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A Critique of Eurocentrism: From the Paradigmatic Perspective of Western Globalization Studies

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Abstract: This study interrogates the constitutive tension between Eurocentrism and its critiques as they manifest within contemporary Western globalization theory and knowledge production. Through a critical engagement with four major paradigms that have shaped Western globalization scholarship since the 1970s—world-systems theory, anti-Eurocentric approaches, the global industrious revolution thesis, and global history as a disciplinary formation—the analysis exposes the persistent conceptual contradictions that structure this discursive field. In response to these problematics, the study advocates for a hermeneutics of civilizational encounter predicated on bidirectional interpretation and mutual learning between civilizations. Such an approach, it is argued, offers a way beyond the epistemological impasse engendered by Eurocentric hegemony in globalization discourse. The inquiry further interrogates the violent character of modern Western civilization, its contemporary project of global integration, and the imperial imaginaries that inform current Western geopolitical thought. It concludes by advancing the possibility of a renewed civilizational form—one grounded in the resources of Chinese civilization and the

distinctive patterns and trajectories of Eastern globalization—as an alternative to prevailing Western models.

Keywords: globalization; paradigm; anti-Eurocentrism; civilization

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Introduction

Globalization refers to the migration and flux of commodities, cultural artifacts, people, ideas, technologies, and knowledge across geopolitical boundaries—such as those of ethnicities, empires, and nation-states—as well as geographical divides spanning continents and oceans, and the demarcations of diverse civilizations. This process engenders a continuous and intensifying global course of connectivity, convergence, and integration across economic, political, socio-technological, and civilizational dimensions. While globalization serves historically as the perennial leitmotif of mutual enrichment, dialogue, and fusion among heterogeneous social and civilizational forms, it also functions as the most potent catalyst and propellant of the ever-evolving modern world. Nevertheless, the theoretical and intellectual discourses concerning the history and phenomena of globalization did not emerge within Western humanities and social sciences until the 1970s. These discourses bear the hallmarks of modern Western civilization, and as they collude with Western capitalist hegemony, the technologies of power in Western capitalism and globalization discourses contrive a certain mutualism. Their synergy seeks to construct, on a global scale, a grand historical narrative of the capitalist system and Western civilizational form, perpetuating Eurocentric hegemony of knowledge and theory. Yet, such Western-centric discourses are consistently challenged by various anti-Eurocentric counter-discourses, leaving it in a constant precarious state of being interrogated, contested, and even subverted.

Since the late 1990s, Western scholars occupying a range of theoretical, disciplinary, cultural, and political positions have engaged in vigorous debate over what might be termed the “aporias” of globalization—the conceptual perplexities

surrounding its definition, its essential character, and its historical specificity. In their influential article “Globalization,” Held and McGrew (1999), writing from a sociological perspective, propose that globalization represents “a process (or set of processes) which embodies a transformation in the spatial organization of social relations and transactions—assessed in terms of their extensity, intensity, velocity and impact—generating transcontinental or interregional flows and networks of activity, interaction, and the exercise of power” (p. 483). Their analysis identifies six major globalizing phenomena characteristic of the contemporary world: the formation of ethnic diasporas and accompanying patterns of racial integration or pluralism; the emergence of new forms of global culture driven by religious proselytism, advances in transportation and communication technologies, and the expanding reach of transnational corporations; the development of global governance mechanisms and institutional systems that operate beyond the framework of the nation-state; the proliferation of threats to regional and global security arising from colonial wars, terrorism, innovations in weapons technology, and the establishment of global arms production networks; the consolidation of economic globalization through financial capital markets; and the unprecedented scale of regional and global ecological and environmental crises.

In her article “A Critical Methodology of Globalization: Politics of the 21st Century?” Kumar (2003) undertakes a systematic review of how globalization has been conceptualized and defined across the disciplines of sociology, economics, law, politics, international relations, and social theory, revealing the extent to which disciplinary perspectives shape competing understandings of the phenomenon. Extending this interdisciplinary impulse, Dator et al. (2006), in their study *Fairness, Globalization, and Public Institutions: East Asia and Beyond*, approach globalization from a theoretical vantage that deliberately transcends any single disciplinary viewpoint. Addressing modes of transport, communication, and their historical transformations, they argue persuasively that “globalization is much, much more than a set of economic factors alone (more than the global flow of capital and goods) and more even than the transborder flow of labor, though that latter aspect of globalization is generally underappreciated” (p. 15). Globalization is also the flow of genes (of genetic information), the flow of popular culture and of new ideas, and the flow of

environmental problems including diseases. This expansive conception insists upon the irreducibly multidimensional character of globalizing processes.

A particularly significant strand of this scholarly conversation concerns the cultural dimensions of globalization, and specifically the phenomenon of “Americanization”—the distinctive form of Westernization propagated through the global dissemination of American cultural icons, consumer practices, and normative values. In her study *Diver City – Global Cities as a Literary Phenomenon*, Pooch (2016) offers a pointed critique of this process, arguing that “Americanization can be translated as neo-colonialism due to its focus on consumerism, commercials, mass media, mass production, and sales” (p. 23). Essentially, everything is money-focused. The settling and colonization are no longer performed in a physical manner but rather via the transportation of trends, values, and legends like the “American dream.” In response to the perceived hegemony of both generalized Westernization and its specifically American variant, Pooch affirms the possibility of a “third path”: the hybridization of global cultures, a process through which local particularities interact with transnational flows to generate novel cultural formations that resist simple assimilation to any single civilizational model.

The critical discourse on globalization within contemporary Western academia, for all its professed reflexivity, remains ensnared in a distinctly Eurocentric problematic, one that manifests in at least five fundamental ways. First, such scholarship tends, implicitly or explicitly, to endorse the Western capitalist eco-political order and its attendant civilizational model as the normative horizon against which the very object of its inquiry—globalization itself—must be measured. This tacit allegiance produces a form of analysis that systematically overlooks, evades, or actively misconstrues the actual historical and geopolitical conditions that have shaped global integration. Second, this body of work substitutes a deductive and narrowly particular—that is, Western—model of globalization for the multi-focal, multi-dimensional, and intricately interwoven tapestry of globalizing processes as they have historically unfolded. In so doing, it marginalizes or negates the contributions and developmental trajectories of diverse civilizational forms, which have, under conditions of co-existence and mutual learning, explored alternative pathways to global interconnection. Third, the epistemic cartography drawn by Eurocentric globalization theory proves singularly inadequate for mapping global

conditions either prior to the putative 16th-century Age of Discovery, before the late 18th-century Industrial Revolution in Western Europe, or beyond the geopolitical spaces dominated by the Atlantic basin and its hinterlands. Fourth, and following from this, this discourse lacks the conceptual apparatus to reassess, from the standpoint of civilizational radiation and influence, what might be termed “Eastern Globalization”—a primary and alternative axis of global integration centered on China, with its spheres of influence extending across the Western Pacific, the Indian Ocean, and the vast reaches of Eurasia. Fifth and finally, these theoretical reflections remain largely confined to the realm of conceptual clarification and disciplinary boundary-work. They fail to mount a reflexive critique of the dominant paradigms themselves at the level of critical theory, and consequently are unable to articulate the endogenous, anti-Eurocentric discourses and theoretical-political positions that are latent within any genuinely comprehensive construction of globalization knowledge. This study seeks to redress these failures by undertaking a critical analysis of four major paradigms that have shaped globalization studies over the past half-century: the world-system paradigm, the explicitly anti-Eurocentric paradigm, the Industrious Revolution paradigm (posited as a counter-narrative to the Western Industrial Revolution), and the global history paradigm. Through this critique, it aims to decenter the Western episteme and contribute to a more genuinely global and historically grounded understanding of its subject.

The World-Systems Paradigm

Drawing its conceptual lineage from Fernand Braudel’s historiography of the *longue durée* and the Dependency Theory advanced by the Argentine Marxist Raúl Prebisch, the work of the American sociologist Immanuel Maurice Wallerstein represents a signal contribution to modern historical sociology. His *The Modern World-System: Capitalist Agriculture and the Origins of the European World-Economy in the Sixteenth Century*, published in 1974 as the inaugural volume of a four-part series, effectively inaugurated what has come to be known as world-systems theory. Casting his gaze across the long arc of modern history—from the sixteenth well into the twentieth century, Wallerstein distills a number of overarching themes. These include: the formation of the modern world-system and the consolidation of its economic and political institutions in the early modern period; the rise of mercantilism, the

stabilization of the European world-economy, and the ascendance of Western European hegemony between roughly 1600 and 1750; the second great expansion of the capitalist world-economy between 1730 and 1840, marked by the Industrial Revolution, the political upheavals of the French Revolution, the intensifying rivalries among Western European capitalist powers, and the waves of independence movements across the Americas; and finally, the crystallization, between 1789 and 1914, of a global geoculture commensurate with the modern world-system—one shaped decisively by the ascendancy of centrist liberal ideology as the dominant political and intellectual framework of the age.

Distinct from the uniform, evolutionist assumptions underlying classical modernization theory, Wallerstein's world-systems analysis delineates a grand historical contour for the emergence and consolidation of the modern world-system. At the core of his framework is the concept of a world-system itself, which he defines as "a unit with a single division of labor and multiple cultural systems. It follows logically that there can ... be two varieties of such world-systems—one with a common political system and one without" (Wallerstein, 1979, p. 5). The former corresponds to the "world-empires" that characterized pre-modern political formations, wherein a single political authority encompassed diverse cultural groups under a unified administrative structure. The latter, by contrast, refers to the modern world-economy, a historically unprecedented formation defined by the dominance of capitalist accumulation across political boundaries. Wallerstein attributes the ascendancy of this capitalist world-economy to two interrelated developments: first, advances in transport technologies enabled long-arm jurisdiction over trans-Atlantic and interregional markets; second, the refinement of military technologies in Western Europe secured overseas colonial rule and stabilized production zones essential to capital accumulation. Within this framework, the capitalist world-system is organized hierarchically into three analytically distinct zones: the core, the semi-periphery, and the periphery. The core regions are characterized by highly developed urban centers, thriving manufacturing sectors, highly secularized and technical agriculture, a skilled and relatively well-compensated labor force, and massive concentrations of investment capital. Through these structural advantages, core areas extract resources and surplus value from the periphery, which is confined to the production of primary commodities, experiences urban decay, and relies on cheap, unskilled labor and

technologically backward methods of production. Capital, accordingly, flows persistently from the periphery toward the core. Situated between these two poles is the semi-periphery, an underdeveloped yet strategically significant zone that functions simultaneously as a primary destination for capitalist investment and as a source of labor reserves for the core. This tripartite structure, Wallerstein contends, is not merely a static typology but a dynamic configuration that reproduces the inequalities constitutive of the modern world-system.

During the 1970s and 1980s, world-system theory succeeded modernization and development theories as the dominant paradigm for global grand historical theory. Various disciplines converged to demonstrate the interconnectedness between nation-states and the global systemic nature of the capitalist economic order, as evidenced in works such as Friedman's (2000) *The Lexus and the Olive Tree*, Denmark et al.'s (2000) *World System History: The Social Science of Long-Term Change*, and Chase-Dunn and Anderson's (2005) *The Historical Evolution of World-Systems*. Despite its considerable influence, the world-systems paradigm exhibits three distinct flaws. First, its economistic reductionism causes it to overlook the transmutation and variability of capitalism, as well as the diversity of capitalist forms (rather than a singular, monolithic Western capitalism) under varied historical and geopolitical circumstances. Consequently, it neglects the non-economic—political, social, and cultural—factors in the processes of integration and interaction across different regions and on a global scale, thereby lacking political, social, and cultural interpretations of globalization. Second, the Wallersteinian world-system is more of a theoretical model and a contextual presupposition than an evolving development formed by the fusion and interaction of diverse factors in the real world. Thus, any dogmatic application of this theoretical model to explain specific and unique globalized economic, political, cultural, and social phenomena inevitably leads to a procrustean distortion. Third, this research paradigm is characterized by a deeply ingrained Eurocentrism. It twists the globalizing process of the modern world to resemble a trajectory of the rest of the world being incessantly integrated into the European capitalist world-system. Within this framework, the European dominance over the world economy is once and for all perpetuated through colonialism, imperialism, and contemporary neo-colonialism and neo-imperialism as white mythology.

The Anti-Eurocentric Paradigm

The anti-Eurocentric paradigm emerged in the 1980s, derived from the theoretical contributions of scholars such as Janet L. Abu-Lughod, André Gunder Frank, and Samir Amin. It also benefits from the post-colonial and diaspora studies by Edward Said, G. C. Spivak, and Homi Bhabha. In *Before European Hegemony: The World System A.D. 1250–1350*, Abu-Lughod (1989) subverts Wallerstein's Eurocentric model from both the aspect of periodization and systemic modality. She argues that the critical period for the formation of the modern world system was not 1500, the century designated by Wallerstein corresponding to Western European dominance, but between 1250 and 1350, characterized by the collective interactions of Asia, the Middle East, and Europe. The world-system of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries was not dominated by a single hegemony but was polycentric, consisting of multiple sub-systems organized into core, semi-periphery, and periphery structures. The entire Afro-Eurasian world system comprised eight interlinked, city-centered regions, further integrated into three sub-systems: the European sub-system (including the Champagne fairs, industrial Flanders, and commercial Genoa and Venice); the Mid-Western route (encompassing the Middle Eastern heartland across Mongol-occupied Asia, Baghdad, the Persian Gulf, Cairo, and the Red Sea); and the Indian Ocean sub-system (spanning India, Southeast Asia, and China). Before the late fourteenth century, the coasts of India, Southeast Asia, and particularly China, experienced four centuries of thriving trade and economic growth. Chinese fleets travelled between Southeast Asia, India, the Middle East, and East Africa, supplying the world with Chinese art, science, technology, and industrial products. China was the most developed and significant region in the world.

The anti-Eurocentric paradigm, which crystallized in the 1980s, draws on the foundational theoretical contributions of scholars such as Janet L. Abu-Lughod, André Gunder Frank, and Samir Amin, while also benefiting from the post-colonial and diaspora studies of Edward Said, G. C. Spivak, and Homi Bhabha. Among these figures, the German-born diaspora intellectual André Gunder Frank exerts a transformative anti-Eurocentric influence across three major fields of research: underdevelopment, dependency theory, and global economic history. From the 1980s onward, he dedicated himself to the reflexive critique of Eurocentrism and the world-

system paradigm, publishing works such as *The Centrality of Central Asia* (1992), *The World System: Five Hundred Years or Five Thousand?* (1993), and *ReOrient: Global Economy in the Asian Age* (1998). In *ReOrient*, Frank applies a long-term historical focal length covering the period from 1400 to 1800 to argue for an Asian-dominated, China-centered global economic system. He proposes that it was China, rather than Western Europe as emphasized in Western academic discourse, that occupied a prominent and active position in economic history prior to the Industrial Revolution. Not the late-rising European world-system, but this long-standing Asian world-system, sustained by silver as the primary medium of trade payment, shaped the early modern world. Thus, the authentic modern world economic system “cannot be squeezed into the procrustean structure of Wallerstein’s European-centered ‘modern world-system,’ for the globe-encompassing world economy/system did not have a single center but at most a hierarchy of centers, probably with China at the top” (Frank, 1998, pp. 327–328). In Frank’s view, European capitalist-led colonialism, imperialism, and technological advancement contributed to the historical conditions of only the last two hundred years of a five-century-long formation of the modern world-system.

Similarly, Samir Amin, the Egyptian neo-Marxist theorist and international political economist, has employed Marxist theory since the early 1970s as an intellectual weapon to address issues of poverty, underdevelopment, dependency, political chaos, and cultural distortion in post-colonial Afro-Asian countries resulting from contemporary Western imperialism and transnational capitalism. He developed analytical models such as underdevelopment (or dependence), accumulation on a world scale, and Eurocentrism to critically interrogate Western-style capitalism and its political and cultural hegemony. In his article “Underdevelopment and Dependence in Black Africa: Historical Origin,” Amin (1972) reconstructs the history of Western capitalist encroachment on Africa through four periods—the pre-mercantilist, mercantilist (seventeenth to early nineteenth century), post-mercantilist (nineteenth century), and the colonial era (since the late nineteenth century)—concluding that the root of African underdevelopment is Western colonial capitalism. Together with Abu-Lughod’s revisionist historiography, Frank’s recentering of Asia, and Amin’s structural critique of dependency, the anti-Eurocentric paradigm offers a fundamental reorientation of global historical inquiry, challenging the temporal,

spatial, and conceptual premises upon which the Wallersteinian world-systems analysis rests.

In *Eurocentrism*, Amin (1989) critiques Eurocentrism as a distinct cultural formation whose animating core is what he terms “Hellenomania”—the obsessive reverence for Greece resurrected during the Renaissance. The reorientation of productive forces from the southern Mediterranean basin, the discovery of the New World, and the “rediscovery” of Greek civilization together furnished the foundational conditions for the emergence of modern Western capitalism centered in Western Europe. This conjuncture, in turn, paved the way for Western Europe’s global conquest, the elaboration of Eurocentric ideology, and the consolidation of what Edward Said has theorized as Orientalism, alongside deeply entrenched forms of racism. As the dominant ideological formation of Western capitalism, Eurocentrism functions to legitimize the systemic inequalities constitutive of the capitalist world order. From the Renaissance and Enlightenment through the nineteenth century, Eurocentrism fabricated a coherent value system composed of interlocking myths: the redemptive narrative of Christian love, the genealogical fiction of Greek ancestry, the civilizational dichotomy of Orientalism, the moralizing imperative of “the White Man’s Burden,” and the teleological schema of linear historical progress bequeathed by the Enlightenment. Amin incisively observes that Eurocentrism retains its toxic purchase in the contemporary world, pervading not only popular consciousness but also the categories and assumptions through which global history, politics, and culture continue to be theorized.

The Industrious Revolution Paradigm

The Industrious Revolution paradigm was first proposed by the American economic historian Jan de Vries in his 1994 article “The Industrial Revolution and the Industrious Revolution” and was subsequently refined in his monograph *The Industrious Revolution: Consumer Behavior and the Household Economy, 1650 to the Present* (2008). De Vries argues that during the two centuries following the seventeenth century, an “Industrious Revolution” emerged within the interstices linking the trans-Atlantic world-system and the Eurasian systems spanning the Indian and Pacific Oceans. This movement, which predated the Western European Industrial Revolution, originated in China and East Asia before extending across a vast

geographical expanse encompassing East Asia, Southeast Asia, Western Europe, and North America. Its leitmotif was the transformation of household economies and the reorientation of cultural consumer tastes. Beginning in the seventeenth century, population growth in Western Europe and the formation of urban networks conducive to economic development and industrial growth catalyzed fundamental changes in the organizational models of households. This, in turn, led to an increase in household purchasing power, the diversification of global commodities converging toward Western Europe, and a sustained flourishing of material culture.

Central to de Vries's framework is the concept of the "long eighteenth century," which he defines as the period from 1650 to 1850. During this era, Western European consumers developed an avid appetite for novel commodities originating in Asia and the Americas, including "sugar, tea, coffee, cocoa, raw cotton and imported cotton piece goods, and distilled spirits.... Once Europeans were exposed to the new products of the East, they became eager consumers" (de Vries, 2008, pp. 154–155). The Dutch East India Company (VOC) first imported Chinese tea to Europe in 1610, followed twenty-five years later in 1635 by the British East India Company, which began regular tea shipments from China to Britain. As tea gradually integrated into Western European social patterns and dietary structures, demand increased dramatically. Yet the most coveted cultural-material luxury in Western Europe during the long eighteenth century was porcelain imported from China, together with its subsequent imitations produced in the Netherlands, Britain, and Germany. Representative examples of such imitations included the British willow pattern ware, Dutch Delftware, and German Meissen porcelain. These ceramics, whether imported or domestically produced, profoundly reshaped the consumption habits of middle-class and even lower-class households, marking a decisive shift in the material culture of early modern Europe.

In *The Birth of the Modern World, 1780–1914: Global Connections and Comparisons*, Bayly (2004) identifies three principal drivers of modern globalization: the Industrious Revolution, industrialization, and the last "great domestication" of nature. He repositions the Industrious Revolution as a global economic and cultural phenomenon spanning both East and West, characterizing it as a sustained and widespread cultural turn in the representation of consumer values. Its impacts extended across Western Europe, the North American colonies, China, and Japan,

fostering the prosperity of commercial capitalism, the expansion of interregional commerce, and the emergence of new patterns of global trade. Bayly further notes that the exploitation of silver and other resources in the Americas, the system of slave production, and the massive dissemination of information collectively amplified the Industrious Revolution's impact in Western Europe (p. 52). At its core, the Industrious Revolution facilitated a series of transformations in dining utensils, furniture, and interior decoration—triggered by what Bayly describes as “the invention of breakfast” (p. 52) that began in Western Europe—thereby significantly altering global trade patterns, consumer fashion in Europe (particularly Britain), and the commercial relationship and cultural-epistemic migration between China and the West. Stearns (2010), in *Globalization in World History*, corroborates this interpretation, observing that Western Europe, India, and China simultaneously entered a period of economic prosperity, with their affluent classes expanding and living standards rising. Consumer culture exhibited new shifts: luxuries once reserved for the nobility and elite began appearing in abundance within ordinary wealthy households.

Hans van de Ven, a scholar of Chinese history, advances this revisionist framework in his article “The Onset of Modern Globalization in China” by arguing for a China-centered system of globalization in East and Southeast Asia dating from the twelfth century—a system encompassing social contact, trade exchange, diaspora, and cultural practices. From an anti-Eurocentric perspective, van de Ven's analysis powerfully supports the Industrious Revolution paradigm pursued by de Vries, Bayly, and Stearns, while overturning the singular “tributary system” and “pre-modern globalization” narratives long dominant in Western scholarship. Within this system, a tributary order dominated by imperial hegemony coexisted with a private commercial capitalist system sustained by maritime trade and diaspora communities, the origins of which can be traced to the maritime trade, navigation, and diaspora of the twelfth-century Southern Song Dynasty. During the Yuan Dynasty, China deepened commercial exchanges with Japan, Java, and Thailand. This process reached its climax in the fifteenth century with the Ming Dynasty's maritime trade and interactions expanding across East Asia, Southeast Asia, and the entire Indian Ocean region. Between 1570 and 1640, the late Ming period witnessed a resurgence of economic prosperity, achieving a degree of commercialization, urbanization, a

sophisticated industrial division of labor, and an affluent consumer culture that, by many measures, far surpassed those of contemporary Western Europe.

The Global History Paradigm

Representative works of contemporary Western global history research include Hopkins's (2002) *Globalization in World History*, Robertson's (2003) *The Three Waves of Globalization: A History of a Developing Global Consciousness*, Bayly's (2004) *The Birth of the Modern World*, Osterhammel and Petersson's (2005) *Globalization: A Short History*, Mazlish's (2006) *The New Global History*, Stearns's (2010) *Globalization in World History*, and Conrad's (2016) *What Is Global History?*. Collectively, these studies have facilitated the formation of what may now be termed the Global History Paradigm, a distinctive analytical framework that foregrounds interconnection, comparison, and the critique of methodological nationalism. In *Globalization in World History*, Stearns (2010) periodizes the history of globalization—understood as the progressive intensification of interregional trade, contact, exchange, and influence, particularly the migration of material culture and knowledge—into five sequential stages: the preparatory stage from 1200 BCE to 1000 CE (the Ancient period); the second stage beginning around 1000 CE; the third stage commencing circa 1500 CE; the fourth stage initiated in the 1850s; and the fifth stage unfolding from the 1940s onward. This periodization underscores the *longue durée* of global interconnection while also marking critical junctures of acceleration and transformation.

Conrad (2016), a German historian, provides a more refined and theoretically self-conscious articulation of the paradigm in *What Is Global History?*. He addresses essential questions regarding the intellectual conditions that necessitated global history's emergence, its definitional boundaries, the intersecting disciplines and paradigms upon which it builds, and its characteristic methodologies and approaches. Conrad posits that globalization, understood as the proliferation of entanglements and connections across spatial and cultural boundaries, constitutes the primary symptomatic feature of the contemporary world. These entanglements, he argues, give rise to various complex systems of interaction and exchange that cannot be adequately apprehended within the frame of the nation-state. The global historian's task, accordingly, is to trace these connections without presupposing their directionality or

valence, attending to the asymmetries of power, the uneven flows of knowledge and capital, and the diverse temporalities that structure global integration. In this way, the Global History Paradigm not only expands the geographical scope of historical inquiry but also fundamentally reconfigures its conceptual architecture.

However, the modern humanities and social sciences—including sociology, history, and philology—remain tightly bound to the framework of the nation-state, presupposing a methodological nationalism that takes the nation-state as the a priori unit of research and the naturalized container of territorial and social processes. Thereby, knowledge about the world is prefigured into a static discourse framed by the nation-state, while global exchanges and connections—whether between, beyond, or transcending nation-state politics and history—are systematically excluded, bracketed, or marginalized. In parallel, Eurocentric assumptions have been seared into the conceptual architecture of modern academic disciplines. Modern European capitalist development is foregrounded, with Europe cast as the central driving force of world history; a particular European historical trajectory is substituted for a universal template of human development. Analytical categories such as “nation,” “revolution,” “society,” and “progress” are deployed to convert specifically European experiences into putatively universally applicable theoretical discourses. Methodologically, this entails the imposition of European categories upon all other nations, cultures, and societies, leaving their past and present in a state of intellectual and theoretical colonization.

Since the 1970s, however, a range of critical paradigms—comparative history, transnational history, world-systems theory, post-colonial studies, multiple modernities, and the history of globalization—have progressively paved the way for the emergence of the global history paradigm. What distinguishes this paradigm is its sustained emphasis on connectivity, mobility, exchange, and integration at the global level. The Global History Paradigm exhibits the following distinctive methodological characteristics:

First, adopting not merely a macro-perspective, it seeks to situate specific historical events and phenomena within a more expansive global context, thereby denaturalizing nationally bounded frames of reference. Second, departing from conventional spatial units such as the nation-state, empire, or civilization, it mobilizes alternative spatial conceptions that enable analysis through various nodes within

relational networks—for instance, religious or ethnic diasporas, trading circuits, or epistemic communities. Third, it views historical units—whether civilizations, nations, or families—not as developing in isolation but as evolving through interaction with the “Other” and in response to global exchange and circulation. In this sense, exchange and interaction between regions and nations, or even between Europe and the rest of the world, are understood as constitutive forces of modern social development rather than secondary effects. Fourth, the paradigm participates in and promotes the broader “spatial turn” within the humanities. Spatial metaphors including territory, geopolitics, circulation, and networks are deployed to displace temporal concepts such as “development,” “time lag,” or “backwardness,” thereby rendering the teleology of modernization and development theories obsolete. Fifth, it decouples from the *longue durée* and the traditional notion of continuity inherited from civilizational history, while emphasizing instead the synchronicity, resonance, and coevalness of historical events on a global scale. Finally, and crucially, it insists on a conscious and reflexive critique of Eurocentrism—not merely as an ideological supplement but as a methodological imperative that reorients the categories, periodizations, and geographies through which global history is narrated.

Conclusion

Bearing the goal of critiquing Eurocentrism and the Western capitalist civilizational model, and drawing from previous critiques of the four paradigms of globalization, we propose abandoning conventional economic and political narratives of globalization. Instead, we advance a new paradigm: cross-civilizational reciprocal interpretation. Grounded in the long-term cyclical migratory movement of civilization between East and West, this paradigm emphasizes mutual learning and cross-civilizational exchange. This paradigm is articulated through four key dimensions. First, by upholding a stance of reciprocal interpretation based on mutual learning among civilizations within the global system, we seek to dispel the epistemic aporia of academic and knowledge discourses imprinted by Eurocentrism. This perspective enables a critical interrogation of the inherently violent nature of modern Western civilization, the processes of global integration, and the imaginary construction of the contemporary Western world-empire. Second, we construct a model of the migration network in globalization, employing network analysis and knowledge-discourse

analysis to map the movement of commodities, cultural artifacts, knowledge, technology, and people across diverse civilizations. Third, alongside the migration network model, we introduce a three-level dynamic superposition model for cross-cultural dialogue, interpretation, and knowledge discourse: (1) knowledge-discourse practices during the dissemination of civilizations, in which intercultural translation and interpretation serve as primary mechanisms; (2) the juxtaposition and “docking” of heterogeneous civilizational discourses at the destination, resulting from an active and dynamic selection process; and (3) the deep transformation, fusion, and creation of new knowledge discourses arising from the interface of heterogeneous civilizations. Finally, the practice of this reciprocal interpretation paradigm allows us to reconstitute the nexus of Chinese and foreign civilizations within the global system and reorganize civilizational hierarchies. Such an approach opens new horizons for cross-civilizational cognition and interpretation. The reciprocal interpretation and mutual referencing between civilizations, as we emphasize, “shall not end in estrangement, divergence, or dispute, nor shall they lose themselves in the buffer zones of economic development, technological change, political systems, or religious beliefs.” Rather, they should ascend toward a return to the origin of civilizational Tao, actively contributing to a new form of human civilization dedicated to global human well-being.

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