Rethinking Modernity

Postcolonialism and the
Sociological Imagination

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palgrave
macmillan

for my parents, Lakhbir S. and Joginder K. Bhambra,
and my brother, Amritpal S. Bhambra

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From Modernization to Multiple Modernities: Eurocentrism *Redux*

This chapter continues my treatment of the relationship between the idea of modernity and the form of sociological argument, a relationship that arises with the very emergence of sociology as I argued in the previous chapter. With the development of this paradigmatic concern with modernity, the future was no longer seen as being about the reproduction of the present, but was considered to be a space for the further development of projects and trends (Burke 1992). These trends and projects were to be the trends and projects of modernity itself where modernity could also be understood, in Habermas's (1996) words, as an *unfinished project* – one that was not yet realized, but could be used as a normative framework to address global processes. The 'unfinished project' in general terms, however, is the bringing to fruition of what is already predicated in the Western experience. Ideas of evolution and progress are central to the concern with the future and, for most writers, as I have argued, the history of the West is seen as a precursor of the future of the non-West. In this chapter, I will address theories of modernization and the recent idea of multiple modernities, which is argued by its proponents to escape the Eurocentrism that is finally allowed to be a characteristic of modernization theory.

The professionalization of sociology in the post Second World War period coincided both with the dominance of structural-functional modernization theory and a world environment characterized by movements of decolonization and independence. The cold war competition for influence in the third world between capitalist and communist political systems and the associated emergence of a strong non-aligned movement meant that, at least in the immediate post-war period, sociologists were

attuned to developments outside of Europe and North America. If, as argued in earlier chapters, colonialism had not had an impact on the development of sociological understandings and analytical categories, as I shall be arguing in this chapter, movements for liberation and decolonization did. In this period, academics who had previously been concerned with interrogating their own past in the West began to turn their scholarly focus to the present conditions of what was seen as, the 'underdeveloped' world (Portes 1973: 248). The nature of the relationship between developed and lesser developed countries became one of the primary questions to emerge within sociological research and the problem was largely posed in terms of whether these countries would evolve in a common direction.

Following in the classical tradition of sociology, modernization theory took as its idea of change the standard notion of a linear movement from a traditional past to a modernized future. As discussed previously, explanations of the processes of modernization were primarily located in the context of a historical understanding of societies where each form was deemed to be superseded by a progressively higher one. Traditional, or pre-modern, societies were put forward as objects of comparison with societies already deemed to be modern and the problem was set up in terms of accounting for the historical transition from one to the other. The debate on convergence around modern institutions and the economy, however, also occurred in the context of counterclaims arguing for *divergence* around issues of culture and political organization. This was, after all, the period of the Cold War and the heyday of decolonization. Re-defining the modern and, increasingly, *contesting the modern*, became an integral aspect of determining the nature of the relationship between the developed and less developed worlds.

Decolonization in the 1960s was followed by the fall of communism in Europe in the late 1980s and 1990s. The perceived seismic shift in the global order – in particular, globalization being seen as the creation of a world market after the break up of the Soviet dominated economic bloc – renewed sociological debates about the nature of the modern world leading to the development of a new paradigm, that of multiple modernities. While for some, such as Fukuyama (1992), these events confirmed the convergence claims of modernization theory and the role of the United States as 'lead society'; for theorists of multiple modernities, the removal of 'cold war' constraints instead allowed for greater divergence. The increasingly vocal claims of scholars from the Third World – be they theorists of underdevelopment or then postcolonial theorists – also required engagement and address (see Escobar 1995; Sylvester 1999; Biccum 2002).

Theorists of multiple modernities situate themselves critically in relation to the earlier debates on modernization, contesting the assumptions of linearity and convergence they associate with this earlier approach, and ostensibly taking into account cultural diversity in the expression of modern institutions. In developing this approach to the question of modernity, and its global instantiations, theorists of multiple modernities believe that two fallacies are to be avoided. The first, associated with earlier modernization theories, is that there is only one modernity. The second is that of Eurocentrism, or: 'that looking from the West to the East legitimates the concept of "Orientalism"' (Eisenstadt and Schluchter 1998: 2). Here the argument is that, while the idea of one modernity, especially one that has already been achieved in Europe, would be Eurocentric, theories of multiple modernities must, nonetheless, take Europe as the reference point in their examination of alternative modernities (Eisenstadt and Schluchter 1998: 2). Thus, while theorists of multiple modernities such as Eisenstadt and Schluchter point to the problem of Eurocentrism, they do so at the same time as asserting the necessary priority to be given to the West in the construction of a comparative sociology of multiple modernities.

In this chapter, I take issue with their claim that this can avoid a charge of Eurocentrism as well as the view that multiple modernities offers a paradigm shift from earlier work on modernization. In each position, I shall argue, globalization is understood in terms of the world *becoming* global through the process of *incorporating* other parts of the world into a system whose defining features drive expansion forward, but are essentially *defined independently of interconnections that are argued to come in the wake of globalization*. In this way, modernity is frequently identified as a feature of the West that is exported and has an impact on other societies, which then incorporate the institutional forms while adapting them within local conditions and cultures. It is this way of thinking about modernity that I will be challenging in this chapter.

As will be shown, part of the problem with both modernization theory and theories of multiple modernities is their reliance on ideal types as the means of conducting comparative analysis. Ideal types, I shall argue, reify particular interactions and interconnections, abstracting them from the wider interconnections in which they are also embedded. A way out of this bind is the use of 'connected histories' as discussed in Chapter 1. Where the problem with the concept of modernity has been defined in terms of its failure to address the experiences of peoples and societies outside of Europe and the West, this failure can only be

remedied by taking them into account *and* by rethinking the previous structures of knowledge which are bound up with their omission.

I

Parsons (1966, 1971), as I argued in the previous chapter, was particularly interested in understanding the implications of the transition to modernity and looking at why the breakthrough to modernization had not occurred elsewhere than in Europe. In common with most other theorists at the time, he believed that modern society had emerged in the West, and that this provided the base from which the *system* of modern societies then developed (Parsons 1971). Modernization scholars such as Rostow (1960) and Lerner (1958) also believed that Western modernization should be used as a model of global applicability and other societies classified in terms of their relative modernization in comparison with this model; that is, other societies were to be studied in terms of the extent to which they approximated the characteristics of Western industrial societies.[1] Almond and Coleman (1960), for example, in their classic study addressing the political systems of developing countries, sought to understand the phenomena of non-Western political systems in comparison to Western ones. They co-ordinated their studies around a common set of categories derived from the Western experience and used these to establish the comparative framework within which the developing countries could be ordered.[2] It should be noted that while becoming modern in the first instance might derive from peculiar circumstances, which were historically contingent and even perhaps unlikely (e.g., as set out by Weber in his study of the Protestant Ethic), once Europe had become modern it was deemed to be able to show the way to the rest of the world as a model to be imitated. The birth of modernity, it was believed, could be induced.

The two general categories on which modernization theory differentiated between the modern and the non-modern were 'changes in individual subjective orientations and changes in the structure of social [and economic] relationships' (Portes 1973: 249). Research around the former focused on determining the extent to which there was an empirically identifiable modern 'man' and what the characteristics of such an individual would be. This occurred in conjunction with seeking to determine the influences that would make 'men' modern. Such research took the form of investigating 'the impact on the individual of his [sic] participation in the process of modernization' (Inkeles 1969: 208) and the value of possessing such modern traits for social and economic growth

more generally. Early theorists of modernity, then, were primarily interested in determining what 'modern man' was like and what the practical implications of being modern might entail in terms of the advancement of non-, or under-, developed countries.[3] In this way, modernity was understood both as a psychosocial syndrome as well as being recognized as a process of national development. At a higher level of abstraction, Portes (1973) argued that psychosocial modernity could be identified with the set of action-orientations defined by Parsons's pattern variables which allowed the specification both of motivational complexes (e.g., achievement versus ascription) and the associated norms and role definitions embodied in institutions (e.g., universalism versus particularism).

The emphasis on institutional regularities was the second dimension through which scholars distinguished modern from traditional societies. It was believed that the patterns – or structures – of modernization had a universal tendency to extend into all social contexts and to institute major changes in social and political structures (Levy 1965). These changes included the emergence and development of the market economy, industrial society, the nation-state, and bureaucratic rationality – modern forms of organization that were seen as impersonal, interdependent, specialized, and formal (Moore 1963: 522). As Portes (1973) argues, modernization was a synthetic term covering a series of societal processes that were seen to converge into a stable whole, that is, modern society. These processes, which were often taken as the principal indices along which countries were measured and then ranked in studies of modernization, included, urbanization and ecological relocation, literacy, social mobility, democratic participation, mass media production and consumption, education, and industrialization and a factory system of production (Lerner 1958; Feldman and Moore 1962; Portes 1973).

Bendix usefully summarizes modernization theory as resting on three related assumptions; first, an understanding of 'tradition' and 'modernity' as mutually exclusive; second, social change occurring as a consequence of phenomena internal to the society changing; and third, a belief that modernity would eventually-replace tradition and, in doing so, would have the same effects across the globe (1967: 324–5). In this sense, modernization theory rests on a notion of *convergence* whereby the difference of other societies – as constituted through their traditions – would be erased through the process of the global diffusion of Western institutions. Once the structures of modernization extended to other areas, it was believed that the previous indigenous patterns, or structures, would change and that change would be in the direction of the relatively modernized societies (Levy 1965: 30). Even where theorists of modernization recognized

the diversity of origins and the 'disequilibrating' processes of industrialization, they still maintained faith 'in a society's historical trajectory towards industrialism' and the common destination of modernization (Feldman and Moore 1962: 167). Parsons's (1964) theory of 'evolutionary universals' similarly outlined the belief that processes of development in the world would be in the direction of greater comparability with Western social systems and their differentiated sub-systems of polity, economy, 'societal community' or civil society, and the 'pattern-maintenance' sub-system of cultural reproduction.

The principle assumptions of modernization theory, then, relate to it being understood as a total social process constituting a universal, and universalizing, pattern. While modernity in its first instance is seen to emerge primarily as a consequence of the internal dynamics of Western societies, modern traits in other parts of the world, Portes suggests, did not 'arise naturally from internal processes of structural change, but artificially from the impact of Western cultural diffusion' (1973: 271), and, therefore, may be resisted. The processes of modernization, then, were taken to be 'the impingement of Western European institutions on new countries in the Americas, in Eastern and Southern Europe, and in Asia and Africa' (Eisenstadt 1968: 256). As a consequence, much analysis of modernization processes rests on an implicit (and often explicit) assumption that 'the highest of modern institutions must inevitably be those that have been devised in the West' (Mazrui 1968: 72), and thus, evolution towards modernity was to be evolution towards Western ways. This evolutionary framework of modernization theory was underpinned by the belief that what had happened in Europe amounted to nothing less than 'the crossing of a threshold between two distinct stages in the history of mankind ... [and] that, though Europe was first ... it is only a matter of time before the less advanced areas also find themselves at the crossing point' (Portes 1973: 248–9).[4] Even where major theorists of modernization – such as Kerr et al. (1960), Feldman and Moore (1962) and Apter (1965) – admitted the possibility of different routes to modernity there was nevertheless believed to be only one destination. Any *deviation* from the point to be arrived at was regarded as *deviant* with Rostow (1960), for example, arguing that communism was an outcome of a 'disease of transition.'

II

Although current, critical commentaries on modernization theory tend to represent the earlier position as both dominant and uniform, the distinction between tradition and modernity that formed the basis of

much modernization theory was, however, a key point of contestation. Critics at the time believed that using notions of a stagnant past, where the differences among societies were not regarded as relevant to the issue of modernization, and a dynamic heterogeneous present, both distorted the character of traditional societies and obscured understandings of 'the manifold variations in the relation between traditional forms and new institutions' (Gusfield 1967: 351). The presumption of a singular problematic of traditional societies, then, was strongly challenged, with scholars suggesting that traditional orientations varied significantly, both in terms of their general organization as well as in their receptivity to change and in providing legitimizing principles for social transformation (see Apter 1965; Gusfield 1967; Portes 1973). By looking at tradition simply as an *obstacle* to such transformation, one missed the fact that 'certain traditional values form[ed] important ingredients *for* structural change' (Portes 1973: 264). Further, Gusfield argued that what were regarded as traditional societies had actually been open to change, and had instituted purposeful, planned change, long before their present encounters with the West (1967: 353). The idea of a stagnant past (or a stagnant traditional present), then, was called into question by many scholars, particularly from within the discipline of anthropology, but also by dissident voices from within sociology and development studies.

As well as contesting assumptions of traditional societies, many scholars were also concerned to repudiate the notion that modernity would replace tradition in a homogenous way across the globe. With regard to the latter, scholars such as Gusfield argued for the outcome of modernizing processes to be understood as being constituted by 'an admixture [of tradition and modernity] in which each derives a degree of support from the other, rather than [being seen as] a clash of opposites' (1967: 355). This established not only the importance of understanding that different traditional orientations had a different relationship to modernizing processes, but also that this initial difference would then lead to a difference in outcomes. Eisenstadt, for his part, argued that while accepting a certain universality to modernity and modernizing processes it had to be recognized that 'different societies necessarily develop different institutional patterns' (1968: 257). Even within western and central European countries, he suggests, 'the course of modernization was neither entirely continuous nor everywhere the same' (1968: 274). Moore, similarly, stated that the challenge to conventional models of modernization arose from a recognition that 'the destination of modernization is neither uniform nor stable and [that] ... the trajectory of transformation differs

in space and time' (1963: 524). This was confirmed through increasing empirical research on contemporary societies which highlighted the wide variety of outcomes of modernization processes leading to a situation in which what was regarded as important was to determine and examine the forces that brought forth the set of orientations typical of modernity in different cultural contexts (see Eisenstadt 1965; Gusfield 1967; Portes 1973).

Scholars critical of dominant sociological explanations of social change were also concerned with the value asymmetry inherent in modernization theory whereby the end stage of modernization was deemed to be preferable to its initial stages (Portes 1973: 251). This value asymmetry was reinforced by the practice of treating developing countries as infant or deviant examples of the West, to be studied in terms of the extent to which they approximated Western experiences (Nettl 1967). In this way, Portes suggests, modernization theory represented 'a more or less subtle return to the Western ethnocentrism characterizing early descriptions of social evolution' (1973: 251). The question of Eurocentrism, or ethnocentrism as it was known then, becomes central, Bernstein argues, 'when it is asked from which historical source the paradigm of modernization is abstracted and universalized' (1971: 147). The methodological problems associated with this will be followed up later in the chapter in the section on ideal types and the comparative method. For now, it is sufficient to note that many scholars at the time were critical of the abstract nature of modernization theory and called for a specific and contextual study of change informed by empirical research on the societies being studied. Scholars such as Moore (1963) and Bendix (1967), in particular, 'advocated alternative strategies of theory-formation and research based on a conceptually more flexible and empirically more sensitive comparative method' (Bernstein 1971: 150).[5]

After its dominance in the 1960s and early 1970s, modernization theory within studies of development was gradually replaced by dependency theory and world-systems theory which contested the linearity of its early explanatory models and argued for more complex understandings of global economic systems (see Cooper and Packard 1997).[6] More importantly, the demise of modernization theory was also related to the explicit move away from structural functional explanations in sociology. The latter was associated with the rise of more radical approaches, particularly those influenced by Marxism, and the related decline of Parsons. The fall of communism in Europe in the 1990s, however, reversed these sensibilities. For a number of commentators, the convergence thesis which had been discarded had turned out to be confirmed, with Fukuyama (1992)

most famously proclaiming a new 'end of history'. This is the context in which some writers, most notably Shmuel Eisenstadt, have returned to modernization theory seeking to challenge this triumphant liberalism, while also acknowledging the force of events (see also Tiryakian 1991). At the same time, the processes of decolonization, which had been the initial context for modernization theory, had themselves given rise to post-colonial critiques of the Eurocentrism of dominant understandings of modernity. The new paradigm of multiple modernities, then, was articulated in relation to these varying concerns.

As I shall demonstrate in the following section, the paradigm of multiple modernities does not go very far in transforming the previous debate over modernization. One reason why this is so is that the theorists of multiple modernities use a rather crude version of the modernization thesis, as set out by Kerr, Rostow, and Lerner among others, without adequately acknowledging the considerable modifications that had been introduced by its critics at the time. This is evidenced in the work of Shmuel Eisenstadt who was involved in the modernization theory debates in the 1960s and whose work has been integral to the identification of the new paradigm of multiple modernities more recently. From his early writings on social systems and modernization theory to more recent work on civilizations and modernity, Eisenstadt (1965, 1987, 1998, 2001) has been concerned with identifying the form of modernity uniquely associated with the West and then examining the cultural dynamics of other civilizations in comparison to it. His early criticisms of modernization theory were primarily directed at those theorists like Kerr *et al* (1960) and Almond and Coleman (1960) who sought to evaluate the extent to which other societies approximated the model of Western industrial society. In repudiating the claim that the kernels of modernity were to be found in most cultures and societies, Eisenstadt contested the 'convergence' thesis central to much modernization theory that the development of modernity constituted the apogee of the evolutionary potential of humanity. Instead, he sought to reclaim the *specificity* of cultures that he believed was being denied by the premises of modernization theory; in particular, the specificity of European civilization and European modernity (1987: 3). His argument, following Parsons, was that modernity, as it had emerged in the context of Western Europe, had 'largely developed from within, "indigenously", through the fruition of the inherent potential of some of its groups and through the continuous interaction between them' (1987: 8) and that this potential was not to be found globally.

III

As I have argued, over the last decade, theorists have begun to move from a conceptual language of *modernization* to that of *multiple modernities* with this shift reflecting an unease with the idea of a singular, uniform trajectory applied to the current diversity of contemporary societies within the global world. Eisenstadt and Schluchter (1998) suggest that, with the hegemonic and homogenizing tendencies attributed to the project of modernization not having borne out convergence, not even in the West itself, so the idea of linear historical progress associated with modernization should give way to pluralized understandings of multiple modernities. Similarly, Delanty (1999) has argued that the historical model of transition from traditional society to modern society is no longer viable and social theory ought, instead, to focus on the dissolution of the modern from a single pattern into various trajectories.

In developing the multiple modernities paradigm, and in guarding against the fallacies mentioned earlier, Eisenstadt and Schluchter suggest that the global expansion of modernity ought not to be viewed 'as a process of repetition, but as the crystallization of new civilizations'; albeit, new civilizations that take as their reference point, 'the original Western crystallization of modernity' (1998: 2, 3). This reference point is not believed to be a singular uniform trajectory around which there is convergence, as in modernization theory, but one from which others are understood to deviate or diverge. Thus, the reference point establishes a multiplicity of modernities and this multiplicity, in their view, is sufficient to avoid the other fallacy of Eurocentrism (or Orientalism, as they put it). I would argue, however, that to the extent that these multiple modernities continue to be understood as derived from the creative appropriation, by those that followed, of the institutional frameworks of modernity that are seen to originate in Europe, the problem of Eurocentrism remains integral to the new paradigm.

The literature on multiple modernities, in a similar fashion to that of modernization theory more generally, identifies modernity with 'the momentous transformations of Western societies during the processes of industrialization, urbanization, and political change in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries' (Wittrock 1998: 19). As such, modernity is understood simultaneously in terms of its *institutional, structural,* and cultural frameworks' (Eisenstadt and Schluchter 1998: 3), that is, its tendency 'towards universal structural, institutional, and cultural *constellations*, as well as a *cultural programme* 'beset by internal antinomies and

contradictions, giving rise to continual critical discourse and political contestations' (Eisenstadt 2000: 7). Understanding modernity in this way allows scholars to situate European modernity – seen in terms of a primary combination of the institutional and the cultural forms – as the originary modernity and, at the same time, allows for different cultural encodings that result in *multiple* modernities. The idea of multiple modernities, then, is consistent with the idea of a common framework of modern institutions – for example, the market economy, the modern nation-state, and bureaucratic rationality – which originated in Europe and was subsequently exported to the rest of the world.[7] This explains the apparent paradox that Eisenstadt and Schluchter can dissociate themselves from Eurocentrism at the same time as apparently embracing its core assumptions, namely, 'the Enlightenment assumptions of the centrality of a Eurocentred type of modernity' (1998: 5).

The focus on different non-European civilizational trajectories is based on the assumption that, even if these trajectories did not lead to an originary modernity as in Europe, they did, nevertheless, lead to complexity in institutional patterns and cultural codes. As Wittrock (1998) argues, repeating the earlier internal critique of modernization theory, these societies were not stagnant, traditional societies, but were developing and transforming their own institutional and cultural contexts prior to the advent of Western modernity. However, it was not until the institutional patterns associated with Western modernity were exported to these other societies that multiple modernities emerged within them. Thus, it is believed to be the conjunction between the institutional patterns of the Western civilizational complex with the different cultural codes of other societies that creates various distinct modernities. Theorists of multiple modernities, then, address modernity in terms of two aspects, its institutional framework and its cultural codes. This separation of the institutional and the cultural allows the former to be understood as that which is common to the different varieties of modernity – and thus allows all types of modernity to be understood as such – while the latter, being the location of crucial antinomies, provides the basis for variability, and thus the divergence that results in *multiple* modernities.

Eisenstadt argues that central to the cultural programme of modernity, as it originated in Europe, 'was an emphasis on the autonomy of man', on emancipation from traditional forms of authority, and a focus on 'reflexivity and exploration', and the 'active construction and mastery of nature, including human nature' (1998: 5). The conjunctions of these developments, he continues, highlighted the openness of the modern political arena and the possibility of contestation within it, with the

fundamental tension existing 'between an emphasis on human autonomy and the restrictive controls inherent in the institutional realization of modern life' (2000: 6); that is, a continual tension between a move towards totality on the one hand as contrasted with, more pluralistic tendencies on the other. The internal antinomies and contradictions of modernity are thus focused on the relations and tensions between the premises of modernity and 'between these premises and the institutional developments in modern societies' (Eisenstadt 2001: 325). These antinomies are understood to lead to political contestations around issues such as the relations between state and society and the patterns of collective identity resulting in the variations of modernity that are seen subsequently to come into being.

Eisenstadt argues that the first radical transformation of 'modernity', of European cultural premises, takes place 'with the expansion of modernity in the Americas' (2000: 13). In fact, it is the first instance of a *multiple* modernity! Other distinct alternative models of modernity are the communist Soviet types and the fascist, national-socialist types.[8] Even within Europe, then, there was no *one* modernity, but, rather, as Wittrock argues, 'an empirically undeniable and easily observable *variety* of institutional and cultural forms' (2000: 58, my emphasis; see also Therborn 1995). These differences, these multiple modernities, are thus seen to have developed first in Europe and to have continued with modernity's expansion into the Americas, Asia, and Africa. Not only modernity, then, but multiple modernities, too, have their origin in Europe or, following Eisenstadt (2000), in the Western civilizational framework at large. Indeed, he believes it to be significant that multiple modernities developed first, not in Asia 'or in Muslim societies where they might have been attributed to the existence of distinct non-European traditions, but within the broad framework of Western civilizations' encounters 'between Western modernity and the cultural traditions and historical experiences' of other societies: a conjunction whose first occurrence was in Europe itself (Eisenstadt 2000: 23). This avowedly non-Eurocentric point of view of the West now establishes the West as both the *origin of modernity* and as the *origin of multiple modernities*.[9]

IV

What, then, is the contribution of non-European civilizations within this new approach? Among the different multiple modernities originating in the West, as discussed above, are those associated with totalitarian

forms – communism (in a line stretching back to Jacobinism) and fascism, with both connecting to forms of ethnic nationalism. Despite their other differences, Eisenstadt (2000, 2001) suggests that communist and fundamentalist movements share, at the very least, a preoccupation with modernity and an engagement with its central ideological problem, that of pluralism versus non-pluralism. These tendencies are seen as movements away from the fragile master Enlightenment code of modernity understood in terms of the autonomy of man and mastery over nature. As such, the space given to codes that develop in other civilizations is in contrast, or even opposition, to the precepts of autonomy, freedom, pluralism, and participation associated with the central form of European modernity. The emergence within multiple modernities of fundamentalist and communal religious tropes, often ostensibly in opposition to modernity and, particularly, European modernity, are thus seen to 'evince distinct characteristics of modern Jacobinism ... and share with communist movements the promulgation of totalistic visions' (Eisenstadt 2000: 19).

The only space given to the codes of other civilizations, then, is to be aligned with the deeply problematic codes of totalitarian modernity, that is, communism and fascism and while the Enlightenment master code is associated with the forms of colonial subjugation alongside which it emerged, these forms of subjugation have no part in the discussion of European modernity. In line with their Weberian heritage, theorists of multiple modernities present an implicitly pessimistic view of the possibilities confronting global societies where totalitarian forms are simply to be regarded as among the multiple forms that modernity brings into being (see Arnason 2000, 2003). This is in contrast to the earlier 'optimistic' view of modernization theory which regarded totalitarian forms as abnormal or aberrant versions of modernity. Therborn, for example, notes that even though modernization theory ignored the effects of colonial and imperial history it nonetheless 'struck a more optimistic liberal note of programmatic change' (2003: 297), one that is missing in the more recent incarnation of multiple modernities.

What is also clear from this discussion is that analyses within the multiple modernities paradigm provide no reason for being optimistic about what might be *learnt* from other civilizations, or how that learning could make a positive difference. These other modernities are seen simply to proliferate and all that is of interest is the extent to which these later versions approximate, or not, to the 'original European' version (to understand multiple modernities in terms of their divergence *from* is implicitly to make an approximation *to*). This valorization of multiplicity,

or then difference for its own sake, is closer to the postmodern radicalism of the 'alternative' modernities discussed by Gaonkar (2001a) and others than the proponents of the multiple modernities paradigm might otherwise feel comfortable with. As such, it can be seen as part of the classic–romantic cycle of theorizing about modernity discussed towards the end of the previous chapter.

That this cycle is taking yet another turn can be seen from the incipient popularity of the concepts of 'liquid modernity' and 'reflexive modernization'. Multiple modernities, in this version, are now seen 'to represent non-Western/ Third World expressions of postcolonial social growth' which, according to Lee, 'do not necessarily identify with the reconstructive programme of reflexive modernization or the image of fluidity in liquid modernity, *both of which are associated with developments in the West*' (2006: 366; my emphasis). The rest of the world is simply to be examined in terms of the 'fit' it provides with these particular concepts of modernity – as Lee concludes his article, 'empirical research would give us a chance to assess their applicability [the applicability of the predetermined concepts] in different parts of the world (2006: 367) – there is no awareness that the rest of the world might provide the basis of generating adequate concepts for thinking about the world.[10]

While theorists such as Wittrock (1998, 2000) and Arnason (2003) point to the importance of interconnections, global conjunctions, and connected and entangled histories in understanding the development of modernity, rarely do they incorporate what is *learnt* from a reading of these histories into their conceptual analyses. Wittrock, for example, argues that during the 'long period of early modern societies in Eurasia, there was a constant flow of cultural, political, and commercial contacts and interactions between different civilizations' (1998: 38). However, nowhere in the rest of his article does he develop this point, but rather, repeatedly iterates the *differences* between early modern societies and their *separate* trajectories, not the consequences of their interconnections. When Wittrock does discuss interconnections in more depth these interconnections 'are related to processes that are all located *within* Europe (1998: 23, 2000: 40). Explicitly following a Weberian tradition, he suggests that it is possible to see 'the formation of modernity in Europe as the result of a series of basically continuous processes where political, economic, and intellectual transformations mutually reinforced and conditioned each other' (Wittrock 2000: 40). Further, only the trajectory of early modern European society is regarded as being able to develop to modernity without interaction with other societies. All other societies are believed to have 'gained' their modernity only after the

impact of, what Wittrock calls, the momentous transformations within Western societies. There is no substantive discussion or engagement with the question of how the multiplicity of early societies may have shaped the development of modernity.

In discussing the importance of widening the perspective 'to include the experiences of civilizations outside of Europe' (Wittrock 1998: 27), then, it is clear that what is meant is to lay the experiences of the civilizations outside of Europe in parallel to Europe, not to discuss the connections between them. Indeed, as Wittrock goes on to argue, these other experiences are 'comparable to, yet radically different from, those of Europe' (1998: 28). Arnason similarly draws attention to the 'parallel (even if more partial) developments in other regions' which he suggests can be acknowledged while still making 'due allowance for distinctive versions of patterns first invented, but not unilaterally imposed by the West' (2000: 63; my emphasis). Where the commonplace meaning of parallel implies no relation, interconnection, or influence it is clear that Arnason follows Wittrock in asserting the importance of developments in 'other' places without taking their importance into account in the conceptual schemes that are then developed except insofar as they are seen to constitute variations of the 'original' European ideal type. Developments *outside of Europe* are seen as emerging, developing, and existing in isolation to developments *in Europe* – the only point of connection that is allowed is subsequent to Europe achieving modernity and is the unidirectional impact of Europe upon other societies.

The recognition of 'difference', as argued earlier, is an important corrective to dominant universalizing tendencies within social science. However, simply recognizing difference is not sufficient. 'Difference' also has to *make a difference* to the assumptions that informed the initial enquiry; in this case, the endogenous origins and initial development of modernity in Europe. The trail laid by Weber in seeking to determine the causes of the 'Rise of West' and 'the European miracle' has been followed by subsequent theorists attempting to account for the miracle *in Europe*, that is, the presumed initial emergence of modernity there (see the special issues of *Daedalus* 1998, 2000). While the explicit interpretive bias linking the emergence of the miracle/modernity in Europe to an innate sense of superiority may be rejected by contemporary theorists, the specialness of the West as a 'factual' matter – that is, as something that happened that needs explanation – remains firmly in place (see McLennan 2000, 2006). Further, insofar as the civilization of modernity is seen to entail the modernity of civilizations, and however differently other civilizations may then express 'their' modernity, there is a clear

understanding of Western modernity as the original form and a form that achieved expression *without relation to others*.

Similarities or affinities between cultures are determined on the basis of whether other cultures are similar, or then, different, to those of the West. The image is very much of a bicycle wheel with Europe at the centre and other cultures represented as the spokes on the wheel – all with a relation to Europe and no consideration of the relationships other places may have had with each other. Taking the analogy further, each spoke (culture) is also assumed to have an integrity of its own and to have existed independent of each other until, that is, European modernity diffused out from the centre changing cultures on its way. The difficulty with this model is twofold. First, in setting up the problem in terms of a comparison with Europe the modernity of other situations is not recognized. Second, assumptions of cultural integrity and internal dynamics both homogenize traditions and cultures as well as efface interconnections (see Yu 2006).

The challenge posed to modernization theory by the approach of multiple modernities, then, may have some significance in its own terms, but it is much less fundamental than its advocates suppose. Particularly welcome is its deconstruction of the simple dichotomy, favoured by some modernization theorists, between the traditional and the modern, where the former has generally been understood in terms of stagnation and backwardness and the latter as dynamic and progressive. With their parallel focus on developments in other parts of the world and an acknowledgement of existing cultural dynamics within those societies, theorists of multiple modernities provide a necessary corrective to analyses based on ideas of a stagnant, stultifying East which only awoke from its slumber *after* encounters with the West. It must be acknowledged, however, that such a critique was also present at the time that modernization theory *was* hegemonic, as discussed earlier in the chapter, and so it is not entirely novel. The basic premise of multiple modernities theorists, of questioning the dominant assumption of convergence and its corollary idea of one trajectory to modernity, is also an important qualification to modernization theory. What is significant in its omission, however, is the failure to address adequately the way in which the West remains the point of reference.

With the multiple modernities approach predicated on the idea that accounting for the internal dynamics of other cultures is sufficient to overcome the charge of Eurocentrism and the belief that maintaining the gaze from the West to the East is a necessary aspect of the comparative method, it is necessary to examine the methodology of comparison and

its associated counterpart, ideal types. In maintaining its focus on the internal dynamics of *separate* civilizations and the inability to take a point of view *other* than from the West, I argue that the comparative approach exacerbates the problem of Eurocentrism by ignoring (and even actively excluding through its use of ideal types) the connected and entangled histories that constitute the basis of an adequate understanding of the global context of socio-historic processes.

V

Theorists of multiple modernities, by accepting the emergence of modernity in Europe as an incontestable, value-neutral proposition, closely follow Weber's thinking, and methodology, on modernity (or modernization) in that they believe that to understand the process of modernity it is first necessary to explore the causes of its emergence in Europe and then to assess other cases in relation to this one. This comparative approach is advanced through a methodology of 'ideal types' where different civilizational trajectories are examined in relation with each other or, more usually, with Europe, or the West. It is argued by theorists of multiple modernities that the advantage of using 'ideal types' over the evolutionary approach associated with modernization theory is that it allows differences to be understood as deviances: 'deviances not from a norm but from an ideal type used only for heuristic purposes' (Eisenstadt and Schluchter 1998: 7). Further, they argue that the ideal type of Western modernity serves as a *common denominator* against which to analyze other civilizations and to ensure that it is possible to say more than simply 'everything is distinct and therefore different' (Eisenstadt and Schluchter 1998: 7). However, it is the very nature of ideal types that the processes they represent are internal and separate from those represented in other ideal types (see Weber 1949; Kalberg 1994). The methodology serves only to reinforce differences between societies and the assumed separateness of their trajectories, rather than facilitating an examination of their interconnections.

In his essay on "Objectivity" in Social Science' Weber argues for the construction of an 'ideal picture' or 'conceptual pattern' of historical phenomena that would bring 'together certain relationships and events of historical life into a complex, which is conceived as an internally consistent system' (1949: 90). By locating the *generic* concepts that constitute historical analysis it is held that one is then able to construct an 'ideal-type' against which subsequent variations could be compared

in a value-neutral way. While Weber accepted that such a model could not 'be found empirically anywhere in reality', and that it abstracts from a more complex reality, he believed that it would be 'indispensable for heuristic as well as expository purposes' in that it provided a useful model against which to assess reality (1949: 90; see also Outhwaite 1983, 1987; Burger 1987). What this understanding fails to acknowledge, however, is that, in its construction, the 'ideal type' refers to the 'real', but is then posited as a conceptual 'truth' that exists abstracted from its particular history and location and is deemed to be applicable as a heuristic in all situations. In using this approach to assess 'other' cultures what is effaced is the cultural situatedness of the construction of the ideal type in the first place.

One of the main problems with accepting such an understanding is highlighted in Weber's argument that, even if someone from another culture – Weber refers to a hypothetical Chinese interlocutor – denies 'the ideal itself and the concrete value-judgements derived from it. Neither of these two latter attitudes can affect the scientific value of the analysis in any way' (1949: 58–9), suggesting that agreement on the conceptual analysis and its consequences is a condition of rational, social scientific debate that can transcend cultural location. As Burger comments, 'the implicit assumption of course, always is that the type has been correctly constructed' (1987: 139). So whereas the ideal type is initially posited as a mental construct drawn from constellations of phenomena of 'empirical reality', when 'empirical reality' contradicts the mental construct it is empirical reality that is seen to be at odds and in need of explanation as 'deviation' accounted for in another, discrete ideal type – as opposed to it necessitating a reconstruction of the mental construct itself (Holmwood and Stewart 1991).

Although I do not wish to reduce historical understandings to the language used to articulate them, it is necessary, nevertheless, to acknowledge the importance of the conceptual categories available without which any attempt at understanding would be inconceivable. As Burger argues, accepting a particular interpretation of 'reality' as objective fact has been seen to require 'intersubjective agreement that a certain content *ought* to be given a particular categorical form' (1987: 65).[11] The questions must be posed, however: 'who is part of the intersubjective agreement?' and 'how does the intersubjective agreement come to be represented as universal?', such that Weber's hypothetical Chinese interlocutor must accept the categories despite not having participated in the intersubjective dialogue that is their foundation. Further, what is to be done when those 'facts' on which there had previously been agreement are now

disputed (possibly as a consequence of the engagement with new inter-locutors)? As should be clear, the new interlocutors that I have in mind are those whose experiences have largely been excluded from dominant, Western conceptions of modernity; namely, those subjugated in colonial encounters.[12]

Modernization theory sets up the tradition–modernity divide as an ideal-typical divide located within a general theory of linear, evolutionary development. Western societies are located at the apex of this schema – having believed to have crossed a qualitative threshold into the modern – while other societies are located at various points behind desperately trying to catch up through an imitation of the West. Where the Western experience is taken as the first historical example of the paradigm of modernity this argument rests on 'an "original state" view of underdevelopment and development' where 'what are in fact empirical generalizations or concepts of limited applicability ... have assumed the status of generalizing ideal-types' (Bernstein 1971: 150). In this instance, the ideal-types are those of tradition and modernity.[13]

Bernstein objects to the ideal typical dichotomy that is set up between tradition and modernity writing that 'the cluster of traits making up the ideal-type of the traditional ... often simply reflect the ethnocentrism underlying the formulation of modernity' (1971: 146). Differences from any perceived norm are then understood in one of two ways: first, as pathological or deviant (see, e.g., Rostow 1960 on communism); and second, as transitory (see, e.g., Bendix 1967), or as constituting a 'lag' (or to use Marxist language, as "uneven development') (Bernstein 1971: 151). Theorists of multiple modernities, in turn, use civilizational ideal types to pluralize the problem of modernization theory's use of the tradition–modernity ideal types and to contest its underpinning of general linear theory without recognizing that what they actually do is pluralize that very linear theory within each ideal type society/civilization they discuss – where each civilization is located in a larger (unacknowledged) framework structured by Europe. While the trajectories of modernity may differ, there is believed to be a point of origin from which the initial trajectory derives, against which all others are then to be measured. This is Europe.

Ideal types, then, abstract from connections where general theory sought to subsume connections in a teleological account which was also Eurocentric. The multiple modernities paradigm is anti-teleological, but de facto Eurocentric where its Eurocentrism is carried into its methodology through the failure to recognize connected histories. Further, any 'abstraction' from more complex empirical circumstances must also imply that the circumstances not included in the type are not themselves

significant. When setting out the 'general features' of modernity, then, it is evident that theorists do not include the colonial encounters and Imperial systems associated both with its beginnings and its consolidation and expansion. The continual positing of modernity in ideal-typical form, abstracted from its wider contexts, leads to events that were defining for those subjected to them being regarded simply as 'unfortunate' empirical contingencies to be assigned as problems of transition.[14]

Not regarding events such as the annihilation of peoples (as in Tasmania), dispossession and cultural genocide (as in the Americas, and Australia), enslavement (of Africans) and bonded labour (as in India) as significant in understanding the emergence of modernity, gives credence to Lemert's assertion that 'the West was founded and has endured on the basis of the grand denial of the reality of its own aggression and evil' (1995: 205). This aggression and evil should not, however, be understood in terms of being an essential characteristic of the West, but as a socio-historical aspect in urgent need of consideration. The present situation is one in which such events have been ignored, evaded, suppressed and not even contemplated as a part of the history of the West in the West's self-conceptualization.[15] They require urgent address.

VI

As Dirlik argues, by identifying 'multiplicity' with the cultural aspect, 'the idea of "multiple modernities" seeks to contain challenges to modernity by conceding the possibility of culturally different ways of being modern' (2003: 285). However, it does nothing to address the fundamental problems with the conceptualization of modernity itself. Discussions of modernity being identifiable in other places and peoples continue to locate those others in terms of the general categories already identified, where the other is understood as representing a tradition that has an integrity separate from the traditions of oneself. In this way, the other is left as the other and there is no sense that we might learn from them and reconstruct our categories of understanding as a result of the new knowledge gained (Holmwood and Stewart 1991). Thus, while purporting to offer new ways of understanding the concept of modernity, theories of multiple modernities continue to rest on assumptions of an original modernity of the West which others adapt, domesticate, or tropicalize. *Their experiences make no difference to the pre-existing universals.*

As I have argued, one set of fundamental relationships that is missing from the theorization of modernity is that of colonialism. Bernstein, a seemingly lone voice in the 1970s, argued for a mode of sociological

analysis which, by taking the colonial situation into account, would demonstrate how modernization theory could be stood on its head: first, by approaching the study of development by means of a historical method and second, by being informed by questions more relevant to the pressing needs of the present situation (1971: 154). Such a conceptualization, he argued, 'both substantively and as reflecting a different tradition of sociological analysis, stands in direct contrast to that derived from modernization theory which is precluded from identifying the dynamics and contradictions of the colonial situation as *sui generis* by a commitment to analysis in terms of "traditional" and "modern" elements which can only yield a dynamic in the concept of "transition", or movement along a tradition-modernity continuum' (Bernstein 1971: 154). What is required, he continues, is for the nature of the relationships between what are regarded as traditional and modern societies to be examined and theorized. Simply pluralizing the civilizational approach to include the experiences and histories of other civilizations does no more than lay those experiences and histories alongside European ones. In contrast, as Subrahmanyam (1997) argues, what is needed is to understand socio-historic processes in terms of them being global, conjunctural phenomena with different, and connected, sources and roots.

De-linking our understandings of socio-historic processes from a European trajectory and focusing on not only the different sources and roots, but also on the ways these interacted and intersected over time would provide us with a richer understanding of the complexities of the world in which we live and the historical processes that constitute it. I argue that there is an urgent need to address these *interconnections* as opposed to reifying the entities that are supposed to be connected, all the while keeping in mind 'that what we are dealing with are not separate and comparable, but connected histories' (Subrahmanyam 1997: 748). The modernization of Britain, for example, as Washbrook argues, 'is inconceivable except in a broader global context of which India already comprised a vital part' (1997: 410). I take as my starting point for the reconstruction of the comparative frame, which will occupy the next section of the book, the argument made by Prakash where he suggests that the erroneous assumption, perpetuated by many theorists, is that the West 'had forged its characteristic commitment to modernity *before* overseas domination' as opposed to *through* it (1999: 12).

Washbrook (1997), for example, argues that the West, prior to the emergence of modernity, is typically represented as a 'closed', or self-sufficient, system of culture in a world consisting of other such systems. Any alternative to this would cast doubt on the 'authenticity' of

modernity's origins in the West. However, to take such a standpoint, he continues, is to treat 'as closed and autonomous, cultures and civilizations between whom there is preponderant evidence of deepening contact and interaction during at least the half-millennium before Modernity made any detectable appearance' (1997: 413). Modernity, then, has to be understood as formed in and through the colonial relationship (see Barlow 1997) – colonization was not simply an outcome of modernity, or shaped by modernity, but rather, modernity itself developed out of colonial encounters, encounters which are hardly captured by the idea of 'diffusion'. These colonial encounters, then, also constituted the circumstances for the emergence of the 'fragile emancipatory codes' of modernity at the same time as modernity has been separated from its origins in the colonial relationship, and has been regarded as a resource for the emancipation of others.[16]

With the sociology of modernity having lost credibility, as Washbrook suggests, so, too, there is a need to rethink the conceptual underpinnings of modern history (1997: 416). To this end, he argues for the adoption of certain methodological assumptions, the most important of which is that societies do not exist as 'closed' entities, but rather, as part of a much wider global context (1997: 417). The histories of other parts of the world, then, can be used to disrupt the commonly accepted history of the West and to demonstrate that 'the West has no simple origin, despite its claims to uniqueness, and its histories cannot adequately be gathered into the form of a singular narrative' (Mitchell 2000: 24). Bonnett similarly suggests that the attempt to rethink the relationship between the West and modernity, and 'to move away from a myopic focus on "how the West made the modern world"', requires us to give up one of the central 'clichés' of our time – that the story of western civilization is the story of humankind itself – and, instead, to understand that Western civilization is *but one of the stories of humanity* (2005: 508). To this end, Bonnett suggests that Harootunian's (2000) understanding of co-eval, that is, co-evolving and co-existing, modernities goes beyond previous approaches by allowing us to think contemporaneity together with the possibility of difference.

Interrogating the colonial inheritance is not only about arguing for a critical perspective on European forms of knowledge; it is also about problematizing the very assertion of forms of knowledge as European. This must be done through the use of global archives, geographies, and histories that would allow us to see that the theories and ideas we use were not created by a culture diffused from a centre which then impacted on the world, but through the interconnections of processes

and paradigms that are themselves continually in negotiation and development (see Pollock et al. 2000). The development of modernity in other societies is not deficient in comparison to the emergence of European modernity, nor deviant in comparison to an ideal-typical understanding of it drawn from the European experience: rather, the different processes and developments provide a richer interpretation of the concept of modernity and may also provide new, and more adequate, practices for the present and future. In the meantime, sociologists cling to the universalistic assumptions of their theories of modernity in the fear that to give them up is to cede the field to a debilitating relativism (see, for example, Alexander 1995). In contrast, I argue, nothing is lost except a certain insularity.

In the next section of the book, I shall challenge the 'facts' of European modernity, arguing that understanding Europe in terms of global interconnections will provide a better understanding of how modernity has developed and, at the same time, alter our understanding of what it means to be modern, and alter our understanding of the European 'ownership' of modernity as an originary project. I have chosen three areas for examination, involving the discourse of modernity and its institutional forms of state and market. In each chapter, I will proceed by presenting the strong case for European distinctiveness and originality before deconstructing that case in terms of wider interconnections and extra-European contributions, as well as in terms of contesting the ascribed ruptural disjunction between tradition and modernity.

John Goldthorpe (1991) has criticized historical sociology for its failure to establish principles by which selections are made among the contributions to historical debates which provide the evidence for claims made within historical sociology itself. Rather, he says, the attitude is one of 'pick and mix' in history's sweetshop (1991: 225). Certainly, there are 'facts' and 'interpretations' to support the idea of European modernity and frequently these are cited within historical sociology as veridical, despite the availability of alternative interpretations and contestations of the 'facts'. While, unlike Goldthorpe, I do not believe that it is possible to provide a set of definitive principles, I shall argue that, nonetheless, the weight of such alternative arguments is sufficient to suggest that an alternative to the idea of European modernity is both plausible and likely to be productive of new insights about historical and social processes. The general response among historical sociologists to arguments of this sort is that their 'selections' are systematic and that the 'deviant' accounts of any particular event would not add up to something equally systematic (see Bryant 1994; Mann 1994). Quite apart

from the privileging of their selections that this involves, I shall argue that this defence is mistaken; the 'deviant' cases do add up to a different systematic account and a different historiographic understanding, namely that of 'connected histories' as an alternative to Eurocentric histories.[17]

Those who argue for the 'facts' of European distinctiveness do not necessarily present their case in terms of all the three areas I shall examine, although many do, but a claim for distinctiveness does depend on rupture in at least one of the domains. For example, Peter Wagner accepts that institutional transitions were very slow and protracted over several centuries and, in consequence, it would not be difficult for him to accept that there were many exogenous influences on what might otherwise be presented as the endogenous development of European modernity. Nonetheless, as we have seen, he does argue that there is a discursive rupture, that is, a marked and decisive shift in European culture, and that this is a decisive marker of European distinctiveness. It is to this claim that I turn first with a discussion of the idea of the Renaissance as effecting a new and distinctive sensibility from which the master code of European modernity, the discourse of Enlightenment, would emerge.

3 From Modernization to Multiple Modernities: Eurocentrism *Redux*

1. Theorists of modernization, such as Rostow (1960) and Lerner (1964), perhaps unsurprisingly given their background in economics, tended to see the dispositions towards modernity as present in all societies, but blocked by certain institutional features. Sociologists tended to be much more influenced by the Weberian understanding that traditionalism in economic motivation was also an obstacle to be overcome.

2. Commenting on this study, Bernstein exclaims that it is hardly surprising that Anglo-American politics appears to approximate the model of a modern political system most closely as the model is derived from a study of Anglo-American politics (1971: 155, footnote 10).

3. Even theorists critical of the concept of modernity, such as Portes (1973), believed that if the psychosocial traits identified with modernity did possess some positive value for social and economic growth, then they needed to be given serious consideration.

4. This assumption is present in Marx – where he writes in the Preface to *Capital*, 'The country that is more developed only shows, to the less developed, the image of its own future' (Marx 1976 [1867]) – as well as in modernization theorists such as Parsons (1971) with his idea of the USA as the 'new lead society', and in Rostow (1960), Lerner (1958) and others.

5. In looking at colonial societies, Bendix suggests that it is necessary to 'take account of at least two traditions ... the native tradition and the tradition of a dual society created by the colonizing country' (1967: 323). In the context of 'European frontier settlements abroad', however, he did not believe that 'the native populations were ... strong enough to create the problem of a dual society' (1967: 323), thus failing to consider the effects of the colonized on the colonizer and seeing the occurrence of change as unidirectional (in contrast, see Wolf 1997 [1982]). While Bendix calls for theoretical considerations to be informed by empirical research, then, this is not necessarily borne out in even his own endeavours.

6. I have not dealt with 'world system theory' or Marxism directly in this part of the book, primarily because the former has not had a major influence over contemporary sociological constructions of modernity while the latter contains a similarly endogenous account of social change to that criticized in standard sociological accounts.

7. This is not to deny diversity among the core institutions of state, market, and bureaucracy – for example, Hall and Soskice (2001) refer to varieties of capitalism, distinguishing Anglo-American, German, and Japanese varieties among others – but to identify the way in which it is cultural difference that is believed to produce diversity within the institutional complex. The purpose of this chapter is to criticize the separation of the institutional complex and the cultural programme and the way in which this separation is then used to argue for a European origin of the institutional framework and the separate development of cultural traditions within which that framework can become inflected.

8. Arnason (2000) attributes to modernization theory the belief that communism is not truly modern, and himself argues for its distinctive modernity as one of modernity's multiples.

9. Anti-Eurocentrism itself, is regarded by Delanty (2006: 267), as having its origins in Europe. While, as we have seen in the previous chapter, European anti-modernism can be associated with the relativity of all values that Delanty claims is intrinsically anti-Eurocentric, two things need to be said. First, this involves the very association of anti-Eurocentrism with the embrace of tradition which I have argued to be problematic and merely the inverse of the modernist position. Second, it does not seem to be the position that Delanty himself advocates, which is a form of universalistic cosmopolitanism that seems to be decidedly Eurocentric. Indeed, his version of cosmopolitanism is both the standard European cosmopolitanism and hostile to particularity. For example, on global cosmopolitanism, Delanty writes that modernity 'is necessarily global in outlook; while it first emerged in western Europe, it is not western, American or European, but is an expression of cosmopolitanism' (2006: 274). Since I have suggested that this universalism is really European particularity projected as a universal it is difficult to see what a European anti-Eurocentrism consistent with cosmopolitanism could possibly be.

   Indeed, Delanty regards postcolonial theory as confused (2006: 267) but it is hard to resist the conclusion that the confusions are his own and derive from his unwillingness to concede that there is anything to be learnt from the perspective of those outside the mainstream of Eurocentric social theory. As Harootunian has noted, in a different context, but applicable here nonetheless, 'France, Italy and England were countries where people went for study and research; Japan, Asia and Africa were simply fields that required first-hand observation, recording and, in some instances, intervention' (1999: 136). With this we are back at the problem highlighted in the Introduction and the first chapter where Europe is seen as the site of theoretical innovation and the rest of the world simply supplies the empirical data for those theories. Despite at least two decades of postcolonial and other scholarship, authors still feel able to write their theories in ignorance of the majority of the world and have the arrogance to posit for them a universality that is not applicable. In the case of theories of reflexive modernization it is peculiar, to say the least, to argue for the hegemonic position to be one that claims to understand itself (and others) where throughout the history of social thought, the hegemonic position has generally been the position that could not see beyond itself and was in need of criticism from elsewhere!

10. The idea of 'intersubjective agreement' replacing notions of 'objectivity' has been developed further by Rorty who also attempts to move beyond charges of ethnocentrism by advocating talking to representatives of other communities and trying to weave together their beliefs 'with beliefs which we already have' (1987: 43). While this goes some way to addressing the ethnocentric universalism of much social theory it also remains locked in ideas of 'us' and 'them' which this book ultimately contests. Further, the resolution of the problem appears to reside in incorporating 'other' knowledges into one's own knowledge schemes without an adequate appreciation that incorporation of that knowledge would necessitate a reconceptualization of the original schemes; and that this needs to occur within the context of analyzing the politics of knowledge production that has some schemes be dominant over others.

11. For a discussion of the restricted and problematic nature of ideal type analysis in the context of sociology and its relation to feminism, see Holmwood (2001).

13. The classical tradition in sociology can be seen to provide the basis for the comparative studies associated with modernization theory. The ideal-typical distinction that is set up between traditional societies and modern societies, for instance, finds resonances within the work of sociologists such as Durkheim, Tonnies, and Spencer among others who all set up a fundamental dualism in social organization which attributes to 'the "traditional" type of social organization a prominent emphasis on affectivity, consensus and informal controls and ... to "modern" forms impersonality, interdependent specialization and formal controls' (Moore 1963: 522).

14. Theorists can recognize the violence of the transition to modernity at the same time as representing modernity itself in abstraction from that violence. Thus, John Scott refers to modernity simply as 'the great intellectual and social upheavals that destroyed the medieval European world' (1995: 1) and his ideal-typical representation of modernity is essentially peaceable. The one exception is perhaps Marx who views the violence of the dispossession from collective rights as an indication of the continued 'violence' of private property rights in capitalism, but his approach to capitalism is one which sees it in terms of endogenous processes where the mechanism of transformation is associated with the lead societies of capitalist modernity.

15. Suzanne Rudolph argues that ideal types are effective categories insofar as they 'capture enough of reality to make them credible even while they falsify reality in the service of the necessary hierarchies of domination' (2005: 6).

16. The example of the Haitian Revolution is illustrative here in that the clause abolishing slavery in the French Declaration of Human Rights was only included after a deputation from the colony of Saint Domingue went to France in 1794 and made the argument to the Constituent Assembly (see Dubois 2004; Fischer 2004; and Trouillot 1995 for more details).

17. I do not mean to imply acceptance of the wider claims made by Goldthorpe (1991) about the nature of differences between history and sociology, where the former must rely on 'given facts', embedded in 'relics', while the latter can construct its facts through the administration of questionnaires and the like. Historical facts are no less artefacts of a research process than sociological facts, a reason that makes the questioning of those research processes of vital significance and makes unlikely any foundational agreement on principles.

4 Myths of European Cultural Integrity – The Renaissance

1. Burke (1964) argues that the realism of historians such as Machiavelli was seen as a 'conceptual realism' which was associated with the Renaissance's shift beyond simply recording events to incorporating a sense of perspective as well. This was understood as distinct from 'medieval realism', he suggests, which was seen to be naturalistic and purely descriptive.

2. While in the nineteenth century sociologists looked to the medieval period in order to provide a comparative offset to modernism and establish the comparative distinction between tradition and modernity (see Nisbet 1966: 15), later sociologists turned to the Renaissance as providing the cultural context for its subsequent emergence (Nisbet 1973; see also Stephen Toulmin 1990;

John Scott 1995). Garner (1990) has also suggested that the classic historian of the Renaissance, Jacob Burckhardt, should be understood as expounding 'sociological' themes precisely insofar as he is 'a theorist of modernity'.

3. The claim has occasionally been made that, because they were intent on restoring a lost condition, it is difficult to see the men of the Renaissance as anything other than conservative, for example, with regard to the Reformation, Elton makes the argument that: 'it is idle to credit the age with the beginning of modern times (in itself a sufficiently uncertain term) if only because its intellectual leaders looked determinedly back rather than forward' (1990: 21). However, it is important to highlight that the recovery of the wisdom of the ancients was not undertaken for its own sake, but in the context of wanting improvement in the present. The modern 'discoveries' of Copernicus and Columbus were believed to have enlarged the realm of the known world and, in doing so, to have surpassed the achievements of the ancients. This contributed, in large part, to their sense of difference from, and superiority over, the ancient world (see Pagden 1993).

4. The emergence of these secular modes of learning have often been used to argue for the Renaissance itself being seen as a secular movement with the humanist challenge to the Church's monopoly over education being seen as a prime example of this shift away from the fact that the Church, and Christianity more generally, continued to play an important role in both social and political affairs and that there was no necessary decline in religious sentiment in this period (see Ferguson 1953).

5. On the development of historical consciousness in this period and its relationship to later European historiographical trends, see Bouwsma (1965).

6. Rice and Grafton's claim that '[o]nly modern western civilization has produced a fully developed science ... so different and so much more successful than the sciences of the ancient Greeks, the medieval Arabs, the Indians, and the Chinese' (1994 [1970]: 18) is not uncommon within the mainstream literature on the subject.

7. Within the discipline of International Relations it has been suggested that, regardless of the different traditions to which theorists may belong, they all agree that 'the Westphalian treaties were a decisive turning point ... [formalizing] relations between modern sovereign states' (Teschke 2003: 2). Even the few scholars who do contest this particular thesis, however, do not call into question 'the development and dynamics of the European states-system' (Teschke 2003: 4), but rather, simply question the dominant interpretations of it.

8. The attempt to establish common ancestry through the classification of languages over time is one such example – Olender (1994), for example, discusses how the search for the 'original' language of Adam and Eve led to the 'purification' of European languages by, at various times, de-emphasizing Oriental, Semitic, and other influences. To make any sense, boundaries have to be drawn creating internal consistency and coherence even if these boundaries do not relate accurately to languages as they are used. Said further states that the emphasis on demonstrating that radical and ineradicable differences between languages 'set the real boundaries between human beings ... forced vision away from common, as well as plural, human realities' (1978: 233).