From Post-Industrial to Post-Modern Society
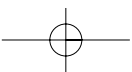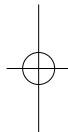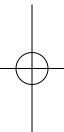
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Rethinking Modernity

Entering the New Millennium

The first edition of this book came out towards the end of the twenti-eth century. This new edition is appearing early in the twenty-first century. Moreover, there has been a change not just of the century but of the millennium. For those living in Christian cultures, we are now at the beginning of the third millennium – whether we call this AD or CE.
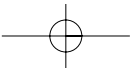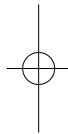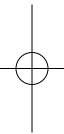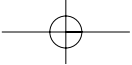
One can of course make too much of this – indeed, in retrospect, far too much was made of this, what with the fear of 'the millennial bug', with computers if not aircraft crashing worldwide, and a general sense of apocalyptic expectation – most of it drummed up by the media indus-tries (which did not inhibit several well-known scholars from cashing in on the general mood).[1] Still it would be unfair – especially after the event – to be too critical of this tendency. As I point out in the last chapter of this book ('Millennial Themes'), the end of the old and the onset of the new millennium concentrated minds, sharpened theories, made people look to the long-term, epochal, changes rather than to the surface currents. If it also led to an exaggerated sense of an ending, or of a new beginning, that was a relatively small price to pay for the stim-ulus provided by the fin-de-siècle feeling (see Kumar 2000 for some further thoughts on 'endism').

Nevertheless changes of centuries and of millennia are artefacts, calendrical devices. They do not necessarily signify any fundamental changes in the real world. The theories dealt with in this book are all about long-term change – about claims to the emergence of new forms of work, new forms of thinking, new forms of society. The second edition of this book is appearing less than ten years since the first edition. What, in the perspective of the *longue durée*, can possibly have

happened, what can have changed to a sufficient degree to justify a new edition?

For one thing, we know that a few years *can* make a momentous difference. Think of the chasm that, in Western society, separates 1918 from 1914, the years of the First World War. It is impossible to argue that the changes of the past ten years can match those years – which still, to many thoughtful people, represent the most gigantic transformation of consciousness of the last two centuries. But enough has happened to make many observers feel that within our very own day the world has changed dramatically – as dramatically, perhaps, as it did in the years after 1989 when communism ceased to challenge Western capitalism.

The expression of this is to be found not so much in the spectacular civil or international wars, many born of ethnic or national conflicts, that have preoccupied the international community recently: the NATO-led intervention in Kosovo in 1999, the bloody war in the Russian province of Chechnya, the renewal of the *intifada* in Palestine. These can with some reason be seen as the continuities and fall-outs from past tensions, some of them at least half a century old if not longer. The new thing, unmistakably and incontrovertibly, was the attacks on the World Trade Center in New York and the Pentagon in Washington, DC, on 11 September, 2001.[2] '9/11' has become the symbol of a new world order, or disorder. Like all important events of world-historical significance it had its antecedents and portents – among other things, in this case, the bungled attack on the World Trade Center in 1993 and the bombing of the US embassies in Nairobi and Dar es Salaam in 1998 (Sanneh 2001). But the events of 9/11 announced the new condition of the world in tones that even the deafest could hear. It made clear what had slowly begun to be realized after the fall of communism: that the United States was now the world's only superpower, that in its economic and military might it stood alone, and that it would therefore for the foreseeable future be the touchstone and arbiter of all the important matters agitating the world. Like it or not – and many in America as well as the rest of the world did not like it – America was the new global empire, as dominant in the world today as Rome had been in its sphere in the ancient world. In pursuit of its own interest and security, as it conceived these, it would seek to intervene in all the corners of the globe. For some people beyond its shores, it would be perceived as the source of salvation, the power that could resolve all problems. For others, it would be the putative cause of all discontents, the target of all resentments, the new 'evil empire'.[3]

That, and not so much the 'clash of civilizations', is the really new thing revealed by 9/11.[4] It is true, of course, that 9/11 could be read in

the perspective of 'Islam versus the West', or at least against America as the symbol of the West. It is also true that the same could be said of many of the most striking developments of recent years: the war in Afghanistan to remove the Taliban, the brutal civil wars in Algeria, the Philippines and Sudan, a rash of suicide bombings across the world, the problem of integrating Muslims into Western European societies, even arguably the Palestinian *intifada* and the American-led invasion of Iraq to remove Saddam Hussein in 2003.[5] Certainly it would not be too hard to make the case that the major 'fault line' in the world today is the one that runs between a global, jihad-driven radical Islam and all the rest – not necessarily only the West.[6]

This could be to overestimate both the unity of Islam and the staying power of its Islamist or 'fundamentalist' branch. 'Islam', absolutized and demonized, may not be the permanent or even long-term threat to world peace and stability. There are many other issues and problems in the twenty-first century world that could at any time force themselves onto the global agenda and become the focal point of divided allegiances and fierce conflicts. Population, poverty, ecology, bio-technology, computer-mediated communication, the spread of nuclear technology, AIDS and other global epidemics, the breakdown of global financial markets: all have the potential to become the flashpoints of new kinds of upheavals, potentially deadly in their consequences, and certainly confronting the world with challenges as serious as that currently posed by a resurgent Islam.[7]

So there are new things in the world – the last few years have reshaped the world order – but we cannot be certain in what direction they are taking us. There is a similar uncertainty about the theories and ideas by means of which we seek to understand the forces and currents that are driving the changes. The theories considered in this book take Western society as their main focus, not because they are unaware of or ignore the rest of the world but because they believe that the changes in Western society will work themselves out in the world at large. The West is given a central position because it is seen as the fulcrum of the world order – politically, economically and culturally.

That is still a tenable position. However, it may not be possible to hold it so unselfconsciously or so unqualifiedly. While one part of the West, the United States, has achieved undoubted pre-eminence, other parts – Europe East and West especially – are struggling to find their place in the new order of things (Hutton 2002; Kagan 2004). The European Union is a spectacular accomplishment, but its members cannot agree on its global role. Meanwhile the countries of the 'Asian Pacific' region – Japan, China, Taiwan, South Korea, Singapore – have created

a dynamic alternative to Western development, or, to put it more precisely, have inserted themselves as equal partners in the global economy (Castells 2000b: 212–337).

Again this does not necessarily affect the main features of analysis. It was always clear, for instance, that the announcement and anatomy of 'the information society' (*Johoka shakai*) occurred earlier in Japan than in the West (Castells 2000b: 248–9; Masuda 1981; Mattelart 2003: 99–102; Morris-Suzuki 1988); and even 'post-modernism' – like modernism – had its origins in the Hispanic hinterland rather than the heartland of Western modernity (Anderson 1998: 3–4). What matters is not simply that these ideas found their most intensive expression in Western circles but that they pointed to developments which had – or so the theories claimed – transformed Western societies to a far greater extent than elsewhere. The scattered elements, drawn from diverse sources, had here found their greatest amalgamation and concentration, and so were more open to inspection than elsewhere. As in the past, the West was the bell-wether to the rest of the world: *de te fabula narratur* [this is your story too].

There has, however, undoubtedly been a shift of focus, or perhaps just a change of mood, since the theories considered in this book were first enunciated. The century and the millennium have turned; announcements of 'the new society' do not resonate so well; other perspectives, opening up less obvious or hitherto neglected aspects, have come to the fore. While commentators are often talking about the same things, they prefer to consider them under different terms. The changes encapsulated as 'post-Fordism' and 'the information society' are now more likely to be discussed under the rubric of 'globalization', both economic and cultural. 'Post-modernity' still seems to ride high, judging by the output of books and articles, though there is a greater tendency to play games with it ('pre-post-modernists', 'post-post-modernists', etc.), and of course there are the unsurprising announcements by certain intellectuals that it is 'finished' (whatever that might mean).[8] But the scrutiny it attracts has also thrown the correlative term 'modernity' into sharper relief, forcing a new questioning of its assumed features. A particularly lively strand of recent commentary has focused on the concept of 'alternative modernities' – alternative, that is, to the Western form that is the main concern of this book.

This new chapter can do no more than comment briefly on these recent developments, as they affect the three theories discussed in this book. I have used 'globalization' and 'alternative modernities' as the main headings for these discussions, conscious that they have different provenances and concerns and map only partly onto the substance of

the three theories. But not only do they reflect current intellectual inter-
ests; they seem also to bear directly on the book's principal analyses –
extending them in some ways, challenging them in others, suggesting
new directions in yet others. While they may be less immediately con-
cerned with ruptures and discontinuities, and less impressed by claims
for novelty or uniqueness, they nevertheless are at one with these other
theories in engaging with contemporary reality in imaginative and illu-
minating ways.

Globalization

It would be as well to start with globalization, as this term now seems
to encompass much that might have been discussed separately under the
headings of 'post-Fordism' and 'the information society', the subjects of
chapters 3 and 4 of this book. Not that there does not continue to be
lively debate about both these terms and what they might signify.[9] But
what is noticeable is the extent to which the concept and analysis of
globalization tends to enter the discussion (the Ducatel volume on the
information society is subtitled 'Work and Life in an Age of Globaliza-
tion'). This is particularly striking in the case of Manuel Castells's
masterly three-volume study, *The Information Age* (2000a, 2000b,
2004). Here a host of issues – contemporary crime, new social and polit-
ical movements, personal and collective identities, the current condition
of women, marriage and the family, and the more familiar economic
and cultural changes – are all treated within the context of globaliza-
tion. The common element is indeed information – the information
technology revolution and all that it connotes by way of instant com-
munication and the compression of time and space. But it is the global
character of information, the 'space of flows' that links people and
places worldwide through the Internet and electronic communication,
that gives it its decisive power. The 'space of flows', the global network,
complements and to some extent replaces the 'space of places', the local-
ities that were the predominant source of our experiences and identi-
ties. It is the integration of information in global networks, centred on
'global cities' such as New York, London and Tokyo, that has brought
about the supersession of the nation-state above all in the economic
arena but also in culture and to an increasing extent in politics as well.
All this has to do with global flows of information in financial markets,
and of the flows of images and symbols created by global media indus-
tries, creating an interconnectedness and a degree of dependence on a
manufactured reality unprecedented in human history. 'The power of

flows [of information] overwhelms the flows of power'. 'Schumpeter meets Weber in the cyberspace of the network enterprise'. We live not just or so much in a 'virtual culture' as in a 'culture of real virtuality' (Castells 2004: 402; 2000a: 199, 327–75; see also Castells 2000a: 407–59; Castells and Ince 2003: 55–8; Freeman et al. 1998).

Castells's work is exemplary in showing the direction in which information society theory has moved. There has been some shift of emphasis – from technology to people, for instance, from the 'micro-electronics revolution' to the software engineers, media personnel and managers of the 'informational economy' and the culture industries (Webster 2002: 82–4). There has been much on the manifold uses of the Internet, as an instrument not just of communication and information but of new experiments with the self and identity (Hakken 2003; Haraway 2003; Kember 2003; Nakamura 2002). There has been an increasing interest in the 'oppositional' potential of the information technology revolution, the extent to which subordinate groups – such as anti-globalizers – can use the technology to promote their causes and subvert those of their opponents and enemies (Castells 2004: 145–67; McCaughey and Ayers 2003; Sassen 2002b; van de Donk et al. 2003). There have been important inquiries into the role of various 'diasporas' and immigrant groups in stimulating developments in the new technology – the role of Indians in California's Silicon Valley is a particularly good example (Castells and Ince 2003: 64–5, 72). There have also been interesting accounts of some of the more unexpected effects of the 'outsourcing' made possible by information technology, such as the fact that American telephone or credit-card users with service inquiries often find themselves talking to Indian agents with impeccable, regionally honed, American accents in Bangalore.[10]

All these instances bring information society theorizing firmly, once again, within the ambit of globalization. So far as the idea of the information society itself is concerned – as discussed in Chapter 3 of this book – there has been remarkably little that is new. Critics, often employing a Marxist perspective, continue to see the idea of an information society as a kind of ideology, a celebration of what are basically new forms of power and exploitation (e.g., Mattelart 2003; May 2002; Robins and Webster 1999; Webster 2002). Apologists, often deriving from business schools or schools of media and communications, are prone to take an almost utopian view of the new information and communications technology, as heralding a new dawn, a radical and beneficial transformation of life and work (e.g., Cortada 2002; Ducatel et al. 2000). Much of this is a continuation of the euphoric view of earlier writers such as Alvin Toffler (1981) and Howard Rheingold (1994).[11]

So globalization is the new thing. And 'global informationalism' does not simply incorporate the central elements of theories of 'the knowledge society', most of which were elaborated in relation to developments within advanced industrial societies. It also displays on a worldwide stage most of the features of post-Fordism. Post-Fordist theorists were always aware of the global dimension but it did not structure their accounts in the way it does those of globalization theorists. Thus Castells relates the customization of goods, the decentralization of management, the flattening of hierarchies, the fragmentation and individualization of work – that is, all that goes under the headings of post-Fordist 'flexible production' and the 'flexible worker' – to the imperatives of the global informational economy (Castells 2000a: 151–279; cf. Reich 1991, 2001; Hepworth and Ryan 2000; Hirst and Thompson 1996: 6; Webster 2002: 68–82). The world economy is still capitalist, more so than ever, but it is a capitalism transformed by informationalism. This makes it impossible to contain or control economic activities within the borders of the traditional nation-states. New inventions, technological innovations, scientists and engineers, above all more or less instantaneously initiated capital flows, make everyone everywhere not so much the controllers and managers as the clients and often the victims of an impersonal 'net' which girdles the globe and catches everyone in its meshes (those who are not so caught are even more unfortunate and impotent than those who are – Castells 2000b: 68–168 refers to a 'Fourth World', including much of Africa, of 'information-poor', socially excluded groups and societies).

'Globalization' is evidently being made to do a lot of work in contemporary social theory, and it would be as well to see precisely what it means and how persuasive it might be. Precision is hard to come by in a concept that is on everyone's lips and therefore can mean many different things. The authors of what has come to be one of the most widely used books on the subject warn that 'globalization is in danger of becoming, if it has not already become, the cliché of our times: the big idea which encompasses everything from global financial markets to the Internet but which delivers little substantive insight into the contemporary human condition' (Held et al. 1999: 1; cf. Hirst and Thompson 1996: 1).[12] Convinced nevertheless of the reality of globalization, as the major development of the contemporary age, they come up first with a broad characterization of it as 'the widening, deepening and speeding up of a worldwide interconnectedness in all aspects of contemporary social life, from the cultural to the criminal, the financial to the spiritual' (Held et al. 1999: 2; cf. Walby 2003). Later they attempt a more precise definition. Globalization is 'a process (or set of processes)

which embodies a transformation in the spatial organization of social relations and transactions – assessed in terms of their extensity, intensity, velocity and impact – generating transcontinental or interregional flows and networks of activity, interaction, and the exercise of power' (Held et al. 1999: 16).

The authors acknowledge that such a broad conception will only prove its worth if it is understood that globalization works differently, in scope and intensity, in different social domains – economic, political, cultural, environmental. Moreover, power and hierarchy mark the current global order. Nothing in their definition, the authors stress, implies 'global integration', global governance, or the emergence of a 'global community'. Indeed, it has been widely recognized that globalization is not just compatible with but may directly stimulate movements towards regional groupings, such as the European Union and the North American Free Trade Agreement. It can also give rise to various forms of 'localism', whether these take the form of ethnic or religious revivals, territorial nationalism, or the rediscovery of local 'heritage' and 'history'. The unlovely term 'glocalization' has specifically been coined to indicate such a conjunction.[13] More assertively there are those who see globalization as the spur to anti-globalization movements, but at the same time point to the significance of the Internet and to global networks of information and communication in enabling and facilitating such movements of protest – in Seattle, Prague, Washington, DC, Genoa, Geneva and elsewhere. It has for some time been clear that many of the new social movement activists (from neo-Zapatistas to the Greens) are adepts at exploiting the new information and communications technology.[14]

Clearly, globalization is not a straightforward business. It is not necessarily linear or progressive. Its development is both uneven and unequal. It has opened up enormous disparities of wealth and power, stimulating widespread movements of resistance (Amoroso 1999; Harvey 2000: 53–72; Sassen 1998; Sklair 1998, 2002; Steger 2002). It has driven a wedge between the 'extraterritorial elites', the parts of the population who have the power and freedom to move and act across the globe, and the territorialized, 'localized' majority left behind in increasingly attenuated communities, drained of meaning and resources (Bauman 1998). It has unleashed new poisons, pollutants and diseases, not just in the poorer sections of the globe but also within the affluent societies of the West, the driving force of the globalization process (Brennan 2003). For some, globalization is the obfuscating name for a new form of Empire – the anonymous empire of an all-encompassing global capitalism, more powerful and penetrating now than it ever was

in the days when nation-states were the capitalist vessels or when European states carved up the world between them (Hardt and Negri 2001; cf. Gray 1998).

Whatever their criticisms, in many cases passionate and damning, most of these authors agree that globalization is something real and also something relatively new, at least in its range and intensity. It is precisely this that has been questioned in a number of important contributions. For some, such as Paul Hirst and Grahame Thompson (1996), to the extent that globalization is real it is not new, and in any case it is not real to any great extent. Taking particularly the case of economic globalization, the putative heart of globalization in general, they argue that the current international economy is *less* open and *less* integrated than it was in the period from 1870 to 1914.[15] Further, genuinely transnational companies, the supposed central actors in the global economy, are relatively rare. Most companies – those large ones that we term 'multinational' – are still nationally based and trade multinationally on the strength of a major national location of production and sales. Foreign direct investment also remains skewed to the advanced industrial economies rather than spreading out to encompass the world as a whole. Trade, investment and financial flows are concentrated in the triad of Europe, Japan and North America, and they are only marginally present in Third World countries (a few 'newly industrializing countries' apart). The 'global' economy, if we wish to designate it as such, remains as before under the control of a few powerful, mostly national, mostly First World, actors. The policies and decisions of nation-states – at least of the most powerful, acting singly or in concert – can and do affect the international economy; there is no general 'decline of the nation-state'.[16]

This is cogent, so far as it goes (but see Held et al. 1999). What it largely leaves out is the important dimension of culture, and the possibility that the desires, thoughts and attitudes of the world's peoples are increasingly being shaped by 'the culture industries', themselves among the largest of the global corporations (Lafeber 2002; Ritzer 2002, 2004a, 2004b; Sklair 2002: 164–207; *Washington Post* 1998; Waters 2002: 182–209). Here, too, it is clear that, despite the undeniably global reach of the media and food conglomerates – Disney, CNN, Coca-Cola, McDonald's, etc. – there is no inevitable drive towards homogenization and the production of a single global culture.[17] But, in the global story, culture may in the long run turn out to be as important as economics and politics (cf. Jameson 1998: 67). Despite the efforts of national governments and national elites, an Americanized version of Western culture has had and continues to have enormous appeal to the

populations of the rest of the world, most noticeably among the young
(and, unlike the West and Japan, the rest of the world is predominantly
youthful).[18]

It used to be thought that '*erst kommt das Essen*, *dann kommt die
Moral*' – subsistence first, culture or morality second. It now seems more
plausible to think that, as Max Weber suggested *contra* Marx, it is the
other way round. Much of the historical work on the culture of con-
sumption has made it clear that basic changes in wants and desires were
a necessary prelude to the massive industrialization of Western societies
(see, e.g., Berg and Clifford 1999; Brewer and Porter 1993; Campbell
1987). Trade and manufactures do not so much follow the flag as the
images of the good life (see, e.g., Miller 1995a: 48; see also Miller
1995b; Stearns 2001). Stalin once said that if he could only take over
the 'dream factory' of Hollywood, he could ignore the governments and
economies of capitalists societies.

It is possible to argue, contrary to the usual claims, that while eco-
nomic and political globalization is very incomplete, cultural globaliza-
tion has a fairer chance of becoming a reality. This need not necessarily
mean Western domination. Cultural forms from non-Western cultures
have been invading the West for some time. This has lead to a certain
degree of synthesis and 'hybridization', most notably in music, clothes
and cuisines (see, e.g., James 1996; Nederveen Pieterse 2004). Much of
this replicates, at a popular level, what occurred in the 'high culture' of
the West at the end of the nineteenth century, when Oriental and African
thought and art had a significant impact on Western intellectuals and
artists.

But we should not let the enthusiasts for 'world music' and 'world
cuisine' deceive us. Just as at the end of the nineteenth century, the
present flow of influence between the West and 'the rest' is not equal
and symmetrical. While the products of global culture will not be
uniform, they may well carry, at a deeper level, a dominant Western
structure. As Richard Wilk points out, though the 'locals' may modify,
'nativize' or even resist the global culture, they often do so with the cat-
egories supplied by the global culture, or its dominant element. 'When
Belizeans create national television in opposition to foreign, imported
programs, they work within visual and thematic forms created in
Hollywood. The result is a kind of Belizean "60 Minutes". Hollywood
has created the space within which Belizeans are "free" to define them-
selves' (Wilk 1995: 123). Cultural globalization, Wilk claims, creates
neither homogenization nor, through resistance, 'difference', but 'struc-
tures of common difference', the *same ways* of portraying our differ-
ences. Thus, the many beauty pageants organized in Belize ostensibly

express differences of locality and ethnicity, in line with the official policy of pluralism; but all have the same form, reflecting the national – and global – norms of professionalism, careerism and cosmopolitanism. All are, in effect, local versions of the global pageant 'Miss World' (Wilk 1995: 125–30).

This example provides a suitable model for much of the globalization debate. The world may be becoming one space, but it is not necessarily becoming 'one place' (Axford 2000: 239) – not, at any rate, if that suggests uniformity and homogeneity. But what we might plausibly argue is that the terms within which 'difference' and 'resistance' are expressed are not neutral, that they come with a distinct Western stamp. When Asian leaders talk about 'Asian values' as against Western conceptions of human rights and individual freedom, they are still forced to define and defend these values in terms of rights and obligations; in order to be heard in the international arena, they find themselves willingly or not borrowing the language of what is essentially a Western discourse (cf. Lechner 1991; see also Ignatieff 1999, 2003a). When Islamic 'fundamentalists' assert themselves against Western values, they do so on the basis of a movement of renewal that (like all fundamentalism today) is 'thoroughly modern' in its conception and mode of operation (Habermas 1994: 132; cf. Eisenstadt 2002a: 18–19; Göle 2002; Jameson 1998: 66; Parekh 1994). Even Benjamin Barber, who generally portrays the struggle between 'Jihad' and 'McWorld' as a contest of opposites, concludes that a better way to express the opposition is to see it not as 'Jihad vs. McWorld' but as 'Jihad *via* McWorld'. Many of Jihad's 'ancient usages' and 'classical norms' are at least partly 'inventions of the agitated modern mind.' 'Jihad is not only McWorld's adversary, it is its child' (1996: 157).[19]

The question of how far modernity can be equated with the West is for the next section. What concerns us here is simply the fact of globalization, how far it is occurring and what its causes and consequences might be. One can think, like Hirst and Thompson or Michael Mann, that globalization is not occurring to any great extent, that it is largely a myth. One can think, like Martin Albrow or Kenichi Ohmae, that globalization is a reality and that it is good – that it represents a new age and a new stage in humanity's progress. One can think, like Leslie Sklair or John Gray, that yes, alas, globalization is occurring, and that its consequences, for society and the environment, are fairly disastrous. Or one can think, like David Held and Anthony Giddens, that 'historically unprecedented' processes of globalization are taking place at the present time, but that they are also contingent, uneven, and 'replete with contradictions'. Hence, they argue, no firm projections can be made

about 'the future trajectory of globalization' or its putative culmination in a single 'world society' or 'world civilization' – not even in a single world market (Held et al. 1999: 7; cf. Giddens 2002: 6–19; Kellner 2002).

My sympathies are, perhaps feebly, largely with the 'transformationalists', such as Held and Giddens, since they stress both the reality of globalization and its open-endedness, the uncertainties of its direction, for good or ill. They are also convincing in seeing that globalization has a pre-history but that it has entered a novel and more radical phase in the last half-century or so. It is clear that globalization has been with us a long time – ever since, indeed, the original hunting and gathering societies began to spread out across the globe, making humanity unique as a species in its global penetration and accommodation. Neolitihic trade routes seem to have been truly global in their scope, linking Polynesia with Africa, and Asia with the New World. There were also ancient empires – the Chinese, the Alexandrian, the Roman – that had 'universal', global aspirations, even if they never encompassed more than a small fraction of the planet. Nor should we forget that the major religions – Hinduism, Buddhism, Christianity, Islam – have from the start all seen themselves as world religions, and in the case of the last two at least have truly established themselves on a global basis. Coming nearer in time, several theorists, following Marx, have traced the contemporary movement of globalization back to the sixteenth century, with the 'voyages of discovery', the worldwide expansion of Europe and the growth of a capitalist economy that from the start took the world as its theatre. All these perspectives are important in helping us to understand our current condition. Globalization as a tendency is not new. We can make sense of it, in part at least, by analysing the forces underlying its *longue durée* (Dussel 1998; Goody 1996: 250–62; Harvey 2000: 54; Hopkins 2002; Jameson 1998; Mazlish and Buultjens 1993; Robertson and Khonker 1998; Wallerstein 1979, 2000).

As so often, though, the salutary stress on continuity can hide the significance of newer developments. The acceleration of the global integration of financial markets, the coming to prominence of new economic powers in Asia, the growing transnationalization of production and consumption, the end of a bi-polar world with the fall of communism, the increasing number and significance of international organizations, the diffusion of a global culture – all these are changes and accomplishments of recent decades and bespeak a new world order in which globalization, however uneven and contradictory, however unequal and hierarchical, is the central fact.[20] None of this denies the existence of earlier phases or forms of globalization, none of it sees globalization as

anything but incomplete and perhaps incompletable. Nor is there any necessity that globalization must in the long term mean Westernization, even though that is a plausible view of the current phase. But this account rightly insists on the reality and novelty of the latest round, of our own globalization. 'Different worlds, different globalizations' (Hannerz 1996: 18).

It is clear too – to return to Castells and others – that a central feature of this latest phase has been the revolution in information and communications technology. No one denies the reality of that, at least, whatever they may think about globalization. The corresponding idea of the information society, with all its ambiguities and problems, therefore also remains a key term and a helpful organizing principle. Whether it is treated on its own, or as an integral part of an argument about globalization, is really just a matter of emphasis. Globalization and what the French call 'informatization' may not be exactly two sides of the same coin but they are so closely interlinked that it would make little sense now to treat one without the other (cf. Kellner 2002: 289). Castells's anatomy of 'the Information Age' is one outstanding example of this as, in a more critical vein, is Mattelart's (2003) analysis of 'the Information Society'.

More problematic is the concept of post-Fordism. Paradoxically it is the very success of its analysis that seems to have made the term increasingly redundant. Virtually every account of work and employment makes use of its key term of 'flexibility' and points to the changes it has brought about in the lives of working people. Particularly noticeable is the use of post-Fordist analysis in accounts of the city, showing how the changes in work organization and production have reconfigured the layout of cities and the spaces of public life. More generally, post-Fordism is seen to underlie the structural changes in the global economy and the emergence of 'the global city', with globalism and post-Fordism again going hand-in-hand, the one reinforcing the other – if, indeed, they are separable at all (see, for example, Badcock 2000; Kesteloot 2000; Sassen 2002a: 118–37; Thorns 2002: 68–94).

Castells again is a leading figure in all this, and though he is content to use the language of Fordism and post-Fordism (2000a: 152–5), many others do not. It is as if there is now so much agreement that post-Fordist changes (whether or not so-called) are occurring that people do not feel the need to refer to the original analysis and opposition of Fordism and post-Fordism.[21] Post-Fordism may have been killed by its own success.

Does this matter? Post-Fordist theory remains invaluable by virtue of its careful attention to changes over time, and by the concreteness of its

analysis of particular formations in particular places (e.g., the 'Third Italy'). It points to a transformation of economic life that is not simply sweeping in its direct economic impact but connects up also with many changes in non-economic life – in the family, in the balance between 'home' and 'work' and between men and women, in life-styles and consumption patterns, in the very notions of individual identity. It matters little what names we choose to call these changes. Post-Fordism, to me at least, continues to have the attraction of referring back to the powerful constellation of Fordism, as deployed by Gramsci. Others may prefer other names. What matters is the truth or otherwise of the developments encapsulated in the term 'post-Fordism'; and here, judging by the recent literature, the verdict seems pretty plain – plainer even than when the chapter was first written.

Alternative Modernities, Multiple Modernities

If the information society and post-Fordism have tended to be embraced by globalization, modernity and post-modernity have been swept up in an equally wide-ranging questioning of the conventional understanding of those terms, and an attempt to establish a broader framework. Since much of this questioning relates to the allegedly Western bias of much of the earlier thinking on modernity, and the need to bring the non-Western world into the picture, this development too could be included under the rubric of a certain kind of globalization (cf. Dirlik 2003). However, whereas the former discussion emphasizes commonalities and linkages, and the power of globalization as a more comprehensive process and more satisfying explanatory concept, in the latter case what comes to the fore are difference and divergence. Modernity, it is suggested, must be seen as a far more varied project, historically and sociologically, than we have been accustomed to think. This means that we need to look at Western modernity with fresh eyes. It must also, by extension, throw a different light on what we might mean by post-modernity.

Somewhat athwart this line of thought is the striking claim that 'we have *never* been modern'. That was the argument of an engaging and provocative essay by the sociologist of science Bruno Latour. 'No one has ever been modern. Modernity has never begun. There has never been a modern world' (1993: 47). These alarming statements turn out not to be what they first seem. Rather, what Latour argues is that 'the constitution of modernity', with its radical separation of the spheres of science, politics and ethics, set an impossible goal. In all societies ('modern' ones no less than pre-modern or non-modern ones), science

is necessarily and inextricably mixed with political and ethical concerns. Contemporary anti-modernists and post-modernists are both mistaken in that they wrongly accept the 'official' version of modernity – with its claim for the autonomy of science – at face value. In practice we are, and always will be, like the 'pre-moderns', even while we go on proclaiming the separation of spheres and their respective sovereignty in their own domains. At most what the anti-modernist and post-modernist critiques have achieved is to destroy our illusions, so that 'we have all become premodern again' (1993: 74; see also Lash 1999: 267–84).

If Latour thinks we have never been modern, Hans Blumenberg (1983) argues that we have *always* been modern. This too isn't quite as dramatic as it first sounds. As against thinkers such as Karl Löwith (1949), who saw modern thought as essentially a secular distillation of earlier Jewish and Christian theology, Blumenberg wishes to establish the originality and 'legitimacy' of the modern epoch. It was the modern age that, uniquely and distinctively, conceived the whole human story as one of a progressive self-assertion and mastery of reality, and so retrospectively conferred the badge of modernity on all human undertakings from earliest times. It took modernity to recognize the 'scientific' and 'rational' quality of human endeavour, past as well as present. 'The modern age was the first and only age that understood itself as an epoch and, in so doing, simultaneously created the other epochs' (1983: 170).

Neither of these perspectives requires a radical rethinking of traditional accounts of modernity. The first, Latour's, simply restates in urbane and elegant terms the well-known gap between promise and performance in modernity. Others have seen it, for instance, in the disjunction between the proclaimed modern ideals of freedom and democracy and the dismal record in these respects of most modern societies to date. In Latour's case, indeed, the failure does not appear so serious: we have simply failed to acknowledge what we have (necessarily) been doing all along in practice, and so have been guilty of a kind of 'false consciousness'. Once we accept the 'hybrid' nature of our culture and practices, once we own that 'we are not exotic but ordinary', we are liberated from our illusion of difference and uniqueness and can learn from the practices of other – 'non-modern', non-Western – cultures routinely studied by anthropologists. Latour is even prepared to say that 'we *have* been modern'; it is just that 'we can no longer be modern in the same way'. We cannot any longer pretend to be modern as that term has been understood hitherto. In that sense, as Latour again admits, in 'this desire to bring to light, to incorporate into language, to make public' what has been obscure and hidden, 'we continue to identify with the intuition of the Enlightenment' (1993: 127, 142).

Blumenberg's intuition is also fundamentally an Enlightenment one, as rethought by Hegel ('the real is rational') or perhaps Habermas ('the unfinished project of modernity'). The Enlightenment's faith in reason needs to be corrected by a more rounded concept of human nature – the need for myth, for instance – but it was an essentially sound one and a genuine achievement of modernity.[22] Once one dispenses with its – necessary for the time – disparagement of tradition and the past, and sees the more or less permanent drive towards the mastery of the environment that is inherent in human striving, one can both reconcile past and present and acknowledge modernity's uniqueness.

Neither Latour nor Blumenberg deny, or even question, the assumption of the Western origin and invention of modernity. Along with most other commentators – myself included – they would probably accept some such orthodox definition of modernity as that given by Anthony Giddens: 'those modes of social [and intellectual] life or organization emerging in Europe from around the seventeenth century, and which subsequently became worldwide in their influence' (1990: 1; cf., e.g., Dodd 1999: 3). This is relatively precise both as to time and to place; it adds also an observation, again generally accepted, as to the momentous consequences of this Western invention. Such an understanding in its main outlines underlies the account of modernity given in chapter 5 of this book.

What is more challenging to the conception of modernity held there is the position, advanced from a number of quarters in recent years, that our accounts of modernity are fundamentally flawed by our equation of modernity with the West, and of modernization with Westernization. There have been, and can be, many varieties of modernity, it is argued. Soviet communism was one; and though it undoubtedly had Western roots in Marxism, it took a form that deviated substantially from the main model of modernity as held by the West (Arnason 2002, 2003). The same might be said of European fascism, as seen in 1930s Germany and Italy. There is also an 'Islamic modernity', as practised by present-day Iran and aspired to by several other Middle Eastern societies, including to a growing extent Turkey (Eickelman 2002; Göle 2002). Most far-reaching of all perhaps are the claims for an Asiatic form of modernity, based partly on 'Asian values' and Asiatic traditions, such as Buddhism and Confucianism. Japan and China, in their different ways, are seen as the leading exemplars of this; but the argument can also be extended to several other societies in South-East Asia, such as those of Singapore, Malaysia, Korea and Vietnam (Dirlik 2003: 278; Eisenstadt 1996; Kang 1998; Pye 2000; Weiming 2000, 2002; Woodside 2001). Even India, it has been argued, despite certain undeniably Western fea-

tures deriving from its colonial past, has fused that colonial past with indigenous traditions to produce a distinctive modernity that is different from the West (Kaviraj 2002). With an eye on more recent developments, some commentators have also been arguing that the various forms and relations of 'diasporic' communities across the globe, the result of large-scale voluntary and involuntary migrations, are creating yet another form of modernity (see, e.g., Tambiah 2002).

It has, of course, always been clear that modernity is a variegated thing, even in its Western form. American modernity – US style – is different from European modernity; Latin American from both North American modernity and that of Europe (Heideking 2002; Ortiz 2002; Wittrock 2002). There is a large literature on the varieties of European modernity – 'Western', 'Eastern' and 'Central-European'; while even in Western Europe itself there are different forms North and South, and between the 'Continental' and 'Anglo-Saxon' models (Crouch 1999; Delanty 1995; Kumar 2001: 71–103; Macfarlane 1978; Niedermüller and Stoklund 2001; Pagden 2002; Therborn 1995). But no one denies a 'family resemblance' between these various Western forms (especially if Russia is excluded from 'Europe'). Not only do they share, in large measure, the common inheritance of Christianity, but they are also linked by the common experiences of the Scientific Revolution, the European Enlightenment, the Democratic and Industrial Revolutions (see further Kumar 2003).

What, therefore, is really at issue here, what the proponents of alternative and multiple modernities are most concerned to question, are the alleged priority and primacy of the overall Western model of modernity.[23] The challenge is at once historical and sociological. In the first place, some scholars question the West's claim to have invented modernity, to have patented the model, as it were. Was modernity really invented in Europe sometime between the seventeenth and nineteenth centuries, and then exported to, or imposed on, the rest of the world?[24] This has been the view of a whole generation of theorists of modernization, not to mention the classical sociologists, Marx, Durkheim and Weber, who gave that account its canonical form (Eisenstadt 2002a: 1; Eisenstadt and Schluchter 2001: 3; Goody 1996: 1–10).

What then are we to make of a China that by the Middle Ages possessed the quintessentially 'modern' – according to Francis Bacon – inventions of gunpowder, printing and the compass? That, well before the West, had perfected the manufacture of paper and had indeed introduced the world's first paper money? That, in Hangchow, had the world's largest city, not to be surpassed until nineteenth-century London? That was the lynch-pin of an emerging 'world system' of trade

and commerce? That had a centralized political system, a uniform tax
system, a meritocratic class system – based on open civil service exam-
inations – and a civil religion (Confucianism) that gave it an unparal-
leled degree of control and integration over a vast land mass
(Abu-Lughod 1991: 316–51; Goody 1996: 91–2; Woodside 2001:
216–17)? And if we are inclined to stress Western expansiveness and a
buccaneering spirit of adventure, we should remember that fifteenth-
century Ming China was the world's foremost naval power, with fleets
that sailed regularly across the Indian Ocean to Calicut, the Persian Gulf
and the east coast of Africa – even, it has been claimed, on at least one
occasion under the legendary admiral Zheng He rounding the Cape
of Good Hope and reaching America, some seventy years before
Columbus (Abu-Lughod 1991: 320–1; Menzies 2003).[25]

But then we should also remember that in 1435, shortly after Zheng's
epic voyages, the Ming emperors abruptly abandoned overseas trade
and exploration and turned China in upon itself. The outward-looking,
expansive, moment never returned. China, for reasons that still perplex
scholars, lost its chance to assume a hegemonic role in the early world
system, leaving the vacant space to be occupied, after a hiatus of a
century or so, by the West. Nor, too, did the undoubtedly brilliant sci-
entific and technological developments lead to any sustained economic
growth or any tradition of scientific inquiry comparable to the West at
a somewhat later period.[26] When the West encountered China in the
nineteenth century, it found a civilization of immense sophistication and
enormous cultural achievements, but one that was no match for the
West economically and militarily. At that level and in that sense at least
China was not modern.

The same sort of thing can be said for the more general claim of early
modernity in eastern Eurasia (no one makes a serious case for any other
non-Western part of the world at this time). There was, it seems, a
general process of 'vernacularization' across the whole region of South
and South-East Asia in the period 1000–1500, producing linguistically-
defined and territorially bounded states that broke with the imperial,
universalizing, goals of earlier rulers – thus paralleling in some respects
the break-up of medieval Christendom in the West and the rise of
nation-states (Pollock 2001). Literary evidence for the same region
shows the emergence in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries of a
public–private distinction with some similarity to what became central
to Western modernity (Subrahmanyam 2001: 80). In Japan, we are told,
there was in the Tokugawa period (1603–1868) not only 'considerable
economic development, the growth of a relatively centralized state, the
emergence of a professional bureaucracy, and an ideological apparatus

to justify the state' (Howell 2001: 117), but also 'a robust public sphere' and a 'vigorous public life' (Berry 2001: 134, 139). The picture of a relatively developed economy, at least in 'core regions', comparable in most respects to similar regions of Europe up to as late as 1750, has been painted not just for Japan but also for China and (northern) India. The claim is that East Asia was as ripe for industrial 'take-off' in the eighteenth century as western Europe – and that a good deal of luck was involved in the West's ultimate success and the ensuing divergence (Goody 1996: 241; Hall 2001: 490; Pomeranz 2000). At the most general level it has been argued that eastern Eurasia shared with its western counterpart a massive and largely successful effort of economic expansion and environmental control that led in the period 1500–1800 to fundamental technological and organizational innovations and, among other things, to a doubling of the world's population. In societies across Eurasia, from Britain and continental Europe to Mughal India, Tokugawa Japan and Ming China, centralized states could command the military, fiscal and bureaucratic resources to impose control on outlying regions, bring peace and security to their tax-paying subjects, and so unleash an 'enhanced human capacity for collective action' (Richards 2003: 16; see also Crosby 1986).

All these features are meant to indicate the emergence in South and East Asian societies of an incipient modernity that, independently and before any real degree of Western penetration, bears comparison with Western developments at the same or later date. However, we should note the warnings of several of the very scholars that describe these features that they are not to be taken as necessarily having the same meanings as they do in the Western case (e.g. Howell 2001: 117; Pollock 2001: 60; Subrahmanyam 1997: 761; Wakeman 2001: 182). We should also remember, as in the separate case of China, the different subsequent trajectories of these societies when compared with the West. Vernacularization did not lead to the emergence of nation-states or even of ethnic consciousness to any great degree (Pollock 2001: 64). The 'public sphere' in both China and Japan remained a largely elite phenomenon. It had the form not, as Jürgen Habermas describes it for the West, of 'private people come together as a public' (Habermas 1991a: 27), but of negotiations between the 'ins' and 'outs' of the gentry class within the context and culture of authoritarian states (Berry 2001: 156; Wakeman 2001: 168; Woodside 2001: 215). The considerable scientific and economic progress in China, Japan and India slowed down or stalled at some point, leaving these countries quite unable to compete with the West or to resist Western penetration or colonization at a later date.[27] In both China and Japan it took massive internal upheavals to

reshape polities – largely along Western lines – so that these societies could begin, or restart, the process of modernization.

Many of the theorists of 'multiple modernities' accept what Shmuel Eisenstadt calls the 'historical precedence' of the Western pattern of modernity (Eisenstadt 2002a: 3; cf. Eisenstadt and Schluchter 2001: 2; Weiming 2002: 207, 217; Wittrock 2002: 38–41). That is, they reject the arguments of those who say that many non-Western societies were already 'modern' or modernizing before their encounters with the West. Moreover, they accept that nearly all societies in the world today have modelled many of their basic political, legal and administrative institutions on Western forms: the territorial nation-state, representative assemblies, independent judiciaries, expert agencies (Eisenstadt 2002a: 14; Wittrock 2002: 31–5). In this sense the West's temporal priority in the matter of modernization has had a determining effect on the kind of modern societies that were formed elsewhere. As Wittrock (2002: 35) says, such a 'temporal conception of modernity ultimately rests on a substantive one.' To have been there first establishes the basic pattern of modernity for all subsequent attempts.

But to what degree and with what effect? Here the new theorists of multiple modernities express their basic disagreement with the 'convergence thesis' of old modernization theory. The West may have invented modernity, but it has not patented the model nor determined the final form it must take. 'The actual developments in modernizing societies', says Eisenstadt (2002a: 1), 'have refuted the homogenizing and hegemonic assumption of the Western program of modernity.' Becoming modern does not necessarily mean becoming Western. As Eisenstadt puts it:

> While the common starting point was once the cultural program of modernity as it developed in the West, more recent developments have seen a multiplicity of cultural and social formations going far beyond the very homogenizing aspects of the original version. All these developments do indeed attest to the continual development of multiple modernities, or of multiple interpretations of modernity – and, above all, to attempts at 'de-Westernization', depriving the West of its monopoly on modernity. (Eisenstadt 2002a: 24; see also Göle 2002: 92–3; Subrahmanyam 2001: 100; Weiming 2002: 216–17).

No doubt there can be a 'Confucian' or an 'Islamic' modernity (as there are American and European modernities). The West may have given the signal, but different societies, it may plausibly be argued, can take and have taken diverse paths to modernity, following the bent of their own particular traditions and cultures. But two caveats to this need

to be noted. First, there is a fundamental ambiguity in the argument. What happens when you adopt, as these theorists accept tends to be the case, the nation-state form? Or scientific expertise? Or industrialization itself? Without falling into the position of out-and-out convergence theories, are there not rather basic structural features that must follow from the adoption of these forms and practices? Secondly, is it not the case – again as many of these 'multiple modernities' theorists themselves point out – that Western modernity itself has been marked by 'internal antinomies and contradictions' for the whole of its history' (Eisenstadt 2002a: 7; cf. Frisby 2001: 1–26)?[28] For instance, no sooner has it 'abolished the past' than it sets about restoring it in the form of revivals – Gothicism, neo-classicism, 'Queen Anne', etc. It is true that these are self-conscious exercises in retrieval and restoration – no more clearly so than in post-modernist culture – but the phenomenon points to a whole series of possibilities that are revealed when we set aside an excessively homogenized view of Western modernity. A similar perception might arise from a consideration of what Eisenstadt (2002a: 24) calls the principle of 'self-correction', and what Sudipta Kaviraj (2002: 140) refers to as 'recursive rationality', at the heart of Western modernity. This points to the high degree of reflexivity, the capacity to reflect and learn, that has made it possible for Western societies to monitor their own development and to produce patterns of divergence and diversity among themselves.[29] This has meant, for instance, that 'late developers' in the West – Germany and Russia among others – were able to deviate substantially from the initial models of modernity supplied by Britain and France.

Does this, together with the 'ambiguities and contradictions' (Frisby 2001: 2) of Western modernity, not supply the pattern for non-Western modernities? Is it not precisely this process, basic to Western modernity itself and arising from its very principles of operation, that allows us to conceive and explain the considerable variation that obtains among modernizing societies throughout the world today? Just as Western intellectuals, from Romantics to Modernists, were able to raid their own cultures (and sometimes others) in turning their passionate critiques against Western institutions and practices (see, e.g., Clark 1999; Lash 1999; Lowy and Sayre 2001; Touriane 1995), so too non-Western peoples have been able to draw upon their own traditions – as well as those of Western societies – in reformulating the modern project (Gandhi might well be seen as an exemplary figure in this). It is not a case of Western versus non-Western modernities. Too schematic and simplified a model of Western modernity has led us into this error. The West invented – it is right to give it the historical priority – a pattern of

modernity that has from its very inception been diversified and capable of multiple directions of development. Non-Western societies are continuing that pattern of diversity, often with tools borrowed from the West, even when they think they are deviating fundamentally from the Western model. That this occasionally gives offence to Western observers should not obscure the similarity of Western and non-Western modernization.

Modernization, Modernity, Post-Modernity

The essential challenge from the theorists of multiple or alternative modernities is not so much to the primacy or priority of Western modernity as to the very meaning of the term 'modernity' and its cognates. Are 'modernity' and 'the West' synonymous? Is modernity inherently Western, is that the only meaning that the word can properly have? And if so, what are we to call those features of non-Western societies that seem to possess many of the qualities of what we have come to call modernity? Some scholars of non-Western societies hesitate to apply the term 'modernity' to the developments they observe, fearing to fall into the trap of using a Western term that will inevitably place those societies, as secondary or 'subaltern', unfavourably against the 'master' model of the West. If the term is to be used at all – and it is difficult to see how to avoid it altogether – it has to be given a different inflection and made to carry multiple meanings.

Considering the case of Confucian Asia, for instance, Alexander Woodside suggests that 'the best intellectual solution might well be to abandon any hope of a unified analytical narrative with an omniscient narrator in looking at the rise of the . . . modern in both the Confucian monarchies and the West.' He counsels instead what we might call the post-modern 'technique of complementary viewpoints', which stresses 'multiple narrations [and] displacements of chronology' (2001: 214). This would not be a loss, but on the contrary has the distinct advantage of opening up the possibility of seeing both Western and Eastern developments in a different light. 'The belief in something called "modernity" is now universal. The search for the roots of multiple modernities outside the West will inevitably defamiliarize the notion for Western audiences, challenging its premature transparency' (Woodside 2001: 193; cf. Therborn 2003; Wittrock 2002: 58). A 'Eurocentric' reading of the term will give way to a global one, allowing scholars to show the part played by many societies, Eastern and Western, in the slow evolution of the complex we have come to call modernity.

Many civilizations have thought of themselves as being at the centre of the world, the source of commerce, culture and learning. With much justification, this was the self-conception of Chinese civilization for much of its history – China as the 'Middle Kingdom', the kingdom at the centre of the earth. With equal justification this was also the view from medieval Islam, as seen from the great centres of Damascus, Baghdad, Cairo and Cordoba. 'Eurocentrism', the view that Europe or the West is the greatest and best, is simply the latest version of this common civilizational tendency (the ancient Egyptians, Mesopotamians and Persians no doubt held similar ideas, as so did most certainly the Romans).

Did the West though, as Weber and many European thinkers held, add something new – something that brought in the characteristic features of what we call modernity? Would it be better, therefore, to call Western modernity the only modernity, employing other terms to describe the undoubtedly creative and dynamic qualities observed in non-Western societies both before and after the onset of Western modernity? This has a number of advantages. It allows us, for instance, to separate 'modernization' from 'industrialization'. Though, as most scholars agree, the Industrial Revolution in the full sense was also a Western invention, the separation of terms leaves it open to discern many major economic developments in other parts of the world, before and during the Industrial Revolution, that can at the very least be described as 'proto-industrial'. More significantly, it has seemed possible to detach industrialization or 'capitalism' from its earlier incubation in Western modernity. Thus we can observe Japanese and Chinese industrialization in full flood, as is also the case in other parts of Asia and Latin America. Whether we consider these as examples of imitation or of indigenous growth, the point remains that there can be several varieties of industrial society that lack many of the attributes of Western modernity: civil society, a public sphere, representative democracy, a concept of individual human rights. We might then say that there can be industrialization without modernization, understanding that latter term in a strictly Western sense.[30]

This does not mean – contrary to the views of those such as Huntington (1997: 154) – that Western modernity remains permanently a Western possession, not available, unlike industrialization, for export. But it does mean accepting that there is something special about Western modernity, that it was the West that invented modernity in the sense in which that term has come to be widely used. This is admitted even by many who are passionate advocates of 'alternative modernities'. Modernity is 'now everywhere', says Dilip Gaonkar. But not only was it 'born

in and of the West some centuries ago under relatively specific socio-historical conditions', 'the West remains the major clearinghouse of global modernity' (2001b: 1). To think in terms of alternative moder-nities, Gaonkar continues, 'does not mean that one blithely abandons the Western discourse on modernity. That is virtually impossible. Modernity has travelled from the West to the rest of the world not only in terms of cultural forms, social practices and institutional arrangements, but also as a form of discourse that interrogates the present. . . . Whoever elects to think in terms of alternative modernities (irrespective of one's location) must think with and also against the tra-dition of reflection that stretches from Marx and Weber through Baude-laire and Benjamin to Habermas, Foucault, and many other Western (born or trained) thinkers' (2001b: 14–15; cf. Dirlik 2003: 289).

This seems to me to get to the heart of the matter. It may be true, as Charles Taylor argues, that Western modernity has not, as it thinks, broken through to the 'truth' about the world, that it is 'powered by its own positive visions of the good – that is, by one constellation of such visions among available others' (2001: 176). But he, too, accepts the superior 'validity' and 'efficacy' of 'post-seventeenth-century' Western natural science and technology, and warns that 'sooner or later, all societies are forced to acquire this efficacy or be dominated by others (and, hence, have it imposed on them anyway)'. Moreover this science, as Taylor again points out, has itself 'grown in close symbiosis with a certain culture' (2001: 179; cf. Taylor 2002; Dirlik 2003: 284–5).

Western culture, and *a fortiori* Western modernity, are not universal. This much we can agree with the theorists of multiple and alternative modernities. But to modernize is to Westernize – to attempt to incor-porate, with all its stresses and difficulties, the patterns of culture that produced Western modernity. This means taking in, to give a crude and incomplete list, the outlook of the Renaissance, the Scientific Revolu-tion and the European Enlightenment. It means adopting the central institutions, practices and beliefs promoted by the American and French Revolutions. This is a formidable task. There is no guarantee of success, and some societies may try to industrialize without modernizing (as China and some South-East Asian societies to some extent seem cur-rently to be attempting to do). But in an increasingly globalized world, dominated as it is by Western powers, it may be that modernization is, as Taylor suggests, the inevitable fate of non-Western societies, like it or not.[31]

And post-modernity? What of its fate? One might almost say that, like post-Fordism, it has been killed by its own success. That is, the general features associated with it – scepticism towards the scientific

method, 'the end of grand narratives', the significance of 'local knowl-
edge', relativism and social constructedness, a questioning of the tradi-
tional narratives of 'past, present and future', together with a jumbling
of histories – have become so commonly accepted that it is often no
longer necessary to discuss them under the rubric 'post-modern'. That
phase of acceptance seems to be over. Post-modernity is no longer the
exciting, unsettling thing it was in the 1990s. It has achieved respectabil-
ity. It no longer needs to insist on its once defiantly proclaimed name.

But that success, paradoxically, has been accompanied by a striking
revival of interest in modernity. Modernity, as Fredric Jameson has
observed, 'is back in business all over the world' (2002: 6; cf. Felski
1998). Scholars, such as Zygmunt Bauman, who once showed particu-
lar interest in post-modernity, seem in their later works to have reverted
to a concern with modernity (e.g, Bauman 2000). Partly this is the result
of a renewed concern with modernization, in a context of globalization
where the impact of the global capitalist system is more powerful than
ever before. Modernity here takes on an ideological aspect, associated
particularly with Western hegemony of the global system, as shown for
instance in the struggle over 'universal human rights'. For some non-
Western societies, this modern idea comes carrying Western imperialist
baggage that they are anxious to disavow. Modernity is therefore here
part of a political struggle, a struggle to impose or avoid certain beliefs
and practices associated with Western modernity (Jameson 2002: 7–8).

But the return to modernity is also the result of a new theoretical
interest. It is a return premised on the victory of the post-modern, and
is an attempt to understand modernity from that vantage point.
Post-modernity shows modernity things it only half-understood about
itself. The links between modernity and post-modernity – highlighted in
chapter 6 of this book – become even tighter. Post-modernity becomes,
ever more clearly than before, a form of reflection on modernity, moder-
nity conscious of itself and in the process revealing principles that were
not obvious during the actual passage to modernity. At the same time,
modernity changes its appearance when seen from the perspective of
post-modernity.[32] If we are now forced to acknowledge the 'dependence
of the postmodern on what remains essentially modernist categories
of the new' (Jameson 2002: 5), we can now also better appreciate the
importance of the counter-movements to modernity (Romanticism,
modernism, 'primitivism') within modernity itself.[33] Modernity con-
tained, and contains, currents of thought and practice that can be uncov-
ered and recombined in a number of ways. It can show a heterogeneity
that is at odds with the common assumption of homogeneity. It can
stress technology, wealth, Prometheus unbound; it can also, with what

might be a contrary, 'oppositional', emphasis, stress liberation and human fulfilment – making it for Immanuel Wallerstein as perhaps for Habermas, 'an eternal modernity', one that, 'once achieved . . . was never to be yielded' (Wallerstein 1995: 472; see also Passerin d'Entreves and Benhabib 1997).

The lines joining – or separating – modernity and post-modernity thereby become more blurred. It is a matter of taste whether one sees this as expressing the power and resilience of modernity or its end and supersession in post-modernity. Post-modernity may ultimately have done its best service in revealing the hidden faces of modernity, its capacity for constantly renewing itself in different guises. That does not preclude the appearance of things that seem so different from what we might call 'classical modernity' – the dominant features of Western society from the 1700s onwards – that we feel forced to invent new terms to describe the new reality. The same has been true about capitalism, with which modernity is so closely and, as Marx thought, perhaps indissolubly linked. But if 'late' or 'global' or 'informational' capitalism is both the same as and different from classical capitalism, so too 'late modernity' or 'post-modernity' may be simply pointing to the potentialities of a system that retains its capacity to surprise the world. In doing so modernity, like capitalism, might once more be indicating that it is not just one more system of society among others, past and present, but an entity that has an unprecedented ability to survive by reinventing itself.