MULTICULTURAL HISTORIANS: THE ASSAULT ON WESTERN CIVILIZATION AND DEFILEMENT OF THE HISTORICAL PROFESSION, PART I: PATRICK O'BRIEN ON THE SCIENTIFIC REVOLUTION

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The history of Western civilization has been undergoing a massive reinterpretation in the name of a historical narrative that meets the requirements of multiculturalism and the promotion of mass immigration—regardless of the established protocols of scholarly trustworthiness and the dictates of documentary evidence. Europe and Asia are now regularly portrayed as "surprisingly similar" as late as 1750/1800 in their economic advances, standard of living, scientific knowhow, and overall cultural achievements. Jack Goldstone has even argued that there "were no cultural or institutional dynamics leading to a materially superior civilization in the West" before 1850, except for the appearance in Britain, "due to a host of locally contingent factors," of an "engineering culture."[1]

Multicultural historians are instructing their students that Europeans don't inhabit a continental homeland independently of Asia and Africa; Europe's history can only be understood within the context of "reciprocal connections" within the globe. "The exceptional interconnectedness of Afroeurasia shaped the history of this world zone in profound ways," writes David Christian, author of the widely promoted book, *Maps of Time: An Introduction to Big History* (2005).[2] Students are being indoctri-

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[1] Jack Goldstone, "Capitalist Origins, the Advent of Modernity, and Coherent Explanation," *Canadian Journal of Sociology* 33, no. 1 (Winter 2008): 119–33. Goldstone has been making this argument for some years; now available in a student-oriented book, *Why Europe? The Rise of the West in World History, 1500–1850* (Boston: McGraw-Hill, 2009).

[2] David Christian, *Maps of Time: An Introduction to Big History* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005). The cited sentence comes from Christian's article "Afroeurasia in Geological Time," *World History Connected* 5, no. 2 (February 2008) (unpaginated). http://worldhistoryconnected.press.illinois.edu/5.2/christian.html

nated that the only thing that stands out about Europeans was the "windfall" profits they obtained from the Americas, the "lucky" presence of coal in England, and the blood-stained manner they went about creating a new form of international slavery combined with "scientific" racism.[3]

This state of affairs has been in the making for some decades now, as evident in the formation of numerous programs dedicated to ethnic minorities, the establishment of well-funded organizations, journals, and the continuous conferences taking place every week and month throughout the West promoting every multicultural idea and policy imaginable. The old experts on European history are divided, heedless, and confined to circumscribed fields lacking a coherent vision. The Western Civilization history course, virtually a standard curriculum offering 40 years ago, has disappeared from American colleges. According to a National Association of Scholars report issued in 2011, "The Vanishing West: 1964–2010," only two percent of colleges offer Western Civilization as a course requirement.[4] No wonder the authors of recent Western Civ texts, pleading for survival, have been adopting a globalist approach; Brian Levack et al. thus write in *The West, Encounters & Transformations* (2007): "we examine the West as a product of a series of cultural encounters both outside the West and within it."[5] They also insist that the religion of Islam was one of the prominent cultural features of the West. Similarly, Clifford Backman, in his just released textbook, *The Cultures of the West* (2013), traces the origins of the West to Iraq, Syria, Lebanon, and Israel; and then goes on to tell students that his book is different from previous texts in treating Islam as "essentially a Western religion" and examining "jointly" the history of Europe and the Middle Eastern world (xxii).[6]

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[3] John M. Hobson, *The Eastern Origins of Western Civilization* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004).

[4] Glenn Ricketts, Peter Wood, Stephen Balch, and Ashley Thorne, *The Vanishing West: 1964–2010. The Disappearance of Western Civilization from the American Undergraduate Curriculum* (New York: National Association of Scholars, May 2011).

[5] Brian Levack, Edward Muir, and Meredith Veldman, *The West, Encounters & Transformations, Volume I: To 1715*, 2nd ed. (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson, 2007), xxx.

[6] Clifford Backman, *The Cultures of the West* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013), xxii.

Writing about Western Civ texts from a globalist approach has been eagerly promoted as a new "teaching" approach since the 1990s; Michael Doyle thus encourages teachers, in "'Hisperanto': Western Civilization in the Global Curriculum," published in the Teaching column of *Perspectives* (May 1998), a publication of the American His-

The intention of this essay is twofold: 1) exhibit the extent to which multicultural world historians have been willing to violate two basic principles of the historical profession—respect for the scholarly sources and reliability in the evaluation of the evidence—for the sake of advancing a view that meets the political objective of promoting diversity; and 2) interpret the assault against European achievements as a curricular effort to brainwash native European students into accepting a heterogeneous race-mixed society consistent with egalitarian mass immigration.

World historians continually boast about their emphasis on "connections" between regions and continents, emphasizing the role of trade, migrations, and environmental events that transcend national boundaries. They also brag about their "scientific" emphasis on the geographical, geological, climatic, economic, and demographic aspects of history, as contrasted to the parochial, cultural, Eurocentric biases of historians who write about the unique features of Western civilization.[7] It would make for an interesting essay showing the ways in which this "scientific" emphasis is seriously impaired by the way multicultural historians envision the geological, biological, and human history of the planet as a communal affair wherein all natural things, cultures, and regions are seen as equal partners marching in unison under the guidance of "progressive" elites.

It would also make for an interesting paper explaining the ways in which politically correct would-be scientific historians employ postmodernist discourses as a means to confuse, detract from, or avoid facing up to the overwhelming reality of the evidence standing in opposition to their poorly supported claims. It would be a most revealing exposition to show how multicultural historians have suppressed the find-

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torical Association, "to continue to incorporate a more inclusive approach to all cultures with which it [the West] came into contact." "Certainly Western Civ students should read parts of the Qur'an and understand the attitudes that produced Fanon's *The Wretched of the Earth*." He refers to the Communist Eric Hobsbawm's widely read books on European history as a model to be emulated by students and teachers.

[7] According to Patrick Manning's *Navigating World History: Historians Create a Global Past* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), histories that do not treat Europe as an integrated part of the African, Asian, or American continents cannot be categorized as works of "world history." Only histories emphasizing connections can be said to constitute "world history," even if such histories area about small local regions in Africa connected to other localities elsewhere. The history of cotton planters in the American South is world history in its connection to the Atlantic; the history of the rise of modern science in Europe is not world history, unless the rise of this science is seen to be connected to some place in Africa, Asia, or the Americas.

ings of Darwinian theory and evolutionary psychology in their efforts to write of a common, generic humanity without ethnic distinctions or group interests.

However, my aim here is to bring to light the flagrant manner in which multicultural historians go about misusing sources, misreading books, misinterpreting the evidence, concealing the facts, and overall violating the principles of historical objectivity and respect for scholarship—all in the name of creating a consensus to accept the imagined merits of a multiracial society inside European-created cultures.

I will do this by examining four recent articles which appeared separately in the *Journal of Global History*, published by Cambridge University Press, in the flagship *Journal of World History*, in the distinguished *American Historical Review*, and in the widely read leftist newspaper *The Guardian*.

Hundreds of other publications could have served as well to illustrate this abuse of the historical profession. In *The Uniqueness of Western Civilization* (2011),[8] I elaborated on some of the ways Kenneth Pomeranz, John Hobson, Bin Wong, Patrick Manning, and others relied on dated sources, misread, and sometimes willfully misinterpreted numerous authors. Examining four articles will allow me to make my case in a detailed and in-depth way. What is going on here cannot be attributed to mere empirical incompleteness and understandable errors of judgment. Our students today may be said to be the targets of a deep-seated educational effort to impose on the historical profession a multicultural view of Europe's history that is heavily infused with fabrications and the mistreatment of scholarly sources.

THE HISTORIOGRAPHICAL MALADIES OF PATRICK O'BRIEN'S GLOBAL PERSPECTIVE ON THE SCIENTIFIC REVOLUTION

Patrick O'Brien, Professor of Global History at the London School of Economics and Political Science, proudly sent proof copies of the following title to a number of historians including myself: "Historical Foundations for a Global Perspective on the Emergence of a Western European Regime for the Discovery, Development, and Diffusion of Useful and Reliable Knowledge." Soon enough the essay appeared in *The Journal of Global History* (March 2013). The essay seemed fair enough in its concluding statement that "historians of global economic development

[8] Ricardo Duchesne, *The Uniqueness of Western Civilization* (Leiden, The Netherlands: Brill, 2011).

might wish to retain the 'older' view of the 'Scientific Revolution.'"[9]

The global historians O'Brien was referring to are Pomeranz, Wong, Goldstone, Prasannan Parthasarathi, Ian Morris, Felipe Fernández-Armesto, Andre Gunder Frank, Manning, Christian, and indeed almost the entire world and global history professoriate dominating our educational institutions. The research of these historians has been invariably about the so-called "similarities"—economic and institutional—between Europe and Asia before the Industrial Revolution. They have generally insisted that the rise of modern science was a global phenomenon. For example, Frank has written that Newtonian science was not peculiar to Europe but "existed and continued to develop elsewhere as well."[10] Fernández-Armesto has shown no hesitation stating that the science and philosophy of Copernicus, Kepler, Laplace, Descartes and Bacon was no more original than the neo-Confucian "scientific" revival of the seven- teenth century—both were "comparable in kind."[11]

Morris, in his widely reviewed book, *Why the West Rules—For Now* (2010), has said that an intellectual movement in seventeenth- to eighteenth-century China known as Kaozheng "paralleled western Europe's scientific revolution in every way—except one: it did not develop a mechanical model of nature"—a rather large difference given that nature can't be understood scientifically without such models.[12] Parthasarathi, in his recent book, *Why Europe Grew Rich and Asia Did Not: Global Economic Divergence, 1600–1850* (2011) has rejected the "older" claim that Europe possessed superior markets, rationality, science or institutions, tracing the divergence instead to different competitive and ecological pressures structured by global dynamics.[13]

Now, while O'Brien thinks that these historians have been "successful" in their "assault upon a triumphalist tradition of European global

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[9] Patrick O'Brien, "Historical Foundations for a Global Perspective on the Emergence of a Western European Regime for the Discovery, Development, and Diffusion of Useful and Reliable Knowledge," *The Journal of Global History* 8, no. 1 (March 2013): 1–24, 15.

[10] Andre Gunder Frank, *Re-Orient: Global Economy in the Asian Age* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998), 188–89.

[11] Felipe Fernández-Armesto, *The World: A History* (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson, 2007), 630.

[12] Ian Morris, *Why the West Rules—For Now: The Patterns of History, and What They Reveal About the Future* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2010), 473.

[13] Prasannan Parthasarathi, *Why Europe Grew Rich and Asia Did Not: Global Economic Divergence* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011).

economic history,"[14] he guardedly questions their claim that the rise of modern science was a global phenomenon. The Scientific Revolution, he writes, was "something less than a short, sharp discontinuity in the accumulation of scientific knowledge, and more a profound conjuncture *locatable for its time in the history of western Europe*."[15] Yet, O'Brien accepts the idea that world history should be the study of "connections in the human community," the story of humanity's "common experience," an idea which precludes seeing historical transformation in terms of the "internal logics" of nations or particular civilizations. The result is one of the most convoluted, awkward, improperly documented papers I have read.

This paper is part of a "project funded by the European Research Council." In an earlier "Proposal to the European Research Council" (2009), O'Brien spoke of the need for "an international alliance . . . to respond to demands from a cosmopolitan generation of students now at university for greater engagement with big questions that are . . . clearly relevant to the geopolitical and moral concerns of their (and our) times of accelerated globalization."[16] He mentioned the names of Montesquieu, Voltaire, Hume, Quesnay, Turgot, Miller, Hegel, and other Enlightenment thinkers known for their "universal" approaches, but then summarily dismissed them for their "superficial" discussions of economic matters, including in his indictment Spencer, Spengler, and Toynbee. He acknowledged the stimulating discussions occasioned by "neo-Weberian explanations" of the rise of the west" (by Eric Jones, Nathan Rosenberg, Douglas North, Joel Mokyr, David Landes, and Angus Maddison). But, again, he quickly brushed them off in favor of "Wallerstein and his followers in the World Systems School of Historical Sociology."

O'Brien further insisted that the "divergence of European economies from Asia is explicable . . . in terms of the gains the former made from the discovery and exploitation of the Americas and (as Marx asserted) by way of the systematic use of naval power and colonization in Asia." He told the European Council that Pomeranz, Wong, Goldstone, Harriet Zurndorfer, and Parthasarathi ("aided by that indefatigable polemicist Gunder Frank") had in effect refuted the old Eurocentric view on West-

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[14] O'Brien, "Historical Foundations," 2.

[15] *Ibid.*, 23.

[16] Patrick O'Brien, "Proposal to the European Research Council" (2009). http://www.lse.ac.uk/economicHistory/Research/URKEW/Proposal%20for%20publication%20%28Apr%202009%29.pdf

ern uniqueness.

O'Brien articulated similar ideas in his inaugural essay for the *Journal of Global History*, "Historiographical Traditions and Modern Imperatives for the Restoration of Global History," published in 2006, where he emphasized the marginalized narratives of the non-Western world, their struggle against "the interests of the wealthy, the powerful and the West," and the need for a new global history "inclusive" of the diversity of the world, in resistance to the "master narratives" of the West.[17] The Council agreed with O'Brien's proposal, and awarded him "a large grant," and so was born the project, "Useful and Reliable Knowledge in Global Histories of Material Progress in the East and the West" (URKEW) at the London School of Economics, with O'Brien as "principal investigator."

The article we are examining here, O'Brien's 2013 article,[18] is the main product, thus far, to be generated by the leading researcher of this project. A close examination offers some revealing insights on the way world historians are rewriting the history of Europeans in accordance with the principles of cultural egalitarianism and racial inclusiveness. They face a major task: how to frame Europe's unparalleled revolutions and novelties within a global framework even if the existing research does not at all validate their perspective. The Scientific Revolution, O'Brien acknowledges in this paper, was "*locatable for its time in the history of western Europe*." Yet the purpose of the entire Global Economic History Network housing the URKEW project is to advance and demonstrate the veracity of the idea that "a global perspective" is required because the major transformations of history have been occasioned and structured by world connections and "two-way" cultural influences. He says in the opening pages that the questions of "how, when, and why western Europe" witnessed a Scientific Revolution can only be answered by a "programme of historical research" that emphasizes "reciprocal comparisons" transcending "the myopias imposed by the frontiers and chronologies of continental, national, or local histories."[19] But O'Brien never manages to find a solid source either refuting the old Eurocentric explanation or demonstrating that Asia nurtured anything close to Newtonian mechanics, apart from some generalities about "reciprocal comparisons," a reference to Arun Bala's unspecified "dialogue of civiliza-

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[17] Patrick O'Brien, "Historiographical Traditions and Modern Imperatives for the Restoration of Global History," *Journal of Global History* 1, no. 1 (March 2006): 38.

[18] O'Brien, "Historical Foundations."

[19] *Ibid.*, 3.

tions," and a citation of a unscholarly book and of one refuted book.

We are thus privy to a very strange paper which boasts about the superiority of global history, yielding the perspective that "much of the modern debate on the Scientific Revolution looks Eurocentric, provincial, and obsessed with local detail,"[20] but which relies almost entirely on Eurocentric sources, and is perforce obligated to conclude that the rise of modern science was a European-generated phenomenon, *but which nevertheless* still frames this revolution in global terms.

O'Brien's paper takes us through a historiographical journey of some of the key books published since roughly the 1990s. Nearly all these books were written by specialists in European history; they are not products of a globalist approach. World historians have yet to produce anything that can justify a global view of modern science; accordingly, O'Brien has no option—unless he foregoes the act of writing about this subject—but to rely on the very Eurocentric sources he otherwise derides. This startling contradiction results in one of the most tortuous, muddling, and diffident papers I have read. It is worth going over the details of this historiographical paper both to educate readers about the state of the research about a momentous revolution in the history of Europe, and to alert them about the strategies globalists are employing in their quest to dissolve Europe's identity and sense of accomplishment.

The first notable trait is the use of the term "useful and reliable knowledge" in the title of the URKEW project, and the Global Economic Network generally. This means that contributions to natural science in the East and the West will be deemed part of this debate so long as they can be shown to be concerned with useful applications for the material welfare of humanity. The ideas don't need to be associated with immediate applications, but they must be closely timed "behind the emergence of contrasts in labor productivity and standards of living" in eastern and western regions. That is, they must be closely arranged behind "the successful assault" on the traditional Eurocentric interpretation of the Industrial Revolution. The question of Western scientific uniqueness is thus framed in terms of the more important and "useful" question of why, when, and how the societies of the world followed trajectories that led to divergent prospects for modern economic growth and technological change.

This way of thinking goes unquestioned among all the participants in this debate. Cultural traits are open to discussion only insofar as they

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[20] *Ibid.*

can be shown to have influenced economic development. This is also true of "critics" of global historians. Many who emphasize Europe's internal culture and institutions cannot avoid focusing on Europe's ascent to *global economic domination, in a Marxist oriented way*. Peer Vries criticizes the Pomeranz/Wong focus on colonial windfalls, but differs from them only in his "internalist" emphasis on the fiscal/administrative capacity of imperial Britain to impose itself economically on the world.[21] Similarly, Joseph Bryant vigorously questions the short-term perspective of Pomeranz, Goody, and Goldstone, and their reduction of the divergence to "fortuitous accidents of geography," in favor of long-term institutional changes in Europe. However, the issue for Bryant remains how to account for "the causes that facilitated the European passage to colonial domination and capitalist modernity."[22]

These sides have been debating each other heartily from conference to conference, grant to grant, invitation to invitation. This is what academia understands by intellectual diversity today.

This faux diversity is further embellished with the presence of non-Europeans such as Wong, Parthasarathi, and Sanjay Subrahmanyam. These three have assimilated the basic tenets of Western political correctness, Marxist political economy, and the idea of "connected histories." They particularly enjoy pointing to similarities in Eastern and Western economic development before Europe's industrial acceleration after 1800. This is not difficult since societies like China and India with their historically massive populations inevitably generated higher levels of output, coupled with the fact that differences in average economic indicators can never be very large when we are dealing with pre-industrial societies living on the margins.

They pay attention only to those cultural factors that can be shown to have brought about an economic outcome. The Greek invention of philosophical reasoning and citizenship politics, the medieval invention of universities and the seven liberal arts, the Copernican Revolution and the Cartographic Revolution, do not qualify, on their own, as part of this debate. Books such as Charles Murray's *Human Accomplishment: The Pur-*

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[21] Peer Vries, "Are Coal and Colonies Really Crucial? Kenneth Pomeranz and the Great Divergence," *Journal of World History* 12, no. 2 (Fall 2001): 407–446.

[22] Joseph Bryant, "The West and the Rest Revisited: Debating Capitalist Origins, European Colonialism, and the Advent of Modernity," *Canadian Journal of Sociology* 31, no. 4 (2006): 403.

suit of Excellence in the Arts and Sciences, 800 B.C. to 1950 (2003),[23] are of no interest to them. Never mind that this book systematically arranges "data that meet scientific standards of reliability and validity" for the purpose of evaluating "as facts" the accomplishments of individuals and countries across the world in the arts and sciences (by calculating the amount of space allocated to these individuals in reference works, encyclopedias, and dictionaries).[24] They could not care less about Murray's finding that 97 percent of accomplishment in science, whether measured in people or events, occurred in Europe and North America from 800 B.C. to 1950.[25] For O'Brien such cultural facts are "Eurocentric, provincial, and obsessed with local detail," or too focused on immaterial events without "usefulness."

This emphasis on "divergence in quantifiable economic terms" allows O'Brien to evaluate Europe's contribution to science only in terms of its economic implications.[26] For all his condemnation of Eurocentrism, he shows no awareness that this abstraction of humans to economic agents alone is itself a modern European idea which cannot be projected backwards onto Europe's history or to all cultures. O'Brien is a Eurocentric egalitarian who has been thoroughly socialized *not* to permit himself any "triumphalist" notion of heroism according to which his people produced a far higher number of explorers (95 percent), musical composers (100 percent), philosophers (about 95 percent), and scientists. To the contrary, just because Europe did, it must make amends by speaking of equal dialogues and by blaming itself for outperforming the world. The "academic offensive" of the URKEW project against European national histories should be seen as a curricular effort to wheedle native European students into accepting the denial of their ethno-cultural identity in favor of a heterogeneous race-mixed society in which all the inhabitants are seen essentially as interchangeable economic agents.

O'Brien promises in the abstract that his paper will first suggest "that the Scientific Revolution's remote antecedents might be traced back to Europe's particular transition from polytheism to monotheism."[27] This is the focus of a few pages in this 24-page paper—the most confounding set of pages I have read in a long time. After suggesting a link between

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[23] Charles Murray, *Human Accomplishment: The Pursuit of Excellence in the Arts and Sciences, 800 B.C. to 1950* (New York: HarperCollins, 2003).

[24] *Ibid.*, xvi.

[25] *Ibid.*, 252.

[26] O'Brien, "Historiographical Traditions," 2.

[27] *Ibid.*, 3.

monotheism and the maturation of a unified metaphysical cosmography, against the polytheistic and animistic views of pagans, he then tells us that pagan intellectuals in both the eastern and western sides of Eurasia had extended the cognitive capacities of humans long before monotheism through accurate observation and logical styles of argument. He does not tell us it was the Greeks who formulated laws of logical thinking, the law of non-contradiction, or that the history of logic is overwhelmingly European. Nevertheless, from a global perspective, even the magisterial eleven-volume work, *Handbook of the History of Logic* (2004–2012),[28] which contains four chapters in the first two volumes on Indian and Arabic logic, is lacking because it omits reciprocal connections for each volume.

Instead, O'Brien goes on to criticize this pagan cosmography—"all schools of classical philosophy"—by which he now means *Greek* pagan thinking. He says that Greek thinkers "offered nothing approximating to proofs for their theoretical and logical speculations."[29]

This is plainly wrong: Aristotle's logical works, which have been grouped under the name of *Organon*, are exactly about the technique and the principles of proof. Aristotle is regarded as the inventor of the syllogism for his emphasis on logical operators like "if," "then," and "or" which retain the same meaning every time they are employed, and for his effort to build propositions and arguments from combinations of such univocal terms. This was new in philosophy.

What about Euclid's *Elements* (300 B.C.), a compilation of ancient geometric proofs over the centuries, carefully categorized and formalized by Euclid? This work is purely theoretical in that it contains no useful applications. But "it has had an enormous number of applications to practical questions in engineering, architecture, astronomy, physics,"[30] starting with Roman engineering which "reached the high point of geometric perfection" based on theoretical knowledge gained from Greece that was useful in resolving complications of measurement and calculation.[31]

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[28] Dov M. Gabbay, ed., *Handbook of the History of Logic*, 11 vols. (Amsterdam: Elsevier, 2004–2012).

[29] O'Brien, "Historiographical Traditions," 6.

[30] Marvin Jay Greenberg, *Euclidean and Non-Euclidean Geometries: Development and History*, 4th ed. (New York: W. H. Freeman, 2008), 9.

[31] Isaac Moreno Gallo, *Roman Surveying* (2004).

http://www.traianvs.net/pdfs/surveying.pdf

First published as *Elementos de ingeniería romana* [Elements of Roman Engineering], *Proceedings of the European Congress* 3 (2004), 25–68.

O'Brien adds that Greek "theories" (Epicureanism, Platonism, Stoicism, and Aristotelianism) "never became highly regarded as economically useful," or as "effective prescriptions" for bodily health and the alleviation of "humankind's eternal angst about life and death."[32] Therefore, he concludes there is no reason to link the rise of modern science to Greek "theories."

Let's forget about Hippocrates, the pursuit of the Greek "good life," Stoic tranquility, or Epicurean happiness. How can one summarily disqualify the contributions of the Greeks to science simply because they were not aimed at the production of useful items? What is weird is that, in making these claims, O'Brien cites three books by G. E. R Lloyd, namely, *Cognitive Variations: Reflections on the Unity and the Diversity of the Human Mind* (2007);[33] *Adversaries and Authorities* (1996);[34] *Methods and Problems in Greek Science* (1991)[35]—all of which argue that the Greeks were unique in the degree of explicitness and self-consciousness of their inquiries, and in the cultivation of exact and explicit concepts of proof in theoretical knowledge. In fact, through most of the first half of his paper there is an outlandish incongruity between what O'Brien writes and the sources he refers to. Many sentences are seemingly supported by excellent sources, but these rarely square in their content with what the sources say. Apparently, O'Brien had no sources to counter the Eurocentric view, which is why he eventually calls for "successful" globalists to accept the old idea that modern science was a European affair; consequently, he is forced to rely on Eurocentric books. However, as he does this, he reinterprets them, or pulls ideas from them which contradict their intended meaning, as if to separate them from any notion of European uniqueness, *at the same time* that he writes that these sources "suggest" that the Scientific Revolution may have had "antecedents" in Europe's past.

But since he does not want to trace modern science to Greece, he goes back to Christian monotheism, starting with the confounding statement that Christian "fundamentalists" "suppressed" classical polytheism and all philosophies that had elevated reason above faith. "Before" the re-

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[32] O'Brien, "Historiographical Traditions," 6.

[33] G. E. R Lloyd, *Cognitive Variations: Reflections on the Unity and the Diversity of the Human Mind* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007).

[34] G. E. R. Lloyd, *Adversaries and Authorities: Investigations into Ancient Greek and Chinese Science* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996).

[35] G. E. R. Lloyd, *Methods and Problems in Greek Science* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1991).

naissance of the twelfth century, he writes, Christian authorities were not particularly willing to "engage seriously with classical perceptions of nature."[36] They rejected the classical notion that nature operated according to rational laws in favor of a world operating according to God's will and unknowable intentions.

Again, the sources he cites don't support O'Brien; rather, they point in an opposite direction. Let me begin with some highlights from Marcia Colish's *Medieval Foundations of the Western Intellectual Tradition, 400–1400* (1997):

> [The Latin Apologists of the first centuries A.D.] were convinced that classical thought could and should be used to clarify and defend the Christian message.[37]

> [For Augustine] the universe is subject to an orderly, rational law of nature in which nothing happens arbitrarily. . . . Classical science and philosophy [were the source of this Augustinian idea].[38]

In a chapter titled "Western European Thought in the *Tenth and Eleventh* Centuries" (my emphasis), Colish focuses on St. Anselm as a logician familiar with "paronyms, modal propositions, hypothetical syllogisms, and negative formulations."[39]

These are not incidental highlights; Colish's entire book is dedicated to the idea that "medieval Europe is the *only traditional society* to modernize itself from within, intellectually no less than economically and technologically."[40]

The second book O'Brien footnotes is Edward Grant's *Science and Religion, 400 B.C.–A.D. 1550: From Aristotle to Copernicus* (2004).[41] The editorial description of this book reads:

> Historian Edward Grant illuminates how today's scientific culture originated with the religious thinkers of the Middle Ages. In the

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[36] O'Brien, "Historiographical Traditions," 6.

[37] Marcia L. Colish, *Medieval Foundations of the Western Intellectual Tradition, 400–1400* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1997), 10.

[38] *Ibid.*, 30.

[39] *Ibid.*, 167.

[40] *Ibid.*, x.

[41] Edward Grant, *Science and Religion, 400 B.C.–A.D. 1550: From Aristotle to Copernicus* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2004).

> early centuries of Christianity, Christians studied science and natural philosophy only to the extent that these subjects proved useful for a better understanding of the Christian faith, not to acquire knowledge for its own sake. However, with the influx of Greco-Arabic science and natural philosophy into Western Europe during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, the Christian attitude toward science changed dramatically. Despite some tensions in the thirteenth century, the Church and its theologians became favorably disposed toward science and natural philosophy and used them extensively in their theological deliberations.[42]

Grant does emphasize changes during and after the twelfth century, but he also brings up the ways in which early Christians eagerly assimilated the classical heritage, setting the ground for the breakthrough in the twelfth century. In another book, *God and Reason in the Middle Ages* (2001), Grant distinctly states that the "self-conscious use of reason and the emphasis on rationality go back to the classical Greeks," and that "despite" some difficulties in the transmission and spread of this heritage during the centuries after the fall of Rome and the coming of the Germanic peoples and Vikings, "natural philosophy was welcomed within Western Christendom." The following passage is worth citing:

> With perhaps few exceptions, philosophers, scientists and natural philosophers in the ancient and medieval periods believed unequivocally in the existence of a unique, and objective world that, with the exception of miracles, was regarded as intelligible, lawful, and essentially knowable.[43]

Grant specifically says that from the first centuries A.D., Christianity adopted the idea of using philosophy and science … for comprehending revealed theology, providing as well a section on the "Early Stirrings [in reason and logic] in the Ninth to Eleventh Centuries."[44]

The third book O'Brien mentions is David Lindberg's edited volume, *Science in the Middle Ages* (2008), which also happens to be about the enormous contribution medieval thinking made to scientific knowledge

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[42] http://www.barnesandnoble.com/w/science-and-religion-400-b-c-to-a-d-1550-edward-grant/1101796402?ean=9780801884016

[43] Edward Grant, *God and Reason in the Middle Ages* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 11–13.

[44] *Ibid.*, 33–48.

and the origins of the Scientific Revolution. In his *The Beginnings of Western Science: The European Scientific Tradition in Philosophical, Religious, and Institutional Context, 600 B.C. to A.D. 1450* (1992), which O'Brien references later, Lindberg limits the heyday of Islamic creativity to the period between 800 and 1100, and he notes that, by 1200, Europe had recovered much of the Greek scientific and philosophical legacies maintained by Muslims.

Despite these sources, O'Brien's next move consists in fostering the misleading impression that the Roman Catholic Church was mostly intent on "suppressing" or "evading" "the Eastern-cum-classical [*sic*] heritage of the West," until eventually the Church "found it expedient" to make concessions to it. After a truly unreadable paragraph, he tries to imply that it was Islam's "advanced economies" that suggested to Christians "that the forces of nature could be manipulated technologically to improve the . . . material welfare of the faithful, and thus promoted their case for their systematic study."[45] Here, in footnotes 25 and 26, every single book he references refutes his reasoning, and overwhelmingly supports the standard Eurocentric account. These sources are:

- Michael Allen Gillespie, *The Theological Origins of Modernity*.[46]
- Toby E. Huff, *The Rise of Early Modern Science: Islam, China and the West*.[47]
- David C. Lindberg, ed., *The Beginnings of Western Science: The European Scientific Tradition in Philosophical, Religious, and Institutional Context, 600 B.C. to A.D. 1450*.[48]
- David Levine, *At the Dawn of Modernity: Biology, Culture, and Material Life in Europe after the Year 1000*.[49]
- Marshall Clagett, *The Science of Mechanics in the Middle Ages*.[50]
- S. R. Epstein and Maarten R. Prak, eds., *Guilds, Innovation and the*

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[45] O'Brien, "Historiographical Traditions," 7.

[46] Michael Allen Gillespie, *The Theological Origins of Modernity* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008).

[47] Toby E. Huff, *The Rise of Early Modern Science: Islam, China and the West* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993).

[48] David C. Lindberg, ed., *The Beginnings of Western Science: The European Scientific Tradition in Philosophical, Religious, and Institutional Context, 600 B.C. to A.D. 1450* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007).

[49] David Levine, *At the Dawn of Modernity: Biology, Culture, and Material Life in Europe after the Year 1000* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001).

[50] Marshall Clagett, *The Science of Mechanics in the Middle Ages* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1959).

European Economy, 1400–1800.[51]

- Bert S. Hall and Delno C. West, eds., *On Pre-modern Technology and Science: A Volume of Studies in Honor of Lynn White, Jr*.[52]
- Frances Gies and Joseph Gies, *Cathedral, Forge, and Waterwheel: Technology and Invention in the Middle Ages*.[53]

None of these books are discussed and none of them support O'Brien. He then writes that "by the twelfth century," the medieval Church finally decided to "encourage the introduction" ("under strictly regulated rules and conditions") of natural philosophy based on Greek classical sources. Attached to this statement is this source: Stephen Gaukroger, *The Emergence of a Scientific Culture: Science and the Shaping of Modernity, 1210–1685*.[54] Again, this book refutes his efforts to portray Christianity as a reluctant endorser of classical philosophy. More than this, Gaukroger argues that Christianity "set the agenda" for science all the way into the Revolution in a way that no other religion in the world ever had:

> A distinctive feature *of the Scientific Revolution* is that, *unlike* earlier scientific programmes and cultures, it is driven, often explicitly, by religious considerations. Christianity *set the agenda* for natural philosophy in many respects and projected it forward in a way *quite different from that of any other scientific culture*.[55] (My emphasis)

Incredibly, O'Brien goes on to stress that in the four centuries preceding Copernicus (1150 to 1550), pagan texts coming from Byzantium and, "in elaborated form, from Islamdom," flowed in successive waves into Europe, with Christian authorities doing their best to "resist" and "suppress" them, particularly "those texts which contradicted core tenets of Christianity" such as the idea that God controlled everything in the world through divine interventions.[56] But, fair is fair, O'Brien finally uses sources that square with his claim regarding Islamic transmission.

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[51] S. R. Epstein and Maarten R. Prak, eds., *Guilds, Innovation and the European Economy, 1400–1800* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008).

[52] Bert S. Hall and Delno C. West, eds., *On Pre-modern Technology and Science: A Volume of Studies in Honor of Lynn White, Jr.* (Malibu, CA: Undena Publications, 1976).

[53] Frances Gies and Joseph Gies, *Cathedral, Forge, and Waterwheel: Technology and Invention in the Middle Ages* (New York: HarperCollins, 1994).

[54] Stephen Gaukroger, *The Emergence of a Scientific Culture: Science and the Shaping of Modernity, 1210–1685* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006).

[55] *Ibid.*, 3.

[56] O'Brien, "Historiographical Traditions," 8.

Both these sources happen to be seriously flawed:

- John Freely, *Aladdin's Lamp: How Greek Science Came to Europe Through the Islamic World* (New York: Knopf/Doubleday, 2009).
- George Saliba, *Islamic Science and the Making of the European Renaissance* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2007).

O'Brien relies on these books to support the idea that Islamic scholars were teachers of Europeans up until Copernicus and through the entire High Middle Ages in the face of Christian opposition. *Aladdin's Lamp*, however, is a popular account which ignores the books we have been citing, and makes the sweeping claim, without scholarly documentation, that Greek science *tout court* came to Europe through the Islamic world. Saliba's book is more scholarly but its image of a highly creative Islamic tradition well into the sixteenth century, producing the Italian Renaissance, has been refuted by Huff's argument that Saliba's thesis is based on the supposition that the mere presence of literate men in Muslim lands bespeaks of scientists engaging in outstanding work.[57] The consensus quite firmly supports the view that by the twelfth century Europe was in possession of the Islamic contribution and about to move well beyond it.

The two sources O'Brien uses to back the claim that Christians were ambivalent towards the spread of Islamic texts, for fear that these would challenge the idea of God's divine interventions in nature, are: Michael Allen Gillespie, *The Theological Origins of the Rise of Early Modernity*;[58] and Michael Horace Barnes, *Stages of Thought: The Co-evolution of Religious Thought and Science*.[59] Gillespie makes the opposite argument about the theological "origins" of modernity, and the book by Barnes has nothing to do with Christianity's relationship to science in medieval Europe; rather, it is authored by a contemporary religious person brought into the debate by O'Brien to confuse and misdirect attention from the issues at hand.

O'Brien keeps pressing the point about how scholastic theologians welcomed investigations of nature while "resolutely" insisting "upon

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[57] Huff, *The Rise of Early Modern Science*.

[58] Michael Allen Gillespie, *The Theological Origins of Modernity* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008).

[59] Michael Horace Barnes, *Stages of Thought: The Co-evolution of Religious Thought and Science* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000).

the sovereignty of revelation."[60] "Most" natural philosophers, "as true believers . . . before, during, and after the Scientific Revolution," refrained from questioning Christianity's foundational beliefs; "they operated within authoritarian regimes." Fortunately, some Christians "courageously . . . referred for support and guidance to Averroes, Avicenna, and other Muslim commentators"; as a result, Christians finally began to deploy "classical modes of logical reasoning to persuade ecclesiastical and secular elites in the West that God had created and designed a natural world to operate on intelligible principles."[61]

Every single one of the sources he cites stands against these claims. The title of James Hannam's *God's Philosophers: How the Medieval World Laid the Foundations of Modern Science*,[62] speaks for itself. Richard Olson's *Science and Religion, 1450–1900: From Copernicus to Darwin*[63] is about the profound influence Christianity had on the lives and work of Galileo, Newton, and Darwin. Edward Grant's *Planets, Stars and Orbs: The Medieval Cosmos, 1200–1687* argues that medieval cosmology was a fusion of pagan Greek ideas and biblical descriptions of the world.[64] The same applies to three other sources he uses.

What is all the more perplexing is the continuous effort by O'Brien to paint Islam as the religion that gave Christian Europe the intellectual sources to think of natural phenomena in terms of natural laws explainable by reason, when it was the other way around. The idea that emerges out of Christian Europe early on is that God is conterminous with reason, whereas in Islam the idea that Allah has limits to his own arbitrary willfulness remains unthinkable to this day. As Robert Reilly argues in *The Closing of the Muslim Mind: How Intellectual Suicide Created the Modern Islamist Crisis*, Islam was at first engaged with Aristotle but eventually rejected his reasoning when Abu Hamid al-Ghazali established a theology in which Allah came to be portrayed as the personal and immediate director of the movement of every molecule in the universe through his sheer incomprehensible willfulness.[65] In contrast, starting

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[60] O'Brien, "Historiographical Traditions," 9.

[61] *Ibid.*

[62] James Hannam, *God's Philosophers: How the Medieval World Laid the Foundations of Modern Science* (London: Icon Books, 2009).

[63] Richard Olson, *Science and Religion, 1450–1900* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2003).

[64] Edward Grant, *Planets, Stars and Orbs: The Medieval Cosmos, 1200–1687* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1994).

[65] Robert Reilly, *The Closing of the Muslim Mind: How Intellectual Suicide Created the Modern Islamist Crisis* (Wilmington, DE: Intercollegiate Studies Institute, 2010).

with St. Anselm's (1033–1109) effort to logically demonstrate the existence of God and continuing with Aquinas and others, Christianity went on to conceptualize the movement of material bodies in terms of natural laws.[66]

O'Brien eventually starts to acknowledge the contribution of medieval Christianity to a "deeper intelligibility about the natural world," though he cannot help inserting phrases about "Islamic discoveries" and how Christians were "deeply indebted" to Islamic thinking,[67] even though he only has two sources (Saliba[68] and Freely[69]) backing him.

One really has to wonder why O'Brien would misuse text after text; some may want to think this is a sign of his willingness to engage sources that contradict his thesis. But this is not reasonable; the standard practice is, in the first instance, to use sources to support one's arguments. One must refer to countering sources but then try to show what are the weaknesses and failures of these sources; and if one is unsure, or the debate is quite undecided, one should acknowledge the opposing sources with statements such as "for a different view, see a, b, and c," or, "for a serious challenge to the ideas presented here, consult x, y, and z," and the like.

When O'Brien writes about the Scientific Revolution proper, and admits that this revolution occurred inside Europe with antecedents in the medieval era, the sources he uses begin to square with his arguments. My view is that O'Brien, a specialist in quantitative economic history, was unprepared for the true state of scholarship on the question of medieval science, but was still determined to persist with a "global perspective." He had a hard time digesting this Eurocentric literature, so he decided to misconstrue one book after another (wording their arguments as close as possible to his own way of thinking).

Nevertheless, O'Brien's paper will go unquestioned and become part of the "conversation," of a growing "scholarly literature" on European history offering a "new," "exciting," and "liberating" global perspective. Historians preoccupied with Europe's history lack the metapolitical language to counter the globalists. They are seen as archaic, myopic, and narrow-minded. And the fact is that many of the remaining Eurocentric scholars are "quiet" academics who debate specialized topics only with their peers without thinking—never mind promoting—a cohesive view

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[66] Hannam, *God's Philosophers*.

[67] O'Brien, "Historiographical Traditions," 11.

[68] Saliba, *Islamic Science and the Making of the European Renaissance*.

[69] Freely, *Aladdin's Lamp*.

of Western civilization. They are generally "liberal minded," sympathetic to the idea of inclusive universities, multiculturalism, and diversity. Some are apolitical or uninvolved with broader political and cultural questions, completely unaware of the dramatic ethnic alteration their own societies are experiencing.

Meanwhile, in contrast to these reserved or "moderate" academics, O'Brien is part of an activist group of academics who have no qualms forcing their ideological expectations upon the sources. Even though he concludes that global historians "may sensibly retain the 'Scientific Revolution' as a venerable and heuristic label,"[70] he still presents it as a "conjuncture in global history,"[71] as a "fortuitous re-ordering of western Europe's cosmography,"[72] with both Eastern and Western antecedents. By "conjuncture" he means that it was something that happened in Europe due to the "fortuitous" dynamics of global forces, which could have happened elsewhere. There was nothing really unique about Europe; modern science, after all, is about engendering instruments "for the accumulation of useful and reliable knowledge" for humanity.

O'Brien did not offer one original thought. He condemned the "myopias imposed" by national histories of this revolution, but relied almost entirely on such histories; and, without any sources of his own, enforced the globalist approach on the literature, twisting it beyond the author's intentions. This is the strategy academic globalists are employing to dilute European identity, destroy European cultural pride and confidence, promote globalization, and create a new economic man.

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[70] O'Brien, "Historiographical Traditions," 13.
[71] *Ibid.*, 22.
[72] *Ibid.*, 15.