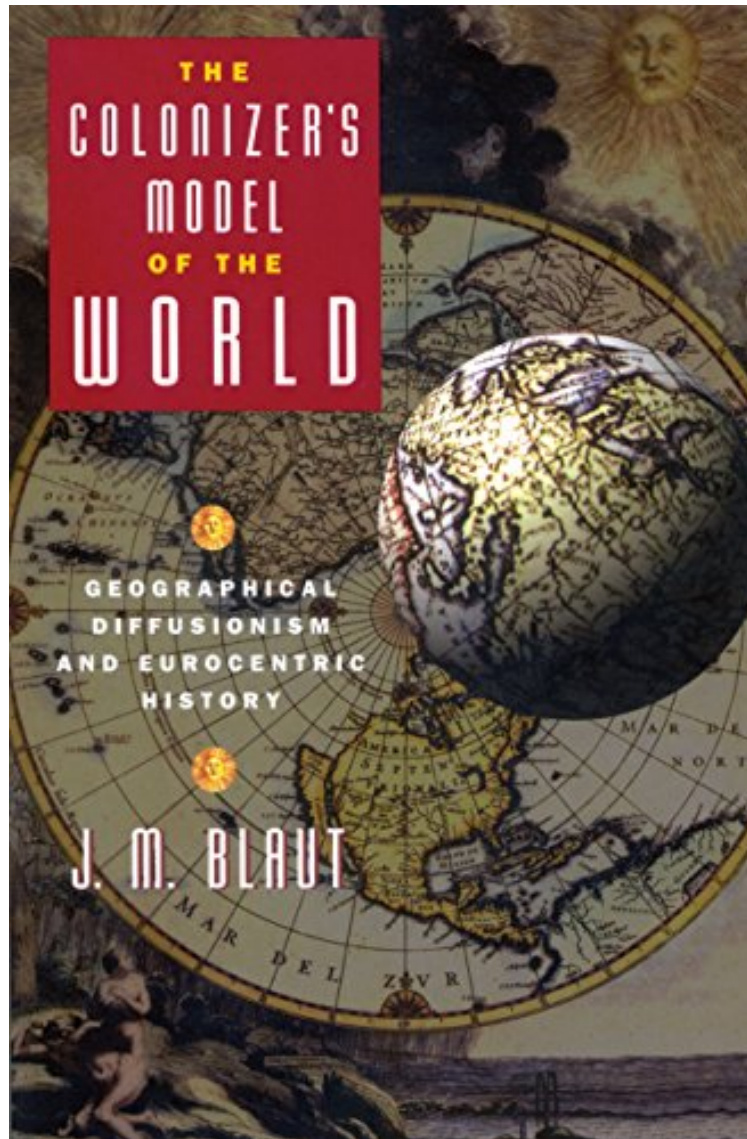


The Colonizer's Model of the World: Geographical Diffusionism and Eurocentric History

J. M. Blaut

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J. M. Blaut : The Colonizer's Model of the World: Geographical Diffusionism and Eurocentric History before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Colonizer's Model of the World: Geographical Diffusionism and Eurocentric History:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Five Stars By Nanae Seki That's what I wanted. The shipment was

smooth.0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Five StarsBy AndyA++++++17 of 20 people found the following review helpful. Refuting EurocentrismBy M. A. KrulJames Blaut, a geographer at the University of Illinois at Chicago, is particularly known for his excellent refutations and polemics against Eurocentrism in economic history. This book, "The Colonizer's Model of the World", is the pinnacle of that oeuvre, together with its companion work Eight Eurocentric Historians. The first and largest part of the book is devoted to refuting the mythology and mistakes of Eurocentric diffusionism, a body of theories and statements which purport to show that Europe or Europeans were in some way, whether mentally or physically or economically or environmentally or culturally, superior to Asians, Africans and other non-Europeans before the 'discovery' of America. Blaut does this by analyzing systematically the works of many recent and past popularizers of these theories, from the 'hydraulic societies' of Karl Wittfogel to the contemporary racist historiography of Eric L. Jones, and subjecting them to an unsparing criticism for their erroneous assumptions and ignorance of the non-European world. As Blaut shows, China, India, Southeast Asia and even Africa were not lagging behind Europe in any respect before 1492, including but not limited to technology, individual freedom (or lack thereof), and demographics. He also makes many essential geographic points, such as refuting the theories that tropical conditions are inherently unsuited for working or thinking, or that tropical soil is necessarily less fertile, or that Europe relied on rainfall agriculture unlike Asia. The book "Eight Eurocentric Historians" builds upon this part and goes into more detail about it. The second part of the book is a discussion of the state of feudalism in Europe and elsewhere (about the same level of development except for the Americas, as Blaut shows) before 1492, and the immensely rapid growth, change, and development Western and Southern Europe underwent in the period roughly from 1492 to 1700. Blaut persuasively argues that only the colonization of the Americas, with the enormous influx of wealth and capitalistic production relations resulting from gold and silver mining and plantation work (particularly sugar), can adequately explain this phenomenon. He also explains why it was Europe that conquered America rather than the opposite, the answer being disease, and why it was Europe as opposed to Asia or Africa that did this, the answer being geographical location and advantageous wind patterns for sailing. Blaut is unsparing and polemic in his writing, occasionally getting preachy, but his case is strong and aims home. He even criticizes otherwise radical authors for their failing in this regard, often legitimately, such as Marx and to a lesser extent Engels, Robert Brenner, Perry Anderson, and others. I do not endorse or support all his critiques on this field, as Blaut occasionally goes overboard, and his endorsement of Martin Bernal's "Black Athena" theory, now discredited, does not aid his case. (It must be noted that this book was written in 1993, and the refutation of this theory in "Black Athena Revisited" (Black Athena Revisited) was published in 1996.) Blaut nonetheless gives good cause also for the radical historians to revise and change the substance of some of the classic Marxist historical view - his book is yet more confirmation that the concept of the "Asiatic mode of production" is untenable and must be discarded, and it also gives more argument for introducing "protocapitalism" as a separate mode of production in between feudalism and Industrial Revolution capitalism, although Blaut himself is not yet willing to do so. What is most important about this book however is not its historiographical import, but the essential corrective it is to much of the still popular view of world history and the development of Europe and its superior position. From Tarzan to Tintin and from Kipling to the popular view of American Indians, the entire picture of the interactions between Europe and the rest of the world are for many people still unwittingly based on completely incorrect Victorian prejudices and assumptions. This goes not just for the average guy, but even for intellectuals, in fact even for professional historians. And if Blaut's book could make a dent in this vision, it will have made a major contribution to international understanding and historical sense.

This influential book challenges one of the most pervasive and powerful beliefs of our time--that Europe rose to modernity and world dominance due to unique qualities of race, environment, culture, mind, or spirit, and that progress for the rest of the world resulted from the diffusion of European civilization. J. M. Blaut persuasively argues that this doctrine is not grounded in the facts of history and geography, but in the ideology of colonialism. Blaut traces the colonizer's model of the world from its 16th-century origins to its present form in theories of economic development, modernization, and new world order.

From Library JournalBlaut (Univ. of Illinois) challenges the notion of "Eurocentric diffusionism": the pervasive presumption that superior Western culture has naturally flowed outward, bringing modernization to the rest of the world. In four chapters the author argues in detail that the historical propositions supporting European preeminence are myths. The conquest of the New World was simply the result of greater maritime accessibility to America, and the rise of Europe, after 1492, was due to the immense wealth of subsequent colonial accumulation. This is a highly analytical, provocative, and scholarly work. While not always convincing in certain aspects, it belongs in libraries serving readers interested in a revisionist view of world history.- William F. Young, SUNY at Albany Lib. Copyright 1993 Reed Business Information, Inc. "No scholarly book could possibly be totally new or original in this era, but Blaut's powerful and tightly focused opus comes close in the way he has marshalled and distilled a vast array of literature and evidence and the vigor and rigor with which he has pursued his central theses--propositions of unusual intellectual significance and timeliness. I find his argument quite persuasive and potentially mind-altering.... This is a work with

truly revolutionary implications, a badly needed recasting of our badly flawed, conventional First World vision of ourselves and the thrust of modern history. This could come to be regarded as a landmark achievement." --Wilbur Zelinsky, PhD, Penn State University "This is a dogmatically written, occasionally outrageous, and absolutely spellbinding book. It is a strongly argued, alternative interpretation of the basic causes for the rise of the west to the hegemonic position it has occupied for perhaps five centuries....It is a major contribution to the debate now coming to the fore in the field. It makes its contribution through a merciless critique of mainline theories, by its selective synthesis of subaltern scholarship (both theory and piecemeal empirical evidence), and by its integration of whatever evidence exists to support this alternative position....I would plan to recommend it to my students as highlighting many of the controversies of the field and as representing an exaggerated version of one possible position." --Janet Abu-Lughod, Ph.D., The New School for Social Research "Will add excitement to courses in world history and self-critical Western Civilization and European history courses. I have adopted this provocative new book for my graduate colloquium on theories of world history and think that undergraduates too would enjoy Blaut's clarity of analysis and passionate writing. He depicts Eurocentric diffusionism as a pernicious ideology justifying European and United States colonial and neocolonial domination of the rest of the world. His largest chapter refutes 'the myth of the European miracle,' the decisive superiority that Western Europe allegedly had achieved independent of outside help. Blaut, a historical geographer, has assembled a wealth of evidence for many parts of the world both for the long period before 1492 and for the transitional period of 1492 to 1688. As one who has taught European history since the early 1960's and world history since the late 1980's I enthusiastically welcome this exciting book which challenges and explains assumptions about European superiority." --David M. Fahey, Miami University -Adopted for Theories of History (World) "Jim Blaut has written an exciting book that successfully challenges conventional Eurocentric diffusionism. The text is very accessible and is well documented with numerous concrete historical examples. The book is very popular among the students that I teach." --Daniel Weiner, Associate Professor of Geography, West Virginia University "My students are enthralled by the accounts in the book of the participation of other regions of the world in the making of modern world history. The book is easy to read without the need for much prior knowledge. Nearly a quarter-century after its publication, the book's themes are just as relevant--if not more so--for helping us understand the process of globalization today."--Sing C. Chew, PhD, Helmholtz Centre for Environmental ResearchUFZ Leipzig, and Humboldt State University "...Attributing European supremacy, in part at any rate, to something resembling chance - Blaut throws down the gauntlet to those still coddling the model of an Inside/Outside world [his language] waiting to be 'modernized' and saved from itself." --B. Marie Perinbam, University of Maryland, College Park, Maryland "Blaut could offer us sound leadership, in heeding Chaudhuri's (1990:43) sound admonition that 'the ceaseless quest of modern historians looking for the 'origins' and roots of capitalism is not much better than the alchemist's search for the philosopher's stone that transforms base metal into gold' -and still less to look for them under a proverbial lamppost in European history, when most of the gold was, and still is, to be found elsewhere in the world." --Andre Gunder Frank, Faculty of Economics, University of Amsterdam, the Netherlands