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World in Crisis: Dearie and Fear in the Globalizing Mediasphere

Sociol Anthony Giddens and Ulrich Beck characterize globalization in terms of a 'global risk society' and 'second modernity'. As the ultimate expression of 'the modern', risk is conceived as an inevitable and unintended consequence of the continuing expansion of global capitalism. Giddens defines modernity in terms of the ways in which society considers and anticipates the future; Beck defines risk society in terms of the ways in which a society conceives of and manages insecurities in a systematic way. The mark of a modern risk society, or more correctly a risk averse society, seeks to limit its encounters with dangers.

These theories of modernity and 'risk' are shaped by a narrow historical vision, one that focuses on adjacent historical conditions. the work of Giddens, Beck and innumerable other Anglo-European scholars is conditioned by a Eurocentric frame of reference and vision of history.

In this context, I want to offer a more expansive reading of history. modernization and the formation of global processes. In particular, I want to argue that the distinctive attributes of a 'second modernity' are overstated, as they are connected to a much broader genealogy and a range of culturally formed knowledge systems that continue to function into the present.

My general thesis here is that agrarian societies responded to the crisis of Holocene global warming by adopting new economic and cultural systems. these systems are condemned to an onglng volition of innovation and crisis accommodation. While there are particular incarnations of this volition, including the current historical phase of globalization, they share a common genealogy which demands the constant re-formulation of our knowledge systems. This genealogy is itself structured around crisis conditions and the perpetual reinvigoration of an evolving crisis consciousness.

In order to formulate adequately these crisis conditions and the evolving crisis consciousness, I borrow from Lacan and his antecedents who alert us to the ways in which desire exceeds itself as *jouissance* and displeasure. This formulation explains the ways in which a contemporary economy of pleasure is driving globalization.