

---

# Critically Modern

*Alternatives, Alterities,  
Anthropologies*

---

*Edited by Bruce M. Knaft*

---

 **INDIANA**  
University Press  
Bloomington & Indianapolis

---

This book is a publication of  
Indiana University Press  
601 North Morton Street  
Bloomington, IN 47404-3797 USA

<http://iupress.indiana.edu>

Telephone orders 800-842-6796  
Fax orders 812-855-7931  
E-mail orders [iuporder@indiana.edu](mailto:iuporder@indiana.edu)

© 2002 by Indiana University Press

All rights reserved

No part of this book may be reproduced or utilized in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopying and recording, or by any information storage and retrieval system, without permission in writing from the publisher. The Association of American University Presses' Resolution on Permissions constitutes the only exception to this prohibition.

The paper used in this publication meets the minimum requirements of American National Standard for Information Sciences—Permanence of Paper for Printed Library Materials, ANSI Z39.48-1984.

Manufactured in the United States of America

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Critically modern : alternatives, alterities, anthropologies / edited by Bruce M. Knaft.  
p. cm.

Revisions of papers presented at a special session held at the 2000 meeting  
of the American Anthropological Association in San Francisco.

Includes bibliographical references and index.

ISBN 0-253-34125-6 (cloth : alk. paper) — ISBN 0-253-21538-2 (pbk. : alk. paper)

1. Social change—Cross-cultural studies. 2. Civilization, Modern—Cross-cultural studies.  
3. Acculturation—Cross-cultural studies. I. Knaft, Bruce M.

GN358 .C75 2002

303.4—dc21

2001008306

1 2 3 4 5 07 06 05 04 03 02

## Contents

Preface vii

Critically Modern: An Introduction 1  
*Bruce M. Knaft*

### PART I

One: Bargains with Modernity in Papua New  
Guinea and Elsewhere 57  
*Robert J. Foster*

Two: Development and Personhood: Tracing the  
Contours of a Moral Discourse 82  
*Ivan Karp*

Three: Trials of the Oxymodern: Public Practice  
at Nomad Station 105  
*Bruce M. Knaft*

Four: "Hands-Up"-ing Buses and Harvesting  
Cheese-Pops: Gendered Mediation of Modern  
Disjuncture in Melanesia 144  
*Holly Wardlow*

### PART 2

Five: Modernity's Masculine Fantasies 175  
*Lisa Rofel*

Six: Accessing "Local" Modernities: Reflections  
on the Place of Linguistic Evidence in  
Ethnography 194  
*Debra A. Spitulnik*

Seven: The Otherwise Modern: Caribbean  
Lessons from the Savage Slot 220  
*Michel-Rolph Trouillot*

---

CRITICALLY MODERN

---

# Critically Modern

## *An Introduction*

---

*Bruce M. Knauf*

What is entailed by the process of being or becoming modern? This question has been important for Western societies since the late eighteenth century, if not before. But it takes on new dimensions in a contemporary world. Modernity has become global in new ways. Or has it? What does it mean to be or to resist being modern in world areas and locales that have different cultural histories? In recent years, these questions have generated vigorous debate across the social sciences and humanities. Especially among anthropologists and critical theorists, standards of social advancement and progress are seen to differ depending on cultural and historical conditions. The process of becoming modern is contested and mediated through alter-native guises. It has been increasingly suggested that modernity is importantly regional, multiple, vernacular, or "other" in character.<sup>1</sup>

Despite its highly equivocal and uneven outcomes, economic and social development has often been associated with aspirations for a better style of life, including a hope that living standards will eventually approximate those of Western countries. In the process, it has often been suggested, customary practices are relinquished or transformed; social relations are dislodged, disrupted, or disembedded by market forces and by new institutions and aspirations. But what new social formations arise? What forms of subjectivity and subordination are incited? What new diversities are generated, and how do these draw on local history as well as on regional connections or international influences?

Anthropologists have often questioned the homogeneity of so-called global developments. On one hand, our strong appreciation of cultural

diversity pointedly questions the ostensible convergence of the world's peoples to a single global culture. On the other hand, anthropologists' concerns with power and domination—how and why some people become disenfranchised and disempowered relative to others—make us skeptical about claims of global progress and collective improvement. Along with other critical theorists, then, anthropologists have questioned the attempt to view modernity as a singular or coherent development. Indeed, the divergent responses of the world's peoples arguably maintain or increase their cultural diversity at the same time that they become more deeply entwined with capitalist influences, institutions, and impositions. Hence the paradox that people in different world areas increasingly share aspirations, material standards, and social institutions at the same time that their local definition of and engagement with these initiatives fuels cultural distinctiveness.

In contemporary cultural anthropology, this view of modern diversity has, in various permutations, become important and influential.<sup>2</sup> Amid this growing interest, however, the question of how modernity becomes "different"—and how we should conceptualize this process—bears further scrutiny. Is the current interest in modernity and its alterities sufficiently clear? Do recent approaches unwittingly adopt the biases of earlier modernization theories and of eurocentric assumptions that we hope to have left behind? Or does an emphasis on being modern and its inflections lever fields such as anthropology to important new insights concerning culture and power in a contemporary world? At issue is whether our understandings of modernity and its alternatives are critically flawed, or if instead they are critically important to anthropology and to the people we study with. It is time to take stock of these issues.

The goal of the present book is to gain critical purchase on the central problematic of modernity and its multiples through a strongly presented range of anthropological perspectives. Constituent chapters combine ethnographic and theoretical interventions authored by established and developing anthropological scholars. Rather than being pinned to a single viewpoint, contributors adopt complementary perspectives on a shared problematic. These perspectives draw variously on theories of capitalism and political economy, history, subjectivity, and aesthetics. The contributors' empirical engagements articulate in important ways with the contemporary study of gender, language use, labor, commodification, public culture, nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), political upheaval, imperial ideology, and governmentality. World area perspectives range from Africa and Oceania to the Caribbean, Euro-America, and interareal connections more generally.

Instead of presenting a single dogma, the chapters of this book pur-

sue a sustained critical dialogue on the problematic of modernity. These treatments are "critical" in three senses. First and most generally, they provide a powerful critique of the notion that being or becoming modern betokens the global triumph of Euro-American economic, social, or cultural development. Second, they reflect critically on recent notions of the alternatively modern—the understanding of modernity as a differentiated or variegated process. Third and more reflexively, the perspectives are critical in a positive sense; their compass of perception is critically important for a self-consciously current anthropology. In this respect, a key shared goal is to combine ethnographic and historical engagements with trenchant theorization to better understand trajectories of culture and power in a contemporary world.

Anthropology that is critical for current understanding needs itself to be critically theorized. In the present case, some of the contributors suggest that relativized views of modernity give short shrift to larger patterns of power and domination. In this critique, an emphasis on the plural modern sheds insufficient light on the deeper and longer impact of political economy—the historical forces of capitalism that shape contemporary globalization and undergird the sense of being or desiring to become modern. On the other hand, viewing modernity as multiple raises thorny questions of ethnographic application. How do we characterize different inflections of modernity relative to each other, or with respect to practices that cannot be considered modern at all? Unless it is clarified to be an analytic perspective rather than an empirical grid for mapping the world, the differentiation of modernity still presents us with dichotomous categories and choices. Which cultural features fit one or another mode of being modern, and which are left behind as backward-looking or traditional? Faced with this question, analysis easily subsumes nuances of subjectivity and cultural belief into one or another variant of a modern world—that is, to save them from being relegated to backwardness or put in a "savage slot" (see Trouillot 1991).

Stated more generally, long-standing ideologies of the modern—which have typically incorporated the West and excluded the Rest—can be unwittingly recapitulated in contemporary approaches. As we relativize our sense of what is alternatively modern, there remains a lingering danger of reinscribing older views, bequeathed from the European Enlightenment, in which people are judged and ranked according to the extent they have achieved—as Immanuel Kant put it in 1784, an "exodus . . . by their own effort from a state of guilty immaturity."<sup>3</sup> Even as they are relativized, concepts of modernity can imply a creeping shared totality, a global standard of improvement against which others are judged. In this respect, modernity and even its plurals can become an

omnibus assumption—a new black box of unexamined ideology in the social science of late capitalism.

Nevertheless, it remains true that aspirations for economic development and for associated institutional if not cultural progress are, if anything, stronger than ever in much of the contemporary world. Nations and local communities push energetically to become more economically and institutionally “developed.” Notions of being and becoming modern are not simply an academic projection; they are a palpable and potent ideology in many if not most world areas. Ideologies of becoming modern are commonly hitched to the aspirations, programs, and propaganda of the nation-state, where they alternatively inform and juxtapose against notions of national authenticity and cultural or religious history. Even when expectations for national improvement are sorely disappointed, they easily inform continuing desires for a style of life associated with economic development and Western-style material betterment. Relatedly, the values that attend modern aspiration interact powerfully with the construction of selfhood and social or material endeavors in diverse world areas. These processes may alternatively resist or reinforce the imposition of Western-style institutions, policies, and initiatives—as variously pursued by state or local governments, businesses, international corporations, NGOs, and development agencies. However much these forces may be disagreed with, they can seldom be ignored.

Whatever terms are used to describe it, the way people engage the ideologies and institutions of a so-called modernizing world provides a valuable vantage point for understanding contemporary articulations of culture and power. So, too, the ethnography, theorization, and critique of alternative or vernacular modernities provide a stimulating point of departure to address these issues while also rendering a productive target for reflexive examination and critique. In diverse circumstances across the world, local notions of value, worth, and success articulate with escalating desires for economic development or social progress to redefine longer-standing practices and orientations. These dynamics are mediated by cultural history and by the economic and political realities of what it means locally to be developed or experience progress. Considering these trajectories and their relationship is crucial for an engaged and contemporary anthropology.

Acknowledging this importance, the present book addresses the issues that surround the process of being or becoming differently modern in different world areas. This issue is analyzed and made problematic through a combination of local, national, and regional understandings. In what ways does the multiplication of modernity capture current dynamics of power and culture? In what ways does it go beyond the over-

generalizations for which previous master narratives of modernity have been critiqued? Reciprocally, in what ways do recent conceptualizations of modernity neglect key dimensions of political economy on one hand, or local culture on the other? Yet more fundamentally, how do we tease apart the issues in this debate without devolving into old-fashioned relativism or global reductionism? Addressing these questions is crucial for confronting one of anthropology’s central current challenges—namely, to critically understand the ways in which people engage images of progress and institutions of development at the same time that they become more culturally diverse, unequal, and disempowered.

### Inflections of Modernity: A Genealogy

A critical understanding of being or becoming modern can hardly be developed without an historical perspective. As part of this history, we need to consider how modernity has emerged as a problem in Western thought and connect this problem to trajectories of sociocultural change or transformation. Besides adding historical perspective, tracing the problematic of modernity provides a vantage point from which current views can be more clearly analyzed and reformulated. The goal is not to promote a hegemony of Western thought. It is rather to provide grounds for critical scrutiny and alternative lines of intervention.

In one respect, modern life is associated with the appreciative search for new meaning in the daily features of a differentiated social world. This conceptualization of “modernity” as can be dated at least as far as back as Charles Baudelaire’s essay “The Painter of Modern Life,” written in 1859–1860 and published in 1863 in *Le Figaro* (Baudelaire 1964). Baudelaire emphasized the rendering and seeking of artistic significance in daily experience, epitomized by the mannered explorations of the man-about-town and the impressionistic drawings of Constantin Guys, a “passionate lover of crowds and incognitos” (1964:5). As Trouillot (this volume) notes, Baudelaire’s experience was also profoundly affected by his travels to the Indian Ocean and by his long-term liaison with a Caribbean mulatto woman—though the impact of these experiences on his work has often been neglected by literary scholars. Quotidian sensibilities were also explored during the last half of the nineteenth century in the novels of Flaubert and in French impressionist painting. These portrayed the daily images and perspectives of unadorned contemporary life in France at the time. Such developments were complemented by the increasing growth of travel literature, memoirs, and experiential accounts of life in non-Western areas.

In a deeper and more general sense, modern notions of selfhood have

often been associated with an affirmation of ordinary life, a secular or instrumentalist orientation, and a heightened sense of autonomous individuality, self-fashioning, and inwardness (see Taylor 1989). In Europe and other areas, these aspects of modern identity often went hand in hand with increasing desire for personal or collective progress based on new ways of daily living—and frequently at the expense of previous ways of life. These trends drew fundamentally on mercantile and incipient capitalist exploitation of non-Western areas. During the late eighteenth and the nineteenth centuries, these trends intensified and melded with the powerful growth of industrial capitalism, technological innovation, and increasing desires for manufactured commodities. In both developments, much of Western economic success ultimately derived from the exploitation of non-Western areas. In ideational and ideological terms, correspondingly, non-Western areas typically served as the primitive Other against which European Enlightenment and colonialism were elevated and justified. This rank ordering of humanity informed the “civilizing mission” of Western intrusion and exploitation of non-Western peoples.

During much of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, desire for progress had a pronounced political side—including the groundswell to create new forms of government that superseded monarchies, aristocracies, and eventually colonial regimes in the hope of creating better and more equitable national societies. These features were highlighted in the watershed transformation of the French Revolution, which is often seen—from a Western political perspective—to inaugurate the beginning of the modern era at the end of the eighteenth century. As Benedict Anderson (1991) has noted, however, the modern nation as a collectively imagined community also arose in the Americas during the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, including in Latin America as well as in the United States.

New modes of temporality also appear to have developed during the late eighteenth century. Reinhart Koselleck (1985:279, 285) suggests that a growing disjunction between future expectations and present experiences developed in Europe during this period. Among the results was a burgeoning belief in progress. Economically and politically, this “progress” was related to the growth of industrial capitalism at home and the global intensification of Western colonial exploitation. In the midst of these developments, the civilizing mission of Europe was complemented by struggles among creole populations for recognition and status against escalating standards of European superiority. Both in Europe and its colonies, the growing discrepancy between aspirations

and realities increased a sense that the passage of time should expectably be marked by progress and improvement vis-à-vis the past. As Foucault (1984:39) notes, “Modernity is often characterized in terms of consciousness of the discontinuity of time: a break with tradition.” These assumptions appear so ubiquitous today that it is important to realize how distinctive and even unusual they are in the context of alternative cultural orientations and earlier phases of Western history. These often emphasized allegiance to the beliefs and orientations of the past rather than plans for a newly different and hopefully better future. The increasing Western emphasis on progress was complemented by the notion that “history” was not so much an index of authenticity or propriety as it was an undeveloped past against which the march of progress should be asserted.

As discussed by Foucault (1984:32 ff.; cf. 1970), notions of Enlightenment changed correspondingly during the latter half of the eighteenth century—as illustrated in the work of Immanuel Kant. These developments reflected the increasing desire for self-conscious improvement through new forms of knowledge, action, and understanding. More darkly, Foucault exposed how the modern will to knowledge incited new forms of classification and power during the nineteenth century. National states used new types of knowledge and forms of knowing to stigmatize, discipline, and punish their subjects—in the name of improving society. This same process informed the subjugation, racialization, and stigmatization of colonial subjects abroad (Stoler 1995). More generally, the enumeration, classification, and codification of subjects into social categories inculcated new forms of moral onus while making persons more “legible” to authorities and hence more controllable by the state (Scott 1998). Correspondingly, modern institutions of legal, penal, medical, and educational imposition made the process of becoming a subject problematic in new ways. The incitement to search for value in daily life—to heroize the present while avoiding the stigma of being backward or depraved—was paralleled by a mandate to reinvent oneself as a newly ascetic and disciplined modern subject (Foucault 1984:41–42; cf. Weber 1958).<sup>4</sup>

Though these trends have usually been attributed to European and colonial life since the late eighteenth century, they had important precursors before this time. Max Weber (1958) suggested that the motivational spirit of capitalism developed from an ethic of this-worldly asceticism associated with Calvinism and related branches of puritanical Christianity during and after the Protestant Reformation. Further, as Trouillot (this volume) emphasizes, Anglo and Germanic views of West-

ern history tend to neglect the earlier relationship of Spain and Portugal to the projective geography of modern imagination and domination, as reflected in the Iberian exploitation of the Caribbean, Latin America, and other areas during the sixteenth century (cf. Dussel 1993).

Even apart from the reciprocal impact of non-Western areas back on the development of European modernity, an emphasis on advancement through inventive self-fashioning had earlier permutations in the European Renaissance and, much earlier, in ancient Greece.<sup>5</sup> Fredric Jameson (n.d.:1) suggests that the concept of being modern—per the Latin word *modernus*—was used as far back as the fifth century A.D. to distinguish the contemporary from the ancient or antique. In a yet deeper historical perspective, Jonathan Friedman (this volume; cf. 1994:39) suggests that civilizational empires have often been characterized by a period of modernism when they have been at the height of their political centralization and cultural hegemony.

Building on these earlier strains and precedents, however, the various strands of Western and colonial modernity braided together in powerful new ways during the late eighteenth and especially the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. It was during this period that industrial capitalism most dramatically transformed life in European towns and cities—while displacing and disrupting local communities of peasants, artisans, landowners, and clergy. These processes were recursively linked to several developments: the increasing activities of Europeans overseas; the exploitation of non-Western areas in a global network of exploitation and commodity production; disruption and movement of non-Western peoples; the growing development of creole populations, including in Europe; and the hybridization of Western values, sensibilities, and institutions among subaltern populations.

These developments are not unique to the modern Western world, as Jonathan Friedman (this volume) suggests. Permutations of them can be found in expansionist development of other civilizational systems, including ancient Roman and Chinese empires and the Old World prior to European hegemony (Abu-Lughod 1989; see Held et al. 1999). But the scale and intensity of *global* connections after 1500 was unprecedented. By the late nineteenth century, these worldwide connections were firmly linked to Western forms of industrial commodity production on one hand, and to globally intense forms of Western colonialism on the other. These two developments—capitalism and colonialism—became increasingly connected to each other. In the process, the threatened influence of *non*-Western areas rebounded back on Europe. This counterforce intensified the needs of the Europeans to construct them-

selves as superior to and different from non-Westerners and from subaltern groups within Europe itself. In this sense, the ideological as well as social disruptions that Europe visited on the New World and elsewhere came home to roost in a newly modern key.

### Classic Social Theory

In the latter part of the nineteenth and the early twentieth centuries, the destructive and yet potentiating developments of “modern society” in the West became a central problematic for thinkers such as Marx, Durkheim, Simmel, and Weber—figures who have since become classic or foundational for social and cultural theory. These scholars were deeply concerned by the advent of full-blown capitalism, the spread of wage labor, the uprooting of people from European communities, and the bustling growth and great risks of life in modern Western cities and towns. Their perspectives were strongly influenced by a desire for progress based on critical inquiry. Bequeathed from the Enlightenment, their approaches employed documentation and reason to understand social developments and, optimally, enable their improvement. As such, classic social theorists critically analyzed the present of their day against the possibilities of the future and the lost benefits of the past. In the process, they drew heavily from Enlightenment notions of improvement through critique. In the formulations of Marx, Durkheim, Simmel, Weber, and others, modern Western society was viewed—depending on the theorist—as an engine of economic inequity and oppression, a specialized division of labor threatened by alienation, an arena for monetary dehumanization, or an iron cage of bureaucracy and rationalization. At the same time, these views also accorded modern society powerful potentials for more efficient organization, technological progress, and moral or humanistic improvement.

The insights of classic social theorists continue to provide important perspective for understanding more recent developments—including those that have taken place during the last half of the twentieth century. Before the 1960s, however, classic social theory was infrequently used to consider or analyze patterns of exploitation in *non*-Western areas. This is a huge shortcoming that has been addressed, with varying degrees of critical success, in more recent decades.

It is perhaps significant that while the problems and potentials of modern society were central to classic social theorists, the term “modern” was typically used in their works as a casual modifier rather than as a central concept. Correspondingly, the notion of “modernity” ap-



pears only rarely in their writings. It has only been much more recently—since the mid-1980s—that “modernity” has emerged explicitly as a core problematic in the human sciences.<sup>6</sup> A quick example illustrates this trend. Emory University’s ample but by no means exhaustive research library includes a whopping 545 books published between 1991 and 2000 that have the word “modernity” in the title. A full 145 of these volumes were published during 1999 or 2000 alone. By contrast, only a handful of volumes that used “modernity” as a title concept were published before the mid- and early 1980s.

This semantic shift reflects deeper issues. Classic social theory—including the work of Marx, Durkheim, Weber, and Simmel—emphasized a close and interactive relation between the subjective features of what we now generally refer to as culture and the more ostensibly objective features of politics and economy. These theorists, along with others, were strongly committed to a *combined* analysis of mental and material factors—a critical consideration of how economic and political features were reciprocally or dialectically related to values, beliefs, and subjective experiences. During the succeeding decades of the twentieth century, however, the disciplinary interests of the social sciences and humanities became increasingly specialized and atomized. In the process, they have been prone to a widening split between models of social change based on economic or political determinism on one hand, those that stress beliefs and cultural values on the other.

Against the backdrop of this academic history, the more recent emphasis on “modernity” reflects an attempt to bring the two sides of this issue back together in the study of contemporary social and cultural change. Whereas empiricist social scientists often stress the economic or political determinism of modernization and globalization, a range of critical theorists, broad-based intellectuals, and social scientists now emphasize the interactive importance of cultural and material influences in the development of alternative modernities. As the Canadian philosopher and cultural activist Charles Taylor (1989, 1992, 1999) has suggested, the moral values and beliefs that attend modernity are not reducible to dominant assumptions of economic determinism and its ostensible relation to social and political “progress.” At the same time, the analysis of modernity does not reject material forces and economic or political factors. Rather, studies of alternative modernities provide a productive middle ground for analyzing these features in relation to cultural and subjective orientations. As such, they connect the social and material emphases of sociology and political science with the evocative but often unsystematic presentations of representational analysis, literary criticism, and cultural studies.

### From POMO Back to MO

From the perspective of the 1970s and 1980s, the split between the social sciences and humanities was galvanized by a newly contentious, influential, and transdisciplinary movement: postmodernism. Since the postmodern impetus has, with some irony, informed and provoked the mushrooming recent interest in modernity, it is worthwhile to consider postmodernism as a predisposing context. As Harvey (1989) suggests, the radical questions posed by postmodernism dovetailed with the economic stagnation and institutional rigidity that plagued Western capitalism during the 1970s. Skeptical of uniform standards of truth and knowledge, postmodern sensibilities rejected rational modernism and all that it implied. This radicalism was important to question the conservative assumptions and ideologies associated with Western reason and progress (which could certainly not be legitimately imparted to all of humanity). Third-wave feminism, subaltern studies, cultural studies, black cultural criticism, and other initiatives drew on postmodern sensibilities to trouble Western assumptions across a wide variety of gendered, sexual, racial, ethnic, and national fronts. That European modernity had disrupted, impoverished, and killed so many people—producing two world wars, racism, crushing colonization, violent decolonization, and then neocolonial domination through postcolonial capitalism that undercut subsistence production and made people in diverse world areas dependent on the strictures of a market economy—made Western modernity highly suspect as a model for general improvement and world progress.

During the 1980s, postmodern perspectives drew variously on French deconstruction, poststructuralism, surrealism, the literary and artistic avant-garde, and pop culture to deconstruct master narratives of understanding and grand theories of development and progress. Full of pastiche, playfulness, hybridity, and experimental forms of expression, postmodern sensibilities made problematic not only the canons of Western description, reason, and explanation but also the means and styles by which these were pursued and expressed. Beyond an intellectual enterprise, postmodern perspectives claimed to ride an emergent wave of contemporary and popular culture—a public world of discordant images and mass-mediated idioms that accelerated in dizzying patterns of possibility and parody. They also foregrounded what Foucault (1980) called subjugated knowledges and helped energize queer theory, postmodern feminism, critical cultural studies, and postcolonial studies, among other initiatives. Many of these perspectives privileged evocation and

impression—a cutting edge of irony, insinuation, and protest—as opposed to systematic demonstration by means of detailed documentation, empirical analysis, or logical explanation.

If postmodern sensibilities refused standards of declarative logic and universal truth, they were effective in criticizing assumptions of Western thought, the structures of its social and political economy, and its understanding of historical and contemporary “progress.” By the late 1980s, the “post” in postmodernity became an exclamation point of rupture, refusal, and disconnection from rational or historical understanding. Though full-blown postmodernists were few in number, they were highly provocative.<sup>7</sup> Postmodern sensibilities had great transdisciplinary influence during the late 1980s, including through the loosening of assumptions and the responses they provoked—not to mention the defenses they engendered among scholars who felt threatened.

From the beginning, postmodern sensibilities were critiqued as thickly as they were asserted or expressed. Many if not most of the interlocutors with postmodernism—including Jean Baudrillard, Fredric Jameson, Gayatri Spivak, Judith Butler, Douglas Kellner, Mike Featherstone, and the early Lyotard—had themselves been strongly influenced by Marxism.<sup>8</sup> The same was true of the greatest defender of Western reason against the poststructural and postmodern critique: the German philosopher Jürgen Habermas.

A characterization of Habermas’s large opus is beyond our present concerns. But his treatment of modernity is relevant. In 1981, Habermas published his voluminous *Theory of Communicative Action* (translated in 1984). Committed to maintaining reason and rational discourse in contemporary society, Habermas reanalyzed the use of reason in the works of Weber, Lukács, Adorno, Mead, Durkheim, and Parsons. In the process, he developed a theoretical model of communicative action that critiqued functionalist reason and promoted rational discourse. Through this discourse, Habermas suggested, communicational action could integrate different aspects of the modern experience or “life-world.” For Habermas, analyzing and understanding proper communication allows us to appreciate the accomplishments and cultivate the unrealized potentials of Western modernity.<sup>9</sup> He thus maintains that rational communicative action can be developed for the good and proper progress of society through a public sphere of reasoned understanding (Habermas 1987; cf. Calhoun 1992).

Habermas is often considered to be the arch philosophical champion of contemporary Western modernity. In his perspective, modernity is the positive fruit of rational discourse bequeathed from the European Enlightenment. By the mid-1980s, however, the poststructural

and postmodern critique of Western reason was near its height. In the context of these critiques, Habermas’s ideas were considered outmoded by many; he seemed to be adopting an antiquated model of Western rational superiority. In 1985, Habermas counterattacked with the twelve lectures of his *Philosophical Discourse of Modernity*. These launched a frontal assault on figures such as Bataille, Foucault, Derrida, and Castoriadis—while asserting Habermas’s own stance that modernity continued, and should continue, as a preeminent project of rational communication based on general truth derived from universal reason. This perspective was alternately ignored and responded to with critiques that further undermined pretensions to rational progress. The writings of Foucault—who emphasized how Western regimes of truth operated as instruments of domination and oppression—were especially important in this respect (Foucault 1980, 1984; see in Kelly 1994). It was out of these debates—and their deeper historical precursors<sup>10</sup>—that contemporary concerns about modernity and its multiples have since emerged. In the process, the legacy of the Foucault-Habermas debate has expanded to consider how people in different world areas have been impelled to engage the progressivist project of Western modernity—and how they resist or countermand it. Subaltern and postcolonial studies have been especially important in this regard.<sup>11</sup>

During the early 1990s, the radical impetus of postmodernism began to burn itself out. Indeed, the explicit influence of postmodernism subsided almost as quickly as its initial rush had been intense. As early as 1992, the question became, as Michael Rosenthal put it in *Socialist Review*, “What Was Postmodernism?” But if the claims of postmodern sensibility were inflated, they highlighted key problems in the perspectives they had attacked—including the Western project of progress through rational development. Though Habermas has continued to be influential—and prolific—he is increasingly seen by many scholars, and even by some of his acolytes, as a classic or anachronistic apologist for master narratives of rational reason in a world that is rife with competing standards of truth and rationality.<sup>12</sup> In the mix, however, the assertion of postmodernity has paved the way for a complementary question: If the asserted break with modernity has been overblown, what new understandings of modern life now become necessary to comprehend the intense trajectories of contemporary change? In what ways have postmodern sensibilities themselves been a symptom of late modern cultural disjunctions? If the “post” in postmodernity was excessive, what is a better way to understand “modernity” to begin with? During the 1990s, then, the excursus of postmodernism led many scholars back in a significantly new key to the study of “modernity.”

**From Philosophy to Social Theory:  
The Reemergence of Modernity as a Social  
and Cultural Problematic**

For reconsidering the relation between modernity and postmodernity, the work of David Harvey during the late 1980s has been particularly important (see Harvey 1989, cf. 1982, 1996, 2000). A scholar of Western urban geography, political economy, and culture, Harvey brings a distinctly Marxist and historical perspective to the question of what dynamics of modernity—economic, political, and cultural—were disrupted and thrown into crisis during the 1970s and 1980s to produce the cultural symptoms associated with postmodernity. In Harvey's view, high industrial capitalism—earlier termed "Fordism" by Antonio Gramsci—was brought into global crisis during the early 1970s due to corporate rigidity, difficulties of further expansion, and falling profit margins. The capitalist response to this crisis, according to Harvey, was increased reliance on "flexible accumulation." Flexible accumulation goes hand in hand with the speeding up and decentralization of transactions and profit-seeking across time and space, including through electronic transmission of ideas, information, and financial transactions. These patterns drew on new electronic technologies while compressing social and cultural experience across time and space. For Harvey, time-space compression is diagnostic of the social and cultural fragmentation of "the condition of postmodernity."

From an anthropological perspective, Harvey's work has major shortcomings that echo those of Habermas and also Foucault. Among other things, all of these approaches sideline the economic and political histories of non-Western peoples—including their engagements with and resistances against capitalism. Harvey's perspective further downplays the motivating force of cultural values, idioms, and ideologies in their own right; they become, on balance, a reflection of economic and political forces. Since the so-called electronic age arguably makes the dissemination of ideas and information one of its prime arenas of production, profit making, and consumption, it needs to be seriously considered if the old Marxist infrastructure and superstructure now have a transformed causal relationship. There is ample evidence that cultural and subjective orientations have been dynamic forces in Western development, including—as Max Weber (1958) emphasized—in the Protestant asceticism that helped spawn a capitalist ethos to begin with. In a contemporary world, subjective orientations exert an obviously huge im-

pact. The events of 11 September 2001 and the aftermath of U.S. bombing that began the following 7 October have sadly underscored that cultural diversity in the developing world system is, if anything, more important than ever to understand. All this runs against the singular weight that Harvey affords to "time-space compression" as a relatively undifferentiated and implicitly globalizing condition. Harvey's characterization of contemporary time and space ultimately draws more from hoary assumptions and categories of Western intellectualism than it does from evidence concerning how time and space are in fact experienced and constructed in different parts of the world (cf. Greenhouse 1996; Miller 1994; Birth 1999).

This said, Harvey's argument has, within its restricted Western frame, been highly important as well as influential. First, his work is rich in detail, critical in Western cultural perspective, and breathtaking in economic and historical scope. As such, it has provided an important example of how critical scholarship need not sacrifice evidential rigor or strength of argument to be evocative and important.<sup>13</sup> Second, Harvey put our understanding of contemporary cultural developments squarely back in play with economic and political factors. Even if culture emerges as something of an infrastructural reflection in his analysis, he opens the door for more dynamic articulations between cultural sensibilities and trajectories of political economy, including in world areas he does not consider. Third, Harvey appreciates the distinctive nature of urban Western developments while also contextualizing them with larger historical processes. His deep appreciation of Marxist thought (see Harvey 1982) gives his analysis an important critical edge even as he also strives to understand the dynamics of Western cultural experience.

Alongside other works and critical reassessments, Harvey's analysis foreshadowed an increasingly explicit consideration of modernity during the early and mid-1990s.<sup>14</sup> Among others, Anthony Giddens's books *The Consequences of Modernity* (1990) and *Modernity and Self-Identity* (1991) have been particularly influential. Giddens amalgamated and elaborated on classic social theorists such as Ferdinand Tönnies (1957) to contrast "traditional" social relations—based on customary regularities within relatively stable communities—with modern ones fraught with disjunction and decontextualization across social contexts (cf. Appadurai 1991). Drawing on this basic contrast, Giddens describes modernity as emerging historically through four related features: capitalism, industrialism, surveillance (especially political control by the nation-state), and the growing organization of military power. For Giddens,

these four features link directly to modernity's global spread and have corresponding results in the world capitalist economy, the international division of labor, the nation-state system, and the world military order.

On Giddens's analysis, changes wrought by modernity have a distinct impact on human social relations. People are increasingly uprooted, displaced, engaged in wage labor, and enmeshed in an ever more complex and differentiated social world. According to his argument, stable individual identity based on affiliation with a physical *place* has transformed into *variable* identities across *space*. Modernity as such disconnects space from place. In the process, social relations become increasingly disembedded; they are differentiated and lifted out of traditional contexts. Interactions based on symbolic tokens, such as money (à la Simmel), become more impersonal. According to Giddens, this both requires and makes problematic new patterns of trust in social relations. As social actors grapple with and reflect on their relation to a complicated social world, their identities become more fragmented, individuated, and inward. Individuation and reflexivity come to permeate the social disembeddedness of a modern world. According to Giddens, these patterns have been evident for well over a century but have now intensified and spread with the globalization of modernity throughout the world. For Giddens, then, the modern epoch has been foundational—and becoming hegemonic—since the mid-nineteenth century. Conversely, the contemporary features associated by some with postmodern distinctiveness and rupture are in his analysis a continuation and extension of long-standing trends.

Giddens's notion of modernity is certainly diffuse; it combines features of economy, politics, social organization, and personal identity in a generalized, schematic, and abstract model. Modernity is here a pervasive but largely undifferentiated process that is global in scope even as it contrasts diametrically to traditional patterns that are historical in the West and presumably cultural in the lingering pockets of a non-modernized world.

As might be expected, Giddens's view of modernity has been subject to critique while also being influential by virtue of its scope, generality, and the ability of researchers to isolate, refine, and transform particular components of his model. Like Harvey, but even more than him, Giddens is open to charges that he neglects the importance of cultural and symbolic influences. These include the values that attend mass consumer, electronic, and infomatic influences on social life in advanced capitalist countries and also in the rest of the world (cf. Miller 1994, 1995; Breckenridge 1995; Freeman 1999; Mankekar 1999; Spitulnik, in press).

Further, Giddens's model creates a rigid historical and cultural divide that admits little articulation between features of non-Western modernity—economic, political, social, and cultural—and those ascribed as global by virtue of their ostensible origin in the West. In this sense, Giddens and related theorists who champion a homogenous view of modernity reproduce the self-justified excesses of modernization theories that burgeoned during the 1950s, 1960s, and 1970s—that is, the idea that developments in the modern Western world are destined for unaltered export to other areas.<sup>15</sup> Views of an undifferentiated modernity no longer seem tenable amid the complexities, differentiations, and resistances of a contemporary world.

### Modernity as Contemporary Problematic and Critique

Against a homogeneous notion of modernity, a range of social theorists and anthropologists have developed approaches that are both more critical and more differentiated during the 1990s. These include an increasing critique of modernity itself as a concept. These treatments problematize and diversify modernity across alternative ranges of time, space, and identity. Against the modern as hegemonic, these views emphasize how different world areas refract the trends of so-called modernity in ways that do not exemplify either Western modernity or non-Western traditions. This perspective pries open our assumptions about how modernity has operated and spread in different contexts and world areas. As part of this mix, increasing emphasis is placed on the subjective and cultural dimensions of modernity—the alternatively modern is not just a reflex of infrastructural forces but a force of distinctive identification and subject making.

The interactive nature of modern subjectivity and modern social life was critically emphasized by Marshall Berman in his early work, *All that Is Solid Melts into Air: The Experience of Modernity* (1982). Written as a Marxist interpretation of modern urban experience and Western literary expression, this work has become quite influential. Emphasizing the modern dialectic between destructive creation and creative destruction, Berman described modernity as an orientation of hoped-for progress and renewal through identification with the ostensible triumphs of Western-style economics, politics, material culture, science, and aesthetics (1992:33). Berman's notion of modernity is particularly useful for our present purposes because it incorporates a strong cultural and ideological dimension. It foregrounds powerful aspirations that may nonetheless be inflected quite differently from alternative cultural van-

tage points and under different socioeconomic and political conditions. In this perspective, the subjective orientations of modernity articulate integrally with economic forces and sociopolitical institutions without becoming their reflex or residuum.

Put more simply for purposes of the present book, *modernity can be defined as the images and institutions associated with Western-style progress and development in a contemporary world*. The images of "progress" and institutions of "development" in this formulation do not have to be Western in a direct sense, but they do resonate with Western-style notions of economic and material progress and link these with images of social and cultural development—in whatever way these are locally or nationally defined (cf. Anderson 1991). Reciprocally, modernity in a contemporary world is often associated with either the incitement or the threat of individual desire to improve social life by subordinating or superseding what is locally configured as backward, undeveloped, or superstitious (Berman 1994:3). To paraphrase Trouillot (this volume), modernity is a geography of imagination that creates progress through the projection and management of alterity.

### Conceptual Plurality and Threats of Demise

Since the mid-1990s, the issues surrounding modernity have become more complex, both in academic conception and in the objective complexities of a contemporary world. Works such as Arjun Appadurai's *Modernity at Large: Cultural Dimensions of Globalization* (1996) pursued an increasingly globalized and culturalized view of modernity. However, Appadurai and most of those influenced by his work have been quick to emphasize the paradoxical nature of this ostensible modernizing globalization, which is based on experiences of disjunction, difference, and dislocation. Cultural and subjective orientations can become increasingly diverse, differentiated, and fractal through the intensification of cultural modernity, as Appadurai stresses.

It has been only a short step from these sensibilities to the outright pluralization of modernity. The eurocentrism of resurgent interest in modernity was quickly exposed from a Latin American perspective by Enrique Dussel (1993) and pursued from a number of postcolonial perspectives (e.g., Chakrabarty 1992, 2001; Alonso 1998; Canclini 1995). Jean Comaroff and John Comaroff (1993) provoked fresh interest in postcolonial ritual and power in Africa through the lens of "modernity and its malcontents." During the mid-1990s, authors such as Allan Pred (1995) were arguing that Europe itself had been subject to diverse capitalist modernities for well over a century (cf. Pred and Watts 1992). By

the late 1990s, the pluralization of modernity became something of an academic industry. Contributions included Partha Chatterjee's *Our Modernity* (1997), Gyan Prakash's "A Different Modernity" (1998), Klaus Lichtblau's "Differentiations of Modernity" (1999), and ethnographic interventions such as Brian Larkin's (1997) consideration of "parallel modernities"—based on the Nigerian penchant for Indian films—and Lisa Rofel's book *Other Modernities* (1999), which plumbed the generational vicissitudes of gendered yearning among female factory workers in China. Casual usages of the plural modern became increasingly common. Fernando Coronil's *The Magical State: Nature, Money, and Modernity in Venezuela* examined "the formation of the Venezuelan state within the context of the historic production of . . . subaltern modernity" (1997:16–17). In *Marxist Modern*, Donald Donham (1999) exquisitely analyzed the Ethiopian revolution in the mid-1970s and suggested that "vernacular modernities" are attempts "to reorder local society by . . . strategies that have produced wealth, power, or knowledge elsewhere in the world" (1999:xviii). Charles Piot's *Remotely Global: Village Modernity in West Africa* (1999) argues that the seeming traditions of the Kabre of northern Togo have in fact been modern for at least three hundred years. The book's conclusion asserts,

I prefer to see the village as a site—and also, in many ways, an effect—of the modern, one that is as privileged as any other, one that has shaped the modern as much as it has been shaped by it, and one that brings the modern—that always uneven, often discordant, ever refracting, forever incomplete cultural/political project—its own vernacular modernity. (1999:178)

Complementing individual case studies of the alternatively modern have been collectively orchestrated treatments, including conferences, university programs, and issues of major academic journals.<sup>16</sup> Though some of the contributions to these projects have but a tangential relation to the explicit problematic of modernity, the theme of the multiply modern has certainly been strong in the recent academic wind.<sup>17</sup>

For all this attention, major problems quickly arise. The critique of modernity follows close on the heels of its multiple assertions. In a much-discussed article, Englund and Leach (2000) hold forth, from a rather Strathernian point of view, against what they see as the new metanarratives of modernity. Charles Piot (2001) considers the Comaroffs' revealing and revolutionary two volumes and critiques the ease and slipperiness of "modernity" as a faceted concept.<sup>18</sup> Bernard Yack, in his *Fetishism of Modernities* (1997), considers the epochal self-consciousness of contemporary social thought and asks more generally, "Why is it that

contemporary intellectuals cannot uncover a new or hidden development without declaring the coming of a new epoch in human experience?" (1997:138). Plagued by a continuation of what he calls "modernity envy," intellectuals now talk, according to Yack, as if developments do not deserve our attention unless they are as epoch-making and pervasive as the ideas and practices of modernity itself.

Though disavowed on the surface, the assumption that modernity is globally hegemonic easily enforces its terminological prevalence. Large swaths of classic social theory are now read through the lens of that thing called modernity, even though the term and its conceptualization are hardly prominent in the works of Marx, Weber, Durkheim, Simmel, and others (Swingewood 1998; contrast Baudelaire 1964). Modernity is sometimes used as a catchphrase for anything that is contemporary in the loosest sense of the term.<sup>19</sup>

The view of modernity as globally diffuse can be troubling for our attempts to comprehend contemporary cultural and subjective diversity. Concern over this problem has become widespread among critical theorists. Indeed, worries over this issue were a prime motive for relativizing our notions of modernity to begin with. More reflexively, as concepts of modernity differentiate and multiply, we may be tempted to agree more than ever with Latour's (1993) assertion, from a structuralist point of view, that we ourselves have never been modern, at least in the ways we might have thought.

#### Scales of Modern Variation

Amid the burgeoning of modernity and its plurals, we may recognize a continuum of conflicting or what Rofel (this volume) calls "discrepant modernities." At one end of the continuum are more structurally robust assessments that highlight the disjunctions and displacement of modernity at large (Harvey 1989; Giddens 1990, 1991; cf. Appadurai 1996). These perspectives are most open to the relativizing critique that England and Leach (2000) have pursued. At the other end of the spectrum are the micromodernities that are so locally and culturally situated that they become practically a synonym for current custom or personal performance. This is modernity written very small. An example is Louisa Schein's (1999) article on "Performing Modernity," in which artful personal enactments among the Chinese Miao minority simultaneously encode, comment on, and ironize a local notion of modernity even as they reinforce it (cf. Schein 2000). This heightened localization increases the ethnographic purchase of modernity while also raising the possibility of neocultural relativism. This is exemplified, for instance,

in Marshall Sahlins's (2001:7) assertion that indigenous versions of modernity are basically self-conscious recapitulations and extensions of indigenous culture. In reaction against this general point of view, Arif Dirlik (1999) slams quite hard at what he calls the new culturalism, which he characterizes as the attempt to relativize modernity while downplaying if not ignoring the power and pragmatics of Euro-American capitalism—the larger structures of economic, political, and social as well as cultural power that have underlain it.

Sandwiched between these global and local extremes are analyses that emphasize how modernity is shaped at the national or regional level. The state-based dimension of alternative modernity is prominent in Coronil's (1997) account of oil-glutting Venezuela. Prakash's (1998) depiction of a different Indian modernity is also centered around the state, tied to Nehru's tropes of the historical nation. This path is also pursued more philosophically in Partha Chatterjee's (1997; cf. 1993) *Our Modernity* and made more historically reflexive in the direction Chakrabarty has taken *Subaltern Studies* (cf. Chakrabarty 2001). In Lisa Rofel's book (1999), other modernities are inflected through the state but are locally situated and, of particular import, strongly inflected by gendered and generational differences.<sup>20</sup> Donald Donham's work on the Ethiopian revolution (1999) is perhaps the best so far to articulate the chain of modernities' historical connections, appropriations, and counterreactions all the way up and down the international, state, and local hierarchy. A similar perspective is pursued at a more detailed local level by Edward LiPuma concerning the Maring of Papua New Guinea in his book *Encompassing Others: The Magic of Modernity in Melanesia* (2000)<sup>21</sup> and by Charles Piot in *Remotely Global* (1999), mentioned above.

As these examples and many others suggest, modernity as a concept is itself being relativized. For some, including Jonathan Friedman (this volume), the proclaiming of alternative modernities has become so loose as to encompass almost any development that is not bound within a bell jar of traditional culture. However, the current spate of interest in alternative modernities—like most new developments in anthropology when viewed historically—is yielding significant insights even as it also contains excesses, vague assertions, and tangential arguments. One of the empirical realities that gives most of these analyses significant purchase is the fact that desires to become modern are not simply an academic projection. Images and institutions of so-called progress and development are extremely powerful forces in the world today. This is true internationally, regionally and at the level of the nation-state, and in the construction of local subjectivities. Yet how can we investigate and analyze this impact while avoiding the problems discussed further above?

### The Present Volume in Contemporary Context

Is the critical understanding of modernity and its inflections a productive project? How can the critiques of modernity extend our awareness of political economy and subjective experience—and the key articulations between them in a contemporary world? The chapters of this book take these questions as their central focus.

All of our contributors agree on two key points. First, modernity as a problematic—regardless of what one thinks of it—has had a major impact on contemporary thought, including in fields such as cultural anthropology. Second, modernity as a concept is fraught with difficulties, especially in the singular. Not only are configurations of modernity slippery and prone to selective guises, they easily reify either as sublime or, I might add, as villainous. The fundamental question that emerges is not whether it is better to singularize or relativize our understanding of modernity. Rather, it is whether relativized notions of modernity go far enough and in the right directions.

For some of this volume's authors—those in part 1, including Robert Foster, Ivan Karp, Holly Wardlow, and me—inflections of modernity can be critically analyzed to reveal the construction and contestation of contemporary subjects in an unequal world. These understandings take the modern as a means of confronting one of the main challenges to contemporary anthropology—that is, how it is that people in the world now share much in common at the same time that they are as differentiated, diverse, and even more unequal than they were before. Modernity in this sense is integrally related to local understandings of what it means to be traditional or progressive. More generally, these contributions explore the “alternativeness” of becoming modern—the ways modernity refracts through different cultural and contextual guises. It is noteworthy that the chapters in this section are concretely ethnographic in focus. As such, they illustrate how research on the process of becoming alternatively modern can put us intimately in touch with the lives and experiences of people in diverse world areas.

The contributors to part 2, Lisa Rofel, Debra Spitulnik, and Michel-Rolph Trouillot, agree with this point of view to a certain extent. But they trouble our views of the modern more deeply. In particular, they suggest that our understandings will be inadequate if we fail to consider non-Western alterity in more fundamental terms. In the process, their expositions contribute to our understanding of matters as diverse as language use, gendered alterity, the groundedness of material relations, and

the Western formulation of modernity itself. In this last regard, as Michel-Rolph Trouillot's contribution poignantly suggests, the drive to be modern has always *already* presumed the alterity of Others as the fulcrum point of Western self-elevation. In this sense, modernity has been plural from the start, even if our awareness of its ideological work has not. As such, we have to query more deeply, to critically revisit Kant, how the West configured the exodus of humanity from its *own* state of guilty immaturity through the construction and projection of Others.

Yet more strongly critical of modernity and its inflections are the chapters comprising part 3 of this volume. At the extreme, as suggested by John Kelly, this raises the possibility of a different kind of anthropology altogether. Donald Donham, for his part, is critical of the way that modernity and its alternatives have often been used in academic discourse. He suggests that we restrict our use of “modernity” until we specify more clearly what we mean. Jonathan Friedman critically reviews a range of the chapters in the present volume and uses them as a foil for sharpening his own contrastive perspective. Whereas other contributors question or critique a generalized notion of modernity, Friedman expands the notion of modernity and then internally differentiates it. Kelly carries the critique a step further and suggests that discussions about modernity are not only not a new debate, but the wrong debate to be having at all. These assessments are important in bringing us to the limit point of our problematic. On one hand (from Donham and from Friedman), this limit point comes from a perspective that stresses political economy and the deeper history of capitalism. On the other (from Kelly), it comes from an aesthetic that questions the modernizing tropes and sensibilities that underlie our analysis of modernity to begin with. For Kelly, our assumptions about the modern tend toward the sublime and neglect what is most unsublime and grotesque: the power of the United States since World War II. For Donham, our analyses too easily subsume disparate articulations of capitalism and local history to a single model. And for Friedman, the notion of alternative modernities mixes together disparate features that should be distinguished and then encompassed within a larger structural model. More generally, these contributions push against current assumptions in the understanding of modernity and its alternative inflections.

The element that unites the contributions of this volume is a willingness to engage in focused debate—based on concrete evidence and scholarly analysis—concerning one of the key issues that has emerged in cultural anthropology toward the end of the 1990s. The problematic of modernity and its inflections provides a sharpening stone for the volume's contributors, each of whom reaches important new insights even



as she or he adopts or opposes a different stance. Indeed, it is striking to me as the editor that the chapters make contributions in the very areas in which each author finds the conceptualization of modernity to be weakest.

For instance, several of the critiques illuminate larger structures of power in the history of capitalism. The chapters by Michel-Rolph Trouillot in part 2 and Donald Donham and Jonathan Friedman in part 3 are particularly strong in this respect. Other chapters articulate aspects of modernity with fine-grained intricacies of local subjectivity and disposition. This is especially true of the contributions based on Melanesian ethnography—those by Foster, Wardlow, and me—plus Spitulnik's account of modern turns of speech in the town Bemba dis-course of urban Zambia.

In larger terms, the present volume links the critique of modernity to greater understanding of how images of progress and institutions of development operate historically and intensify in a contemporary world. Though the contributions may be grouped for heuristic purposes into those that are more appreciative of an alternatively modern perspective, those that stress the deeper significance of alterity, and those that emphasize other anthropological perspectives, their insights crosscut this simple alignment. All the contributors challenge us to consider the problem of modernity and its multiples in new ways. The present volume thus exemplifies a debate between points of view that are stimulating rather than compromising of rigorous ethnographic and theoretical analysis. Against talk that cultural anthropology has become anthropology lite, it is gratifying here to see important issues at the heart of the field contended so richly through acute evidence and critical theorization.

#### Alternatively Modern: A Critical Appreciation

Our introductory understanding can be rounded off by summarizing the key contributions of an alternatively modern perspective. From the present vantage point, becoming modern entails a core articulation between regional or global forces of so-called progress and the specifics of local sensibility and response. The alternatively modern engages the global with the local and the impact of political economy with cultural orientations and subjective dispositions. A focus on alternative modernities directs our attention to these complementary processes and forces us to analyze them in the direct context of each other. This perspective is highly appropriate for a contemporary anthropology that strives to

connect larger features of political economy and regional history with the appreciation of local cultural diversity. More specifically, it encourages us to consider in a new and more concrete way what methods and means of knowing are most appropriate for contemporary anthropology. What modes of inquiry, and what kinds of response, do we take as evidence of social or cultural identities in complex contemporary conditions? How do we combine information gathered from direct observation, discursive revelation, or enacted presentation with the study of regional, historical, and even global dimensions of political economy? Grappling with these questions is facilitated by a distinctively anthropological perspective on the process of modern differentiation in different world areas.

In certain respects, relativized notions of modernity harbor a theory of how modern powers and agents extend their influence. In particular, they suggest that modern images and institutions become forceful through the very opposition and reciprocal definition of progress or development vis-à-vis notions of tradition or national neotradition. These competing tropes and meanings of what indicates authenticity and what indicates development and progress are locally and regionally mediated. They are highlighted as actors negotiate their desire for economic success or development vis-à-vis their sense of value and commitment to longer-standing beliefs and practices. These articulations develop through schism and discontinuity—for instance, as disjunction between images of economic and material development and those of cultural or historical identification. The alternatively modern thus harbors a dialectical notion of how becoming locally or nationally “developed” occurs through selective appropriation, opposition, and redefinition of authenticity in relation to market forces and aspirations for economic and political improvement. This recursive pattern has been evident since the exploitative expansion of Western political economies during the sixteenth century. But it has intensified under capitalism and more recently during the latter part of the twentieth century.

Focusing on this key relationship, the alternatively modern may be said to address the figure-ground relationship between modernity and tradition as these are locally or nationally perceived and configured. Though these features are often viewed as antithetical to one another, they are in fact intricately and importantly intertwined. We may here paraphrase Donham (this volume) in a slightly different way to say that the alternatively modern is the social and discursive space in which the relationship between modernity and tradition is configured. This configuration is forged in a crucible of cultural beliefs and orientations on one hand, and politicoeconomic constraints and opportunities on



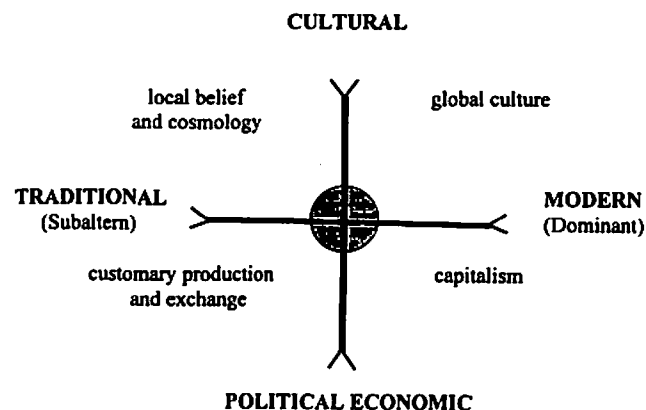


Figure 1.1. The articulatory space of the alternatively modern

the other. In short, the alternatively modern is the articulatory space through which notions of modernity and tradition are co-constructed as progress and history in the context of culture and political economy (see figure 1.1).

The process of becoming alternatively modern juxtaposes and articulates dominant and subaltern notions of propriety and development. As such, it does not divorce our awareness from concrete contestations of belief and practice; to the contrary, it puts us squarely in touch with them. This provides an ethnographically concrete rather than an abstract way to consider the continuing development of capitalism, the local workings of so-called global culture, shared traditions of belief and cosmology, and customary patterns of production and exchange. An emphasis on the alternatively modern is more processual than classificatory, more concerned with specific disempowerments and cultural engagements than with typological differences. It also moves us close to ethnographic and historical specifics, which are often if not typically our best defense against the imposition of Western assumptions and oppositions.

Does this conceptualization still borrow too much from the Western notion of modernity that it attempts to relativize? In practical terms, I think there is a simple way to address this issue. (Practicality is important here, lest we launch into spirals of hermeneutic absorption or reflexive doubt.) The simple reply is to consider if notions of being alternatively modern make sense of specific ethnographic and larger dy-

namics. Is the problematic of modernity and its alternatives good to think with, or not?

To me, the contributions to this volume suggest that the answer to this question is yes. Robert Foster presents a convincing argument that the weaknesses of modernity theory should not lead us to neglect its insights. Taking the stimulating but unrefined generalizations of Anthony Giddens, Foster shows how local uses of money and responses to state institutions recontextualize Giddens's generalizations in a more concrete manner. In particular, he shows how Giddens's notions of distanciation and disembedding can be productively reconsidered to show how local people reembed and reposition themselves as they bend modern trends to their own objectives. In political terms, Foster shows how the reassertion of personal ties of gift giving and patronage recolonize Melanesian politics from below. These practices contravene the bureaucratic and top-down nature of Western-style political authority.

A striking example of Papua New Guinean's bargaining with modernity comes in Foster's account of the Anganen ritual use of money. Crisp, red twenty-kina currency notes that depict the head of a boar now combine ritual efficacy and financial value. Here is the antithesis of the colonial exotic that projected native people as thinking that money was merely pretty paper. Instead, Anganen play actively and consciously with meanings of money through performative enactment. They directly engage the importance of cash with the importance of ritual. The creative fusion of these divergent "modern" and "traditional" elements does not deny one for the other. Instead, Foster's analysis reveals a capital ritual in which becoming healthy and becoming wealthy in a modern way can hardly be disentangled.

Ivan Karp steps back to analyze the discursive structure and assumptions about personhood that inhere in development discourse. Though the specific terms of development discourse may seem to apply especially to the post-World War II era—and to professional cadres—Karp shows how development discourse is in fact a key ideological feature that reverberates through wide ranges of national, local, and international policy, decision making, assessment, evaluation and—ultimately—stigmata. As Karp suggests, development discourse promulgates hierarchical images of self and other based on social institutions and personal qualities that define the "developed" or "undeveloped" person. Though these images may at one level be contested by national or local respondents, Karp (this volume) illustrates in fine detail how the fragments of this discourse "echo and quote one another, often unknowingly . . . through repetition and reproduction across time, space, and social setting." Starting with an analysis of official promulgations and media

reports, he shows how ideologies of development are quite influential in inciting emergent dimensions of personhood. At the same time, development discourse fosters a remarkably similar notion of stigmatized personhood across diverse settings. It is hence not simply a rhetorical imposition but a key means by which a much deeper history of colonial and international domination insinuates itself into national and local subjectivity.

At issue here is the classification of persons into ranked categories by the bleached authority of an ostensibly objective scale of social and moral development. Now as before under colonialism, the local subject is viewed as inert material to be transformed through new forms of discipline. But now, this objective is soft-pedaled under the guise of "social training"—and then effaced from awareness by overweening emphasis on technocratic assessments of material advancement. As Karp insightfully shows, the ideological power of development discourse stems from its ability to treat subjects, in alternative moments, as shared participants on a universal path of progress and yet as "exceptions" who require outside intervention and imposition. His larger point is central for the present volume: even as tropes of development and becoming modern are in danger of being reified by us as academics, they are reified with great cultural, political, and economic power as ideologies of value in a plethora of real-world places. These draw on and perpetuate deep legacies of capitalist and colonial exploitation. As Karp reminds us, "development ideology is one of the constituting features of a global system that is heir to colonial and imperial domination."

My own ethnographic chapter in this volume illustrates how local desires to be modern spiral with the subordinated re-presentations of what it means to be traditional. The Gebusi of south lowland Papua New Guinea were not exposed to colonial influence until the 1960s, and they retained many of their indigenous customs and beliefs into the 1980s. By 1998, however, many Gebusi had relocated next to the government station and oriented their lives around Christian churches, the community school, market, sports leagues, aid post, and government administration. These changes are striking because Gebusi have not been subject to significant land alienation, forced labor, taxation, colonial violence, outmigration, or economic development. This underscores the degree to which the process of becoming alternatively modern is one of subjective and cultural incitement (Knaft 2002).

Among Gebusi, local modernity is marked by the redefinition and reperformance of traditional customs as well as by participation in contemporary institutions and by adopting fundamentalist Christian beliefs. On national Independence Day, indigenous practices are enacted

by Gebusi in farcical and buffoonish fashion for a large interethnic crowd. This dynamic reveals how becoming alternatively modern is simultaneously a process of reconstructing tradition through new forms of public culture. For Gebusi, this entails a new sense of historicity and identification with beliefs and practices associated with a more "developed" and "progressive" style of life. In remote areas, the desire to be modern easily becomes acute or "oxymodern" through the redefinition of indigenous practices and beliefs. Reciprocally, the continual threat of backsliding into tradition intensifies aspirations for modern development in the absence of realistic opportunities for economic or political progress. This renders people such as Gebusi receptive to ideologies of material and moral development that subordinate them to externally introduced institutions—including those associated with fundamentalist Christianity. Reciprocally, this dynamic fuels a continued sense of feeling locally "backward." The larger implication is that ideologies of local progress can be stood on their heads to reveal how alternative modernities incite subordination and disempowerment even when political coercion and economic development are only implicit. This underscores the degree to which the subaltern modern is a cultural and subjective as well as a political and economic entailment.

Focusing on a very different Melanesian society, Holly Wardlow exposes the cultural problems raised by modern commodities in a cultural context that accorded high value to prowess in physical labor. In contrast to Gebusi, Huli are a populous and thickly settled people with a history of aggressive expansion against their neighbors, a longer history of colonial contact, and a stronger sense of indigenous cultural propriety. Wardlow shows how the Huli process of becoming modern is radically gendered. The burgeoning growth of criminal theft by "rascals" is strongly associated with men. More generally, the acquisition and public display of commodities and Western clothes are lauded for Huli men but disparaged for Huli women—who are enjoined to occupy a moral place of tradition. One is reminded here of Carol Smith's (1995) work on gendered Mayan economy, in which male capitalization is complemented by the traditionalization of Mayan women. Analogous cases can found in central Asia, as described in Wynne Maggi's (2001) book on Kalasha women of northwestern Pakistan. Of course, women are not universally associated with historical tradition—and such an association may not preclude them from so-called modern pursuits in any event. The feminization of wage labor in Latin America and Southeast and east Asia reminds us of Donald Donham's insistence that the larger capital field is fundamental for understanding the relation between labor and the process of becoming alternatively modern. But how sensibilities of

progress and development are locally gendered is distinctively important as part of this mix, as Lisa Rofel emphasizes in her book, *Other Modernities* (1999) and in chapter 5 of the present volume.

Against this background, a gendered perspective troubles any notion of multiple modernity that would assume alternative coherence within a community or society. Gendered issues are not limited to the domestic sphere—nor to ideologies of womanhood or motherhood as they refract at a regional or national level. Rather, gendered relations themselves configure the larger structure of social and political change (Freeman 2001; see Marchand and Runyan 2000; Massey 1994, pt. 3; Felski 1995; Knaft 1997). Wardlow's chapter brings this awareness from a large-scale assertion to a detailed analysis of how Huli gender informs commodity acquisition through labor on one hand, and theft on the other. This vantage point sheds an importantly new light on the contemporary tensions of sociality and exchange in Melanesia. In all, Wardlow's chapter is a model example of how the theoretical analysis and the ethnographic critique of modernity can drive each other to new levels of sophistication in our understanding of contemporary cultural and socioeconomic change.

Lisa Rofel's chapter provides a large-scale theoretical and structural complement to Wardlow's nuanced portrayal of alternatively gendered modernity. In a revealing critique, Rofel exposes the masculinist assumptions that inform our general theories of modernity. These assumptions are ingrained in even the most ostensibly cutting-edge Marxist global analyses. Rofel takes as a detailed case in point Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri's much-discussed recent book, *Empire* (2000). Billed as a Communist manifesto for the twenty-first century,<sup>22</sup> Rofel shows how this important book is in fact flawed to the core not just by its global reification of modern sovereignty but by its inexcusable neglect of subaltern populations, women, and those who are most disempowered. These people are effaced by Hardt and Negri in favor of a more philosophical assessment of Western thought that finds its social complement in the undifferentiated mass of the growing "multitude." As Rofel documents, this undifferentiated multitude is portrayed by Hardt and Negri in unswervingly masculinist and occidentalist terms. As the events of 11 September 2001 have so dramatically shown, opposition to the American-led system of world sovereignty can be powerfully non-Western and poignantly gendered in its own masculinizing terms. It will hardly do to leave these factors as an afterthought; they are obviously central to both the potentials and the perils of globalizing opposition.

In a bitingly playful twist, Rofel reveals how Hardt and Negri's master narrative—of radical Leftists fighting against the system—is itself a

very Western masculine account that parallels quite closely the sexist and racist assumptions of George Lucas's *Star Wars* movies. In both cases, the evil and diffusely hegemonic Force is overthrown by a cadre of masculine oppressed who fight against all odds to heroically vanquish the Empire for the blessed good of all. One recalls here, if in a less searing key, the arguments of Catherine Lutz (1995) on "The Gender of Theory": the grander the edifice of theoretical assertion, the more likely its symbolic capital derives from masculinist assumptions. To counter this trend, Rofel encourages alternative narrative strategies that highlight a range of subaltern and postcolonial perspectives. These put us more fully in touch with the gendered, sexualized, racialized, and other stigmatizing ways that the imperial workings of contemporary modernity are actualized in fact—and by means of which they may also be resisted. This can be done without resorting to the crude reactionary violence of masculinist terrorism. Rofel follows a more nuanced track in her monograph on gendered yearnings in postsocialist China (1999). In this sense, she evokes sensibilities that are well-tuned to recuperative work across widely differing contexts. In the present volume, this brings us back to the nuanced insights of Holly Wardlow concerning the gendering of modernity in the southern Highlands of Papua New Guinea, discussed further above. Such perspectives, which consider gender in the context of modern tension, are crucial to our understanding of current developments—global as well as local.

Debra Spitulnik's chapter directs our attention to the specific words and discursive usages that evoke modernity in urban Zambia. Spitulnik shows in detail how vernacular discourse concerning things modern is often cast in the former colonial language (English) and historically informed by the structures and ideologies of colonial rule. Zambian pre-occupations with being modern now include usages that gloss as "modern times," "being enlightened," "being European," and "being in a style of affluence." As Spitulnik suggests, these linguistic usages link directly to the Western metanarrative of modernization. She views these specifics in larger linguistic and cultural terms to refine our methodological as well as theoretical sense of how modernities can be concretely studied in ethnographic practice. In the process, she underscores how important it is for anthropologists not to neglect the specifics of local linguistic use amid their desire to reach larger and more sweeping generalizations in the study of contemporary cultural and social change.

Pushing her analysis further, Spitulnik critically questions whether Zambian terms and usages can be easily lumped under the singular banner of "modernity." The postcolonial inflections of so-called modernity take multiple guises in Zambia. Some Zambian usages evoke continuous

or quick action. Others emphasize newness or novelty. Still others convey a sense of progress; a concern with consumption, prosperity, and affluence; or conversance with outside forms of knowledge and goods. Some of these usages operate in a referential sense—as social attributions or designations—while others signify that the speaker is him- or herself claiming a modern identity. In short, though images of being or becoming modern constitute an extremely important nexus of cultural reference and identification in contemporary Zambia, they do not cohere easily within a single or simple notion of modernity—as might be analytically or theoretically attributed on *a priori* grounds. Spitulnik thus asks pointedly, “What is obscured in the cluster of conceptual distinctions and/or ethnographic realities that are grouped together under the shade of the modernity umbrella?” Ultimately, she adopts a notion of modernity that has heuristic value not as a definitional category but as a stimulus for revealing the distinctively Zambian linguistic practices that bear, in various ways, on the conflicted dynamics of postcolonial aspiration and future-seeking styles of life.

Michel-Rolph Trouillot’s chapter steps back to question the larger assumptions about alterity that are both smuggled in and effaced in most conceptualizations of the modern. As he suggests, the ideological as well as the political and economic force of modernity is exposed by raw colonial exploitation that projected Others as backward and undeveloped. This is not a new phenomenon but is evident in the precapitalist mercantile exploitation of the Caribbean and Latin America by Spain and Portugal in the sixteenth century. As Trouillot also reminds us, non-Western alterity is close to the heart of modernity in the formulations of Baudelaire, whose mid-nineteenth-century conceptualization is often taken as the touchstone of this concept in Western thought. A relational notion of modernity that exposes the subaltern as Alter or Other is key to comprehending not just the polarization of the world into ostensibly central and peripheral regions but how this relational subordination is ideologically backgrounded and effaced. The projection of Otherness is both at the root of the modern and erased from the history of modern awareness. As Trouillot himself puts it, “modernity always required an Other and an Elsewhere.”

If modernity is an ideology of value as well as a social condition, this very fact underscores its power and importance. Even as tropes of progress and being modern are in danger of being reified by us as academics, they are also and separately reified with great cultural, political, and economic power as ideologies of value in a multitude of alternative places and times. Ideologies of the modern are not simply our own; they are important propositions whose reality is symbolically and socially

instituted in many parts of the contemporary world. The people described in the various chapters of this volume underscore the force of the modern as an ideology of aspiration and differential power. We find this among Ethiopian revolutionaries (per Donham’s chapter); Zambian speakers of urbanity (per Spitulnik); rural New Guinea highlanders (per Wardlow and Foster); Caribbean slave women dedicated to fashionable clothing (per Trouillot); Christian fundamentalists from remote places (per my own chapter); and urbane subjects of the modern world system, who, as Rofel underscores, are more differentiated and less masculine than Hardt and Negri (2000) realize.

The critiques of modernity that conclude this volume highlight the need to rebraid our understanding of capitalist exploitation amid ideological constructions of “progress” and “development.” John Kelly exposes the aesthetic tropes and sublime assumptions that are reproduced in our modernist thoughts and concepts. These include our general tendency to neglect the most power-laden and pernicious aspects of modern developments while being dazzled by glossy visions of a globalizing world. Donald Donham’s contribution pulls us back to a more concrete understanding of capitalist economy and history. In particular, he critiques the Comaroffs’ voluminous opus (1991, 1997) as well as parts of his own previous work to reach a more nuanced understanding of how capitalism and modernity have interacted in alternative parts of Africa—specifically, Ethiopia and South Africa. In the process, he illustrates how modernity emerges as the discursive space within which notions of what it means to be traditional or modern are contested and negotiated. In complementary fashion, Jonathan Friedman stresses the need for a wider historical purview and puts our understanding of modernity into a much larger civilizational and structuralist framework. This framework highlights the different strands that can inflect variously as traditionalist, primitivist, modern, or postmodern—all within the larger identity space of modernity.

Through their specifics, these critiques of modernity give us new perspectives for understanding the desires, motivations, and incitements to action that inform the lives of diverse people in a complex world. Certainly the ideologies of new value that impact these sensibilities may be sublime or grotesque, hardened by capital structures or softened by global flows. But sandwiched between a nagging continuation of cultural and subjective relativism on one hand, and capital superordination on the other, anthropologists can document and analyze exactly how and why people engage images of progress so forcefully, and how and why they associate these so consistently with manufactured commodities and special kinds of economic and institutional development. As I am re-

peatedly finding in my own ethnographic work among Gebusi, the motivations that attend these developments are often quite cultural and quite home grown—not just a reflex of an external modern, but an active crucible of local imagination amid contemporary incitement and subservience. The inflections of modernity are not just our own contestation, but that of others, in the rest of the world.

### Alternative Problematics

As Gilles Deleuze suggested, a “concept” connects disparate ideas at infinite speed.<sup>23</sup> Accordingly, an important concept is really a theory writ small. In this sense, it can be useful to compare the alternatively modern with two of its conceptual complements in recent theorization. One of these is the long-standing importance of capitalism, which is undoubtedly crucial to understanding modernity. In the present book, the import of capitalism is foregrounded in Donham’s and Friedman’s chapters and is highly important in those of Trouillot and to some extent Kelly as well. A corollary concept of similar order is globalism or globalization. As reflected in current journal issues, conferences, and a host of new books, the idea of globalization is now taking its minutes of maximal attention in the academic sun.<sup>24</sup> In the present volume, the spread, threat, and refraction of global impact emerges in almost all the chapters.

Stepping back, it may be said that this triumvirate—modernity, capitalism, and globalization—inflects many new developments in cultural anthropology. More generally, cultural anthropology seems to be at a distinctive moment. Having shied away from theory building in a larger sense, our central concepts now assume the role of mini theories, tacit and often inexplicit, but quick and powerful in the breach.<sup>25</sup> Elaborate theories we seem to have given up, but pregnant and sweeping concepts we seem to like. Masterful tropes unmaster our narratives. In this sense, the assertions of capitalism on one hand, or globalism on the other, are perhaps equivalent to the conceptualization of modernity in scale, suggestiveness, and—one might add—lack of precision.

Within this general context, we can ask how an inflected notion of modernity stacks up against its main competitors in the current conceptual market—how it compares to a dominant emphasis on capitalism on one hand, or globalization on the other. My own view is that each of these megatropes evokes a distinct sensibility—a particular structure of feeling that has distinctive insights and oversights. Refractions of modernity usefully engage the discordant alternatives that galvanize culture and identity in a contemporary world. They articulate local features

with global ones and dynamics that are cultural with those that are political and economic. Notions of progress provoke paradoxes and creative struggles that highlight the power of imagination in the face of violent interactions, deferments, and disillusionments.

Attending to these discordances puts large structural forces directly in play with subaltern subjectivities. Tropes and tensions of progress—what it means to be locally modern in a contemporary world—serve as a pivot between the entailments of global capitalism and national or local constructions of subjectivity, meaning, and agency. From this vantage point, it is a bit disingenuous to make of modernity something of an omnibus notion and then critique its conceptualization for being too encompassing or reified. Few would make the same requirement or impose the same limits on our notions of capitalism or globalism, or even, for that matter, on the concept of the sublime, the grotesque, the discourse of development, or the savage slot, to name a few concepts—all quite valuable and important—that are developed in this book’s chapters.

### Conceptual Slide

At present, our attempt to refine key concepts and articulate them with each other runs up against the sociology of our own knowledge. As Robert Foster mentions in his chapter, the key concept typically emerges in our intellectual discourse first as a singular noun—a reified entity that has capital pretensions even if it is not actually capitalized. Think of classic anthropological notions: Culture, Civilization, or Structure. All of these used to have the stature and weight of singular reference. Anthropologists used to seriously discuss how to draw firm boundaries between one culture, civilization, or structure and another. There were arguments about typologies and borders, categorical skirmishes and counterassertions. The ethnographic map seemed to be a terrain of limited good, fought over as turf for theoretical advance and control by alternative means of conceptual colonization.

During the late 1970s and 1980s, these older nouns were replaced with new ones in anthropology, including concepts of practice and hegemony, then reflexivity and postmodernism. By contrast, the older terms of favor were not so much dropped but weakened—first by making them more radically plural, and then by turning them into adjectives. The culture concept became a web of plural cultures and was then demoted to being “cultural.” As least in anthropology, we rarely refer to “culture” as a bounded empirical referent with defined borders. But we are still perfectly comfortable talking and thinking about cultural this, cultural that, “cultural anthropology.” This “adjectival softening” has

been evident in other theoretical moves as well. "Structure" became "structures" and then "structural." "Hegemony" slid into "hegemonies" and then became "hegemonic." Bourdieu's *Outline of a Theory of Practice* (1977) became a flood of practices (see Knaft 1996, chap. 4).

In genealogical perspective, as Donald Donham's chapter clearly signals, "modernity" has now embarked down this same slippery slope—yesterday a singular noun, today a pluralized phenomenon, tomorrow perhaps a mere adjective: modern this, modern that. The modern thus becomes a modifier of other things; it has diminished analytic and theoretical heft.

Given general trends, however, the jump to nominate other singularities—be they capitalism, globalization, or even the sublime or the grotesque, per John Kelly's chapter—is to quickly beg for them the same fate. Capitalism and globalization are certainly ripe for pluralization if they have any pretense to avoid the same eurocentrism that has historically bedeviled the concept of modernity. We move quickly from capitalism writ large to regional or local or historically periodized capitalisms—Confucian capitalism; Latin capitalism; early, high, or late capitalism; electronic capitalism; virtual capitalism; and so on (cf. Blim 2000). In similar fashion, globalization in the singular is quickly dispensed with—especially by anthropologists—in favor of specific avenues or streams of global flow and transaction. This is also true of the ostensibly global dimensions of culture. We quickly devolve from global cultural to a horizontal series of global subject positions. There has been heightened interest in identity forms that are international in scope but segmented in applicability, including a range of recent work on cosmopolitanism, flexible citizenship, and other types of transnational identity (e.g., Cheah and Robbins 1998; Ong 1999; Appadurai 2000; Anderson 1998). As these subsidiary domains are themselves exposed as imprecise and unstable in reference, we can expect them to slide into adjectives: capital this, capital that, transnational this, cosmopolitan that, global whatever, and so on.

In short, the problem of pluralization and adjectival softening is common to our intellectual time. In the present case, this means that the ills of modernity as a concept cannot be easily cured by simply replacing it with another conceptual eminence, such as "capitalism" or "globalization." This tendency is nonetheless encouraged by the quickening speed at which new ideas are generated; they emerge for a few months of critical attention and then become debris at the feet of another new angel of backward-looking academic history. This problem is what I call the decreasing half-life of ideas in cultural anthropology. This is the tendency to efface our concepts in the very process of their formulation and pre-

sentation. Like physicists, we seem to work harder and harder to create newer and newer elements that disappear faster and faster—surviving only long enough to trace their names before vanishing. Ultimately, however, this disappearance is of our own choosing. So before we drive our concepts down the slide, it is worth considering how hard we want to push them and how fast we want them to fall.

### Capitalism

Critical analysis of capitalism, for its part, is particularly good for considering the historical development and profound implications of wage labor, especially in the mechanized production of commodities and the implications of these for capital surplus and world historical inequality. For all its limitations, capitalism harkens us back to the inexhaustible insights of Marx. Expanding on this legacy, Trouillot's chapter in this volume (complemented by the work of Andre Gunder Frank) suggests how capitalism has been historically linked to forced labor and the expropriation of material resources in non-Western areas for several centuries. These implications can be productively pursued in the present—that is, to see how current flows of goods and information ensconce new forms of exploitation that are either hidden from view or smoothed over by modern ideologies of a global free market. In a late modern capitalist world, the global study of flexible *accumulation*, à la David Harvey, needs now to be complemented by local study of flexible *exploitation*. "Flex-exploitation," as such, is particularly ripe for ethnographic study in non-Western areas. So, too, conversely, we can consider the flexible and sometimes quite reactionary or violent means used to combat or oppose flex-exploitation.

What about politics? Though capitalism does not link in and of itself to dynamics of state and multistate power, it does beg for and articulate easily with such analysis—as Marx illustrated so brilliantly in "The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte" (Marx 1977). In a contemporary world, capitalism and state politics go hand in hand.

Capitalist analysis is far weaker, however, when it comes to engaging the cultural meaning, motivations, and significations of action, both in the metropole and, even more, in the reticulated periphery. Without an understanding of cultural engagements with and resistances to domination—the focus of modernity's alternatives and alterities—capitalist analysis rings culturally flat. This criticism now applies to the latest Marxist work, including Hardt and Negri's *Empire* (2000), which, as Rofel demonstrates, provides an only ostensibly cutting-edge Marxism for the coming century. It seems woefully inadequate to emphasize

the Euro-American foundation or global spread of capitalism as a way to circumvent this problem. This reemphasis on the global West merely siphons its Alters into residual categories; they become new varieties of the savage slot.

The Frankfurt School attempted to bridge the gap between capitalism and cultural possibility, of course. But the aestheticized results of these attempts—the legacy of Horkheimer, Adorno, and even Benjamin if one reads him critically—are not always useful for understanding what meanings, motivations, and actions are in fact informing the lives of common people in so many parts of the contemporary world. Lamentably, the same has become increasingly true, I think, of contemporary cultural studies, notwithstanding its scintillating earlier strains from Raymond Williams and E. P. Thompson. We sorely need but presently lack an understanding of what Lisa Rofel describes in her chapter as the cultural production of contemporary capitalism in alternative world areas.

### Globalization

What about globality as a contemporary condition? Though of course evident in Marx, globalization has recently—until 11 September—swelled with academic interest. In this sense, it echoed the economic boom and Internet hopes of the 1990s. Globalism has given us lots of coverage, of course, and lots of flow—flows of commodities, flows of people, flows of imagination, flows of transnational discourse. In the process, it also foregrounds consumption. By contrast, capitalism as a trope centers on production. This production is ultimately grounded in labor and the expropriation of landed resources, as Coronil (2000) makes clear. Capitalism stresses differential appropriation of surplus by some people and places. If the profit of exploitation is almost always made elsewhere through movement (and increasingly so in the present), capitalism stresses how the fruits of profiteering are even more importantly brought back home to roost. The ultimate nail of exploitation under capitalism is the hard-rootedness of possession. Profits are *not* shared globally but are decidedly unequal in distribution and deployment.

Though intertwined, globalism as a trope runs in a different direction. Globalization supplies lateral axes of circulation and distribution. It proffers the prospect of equalization. And it sacrifices historical depth for what is distinctly and globally new in the present. Where images of capitalism stress economic possessiveness and territoriality, globalism stresses a newly deterritorialized space of possibilities. But because the global is so big and unwieldy by itself, its conceptualization quickly

shifts, particularly in cultural terms, from globalism in general to a horizontal stratification of global subject positions—to cosmopolitanism, flexible citizenship, various types of transnationalism, or different kinds of flows. Among cultural anthropologists, the culturally transnational celebrates a Bakhtinian world in which capitalist enclaves of possession can be transgressed through hybrid creativities. This trend is appreciative and ultimately rosy. Where capitalist tropes tend toward pessimism, those of the global are optimistic. It may be more than a passing irony that optimism about the global has been shared not only by economists, political scientists, and positivist sociologists—ideological champions of a free market world—but also by critical theorists of globality. Even as it cultivates aesthetic irony and reversal, the critical theorization of global movement shades toward an elite and top-down orientation, as Arif Dirlik (1998) has stressed. Stepping back, then, we can see that concepts of globalization contrast with those of capitalism as much as they complement them.

Amid these competing images, it is important to keep our eye on the concrete accumulation of wealth and power in some areas and classes at the expense of others. This underscores rather than undercuts our appreciation of how exploitation is spatially flexible and symbolically fluid in a contemporary world. Globalism is not a wonderful new age but a new twist of subordination. We can here concur with Victor Li's (2000) trenchant critique of globalization and Dirlik's (1999) salutary reminder not to neglect the continuing hard structures of Western-style, political, and military domination.

From the perspective of cultural anthropology, however, neither globalism nor capitalism are very good at plumbing the subjective diversity and cultural practices of subaltern circumstance. As opposed to reflexive optimism or pessimism, inflections of alternative modernity—like Max Weber himself, if you read him closely—tend to be situational in assessment. By contrast, the long-standing problems of Marxism and of political economy—that they are robust in historic structure but weak in cultural sensitivity—persist and beg for reconceptualization. Notions of cultural globalization, for their part, still tend to be vague and upper class.

### Alternatively Modern Redux

Viewed in larger context, the problematics of the alternatively modern are both distinctive and analytically productive. They focus our attention on the contemporary experience of alterity and how this is impacted by larger structures of exploitation and domination. These dynamics are

open to capitalist analysis but ultimately cannot be understood by privileging economic or political determinism over subjective orientations. The latter keep our understanding in touch with local and regional specifics of cultural engagement, including the process of subject making and the collective imagination of communities, ethnic groups, and nations. Through their articulation with economic and political dynamics, these illuminate axes of difference and domination that emerge with respect to gender, sex, and generation, as well as those of class, ethnicity, and nationality.

The alternatively modern is concrete because ideologies and institutions of so-called progress and development are increasingly influential and increasingly differentiated across a contemporary world. These ideologies and institutions are deeply entwined with the momentous and continuing changes of capitalism even as they are not fully reducible to them. The same can be said of their articulation with development plans and programs associated with the nation-state and with international or multinational organizations. It is the connection and yet the local indeterminacy of these articulations—between ideologies of progress versus history on one hand, and between culture and political economy on the other—that gives the study of the alternatively modern both ethnographic purchase and theoretical value.

Modern alterity focuses our attention on a nexus of articulations rather than specifying a predetermined outcome or content. It suggests analytic and theoretical connections for an engaged anthropology but does not provide a recipe of outcomes or results. Its analytic does not restrict results or structure them in an empirical or categorical grid. Relatedly, an alternatively modern perspective does not ensure that the resulting analysis will be insightful; as in all ethnography and theory, this depends on the ethnographic rigor and intellectual skill with which the tools of analysis are applied. It is telling, however, that many of the most productive and insightful studies by cultural anthropologists in recent years—both ethnographic and theoretical—have resonated with if not been centrally concerned with the tensions of being or becoming alternatively modern. The present book attempts to draw on this critical trend, to critique and to clarify it, and to suggest how it may be extended and improved on in the future.

#### Beyond the Academic

If our conceptualizations of modernity have exploded during the last twenty years, the impact and ideology of becoming progressive or developed in different world areas has also burgeoned over this same period.

In the wake of two world wars, theories of modernization were accompanied by master plans to “lift up” and improve the lives of people in non-Western areas. Economic development projects, the green revolution, regimes of political intervention, and financial loans from wealthy nations were all designed to modernize social life and institutions in so-called developing countries. It is now widely agreed, of course, that many if not most of these plans went greatly awry, had unanticipated and unfortunate consequences, and often intensified the problems they were ostensibly designed to resolve (e.g., Escobar 1995; Scott 1998; Gupta 1998; Ferguson 1999; cf. Worsley 1984). Nevertheless, the peoples of the world become increasingly capitalized by the march of wage labor, the massively unequal profits of flexible exploitation and accumulation, and stratification based on unequal access to money in general and to goods, information, education, technology, and decent standards of living in particular.

If the decade of the 1990s was one of comparatively conspicuous growth and opulence among the Western and transnational elite—and if it spawned rosy theories of global connection in its wake—the problems bequeathed to the increasing proportion of the world who see themselves as marginal, disempowered, and peripheralized by these developments are intensified by the relentlessly increasing exposure to and internalization of ideologies of “progress” and “development.” Becoming “modern” is all the more problematic as standards of progress intensify along with their impossibility of being satisfied. These drive each other reciprocally to yet greater extremes. We see that the gap between expectation and experience that Koselleck (1985) documented in Western notions of “progress” during the late eighteenth century is not just alive; it reinvents itself with ferocious and pernicious intensity in many if not most corners of the contemporary world. Ultimately enforced by military power, the increasing intensity of international development projects, of well-meaning human rights initiatives, of leveraged control of poorer nations by the International Monetary Fund and World Bank, and the NGO-ization of international influence—all of these fuel escalating ideologies of progress and “development” even as their well-intentioned agents strive in vain to close the reality gap. It is a hopeless battle. In outcome, the problems of cold war schemes for modernization have not subsided. Rather, they have expanded, intensified, and insinuated themselves into social lives and subjectivities in new and more fearful ways. If the academic conceptualization of modernity still borrows too much from its intellectual predecessors, the work of modern progress as ideology and as power cannot be ignored. It is important to remember this as we use our skills as ethnographers and



theoreticians to expose the meanings and inequities of contemporary lives in newly critical ways.

### Notes

1. E.g., see Gaonkar 1999; Mitchell 2000; Eisenstadt 2001; Lichtblau 1999; Chatterjee 1997; Prakash 1998.
2. See Rofel 1999; Piot 1999, 2001; Donham 1999; Knauf 2002; Larkin 1997; Schein 1999; Ferguson 1999; LiPuma 2000; cf. Comaroff and Comaroff 1993; Appadurai 1996; Nonini and Ong 1997.
3. Quoted by Dussel 1993:68.
4. Cf. more generally Foucault 1970, 1973, 1979, 1980, 1983.
5. See Greenblatt 1980; Horkheimer and Adorno 2000, chap. 3.
6. Of course, the development of modernism as a Western artistic movement pervaded much of the twentieth century. And the use of "modern" as a casual descriptor has long been common in both popular and academic discourse.
7. See Lyotard 1984, 1988; Baudrillard 1988, 1990a, 1990b, 1996, 1997; Kroker et al. 1989; Haraway 1997. Among anthropologists, see Marcus and Fischer 1986; Tyler 1990; Clifford 1997.
8. See Baudrillard 1975, 1981, 1983; Jameson 1981, 1991; Lyotard 1989a, 1989b, 1993; Butler 1987, 1990; Spivak 1987; Kellner 1989; Bronner and Kellner 1989; Featherstone 1991.
9. For Habermas, an analytic and philosophical understanding of the modern lifeworld integrates with analysis of "external" structural systems to provide proper grounding for general social theory.
10. In a longer temporal perspective, the relationship between rationality and anti-rationality has been a key tension in Western thought at least since the growth of romanticism during the eighteenth century (see Berlin 1999).
11. E.g., Guha and Spivak 1988; Spivak 1987, 1996, 1999; Chakrabarty 2001; Bhabha 1994; see Williams and Chrisman 1994.
12. Outhwaite (1994:152, 154), who describes himself as an "unabashed enthusiast" of Habermas, writes, "He has clearly become a classic, often anachronistically set among the previous generation of the founders of the Frankfurt School." In terms of the debate concerning modernity specifically, Outhwaite (1994:136) suggests, "Habermas' own critique inevitably begins to look, even more than it did before, like the American and Soviet anti-guerrilla campaigns which unsuccessfully deployed what should have been devastating firepower against an army which refused to stand still and be shot at."
13. In this regard, Harvey's scholarship provides a salutary counterexample to

the excesses of slipshod impressionism that marked the high-water mark of postmodernism during the late 1980s.

14. E.g., Lash and Friedman 1992; Friedman 1994; Berman 1994; Touraine 1995; Miller 1994, 1995; Manganaro 1990.
15. Rostow (1952, 1960, 1963, 1971) was one of the strongest and most consistent advocates of growth through the global spread of Western-style modernization (see critique by Arndt 1987).
16. See, for instance, the theme issue of *Public Culture* on "Alter/Native Modernities" (1999, no. 27), and the special issue of *Daedalus* devoted to "Multiple Modernities" (winter 2000, vol. 129, no. 1). A similar emphasis can be found in books such as Timothy Mitchell's edited collection, *Questions of Modernity* (2000).
17. The size and speed of this trend was thrown into relief by the circumstances of my own research. During extended fieldwork in a remote rain-forest area of interior Papua New Guinea in 1998 (Knauf 2002), I was struck by how peculiarly modern the Gebusi people I had previously lived with had since become. On my return to the United States, I started to organize a session for the ensuing annual anthropology meetings on "Alternative Modernities"—thinking that this was a relatively novel way to conceptualize such development. My plan was short-circuited by a request by my university to propose a program for the Ford Foundation's "Crossing Borders" funding initiative. My proposal for Emory was entitled "Vernacular Modernities." Only in the ensuing months did I realize how rampant the notion of plural modernities had become during my absence in the field. When the Emory project was funded (with me as its director—see <<http://www.emory.edu/COLLEGE/ICIS/programs/vm/index.html>>), one of the other initiatives simultaneously funded by Ford was a program on "Alternative Modernities" (my original title), submitted by the five-college consortium in Massachusetts. Later that semester, I was invited to the University of Chicago, where I presented a version of my chapter on the oxymoron (published as chapter 3 in the present volume). A scant fifteen minutes after my presentation, Marshall Sahlins announced that he had just pulled from his office mailbox the new special issue of *Daedalus*—entitled "Multiple Modernities."
18. See Comaroff and Comaroff 1991, 1997; cf. 1993.
19. For instance, the omnibus sociology textbook of contemporary societies by Stuart Hall et al. is titled *Modernity* and subtitled *An Introduction to Modern Societies* (1996)—but it has precious little analysis of the concept itself. Hall et al. suggest simply that modernity entails a decline of tradition and of associated religious practices amid the rise of a market economy and secular forms of political power (1996:8). Toward the end of the book, Giddens's notion of modernity is summarized as entailing capitalism, industrialism, administrative power, and military power (1996:452 ff.). These features are mixed in a vague manner rather than differentiated or analyzed

in relation to historical or cultural specifics. Such formulations do little to capture the subjective and cultural—much less the sociopolitical and economic—dimensions of alternative modernities, which are importantly different in different world areas. This problem also pervades influential works such as Held and colleagues' *Global Transformations* (1999).

20. Rofel is concerned with the implications of Chinese socialist and post-socialist ideologies for gendered subjectivity and labor. She states toward the end of her book that "the state has generated multiple imaginaries of modernities" (1999:279). Rofel focuses on the way these versions of modernity are differentially responded to, appropriated, or resisted by different groups of Chinese women—in generational terms, in discursive histories, and in micropactices of work.
21. In a Melanesian context, see also Akin and Robbins's important edited collection *Money and Modernity: State and Local Currencies in Melanesia* (1999), and Friedman and Carrier's collection *Melanesian Modernities* (1996).
22. The comments of Slavoj Žižek on the book jacket of *Empire* aver that "What Hardt and Negri offer is nothing less than a rewriting of *The Communist Manifesto* for our time."
23. As Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari put it in *What Is Philosophy?*, "The concept is defined by the inseparability of a finite number of heterogeneous components traversed by a point of survey at infinite speed" (1994:21).
24. Prominent recent works concerning globalization include John Tomlinson's *Globalization and Culture* (1999), Anthony Held and colleagues' *Global Transformations* (1999), Saskia Sassen's *Globalization and its Discontents* (1998), Martin Albrow's *The Global Age* (1997), and a host of other more popular works, such as Thomas Friedman's *The Lexus and the Olive Tree: Understanding Globalization* (2000). This emphasis has been presaged by works such as Jonathan Friedman's *Cultural Identity and Global Process* (1994) and analyses of global political economy and history by Immanuel Wallerstein, Andre Gunder Frank, Giovanni Arrighi, and, in anthropology, the late Eric Wolf (1982). Current interest also includes avant-garde formulations, as in Arjun Appadurai's special issue of *Public Culture* on "Globalization" (2000).
25. By contrast, there is little current interest in cultural anthropology to develop grand theories. The same is generally true of cultural studies, post-colonial or diasporic studies, queer theorizations, and post-Marxist studies.

## References

Abu-Lughod, Janet

- 1989 *Before European Hegemony: The World System A.D. 1250-1350*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Akin, David, and Joel Robbins

- 1999 [Eds.] *Money and Modernity: State and Local Currencies in Melanesia*. Pittsburgh, Pa.: University of Pittsburgh Press.

Albrow, Martin

- 1997 *The Global Age: State and Society Beyond Modernity*. Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press.

Alonso, Carlos J.

- 1998 *The Burden of Modernity: The Rhetoric of Cultural Discourse in Spanish America*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Anderson, Benedict

- 1991 *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*. Expanded edition. London: Verso.  
1998 Long-Distance Nationalism. In *The Spectre of Comparisons: Nationalism, Southeast Asia, and the World*, pp. 58-74. London: Verso.

Appadurai, Arjun

- 1996 *Modernity at Large: Cultural Dimensions of Globalization*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.  
2000 Grassroots Globalization and the Research Imagination. *Public Culture* 12: 1-19.

Arndt, Heinz W.

- 1987 *Economic Development: The History of an Idea*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Baudelaire, Charles

- 1964 [1863] *The Painter of Modern Life and Other Essays*. London: Phaidon.

Baudrillard, Jean

- 1975 *The Mirror of Production*. St. Louis, Mo.: Telos Press.  
1981 *For a Critique of the Political Economy of the Sign*. St. Louis, Mo.: Telos.  
1983 *In the Shadow of the Silent Majorities*. New York: Semiotext(e).  
1988 *The Ecstasy of Communication*. New York: Semiotext(e).  
1990a *Cool Memories*. London: Verso.  
1990b *The Revenge of the Crystal*. London: Pluto.  
1996 *Cool Memories II*. Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press.  
1997 *Fragments: Cool Memories III*. London: Verso.

Berlin, Isaiah

- 1999 *The Roots of Romanticism*. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press.

Berman, Art

- 1994 *Preface to Modernism*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press.

Berman, Marshall

- 1982 *All That Is Solid Melts into Air: The Experience of Modernity*. New York: Penguin.  
1992 Why Modernism Still Matters. In *Modernity and Identity*. Edited by Scott Lash and Jonathan Friedman, pp. 33-58. Oxford: Blackwell.

- Bhabha, Homi K.  
1994 *The Location of Culture*. London: Routledge.
- Birth, Kevin  
1999 *Any Time Is Trinidad Time: Social Meanings and Temporal Consciousness*. Gainesville: University Press of Florida.
- Blim, Michael  
2000 Capitalisms in Late Modernity. *Annual Review of Anthropology* 29: 25-38.
- Bourdieu, Pierre  
1977 *Outline of a Theory of Practice*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Breckenridge, Carol A.  
1995 [Ed.] *Consuming Modernity: Public Culture in a South Asian World*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Bronner, Stephen E., and Douglas M. Kellner  
1989 [Eds.] *Critical Theory and Society: A Reader*. New York: Routledge.
- Butler, Judith  
1987 *Subjects of Desire: Hegelian Reflections in Twentieth-Century France*. New York: Columbia University Press.  
1990 *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*. New York: Routledge.
- Calhoun, Craig  
1992 [Ed.] *Habermas and the Public Sphere*. Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press.
- Canclini, Nestor Garcia  
1995 *Hybrid Cultures: Strategies for Entering and Leaving Modernity*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Chakrabarty, Dipesh  
1992 Postcoloniality and the Artifice of History: Who Speaks for "Indian" Pasts? *Representations* 37: 1-26.  
2001 *Provincializing Europe: Postcolonial Thought and Historical Difference*. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press.
- Chatterjee, Partha  
1993 *The Nation and its Fragments: Colonial and Post-Colonial Histories*. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press.  
1997 *Our Modernity*. Lecture to the South-South Exchange Programme for Research on the History of Development and the Council for the Development of Social Science Research in Africa. Rotterdam: Vinlin Press.
- Cheah, Pheng, and Bruce Robbins  
1998 [Eds.] *Cosmopolitics: Thinking and Feeling Beyond the Nation*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

- Clifford, James  
1997 *Routes: Travel and Translation in the Late Twentieth Century*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press.
- Comaroff, Jean, and John L. Comaroff  
1991 *Of Revelation and Revolution, Volume 1: Christianity, Colonialism, and Consciousness in South Africa*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.  
1993 [Eds.] *Modernity and Its Malcontents: Ritual and Power in Postcolonial Africa*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Comaroff, John L., and Jean Comaroff  
1997 *Of Revelation and Revolution: Volume 2: The Dialectics of Modernity on a South African Frontier*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Coronil, Fernando  
1997 *The Magical State: Nature, Money, and Modernity in Venezuela*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.  
2000 Occidentalism and Subaltern Modernities: The Point is their Counterpoint. Paper presented in the session "Inflections of Modernity" at the Annual Meetings of the American Anthropological Association, San Francisco, November 16.
- Deleuze, Gilles, and Félix Guattari  
1994 *What Is Philosophy?* London: Verso.
- Dirlik, Arif  
1998 *The Postcolonial Aura: Third World Criticism in the Age of Global Capitalism*. Boulder, Colo.: Westview.  
1999 Is There History after Eurocentrism? Globalism, Postcolonialism, and the Disavowal of History. *Cultural Critique* 42: 1-34.
- Donham, Donald L.  
1999 *Marxist Modern: An Ethnographic History of the Ethiopian Revolution*. Berkeley: University of California Press.  
2002 On Being Modern in a Capitalist World: Some Conceptual and Comparative Issues. In *Critically Modern: Alternatives, Alterities, Anthropologies* [this volume]. Edited by Bruce M. Knaft. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.
- Dussel, Enrique  
1993 Eurocentrism and Modernity. *boundary 2*, 20: 65-74.
- Eisenstadt, S. N.  
2001 Multiple Modernities. *Daedalus* 129(1): 1-31.
- Englund, Harri, and James Leach  
2000 Ethnography and the Meta-Narratives of Modernity. *Current Anthropology* 41(2): 225-48.
- Escobar, Arturo  
1995 *Encountering Development: The Making and Unmaking of the Third World*. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press.

- Featherstone, Mike  
1991 *Consumer Culture and Postmodernism*. London: Sage.
- Felski, Rita  
1995 *The Gender of Modernity*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press.
- Ferguson, James  
1999 *Expectations of Modernity: Myths and Meanings of Urban Life on the Zambian Copperbelt*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Foucault, Michel  
1970 *The Order of Things: An Archaeology of the Human Sciences*. New York: Vintage.  
1973 *The Birth of the Clinic: An Archaeology of Medical Perception*. New York: Pantheon.  
1979 *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*. New York: Vintage.  
1980 *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings, 1972-1977*. Edited by Colin Gordon. New York: Pantheon.  
1983 The Subject and Power. In *Michel Foucault: Beyond Structuralism and Hermeneutics*. 2nd ed. Edited by Hubert L. Dreyfus and Paul Rabinow, pp. 208-26. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.  
1984 *The Foucault Reader*. Edited by Paul Rabinow. New York: Pantheon.
- Foster, Robert J.  
2002 Bargains with Modernity in Papua New Guinea and Elsewhere. In *Critically Modern: Alternatives, Alterities, Anthropologies* [this volume]. Edited by Bruce M. Knaft. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.
- Freeman, Carla S.  
1999 *High Tech and High Heels in the Global Economy: Women, Work, and Pink-Collar Identities in the Caribbean*. Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press.  
2001 Is Local: Global as Feminine? Masculine? Rethinking the Gender of Globalization. *Signs* 26(4): 1007-37.
- Friedman, Jonathan  
1994 *Cultural Identity and Global Process*. Thousand Oaks, Calif.: Sage.  
2002 Modernity and Other Traditions. In *Critically Modern: Alternatives, Alterities, Anthropologies* [this volume]. Edited by Bruce M. Knaft. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.
- Friedman, Jonathan, and James G. Carrier  
1996 [Eds.] *Melanesian Modernities*. Lund Monographs in Social Anthropology No. 3. Lund, Sweden: Lund University Press.
- Friedman, Thomas  
2000 *The Lexus and the Olive Tree: Understanding Globalization*. New York: Anchor.
- Gaonkar, Dilip Parameshwar  
1999 On Alternative Modernities. *Public Culture* 11: 1-18.

- Giddens, Anthony  
1990 *The Consequences of Modernity*. Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press.  
1991 *Modernity and Self-Identity: Self and Society in the Late Modern Age*. Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press.
- Greenblatt, Stephen  
1980 *Renaissance Self-Fashioning: From More to Shakespeare*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Greenhouse, Carol J.  
1996 [Ed.] *A Moment's Notice: Time Politics across Cultures*. Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press.
- Guha, Ranajit, and Gayatri Spivak  
1988 [Eds.] *Selected Subaltern Studies*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Gupta, Akhil  
1998 *Postcolonial Developments: Agriculture in the Making of Modern India*. Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press.
- Habermas, Jürgen  
1984a [1981] *The Theory of Communicative Action, Volume 1: Reason and the Rationalization of Society*. Boston: Beacon.  
1984b *The Theory of Communicative Action, Volume 2: Lifeworld and System: A Critique of Functionalist Reason*. Boston: Beacon.  
1987 [1985] *The Philosophical Discourse of Modernity: Twelve Lectures*. Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press.
- Hall, Stuart, David Held, Don Hubert, and Keith Thompson  
1996 [Eds.] *Modernity: An Introduction to Modern Societies*. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Haraway, Donna J.  
1997 *Modest\*Witness@Second\*Millennium. Female\*Man\*Meets\*Onco\*Mouse: Feminism and Technoscience*. New York: Routledge.
- Hardt, Michael, and Antonio Negri  
2000 *Empire*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press.
- Harvey, David  
1982 *Limits to Capital*. Oxford: Blackwell.  
1989 *The Condition of Postmodernity: An Enquiry into the Origins of Culture Change*. Cambridge: Blackwell.  
1996 *Justice, Nature, and the Geography of Difference*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.  
2000 *Spaces of Hope*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Held, David, Anthony McGrew, David Goldblatt, and Jonathan Perraton  
1999 *Global Transformations: Politics, Economics, and Culture*. Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press.
- Horkheimer, Max, and Theodor W. Adorno  
2000 [1944] *Dialectic of Enlightenment*. New York: Continuum.

- Jameson, Fredric  
 1981 *The Political Unconscious: Narrative as a Socially Symbolic Act*. Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press.  
 1991 *Postmodernism, or the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism*. Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press.  
 n.d. The Four Maxims of Modernity. Unpublished manuscript.
- Karp, Ivan  
 2002 Development and Personhood: Tracing the Contours of a Moral Discourse. In *Critically Modern: Alternatives, Alterities, Anthropologies* [this volume]. Edited by Bruce M. Knaft. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.
- Kellner, Douglas  
 1989 *Jean Baudrillard: From Marxism to Postmodernism and Beyond*. Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press.
- Kelly, John D.  
 2002 Alternative Modernities or an Alternative to "Modernity": Getting Out of the Modernist Sublime. In *Critically Modern: Alternatives, Alterities, Anthropologies* [this volume]. Edited by Bruce M. Knaft. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.
- Kelly, Michael  
 1994 [Ed.] *Critique and Power: Recasting the Foucault/Habermas Debate*. Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press.
- Knaft, Bruce M.  
 1996 *Genealogies for the Present in Cultural Anthropology*. New York: Routledge.  
 1997 Gender Identity, Political Economy, and Modernity in Melanesia and Amazonia. *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute* 3: 233-59.  
 2002 Trials of the Oxymodern: Public Practice at Nomad Station. In *Critically Modern: Alternatives, Alterities, Anthropologies* [this volume]. Edited by Bruce M. Knaft. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.  
 2002 *Exchanging the Past: A Rainforest World of Before and After*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Koselleck, Reinhart  
 1985 [1979] *Futures Past: On the Semantics of Historical Time*. Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press.
- Kroker, Arthur, Marilouise Kroker, and David Cook  
 1989 *Panic Encyclopedia: The Definitive Guide to the Postmodern Scene*. New York: St. Martin's Press.
- Larkin, Brian  
 1997 Indian Films and Nigerian Lovers: Media and the Creation of Parallel Modernities. *Africa* 67: 406-40.
- Lash, Scott, and Jonathan Friedman  
 1992 [Eds.] *Modernity and Identity*. Oxford: Blackwell.

- Latour, Bruno  
 1993 *We Have Never Been Modern*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press.
- Li, Victor  
 2000 What's in a Name: Questioning "Globalization." *Cultural Critique* 45: 1-39.
- Lichtblau, Klaus  
 1999 Differentiations of Modernity. *Theory, Culture, and Society* 16: 1-30.
- LiPuma, Edward  
 2000 *Encompassing Others: The Magic of Modernity in Melanesia*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.
- Lutz, Catherine  
 1995 The Gender of Theory. In *Women Writing Culture*. Edited by Ruth Behar and Deborah A. Gordon, pp. 249-66. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Lyotard, Jean-François  
 1984 [1979] *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge*. Translated by Geoff Bennington and Brian Massumi. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.  
 1988 *The Differend: Phrases in Dispute*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.  
 1989a *The Lyotard Reader*. Edited by Andrew Benjamin. Oxford: Blackwell.  
 1989b *La guerre des Algériens: Écrits, 1956-1963*. Paris: Galilée.  
 1993 *Political Writings*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Maggi, Wynne R.  
 2001 *Our Women are Free: Gender among Kalasha of Northwestern Pakistan*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.
- Manganaro, Mark  
 1990 [Ed.] *Modernist Anthropology: From Field Work to Text*. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press.
- Mankekar, Purnima  
 1999 *Screening Culture, Viewing Politics: An Ethnography of Television, Womanhood, and Nation in Postcolonial India*. Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press.
- Marchand, H. Marianne, and Anne Sisson Runyan  
 2000 *Gender and Global Restructuring: Sightings, Sites, and Resistances*. New York: Routledge.
- Marcus, George E., and Michael M. J. Fischer  
 1986 *Anthropology as Cultural Critique: An Experimental Moment in the Human Sciences*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Marx, Karl  
 1977 The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte. In *Karl Marx: Se-*

*lected Writings*. Edited by David McLellan, pp. 300-325. New York: Oxford University Press.

- Massey, Doreen  
1994 *Space, Place, and Gender*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Miller, Daniel  
1994 *Modernity, An Ethnographic Approach: Dualism and Mass Consumption in Trinidad*. Oxford: Berg.  
1995 [Ed.] *Worlds Apart: Modernity through the Prism of the Local*. London: Routledge.
- Mitchell, Timothy  
2000 [Ed.] *Questions of Modernity*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Nonini, Donald M., and Aihwa Ong.  
1997 Chinese Transnationalism as an Alternative Modernity. In *Un-grounded Empires: The Cultural Politics of Modern Chinese Transnationalism*. Edited by Aihwa Ong and Donald M. Nonini, pp. 3-33. New York: Routledge.
- Ong, Aihwa  
1999 *Flexible Citizenship: The Cultural Logics of Transnationality*. Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press.
- Outhwaite, William  
1994 *Habermas: A Critical Introduction*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Piot, Charles  
1999 *Remotely Global: Village Modernity in West Africa*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.  
2001 Of Hybridity, Modernity, and Their Malcontents. *Interventions* 3: 85-91.
- Prakash, Gyan  
1998 A Different Modernity. Unpublished manuscript.
- Pred, Allan  
1995 *Recognizing European Modernities: A Montage of the Present*. London: Routledge.
- Pred, Allan, and Michael J. Watts  
1992 *Reworking Modernity: Capitalisms and Symbolic Discontent*. New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press.
- Rofel, Lisa  
1999 *Other Modernities: Gendered Yearnings in China after Socialism*. Berkeley: University of California Press.  
2002 Modernity's Masculine Fantasies. In *Critically Modern: Alternatives, Alterities, Anthropologies* [this volume]. Edited by Bruce M. Knaft. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.
- Rosenthal, Michael  
1992 What Was Postmodernism? *Socialist Review* 22: 83-105.

- Rostow, Walter W.  
1952 *The Process of Economic Growth*. New York: Norton.  
1960 *The Stages of Economic Growth: A Non-Communist Manifesto*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.  
1963 *The Economics of Take-off into Sustained Growth*. New York: St. Martin's Press.  
1971 *Politics and the Stages of Growth*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Sahlins, Marshall D.  
2001 Six Are Honored at Commencement '01. [An interview with Marshall Sahlins by Britt Halvorson.] *Michigan Today* 33(2): 7.
- Sassen, Saskia  
1998 *Globalization and its Discontents: Essays on the New Mobility of People and Money*. New York: New Press.
- Schein, Louisa  
1999 Performing Modernity. *Cultural Anthropology* 14: 361-95.  
2000 *Minority Rules: The Miao and the Feminine in China's Cultural Politics*. Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press.
- Scott, James C.  
1998 *Seeing Like a State: How Certain Schemes to Improve the Human Condition have Failed*. New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press.
- Smith, Carol A.  
1995 Race-Class-Gender Ideology in Guatemala: Modern and Anti-Modern Forms. *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 37: 723-49.
- Spitulnik, Debra A.  
2002 Accessing "Local" Modernities: Reflections on the Place of Linguistic Evidence in Ethnography. In *Critically Modern: Alternatives, Alterities, Anthropologies* [this volume]. Edited by Bruce M. Knaft. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.  
In press *Media Connections and Disconnections: Radio Culture and the Public Sphere in Zambia*. Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press.
- Spivak, Gayatri  
1987 *In Other Worlds: Essays in Cultural Politics*. New York: Methuen.  
1996 *The Spivak Reader: Selected Works of Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak*. Edited by Donna Landry and Gerald MacLean. New York: Routledge.  
1999 *A Critique of Postcolonial Reason: Toward a History of the Vanishing Present*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press.
- Stoler, Ann L.  
1995 *Race and the Education of Desire: Foucault's History of Sexuality and the Colonial Order of Things*. Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press.
- Swingewood, Alan  
1998 *Cultural Theory and the Problem of Modernity*. New York: St. Martin's Press.

- Taylor, Charles  
 1989 *Sources of the Self: The Making of Modern Identity*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press.  
 1992 *The Ethics of Authenticity*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press.  
 1999 Two Theories of Modernity. *Public Culture* 11: 153-74.
- Tomlinson, John  
 1999 *Globalization and Culture*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Tönnies, Ferdinand  
 1957 *Community and Society (Gemeinschaft und Gesellschaft)*. East Lansing: Michigan State University Press.
- Touraine, Alan  
 1995 *Critique of Modernity*. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Trouillot, Michel-Rolph  
 1991 Anthropology and the Savage Slot. In *Recapturing Anthropology: Working in the Present*. Edited by Richard G. Fox, pp. 17-44. Santa Fe, N.M.: School of American Research Press.  
 2002 The Otherwise Modern: Caribbean Lessons from the Savage Slot. In *Critically Modern: Alternatives, Alterities, Anthropologies* [this volume]. Edited by Bruce M. Knaft. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.
- Tyler, Stephen  
 1990 *The Unspeakable: Discourse, Dialogue, and Rhetoric in the Postmodern World*. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press.
- Wardlow, Holly  
 2002 "Hands-Up"-ing Buses and Harvesting Cheese-Pops: Gendered Mediation of Modern Disjuncture in Melanesia. In *Critically Modern: Alternatives, Alterities, Anthropologies* [this volume]. Edited by Bruce M. Knaft. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.
- Weber, Max  
 1958 *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*. New York: Scribners.
- Williams, Patrick, and Laura Chrisman  
 1994 [Eds.] *Colonial Discourse and Post-Colonial Theory: A Reader*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Wolf, Eric  
 1982 *Europe and the People without History*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Worsley, Peter  
 1984 *The Three Worlds: Culture and World Development*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Yack, Bernard  
 1997 *The Fetishism of Modernities: Epochal Self-Consciousness in Contemporary Social and Political Thought*. Notre Dame, Ind.: University of Notre Dame Press.