

# Imperialism & Perpetual Revolution: The Radical Lure of the Empire

## **0. Introduction**

*“the imperial-successor role that United States [is] ambitious to play...”* – Hitchens, 2002, p.27

In this essay I place forward arguments for a rethinking of the relationship between Empire and Revolution, i.e. between Imperialism and Radicalism. I will first talk about the history of the intermingling of Imperial Power with Enlightenment ideologies, and I analyze the principle of usurpation of power as a means for the Empire to perpetuate itself (because it is not enough to change the Master to change the System). I analyze the structural similarities of Socialist, Liberal, Monarchic, Neoconservative and Fascist imperial policies, with special emphasis on Marxist, neo-Marxist and post-Marxist (as well as Trotskyist, neo-) intellectual justifications for Empire. Then, in the next chapter, I take a more theoretical approach to the problem of Empire, in order to bring back “deep history” into historiography, against the prevalent emphasis on accident, local power structures (*qua* overextension of Foucault’s principles – whom I otherwise admire) and “Great Man” history. These processual or developmental methods are then applied to the case of the American Empire, with recourse to Christopher Hitchens as an intellectual *both* for Revolution *and* Empire (again representing the two sides of the same coin of Radical Imperialism) and as an example of a type of intellectual belonging to the history of imperial discourse. I will take a look at the figures of Trotsky, Jefferson and Wolfowitz as the backbones of a kind of continuum of American Revolutionary Imperialism. Lastly, I will recap my position and discuss the possibility of claiming back the mantle of Enlightenment radicalism from the Imperialists. I will argue that it is not enough to oppose Empire by Revolution (whether liberal, socialist, fascist or conservative), but rather to propose a new kind of anti-imperial radicalism founded on the principle of turning away from, and rejecting, the ever-present lure of *Imperial power as the means for a Revolution*.

## 1. Whatever Her Crimes... Revolutionaries For Empire

*“the opportunities – perhaps even the need – for colonisation is [sic] as great as it ever was”* – Robert Cooper, Observer, April 7, 2002

*“England, it is true, in causing a social revolution in Hindustan, was actuated only by the vilest of interests, and was stupid in her manner of enforcing them. But that is not the question. The question is, can mankind fulfil its destiny without **a fundamental revolution** in the social state of Asia? If not, whatever may have been the crimes of England she was the unconscious tool of history in bringing about that revolution.”* [my emphasis] – Karl Marx, NY Daily Tribune, June 25, 1853

In the attempt to differentiate between an imperialist and a revolutionary, between a terrorist and a freedom-fighter, between a man over the people and a man of the people, it is paramount to appreciate the level of ambiguity involved. Who said history is a simple process of heroes and villains, of “Us” vs. “Them”? (This rhetorical question, by the way, need not be answered.) If imperialism arises as a theme, as a topic, only in the late phases of what is today called the Imperial Period of the Empire of the British Crown, it is nonetheless a concept that has universal validity and retroactive power of discernment. Thus we are able to say Napoleon was an imperialist, although what good uttering this nearly tautologous statement will do remains an open question. It is clear that the ideologies at play in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century were seen, from the perspective of the emerging intellectual class of heirs of the Enlightenment, not as anti-imperial or pro-imperial, but as either anti- or pro- existing regime. The revolutions of 1688, 1776, 1789, 1848 and 1870 that shook up Europe and the New World were about reform, democracy, human rights, freedom, equality, constitutionalism, nationalism, socialism etc., but only to a limited extent did these revolutionary moduses attack or tackle the existence *per se* of radically export-oriented intellectual, governmental and sociological forces. Their existence was taken for granted. The question was rather: Which motives, noble or savage, new or old, liberal or conservative, would fuel the course and development of modern economic integration and imperial regimentation. The democracies of France and America are still in retrospect seen by many as “superior” to the bureaucratic tidiness and unprincipled haughtiness of the British in their prime. Yet the legacy of French imperialism in Algeria, Indo-China and Hispaniola (to name a few) bears not the marks of democratic decency but imperialist indecency. Nor do the latter-day machinations of the U.S. forces around the world (actually also in two of the three French colonies mentioned above!) bear the stamp of anything less brutal or real-politik dictated than do the traces of the British imperial rule in its Apollonian

dominion. The same could be said for the Socialist imperialist ventures around the world. “Our” Empire is always benevolent, for the good of the populace and unavoidable at worst.

I should like to remind the reader that we opened with a quotation from a leading New Labour intellectual advocating re-instatement of colonial rule (based on benevolent multilateralism, *of course*). But what is more interesting than a Socialist-Liberal embracing of imperial politics (it is dubious whether Tony Blair is in any senses of the words either “Socialist” or “Labour”) - which after all has become commonplace in our day and age - is the early identification, in Marx’s report on India quoted in the epigraph, of Empire with Revolution. There is revolutionary potential in the British Imperial Rule in India; “*a fundamental revolution*” becomes possible *via* Empire. This is ominous, since it all too easily predates and prefigures the misuse of imperial power in the alleged service of Socialism by the governments of Kremlin and Beijing; *Empire as Revolution...*

Very simply put, in Marx and others, rather than dismantling power structures that make Empire possible in the first place, “usurpation” and “reformation” of power were the provincial goals of revolutionaries (bar anarchists and utopians, whose role in these events is anyway marginal). Revolution was seen by many (including both bourgeois and working class ideologues) as dependent on violence, on international alliances, on cross-border infiltration and insurgency, on a propagandist effort to win over new adherents and to enlarge and enrich spheres of influence. In a word, the modernizing and democratizing ideals of Robespierre, Jefferson, Cromwell, Catherine the Great, Hegel, Frederick the Great, Napoleon, Marx and Engels were through and through infused with the spirit of expansion and encroachment on neighbouring ideologies, empires and peoples. Pen may be mightier than the sword, but the sword is the instrument of change used and needed by the pen-wielders. For this reason, we must look for kinship in the ideas of Revolution and Imperialism. Napoleon is only the most blatant example of an Imperialist Revolutionary; we can look for examples within the regimes and doctrines of Nationalism, Socialism, State Capitalism and Humanitarian Democracy – not to forget the older doctrines of Monarchy, Absolutism, Feudalism, Christianity, Holy Roman Empire, Mercantilism and Populist Reformation. The history of Empires is the history of ideologies at war. The history of ideologies at war is the history of Revolutions. Modern history, it seems, is the history of revolutionary imperialists and imperialist revolutionaries. In our failure to dismantle Imperial Power lies the shortlivedness and failure of most, perhaps all, hitherto Revolutions. Usurpation unleashes a new Master but the same old Host.

It should not be forgotten that the United Kingdom only develops into a world-wide Empire *after* achieving many political reforms making it one of the most “civilized” and “modern” states in the world, starting really from Magna Carta in the late Norman period, but culminating in the Bill of Rights and parliamentary reforms of the Glorious Revolution in 1688-9. Its culture, philosophy and economics are the seed of a host of competing and potentially radical ideals, many of which give way to the eventual flourishing and independence of many of its erstwhile colonies, most notably America (soon perhaps to be eclipsed by India). American culture, however much maligned and disparaged, has been the epicenter of many (if not most) of the most important revolutionary and technological advances in cultural history of the last 100 years, yet its political realities have been marked by a long, consistent and brutal history of colonial and neo-colonial (somewhat Romanesque and a bit grotesque) manoeuvres, wars, invasions, occupations, interventions and confrontations. Empire *is* revolutionary, and revolution *is* imperialistic. As Uday Singh Mehta says, “*Marxism and liberalism share in a transformative energy and in a view of the world as something malleable through political effort*” (1990, p.80). Both Marxism and liberalism, I may add, have their own histories and genealogies of imperial impulses and exertions. Indeed, later on Mehta speaks about the “*liberal justification of the empire*” (ibid. p.81). This is all just to show that *all* of the major ideologies of the modern era are “responsible”, in their own ways, for imperialist drives.

This, anyway, was the order of things approximately until the last couple of decades of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Things began to change towards the direction of an *anti-imperialist* labour movement, pacifism, isolationism, international stability and Unionism only after the bloody stains marking the borders of Europe’s nations had been left to dry up (thus, for example, Alsace-Lorraine belongs to France). Even Hobsbawm (1989, p.73) says that the anti-imperialist struggles of the Communist International were more about agitation and revolutionary export than pacifism and resistance *per se*. Thus again the dilemma of Revolution-as-Imperialism; how to organize resistance that is not already imperial (for example in the sense of relying on some Socialist or Capitalist common trade agreement for sustenance)? Anti-imperialism of the virulent and radical sort has the choice between local and global influence. If the latter, what distinguishes it from Imperialism itself? Anti-imperialism of the limited and “non-imperial” sort becomes possible only within what Robert Cooper considers (somewhat loosely and weakly) “post-modern states”, marked by economic stability, parliamentary bi-cameralism and Unionist tendencies of co-operation and integration. In this climate of post-colonial Europe, the “task” of imperialism was transferred away from “Old” European nations to the newcomers in the field, whether America, China, Iraq or Serbia.

Understanding this, we turn to a more general refinement of the theories necessary in unravelling the saga of Imperialism.

## **2. Accident and Lawlikeness in the Historiography of Empires**

*“politics and history are only different aspects of the same study”* – Mehta (1999, p.106)

The course of imperialism can be seen as a series of isolated flourishings (with concomitant rises and falls) of powerful, politically potent and militarily extrovert civilizations. In this scheme the apparent continuity of factors such as regional interests and long-term developments is seen as a kind of second-order development, or fallout, of Ur-moments such as the establishment of the East-India Company in 1600, the signing of the Balfour Declaration in 1917 or the refinement of the Monroe Doctrine by Theodore Roosevelt (“the Roosevelt Corollary”) in 1904. This perspective could be called the “author”-theory of imperialism. This is related to the “Great Man” theory in historiography, in which imperialism arises out of the imagination and dreams of people like Benjamin Disraeli, Cecil Rhodes, Adolf Hitler, Joseph Stalin, Hideki Tojo and Paul Wolfowitz. There is much to be said for this approach, since it at least helps to give a human face to the indomitable forces of history. However, its limitations are clear, because one has to factor in such issues as (the broadly defined) “international climate”, big power diplomacy, economic incentives and necessities, historical trends, flourishing of certain pro-imperial ideologies, the appeal and popularity of imperial politics and politicians, etc... This theory is favoured by “specialist” historians who write hagiographies of historical figures and who, in their patriotic imagining of a nation’s pre-history, invent a mythical *ab ovo* beginning. Another theory is manifestly called for.

In an alternate view, and this I suppose is becoming more and more evident in post-colonial studies, imperial history can be looked at from the long-sighted, if perilous, perspective of genealogies, inheritances, long-term power shifts and post-colonial (sometimes also re-colonial) struggles, where both the old and the newly-emergent political regimes are players and actors of continuity and change. In this alternate perspective, while not entirely antagonistic to the methods and findings of the earlier-mentioned historiography which emphasises short-term and myopic Machiavellian tactics over strategy, the course of events in world history cannot be neatly categorized into periods of hegemonic domination by a single dominant Imperial (“Super”) Power - be it Britain, America, France, Spain, the Netherlands, the Ottoman Empire or Sweden. In the more nuanced perspective of

“deep” history, the conflicts and struggles which arise in the manifold locations of the traversed world are seen as symptoms of long-winded developments – both material processes and ideological maturations. It is no accident that the “White Man’s Burden” was seen as superceding the British Empire itself (a version of which was used by conservatives of William F. Buckley’s ilk, but also by many “liberals”, as an intellectual justification for the intervention by America into Western Europe, East Asia and Central America in the middle of the 20<sup>th</sup> century). Likewise it is no accident that the Communist International saw its role as being that of a “midwife of history”, or that Leninist functionaries proclaimed “New Man” and Pol Pot “Year Zero”. Nor should we flinch (at least not from *surprise*) when Tony Blair and George W. Bush proclaim a democratizing mission of historical importance in Iraq (and Afghanistan, Iran, Libya...) in 2003-2007 (and still counting). History, at least in its modern phases, unfolds as a response to the calls of Empire, both as a revolutionary counter-cry and as an evolutionary show of support. What Karl Marx and Robert Cooper have in common is a belief in this developmental view of History (with a capital ‘H’ no less), where events are occurrences of patterns. Empire and Revolution intertwine.

Now, with these two concepts available, let us turn our attention to the curious relationship between Great Britain and America, in which the roles of Master and Servant, Colonizer and Colonized, Senior and Junior are subject to a curious and long-winded path of reversals and re-reversals.

### **3. Christopher Hitchens in America - Remembrance of Revolutionaries Past**

*“The tree of liberty must at times be refreshed with the blood of patriots and tyrants.”* – Thomas Jefferson, quoted in Hitchens’s biography, p. 68

Since the early colonies at Jamestown and Massachussets, American soil (really from Canada to Cuba) has been subject to a long-winded colonial enterprise, engaged not only by the British crown but also Spain and France, with some additional interference from other European imperial powers such as the Netherlands. The British dominion of the Eastern seaboard was maintained through economic and military successes. Still, by the Declaration of Independence in 1776, the 13 states of the Union represented scantily a fraction of the current United States of America. The history of the continental expansion is a long one and not the subject of this essay, but what is important from our perspective is the radically imperialist nature of the newly-independent ex-colony of the Crown. Unlike Australia, which had few enemies and fewer conquests, America was already looking for

landgrabs, expansion and economic exploitation of neighbouring areas. California, Cuba and Canada were the three hard “C’s” that most American presidents dreamt of annexing (although surely the nomenclature at those days was slightly different). The slave trade that fuelled the new economy was continued well after breaking off ties with England, and the history of America is nothing if not the history of the emancipation of its unsung labour heroes. But the myth that America only arises in 1945 as the undefeated champion and spearhead of the Occident is just that, a myth. Surely its imperialistic history stretches as far back as its early origins. Itself a colony, it re-imagined itself as a colonizing power, and by the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century (by the time of Teddy Roosevelt) it had become entangled in numerous Carribean and Pacific endeavours, so much so that by 1945, it had already experienced, through the misuse (or rather technically correct but morally bankrupt use) of the Doctrine named after President James Monroe, imperial adventures as far away from “homeland” as the Philippines, not to forget the Carribean theatre involving Cuba and Puerto Rico as well as the Central American regencies of Guatemala, Honduras, El Salvador and Nicaragua. Since then, the experiences of Columbia, Vietnam and the Middle East (where the military support of Israel can be seen as a sort of vassal relationship, part feudal, part imperialistic) have made American Imperialism an easy-enough catchword for a whole new generation. America, today, has either the accidental or conscious position of being the “World’s Only Superpower” (no longer as true as it was just ten years ago), and whatever *else* this may mean, it certainly entails the status, whether sought or unsought, of an Imperial Regime. America is the brightest Son of Britain, and the Oedipal struggle to become the next Father has undeniably succeeded. Again, to bring back what I discussed previously, this is by design caused by big historical processes. Already Hegel discovered the general Westward movement of Capital and Civilizations; whatever the *reasons* for this, it has clearly been a good rule of thumb thus far in the deep history of the last couple of Millennia.

To understand American imperialism, we will do well to turn our attention to the work and persona of Christopher Hitchens, a British-born American citizen; an intellectual, literary critic and political columnist. Only within the last couple of years, really only after the events of 9/11, has Hitchens made anew his name as a supporter of the American-British “War on Terror”, as exemplified by the military ventures in Afghanistan and Iraq (2001 and 2003 respectively). Before 2001 Hitchens was chiefly known as an anti-conformist but undoubtedly Leftist intellectual, although already during the Clinton years he made a slow but decisive turn against his former comrades in the Nation magazine (where he had a long-running column called “Minority Report”) and elsewhere in the cultural Left, by opposing Clinton as a general scoundrel and liar yet supporting the anti-Serbian NATO intervention in Eastern Europe during the same period (showing his early commitment to

“humanitarian intervention”). After 9/11 his movement to the right was complete when his exasperation with the perceived inefficacy and anti-American infantilism of his former comrades led to his “breaking ranks” with his ex-friends (not unlike Norman Podhoretz earlier on, another ex-leftist). Yet to classify him as a rightist is only partially fair (politically and provincially), since he would probably consider himself as a general free-thinker or, to use a favourite expression of his, “contrarian”. Never shunning controversy, he has written polemics against Henry Kissinger, Mother Theresa and, most recently, God. His atheism, rationalism, humanism and trotskyist background are perhaps *at face value* at odds with the neo-conservative clique running Washington, but I will argue only at face value. I have read enough of his works, both literary and political, to be able to say with some confidence that I am able to trace back his intellectual roots to a number of political thinkers who have much in common, yet who represent wide internal variation and mutual antagonism in the eyes of many. This list, extracted from the words and works of Christopher Hitchens himself, shall serve as a primer on the “imperial revolutionary” roots of modern America as well.

I have mentioned his background in Marxist circles, so we can start from there: Marx, Engels, Hegel, Trotsky (big influence), Jefferson, Paine, Orwell... and more recently Paul Wolfowitz, Leo Strauss and Ayn Rand, three gurus of the American right; the last one known for her atheism and free-marketeering philosophy, the first two tied in with the neo-conservative agenda. The axis of Trotsky-Jefferson-Wolfowitz is crucial here, because it represents a trio of related but somewhat far removed idealist positions, all in the service of “Permanent Revolution” based loosely on Rationalist and Enlightenment principles. Trotsky represents pre-Stalinist (and to some extent pre-Leninist) socialism, Jefferson pre-Wilsonian radical liberalism, while Wolfowitz, for Hitchens, represents the humanist principles of interventionism required for the perpetuation of the American Revolution, “*the only revolution that still retains any power to inspire*” (from his book on Thomas Jefferson, p. 188). He has used Jefferson’s war against the Muslim pirates during his presidency as a kind of analogue, pre-figurement and a noble first stage of the current War on Terror, both in his book quoted in the preceding sentence and in numerous articles such as one titled “Jefferson and the Muslim Pirates” (City Journal, Spring 2007 Issue), in which Hitchens draws extensive parallels between then and now, apparently trying to show how the Islamic World is indeed in a permanent conflict with the West, and that its values are unreconcilable and worthy of “infidels” (as he quotes Jefferson saying). He goes on to muse that “*here was an early instance of the “heads I win, tails you lose” dilemma, in which the United States is faced with corrupt regimes, on the one hand, and Islamic militants, on the other—or indeed a collusion between them*” (ibid.), drawing explicit parallels to the current situation with Iraq-style secular autocracies and Jihadist primitivist-



fundamentalists forming a loose but nefariously networked “Axis of Evil” (a term he seems to have few problems with). This is an example of how *not* to read history, as his analysis is coloured by the exigencies of the current situation. One should not be (but perhaps always is), as a historian, looking for excuses and justifications for ongoing struggles from the events of early modernity. Here he falls in line with the neo-conservative mainstream of the Republican right, which brings me back to the neo-Trotskyite, ex-Leftist clique of “radical conservatives” running U.S. foreign policy.

Leo Strauss is often considered the philosophical father, or perhaps godfather or forefather, of the “neo-cons”, as crystallized by the axis of Richard Perle, Paul Wolfowitz, Irving & William Kristol, Robert Kagan and Donald Rumsfeld. The political influence of the think-tanks they command such as American Enterprise Institute and Project for the New American Century has been a major force behind both the George Bush administrations (senior and junior), as well as a continual pusher for a regime change in Iraq for a decade before the invasion in 2003. But it is not enough to provide an analysis of the geneologies of imperialism, e.g. in the philosophical tradition stretching back to Plato, the Stoics and the early Christian Emperors (all of whom Strauss is emulating and revering in a perverse fashion) as well as the Marxist and anarchist radical “Internationals”, especially in the prevalent figure of Trotsky, who is a revered figure within both the Left and Right of the American intellectual circles (Kristol, Wolfowitz, Podhoretz and Hitchens would all consider Trotsky a mentor!). Analyzing such geneologies is not enough to elucidate the larger historical conditions and processes at play here. Such an “authors theory” of history is subject to personal interpretation. More than that, it can lead to a whimsical “anthropomorphizing” of history (which is not the contradiction in terms that it may appear to be since history is more than the sum of its parts).

Visions and fantasies of benevolent “export of democracy” (i.e. revolutionary imperialism) come, of course, in different guises and shapes. Liberal interventionists from Wilson to Kennedy, Johnson and Clinton are perpetrators of the same (or at any rate similar) policies of neo-imperialist idealism. What is crucial with America is the recurrence and re-emergence of typical and well-attested patterns of Empire-making: a sense of superiority (“a civilizing mission” or a “white man’s burden”), a sense of necessity (marked by a certain feigned reluctance to perform the duties of the world police man), a sense of pre-emptive action (as if the presence of American troops and bases on more than half of the world’s countries is to be explained away as a “response” to a call, a duty or a threat in such-and-such a locale), a sense of self-evident naturalness (“of course” things are as they are) and a rich presence of symbols of power and “Manifest Destiny” (such as flags, songs, entertainment, rituals and political patriotism). The *form* of imperialism develops out of these

traditions of indoctrination, military build-up (caused by increased military spending made possible by directing tax money away from soft socialist programs), vamped-up nationalism (through propaganda and entertainment), weakening of the institutions of academic freedom, weaking of the tolerance for pacifism, increased hysteria and fear and, inevitably, the weakening of civil liberties. This latter, in the U.S., has come in the form of the Patriot Acts I and II and the development, post-9/11, of the department of Homeland Security. The C.I.A., an instrument of imperialist control all around the world, arose out of the militarism of the Second World War, and it seems that creating a permanent War Economy (as has been done in the wake of 2001) will always yield an increased susceptibility to new semi-secret instruments of arbitrary control – with policing of the population at home, and wars, occupations and assassinations abroad. Imperialism, while not always an agency of fear and old-school militarism, will use these channels if necessary. The creation of permanent bases, whether for War Structures or Economic Yield, is a feature of all Imperial Powers, and the current American policies are representing precisely these interests of Military and Economic hegemony. All under the rubric of Revolutionary “spreading of democracy”. One thinks of Napoleon’s conquest of Europe, Jefferson’s conquest and “purchase” of the Indian lands in the Western Expansion achieved through the Louisiana Purchase and the Lewis and Clark Expedition – a kind of “Lebensraum” quest from two centuries back which Hitchens, accurately enough (sad but true), describes as “*an Enlightenment project*” (2005, p.152) – or of Stalin’s struggle for supremacy in the Russian sphere of influence (all for the purpose of “liberating” oppressed capitalist powers). In cases such as these, there is no difference between Empire and Revolution. Anti-imperialism then becomes an anti-revolutionary activity: Indeed, to be “anti-Soviet” or “anti-American” means to be against the values of Permanent Revolution ingrained in the principles of these modern nation-states. To be “anti-revolutionary” is, one day, to be anti-Trotskyist, and, on another, to be Trotskyist... Likewise, Hitchens will not miss a chance to ridicule the Leftist critics of the current War on Iraq for falling in the same camp with old-school “Isolationists” (conceived here as a swearword) like Pat Buchanan. For him, the neoconservatives, in their imperialism, are the only true radicals and revolutionaries left (the double meaning of “left” shouldn’t be missed here), “*the only ones willing to take the radical risk of regime change*”, as he put it in a debate with Tariq Ali on Democracy Now (printed in Arts and Opinion, 1/2005, online edition). As Mehta put it, “*one prevalent response to imperial historicism is almost by necessity a form of parochialism*” (1999, p.97). Perhaps such a response is not necessary. In attacking Empire one must first disjoin Power from Principle. I will close my essay by arguing for a re-evaluation of the anti-imperialist discourse, not *against* history and civilization but *for* civilization, in a proactive rather than reactive mood.

#### **4. Conclusions: From Revolutionary Imperialism to Revolutionary Anti-Imperialism**

*“there is a minority of intellectual pacifists, whose real though unacknowledged motive appears to be hatred of western democracy and admiration for totalitarianism”* – Orwell, quoted by Hitchens (2000, p.11, footnote)

*“...the dirty work of Empire...”* – Orwell, *ibid.* (p.16)

What we should ask next is a tough question. It is a question perhaps unanswerable in any abstract way. It concerns the justifiability of political actions *per se*, and specifically the possible justification of Revolution both in its anti-imperialist and imperialist modalities. So: If revolutions are in some instances justified (very few would contest this point), can we conceive of a situation in which an Empire can be seen as “*an unconscious tool of history*” (to use Marx’s phrase quoted at the very beginning of this essay), and justifiably – or at the very least tolerably – so? The same claimant is present in Jefferson’s oft-quoted adage printed above: “*the blood of tyrants*” must run... In his justification for the invasion of Iraq, Hitchens has for long held the view, essentially, that one cannot make an omelette without breaking a few eggs (or Iraqi children’s skulls as the case may be). I believe this question about the necessity of a bit of blood-letting every now and then can be elucidated by turning to another hero of Hitchens, one Eric Blair, also known as George Orwell. The quotations that opened this chapter elucidate the double nature of the struggle against tyranny: On the one hand, the question of the violent overthrow the existing regime is never to be automatically rejected (pacifism may fail). Still, the powers and processes of imperial dominance and economic exploitation cannot be “usurped” or “reappropriated” too easily; one risks the perennial danger of merely changing masters and not principles. The work of the Empire, no matter who is nominally in charge, is “*dirty*”. To confront the “radicalism” of Imperialism one has to approach the real revolutionary promise of Imperial Power. If there are no options available for people, naturally they will take the first opportunity they get, whether it comes in the form of a deceptive imperial promise for *Pax Romana* under the sword or not. Imperialism has usurped the Enlightenment project of Democracy and Freedom for itself. In the early months of the new Iraq Invasion, there was considerable satisfaction, glee and happiness amongst many of the people oppressed by Saddam Hussein’s tyrannical regime. However, as the invasion turned into occupation (although technically never did change, just the perception of it did) the dreams of Empire-driven Revolution gave way to the realization that, just as is usually the case, Imperial Intervention, however “benign” and “sought-after”, overstays its welcome every time.

Hitchens writes: “*Since one of the great developments of his time and ours is the gradual emancipation of the formerly colonized world, and its increasing presence through migration and exile in the lands of the ‘West’, Orwell can be read as one of the founders of the discipline of post-colonialism, as well as one of the literary registers of the historical transition of Britain from an imperial and monochrome (and paradoxically insular) society to a multicultural and multi-ethnic one.*” (2002, p.32) The irony of the above comment should not escape us, since Hitchens has himself showcased the possibility of a re-transfer of the trends of history again back towards the direction of “imperial” existence, its “monochrome” this time made “multicultural” instead. The possibility of “multicultural imperialism”, that is to say “Enlightenment despotism” has now become a reality. The conjunction of “anti-imperial” and “anti-revolutionary” has become a stain on the consciousness of the critical West. Surely the choice is not between Empire and Anomie? The only way forward is to find means of re-engaging the silent and slow processes of historical development from the perspective of anti-imperialism. Anti-imperial discourse must learn again to speak the language of the Enlightenment. The following modest proposals are rooted in the double-thronged edifice of Empire and Revolution, as possible way-openers for a future discourse that may well one day be called *post-imperial studies*: Instead of Isolationism, Engagement; Instead of Criticism, Activism; Instead of Localism, Globalism; and, most importantly, instead of Empire... What?

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