Introduction

A peregrination is a lengthy journey, often slogged on foot. *Deadly Contradictions* is such a journey—a walkabout with a Rousseauian purpose, to understand other worlds to better "know our own." Moreover, the voyage is conducted to help solve two mysteries. The first of these is a murder whodunit. The United States is a Great Power, one the *New York Times* has judged to be "the most powerful country ever" (Herbert 2011). Since the end of World War II American greatness has repeatedly involved the exercise of violent force; which is a way of saying the US has often gone to war in other countries and in so doing has killed many. So a first mystery to be explored is: Why has the US killed so many people in war?

The second, more general and abstract mystery derives from the intellectual infrastructure erected to address the first. To investigate why the US has killed so many in its wars, it was necessary to develop a theory of the particular being that is the US, in all its martial finery. The theory advanced is one of global warring in empires. However, this theory was itself dependent upon formulation of a research framework concerning how in general to analyze human being. This framework is critical structural realism. The second mystery, then, is the puzzle of human being: what it is, how it works or does not. Critical structural realism and its application in global warring theory suggest a solution to this second mystery. Readers, consider yourselves the very best sort of intellectual tourists on an expedition to solve two mysteries. Consider me your humble guide.

Empires and Modernity

Before describing this journey, I will indulge an aside about why empires, imperialism, and modernity play roles in *Deadly Contradictions*. Dana Priest reports that Donald Rumsfeld, when he was George W. Bush's defense secretary, commissioned a "private study of great empires" (Priest 2004: 30).

The study was completed just prior to the US invasion of Iraq. Secretary Rumsfeld's intentions in ordering the study are unclear. Perhaps he and his subalterns were curious about how other empires worked and how the US compared to them.

A vast number of attempts to understand imperial social forms had been made prior to Secretary Rumsfeld's, beginning in Enlightenment times with Edward Gibbons's *The Rise and Fall of the Roman Empire* (1776). Demandt (1984) recorded 210 theories to explain Rome's fall alone. Since 9/11 and the US occupation of Iraq and Afghanistan, a deluge of books and articles have debated American imperialism.[1] Why another text focusing on empires and imperialism?

Throughout the twentieth century, from Hobson (1902) to Lenin (1917) to Harvey (2003), scholarly attention has emphasized the economics of imperialism—and usefully so, because empire and economic accumulation *are* conjoined. But, as the pages of this text will demonstrate, empires and imperialism have equally involved the violence of war, and have done so for a very long time. *Deadly Contradictions* argues that imperial social forms have been extremely important since deep in antiquity, and addresses an intellectual black hole in their study by giving the gore of war a theoretical place.

Consider, next, modernity. While debates about modernity may not be as old as those concerning imperialism; they are extensive, often vitupritive, and lacking in common sense, with this phrase used in a Peircian manner (Peirce 1955: 290–301); meaning that there is little 'sense' among knowledgeable folk about what modernity might be. Two strands in modernity debates stand out: the first concerns what modernity *is* and, second, whatever it is, has it already passed. Some regard the "is" of modernity as a cultural or a conceptual notion. Jonathan Friedman (2008: 9), for example, considers modernity "the cultural field of commercial capitalism." I prefer not to view modernity as a cultural phenomenon associated with social forms. Rather, it is the reverse: social forms that may be associated with certain cultural systems. So framed, "modernity" is a time whose regnant social forms are capitalist ones articulated by governments within imperial state structures, plus the cultural notions associated with these structures. Modernity has a beginning: around AD 1410 and the Portuguese conquest of Ceuta in Morocco, when the rise of European capitalist and governmental institutions began. In this optic modernity is European in origin, though rapidly spreading to those regarded as others by Europeans. Actually, Chapter 2 will argue that modernity retains an organizational design from antiquity.

If modernity has a beginning, does it have an end? Here is where postmodernists come in. For them, modernity passed like a kidney stone from the body politic into oblivion somewhere around 1979, the year of publica-

tion of Francois Lyotard's *The Postmodern Condition.* It does not take very deep research to discover that capitalism and states are still very much with us. However, there is reason to believe that the postmodernists may have stumbled upon something, so one of the topics explored in *Deadly Contradictions* is whether these are end times for modernity. With the preceding noted, it is time to introduce a metaphor used throughout out the text.

Imagine the United States of America as a recent version of Hobbes's Leviathan. Hereafter, the trope "US Leviathan" will stand for the structure that is the US. Picture modernity as the seas in which the Leviathan swims. Give this seascape a melodramatic flourish by envisioning those seas as stormy because of contradictory waves sent roiling by the Leviathan's own prodigious force. Finally, add danger to the melodrama by visualizing the tempest as one that might overwhelm and drown the Leviathan, and with it other creatures of the sea of modernity. In this sense, the book's peregrination is an excursion from the highlands where the US Leviathan is theoretically modeled, to the sea, where it is observed sailing the turbulent waters of modernity. Next, readers, I provide the itinerary of your peregrination.

The Itinerary

In the highlands, at the beginning of the theoretical section, chapter 1 formulates the text's approach to contemporary warfare. The chapter is divided into two parts. The first develops a critical structural realism; the second formulates global warring theory. The chapter's goal is to define the basic concepts of the approach and, in some cases, to reconceptualize them in order to better address the fact that humans are constantly in motion and that those motions occur on an extraordinarily complex, interconnected globe.[2]

I formally introduce the notion of the "social being" to replace concepts of society. The idea is that human social forms are not static structures, but open, reflexive, autopoetic beings in continual motion—now/here, then/there—and shape-shifters, changing their organization like the moving frames in a film. The US Leviathan is a trope of a variety of imperial social being. Social being dynamics are propelled by the interconnected macro-, meso-, and microregions of organization, which collaborate to produce motion. "Macro-regions" pertain to the entire social being; "meso-regions" to individual actors who operate the social being; and "micro-regions" to the structures within actors that operate the actors that operate the social being. Global warring theory is largely formulated on the basis of macro- and meso-concepts that explain the US Leviathan's dynamics.

Theories can be usefully thought of as structures composed of concepts exhibiting two parts: what is explained, the "explanandum"; and what does the explaining, the "explanans." The explanans is connected with the explanandum because its concepts explain those in the explanandum. Recall the first mystery that *Deadly Contradictions* addresses: Why does the US war and kill so many people? The US Leviathan's wars will be shown to be of a type termed global warring. The preceding means that the explanandum of global warring theory is a solution to the first mystery, and an answer to the question of why the US so frequently conducts global warring.

The explanans of the theory can be divided into two interrelated parts: one concerning the world actors find themselves in, and the other addressing how actors deal with this world. Thus, the first category of concepts applies in macro-regions. These notions are about the realities actors inhabit and include formulations of ideas about force, power, logic, strings, contradictions, and reproduction. This is because the actualities in which actors reside are those that need to be represented as structures of force and power, riven by contradiction and needing to reproduce. The second part of the explanans involves concepts in meso-regions that account for how actors act upon what is happening to them in their macro-realms. The terms employed here might be said to be those of a hermeneutics—not a literary hermeneutics like Clifford Geertz's, but a pragmatic variety. The major notions are social reflexivity, hermeneutic puzzles and politics, and public *délires* (elite-instituted desire): actors confront hermeneutic puzzles of force, contradiction, and reproduction with social reflexivity that involves them in hermeneutic politics to create public *délires.*

The actors examined in *Deadly Contradictions* are in a special category of elites—those involved with security, who judge questions of war and peace. The concepts of the first part of the explanans are examined to explain the state of the structures of force and power in which US security elites find themselves. Those of the second part are examined to see how those actors, employing a pragmatic hermeneutics, act upon the structures of force and power in which they find themselves to, among other things, open the gates of global warring hell.

Chapter 2 takes the theoretical tools formulated in the previous chapter and applies them to theorizing imperial social beings. In imperial beings, which exercise different forms of economic and violent force, readers will discover shape-shifting things, Nietzschean "monsters of energy." Having slogged through theoretical highland, the text's narrative descends to empirical seas to explore the theory's plausibility.

How might these seas be imagined? One way is to see them as oceans of space and time upon which human social forms sail. Different empirical space/time places are different seas, there being, very broadly, ancient,

medieval, and modern seas. Two seas are visited in chapters 3 through 10. The first is that of the US Leviathan, roughly from its beginning up to the middle of the twentieth century. Here readers learn of the development and nature of a New American Empire. The second area reconnoitered is the roiling seas of the latter half of the twentieth and early twenty-first centuries, when the New American Empire is seen in action doing its global warring. Chapter 3 examines the US from its beginnings until the last year of World War II to judge how long it has been an imperial social being. Chapter 4 investigates the five years from 1945 to 1950. The world in 1945 was one of daunting international disorder—old empires dying, America ascendant. This chapter details the actual institution of the New American Empire. Of course, it is not easy being an empire. In chapter 5 the argument travels to observe the disordering contradictions that have vexed the empire since World War II, provoking reproductive vulnerabilities and with them hermeneutic puzzles about how to plot an imperial course in turbulent seas. The chapter identifies two general types of political and economic contradictions provoking reproductive vulnerabilities.

The argument in the next five chapters travels to the violent places of US global warring. The discussion reveals the role of contradiction and reproductive vulnerabilities, showing how security elites wrestle with the hermeneutic puzzles and politics provoked by these vulnerabilities. The fighting considered is more than the conventional conflicts where the US overtly and directly sends troops into combat with enemies. The New American Empire has been a sly Leviathan, fighting covertly and indirectly by sending other countries' boys off to fight and die for it.

Chapter 6 examines US global warring between 1950 and 1974. The chapter includes an overview of the wars of this period, as well as five in-depth examinations of important deadly quarrels: the Korean War, the Iran Coup, the Guatemalan Coup, Cuba and the Bay of Pigs Invasion, and the Vietnam War. Chapter 7 analyzes US global warring from 1975 until 1989. It documents a time of change, especially in the contradictions troubling the empire. In light of these changing contradictions, the chapter investigates US global warring in Afghanistan at the time of the Soviet invasion; in the Iran-Iraq War through the 1980s; and in Libya, also in the 1980s.

Chapter 8 reports on a coalescing and intensification of contradictions facing the US Leviathan after 1990 that resulted in a perfect storm of contradiction. Chapters 9 and 10 document how US global warring, or preparation for such warring, spread after 1990 to become world warring in sixteen violent places in five theaters in the Middle East, Central Asia, Africa, Latin American, and the Pacific. For each case of hostilities, it is argued that imperial America sought to violently fix the vulnerabilities provoked by the storm of contradictions.

Finally, at journey's end, chapter 11 looks back to judge whether the perigrination has offered solutions to the two mysteries that were the reason for the trip in the first place.

Time and Technique

The time analyzed in the book and the techniques used to study it deserve comment. Fernand Braudel, in his classic *The Mediterranean* ([1949] 1972), proposed that there have been different varieties of time that scholars can explore—specifically, three different "planes": *la longue durée, l'histoire sociale,* and *l'histoire événementielle* (Braudel 1972: 20–21). The *longue durée* was "the slow unfolding of structural realities," "whose passage is almost imperceptible" (Braudel 1972: 23, 20). *L'histoire sociale* was "the history of groups and groupings" (Braudel 1972: 20), whereas *l'histoire événementielle* was "brief, rapid, nervous fluctuations," "individal time," and the "history of events" (Braudel 1972: 21). Two sorts of criteria distinguished Braudel's temporal planes: they involved short or long time periods (i.e., *l'histoire événementielle* versus *la longue durée*); and the actors in the planes could be structures or individuals (i.e., *la longue durée* and *l'histoire sociale* versus *l'histoire événementielle*.) Two questions arise about this conceptualization. Why, if there were long and short temporal planes, was there no medium plane? And when was the object of study in temporal planes likely to be that of individuals, or likely to be that of structures?

To address these questions, one might suggest that history can be studied in terms of seas of space and time that may have short, medium, and long time-frames. "Short time-frames" very roughly correspond to Braudel's *l'histoire événementielle.* They are "moments" of time, occurring briefly, lasting from weeks to a few years. Ethnographers often work in such stretches. Scholars of the Manchester School—one thinks of Gluckman's (1958) fine study of the opening of a bridge in Zululand or Victor Turner's (1957) "social dramas"—were masters of short time-frame ethnographies. Individuals are easily observable in the moment. However, short time-frames are so short that it is difficult to observe structural trends.

"Medium time-frames" have no real Braudelian correspondence. They are periods of decades to a century or so that have within them different "moments." They have normally been studied by historians or historically inclined social thinkers, and are long enough to allow structural trends to be distinguished, though generally not so long that the results of those trends can be known. Because structural trends are observable in medium time-frame studies, it is possible to analyze how individuals react to them. Even though Braudel did not conceptualize a medium time-frame, his

two-volume *The Mediterrean* is actually such a study of the time of King Philip II of Spain (1527–1598). Walter LaFeber's *The New Empire* (1963) is a classic medium time-frame account of the rise of US capitalism and empire between 1860 and 1898; while Arthur Schlesinger's *The Crisis of the Old Order* (1957) is an equally distinguished account of how that capitalism got into trouble between 1919 and 1933. All in all, studies over medium time-frames are "teasers," in that they indicate the direction in which the story is going but do not actually reveal its ending because it has not yet occurred.

"Long time-frames" correspond approximately to Braudel's *la longue durée* and *l'histoire sociale* (if observed over centuries). They extend over grand time periods—veritable spatiotemporal oceans—in which structural trends have begun, matured, and finished; and they are composed of the medium time-frames that are themselves composed of different moments in short time-frames. Long time-frame researches have typically been the domain of historians or archeologists. Nineteenth-century evolutionary anthropologists such as Lewis Henry Morgan (1877) and E.B. Tylor (1871), as well as mid–twentieth-century neo-evolutionists like Leslie White (1959) and Julian Steward (1963), conducted long time-frame researchs. More recently, Eric Wolf's (1982) *Europe and the People without History* and R. Brian Ferguson's (1995) *Yanomami Warfare* each offer long time-frame narratives of the entire world and of that of the Yanomami during modernity. Long time-frame studies often emphasize structural change, as times are so great that individual actions become lost in a fog of the past. However, where individual data is still available it can be interesting to analyze individuals' responses to structural transformation. Long time-frames can be a gratifying field of study because they contain the "end of the story" both for structures and the persons who compose them.

Deadly Contradictions, though it sketches the entire history of the American polity, is concentrated in a medium time-frame—the moments of the US Leviathan between 1945 and 2014. This period might be envisioned as part of the epoch of late modernity, and its examination might be thought of as providing clues as to how the story of modernity might end. Analysis begins in 1945 because a series of changes that were instituted that year transformed the Old into the New American Empire. It terminated in 2014, by which time President Obama had announced that US military strategy "will … move away from large-scale ground warfare that has dominated the post-9/11 era" (Pilkington 2012), leaving many to wonder: what comes next?

Research for *Deadly Contradictions* was conducted partially through participant observation and primarily through examination of primary and secondary written material. Bronislav Malinowski's guidance as to what

constituted proper data analysis is helpful in grasping how both participant observation and written material were analyzed. In *Argonauts of the Western Pacific,* he insisted that "acceptable Ethnographic work" should consist of observations of "the totality of all social, cultural, and psychological aspects of the community" (1922: xvi). He wanted data on the "totality" of a community because its different parts were "so interwoven that one" cannot be "understood without taking into consideration all the others" (ibid.). This codification of the "acceptable" in fieldwork became the ethnographic standard, though different schools have gathered varying amounts of cultural and social information.

It is certainly important to know how things "fit together." Of course, things that fit together are continually in motion in particular directions. Things change, and observationally ignoring this fact leads to epistemic holes. Knowledge of change requires data analysis that reveals what is connected with what else, but also discloses what came before in some space at some time, what will come subsequently in some space at some time, and how the subsequents and antecedents are connected. As much as possible, *Deadly Contradictions* has sought such analysis.

One sort of ethnographic experience has been very useful for the particular concerns of *Deadly Contradictions.* As a consultant for the United States Agency for International Development (1973–1993), I have known an assortment of US government officials—diplomats, soldiers, administrators. These mid-level operatives (who were mostly men) gave me a "feel" for the officials who man (and now woman) the ship of state.

Primary and secondary written information was gathered at libraries or from the Internet. The Internet has been a remarkable resource. First of all, it holds an extraordinary amount of material. It has allowed people who might otherwise have been voiceless to publish on the web, where it is globally available to almost everyone. Often their data is the most up-to-date account of events. Additionally, a surprising amount of material available online—some from formerly secret sources like the CIA—concerns the thoughts and actions of elites responsible for the US government and economy.

The cases of US global warring analyzed in the text are not derived from random sampling. Such sampling is currently not possible—first because so much US military intervention has been covert and is not known; and second because, as discussed later in the text, I do not believe the US military establishment actually knows how many hostilities it has engaged in. Thus, exactly what universe should be used as a basis for sampling remains unclear. However, the cases analyzed in the text are representative of the type of warring that occurred in each time period investigated.

Readers are no doubt aware that the material used to warrant the theoretical views in this text, and for that matter in any text, comes from people with particular biases, including myself. However, not all prejudices are equal. I am acutely aware that if the information supporting *Deadly Contradiction's* arguments is tendentious, then it conclusions will be rejected. One of my biases, then, is to base arguments as much as possible on evidence that is as reliable as possible. Certain areas discussed, especially those concerning recent hostilities like those in Iraq or Syria, are emotional minefields of conflicting opinion and hidden action. Given this actuality, I have sought whenever possible to make information bias known and to express any opposing views. It is time to begin the peregrination by climbing to the theoretical highlands to build a critical structural realism and global warring theory.

Notes

1. Harvey (2003: 225–226) provides references to literature concerning contemporary imperialism.

2. *Deadly Contradictions*' concepts are abstract and general and, consequently, sometimes hard to fathom. My rhetorical mentor has been the early novelist Daniel Defoe, who encouraged a "plain style." A glossary of important terms is included in this volume. When concepts are first defined they are placed in quotation marks.