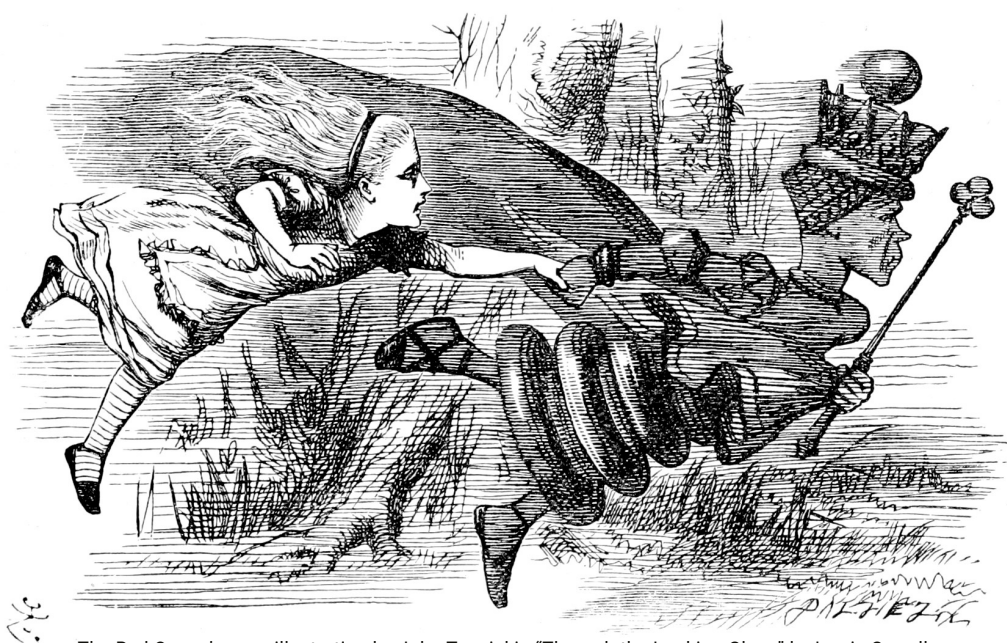




THE TREADMILL PARADOX IN CULTURAL HISTORY: COMPETITIVE GLOBAL CAPITALISM AND THE ANTHROPOCENE CHALLENGE



The Red Queen's race, illustration by John Tenniel in "Through the Looking-Glass" by Lewis Carroll

GOODY LECTURE

24 June 2021 | 18:00–20:00

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In Jack Goody's voluminous work on comparative cultural history, one of the most intriguing arguments consists in the view that supremacy in Eurasia has alternated between regions, notably between China and Western Europe. The present is a particularly fruitful moment to revisit this perspective, as the Chinese economy is fast becoming the largest and most powerful in the world.

The alternation of hegemony described by Goody currently contributes to a situation where humanity actively undermines the conditions for its own thriving, not deliberately, but through a global version of the tragedy of the commons, producing a global environmental crisis. The information revolution represents another major transformation, and the two can be analysed through the lens of the 'Red Queen paradox', a hypothesis from evolutionary theory, which shows why agents need to improve continuously in order to stay in the same place. Red Queen phenomena, or treadmill competition, may shed light on the long Eurasian history studied by Goody, and can explain contemporary side-effects of modernity, as well as indicating the destructive outcomes of unregulated competition. *Speaker's Abstract*

VENUE:

The lecture will probably be delivered by video-conference. Further information will follow.

ORGANISER:

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