul. Its value is other than monetary. To commodify it is to destroy it." Lizardo (2008) examines the impact of global culturalism as an ideological process working in two levels: "On its systemic macrolevel perspective, globalization is usually referred to the cultural/media imperialism thesis. On a more microlevel approach, globalization refers to the way in which the consumption of global culture is integrated into everyday routines and traditional ways of life." Hence, cultural homogenization is seen as a cultural threat as brings with it the end of national cultural diversity. Thus, global culturalism is mainly conceived as "sapping the vitality of indigenous cultural worlds". For cultural diversity is replaced by "the homogenous sterility of a U.S. dominated global popular culture industry." (Lizardo, 2008, n.p)

Located within a Saidian worldview, globalization is primarily a latent tool of Euro-American hegemony. Personal identity is hegemonized by repression or consent and homogenized into a global mainstream culture. "Personal identity is understood as encased within a wider and inescapable collective identity." (Palmer, 2004, p.17) The present-day culture is instrumental, and ideated media is a cornerstone in this field. The popular culture plays a complicit role in maintaining hegemony, not only by its representations of geocultural spaces, but also by constructing the subjectivities that can be culturally mobilized in the homogenization of our cultural space against a threat originating from their space. "The idea of constructed subjectivities has its common relationship with the ideas of imperialism and attachment in the colonial era, and enclosure and commodification that characterized the production of 'space' and 'nature' in the contemporary global politics." (Al-Mahfedi, 2011, p. 6)

Like its classical imperial culture, globalization is an expansionist economic system and a corporate homogeneous cultural term, consisting of processes that lead toward global interdependence and the increasing rapidity of exchange across vast distances. While imperialism and colonialism served as the leading cultural materialized projects of

Eurocentric ideologies, homogenization and hegemonization are the twin globalizing process of Americentrism. Whereas homogenization entails attachment to the same model, style or thought, hegemonization refers to the concentration of power in a particular, country or civilization. Thus, homogenization enforces the process of expanding homogeneity while hegemonization validates the emergence and consolidation of a hegemonic center or culture. With emergence of global center, power or culture, there has been a disproportionate share of global power among nations and cultures.

Within the increasing lot of homogenization and hegemonization, the Western model whether educational, commercial, cultural or otherwise becomes the celebrated model and the established criterion. The major ideological systems are characterized as triumphalist and hegemonic. Indeed, the West set itself as the mother of all modern ideologies: liberalism, capitalism, socialism, Marxism, fascism, Nazism, and others, orchestrating its control and power through the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the United States, and the European Union (EU). Moreover, the so-called world system is totally exclusive and hegemonic. The US-backed UN was formed primarily by the victors of World War II, all of whom belonged to one and one-half civilizations: Britain, the United States, France, and the European part of the Soviet Union all belonged to Western civilization, while the Asian part of the Soviet Union provided the other half. After they established themselves as permanent members of the UN's powerful Security Council, they made one concession to another civilization: they allowed pre-Communist China to be a permanent member. Of the five original languages of the UN, four were European: English, French, Spanish, and Russian. Again, a concession was made to China by recognizing its language. Arabic has more recently gained recognition. Besides, UN's international law or the Law of Nations to help maintain the peace in the world was itself a child of European diplomatic history and statecraft. It once used to be the law of Christian nations, which gradually became the law of civilized nations, and then became the law of developed nations. That old international law was used to legitimate Western colonization of other countries.

In line with cultural and political foundation of the international agencies, intellectual forebears of Western political thought were backed by an arrogant Euro-Americentrism. In Megret (2006, p. 279), John Stuart Mill distinguished between "barbarians" and "societies worthy of the Law of Nations." He argues, "[t]o suppose that the same international customs, and the same rules of international morality, can obtain between one civilized nation and another, and between civilized nations and barbarians, is a grave error, and one which no statesman can fall into". "What made colonization possible," Megret observes, was also in effect what made the exclusion of non-European peoples logical: these would be civilized by force if need be, while being denied the benefits of civilization, on account of their 'non-civilization'. The contrast between 'civilized nations' and 'barbarians' or 'savages', therefore, is a constant theme of the early modern literature on the laws of war (p.87).

Even the Western adherents of socialism such as Karl Marx and Frederick Engels had approbated Western colonialism: Karl Marx applauded Britain's colonization of India, and Frederick Engels applauded France's colonization of Algeria. All of these were "civilizational criteria" accepted by almost the entire Western world (Marx & Engels, 1976, p. 471).

Hence, there has been the omnipresent presence of the West with a net result of a Eurocentric and Americentric brand of globalization, meaning that one aspect of Western culture is eventually and subtly imposed on other cultures and masqueraded as universal. An informal cultural empire is born; hegemony is triumphant. As a result, from a bipolar world existed during the Cold War to a unipolar world that exists now, with the United States

being the only superpower, the international relations were governed by the Western theories that still grapple with power over other nations and countries. Following the disintegration of the Soviet Union in 1991, and the emergence of unipolar world order under American hegemony, Islam became the new enemy, to fill the vacuum left by the Communists.

Here again, we are before a process of focalization, a process of myth-making of the “Orient”, of the “Other”, of the “rest”. New terms have found their way into “quotidian political lexicon” and are used to “silence dissent”. Vigo (2008) cites several instances that were prevalent in the American top thinkers and policy makers and academicians who still harbor on dichotomous and discriminatory world thinking. For them, the “War on Terror” and “foreign fighters” never referred to U.S. or British soldiers or “self-hating Jews” but only to American Jewish academics who decried the invasion of Iraq, to “apologist” journalists and scholars who wrote against the invasions of Iraq and Afghanistan and who suggested that U.S. politicians examine the reasons behind 9/11. “Terrorist sympathizers” was used for anyone questioning the human rights abuses of Guantanamo or Baghram prisons, amongst many other labels (7-8). This fact indicates that the Orientalist/colonialist paradox outlined by Said could easily become the stage for a major backlash against all things humanist, Arabo-Muslim, immigrant or intellectually rigorous critics of American policy. The “War on Terror” is rife with misunderstandings which discourage dialogue, dismiss historical and political facts and engage Orientalist precepts at their very roots.

It is not difficult, therefore, to see how the imperial forces relied on military force when alternative methods of power projection and another normal form of controlling other territories failed. Taking Fieldhouse’s broad definition of imperialism as “the tendency of one society or state to control another, for whatever means or whatever purpose”, political control could result in colonization or in colonialism wherein the former denotes conscious settlement, the latter is a widely differing form of political subjugation (1981, p.1). Imperial project can shift its tools when it leads to independence. Imperialism is generally reified in globalism or neocolonialism. The cultural independence of national/local identity is compromised by the retention of economic and cultural control by the former imperial colonial power (1981, p.8-11).

Furthermore, “Insofar as the globalizing theorization is premised on a Eurocentric and teleological narrative of modernity and postmodernity [an extended form of Orientalist/colonial discourse], it ultimately excludes possibilities of historical alternatives and/or alternative histories”. As stated by Kang (2004, p.26), “While avowedly Eurocentric in its hegemonic formations, globalization also sets up an indispensable structural context for analyzing what happens in today’s world. . . . Globalization can be perceived in both senses, first to global capitalism as an ideology and then to the “new world order” or “world-system” as an accepted politico-cultural reality” (p.23).

5. CONCLUSION

The present-day realities all affirm that the Orientalist episteme of power is being invoked, recreated and reinstalled. If the oriental is seen by the Orientalist colonial Eurocentric discourse as a myth, an object of fantasy, an image of everything that is abnormal, exotic, savage and irrational, and a source of evil, it is treated by the neocolonial globalized Americentric discourse as a market of products, a field of exercise, an object of manufacturing, and a place of imagined terror. The West set itself as the producer, the director, and the master of production, of creation, of marketing. Likewise, America has taken over this physical and discursive role of European dominance in Asia and the Middle East. As Said puts it, not only can facts be created, but that social memory is completely

dependent upon the constructed facts which render invisible atrocities that have happened. Said (2003) writes: "Revisionist justifications of the invasion of Iraq and the American war on terrorism that have become one of the least welcome imports from an earlier failed empire, Britain, and have coarsened discourse and distorted fact and history with alarming fluency." (n.p)

It is quite pertinent to note that Eurocentric and Americentric discourses are partly epistemological and partly politico-cultural. Thus, the Orientalists' writings were a major resource for Western colonialism, imperialism and current domination and hegemony. The Orientalist strategy was, and is still, based on a premise that in order to colonize and rule, you first demonize and disturb. The illegal interventions in the Arab states, Iraq, Libya, Yemen, Somalia, to mention just few instances, demonstrate all of the hallmarks of a throwback to old-fashioned atavistic colonial rule. America argues that the ultimate objective is to disengage and allow a democratic state. This throwback indicates an ever-going process of domination and subjugation of the Other and illustrates that what was changed was not the system but the tools and instruments. Knowledge and information were, and are still used, by the imperial and global powers in increasingly sophisticated ways as it moved from a position of ruling by coercive violence to the maintenance of political rule through tacit consent within a framework of regulation that restricted avenues of opposition.

The world is too much moving to and driven by the monolithic culture to which world history seems to maintain, increasingly homogenized and hegemonized under the banner of Americanism retains its ideological and political self-identity as a form of cultural imperialism. In this respect, any insistence on the discourse of nationhood simply in terms of an imagined community as invented by Western capitalist discourse is fatalist because it establishes an exclusivist ideology that implicitly excludes other alternative cultural realities in opposition to Eurocentric or Americentric cultural identity.

The relationship between imperial cultural discourse and global homogenizing discourse is the question of how one might modernize while preserving and maintaining cultural and political hegemony. In this regard, Eurocentrism and Americentrism bring each other geopolitically, culturally, epistemologically to exercise power and domination over the world and construct their global identity. Much of our current educational, cultural and economic symbols come to us through the mediation of the mainstream dominant discourse. What we have witnessed is just a shift from the cultural repression paradigm to the cultural consent and internalization paradigm. The agent markets its object in a metamorphous scale in which colonialism itself becomes "a metaphor for any regime of unequal power" (Holden & Ruppel, 2003, p. ix).

The idea of homogenized hegemonic culture is a sort of informed consent in which cultural identity is drawn according to a globalizing trend and logo. Moving from the epistemological Orientalist discourse through the colonial/imperial constructivist paradigm to the globalized ontological terrain, the Western philosophical thought has suffered the plague of centrism in its treatment with the other. It is a valid conclusion to suggest that less well-connected societies "lose" when they become part of this homogenized system as previous models of "imperialist homogenization" destroying and replacing local cultures have been maintained.

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