

USE OF EVOLUTIONARY DISCOURSE IN JURGEN OSTERHAMMEL'S *THE TRANSFORMATION OF THE WORLD: A GLOBAL HISTORY OF THE NINETEENTH CENTURY*

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Abstract

*The paper will explore the use of evolutionary discourse in Osterhammel's *The Transformation of the World: A Global History of the Nineteenth Century* (2014) with the argument that contrary to its claims to avoid Eurocentrism and exceptionalism of national histories, it retells us the story of 'great divergence' placing West at the center and the rest in the periphery entangled in the 'inextricable web of affinities' of imperial and global networks. Osterhammel writes against the grain of language saturated with notions of Eurocentrism and Western exceptionalism that prevailed in past national histories. Like Darwin, he also faces the difficulty of finding adequate words to present a new history. Darwin tried to present an anti-teleological and anti-anthropocentric theory in a language that remained saturated with notions of design and purpose, well-suited to serve natural theology (Beer, 2000, p. xviii). Osterhammel rejects Marxism (because of its reductionism), and postcolonialism (because of its provincialism), to include the perspectives such approaches marginalize. Despite his effort to critique the center/periphery binary by stressing polycentrism, his story of great divergence ends up maintaining hierarchies. Osterhammel (2014) goes as far as to declare the nineteenth century a "European century," because "never had changes originating in Europe achieved such impact on the rest of the world" (p. xx). The first part of my paper draws on secondary literature to review the use of evolutionary theory in history, and the second part draws on unravelling the evolutionary patterns both Darwinian and non-Darwinian in the primary text*

Keywords: Literary Criticism, Evolutionary theory, Imperialism, Globalization, Evolutionary discourse, Global History.

1. Introduction

In the nineteenth century, evolutionary theory enjoyed pervasive influence in all aspects of Victorian culture, may it be social sciences, literature, popular culture, shows and museums. The genre of ‘evolutionary epic’ emerged with the publication of Robert Chambers’s *Vestiges of the Natural History of Creation* (1844) and was shaped by Herbert Spencer, Charles Darwin, and other popularizers of science (Dawson & Lightman, 2011, p. ix). The texts contributing to evolutionary epic followed usually one of the two directions; i) “progressive” direction (followed by majority), “probably because the evolutionary epic predates Darwinism” with its affinity with idea of development (p. x); ii) “non-directional” evolution became popular in the late twentieth century texts focusing on themes of “fragility and contingency” (ibid). In the nineteenth century, evolution as progress enjoyed more acceptance because of great scientific and cultural changes the West underwent, linking them to the evolutionary elements of “divergence”, and “modification” (p. xii). Besides progress, another theme prevalent in the evolutionary epic was “the normalization of competition, be it in nature or in society” with examples of both peaceful and violent competition among individuals and races (p. xviii). What made evolutionary theory so pervasive was its multivalence, its availability to be appropriated for different disciplines and disparate debates by producing “profoundly opposed insights and narratives” (Beer, 2000, p. xxiii). It equally well served the agendas of imperialists and anti-imperialists. Charles Darwin presented the idea of evolution based on natural selection, while for Herbert Spencer, evolution became a cosmic law that helped him synthesize all knowledge in his multi-volume *System of Synthetic Philosophy* (1862-96) (Lightman, 2014, p. 295). Recently, the rise of big history has brought evolutionary theory back into the center with a claim to revive the evolutionary epic or universal history (Hesketh, 2014, p. 182). Evolution is still relevant because “the same spirit of interconnectedness marking synthetic philosophy continues to this day” (Lightman, 2014, p. 8). World historians are also trying “to produce unifying narratives of global history itself” (Hesketh, 2014, p. 177). Jurgen Osterhammel’s global history provides a synthesis of syntheses and hence should be read in the continuity of historical tradition (as discussed in the literature review) steeped in Western ideology.

In his narrative, imperialism and globalization appear akin to evolution in bringing about changes and political, social, and cultural variation. Network becomes the main metaphor tracing the global interdependence of nations entangled in webs of slow causality woven by social, political, economic, and cultural factors that gradually changed the face of the world. The narrative unfolds itself playing on the evolutionary themes of transformation, progress/development, intrusion, struggle, adaptation, survival, and extinction. In its story of the global transformation, it approaches racial others from an insular position. They are hardly involved in a dialogue, and their presence is but secondary to the main plot that revolves around the West. Acknowledging my positionality as a literary critic, my paper will treat the historical narrative as a literary text to examine the use of inherited evolutionary discourse not only in the treatment of themes, but also in the use of language. Osterhammel does not claim to use an evolutionary approach, still, the evolutionary paradigm is evident in the subtext of the narrative. My paper analyzes the use of evolutionary discourse in the selected global history, arguing that it reconstructs racial/national hierarchies, despite its claims and attempts to deconstruct the white supremacy in Western imperialism and its postcolonial hegemony in the form of globalization.

My study is inspired by two works; Gillian Beer's *Darwin's plots* (2000), which reads Darwin's natural history as a literary text because of the use of figurative language in its story of evolution, as well as the influence of his language on the fiction especially social-realist novels by George Eliot and Thomas Hardy; and *Evolution and Victorian Culture* (2014) edited by Bernard Lightman and Bennett Zon, which presents a comprehensive analysis of ubiquitous influence of evolutionary theory in all aspects of culture. The only link missing in the book is a chapter on history. There has been an established tradition of historiography from the evolutionary perspective, and here lies the justification for writing this paper. It is both significant and interesting to explore i) how has evolutionary discourse been used in writing history? ii) how do the claims of global history to include other perspectives sound hollow in its traditional Eurocentrism with renewed hierarchies? and iii) how do evolutionary patterns in global history make it but an addition to the established historical tradition of social-evolutionary worldview?

2. Literature Review

Paul Crook (1999), while working on his book *Darwinism, War and History* (1994), like Beer observed the problematic of translation of Darwin's ideas due to their multivalence. "There was in Darwin's model not only conflict, chance and dominance but also co-adaptation and co-existence" (p. 633). He argues that imperialists and anti-imperialists drew different conclusions from Darwin's theory and appropriated it to serve their diverse purposes. Karl Pearson, a disciple of Francis Galton (founder of eugenics) and a Darwinist imperialist, in his work *National Life from the Standpoint of Science* (1900) attempted to present a "model for efficient modern states" and accepted the elimination of inferior races (p. 642). Benjamin Kidd, though initially influenced by Francis Galton and Pearson, soon distanced himself from them on ethical grounds. *His Social Evolution* (1894), in the application of Darwinian principles to society, brought religion and ethics to the center in civilizing man by freeing him from his barbarism (p. 644). Crook asserts that this sanitized version of social Darwinism brought it in line with "American progressivism, 'British Oxford idealism', and 'new liberalism'" (p. 644). His *Control of Tropics* (1898) provided moral and intellectual justification for High Imperialism by strengthening the benevolent image of empire working for the welfare of the indigenous peoples by teaching them 'social efficiency' under "paternalistic trusteeship" (p. 645).

Crook (1999) gives example of Leonard Hobhouse's *Democracy and Reaction* (1904) as an attack on social Darwinism because of "hereditarian and materialistic tendencies" (p. 637). Most liberals used Darwinism to serve their purpose exercising careful 'selection'. For example, J. A. Hobson in *Imperialism: A Study* (1902) attacked the notions of strong competition in capitalism and violence in imperialism, yet he used an evolutionary approach to promote his "liberal ideal of internationalism" because he shared with H.G. Wells a vision of progress of the world into a European and finally "a world federation" (p. 640). At the same time, he also shared Well's eugenic ideas for 'rational selection' of 'Efficient' and elimination of 'inefficient' (ibid). Crook observes that Hobson implied that the civilizing mission was used as an "intellectual and moral" cover-up for baser instincts of greed and domination (p. 641). Anti-imperial works after the two world wars followed in the example of Hobson to promote capitalism for peace and war as a disruptive force.

Doris Goldstein (2012) postulates that in the context of evolutionary theory, emerged a new genre “social evolutionary history” with many disciples like W. E. H. Lecky, H. G. Wells and J. H. Robinson who modelled their histories “on the teleology of progress central to evolutionism of Comte, Spencer and Victorian anthropology” (p. 41). William Lackey tried to discover general laws to explain the changes in European thought in *History of the Rise and Influence of the Spirit of Rationalism in Europe* (1865). The assumption that “law of progressive transformation” governs both natural and social worlds is the basis of social evolutionism (p. 45). H.G. Wells in his *An Outline of History* (1920) remains a more faithful Darwinian. Though the law of progressive transformation does not control his narrative, yet the ending of the book implies that “there is a progressive” direction in historical change, defined as a movement towards “a world state and universal justice” (p. 46). Despite giving space to non-European civilizations, their achievements are measured against European standard, and hence it “retains traces of the teleology and Eurocentrism of nineteenth century social evolutionism” (ibid). In another article, Goldstein (2004) asserts that social Darwinism viewed history “in terms of stages, of progress based on scientific accomplishments” (p. 6). He gives the example of Edward A. Freeman’s *Comparative Politics* (1873), who assumed “a single cultural ladder” (European) to position nations on a journey from savagery to civilization (p. 15). He considered Western branches of Aryan race to be “the rulers and teachers of the world” in promoting liberalism and democracy (pp. 14-15).

Similarly, Ian Hesketh(2011) cites the example of Henry Thomas Buckle’s *History of Civilization in England* (1857, 1861) to assert that in order to make history a science, Buckle worked with the assumption that history like nature was governed by laws which human will could not transcend. According to Buckle, the task of the historian was to uncover those laws to study past and to predict “the future course of progress” (Hesketh, 2011, p.14). Like other evolutionary historians, Buckle also used England as an “ultimate example of the progress of civilization” and a yardstick to measure the progress of other nations (pp. 18-19). In his article, “A Good Darwinian”, Hesketh (2015) gives the example of Winwood Reade’s use of evolutionary theory. Reade intended to be Darwin’s disciple, yet his views turned out to be non-Darwinian in his history of progression of societies from animism to monotheism (Hesketh, 2015, p. 47). Contrary to his desire to present the role played by natural selection in

“human and cultural history”, he soon realized that the idea of development was more useful (p. 45).

Later critics targetted this genre of “social evolutionary history” for its “implicit progressivism and simplistic linear causality” (Goldstein, 2012, p. 50). After two world wars, the stagist view of history with “teleology, racism, and Eurocentrism of classical social evolutionism” fell from favor in anthropology and history (p. 41). More recently, “evolutionary theory has entered the discourse of historians largely as a result of new interest in world history and its most ambitious siblings, big history, and deep history” (p. 54). William McNeill, David Christian and Daniel Smail have drawn attention to the relevance of evolutionary biology and anthropology to history in their works. Hesketh(2015) posits that evolutionary perspective in modern histories follows the Victorian model in its preference for evolutionary ideas that are “non-Darwinian”, and this choice seems to be made due to “moral and aesthetic preferences rather than epistemological ones” (p. 50). Histories written in the nineteenth centuries such as by Buckle and Reade; in the twentieth century as by H.G. Wells and Edward Wilson; and in the twenty-first century as by David Christian, confirm that “the evolutionary epic is a decidedly non-Darwinian genre of evolutionary history” (p. 45). Doris Goldstein (2004) also affirms this position by citing Peter Bowler; “it was a revolution because it required the rejection of certain key-concepts of creationism, but it was non-Darwinian because it succeeded in preserving and modernizing the old teleological view of things” (qtd. on p. 3). In his analysis of Oxford School historians, Goldstein argues that social evolutionism (Social Darwinism) was more appealing to historians, as it unlike Darwin’s theory embraced “purpose and progress” (25). Ian Hesketh(2014) postulates that big history aims to “tell the entire story of humanity within the context of the universe albeit from the perspective of an author’s particular area of expertise” (p.184). Big history uses “compensatory principle” to reinstate what is supposed to be displaced, for example, “human agency is found despite its previous insignificance, where the earth is found suddenly to occupy, once again, the center of the universe” (p.194). Global history, I contend, aims to tell the story of other nations within the context of the evolution of the West. Like big history, global history also resorts to “compensatory principle” as despite its attempt to avoid

Eurocentrism, the comparative study of other regions restores the centrality of Europe as the standard of modernity or progress.

3. Discussion of the argument: Evolutionary patterns in global history

Evolutionary thinkers like Charles Darwin and Herbert Spencer are not included in Osterhammel's bibliography as the primary sources, but they appear in his synthesis of the syntheses of the secondary literature that he draws on to write his global history. Evolutionary discourse becomes evident in the sub-text of his narrative, as the detailed discussion of the text proposes to illustrate. Darwin's theory was anti-teleological, but his supporters and popularizers like John Tyndall, and T. H. Huxley restored teleology and emphasized Lamarckian and Spencerian idea of development and progress in which human will and industry played vital role overlooking and undermining the role of natural selection (Lightman, 2014, p. 293). Progress served as "the underlying ideology of the Atlantic West since the Enlightenment" (Ostehammel, 2014, 239), and this explains the non-Darwinian translation of the idea of evolution in terms of development and progress. Darwin's theory, if we analyze closely is not as anti-teleological and anti-anthropocentric as it appears. For example, he uses the analogy of artificial selection and the role of human agency played in it, though no doubt it presents a self-serving image of man who can manipulate natural laws to serve his interest; "Man selects only for his own good; Nature only for that of the being which she tends" (Darwin, 1859, 2002, p. 48). At another place, again he emphasizes human agency in the manipulation of "principle of divergence, causing differences...steadily to increase and the breeds to diverge in character both from each other and from their common parent" (p. 62). Here one can trace ideas of the possibility to play with evolution to improve the species that later served as the basis of Eugenics in 1884 by Darwin's cousin Francis Galton. Similarly, these ideas seem to be in line with ideas of progress and development popular at the time.

Osterhammel contends that nineteenth-century theories of social development were grounded on "Enlightenment ideas of progress" and were considered "universally valid" (p. 746). According to Adam Smith, human society progressed through the stages of "hunting, gathering, pastoralism, and agriculture to modern life in "the commercial society of emergent

capitalism” (ibid); Herbert Spencer presented his theory of progress from ‘military’ to ‘industrial’ society as a result of consistent differentiation and adaptation; Sir Henry Maine visualized progress as a transition from the relations of status to relations of contract (ibid). In the 1860s, Ethnology adopted evolutionary theory in terms of “a general progression of humanity” by presenting other societies at an “earlier stage of development” (Osterhammel, 2014, p.819). These models served as a theoretical framework to study non-European cultures positioning them on the ladder of progress using Western standard. Rise of racism in the late nineteenth century excluded “scriptless primitives” and “Orientals” from the story of progress (p. 747). The standard of civilization also had its roots in “the evolutionary aspect of law” (p. 832), and the Western civilizing mission was based on the idea of progress from simple to complex civil society (p. 828). For Herbert Spencer, evolution was a journey from simplicity and homogeneity to complexity and heterogeneity (1851, 2019, p. 9). This idea became popular in the everyday representation of evolution in anthropology, ethnology, history, and popular culture. Osterhammel draws attention to the idea of progress that dominated the Western imagination; “Optimistic openness to the future, awareness of innovation, and faith in technological and moral progress had seldom been so great, and the old has rarely appeared so obsolete” (Osterhammel, 2014, p.43). The idea of evolution in terms of growth and progress predated Darwin, as is evident from the first two examples, and this ready-made garment served well the new-born Darwinian theory which provided evolutionary ideas “scientific legitimacy” (Lightman, 2014, p. 288).

William Green argues that contemporary historians share “conceptual framework” of the nineteenth-century evolutionary theorists; “Both have considered change to be gradual and constant... from simple to complex... Both have asked the same kind of questions: how do people become civilized?” (qtd. in Goldstein, 2012, p. 56). Osterhammel’s global history tells us a story of “transformation of the world” spearheaded by the West. He does not want to repeat “the great divergence” narrative but resorts to providing a synthesis of other historical accounts rather than providing some “novel interpretation” for European supremacy (Osterhammel, 2014, p. xxi). His whole narrative revolves around the changes in Europe and their impact on the rest of the world; “Never has Europe released a comparable burst of innovativeness and initiative _ or of conquering might and arrogance” (p. xxi). Herbert

Spencer (1851, 2019) postulates in his article on progress; “The only obvious respect in which all kinds of progress are alike, is that they are modes of change” (p. 36). Osterhammel enlists a series of changes giving them large space in his big book. Speed revolution brought about by railroad and steamships overcame the limits imposed by time and distance enabling land and trade imperialism. The West observed acceleration not only in the production of goods and trade but also in artillery power with increased capacity to cause destruction. Osterhammel (2014) calls it “military great divergence” (p. 909), which made imperial wars “cost-effective” (p. 910). Due to advanced military technology, “asymmetrical colonial warfare became one of the forms violence, characteristic of the age” (p. 512). Telegraph cables revolutionized long-distance reporting. Osterhammel considers telegraph network to be more centralized than the internet of the day (p. 37). Industry became an international business with branches across the globe, and the great divergence “first appeared in the nineteenth century” (p. 651). Osterhammel admits that industrialization was not the only cause of great divergence; rather agrarian development, political and economic reforms, professionalization, rise of corporate culture and international trade all played a role in the slow causality of Western progress. Simultaneously, he asserts; “There were no longer any non-industrial great powers” (p. 909), except Japan, the only Asian country, that successfully followed in the footsteps of the West, while other countries could not resist “the armoured powers of the West” (ibid).

Osterhammel considers many institutions in modern times the legacy and “inventions of the nineteenth century, may they be archives, museums, photography, cinema, and public libraries (p. 4). World exhibition, another innovation, also started its journey from the West with the first being held in London in 1851 (p. 15). Osterhammel calls the nineteenth century a century of “Western explosion of knowledge” (p. 781). New disciplines of knowledge emerged, and societies were formed to promote research and literacy at home and later in the colonies under Western tutelage. Different branches of science became the most “conspicuous measure of progress” of the West (p. 779). Free press and daily newspapers were Euro-American inventions that quickly spread across the globe through imperial and global networks (p. 32). Darwin insists on the triumph of most divergent species; “most divergent varieties will invariably prevail and multiply” (p. 67). Osterhammel’s narrative,

contrary to its claim to avoid the tale of Europe's special path, focuses on the West as the engine of all changes culminating in progress or modernity with the rest of the world at a receiving end.

Darwin lays special emphasis on "inextricable web of affinities" that connects "all living and extinct forms" in "one great system" (pp. 98-99). Osterhammel affirms that 'web' was a popular metaphor in the nineteenth century. Railroads were compared to webs, cities to 'labyrinth' or 'grid' (p. 711). The metaphor of web gets transformed into a network of interconnections and dependencies in the global history, which tells us the story of "a densely knit web of global connections... a multiplicity of such webs" (p. xv). The process of globalization, defined as "formation of worldwide networks" (p. 711), observed a sudden hike from 1860 to 1914 and included "intercontinental migration and the expansion of colonial empires" (ibid). The nineteenth century was marked by networks of telegraph, steamships, weaving further networks of trade, and finance. Transportation, communication, and financial networks entangled the continents in complex affinities so that change in one node was bound to impact the periphery and vice versa. After the seven-year war between France and Britain (1756-63), Britain dominated the globe with "a network of naval bases" (p. 59).

Osterhammel prefers the metaphor of network because it provides a polycentric view with "multiple points of contact and intersection unlike the monocentric spider's web "holding everything in place" (p. 710). This preference seems in line with his effort to avoid hierarchies implicit in a Eurocentric approach. Nonetheless, he acknowledges that despite its rhizomatic structure, a network might have "strong centers and weak peripheries" (p. 710), and this assumption is well illustrated in all the networks with thick European nodes entangling the weak peripheries. The 1880s onwards, imperial centers had successfully entangled other countries into "economic and communication networks" (p. 64). The rest of the world was entangled in "relations of technological and economic dependence" (p. 713). At its best, Osterhammel's "portrait of an epoch" (p. xvii) presents different nations entangled in global and imperial networks, varying in political, economic, and cultural development with Europe. This portrait is akin to the image of an entangled bank in *The*

Origins highlighting the complex affinities of interdependence among species engaged in the struggle for existence (Darwin, 1859, 2002,p.121).

The idea of ‘struggle’ in Darwin’s theory serves as the basis of social-Darwinism, where the same law of nature is applied to social and political institutions and international relations. Most historians of imperialism link new imperialism with social Darwinism. William L. Langer’s *Diplomacy of Imperialism* (1935), Bernard Porter’s *A Short History of British Imperialism* (1975) and John M. Mackenzie’s *Propaganda and Empire* (1984) are but a few examples quoted by Crook (1999, p. 635). Osterhammel (2014), following the historical tradition, links “High imperialism” with social Darwinism, though he lists it as one of the four causes, three others being i) economic globalization, ii) technological progress and iii) inability to preserve peace (p. 432). In chapter VIII, in a section on “colonialism and imperialism”, Osterhammel unravels the relationship between imperialism and social Darwinism; “Imperialist politics bases itself on a hierarchy of peoples, always divided into the strong and the weak and usually graded by culture or race. Imperialists consider that their superior civilization entitles them to rule over others” (p. 432).

In chapter IX, he reiterates the fact that the dominant ideology of Europe was “an international liberalism inflected in a racist, social Darwinist direction” (p. 513). He uses evolutionary discourse to describe Unites States’ policy based on “bleak and fatalistic worldview” by linking it to Darwin’s emphasis “on the element of conflict in natural selection” (p. 494). Social Darwinism applied the idea of struggle in nature to justify the competition evident in class and race relations; “Only those who grew and engaged would have a chance of survival in viciously competitive environment” (ibid). The idea of success was conditioned with the combination of “industrial strength and scientific-technological innovation with colonial possessions and national fighting spirit” (ibid). He refers to Malthusian anxieties about the rapid population growth leading to a shortage of resources and causing international struggles “to re-divide what was already divided” (p. 494). Imperialism and globalization served as survival strategies for the West in their attempt to compete for resources. Imperialism was justified on the common assumption that weaker nations could not survive on their own or form responsible governments. Their progress was linked to “colonial tutelage” (p. 495). Social Darwinism spread in the rest of the world too in different

forms. Countries like Japan and Ottoman Empire got converted to the Western idea of progress, as is evident from the global dissemination and popularity of Spencer's ideas especially "from the 1860s to the 1920s" as explored by Lightman in *Global Spencerism* (2015, p. 4). Similarly, China underwent many internal reforms to meet the challenge of "the international struggle for survival" (Osterhammel, 2014, p. 495). From the Muslim world, Osterhammel gives only one example, Sayyid Jamal al-Din al-Afghani (though there were many others e.g., Sir Syed Ahmad Khan, Allama Muhammad Iqbal in the sub-continent), who tried to reorganize the society through "the propagation of pan-Islamic unity" (p. 496).

Osterhammel mentions "tension between equality and hierarchy" as an important characteristic of the age (p. 914). The networks of imperialism and globalization initiated new hierarchical structures of unequal distributions of power and resources with the West at the apex of development in economic, political and cultural nodes. It has been more than a century since Darwin tried to move away from the chain of being with his egalitarian idea of kinship of all living beings decentering the man from his special position. Nonetheless, his image of 'tree' implied new hierarchies, as, in the great struggle for existence, many branches of genera fail to survive; "At each period of growth all the growing twigs have tried to branch out on all sides, and to overtop and kill the surrounding twigs and branches, in the same manner as species and groups of species have tried to overmaster other species in the great battle for life" (Darwin, 1859, 2002, p. 74). The colonial system itself rested on hierarchy, "inequality, injustice and hypocrisy" (Osterhammel, 2014, p.915). The image of the benevolent West could not be sustained, as it became evident that the West was not "interested in the genuine modernization of the colonies" resulting in "a deep mistrust of Europe" (p. 913). Modernity did not bring prosperity to the colonies, as infrastructure was built to serve the economic interests of the Empire. The world resources became centralized, and "pentarchy" of great powers had all things to themselves (p. 915). In Asia, only Japan succeeded to join the great powers after acquiring its status as a great naval power.

In his chapter on Hierarchies, Osterhammel states that the Victorian era imagined society as "a kind of ladder" (p. 744). The rise of bourgeois reinforced the image of society as "a ladder" with an ambition "to move upward" (p. 762). Even the United States, though dominated by "middle classes" was not a classless society (p. 765). Anti-Semitism and

racism after the end of slavery highlight new hierarchies and inequalities. Move from agrarian to industrial, relations of status to those of contract, end of slavery and division of labor challenged old hierarchies opening “possibilities of advancement up the ladder” (ibid). Christian egalitarianism, socialist and labor movements challenged the old order appealing to the Enlightenment ideals of liberty and equality both on national and international levels though not significantly changing power/class relations. Even not all European countries were equal; the term Europe usually excluded Eastern and Southern Europe because of political and cultural differences, imperial conflicts, and their assumed backwardness. Success in economic, industrial, and imperial ventures well-established the superiority of Anglo-Saxon race of Western Europe, while Southern and Eastern Europeans were not considered their equal despite white skin. Colored races were placed at the bottom on the ladder of progress, though “yellow race” was feared for its demographic strength and business skills (p. 495).

In chapter VII, in his section on “Civilization and Exclusion”, Osterhammel mentions Charles Darwin to highlight the role evolutionary thinking played in racial thinking of the time. Racism predated Darwin, but earlier race theories e.g., by Robert Knox and Arthur de Gobineau gained popularity in the late nineteenth century (p. 859). They transformed Victorian imagination and attitudes by popularizing Euro-American racial discourse. Though Alexander von Humboldt rejected ‘racial thinking’, yet, Osterhammel asserts, the evolutionary theory presented by Darwin and his supporters revolutionized the disciplines of anthropology, ethnology and introduced eugenics, hence changing “the paradigm of the debate” (p. 859). In his article on progress, Spencer (1851, 2019) differentiated between Australian natives comparing them to “chimpanzee and gorilla” to emphasize their lack of heterogeneity in contrast to physically more heterogenous Europeans (p. 17). At another point, he argues that despite common origin, “the race as a whole is far less homogenous than it once was”(p. 18). Thus, despite Darwin’s emphasis on common descent (monogenesis), the idea of modification or divergence emphasized racial differences. Racism was extended beyond the color of skin to marginalize Jews, socialists, and feminists (Osterhammel, 2014, p. 856). Progress in the medical field enhanced the quality of life, survival rate of infants, but also of the ‘unfit’ leading to eugenic anxieties (p. 276). Spencer (1851, 2019) in repudiating

poor laws, in *Social Statics*, appeals to nature's benevolence in the destruction of the weakest to justify the extermination of the paupers to make "room" for a "generation capable of the fullest enjoyment" (p. 79). Racism became stronger in the United States and other settler colonies. In the 1880s, in North America and South Africa, white supremacy became the norm (Osterhammel, 2014, p. 350). In the 1870s, Jim Crow laws ensured that end of slavery did not mean equal rights (p. 355). The 1880s onwards, racial doctrines glorified "the global dominance and civilizing diffusion of the "Anglo-Saxon race" (p. 88). As late as in the 1960s, the sociological modernization theory presented history as "a competitive race, with the efficient North Atlantic out ahead and other regions as stragglers or late developers" (p. 69).

A central theme of an evolutionary narrative is an intrusion into habitat and the resultant conflict. Darwin (1859, 2002) maintains; "If the country were open on its borders, new forms would certainly immigrate, and this also would seriously disturb the relations of some of the former inhabitants" (p. 47). Imperialism and globalization became modes of intrusion into the otherwise distant and closed parts of the world like China and Central Africa. Speed revolution enabled by steam power and military potential acquired with gunboats and iron ships made these areas accessible to the West. "Free trade imperialism" was also used to open up Korea and other regions of the world (Osterhammel, 2014, p. 494). Intrusion in terms of imperialism and frontier expansion was considered an important source of economic growth and political stability at home. The tax-paying colonies and land in the frontiers were cherished as imperial prizes. Pioneers have been glorified in American histories for land-grabbing as a contribution to "modern nationhood and to the progress of the society as a whole" (p. 323). The United States from the start adopted an expansionist policy, and the Northwest Ordinance provided "precise rules" to accomplish this (p. 410). In 1800, Thomas Jefferson saw the future of the United States in the West and after 1840, "Manifest Destiny" became the dominant ideology to justify Westward expansion (p. 332). In 1893, Frederick Jackson Turner highlighted the role of the frontier in shaping American "polity and society" (p. 99). Frontier served as a battleground and a contact zone between the natives and the intruders and mostly ended in defeat or extinction of the former (p. 324). In 1831, Chief Justice John Marshall declared tribes "domestic dependent nations" capable of governing themselves (p. 342), but this decision was ignored. In 1829, Andrew Jackson became

president. He pursued the strategy of ethnic cleansing and introduced Indian removal policy (p. 342). The 1860s marked the outbreak of Indian wars against intrusion (p. 340). Their resistance ended with the capitulation of Lakota Chief Sitting Bull in 1881 (p. 343). Against the pervasive Western power of intrusion, it became almost impossible for the rest of the world to resist. There are a few examples of successful resistance. In 1804, Haiti became independent (p. 400). The United States achieved revolutionary independence in 1783. Other settler colonies achieved 'evolutionary autonomy', Australia (1788), New Zealand (1840), Canada (1867) (p. 413), but the subject colonies could not deter intruders in the nineteenth century.

Another important theme in an evolutionary narrative is that of adaptation to the changing conditions in the struggle for existence. Darwin (1859, 2002) notes that modification and extinction are connected as those who fail to modify get extinct (p. 69). In response to the consistent evolution of the West, the rest of the world was propelled to adapt itself to the changes brought about by imperialism and globalization. Assimilation and resistance were two different responses to the changing conditions (Osterhammel, 2014, p. 337). Japan adapted itself to the Western model of progress as a national project, the Ottoman Empire adopted a policy of defensive modernization, while Mexico embraced technocratic rule. They tried to evolve their state and military systems to "forestall military conquest or colonization", but their attempts at adaptation did not always succeed (p. 912). Western societies got disciplined by a process of chronometerization, using the clock as "a weapon of modernization" dividing the world into "the watch owners and the watchless" (p. 71). Global networks of transportation and communication had to follow GMT as their standard to set their schedules. The non-European world tried to catch up with the West by acquiring scientific knowledge, as Western natural science devalued their local knowledge of nature (p. 811). Colonial languages like English and French facilitated the dissemination of Western ideas (Westernization). West became a referential framework or model for the rest of the world for political, cultural, and economic modernity. Darwin (1859, 2002) notes; "And as foreigners have thus everywhere beaten some of the natives, we may safely conclude that the natives might have modified with advantage, so as to have better resisted such intruders" (p. 49). Enlightenment ideals of liberty and equality, which brought about revolutions in the West

resulting in political reforms, inspired and educated the liberal patriots in the colonies to promote nationalism and to mobilize freedom movements. Osterhammel (2014) attributes the recent rise of Asia also to the emulation of the Western model (p. 651).

The inability to adapt to the changing conditions leads to extinction or elimination of the weaker races in the struggle for existence. Darwin (1859, 2002) claims that in the battle for life; “if some of these many species become modified and improved, others will have to be improved in a corresponding degree or they will be exterminated” (p. 59). Osterhammel (2014) gives many examples of genocide and ruthless killing of the racial others in his history in the imperial encounters and expansion of frontiers. Before 1850, Aborigines in Australia were hunted down on a large scale. Their population dramatically decreased because of massacre and the diseases like small-pox brought by the invaders (p. 125). Inferior weaponry was also a cause of their defeat. In New Zealand, Maories faced the same fate (p. 373). In North America, Indian population decreased from 200,000 in 1821 to 30,000 in 1860 (p. 333). Conflicts among different tribes of American Indians prevented them to form a “united front” against the intrusion (p. 334). The intruders indiscriminately slaughtered bison and destroyed their means of livelihood (p. 336). End of horse and bison trade left them poor and at the mercy of forced labor. Osterhammel gives examples of genocide in the bloody wars waged in Sudan, the Ivory Coast and East Africa using lethal weapons (p. 127). Belgian Congo and German Southeast Africa became the stage for large scale genocide (p. 459). Similarly, 800,000 Asian and African warriors died in colonial wars in comparison to 280,000 Europeans and North Americans (p. 126).

The evolutionary theory lays special emphasis on fecundity, growth, and production. The dominance of a genera depends on its capacity to procreate extensively to survive in the struggle for existence. The nineteenth century, Osterhammel asserts, was a century of rapid growth and production. He describes it as an era of unipolar or “asymmetrical efficiency growth” (p. 907) enabled by industrial mode of production and free trade policy increasing per capita income. Free trade imperialism flourished because of unequal treaties with Japan, China and Korea, while the West enjoyed “unilateral privileges” (p. 290). Imperialism served as a form of investment, and slave plantations on the expanding frontiers also added to wealth. Both agrarian and industrial revolutions boosted production and international trade.

Fossil fuel age began in the 1820s, and application of steam engines in factories increased the production of goods on a large scale, while steamships and trains increased the circulation of goods. 1820-1913 witnessed a considerable gap in income and wealth in the world, as industrial Europe and Western settler lands achieved the highest economic growth (pp. 169-70). Britain's economy thrived on tribute-paying territories and its trade imperialism (p. 463).

Another sign of production and fecundity was population growth in the West. Darwin (1859, 2002) asserts; "as more individuals are produced than can possibly survive, there must in every case be a struggle for existence, either one individual with another of the same species, or with the individuals of distinct species, or with the physical conditions of life" (p. 44). The growing population of Europe served as a force to expand, migrate, and settle in new lands for resources. Osterhammel (2014) postulates that this table challenges "European stereotypes of Asia" with surprising low growth rates (p. 121). Victorians and even later generations believed in Thomas Robert Malthus's analysis which presented Asians in general and Chinese in particular "incapable of "preventive checks" on their family and therefore faced a shortage of resources and dire poverty or famines to check the rapid growth (p. 121). Darwin (1859, 2002), greatly inspired by Malthus, held that "the geometrical tendency to increase must be checked by destruction at some period of life" (p. 45). Malthusian thesis was widely accepted even in China itself without being challenged, so thorough was the invasion of Western ideology. Other examples of low population growth are those of India, Japan (before 1870) and of middle Europe (Osterhammel, 2014, p.123). Osterhammel presents rapid population growth of Europe as its potential to multiply and expand territories for resources, though he admits that population growth or inertia are not accurate indicators of progress, as advanced countries like France also experienced "depopulation" (p. 123). Wars, civil wars, and epidemics caused the disparity in population growth rates.

Osterhammel's treatment of time with his open chronology is no different from that of Darwin, Spencer and historians who used evolutionary approach in their works. He refutes the notion of "the spontaneous emergence of modernity" and describes it as a result of a long time, starting with Montaigne and Bacon (p. 904). He does not believe in sudden changes and seems to prefer a uniformitarian explanation for gradual change or transformation of the world. He claims; "Lengthy processes were necessary to translate the "birth of modernity" at

the level of ideas into institutions and mentalities that came close to the definitions of modernity used in today's social theory" (p. 905). Some histories map the nineteenth century from 1848-1916, others studying modernity from 1750-1857, while imperial histories from 1880-1945, and cultural histories from 1830-1890 (pp. 58-63). As far as situating nineteenth century is concerned, he takes a long period from 1760-1918, considering the seven-year war, French Revolution, political crisis leading to the emergence of the New World, European imperialism, British, French, and German rivalries, industrialization, labor movements, racism, new imperialism, end of slavery, nation-building, and the first World War. His chapters and events are not arranged chronologically, rather his treatment of time remains flexible to look backward and forward to unravel the long causality of the events and their global impact on social, political, and cultural development.

4. Conclusion

Finally, Osterhammel acknowledges to be Eurocentrically inclined, as he believes the nineteenth century to be "a European century" (p. xvii). This Eurocentrism is very much in line with the histories written from an evolutionary perspective, as is evident in the examples discussed in the literature review. Though Osterhammel aims to challenge "Eurocentrism" and all other forms of "naïve cultural self-reference", yet he admits that a global perspective, which "consciously plays on the relativity of ways of seeing", is also non-neutral (p. xx). His global history relies on the secondary literature, mainly Western with a minor contribution from Asian or African world, for varied interpretation of European modernity and its global descent through modification. The scope of his work gets limited by the limits of the works he draws on. He accepts his positionality as a 'European' (German) author, mainly addressing 'European' readers (p. xx). He defends his inability to present an accurate and inclusive picture from research in other countries on the grounds that "no one has sufficient knowledge to verify correctness of every detail, to do equal justice to every region of the world" (p. xviv). Being a relative perspective, 'global' does not deconstruct a core-periphery structure, and hence he exempts himself from the responsibility shifting the blame on lack of sources to incorporate the perspective of the "voiceless, the marginalized, and the victimized" (ibid). Henceforth, "centrality of Europe" is restored in his story of global transformation

(ibid), and he asserts; “The nineteenth century was a European one also in the sense that other countries took Europe as a yardstick” (ibid).

He unwittingly falls into trap of “West against the rest” tradition by choosing “to measure again, on a case-by-case basis, the gap between “Europe” ... and other parts of the world” (p. xxi). The self-versus-other trope is established right from the beginning, as despite his intention to avoid re-capitulating “Europe’s special path”(ibid), he launches on re-narrating the story of the conquest of the West and submission of the rest. He eventually concludes with the impossibility to make any changes to the story of the West taking it as “an incontrovertible fact” (p. 910). Failing to find any other models of political, cultural and economic modernity, he finds no alternative but to present the West as “the global standard”, inviting from the rest, heterogenous responses ranging from imitation, partial adaptation to dismissal (p. 912). Osterhammel claims that cultural transfer was but “a one-way street” and based on the conclusions of secondary literature, his generalizations do not escape the hierarchical structure of national histories telling stories of Western exceptionalism. Osterhammel claims that it would be “naïve to romanticize “local knowledge” in non-European cultures, and unjust to charge an expanding Europe with its wholesale suppression” (p. 809). He concludes to the dismay and humiliation of the ‘marginalized’ and the ‘voiceless’: “Whereas the East borrowed all it could from the West _ from legal systems to architecture- no one in Europe or North America thought that Asia or Africa offered a model in anything” (p. 914).

To conclude, imperialism and globalization weaved new webs of affinities of dependence, “opportunities” and new hierarchies with Asia and Africa at the bottom (p. 463). Imperialism kept evolving itself taking different forms e.g., trade imperialism, land imperialism by weaving webs of debts and unequal treaties and sanctions. It brought about more radical changes than any revolution bringing about social, economic, and cultural changes across the globe, wherefore, Osterhammel considers it a kind of revolution which paved way for French and American revolutions (1793, 1776) (p. 516). On the contrary, Asia and Africa did not undergo any remarkable revolutions as did the West, they remained stagnant with their “princdoms” and “tribal states” (p. 574). As all changes originated in the West and affected the rest through global and imperial networks, “West was perceived as

“youthful” and non-European world as “old, passive and lifeless” (p. 658). In his search for the origins of global modernity, Osterhammel comes up with no new answers, as his generalizations about grand narratives are limited by the conclusions of the secondary literature, and his synthesis of syntheses reflects the same evolutionary patterns that marked the earlier histories, with the most heterogeneous West at the center of networks of development and the rest of the world entangled in the affinities of dependence. The paper has limited scope in its study of only one global history, but it invites the attention of future scholars to the use of evolutionary discourse in different disciplines in the twenty-first century. It is an interesting project to uncover our relationship with the past, to investigate how far we have moved from it, and how much we owe to it in shaping our worldviews.

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