

# Cosmologies, Development, and Land

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A large, dark blue, diagonal shape that starts from the bottom left corner and extends towards the top right corner, covering the lower half of the slide.

# Three Cosmologies (account or theory of the origin of the universe)

## Big Bang

From nothing came particles that separated, organized, and evolved into life



## Biblical Creation

God created all things in 7 days with humans last, tasking them with multiplying and farming the land



## “Skywoman Falling” - Kimmerer

She arrived and animals worked with her to plant and cultivate life



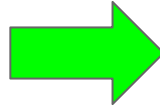
Regarding their relation to the land, what is similar and unique about these cosmologies?

(Big Bang, Biblical Creation, Skywoman)

# Impact on Development

## Concept of **Ownership**

- Big Bang splits life into hierarchies with humans on top of the evolutionary ladder
- Biblical Creationism places humans on top, “fill the earth and subdue it” (Genesis 1:28)
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- Skywoman teaches co-creation and co-dependency between humans and nature



## Western Perspective

- Embraced the Big Bang and Biblical cosmologies
- Had a direct impact on how Europe and the US developed
- Divine right (God’s mandate), Manifest Destiny, Colonialism, or “White Man’s Burden to conquer and Christianize the land”
  - <http://www.let.rug.nl/usa/essays/1801-1900/manifest-destiny/the-components-of-manifest-destiny.php>

# Pre-US Development

## White - The Middle Ground



The Middle Ground consisted of a mixture of cultures between Europeans and Indians that led to creating “a common, mutually comprehensible world in the region around the Great Lakes the French called *pays d’en haut*.”

This provides a glimpse into what balance and understanding could have looked like (it was no utopia though!)

“The...final dissolution of this world came when Indians ceased to have power to force whites onto the middle ground...Americans invented Indians and forced Indians to live with the consequences of this invention.”

# “Globalizing Cosmologies” - Pennock & Power

"A cosmology – a complete view of heavens and earth – that enables a society to think about its place within a clearly envisioned ‘global’ context, to conceive of its actions in such terms and, in many cases, to legitimize political, social or economic agendas with reference to ‘global’ processes."

**Once the United States embraced their globalizing cosmology of Manifest Destiny and individual land ownership (property rights), the middle ground stability ceased to exist and genocide began.**

# US Development and Economy



**With the Middle Ground gone, how and why did America choose Capitalism?**

Land expropriated from Native Americans was sold cheaply to land speculators who then created companies to flip it for a profit

Cotton plantation owners brought in more slaves to work this land, making a huge profit, with slaves as the engine of this new capitalism

Other Americans saw these profits and created companies following this "efficient management" style and capitalism continued to grow until it entrenched and defined the American workplace and workforce

# Summary

- By the US choosing to embrace a globalizing cosmology of Manifest Destiny, it led directly or indirectly to these developments:
  - Creation of the “Indian” other and subsequent genocide
  - Rejection of Native American cosmologies and worldview
  - Creation and adoption of Capitalism and Neoliberalism from the origins of slavery
- Had the US chosen a globalizing cosmology other than Manifest Destiny (such as Skywoman), the world would look very different than what it is today
- It is difficult to analyze how the foundations, or cosmologies, of countries have influenced their development through modernity



Challenge:

Look outside and attempt to reimagine how that area of land could look different had a different cosmology been embraced by your country.