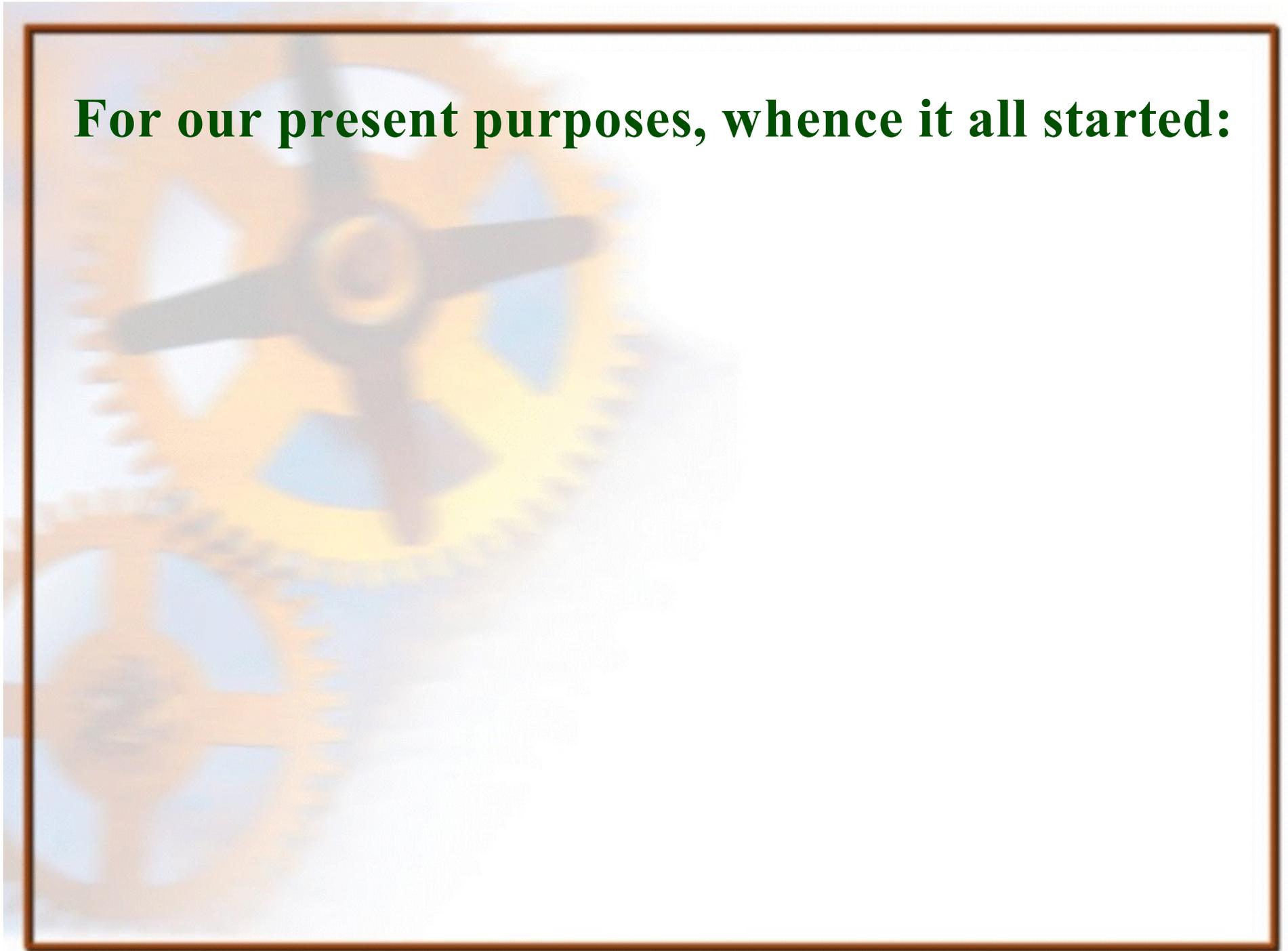


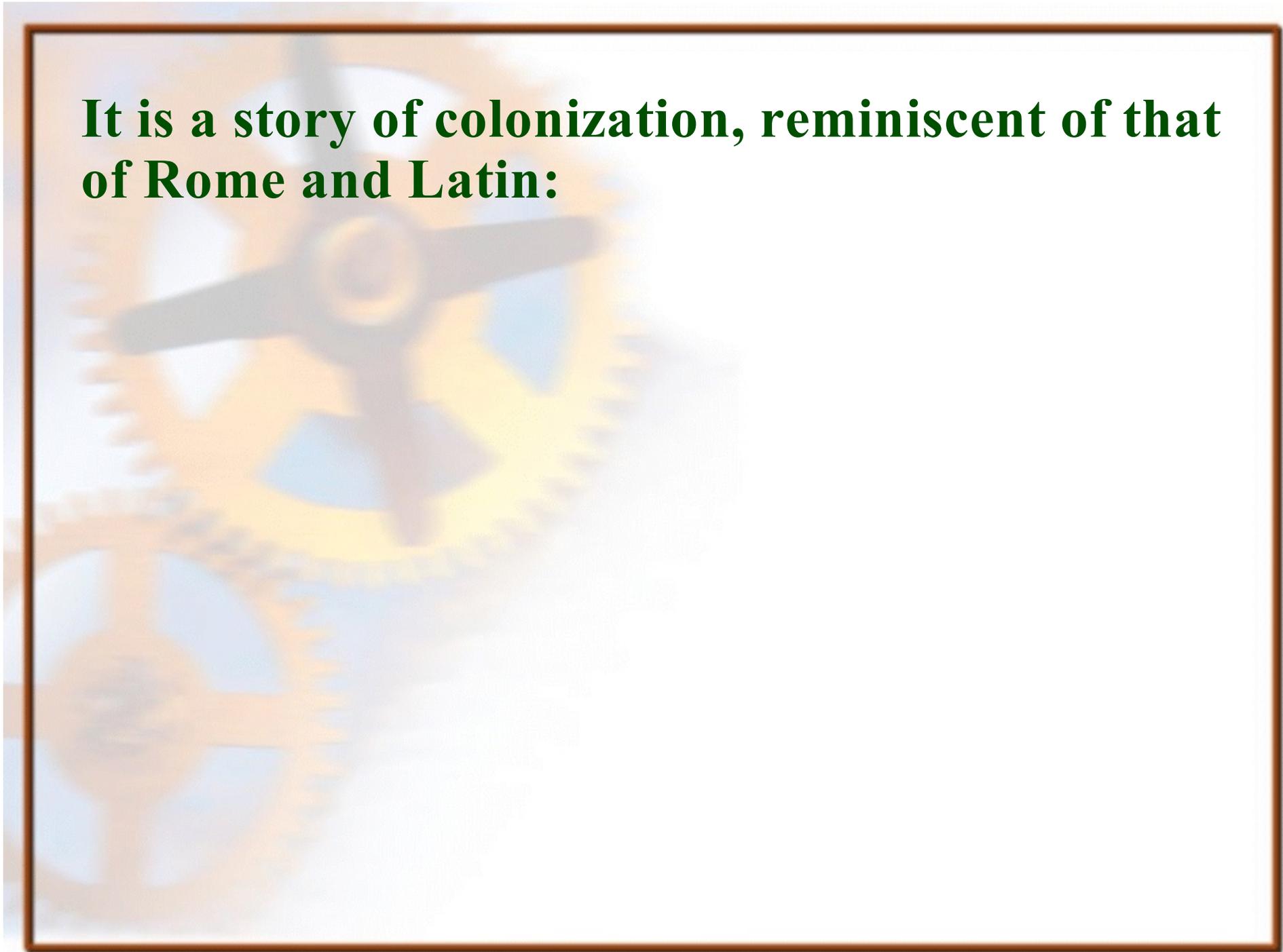
**Globalization, Global English,
and World English(es):
Myths and Facts**

Salikoko S. Mufwene

For our present purposes, whence it all started:



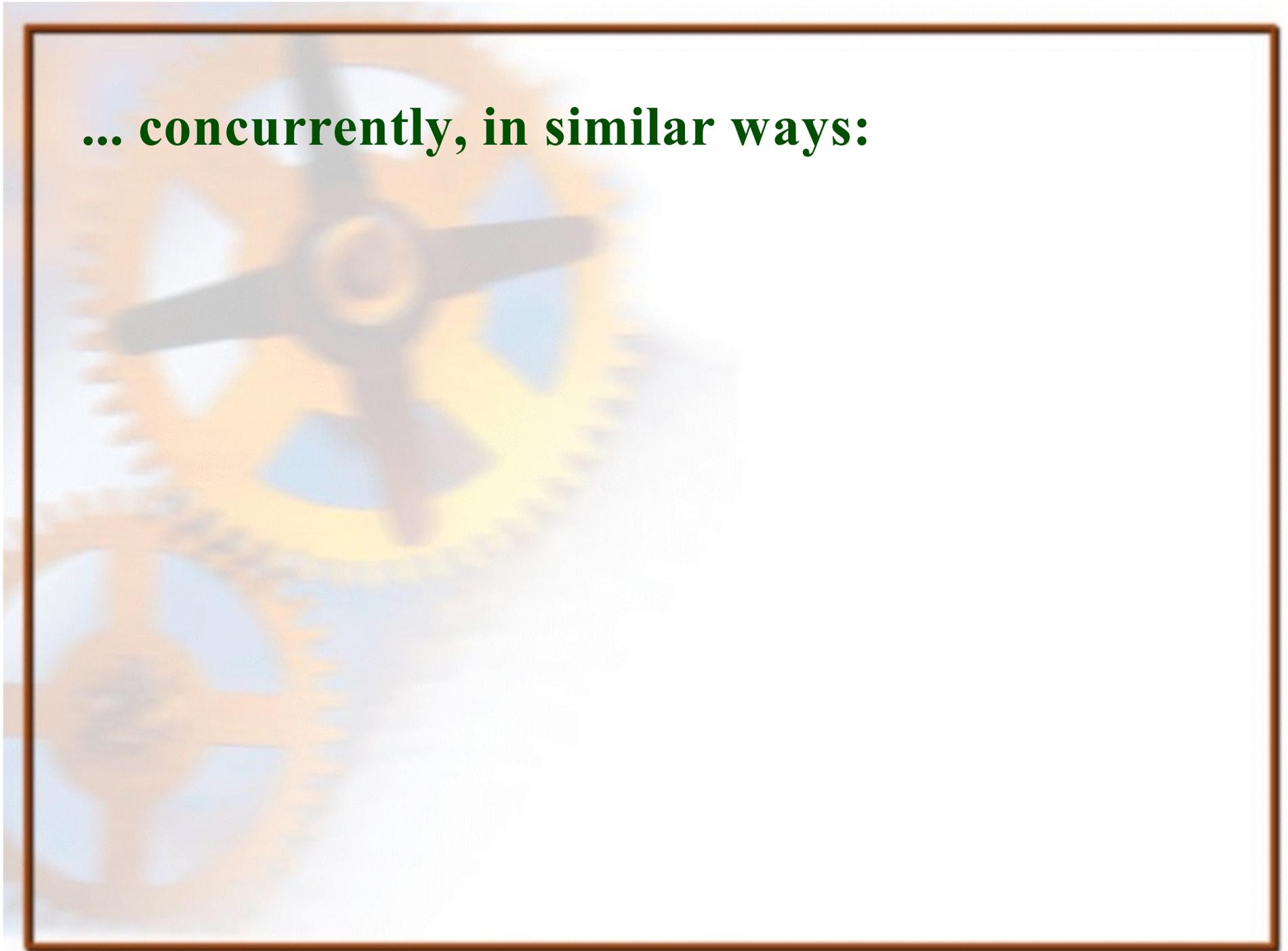
It is a story of colonization, reminiscent of that of Rome and Latin:



And the latter was repeated...



... concurrently, in similar ways:



The different meanings of ‘Globalization’

- **Network of economic interdependencies**
- **New form of economic colonization controlled by multinational corporations ==> insidious form of economic domination by world powers**
- **Condition of interconnectedness, such as with inter-governmental consultations in world affairs**
- **All-inclusive condition, such as with “global wars”**
- **Diffusion/Distribution all over the world**
- **World-wide or regional uniformity in economic and cultural systems ==> a sort of cultural homogenization**
- **Deterritorialization and/or Reterritorialization**

But globalization is not about equality...

- **It has increased economic inequities**
- **It has produced uniformities with lots of local characters**
- **Glocalization is consistent with globalization**
- **Globalization has not affected the whole world in a consistent way**
- **There are parts of the world that are more engaged in it than others; and there are segments of populations that are more engaged in it than others**
- **Globalization is not about to obliterate disparities between the First and the Third Worlds**
- **Globalization is not about to erase differences between former settlement and exploitation colonies**
- **Globalization is not about to lump “native” and “non-native” Englishes in the same category**

It should help to re-examine some claims associated with “global English” in light of the complex nature of “globalization”...

- as a condition of both homogeneity and heterogeneity,**
- or as an evolution toward world- wide uniformity and cross-local diversity,**
- or as evolving in one and many parts of the world at the same time**

What is “Global English”

If English is diverse, in what sense is it global?

- **English as a language spoken all over the world...**
- **by native and non-native speakers**
- **It is becoming the lingua franca for the whole world**
- **According to Crystal (2004:4), it is “the world’s first truly global language”**
- **A language that plays an important role in the globalization (i.e., unification) of the world into a “global village”**
- **But Crystal (2004:31) also suggests that, like Latin, English is probably fragmenting, or it will, into mutually unintelligible varieties (i.e., separate languages)**
- **As we know, English creoles have already been disenfranchized (by linguists)**

“World Englishes” vs. “World English”

- **“World English” smacks of “world language”, highlighting the role of English as a world language and as an international lingua franca**
- **“World Englishes” is similar to “New Englishes”, though the latter raises the question of what modern English variety is not new.**
- **According to Braj Kachru (p.c., 14 July 2004), the notion of “World Englishes” is independent of whether or not English functions as a world language...**
- **The concept was intended to capture the pluralism and the regional and cross-cultural variation that obtains among English varieties around the world, the distinct identities of these varieties.**

Bolton (2004) corroborates this...

... citing Kachru and Smith (1985) and underscoring...

- **the centrifugal and centripetal dynamics of international Englishes... with *Englishes* symbolizing**
- **“the functional and formal variation in the language, and its international acculturation” ...**
- **its inclusivity and pluricentricity, its international, regional, and local characters**
- **Thus, *world Englishes*, in the plural, is not associated with the issues I raise about Crystal’s notion of “Global English”**

There is also that important distinction between the Inner, Outer, and Expanding Circles of English (Kachru 1992)

- **It is partly correlated with the distinction between non-plantation settlement colonies and exploitation colonies (Mufwene 2001)...**
- **to which can be added territories that had not been colonized by England/the United Kingdom**
- **English functions as a *vernacular* in former settlement colonies...**
- **as an official language and as an important intranational *lingua franca* for the educated in former exploitation colonies...**
- **as a useful international *lingua franca* in the other countries (including continental Europe)**

The variation in the ethnographic status of English can be correlated with its differential coexistence with indigenous languages in former colonies

- **English has been more of a risk to the indigenous languages of former settlement colonies than to those of former exploitation colonies, if at all**
- **A vernacular competes with other vernaculars, whereas a lingua franca competes with other lingua francas...**
- **Moreover, a lingua franca can compete only with lingua francas that it shares ethnographic functions with**

How “global” can English be while it is not spoken by large segments of the population outside the England/UK and its former settlement colonies?

- “[S]ome two thirds of the world population do not yet use it” (Crystal 1997:23)
- Thus, English is *global* only in the geographical sense!
- But this is not what is suggested by the myth of English as a “killer language”
- “Perhaps a global language will hasten the disappearance of minority languages, or (...) make all other languages disappear” (Crystal 199:13). Under what conditions?

Is English a driver of globalization or a free rider?

- **Do languages have lives independent of their speakers?**
- **Do languages engage in wars with each other?**
- **Does globalization need English?**
- **Are businessmen language missionaries?**
- **Does *McDonaldization* amount to *Anglicization* of the world?**
- **Did British colonization intend to Anglicize the relevant territories of Africa and Asia? (Brutt-Griffler 2002)**
- **Why have we been fighting for the legitimization of “New” or “Indigenized Englishes”?**

Is there going to be an “English-only Europe”? (Phillipson 2003)

- **Is there going to be an English-only India too?**
- **Or, is there going to be an English-only South Africa?**
- **The answer is likely to be negative in all these cases, even in Europe, despite the success of the European Union**
- **The EU has promoted linguistic nationalisms and has supported linguistic minorities, though it has not created the requisite ecologies for the latter to thrive**
- **In any case, when it comes to language endangerment, the distinction between ‘vernacular’ and ‘lingua franca’ can’t be overlooked!**
- **An important lesson about language practice, above all ideologies, can be learned from Africa and Asia**

Is a “truly global language” likely to emerge that functions alone as a world vernacular?

- “[C]ould English kill off all other languages altogether? A world in which there was only one language left (...) is a scenario which could in theory obtain with 500 years” (Crystal 2004:41).
- Theories of evolution are about the past, not about the future (Stephen Jay Gould 2000, report of a conference in Paris).
- Look what genetic linguistics shows us about the fate of languages like Latin and Proto-Bantu that have prevailed over other languages.
- Crystal (2004:31) too suggests that, like Vulgar Latin a millenium ago, “English is going to fragment into mutually unintelligible varieties” (i.e., languages, p. 134)
- Isn’t this the story of English creoles? They are not dying, by the way, not even by “decreolization.”

Much of the non-Western world has taken a different socio-economic evolutionary pattern from the West

- **It is not globalizing in exactly the same style**
- **There is also a significant part of it that has been marginalized from economic and cultural globalization of the kind most commonly discussed in the literature**
- **Neither the languages nor the cultures of this marginalized world seem threatened by English**
- **Even places such as Taiwan, Malaysia, Hong Kong, and Singapore, which seem to have benefited from world-wide and regional globalization are not about to evolve into English-only polities...**
- **<<== because globalization does not make monolingualism a prerequisite.**

... and because the rest of the world does not want to replicate the West, though it has emulated the good sides of it...

- and even if it wanted too, there is a particular kind of local cultural infrastructure that would not support that kind of evolution... a sort of ecology that is not particularly accommodating to that foreign infusion...**
- a cultural ecology that exploitation colonization was not able to, or probably did not intend, to change.**



Thank you