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Review of:
W. Warren Wagar. A SHORT HISTORY OF THE FUTURE, 2nd ed. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992. xi + 324 pp. ISBN 0-226-86902-4, $14.95 (paper).

Reviewed by
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v.10/4/95

Utopian visions of possible new world orders proliferate every 50 to 60 years with the long stagnation of the Kondraetieff economic cycle, according to the research of Edgar Kiser and Kriss A. Drass ("Changes in the Core of the World-System and the Production of Utopian Literature in Great Britain and the United Staets, 1883-1975," AMERICAN SOCIOLOGICAL REVIEW, 1987). They found that the publication of utopian novels as a percentage of all novels published clusters in the downturn phase of the Kondraetieff wave, peaking during the period when economic conditions turn for the better after a long crisis. Hegemonic decline amplifies the cultural response to the economy. Kiser and Drass use the publication of utopian novels as something of a

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temperature gauge of the prevailing cultural weather. The relationship between ideological and economic conditions is turbulent at best. But over the long term, the cultural atmosphere surrounding economic conditions shifts with the seasonal pattern of economic stagnation and expansion, and hegemonic stability and decline. One such novel of particular importance for conceiving the future of the world-system is W. Warren Wagar's A SHORT HISTORY OF THE FUTURE.

Wagar, a historian at SUNY Binghamton and colleague of Immanuel Wallerstein, has written a utopian vision from a deliberately world-systemic point of view. As a novel, it reads rather like a historian's extrapolation based on an explicit theory. It is full of long treatises on changing world conditions, with only occasional epistolary interludes to add

human characters to what is otherwise all plot. While it lacks the literary quality of the H. G. Wells it attempts to emulate, it is nevertheless readable and enjoyable simply as the written imagination of a learned and intelligent author. Viewing a

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utopian novel simply as a novel misses the whole point.

Utopian novels pose new answers to the ideological question of "what is possible?" (Kiser and Drass). Along with answers to "what exists?" and "what is good?," conceiving "what is possible?" forms the basis for any world view. Goran Therborn's classic work on ideology (THE POWER OF IDEOLOGY AND THE IDEOLOGY OF POWER, 1980) explains that defining "what is possible" is the last

defense of the status quo. While one may empirically demonstrate that exploitation exists and even that it is unfair, for instance, one cannot prove empirically that a better alternative is possible when that system does not yet exist. Conceiving "what is possible" is an act of extrapolation from what exists. When the world economy has unmistakenly failed to grow at appeasing rates for nearly a generation, people become convinced that the existing forms of organization must be discarded and experiment with new ones to put in their place. Utopian visions, at that time, have a new resonance. They take advantage of the pliable economic conditions to stretch our conception of the possible.

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Wagar's novel comes at what is, hopefully, the tail of a long stagnation, and at the middle of America's descent from hegemony. As a utopian vision of possible futures, a vision based on world-system theory, Wagar offers scenarios that begin to offer what we must have in order for the theory to offer more than analysis of what exists. Since the end of the Soviet Union in 1990, socialist visions of the future appear to many to be trapped by futility. Despite the long-ago recognition by most Western leftists that the Soviet model was undemocratic and oppressive, its utter collapse brought a surprising recognition that the entire system had long been unreformable. Democratization by Gorbachevs or Trotskys or other would-be true democratic socialists could not reverse the failings of the command economy (Terry Boswell and Ralph Peters, "State Socialism and the Industrial Divide in the World-Economy: A Comparative Essay on the Rebellions in Poland and China,"

CRITICAL SOCIOLOGY, 1990). This recognition is what leaves Marxists in a crisis of purpose, not the trumpeting of Soviet oppression or even of its failures, which were recognizable from

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applying Marxist theory. This is not to say that Wagar offers a viable alternative model or that his vision is even a prediction of what will happen (the first edition still even had a Soviet Union). The purpose of a utopian novel is not to predict the future but to offer what Wagar calls an "array of possibilities" (p. x). His particular array is not highly probable as an extrapolation. But it does offer a vision of a world socialism that is not constrained by the now suddenly-obvious impossibilities of extending a "reformed" Soviet model. Wagar's vision is feasible within known parameters of the world-system and while an unlikely event to occur by accident, something like it could be made to happen by concerted action. It thus extends the possibility that concerted action would be worthwhile.

Wagar actually offers two utopias and one dystopia. Each follows from and requires the previous one to create the conditions for its subsumption. The novel is organized into three "books": "Earth Inc.," "Red Earth," and "House of Earth," which chronicle the history of the world form 1995 to 2100. Wagar (p.

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xiii) modeled his three "books" on the Christian eschatology of "Armageddon, Millennium, and New Jerusalem." The dystopia must come first. It is an extrapolation from existing transnational corporate capitalism to include a corporate world polity, the GTC (Global Trade Consortium). The GTC functions as world hegemon, enforcing a corporate world order through economic boycott rather than military dominance. Initially the GTC is an enlightened despot, maintaining world peace and ushering in a renewed global prosperity at the small price of undemocratic rule, uniform cultural commodification, growing inequality, environmental degradation, and individual subservience. But global capitalist expansion leads inevitably to overproduction and recession. Wagar plays out the next century with dates from the one now ending. Global recession in 2032 lasts until world war breaks out in the 2040s. But in this scenario, the world war is a nuclear holocaust.

From the ashes of the war, the states in the Southern Hemisphere (which are now the core) coalesce to form a new world

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polity based on the principles of the World Party. The World Party is the most interesting and perhaps most important part of the book, which we will return to shortly. This new world state seems to be a democratic version of the GTC, which as a global democracy is driven to redress the problems of inequality and environmental degradation while also managing to restore peace and prosperity.

It succeeds a bit too easily, but Wagar does remind us that even in a democratic socialist utopia, resistance will occur against the tyranny of the majority. This resistance takes the form of the Small Party, an anarchist congregation seeking individual and cultural autonomy through community self-sufficiency. In the final and most entertaining "book," a victorious Small Party simply dissolves the world government. The final utopia is a world of self-governing communities small enough to practice direct democracy and enabled by fantastic technology to be both self-sufficient and fully prosperous. Any hierarchy is rejected, or falls away, and the material determination of the

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spirit is finally reversed.

The World Party

While the particular scenarios that Wagar presents are built upon an increasing number of "what ifs," the World Party is based on a set of principles that are applicable in a wide array of scenarios. Those principles deserve discussion, regardless of the merits of the scenarios. The Party principles, as I interpret them from various points in the text, are as follows:

1. A World Socialist Commonwealth, including a world state with a military monopoly and public ownership of the megacorporations.
2. Global Democracy with direct elections by department for all offices, global and local.
3. Legal and programmatic provision for equal opportunity,

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including a worldwide assault on racism and sexism; and state provision of basic needs, including education, health care, child

care, and retirement.

4. Incomes based on need, with no more than a 3:1 ratio among individuals for those employed (half share for those unwilling to work) and no more than 2:1 across departments.

5. "Declaration of Human Sovereignty," in which the world state abolishes national sovereignty and eschews national or ethnic identities.

6. "Integral humanism," a philosophical order of public affairs based on rationality, including a secular state and official tolerance for individual beliefs (i.e., no legal enforcement of religious, national, ethnic, or other traditions), and a disdain for commodity fetishism.

7. A global plan for ecological restoration, renewable sources of supply, and population control.

8. A critique of world capitalism as the source of world wars and as oppressive and illegal as a world order (although petty

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bourgeois capital and markets can operate within departments).

9. A critique of Stalinist style state socialism as oppressie and illegal, with guarantees for democracy and individual liberty.

10. A vanguard party strategy for mundialization, including revolutio, elections, coops, and even conquest of laggards until all states join the world commonwealth.

The World Party is modeled on the German Green Party, with a heavy dose of the original Second International and the added twist of being based on world-system rather than Marxist or Keynesian theory. It carries a "New Left" imprint of being socialist and democratic, anti-capitalist and anti-totalitarian, class and individually based. As Giovanni Arrighi, Terence K. Hopkins and Immanuel Wallerstein ("1968: The Great Rehearsal," in Boswell, ed., REVOLUTION IN THE WORLD-SYSTEM, 1987) point out, since the world revolution of 1968, such "New Left" conceptions have redefined progressive politics.

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There are many points that deserve critique, rejection, or revision. We can start with those offered by Wagar himself, by enunciating the principles of the Small Party. It carries an imprint from the other major offspring of 1968 revolution, the "New Age" conceptions that redefined identity and spirituality. To many, "New Age" means hippie wannabes wearing crystals,

sleeping under pyramids, and listening to whales sing. It is that, but it is also an umbrella term for a wide variety of lifestyle issues that share a concern for personal autonomy and self-awareness. The most prominent are feminist (and ethnic) conceptions of identity, which, for instance, overlap but still contrast with leftist definitions of feminism as equality in the workplace.

Given the anarchistic and spiritual character of the Small Party, its principles are deliberately vague. Perhaps only the following two principles are necessary and shared: elimination of the state or other central authority above the community; and complete autonomy and self-reliance of small communities. Self-

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reliance is premised on utopian technology that provides for abundant prosperity with little effort. Wagar suggests that most such communities would be governed by town-hall-style direct democracy, although religious and other traditional orders may also proliferate. He assumes that abundance would guarantee a general equality and eliminate any desire for hierarchy or conquest. A missing assumption, which we can add, is that the technology has a diminishing return to scale, and perhaps even to hierarchy, which would make small egalitarian communities the optimal form. But this makes the technological form, and thus the Small Party option, even more fantastical, eviscerating the critique.

Perhaps the "New Age" critique of "scientific socialism" is better understood as an alternative set of goals rather than an alternative organizational form that must be premised on utopian technology. Let me below offer a series of contrasts, interpreted from the text, with the Small Party goals listed first: spiritual vs. rational; early Marx vs. late Marx; spontaneous vs. planned;

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feminine vs. masculine; identity vs. humanity; community vs. individual; individual vs. family; autonomy vs. centralized; self-sufficient vs. interdependent; negotiation vs. law; variety vs. standard; freedom vs. equality; relativist vs. universal; folk vs. classical; play vs. work; and, anarchy vs. state.

Not all goals contradict and instead are only a different priority or emphasis. Nevertheless, the contrast is often striking and many do contradict. Wagar offers a stage theory wherein rational scientific world socialism produces the abundance that enables a communal spiritual world. Working class

technocrats turn into communal hippies. A strength of Wagar's array of possibilities is that they take account of the slow movement of global time. He lets about 50 years pass, a full Kondraetieff, before one world order slips into the next. Each set of social relations that characterize a period is predicated on the developments that preceded it -- the autonomous community utopia required the equality and prosperity of a world socialism, which in turn was built on charred framework of a capitalist world

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polity. But are these stages necessary?

Wagar's stage conception justifies sacrificing spirituality, spontaneity, femininity, identity, and perhaps even freedom in the short run in order to achieve the same in the abundant future. I doubt that by sacrificing these goals one creates the conditions for their achievement, or even if it might, that many would risk the sacrifice. These are not investments, where a sacrifice reaps a greater reward, but are alternatives. Some may even be complimentary. Yet must we accept either the premise of fantastic technology or that the achievement of goals must occur in stages? Is not a synthesis of goals, requiring only foreseeable technology, a possible option?

I not only think the answer is yes, but also think that the world party and world socialism is only worthwhile if the answer is yes. What that synthesis can and should be cannot be answered here. Or what is the same thing, all or at least most of the goals should be included. "How can 'New Left' and 'New Age' be reconciled or synthesized?" is the first of two questions that

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advocates of a world party and world socialism need to reach an agreed upon answer. The second is question is, "How do we begin?"

Historically, attempts to organize international parties have succeeded only up to the point of exercising real power. Power is located in states, which have a societal constituency and a physical border that frequently contradicts global concerns. The nationalistic division of the Second International over World War I is the classic example. Yet, ironically, as the national interests in western Europe coalesced after World War II, the Second International revived as a common forum for designing and coordinating (moderately) progressive policies. Could such a forum exist at the world level?

Certainly global organizations exist and have been

proliferating at a phenomenal rate since World War II. In analyzing data on the establishment of International Non-Governmental Organizations (INGOs) since 1875, John Boli (1994) finds a linear increase interrupted only by war and depression,

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that after World War II increased geometrically (three times as many in 1990 as 1960). These organizations, along with other global actors and events, constitute and reflect the world polity (despite the absence of a world state). Yet international political parties and labor unions have not been among the organizations on the rise. Most have been industry and trade organizations, that is in class terms, organizations of international capital rather than labor. Capital is laying the foundation for organizing labor globally, as it previously did industrially.

If the foundation is there, then the question of how to begin becomes one of deciding where to start, what part of the foundation to build upon first. A utopian perspective is ill-equipped to determine what we should do; it offers only scenarios of what we could do. Wagar offers an alternative scenario to traditional party organizing. He has the World Party evolving out of study groups, salons, and other nonhierarchical interactions. The most important are discussion networks on the Internet, not unlike the World-Systems Network with which most readers of this journal are familiar.

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Book reviewed:
Robert Perrucci. JAPANESE AUTO TRANSPLANTS IN THE HEARTLAND: CORPORATISM AND COMMUNITY. New York: Aldine de Gruyter, 1994. xii+186 pp. ISBN 0-202-30582-7, $37.95 (hardcover); ISBN 0-202-30529-5, $18.95 (paper).

Reviewed by
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v.10/4/95

Robert Perrucci's JAPANESE AUTO TRANSPLANTS IN THE HEARTLAND is not a study of transplants as factories. There is little or no discussion of work, management relations, or quality control inside Japanese automobile transplants, and anyone interested in these topics would be better served by books such as Kenny and Florida's BEYOND MASS PRODUCTION or Womack et al.'s THE MACHINE THAT CHANGED THE WORLD. Perrucci, in other words, is not interested in transplants as 'things,' he is interested in transplants as 'process' and specifically in the factors and forces leading to their location in certain midwestern communities in the United States.

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As the book correctly points out, this "transplant phenomenon" is the result of both global and national, or what could be called macro, and state and local, or micro, determinants. Perrucci's discussion of the macro determinants is probably the weakest part of the book. Not only does he overlook some important points, e.g., the role of MITI or the effects of the VRA (the Voluntary Restraint Agreement between Japan and the U.S.) on aggressive Japanese companies, but he repeats much of what has already been observed about transplants. On the other hand, the originality and strength of this book lies in its analysis of the micro determinants. Previously, these received, at best, some scattered attention (e.g., Green and Yanarella, eds., THE POLITICS OF INDUSTRIAL RECRUITMENT, 1990). In this book, Perrucci systematically examines these by comparing informal and formal state and local policies and practices which led to the

construction of Japanese auto transplants in several Midwest communities. Perrucci concludes that the important determinants at the micro level were the ability of an "activist" state and

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local governments, working in conjunction with local business elites, to provide incentives for, and construct a consensus around, the new plant, its people, and its economic benefits. He refers to this alliance between state, local governments and local elites for the purpose of attracting investments and stimulating the economy as "embedded corporatism" and argues that it is _not_ a transitory phenomenon, arising solely to meet the demands of luring the transplants. Instead, "embedded corporatism" represents "a significant and historic change in the way political and economic life is organized" (p. 35). The clearest indicator of the growth of "embedded corporatism" over the last 20 years is the growth of interest among states, as evidenced by a doubling in the number of conventional programs and the creation of new programs, in promoting economic development. This, in turn, is a response by states to declining Federal and local revenues due to deindustrialization and increased responsibility for the welfare of its citzenry. In a the largest sense, Perrucci sees "embedded corporatism," of which the transplant phenomenon is only one

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instance, as part of a new "social structure of accumulation" consisting of regional economies and "based on close cooperation between private corporations and state government" (p. 35).

In my opinion, this book is well worth reading; it addresses relevant points about both transplants and the future of the American political economy. Some may be dismayed by the middle chapters because they read like a community study in the vein of Vidich and Bensman's SMALL TOWN IN MASS SOCIETY. But the strength of this book, and its relevance to world-system concerns, is that it links these community level developments with broader trends. This was, in fact, the espoused intention of the author: "our case study approach will show how broad formulations of global change are reflected in the day-to-day actions of politicians, business owners, labor officials, environmentalists and other community members...." (p. 37), and it has been achieved with an extremely high degree of success.

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Book reviewed:
Andre Gunder Frank and Barry K. Gills, eds. THE WORLD SYSTEM: FIVE HUNDRED YEARS OR FIVE THOUSAND? London and New York: Routledge, 1993. xxii + 320 pp. ISBN 0-415-7678-1, $65.00 (hardcover).

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v.10/4/95

THE WORLD SYSTEM: FIVE HUNDRED YEARS OR FIVE THOUSAND? is an extended debate among the editors, Immanuel Wallerstein, Samir Amin, and others about how new and how different the modern, capitalist world-system is from all previous world-systems. Although Andre Gunder Frank and Barry Gills accept Wallerstein's analysis of the modern world-system, they strongly reject his claim for its novelty. Rather, they argue that many of the processes Wallerstein posits as unique to the modern world-system when the state were invented in Mesopotamia some five thousand years ago. They argue that the emphasis on the uniqueness of the modern world-system reproduces an unintended and unfortunate

Eurocentrism. They argue instead for a humanocentric world history.

Two further issues lurk in the background in the debate about European uniqueness. First, Frank and Gills argue that the assertion that there has been one continuous world system is not a reversion to a theory of unilineal, inevitable progress. Rather, it is a recognition of a deep historical continuity filled with contingencies amenable to human action. While they seek to avoid slipping into teleological reasoning and unilineal theorizing, and explicitly reject both, they always seem in imminent danger of going over the brink.

Second, Frank and Gills's position continues to be contested, not only by Samir Amin and Immanuel Wallerstein, but by

Christopher Chase-Dunn and myself and others. While Amin and Wallerstein argue that the appearance of the modern world-system was indeed something new under the sun, Chase-Dunn and I argue that its appearance was not the first such transformation. Gills and Frank side-step the issue of earlier transformations by

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starting with a major evolutionary problem already solved: the origin of states. We argue that the appearance of states was also a world-systemic process, and that the study of such major transformations -- from kin-based, normative to tributary, and from tributary to capitalist world-systems -- may offer insights into possible future transformations. This argument is largely ignored. To be fair, not much of it was in print at the time Frank and Gills edited their collection.

While the debate over the uniqueness of the modern world-system continues, the level of disagreement should not be overstated. The differences are often ones of perspective, interpretation, and nuance. Frank and Gills emphasize continuity; others emphasize transformation.

The book is organized in four parts. Part one is the editors' opening essay--a masterful tour and plea for examining world history from a world-systemic view. It rehearses all the familiar, and many new, arguments for approaching history and social change from a world-system perspective. The second part develops their

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theory, beginning with a now classic essay on ancient imperialism by Kajsa Ekholm and Jonathan Friedman, followed by the editors' own theory of accumulation (the latter first appeared in Chase-Dunn and Hall, eds., CORE/PERIPHERY RELATIONS IN PRECAPITALIST WORLDS, 1991). This part concludes with a previously unpublished essay by Gills on hegemonic transitions. Gills provides a useful summary of conventional international relations theories and Gramscian theories of hegemony and compares both to their theory. He further claims that the cycles of hegemony and cycles of accumulation that characterize the five thousand year old world system are rooted in class struggles between elites and non-elites and among elites (p. 130).

Part three analyzes world history, begining with a breathtaking tour of hegemonic shifts from "1700 BC to 1700 AD." They follow this with an analysis of feudalism, capitalism, and socialism as ideological modes. Part four opens with a new essay by political scientist David Wilkinson. This essay is a readable

introduction to Wilkinson's important work which closely parallels

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that of Gills and Frank. In it he explains his concepts of central civilization, oikumenes, and civilizations. Next Samir Amin uses an analysis of tributary empires to makes a case for a sharp transformation to capitalism which draws on his EUROCENTRISM (1989). Janet Abu-Lughod summarizes and extends her analysis from BEFORE EUROPEAN HEGEMONY (1989) in a new essay, which observes both continuity and significant change in the appearance of modern capitalism. Immanuel Wallerstein presents a pungent four page critique of Frank and Gills' world system (no hyphen, singular) analysis, arguing for world-systems (hyphen, plural) analysis. This essay, in combination with the opening pages of the first essay draws the distinctions between the two approaches quite clearly. Gills and Frank exercise editorial prerogative and close with a rejoinder to their critics.

A major insight in this collection is that the rise of Europe, and indeed the occurrence of feudalism, can only be explained by recourse to systemic connections to the rest of Afroeurasia. Debates of the uniqueness of Europe not withstanding,

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Frank and Gills agree with Amin that European feudalism originates in systemic processes, that it is a peripheral form of the tributary state.

The major weaknesses, in my view, are: (1) lack of clear connection to and implication for future transformations, other than the claim that the struggle continues; (2) insufficient attention to demographic processes, especially epidemics transmitted along trade routes; and (3) only limited explanation of what drive the cycles of hegemony and accumulation that characterize this five thousand year old world system. Even the role of class struggles is not fully explicated. At least the questions are raised in a provocative way.

This book bears the burden of any collection of previously published essays: it is redundant in places and disjointed in others. However, a Foreword by William H. McNeill, the Preface by the editors, addenda to a few essays, and parenthetical remarks noting links among the essays increase its overall coherence and minimize these minor faults. Even those who have read one, or even all, of the previously published essays will benefit from a new reading of the entire collection. Overall, THE WORLD SYSTEM: FIVE HUNDRED YEARS OR FIVE THOUSAND? belongs in every library that

claims coverage of world history or international or relations. It is a "must read" for anyone seriously interested in the debates about precapitalist world-systems.

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Book reviewed:
Guillermo Algaze. THE URUK WORLD SYSTEM: THE DYNAMICS OF EXPANSION OF EARLY MESOPOTAMIAN CIVILIZATION. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993. xii + 162 pp. ISBN 0-226-01381-2, $39.95 (hardcover).

Reviewed by
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One of the many ironies of studying complex societies in Western Asia is that so much new information has been acquired as a result of modern processes which obliterate the past more forcefully than anything the world has ever seen. Like the hydraulic works which brought plenty then despair to Mesopotamia over the ages, the dams on the Tigris and Euphrates and their tributaries in Turkey, Syria, and Iraq bring short-term economic

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gain but threaten long-term ecological and archaeological disaster. The quarter century archaeological bonanza of surveys and salvage excavations is bittersweet indeed. A second irony is that the Uruk period of Southern Mesopotamia is in some respects better known in the peripheries than in the "heartland of cities." In the south, Warka remains the primary reference point, but elsewhere dozens of Uruk sites have been surveyed and an increasing number excavated, creating a rich database and an intriguing series of questions. It is this outer world of the Uruk that Guillermo Algaze addresses in his excellent book on The Uruk World System.

Based on a 1986 dissertation at the University of Chicago, the book expands and refines the arguments presented in a 1989 article in CURRENT ANTHROPOLOGY (Algaze, "The Uruk Expansion:

Cross-cultural Exchange in Early Mesopotamian Civilization"). Algaze articulates a concise scenario to explain the presence of Uruk sites in Syria, Iran and Anatolia. He suggests that Uruk interest in these areas was driven by the need to procure critical

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resources not present in the southern alluvium. To do this Uruk societies created a series of settlements in the peripheries to develop exchange relations with highland areas where resources and preexisting trade networks, most notably for timber, stone, and metals, were located. The asymmetrical nature of these relations, between representatives of the highly organized Uruk polities and the lower-order indigenous Chalcolithic societies, created a situation of dependency. Only limited sectors of the highland economies were developed and local elites became reliant on trade relations on the Mesopotamian "market" for continual reinforcement of their roles and statuses.

In turn, the Uruk lowland exported a narrow range of finished goods, such as textiles, to the north, strengthening central control of labor-intensive industries at home and undermining economic diversification in the periphery. The overall result was an "informal empire", where domination was essentially economic rather than political or territorial. But the catalytic effect of this intrusion on Late Chalcolithic societies also hastened their

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demise, as increasingly sophisticated northern elites began exercising greater control over exchange, interrupting critical flows of resources to the south and helping cause the collapse of the Late Uruk period. This persuasive scenario explicitly employs elements of several classic theories; dependency theory, world systems approaches, and revisionist theories of imperialism. It is also based on a view of southern Mesopotamia as resource-poor.

The bulk of the book is taken up with a systematic discussion of the Uruk, Uruk-related, and indigenous Late Chalcolithic sites in the peripheries and their functions. This makes for highly informative reading, as Algaze collates all the available evidence, primarily from surveys. The number of sites with Uruk material is considerable, but distinguishing an "Uruk" site from a "local" site on the basis of surface collections is problematic. Sites with Uruk material are categorized as urban-sized "enclaves,? such as Habuba Kabira, Tell Brak, and possibly Nineveh, with their surrounding cluster sites, and smaller "outposts" and "stations" further in the periphery, such as Godin

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Tepe, Tepe Sialk, and Hassek Huyuk. Again, determination of site function on the basis of surface remains is a difficult issue. Algaze persuasively notes, however, that the distribution of sites is such that an economic rationale is visible. The enclaves are clearly located on strategic trade routes along the Euphrates, Upper Khabour, and Upper Tigris, while smaller stations appear to secure connecting routes. Other stations are located in the vicinity of highland production centers, such as the Anatolian copper working site of Tepecik.

The materialist orientation of the argument is clear, with little mention of the political and the religious. The economic focus is in keeping with the thrust of world systems and dependency approaches which must rely on straight-forward coercions and benefits to explain how people were motivated to participate in this trading system. This is very much against the trend of other recent studies of intersocietal interaction, most notably the work of Mary Helms (ULYSSES' SAIL, 1988; "Long-distance Contacts, Elite Aspirations, and the Age of Discovery in

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Cosmological Context," in Shortman and Urban, eds., RESOURCES, POWER, AND INTERREGIONAL INTERACTION, 1992), which stress ideological factors as motivation for elite demands and for public acquiescence and participation. In the Old World ideological approaches have been employed in analyses of exchange in Early Cycladic and early Egypto-Levantine contexts (Cyprian Broodbank, "Ulysses without Sails: Trade, Distance, Knowledge and Power in the Early Cyclades," WORLD ARCHAEOLOGY, 1993; Alexander H. Joffe, SETTLEMENT AND SOCIETY IN THE EARLY BRONZE I AND II OF THE SOUTHERN LEVANT, 1993), while in the New World they have been the source of much controversy (Geoffrey W. Conrad and Arthur A. Demarest, RELIGION AND EMPIRE, 1988). There is of course no "right" way to look at intersocietal interaction, but an ideological perspective on the Uruk expansion may help resolve certain questions of intent, function, scale and timing.

The book is on weakest grounds when discussing the goods being exchanged. The argument is largely from silence with regard to the raw or finished bulk goods presumably traded in either

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direction, such as timber, textiles, dried fish, prisoners, or any

of the other commodities attested in later documentary evidence. What is actually found in the Mesopotamian core are a variety of metals and exotic stones, while in the peripheries outside the colonies there are Uruk ceramics and seals. The nature of the actual finds cuts directly to the heart of the world systems approach. Algaze dismisses Wallerstein's dichotomy between "preciosities" and bulk staples, but in his insistence to invoke dependency theory he must posit large-scale production activities which strengthen elites in the peripheries and lead to underdevelopment. Similarly, to make the Uruk expansion the forerunner of later, more direct forms of domination, the "informal empire" must exert a level of economic control attainable only through large-scale and asymmetrical exchange. Finally, lowland-highland relations had to be sufficiently profound that their interruption by independent-minded elites in the peripheries would have helped precipitate the collapse of the Late Uruk society in the alluvium and propelled the highlands

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towards greater complexity. At the root of much of this lies the notion of a "resource-starved" Mesopotamian alluvium, whose socioeconomic hunger for interregional exchange is a central tenant of North American theories on the ?origins of the state.?

Three factors have tended to constrain our view of intersocietal interaction and early complexity in Western Asia and elsewhere (see also the discussion in Edward M. Schortman and Paticia A. Urban, "The Place of Interaction Studies in Archaeological Thought," in Shortman and Urban, eds., RESOURCES, POWER, AND INTERREGIONAL INTERACTION, 1992). First is the explicit emphasis on specialized production in North American managerially-oriented, neo-evolutionary analyses of state formation. Second are the slightly tyrannical analogies of Akkadian imperialism, where we have tended to rather simplistically accept Sargonic accounts (Piotr Michalowski, "Memory and Deed: The Historiography of the Political Expansion of the Akkad State," in Liverani, ed., AKKAD - THE FIRST WORLD EMPIRE, 1993), and Old Assyrian trade, where documentary evidence alone reveals an archaeologically invisible

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relationship of otherwise unimagined proportions. These are combined with the textbook mantra of Mesopotamia lacking natural resources, a view that is perhaps more a colonialist lament rather than an objective assessment. The result has been an anthropological paradigm on the origins of the state lying in the

ability of institutions to process information and administer production, rationally taking advantage of its ability to produce tremendous agricultural surpluses but at the same time desperately needing interaction with its highland neighbors. While it has been applied cross-culturally, most recently by Algaze ("Expansionary Dynamics of Some Early Pristine States," AMERICAN ANTHROPOLOGIST, 1993), the theory no longer seems especially robust (see especially Philip L. Kohl, "State Formation," in Patterson and Gailey, eds., POWER RELATIONS AND STATE FORMATION, 1987; and Norman Yoffee, "Too Many Chiefs? Or Safe Texts for the 90s," in Sherratt and Yoffee, eds., ARCHAEOLOGICAL THEORY - WHO SETS THE AGENDA?, 1993). Only a few aspects may be considered here.

Was the alluvium so starved for resources? In his comment on

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Algaze's earlier presentation, Harvey Weiss ("Comment on Guillermo Algaze, 'The Uruk Expansion'," CURRENT ANTHROPOLOGY, 1989) believes not, suggesting for example, that imported wood was not necessary for monumental architecture, that gypsum was extracted locally, and so on. Ironically, such a minimalist view on the need for lowland-highland interaction undermines Weiss's own theories regarding Akkadian imperialism in Northern Mesopotamia (H. Weiss, M.-A. Courty, W. Wetterstrom, F. Guichard, L. Senior, R. Meadow, and A. Curnow, "The Genesis and Collapse of Third Millenium North Mesopotamian Civilization," SCIENCE, 1993). Recent ethnoarchaeology, for example, would suggest that local trees and reeds may have sufficed for all but the most monumental architecture in Southern Mesopotamia (Edward Ochsenschlager, "Ethnographic Evidence for Wood, Boats, Bitumen and Reeds in Southern Iraq," BULLETIN ON SUMERIAN AGRICULTURE, 1992; Jean-Claude Margueron, "Le Bois dans L'Architecture: Premier Essai pour Une Estimation des Besoins dans Le Bassin Mesopotamien," BULLETIN ON SUMERIAN AGRICULTURE, 1992). The debate over resources

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will not be resolved easily, but it useful to focus on what we actually have in the archaeological record, prestige goods, and to suggest factors which complement the materialist approach.

Here the work of Helms and others on ideological factors helps provide a more realistic set of assumptions on the basic rationale for interregional interaction, the securing of critical resources for elite symbolic use and the exercise of ideological power. The significance of prestige goods in interregional interaction was pointed out long ago by Robert M. Adams

("Anthropological Perspectives on Ancient Trade," CURRENT ANTHROPOLOGY, 1974) and Jane Schneider ("Was there a Pre-Capitalist World-System?", PEASANT STUDIES, 1977). Furthermore, no one has been able to propose an entirely convincing explanation for how Uruk settlers got to the peripheries and how they were organized. Certainly the wholesale Uruk colonization of the Susiana plain is a very different phenomenon than the trading posts in Syro-Anatolia, for which Algaze proposes a "trade diaspora" model, following Philip Curtin. But issues of initial

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design and intent remain unclear. Were it the case that elites at least initially sought high-value, low-volume materials for purposes of symbolic display, then appeals to the religious sphere may have sufficed to motivate colonists. Exercising the ideological and administrative ability to dispatch groups of people to distant frontiers may itself have been a part of the rationale for the colonies. Once in the periphery the colonies may have been self-sustaining, dutifully replicating southern Mesopotamian practice amidst the natives, eventually growing into large settlement systems. The shallow duality of coercions and benefits may thus be escaped. Large numbers of people would not have been required to set up such a system, nor would continual migration been required to sustain it. At its zenith the colonial system may have contained maximally a scant few tens of thousands of "Urukians," but how many of them had ever seen the alluvium?

Is the Uruk expansion then a series of events or part of a long-term trend? Algaze notes that Ubaid 3 and 4 contacts with Syro-Mesopotamia foreshadowed Uruk movement into these regions, a

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point forcefully made by Joan Oates ("Trade and Power in the Fifth and Fourth Millenium BC: New Evidence from Northern Mesopotamia," WORLD ARCHAEOLOGY, 1993). These antecedents, and particularly the evidence for Middle Uruk materials at sites such as Sheikh Hassan which predate the bulk of Late Uruk settlement appear to negate Johnson's suggestion that the Uruk expansion simply represents the movement of refugees fleeing the collapse of Late Uruk city-states in Sumer (Gregory A. Johnson, "Late Uruk in Greater Mesopotamia: Expansion or Collapse?", ORIGINI, 1988-1989). While most of the peripheral Uruk sites themselves seems to be fairly short-lived, Oates also points to recently discovered Jemdet Nasr materials at Tell Brak as evidence that the southern foray was neither as brief nor its collapse as thorough as seemed only a few years ago.

To be sure, there must have been significant changes within the Uruk period in relationships between city-states, colonies, and peripheries. Any discussion of Uruk chronology is sadly hampered by the crippling dearth of radiocarbon assays. The high point of the colonial system appears to have coincided with the

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Eanna Archaic IV horizon at Warka, at which point the demands of the proliferating institutions in the core would have been many and varied, and the sheer subsistence requirements of the colonies considerable. The scale of elite demands at this point may have been such that more wide-ranging exploitation appeared necessary. The Late Uruk may therefore represent the intensification or culmination of a trend that had its origins in the ideological but which at its peak unavoidably overflowed into the socio-economic.

The Uruk expansion was certainly part of a cyclical "momentum towards empire" but "societal responses to the chronic lack of resources in the Mesopotamian alluvium" is not an adequate behavioral explanation. While recognizing that there was likely no master plan, and that competing Mesopotamian states probably dispatched their own colonies to the peripheries, there is little discussion of how these sites would have related with one another. Did colonies from different city-states compete or cooperate? The overall tone of the book gives the impression that all the enclaves, outposts, and stations worked smoothly together. Perhaps

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that was indeed the case, but it would contradict the dominant conflict models for the Uruk period, which, it should be pointed out, derive largely from inferences on settlement patterns and fragments of iconography. Models of Phoenician or Greek colonization, and interaction between the two systems, could also be usefully explored to a greater extent. As Algaze notes in the book, and in his recent article ("Expansionary Dynamics...," 1993), there is a decided cross-cultural pattern of early complex societies maintaining settlements in the peripheries at the apex of their late prehistoric sequences. But this commonality may disguise important contrasts. The Egyptian system in the Southern Levant was originated by entrepreneurs and then taken over by emergent "royal" authority in Dynasty One (as J. P. Dessel and I have argued in a still unpublished manuscript). The way the Uruk system was run makes it seem unlikely to have been the monopoly of any one city-state, however. These sorts of contrasts raise the inescapable, if tautological, question of the relationship between

"trade" and the "state" (e.g., Malcolm Webb, "The Flag Follows

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Trade: An Essay on the Necessary Interaction of Military and Commercial Factors in State Formation," in Sabloff and Lamberg-Karlovsky, eds., ANCIENT CIVILIZATION AND TRADE, 1975).

Finally, there is the impact of the Uruk expansion on local Late Chalcolithic societies. Stein has suggested that Uruk-Anatolian relations may in fact have been highly symmetric, with distance acting as a leveling mechanism (Gil Stein, "Power and Distance in the Uruk Mesopotamian Colonial System," paper presented at the meeting of the American Anthropological Association, 1993). The fact remains, however, that another half-millennium passed before city-states appear in Syro-Mesopotamia. Another issue is whether Ninevite 5 is to be characterized as a "chiefdom", essentially the last and biggest Chalcolithic entity, in a sense picking up where the Halaf left off, or whether it is, in fact, the first "urban" phase in northern Mesopotamia. The former view demands that the critical stimulus for urbanism come not from the Uruk expansion but from the even more brief and archaeologically ephemeral Akkadian intrusion in the mid-3rd

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millennium. The latter view, albeit slightly absurdist, highlights the limited cross-cultural utility of terms such as "state" and "urban". Until researchers addressing small-scale societies develop their own concepts for understanding "urbanism" and the "state" in different areas, what might be called "urban relativism" (a phrase I owe to Norman Yoffee), and an appreciation of the dynamic range of variation in local responses to intersocietal interaction, the peripheries will continue to be dominated by the cores.

In the final analysis, however, it should be stressed that all comments on the origins, structure and function of the Uruk expansion are speculations based solely on spatial patterns, stylistic parallels, and ethnohistorical analogies. These and other reconstructions could easily be tested by a systematic and wide-ranging program of neutron activation or other source analyses of the type that Joan Oates and her colleagues have begun (Oates, "Trade and Power...," 1993, p. 417). Until then Algaze's book provides the best guide we could have to the Uruk expansion

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and the most systematic explanation of the phenomenon.

This book is unusual in Near Eastern archaeology for developing an explicit theoretical position that is close to the leading edge of anthropological thought. Fortunately, most branches of Near Eastern archaeology have begun to overcome their timidity and positivist prejudices, and despite its materialist perspective Algaze's book is an excellent example of where we should be going. The judicious use of a world systems perspective, and the ingenious, if problematic, fusion with theories of dependency and imperialism, are exactly the sorts of studies that archaeologists and historical sociologists should be doing, without devolving to the global caricature of the "5000 year world system" (e.g., Andre Gunder Frank, "The Bronze Age World System and Its Cycles," CURRENT ANTHROPOLOGY, 1993). The criticisms raised here do not detract from Algaze's achievement in presenting a well-documented, coherent, and testable scenario. On a broader level Algaze's book is an important contribution towards understanding the dynamics of early complex societies.

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Book reviewed:
Gary Gereffi and Miguel Korzeniewicz, eds.
COMMODITY CHAINS AND GLOBAL CAPITALISM. Westport, Connecticut: Praeger, 1994. xiv + 334 pp. ISBN 0-313-28914-X, $59.95 (hardcover); ISBN 0-275-94573-1, $22.95 (paper).

Reviewed by

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v.10/4/95

Despite early recognition of its theoretical centrality (Immanuel Wallerstein, HISTORICAL CAPITALISM, 1983, pp. 13-16), the "commodity chain" has been inadequately conceptualized by world-system researchers. This book aims to correct that deficiency by aggregating papers that were presented at the 1992 annual conference of the Political Economy of the World-System Section of the American Sociological Association. The book is organized around four themes: commodity chains in the capitalist

world-economy prior to 1800; the economic restructuring of commodity chains; the geographic

organization of commodity chains; and the shaping role of core consumption upon shifts in peripheral production and distribution.

Each of the articles is rich in empirical details that reflect lengthy and involved research on the part of the writers; the book, as a whole, provides the basis for comparing trends in several different countries and industries. That dense detail is condensed through the use of 21 tables and 34 commodity chain diagrams and maps. When we used this book in a Fall, 1994 graduate seminar, we quickly became aware that the book's preoccupation with the presentation of that empirical detail is also its primary weakness. Most of the articles focus upon documenting the various nodes and linkages that comprise the production and/or distribution processes involved in several different international industries. The

editors declare that COMMODITY CHAINS fleshes out, for the first time, the "global commodity chains approach." Theoretically, this volume never achieves that goal. Indeed, we are disappointed to find so little world-system theory in a volume derived from a PEWS Conference. In addition to seven pages by Hopkins and Wallerstein, the index

enumerates only seven brief references to "world-system theory," out of 311 pages of substantive content! For our graduate seminar, we repeatedly were forced to demonstrate how the assigned readings contributed to world-system theory, for most of the writers get caught up in a descriptive style or fail to link their explanations with world-system theory.

Even more fundamentally, we are troubled by the absence of a key world-systems notion. Hidden, only once (p. 49), Hopkins and Wallerstein introduce what they consider to be the pivotal

question that should be addressed in commodity chain analysis: "If one thinks of the entire chain as having a total amount of surplus value that has been appropriated, what is the division of this surplus value among the boxes of the chain?" Surprisingly, this central idea is ignored by the other contributors. None of the articles in this volume directly analyzes the extraction of surplus between the nodes of the chains or the exploitation of labor that occurs in the many processes. Instead, the editors contend that the global commodity chains approach "promotes a nuanced

analysis of world-economic spatial inequalities in terms of differential access to markets and resources" (p.2). Without adequate linkage to broader world-system arguments, that line of reasoning sounds more like a disquieting apparition from the work of Rostow than a conceptual extension of world-system theory.

What never appears in this book is the key

idea that lies at the heart of understanding the international division of labor: unequal exchange. There is little or no attention to the central world-system thesis that exploitation and domination are structured at multiple levels of the commodity chains that are so painstakingly depicted. COMMODITY CHAINS makes a needed beginning; but its proposed framework will not be soundly grounded in world-systems theory until it factors in the messy inequities that really result from the neat boxes and lines in the commodity chain diagrams. We will lose sight of the research agenda for social change that Wallerstein (REVIEW, 1 (1-2), 1977) originally proposed for world-system analysis if we get caught up in an approach that "explains the distribution of wealth ... as an outcome of the relative intensity of competition

within different nodes" (p. 4). Mainstream economists embrace exactly that kind of "free-market" language to account for the

polarization between the First and Third Worlds. The "ghosts of theories past" linger in the verbiage of too many of these articles; and the commodity networks are described with a mechanical coldness that ignores the human exploitation that propels capitalism.

Even though Wallerstein (WORLD INEQUALITY, 1975, pp. 9-29) declared it dead twenty years ago, developmentalism leaps off the pages of this book more often than world-system theory. We do not entirely direct that criticism toward the editors, for the shortcomings of this book derive from a fundamental flaw in the annual PEWS Conferences. Most of the papers presented at those meetings are atheoretical descriptions of the international arena; moreover, too many of the participants make no pretense of grounding their research within the world-system framework. If this trend continues, these annual volumes will accumulate a body of literature barely distinguishable as world-system analysis. Because there has been inadequate

attention to theoretical debates, these conference proceedings have degenerated into hodgepodges of disjointed viewpoints.

That strategy does not build an accumulated body of research and knowledge that we should be labelling world-system analysis.

It is too late to correct the flaws in COMMODITY CHAINS. However, we would urge a proactive strategy on the part of future editors of the PEWS collections. If the contributed chapters are atheoretical, they should be revised so that their world-system explanations are clearly drawn -- even when that requires summarizing more briefly the descriptive details. When the contributor offers an antagonistic viewpoint (and we are convinced that the writers are often unaware they are leaning those directions), other alternatives should be considered. First, the editor should contemplate omitting such an article from a volume that purports to represent the state of the

world-system field. Or, the editor might incorporate such a piece by having the writer specify directly his or her debate with world-system explanations.

Korzeniewicz, Gereffi, and Korzeniewicz reply

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Review, Giovanni Arrighi, _The Long Twentieth Century_
(Verso, 1994)

by Immanuel Wallerstein

v.10/4/95

Despite its title, this book is not really about the twentieth century, long or otherwise. It is an attempt to understand the decline of U.S. hegemony and the present dilemmas of the world-system in the light of the historical evolution of world capitalism beginning with Venice and Genoa. It is a historicized political economy of the world-system, a major contribution to our understanding of our world. It is ambitious theoretically, since Arrighi is trying to put together a whole series of familiar stories and theoretical propositions in a provocative and original way. It will be discussed and debated and used widely.

Arrighi sees a constant tension between the "revenue-maximizing logic of trade expansions" and the "profit-maximizing logic of capital accumulation" (p. 232) which alternately coincide with and

reinforce each other and bifurcate. Lest this seem abstruse, Arrighi immediately translates this into a concrete interpretation of 600 years of world history. He builds his story on the idea of successive, alternating forms of hegemony within the world-system, what he calls the dialectic of state and capital.

He takes off from a boutade of Braudel: "[In] Venice the state was all; in Genoa capital was all" (p. 145). In Venice the strength of capital rested on the coercive power of the state; in Genoa, capital stood on its own two feet, and the state, such as it was, was dependent upon it. Arrighi's summary judgment: In the short run (in which a century is a short run), Venice's method seemed unbeatable, but in the long run it was Genoa that created the "first world-embracing cycle of capital accumulation" (p. 147). Then, in

one of those clever antinomies of which he is fond, Arrighi says: "Just as Venice's inherent strength in state- and war-making was its weakness, so Genoa's weakness in these same activities was its strength" (p. 148). Venice became the prototype of "state (monopoly) capitalism" and Genoa of "cosmopolitan (finance) capitalism."

So far, most readers will nod hazily in their fuzziness about the details of the fifteenth-century world. It is when Arrighi starts applying these categories closer to home that the surprises come. It turns out the "Dutch regime, like the Venetian, was rooted from the start in fundamental self-reliance and competitiveness in the use and control of force" (p. 151), which explains its hegemony and which then "backfired...[by creating] a new enticement for territorialist organizations to imitate and compete with the Dutch..." (p. 158). Once again, success would mean failure, Arrighi's repeated leitmotiv.

The British replaced the Dutch, and the Age of the Genoese was paralleled by the Age of the Rothschilds. They did this by reviving "the organizational structures of Iberian imperialism and Genoese cosmopolitan finance capital, both of which the Dutch had superseded" (p. 177). "Control over the world market was the specificity of British capitalism" (p. 287). The Germans tried to suspend the excessive competition this brought about, but the U.S. "superseded" it (p.285). U.S. corporate capitalism, expanding transnationally became "so many 'Trojan horses' in the domestic markets of other countries" (p. 294). This destroyed the structures of accumulation of British market capitalism but once done, "U.S. capitalism was powerless to create the conditions of its own self-expansion in a chaotic world" (p. 295). The impasse was overcome only by inventing the cold war.

In the light of this history, the financial expansion of the 1970s and 1980s does not seem revolutionary but a repeat of an old story. The overall picture is of four successive hegemonies: Genoese, Dutch, British, and U.S., about which three major statements can be made: they successively were briefer; there was a long-term tendency for the leading agencies to be successively larger and more complex; there was a double movement, backward and forward in time, with each shift of hegemony (Venice/United Provinces/U.S.

contrasted with Genoa/United Kingdom).

What can we say about such a vast canvas, most inadequately summarized here? Its greatest strength is its clear vision of capi-

talism as a single-mindedly rational attempt to accumulate capital endlessly, which means, says Arrighi, capitalists are interested in the expansion of production only if it's profitable, which is true only about half the time. The rest of the time, the capitalists expand their money stocks by playing financial games. They can internalize or externalize their protection costs (Frederic Lane's very fruitful concept) and there are pluses and minuses in each path. But it's not a matter of capricious option. The structure forces capitalists to alternate in a sort of ratchet fashion: one step backward, two steps forward.

Arrighi's intellectual indebtedness to Marx and Schumpeter are well-known. What he has done is this book is take Braudel seriously as a source of data and hypotheses and cast him in a Marxo-Schumpeterian mold. The work is truly a political economy, one in which successes breed failures, where "the real barrier of capitalist production is capital itself" (Marx), but (or is it and?) capitalism is the "anti-market" (Braudel).

This book will not make everyone happy. There is no discussion of class, but then there is none in Marx's Capital. Perhaps more surprisingly, in a work written by Arrighi, there is scarcely a hint about the core-periphery antinomy in the organization of the world-economy. What Arrighi is concentrating upon is the organiza-

tion of the cycles of accumulation as the key to the story of the historical development of the world-system. And finally, for a political economy, which in theory emphasizes the role of political factors in the process of accumulation, there is little real politics in the book. Words like left and right do not appear, and ideology is never mentioned. The current very central concerns of racism/sexism or culture do not appear in the index.

Nonetheless, this is an important and exciting work, which challenges most people's approach to the understanding of the world-system. It is argued intensively, if a bit kaleidoscopically. It forces the reader to reflect, if only to locate the potential inconsistencies in the fast-moving narrative. It is not bedside reading. It is a serious book for serious people in serious times.