Culture in the transitions to modernity: seven pillars of a new research agenda

Isaac Ariail Reed · Julia Adams

Abstract How did cultural dynamics help bring about the societies we now recognize as modern? This article constructs seven distinct models for how structures of signification and social meaning participated in the transitions to modernity in the West and, in some of the models, across the globe. Our models address: (1) the spread, via imitation, of modern institutions around the world (memetic replication); (2) the construal, by socio-cultural forces and by state organizations, of the modern citizen-subject (social subjectification); (3) the continual search for new meanings to replace traditional religious meaning-systems (compensatory reenchantment); (4) repeated attempts, in modern revolutions, to remake society completely, according to a utopian vision (ideological totalization); (5) the cultural origins and social consequences of scientific and humanistic worldviews (epistemic rift); (6) the gendered politics of state formation (patriarchal supercession); (7) the invention and production of race in the colonial encounter (racial recognition). We explicate the models in reverse chronological order, because in our synthesis, we argue that the original modern break results from a dynamic combination of racial recognition, patriarchal supercession, and epistemic rift; these changes set the stage for the four other processes we theorize. In addition to our synthesis, we also consider, from a more neutral perspective, the kinds of causal arguments upon which these models tend to rely, and thus explicate the analytical undergirding for the application of any of these models to empirical research on transitions to modernity. Throughout the article, we consider how these models might, and might not, mesh with other families of explanation, such as the politico-economic.

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I. A. Reed (✉)
Department of Sociology, University of Colorado, UCB 327, Boulder, CO 80309, USA
e-mail: isaac.reed@colorado.edu

J. Adams
Department of Sociology, Yale University, P.O. Box 208265, New Haven, CT 06520, USA
e-mail: Julia.Adams@yale.edu

What is modernity and where does it come from? Though the furor surrounding the debate between the defenders of the Enlightenment and the postmodernists seems to have cooled somewhat, understanding of what "modernity" is, and what if anything reliably brings it about, is more central than ever to the intellectual agenda of the human sciences. In recent years we have heard much talk of and read much writing about "multiple modernities" and "alternative modernities." Simultaneously, the theorization of empire, and the analysis of the expansion and intensification of global capitalism since the 1970s, has rendered impossible any contemporary analysis of multiple modernities that hews closely to methodological nationalism. And so we have a plethora of evocative terms that strongly suggest we should rethink modernity: hybridity, the forbidden modern, the Black Atlantic, "we have never been modern," etc. In this broad, international intellectual context, two related themes have emerged.

First, the internal transformation of the West into a set of interlocked modern societies has been reconsidered, with attention to the complexities of meaning, by using theoretical frames inherited from the cultural turn. The focus here has been on the ideologies of revolutionaries, the advent of science and objectivity in scholarship, and the complexities of consumerism, lifestyle, and identity as sources for happiness and for political contention. From historians, for example, we hear about the surprising radicalism of the American Revolution and the first modern revolution in 1688 in England. And from this intellectual strand we can draw out sociological questions about how the advent of science, democratic ideals, and modernizing tendencies in all sorts of spheres—from public architecture to the military—fundamentally reconstituted social life in the modern era, perhaps in a better way.

Second, the tools of structuralism and post-structuralism, and in some cases post-Freudian psychoanalysis, have been used to construct a relational narrative that sets the modern West against its others, internal and external, and thus primes the researcher to grasp the contradiction between modern, universalizing thought and the sorts of social exclusions and domination that the cultural construction of difference enabled. Here the emphasis is on the overlap between culture and power in the constitution of people and places inside and outside of the modern world. Some of the theoretical thematics here are traceable to Marx, exemplify what Paul Ricoeur called "the discourse of suspicion," and are articulated in the virtuoso performances of post-colonial theory in the humanities.

The problem, of course, is that both these narratives are historically true and normatively resonant. Might we look to historical sociology to help us with the constant oscillation between approval of and suspicion toward modernity? And if we do, how might we structure our sociological research in an era when modernity is being redefined, culture is firmly on the sociological agenda, and the history of modernity's others is increasingly well-written and available to scholars worldwide?

Any attempt to respond to these debates sociologically runs into another problem, however: in sociological modernization theory, and in the classics of historical sociology published from the 1960s through the 1980s, there was scant attention to race, gender, or culture, if culture is to be understood as a concrete, socially effective, power-laden semiotic system. Thus, to remedy this problem, we construct in this article a historico-theoretical argument: we first propose seven theoretical

models for how culture helped to bring about what are now generally recognized as modern societies, beginning with processes that are clearly visible (indeed, in some cases quantifiable) in the twentieth century. We then discuss how, in our view, these models fit together chronologically. In doing so, we locate, at the origins of the modern West, an initial cultural break in which the fundamental social symbols that ground the understanding of race, gender, and epistemology for a Western elite inaugurate "the modern."

Modernity and culture in historical sociology

Sociologically, the ongoing struggle over definitions of modernity originates in the second wave of historical sociology, and thus with the criticisms—ideological, empirical, and metatheoretical—of modernization theory (see, e.g., Tipps 1973; Appleby 1978). The second wave—including the iconic work of scholars such as Barrington Moore, Theda Skocpol, and Charles Tilly—grouped under the rubric of "modernity" at least the following unevenly related dimensions or characteristics: "calculation, bureaucracy, rationality, capitalism, disenchantment, industrialization, secularization, individualism" (Adams et al. 2005, p. 14). Thus second wave scholars took much of their basic definition of modernity from modernization theory (a definition that itself stemmed from classical sociological roots), but with a signal difference. For, essential to second-wave comparative historical scholarship (and to the authors of this article, as well) was a deep skepticism about the process of convergence toward a single model of the modern industrialized nation-state that formed the unassailable presupposition of the modernization theorists. In recent years, the reflexive aggregation of various modern values, institutions, and economic arrangements that characterized modernization theory has been revived. In our focus on culture in this article, we hope to counter this strategy explicitly, and set up, instead, a combinatorics of culture in the transitions to modernity. It is to this end that we propose to parse seven different cultural models of the transition to modernity.

In doing so, we draw explicitly from the insights of the contemporary third wave of comparative-historical sociology. Adams et al. (2005) have argued that the description of modern social life forwarded by modernization theorists and their second wave discontents occludes the tensions inherent in modernity—contradictory elements that are, in the third wave, the very object of study. These include (1) the roles played by various supposed irrationalities—such as habit, emotion, religion, and violence—in the transitions to modernity; (2) the incorporation of actors who were both oppressed in modernity and repressed by prior scholarship on modernity (e.g., women, colonized and enslaved populations, deviant sexualities), and (3) the contested understanding of modernity itself. We take our cue, in this article, from this insistence, but we focus in particular on how culture helped bring about the massive social changes that brought us the modern world—in the early modern West and, eventually, all over the globe.

We think that, by focusing on the specifics of cultural dynamics, we can attempt a synthetic redefinition of modernity, which we develop at the end of this article, after describing the seven prevalent characterizations. Because these models vary in how they conceptualize culture, however, and the relationship

between culture and social structure, we begin with an intentionally broad definition of culture, one capacious enough to incorporate all seven. Culture is, for this purpose, meaning-in-society, and we define meaning as a system of signification deployed by actors to understand, describe, explain, evaluate, rationalize, sacralize, or otherwise grasp or map the world around them. Culture thus understood contains language but is not reducible to it; indeed, in many cultural analyses the term "language" is used metaphorically, so as to convey that the operative meanings in society possess a coherent and powerful structure resembling human language. Thus when we use the term culture we mean, at the most general level, structures of meaning shared by social actors at a given time or place of interest. We are interested in these structures because we think they help explain social action and social transformation. Broadly, we think that semiotic processes, the worldviews of actors both individual and collective, and actors' depth-psychological motives are consequential causal vectors in social life. Each of the seven models addresses how culture matters for the genesis and, in some cases, reproduction of modernity. All of them take as a starting point some fundamental break that separates the pre-modern from the modern. We have named each one to reflect the core cultural source of social change. We also list them in what is, in our view, reverse chronological order, gesturing at ever-increasing historical depth in the cultural causes of modernity.

The seven models are:

> **Memetic replication**—in which already-constructed modern institutions (e.g., education systems, voting regimes, etc.) are spread via imitation across the globe.
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> **Social subjectification**—in which socio-cultural forces construe a new citizen-subject, often one who will govern him or herself by internalizing rules and regulations.
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> **Moral re-enchantment**—in which people in modern societies seek, invent, and spread overarching meaning-systems to replace those (often Religious) meaning systems that were destroyed, weakened or displaced by the advent of modern social arrangements.
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> **Ideological totalization**—in which certain vanguard elites attempt to completely remake society according to a totalizing utopian vision.
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> **Epistemic rift**—in which a new worldview, often one that separates the divine, human, and natural orders, becomes dominant with deep social effects.
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> **Patriarchal supercession**—in which older forms of legitimate authority that rely upon the imagery and performance of patriarchy are reconfigured into a new modern state, symbolized as an agreement between brothers.
>
> **Racial recognition**—in which the invention and production of race in the colonial encounter inaugurates the self-conception of Westerners as "modern," and informs and influences the nature and purpose of colonial domination.

As the reader will note, each of these models draws upon larger narratives about "how modernity happened." We attempt to secularize these stories, and construct models—indeed one is tempted to say cultural mechanisms—that may, or may not, be present in different cases of the transition to modernity. Thus, in what follows it is our intention to take grand narratives of the origins of

modernity and convert them into a more manageable set of models: a typology of culture in the transition.

Seven models of culture in the transitions to modernity

Memetic replication

In what we call the memetic replication model of the transition to modernity, cultural forms—including the modern actor—become templates that are copied, transposed, diffused, and otherwise reproduced across time and space. These forms include the nation-state; rights; the capitalist wage-labor relation; bureaucracy and regulatory regimes; scientific research institutions; mass education; citizenship and voting; constitutions, and so on. In fact, just about any modern institution or organizational form that can be abstracted, translated, and relocated can be a generative source for the transition to modernity in a given time or place.

The key point is that it is the model or template for a practice or an institution that serves as a meaning-structure that is portable. Perhaps the most well-known application of this idea to the global advent of modernity is the argument, made by John Meyer and his collaborating authors in a series of papers, that the world expansion of mass education is a result of a certain sort of imitation: "mass schooling made sense in so many contexts because it became a central feature of the western, and subsequently the world, model of the nation-state and its development. Nation states expand schooling because they adhere to world models of the organization of sovereignty (the modern state) and the organization of society as composed of individuals (the modern nation)."(Meyer et al. 1992, p. 129). The notion of the modern actor is itself amenable to such an analysis. Meyer and Jepperson have argued that the "cultural rules that constitute agentic actorhood in the first place and that subsequently structure it" derive from the "development, expansion, and secularization of the principally religious models of Western Christendom" (Meyer and Jepperson 2000, p. 102). This template of the agent has since "been globalized to an astonishing degree" (ibid., p. 103). It continues to spread and to find fertile new ground.

The memetic replication approach to transitions to modernity bears a family resemblance to Richard Dawkins's evolutionary account of cultural information transfer (Dawkins 2006; Blackmore 1999). A meme, for Dawkins, is a unit of information that reproduces itself across minds and societies. We draw this comparison not to assimilate the sociological theories of Meyer and others to Dawkins's philosophical project, but rather to highlight the sociological question of how replication and diffusion works at a macro-institutional level. The sociological mechanism for the transfer of institutional templates must be different than biological diffusion by sexual reproduction, or the bio-social capacity of certain forms of information per se—for example, particular advertising jingles—to copy themselves from one mind to another. The prototypical social units among which transfer takes place in this model are neither brains nor bodies, but organizations, and especially nation-states. And the mechanisms by which templates are diffused

may be pragmatic-rational or functional, but they may also involve symbolic, ceremonial acts of upgrading. Thus Meyer and Rowan (1977, p. 341): "the formal structures of many organizations in postindustrial society dramatically reflect the myths of their institutional environments instead of the demands of their work activities."

This points to the way that, in this model, memetic reproduction refers to the exporting of pieces of modernity around the globe after it had been established in Europe. This argument is de facto historically anchored in the nineteenth, twentieth, and twenty-first centuries—and not with either the original encounter between "the West and the rest" or the original social dynamics of early modern Western societies. In addition, one can argue that in its full form, this diffusion is only made possible by the development of modern technology, as the material basis of rapid-fire transmission of abstracted social code.

Social subjectification

In this model, the transition to modernity occurs with the invention, via manners, discipline, and knowledge, of modern subjects. The model has three versions. A first version attends to the invention and regulation of the statistically predictable population, and the variety of state regimes that are the consequence of this knowledge formation. In Michel Foucault's view, this new form of productive power, "governmentality," is quintessentially modern (Foucault 1991). Researchers have taken up the governmentality idea with vigor, and used it to explain a wide variety of phenomena: the welfare state in twentieth-century Europe and the United States; Fordism; the actuarial sciences (insurance, credit, etc); public and reproductive health and regulation, and the systematic management of metropolitan and colonial populations (e.g., Horn 1995; Steinmetz 1993).

A second version of the model focuses on how, in the West, the Protestant Reformation fostered two essential features of modern life: a disciplined, interested, calculating self (if also a self-monitoring, anxiety-ridden one!), on the hand, and a highly structured state apparatus of monitoring and social cohesion culminating in the modern state, on the other. Max Weber studied both aspects; recently, in his study of state formation in the Netherlands and Prussia, Philip Gorski sought to bring them together (Gorski 2003).

In a third version, common to early modern Europe and Japan, warriors were disciplined (and disciplined themselves) by substituting manners and competitive civility (often at court, in pursuit of the monarch's favor) for less mediated forms of violence and physical superiority (Elias 2000; Ikegami 1997; Spierenburg 2008) This model can also be applied to variations among contemporary regions and nation-states: America's incomplete civilizing process, for example, stems from the interlaced historical rhythm of state-building, regional honor cultures, and partial individual disarmament (Mennell 2007).

In each version of this model, culture is understood slightly differently. In Norbert Elias's work on the "civilizing process," for example, culture comes in as the gestures and manners that provide status and distinction to a formerly violent elite that has been, to use Eiko Ikegami's term for what happened to the Samurai in Japan, "tamed." In the second version, originally theorized by Weber, culture

takes the form of religious imperatives that are internalized to the point of structuring people's basic motivations. In the third version, culture is the quasi-objective knowledge produced by and for apparatuses of power and control.

There are, then, a particularly wide variety of theoretical presuppositions that can be carried by the social subjectification model—and not all of them can be carried at once. Still, the central idea should be clear—that culture continually creates and recreates, in one degree or another, the modern self. A well-known example of this argument is Nikolas Rose's study of the advent and practical implementation of the "psy" disciplines in *Governing the Soul: The Shaping of the Private Self*. He thus narrates the history of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries in the following way:

> in respect of practices for the government of conduct in the English speaking world, and perhaps more widely in Europe, one could trace a shift from a conception of the human being as a moral subject of habit, to that of the normal subject of character and constitution in the second half of the nineteenth century, to the social subject of solidarity and citizenship rights in the first half of the twentieth century, to the autonomous subject of choice and self-realization as the twentieth century drew to a close (Rose 1999, p. xviii).

A consistent emphasis of this model has been to examine the conjunction between the inculcation of these embodied psychological dispositions and the development of capitalist economies, particularly a calculating and future-oriented bourgeoisie and a disciplined labor force.

Moral reenchantment

According to this model, pre-modern societies were characterized—culturally at least—by an overarching religious meaning-system that endowed social life with sacrality, order, and sense, and anchored the lives and purposes of pre-modern persons. Modernity overthrows this meaning system, and puts in its place myriad meaning-systems that come to compensate for the 'holistic' organization that religion once provided. These compensatory meanings, because of what they are called upon to replace, tend to be romantic, melodramatic, Manichean, utopian, and excessive. They are invested with longing that can never be fully satisfied.

This model builds off one of the core claims of the classic social theories of Marx, Durkheim, and Weber, namely, that modernity is characterized by "alienation," "anomie," or "disenchantment." To be clear, these arguments by the classical sociologists are not taken as evaluative statements about modernity, but rather as broad analytical claims that the dynamism of modern societies derives, in part, from the loss of meaning that certain actors within it experience. In particular, this model converts Weber's meditations on disenchantment into a specific causal vector wherein individual and collective actors have a predilection to replace the overarching meanings once provided by religion with new meaning-systems whose stories are also dramatic, indicative of human beings' place in the cosmos, and contain moral imperatives and codes. In modernity, however, there is always a multiplicity of these "replacements," and this multiplicity undermines the holistic claim of each one to be the "true"

replacement. Sometimes this has can have the effect of driving actors deeper into their meaning-systems in search of unity, coherence, and the meaning of life. Anecdotally, we can see this dynamic in all sorts of cultural artifacts of the modern era, from Wordsworth's poems, to subcultures based on punk music or fantasy/science fiction. We can also add here that religion itself has been domesticated and privatized, important to some but no longer the overarching organizing principle of modern societies.

In exemplary fashion, Peter Brooks argues that the turn to melodrama in the nineteenth century on the French stage, and in the novels of Balzac and James, was a result of the "desacralization" of French society—the loss of Christianity as a guarantor of the social order after the Revolution. In response, playwrights and novelists looked for Good and Evil in the intimate interactions of private lives. In their narratives, small gestures and words have a "hidden" meaning—a mysterious, obscure, and yet consequential metaphysical order. These authors, writes Brooks, created a "moral occult" that is "the domain of operative spiritual values which is both indicated within and masked by the surface of reality. The moral occult is not a metaphysical system; it is rather the repository of the fragmentary and desacralized remnants of sacred myth" (Brooks 1984, p. 5) Thus, in this example, the popularity and power of nineteenth century melodrama is explained as a response to the "disenchantment" of modern life.

Here we hasten to add, however, that the uses of reenchantment extend far beyond the production of new cultural forms and genres. Indeed, the role of romanticism, broadly understood, in the social changes of the nineteenth century—including in the triumph of the nation-state form, and nationalism, in Western Europe—is difficult to underestimate.[1]

Ideological totalization

This model of culture in the transition rejects the hypothesis that modernity is troubled by disenchantment, and instead posits the origins of modernity in a moment when society became enchanted with… itself. In the totalization model, the modern is a unique, and uniquely twisted, ritual of societal self-constitution. The transition to modernity is a transition in which "society," "mankind," or perhaps "posterity" (Becker 1932) becomes the object of ritual observance and ideological preoccupation. Actors are thus impelled to remake society entirely, totally, and perfectly. The causal movers in this model of transition are the ordered meanings of utopia—often carried by certain vanguards or elites—according to which a society can be made rationally-regulated (and perhaps secular) and transparent. As a result of this remaking, the expectation is that the humans who did the remaking will be made "free." Historically, this model takes as its classic instances the "revolution of the saints" (Walzer 1965) in early modern England and (of course) the French Revolution. Beyond these exemplars, one can see a series of modern ideological

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[1] Another important connection could be drawn to the recent debates about, attacks on, and revisions of secularization theory in the sociology of religion. The complex processes by which religious authority is redistributed, relegated to certain spheres of influence, or retains a certain amount of force in public life could be studied as part of the question of moral reenchantment. See, in particular, Smith (2003), and Lichterman and Potts (2008).

movements with an often explicit Jacobin dimension—Haitian, Napoleonic, Bolshevik, National Socialist, Maoist.[2]

Francois Furet and other historians of the French Revolution have argued that at key moments, the momentum of the revolution (and, for Furet, the Terror) was maintained via this Jacobin commitment to total remaking, and to total transparency and authenticity (Furet 1981, Rosenfeld 2001). In Furet's argument, for a short but essential time span (from the summer of 1789 through to Thermidor), ideology was the singular cause of the revolution. The course of revolution was determined by the way certain actors and decisions were, or were not, seen to be the avatar of the people's Revolution. And the expert, in this regard, was Robespierre. Although this experiment in revolutionary purity was destined (according to Furet) for a grisly conclusion, it also introduced into the cultural repertoire of the West a fundamentally new idiom: it was "the first experiment with democracy" (Furet 1981, p. 79). Furet's work, overall, can be understood as an attempt to grasp and evaluate the egalitarian and authoritarian dimensions of "totalizing modernity."

The second dimension of Furet's *Penser la Revolution Francaise* points to an understanding of the totalization model as iterative and performative. Furet (in) famously argued that the Marxist historians of the French Revolution shared with the Revolutionaries this ritualized imagination of total transformation.[3] This points to an interesting dimension of the model: while "total revolution" is always a utopian ideal (and perhaps a stark one), and while revolutionary vanguards may refer to previous originary moments as their inspiration, they must always proclaim that it is ultimately their revolutionary moment that will divide the "traditional" (incomplete, artifice-driven, etc.) from the "modern" (complete, authentic, etc.). In other words, in the totalization model, the central causal force is a cultural formation, centered on a utopian vision, which, at each new revolutionary moment, poses itself as the true social theory of the past and present. While it is clear to any student of history that such total remakings always fail, the social consequences of such totalizing zeal cannot be ignored—ideologies of totality, in this model, are one of the driving causes that create the real complexities of unfinished and un-totalized modernity.

One need not share Furet's politics, or his animosity to the rigors of political economy, to use this model to build explanations. Consider, in this regard, a very recent example of totalization theory, which explicitly combines an analysis of ideological totalization with an analysis of political power, empire, and the economic forces that shaped England in the seventeenth century. Steve Pincus's *1688: The First Modern Revolution* (2009) is devoted to showing how James II was, contrary to the Whiggish common wisdom of English historiography, a "Catholic Modernizer" deeply influenced by Louis XIV.[4] During James's short reign, this

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[2] In the register of grand theory, both Eisenstadt (1999) and Voegelin (2000) have explored this "Jacobin" or "Gnostic" aspect of modernity.

[3] One might add to this that Furet himself was prone to participate in this ritualized imagination, in so far as he attempted to interpret the revolution as the source of both egalitarian and authoritarian strands of modern Europe, thus apotheosizing it—despite his neo-Tocquevillian intentions—as both God and Devil of modernity.

[4] Once again, we see the iterative nature of the totalizing ideal.

supposedly backward king in fact engaged in an ambitious project to build what we would now recognize as a modern state, with a centralized bureaucracy, an efficient army and a world-class navy, and tax policies that, combined with his centralized administration, augmented his income by a third over that of his brother Charles II. He also, perhaps most importantly for what was to come, "extended the power of central government deep into the localities" (Pincus 2009, p. 162). James not only built a more rational state, he built a more intensive and extensive one.

This enables Pincus to answer one of the more difficult questions in English historiography, namely, why James II provoked revolutionary action at all.[5] Pincus argues that his modernization program opened up the space for, and in fact demanded, a "modern" response when and where resentment was felt—and because of what was involved in reconstructing the English state in the first place, resentment was felt all over the island. The revolution of 1688–89, then, was a struggle over different ideological visions of English modernity. For example, James's modernizing ideology had a particular conception of political economy, namely, that property should be understood as land, and that the key for expanding the wealth and international power of the empire was to expand and secure its landholdings. In other words, for James and his advisors, wealth was a zero-sum game, and the competition for wealth a military struggle. The Whigs had other ideas. In particular, they held that wealth derived from labor and manufacturing and was thus, in principle infinite. This debate swirled through the revolution in pamphlets and speeches, and, ultimately, in post-revolutionary tax policies. It was the ideological context for political action and violence; the Glorious revolution was a battle over how, not whether, to totally remake the nation. Or, as Pincus puts it, "Modernizing states create the ideological space for a modernizing opposition" (2009, p. 40).

Epistemic rift

In this model, the fundamental break that inaugurates the modern is a break in social epistemology: certain influential elites, and eventually, large sections of the population, reconstitute their worldview. In the new, modern worldview, the natural, the human, and the divine become separated (Latour 1993). Inquiry into the advent, triumph, and social consequences of this worldview (often glossed as "scientific" or "secular" but perhaps better thought of as a differentiation or splitting apart of different sorts of beings), then, is the core occupation of socio-historical research guided by this model.

Science has long been a part of definitions of modernity and of narratives of transition. In the pre-Kuhnian intellectual histories of the scientific revolution in England, science was understood as a tremendous breakthrough to truth and light. In sociological explanations since Marx, the advent of science has been

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[5] Pincus counters both the "Whig" and the "revisionist" accounts of the English revolution. In the Whig story, it was James' "un-English" policies and Catholic faith which made the reasonable, Protestant Englishmen resist his rule and install a more "moderate" regime. The revisionists have countered this by arguing that it was, in fact, bigoted Tory resistance to James' toleration policies that provoked revolution.

understood as the product of more practical technological developments, or as the offspring of more fundamental economic and political changes. The epistemic rift model shares some of the dispositions of these earlier theories, particularly with regard to the social consequences of science: the increased ability to manipulate and control nature at certain persons' disposal, the idea/ ideal of social engineering as an ideological guide for both social control and war, and so on.

But in this model, scientific modernity is neither the result of the discovery of the natural world nor the superstructural effect of political and economic transformation. Instead, it is understood as a dynamically created worldview that itself has cultural sources.[6] When elites remake their worldview to create a cosmos in which nature, human beings, and God are very different essences, to which correspond very different forms of knowledge and practice, they create the cultural underpinnings of the various social forms we typically associate with modernity. In his well-known historical monograph *A Social History of Truth* (1994), Steven Shapin investigates the origins of this epistemic rift for England.

Shapin proposes that it was the cultural requisites of being an English gentleman, on the one hand, and the cultural prerogatives that came with being perceived as one, on the other, that brought about the scientific approach to nature that we now recognize as the English scientific revolution. A reading of etiquette manuals reveals that landed gentlemen—especially younger sons like Robert Boyle—were both taken to be and required to be truth-tellers above all. Their wealth, it was thought, freed them from economic compulsion, while their distance from politics freed them from the untrustworthy arts of persuasion and rhetoric. Combine this with the reformist Protestant tendencies circulating among some of the elite, and the product is the "Christian virtuoso" Robert Boyle. Gentlemen—considered to be disinterested, honest, and perceptually competent, and who were loathe to lie for fear of losing their good name or their life—became the central actors in a "culture of veracity," which could undermine old scholastic texts whenever a gentleman observed the results of a new experiment.

What is fascinating about Shapin's argument is that, in his account, the cultural processes that lead to the social epistemology of modernity are quite distinct from the cultural formations that characterize modernity. It is the medieval remnants of honor culture held by the gentlemen, according to which "giving the lie" to a status equal can result in a violent duel, that create the turn to civil conversation, a probabilistic worldview, and "reasonable argumentation" among the new men of science. It is the capacity of a tiny gentlemanly elite to trust each other—mediated by the widespread canard that, for a gentleman, "his word is his bond"—that creates the empiricist philosophical imperative to reject the authority of ancient texts and rely on experience and experimentation. Where, then, did we get neutral scientific modernity? From a bunch of stupendously rich

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[6] In *We Have Never Been Modern*, for example, Bruno Latour (1993) argues that "modernity arises first from the conjoined creation of [the human, the natural, and the divine], and then from the masking of the conjoined birth and the separate treatment of the three communities while, underneath, hybrids continue to multiply as an effect of this separate treatment."

younger sons of the aristocracy with nothing to do but avoid killing one another over perceived insults to their honor.

Furthermore, Shapin's account of the origins of the scientific worldview can be combined with an account of England's economic and political history. Shapin already implies one connection that when he notes that it was the younger sons of the aristocracy that were available to be gentleman of their word, since they were financially secure, but not involved in politics. He thus implicates the economic system of primogeniture in the advent of the scientific worldview.

Patriarchal supersession

In this model, modernity emerges when the symbolic power of father-rule evident in patriarchal politics is converted into a symbolic contract among brothers that constitutes the ideological backing of the emergent modern state. Patriarchal patrimonial rule, which rests on the allegiance that subjects— themselves fathers to whom is delegated the prerogative of rule over their households and localities—feel for the ruling father of the realm, is displaced. Patriarchy is not just symbolically transformed but abolished as such, in favor of fraternity if not full-blown individualism.[7] This can happen in two basic and interrelated ways.

In one version of the model, the generative action is situated largely in the elite. Elite fathers attempt to ensure the legacy of their family lineage; they do so by acting as agents of their future sons, as well as their ancestors, real or fictive. They make strategic marriages and alliances, engage in familial forms of property holding, and invent new and innovative collective capacities by which they seek to control and lineally possess state offices and privileges. (What sounds like, and can indeed be, highly strategic behavior, is also infused with emotional commitment and evaluative weight.) In so doing, these men and the many elite women who act on their behalf usher in modernity and in particular modern statehood. They do this mostly unwittingly, and to a great degree in the service of the repeatedly performed identity project of the "father-ruler." But, in coming together as father-rulers and in service of patriarchal rule, to collectively ensure that respective lineages will be preserved, these patriarchs create what turn out to be not only bureaucratic rule-regulated forms and lateral practices of political collaboration but also norms of fraternal debate and collective action. This, in part, explains state building and patterns of state dissolution. Adams (2005) has shown, in detail, how this process constituted the "familial states" of early modern Europe.

In another version of this model, a mechanism that is compatible with the above, the transformation is more explicitly violent, as a monarch (symbolized as king and father) is attacked, both symbolically and literally, in the name of the liberty and claims to sovereignty of a set of symbolic "brothers." For example,

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[7] Here we use patriarchy to refer to a specific political format of father rule and the inheritance of sovereignty, rather than in the broader sense of a society structured to serve men's interests. See Adams (2005) for further discussion. For a version of this model articulated in the normative language of political theory, see Carol Pateman's classic, *The Sexual Contract* (1988).

the feminist histories of early modern France and the French Revolution show in detail how this "family romance" (as, following Freud, Lynn Hunt (1993) dubs it) works itself out in both the revolts of aristocrats against the Crown, and the extended contestations between liberal republicans and monarchists that characterized the tumultuous century between the Revolution and the installation of the Third Republic in France. As we discuss below, this version of the model has depth-psychological undertones that need to be clarified if it is to be proposed as a tool for sociological explanation.

Although the patriarchal supersession model does not, by itself, explain the nature of the public sphere or the variety of associational institutions that characterize modern democratic societies, it does help clarify why so many of the ostensibly individualist or neutral public institutions of modern societies in fact embody masculinist norms and legacies. Joan Landes, for example, has argued that "the shift from the iconic imagery of the Old Regime to the symbolic structure of bourgeois representation was constitutive of modern politics as a relation of gender," and thus that "women's absence from the bourgeois political sphere has not been a chance occurrence, nor merely a symptom of the regrettable persistence of archaic patriarchies"(Landes 1988, p. 204). In Landes's account, the French Revolution was also a revolution of "republican bodies" that located men in the sphere of civics and politics, and restricted women to the sphere of the family. "The sons' revolt against the father was not just a quarrel among men," she argues, for, "the Revolution's phallic quality was a product of the way political legitimacy and individual rights were predicated on the entitlement of men alone. The universal bourgeois subject was from the outset a gendered subject." So, "the revolt against the father was also a revolt against women as free and equal public and private beings" (Landes 1988, p. 158). Landes's and Adams's accounts potentially converge with respect to the cross-class alliances of men in service of redisciplining women that emerged with such force in the tumultuous period of the great European revolutions, and that are a perennial feature of interregna and other moments of political instability.

This model also speaks to the present day, and is applicable far beyond its original Euro-American boundaries, and with some interesting and politically consequential variations. Today's Saudi Arabia, for example, features a state governed by the patriarchal and fraternal House of Saud; the kingdom is still controlled by the heritage of Ibn al-Aziz ibn Saud's forty-five legitimate sons. More generally, Mounira Charrad's work highlights the fierce and ongoing modernization struggle over kin-based political prerogatives, and states, in the twentieth–and twenty-first-century Maghreb and Middle East (Charrad 2001). To address oneself analytically to this struggle necessarily involves attending to the shaping power of familial signification in the evolving sphere of patrimonial politics.

Finally, it should be noted that, in Adams's account of the symbolic transformation of patriarchy, the ideologies of father-rule are but one dimension of a vast, emergent structure of empire that includes the search for profit in the colonies and the struggle for legitimate authority in the metropole. The games of signification are also games of profit and power, as Adams (2005b) notes in her analysis of Elizabeth I's remarkable ability to manipulate the gendered signs of

royal authority. Thus here again we see the intersection of culture and political economy.

Racial recognition

In this model, it is the recognition of the non-modern, non-Western, "traditional" or "exotic" Other that supplies the basis for Western peoples to conceive of themselves as "modern." People in the West become or start acting modern when they see themselves in contrast to what they construe as traditional, primitive, or exotic (e.g., "Oriental"). The origin of this dynamic is the cataclysmic historical collision between European imperialists and those whom they colonize and enslave. A new understanding—of imperial Self construed in relation to colonial Other, and vice versa—ensues, and eventually penetrates both the modern metropolitan society and the colonial territories by means of both paradigmatic (often traumatic) events and evolving institutions like economic relationships, states, popular movements, and migration streams.

Importantly, this mechanism of recognition, and its offshoots, is iterative and permanently ambivalent. It is repeated each time that another originary colonial encounter occurs. As empires meet colonial populations across the globe, Western modernity emerges in opposition to the rest of the world. In the minds of the colonists—and, to some degree, in the "captive minds"[8] of the colonized—the repetition of these encounters produces the social imaginary of European modernity as "civilized," and its others as "savage." This dialectical encounter is shot through with ambivalence, surprising where we might otherwise expect sheer hostility from the colonized and enslaved, and satisfaction from their overlords. Fantasies and projections abound, as white colonizers desire all the chaos that they project onto their subordinates, and the colonized internalize a permanent sense of lack that leads to a desire for the metropolis. As we discuss below, one way to understand these fantasies and obsessions is by using psychoanalytical language to capture how certain symbols (particularly at the intersection of "race" and "sex") are imbued with inordinate emotional valences and energies.

It is important, however, to underline how deeply this model revises and resituates the classic second-wave narratives of the origins of Western modernity. In the racial recognition model, Western, white modernity—in its "early" (sixteenth and seventeenth century) and "bourgeois" (eighteenth and nineteenth century) forms—emerges from and through the interaction with a variety of others. Whether we are spotlighting Cortez and Montezuma in the New World (Todorov 1984), or the Burmese and the British in the twentieth century (Orwell 1950), or the Frenchman and the African, with the Antillean uncomfortably mediating between them (Fanon 2008), the constitution of modern selfhood is always relational in its construction and fissured in form.

So, Louis Sala-Molins's provocative question and answer—"How can the Enlightenment be interpreted? Only with the Code Noir in hand" (Sala-Molins

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[8] It is interesting to note, in the context of current debates about multiple modernities, that the concept of the "captive mind" has migrated from an Eastern European account of the totalitarian state (Milosz 1990) to an account of the continuation of not only economic, but also cultural domination, of the East by the West in the post-colonial era (Alatas 2006).

2006, p. 9)—is useful shorthand for the sorts of sociological investigations that can proceed under the aegis of this model. Consider, for example, Audrey Smedley's account of the cultural invention of race in modern America (Smedley 2007). In conjunction with Edmund Morgan's work on labor and slavery in Colonial Virginia (Morgan 1975), she constructs the following argument: English settlers in North America brought with them a powerful ideology of civilized-versus-savage, formed originally during their attempts to force the Irish to surrender a pastoral economy and labor on English farms instead. In North America, this notion of the savage Irish was quickly adapted to describe the Indians, and mobilized in the seventeenth century wars between English settlers and Native American tribes. Then an essential intersection of the ideology of the savage and the economic possibilities granted by land confiscated from these tribes occurred: faced with the problems created by indentured labor imported from Britain and Ireland—and in particular Bacon's rebellion in 1676—Virginia's planters mapped the civilized/savage binary onto a new distinction: white/black. In doing so, they implicitly accepted the original (white) indentured servants' claims to humanity, while relegating newly imported Africans to a "fallen" position of unsalvageable savages. To the English planters, writes Smedley, "they were heathens wracked with sin."(Smedley 2007, p. 110). Indians began to be interpreted as "noble savages," while "almost imperceptibly the status of 'the Negro' in the gallery of interacting populations in the colonial world was lowered below that of Indians, most of whom were, after all, formally free"(Smedley 2007, p. 110).

One of the theoretical implications of this is that Western modernity emerges in opposition to more than one type of other—"savages" can be noble or abject, and other civilizations can be construed as in decline, degraded, or capable of assimilation into the economic and political projects of Western modernity, depending upon their perceived "qualities" or "culture." So, for example, in the nineteenth century, as German colonial states are set up in Samoa, Quingdao, and Namibia, different "others" are constructed by the ethnographic representations of non-Westerners in the German anthropological archives (Steinmetz 2007).

Furthermore, if we follow post-colonial theory in the construction of this model, we can understand this process as a performative one, in which modernity is always iteratively being "remade." Importantly, this model also challenges the idea that the globalization of "modernity" is just a question of time, as certain countries or areas of the world will eventually have their own transition. As Chakrabarty (2000) has made clear, there is a fundamental misperception embedded in this notion that history is a "waiting room" in which various countries wait to enter modernity. For, in the racial recognition model, European modernity needs its Others in its continual reconstructions of itself.

It is also clear that this model is primed for combination with the insights of political economy. In George Steinmetz's account of German colonialism, the impetus towards knowing and dominating the native derives from class competition and the way different actors, from different strata of the German elite, use different forms of capital. But perhaps the classic example of such a combination is actually in one of the exemplar texts of the second wave of historical sociology, wherein we find an argument about the origins of the

American civil war that brings together the effect of moralizing discourse about slavery and the economic and political effects of the conquering of the American west via the Indian genocide (Moore 1993 [1966], pp. 115–132). It is precisely the sorts of theoretical questions posed by Moore's analysis of the lead-up to the American civil war that remain to be explored by sociologists via the racial recognition model.

The combinatorics of culture in transitions to modernity

Whence modernity, then? Culturally speaking, one response is synthetic, and it goes like so: At its origins, the transition to modernity involves the construal and invention of an elite, white, male cadre of individuals whose perceived faculties and performances become the legitimating basis for reconstituting social life itself.[9] The initial colonial encounters set up the possibility of evaluating certain nascent elements of European culture as exemplary and essential to racial superiority, and these become motivations for, and legitimations of, fierce and violent domination. Simultaneously, the European elite participates in the epistemic rift that inaugurates the scientific worldview. Finally, this elite also reconstrues gender politics over a long period of revolts, revolutions, and state-building, replacing kings with the false universal "man." These cultural changes in the European elite are co-constituted by other processes, such as global trade and commodification, without which elites would not have been authorized to re-imagine self and social world, and wrench the culturally modern from pre-modern social conditions.

In this synthetic story—which can stand as the eighth model of cultural transitions to modernity—these are the initial ruptures that make modernity culturally possible in Western Europe, and it is their application to the familiar problems of political sovereignty, economic development, and population control that usher in the genesis of the social (and the "social problem") as it was understood by the classical social theorists and a generation of actual policy-makers. That is, the cultural dimensions of modernity are affirmed, popularized, and violently instantiated in modern revolutions (ideological totalization). These revolutions, however, not only overthrow kingly/fatherly power at the head of the state, they also destroy the elaborate, overarching worldviews derived from various religions, and thus create a need, in the populace, for moral reenchantment. New, modern governments must then constitute their subject populations as knowable to control them (subjectification). They are able to do this, at least in part, because they are capable of mimetically transferring modes of knowledge and self over increasingly extended distances, thus enabling governmentality.

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[9] Here, we might mention that the historical sociology of modernity meets up with the normative debates about modernity and post-modernity that occupied social and political theory in the 1980s and 1990s. In particular, the normative question raised and answered in the affirmative by Jürgen Habermas—namely "can the rational kernel of modernity be salvaged from the highly exclusive social context in which it emerged?"—might be approached in a new way, on the basis of a quite different account of the cultural forces involved in the origins of modernity. See Habermas (1989) and Calhoun (1992).

More generally, memesis, in the twentieth century, becomes a central dynamic of what John R. Hall (2009) has called the "Empire of Modernity," as various modern social forms come to structure the lives of more and more of the global population. For, the technological innovation initially sparked by epistemic rift creates the possibility of mimetic transfer of templates for practices and institutions. Thus, from its beginnings, but especially in the twentieth century, the cultural processes identified by our other six models then transported around the globe. In other words, the plural origins of modern social life are now folded into a repertoire of signifiers that reproduces ways of doing and being modern worldwide. Hence the uneven global modernity that we recognize as our contemporary condition.[10]

Modernity in this sense, then, is both one and many—because although transitions to modernity in different places and times can indeed vary in their causes and consequences, there is at the core of all of them a convulsion of social life in the West that was both dependent upon, and massively consequential for, the rest of the globe. This is why we cannot fully embrace the language of multiple modernities. As a descriptive term, "multiple modernities" works well enough as a reminder that there is no single concrete case of modernity towards which all other cases are converging, or should be expected to converge. But beyond this we would insist—as some writers who use the term "alternative modernities" do as well—that the colonial encounter between European empires and the various areas of the globe they colonized remains central to any attempt to theorize modernity as a social process, subjective experience, or normative aspiration. Only in this deeply historical context can the insights of the models that focus on the intensification of "globalization" in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries be effectively mobilized for sociological analysis.

The analytics of cultural causality in transitions to modernity

We set forth above one possible synthetic road forward for analysts of transitions to modernity. But by describing the seven pillars, we also intend to make broad, cultural-theoretic accounts of modernity into a set of articulated, and ultimately empirically identifiable, models about how meaning and signification mattered in the transitions to modernity. To do this, however, we need to be explicit about how these models claim to explain the transition, which is to say, we need to identify the causal analytics upon which these models rely.

Much of the theoretical and historical literature from which these models derive is colloquially understood to be "interpretive" rather than "explanatory." From our point of view, however, this is less an immutable philosophical divide than an indication that the causal imagery implied by these cultural models is quite different from—and less well understood than—that used in models of the transition based in politics, markets, modes of economic production, or elite struggle. Thus, an elucidation of the basic causal structure of these cultural arguments is a necessary

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[10] The intellectual formation of modernization theory itself could be seen as part of this memetic apparatus.

step towards their mobilization in sociological research. In the models outlined above, we see three central causal images.[11]

Causal image 1: Semiotic mechanisms

In structural linguistics,[12] a sign consists of a signifier (a written mark or a sound) and a signified (the concept to which it points). In semiotics more broadly conceived, virtually any object, gesture, image, or utterance can serve as a signifier insofar as meaning is conventionally attributed to it. Signifiers point to concepts or notions (signifieds), and signifiers and signifieds thus combine into signs. In turn, individual signs participate in larger groupings of signs, referred to as signifying systems or structures of signification. Much as certain economic structures are understood to be themselves motors of social change, structures of signification can also be causally dynamic. This dynamism derives from the fact that structures of signification contain many ambiguous, unstable, and non-literal or non-referential elements. These might be linguistic operations like metaphor, metonymy, and synecdoche and other tropes, or larger textual features like contradiction, fragmentation, irony, parody, or even genre. Furthermore, some post-structuralist linguists have argued that, as a whole, signifying systems are never fully organized or closed, but that much social energy and social power is exerted in attempts to make them closed or at least more stable, and thus eliminate the playful ambiguities of a given structure. These efforts, argue post-structuralist theorists, produce in turn new meanings, problems, and possibilities.

   All of this may be sociologically translated, of course. Researchers of historical transitions and social transformations have been less inclined to the universal rigors of linguistic theory and philosophy, and more disposed to identify empirically certain processes of signification that have been consequential sources of social change. For example:

(1) signs may repeatedly copy themselves and diffuse across different social spaces;
(2) signs are temporally ordered into narratives, and some stories work better than others as generative scripts for social action;
(3) signs can create structured positions for subjects to occupy, whether in imagination or in social interaction (see Althusser 1971);

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[11] In this we are inspired by Stinchcombe's (1968) parsing of three modalities of causal imagery in social research. There may also be some similarities between our analysis of cultural causality and Hayden White's "tropological" analysis of historical narratives (1973) and cultural-theoretical arguments (1978). However, we consider what follows to be an explication of arguments that historical sociologists interested in culture make about the world, and indeed, often make correctly about the world. Thus while we share White's passion for understanding the structures through which investigators grasp the past, we reject some of the more relativist readings of his work. For a review of the implications of White's work for "postmodern" historiography, see Ankersmit (1986, 1998).

[12] We do not elaborate on debates within structural linguistics here. The classic references are Saussure (1966), and Jakobson (1962). For theoretical overviews of structuralism and post-structuralism, see Culler (1975, 1982).

(4)   certain signification structures are organized around central and ambiguous signifiers that become very powerful motivators for collective action, even though their interpretation is fundamentally contested (e.g., "freedom").

The memetic model of the transition is the sparsest and most causally specific of the models we have outlined, as it relies almost entirely on the mechanisms by which signs are copied and diffused. The replication of signs from one organization to another, via the "myths" that make up an organization's environment, is an example of a semiotic mechanism that requires very little depth of meaning. Notoriously, the memetic model also excludes human actors as part its explanatory apparatus; this differentiates cultural memesis from many other cultural explanations that rely upon an imagery of actors interacting with each other in a meaningful social context.

Causal image 2: Culture in action and interaction

Part of what makes meaning effective upon social life is the subjective experiences and predispositions of actors. Actors in the social world solve problems, resolve contradictions, construct identities, and so on, and in doing so they draw upon meanings as models of and models for the world (Geertz 1973). The meaningful projects of purposeful human agents are thus an important part of many causal explanations that call upon culture. According to this logic, to show a cultural cause, one must show that a set of actions or events was brought about by actors with certain purposes, and that these purposes were defined and motivated by certain meanings. This perspective, familiar to many ethnographers and qualitative sociologists, has its philosophical justification in pragmatism, hermeneutics, and the language-game philosophy of the later Wittgenstein. The point here is that agents in interaction with each other enact certain meanings that "construct" or "make" the world in which they live.[13] Thus, the consciousness and "forms of life" of social actors are a part of the causal story that makes up a social explanation. In sociological research on culture and modernity, we see a variety of ways in which subjectively meaningful action becomes an important causal mover:

(1)   humans, in interaction with each other, create emergent understandings that take on a life of their own, and thus causally direct social processes. Symbols, that is, emerge from interaction and are thus imbued by actors with the power to regulate their behavior. (This was Durkheim's (1915) original argument about the role of totems in Aboriginal societies, and continues on in a variety of arguments about the importance of social morality to action);
(2)   humans strive to make sense of the world, other actors, current or future events, and so on. They thus act in an effort to make their view of the world coherent, aesthetically pleasing, and deeply meaningful (see Geertz 1973);
(3)   individual or emergent-collective actors must solve problems, and marshal a wide variety of meanings to help them do so (Swidler 1986; Joas 1996).

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[13] An important reference point here is Donald Davidson's work in analytic philosophy on "reasons as causes," and the ensuing debates in the philosophy of social science on the relationship between interpretation and explanation. See Davidson (2006); Risjord (2000); Henderson (1993).

With the exception of the memetic replication model, all of the models set out here rely, implicitly or explicitly, on this model of culture in action. But perhaps foremost among them is the model of ideological totalization. Here the point is that a utopian ideology, deeply believed and felt by a certain vanguard, becomes a causal mover in a modern revolution, even if the ideology itself does not predict the outcome of the revolution, but rather has unintended consequences. The vanguard's actions aim at an end given by utopian meanings, and are indeed oriented and defined by the meaning system in place (in the case of Furet's analysis of the French revolution, the meaning of the republic during the terror is constructed around the signifier of "virtue," which is used, and abused, with tremendous pragmatic skill by Robespierre).

Causal image 3: Depth psychological

Finally, some of our models of culture in the transition to modernity—in particular racial recognition and the second, more violent version of patriarchal supersession—invoke a causal imagery in which collective representations interact with libidinal impulses such as sexual desire or aggression. This involves a model of the actor in which he or she has not only purposes and experiences, but also unconscious energies, repressed memories, drives, and desires. It also requires an account of how such energies are transposed onto social relations and the symbols that mediate them.

A key origin text for this imagery is Franz Fanon's *Black Skin, White Masks* (2008 [1952]), in which the ethnographic analysis of encounters between colonizers and colonized is followed by a highly original theoretical synthesis of Hegel's theory of lordship and bondage with Adler's neo-Freudian psychoanalytic theory of aggression. Fanon proposes that both the social relationship between dominator and dominated, and the psycho-sexual energies that this relationship (in its various gender combinations) calls forth are in fact formed in their concrete effectiveness by the already emotionally laden, energized symbolic meanings of black skin and white skin. In a famous footnote, he amends Hegel's model of master and slave to suggest that rather than opening up a meaningful space of intersubjectivity, this dialectic in fact involves the projection of fantasies and the development of a deeply interwoven set of jealousies and inferiority complexes:

> We hope to have shown that the master here is basically different from the one described by Hegel. For Hegel there is reciprocity; here the master scorns the consciousness of the slave. What he wants from the slave is not recognition but work. Likewise, the slave here can in no way be equated with the slave who loses himself in the object and finds the source of his liberation in his work. The black slave wants to be like his master. Therefore he is less independent than the Hegelian slave. For Hegel, the slave turns away from the master and turns toward the object. Here the slave turns toward the master and abandons the object (Fanon 2008, p. 195).

Though it would be hard to match Fanon's eloquence or ability to evoke a deep understanding of the colonial relation, the social researcher can, nonetheless, draw a few important causal implications from this—keeping in mind the psychoanalytic frame that precedes this explication of Hegel in Fanon's text. Because of the

important role of projection and fantasy in constructing social relations, the colonizer's actions are not structured by the presence or lack of authentic recognition from the colonized. Rather, the racial order, for Fanon, is constructed not only by collective representations, but also by the depth psychological meanings of racial encounters in everyday life, and these meanings follow a logic that is unconscious, over-determined, and fantastical.

Thus, as these fantasies and projections come to structure the minds of both colonizer and colonized, they engage them in a relationship that outlasts any particular arrangement of resources and labor. In this imagery, then, social life is pushed forward by dynamic links among sexuality, aggression, and power that, in individuals, occur in the unconscious, and, at the collective level, play themselves out in symbols and rituals. To interpret culture causally under this rubric, then, involves analyzing the unconscious sources of action as they are worked out in actual, and imagined and fantasized, human relations. So:

(1)   The discharge of libidinal energies is channeled by collective representations that form part of the unconscious.[14]

(2)   Symbols, then, can evoke or provoke outpourings of desire and aggression, both individually and collectively. In particular, certain highly charged sexual and familial metaphors (e.g., representations of the nation as a female who needs to be protected, or representations of a King as an abusive, misguided, and sexually impotent father) can call forth a "surplus" of violence or aggression.

(3)   Finally, the basic process of identity formation (both individual and collective), whereby self or group is constituted in opposition to alter or others, is subject to a variety of forms of cathexis and projection. Colonizers may project onto the colonized the destructive and anarchic desires that they themselves possess and disavow, for example.

In his exemplar of the racial recognition model, George Steinmetz explicitly argues that the introduction of Lacanian language to the toolkit of analysis will enable Bourdieu's theory of fields to gain more causal leverage. As Steinmetz writes, "Specifically, the concepts of cultural and symbolic capital, on the one hand, and habitus, on the other, become more compelling and precise once they are articulated with the Lacanian concepts of symbolic and imaginary identification" (p. 57). We tend to agree with his assessment that "in recent years, a rising chorus of voices scattered across various disciplines has called for reintergrating the unconscious and psychoanalysis more generally into social theory and socioanalysis" (p.56), though the discomfort some may feel with this idea probably derives from a well-founded suspicion about the extensive meta-theoretical commitments that this reintegration requires.

Ontological commitments of the three causal imageries

It is not a coincidence that all seven of the models of culture in the transition that we discussed above—and certainly our eighth synthetic model as well—rely to some

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[14] Here we use a post-Lacanian reading of Freud, wherein the unconscious is constituted by both drives and representations. See Lacan (1997).

degree on the causal imagery of semiotic mechanisms or, perhaps more broadly, semiotic conditions for action. The ontological commitment here is relatively minimal, or, at least, it is a commitment widely shared by cultural sociologists: one must presuppose that there are such things as collective representations, and that these work in a manner broadly similar to that proposed by structuralist linguistics.[15] But beyond this, the content of the representations is underdetermined by these presuppositions. There is no a priori commitment, in this causal imagery, to what signs refer to, which signifiers are central, and so on. Rather, the content of the structured meanings of social life can be allowed to vary historically in the construction of causal explanations.[16]

The causal imagery of culture in action-and-interaction adds another level of commitment, but again the ontological baggage added is relatively minimal: one must conceive of social actors who are broadly purposeful and/or pragmatic (though not necessarily strategic in any strong sense), and possessed of the basic human capacities of cognition and interaction. Here again, many cultural accounts of the transition to modernity rely upon this phenomenological imagery, especially those models that emphasize the pursuit, by agents, of meaningful and coherent renderings of the cosmos, society, or morality. But, as with the previous causal image, the specific content of what actors are seeking remains underdetermined by this analytic langauge—though even the more pragmatist versions of this causal image of 'culture-in-action' separate this model from causal models based on rational choice or economic calculation (Swidler 2001).

The ontological commitments entailed by depth psychological causal stories are much fuller, and thus, for many, much more problematic. To construct sociological explanations with this causal imagery, one must accept that consciousness is radically constituted and conditioned by structured impulses and drives that are neither publically evident nor even directly accessible to the actor. For this reason, the interpretive work required of the analyst is much greater. For: in identifying semiotic mechanisms, the sociologist must perform the abstractions of formalist analysis; in understanding actor's experiences, she must become hermeneutically sensitive; in grasping the unconscious material of libidinal relations, however, she must become a socio-historical psychoanalyst, and thus bear the burden of working at several levels if interpretation simultaneously in constructing her analysis.[17]

With the exception of the memetic, the models outlined above tend to rely on both the imagery of semiotic mechanism and of meaningful action and experience, with the extension, in some versions of the social subjectification, patriarchal supersession, and racial recognition models, to depth psychology. But we should also recognize that the ideological totalization model and the moral reenchantment

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[15] For a discussion of structuralism, post-structuralism, and "neo" structuralism, and the relationship of all of these to sociological analysis, see (Heiskala 2003).

[16] Another way of putting this would be to draw John R. Hall's distinction between 'cultural structures,' which repeat themselves across time and spaces, and 'cultural meanings,' which have specific histories. See Hall (2000).

[17] There is of course the possibility that she would have not only to execute a causal analysis but also of prepare for practical intervention, or, "diagnosis and cure." Here we move very quickly out of the realm of sociological analysis and onto the terrain of revolutionary politics (see Fanon 1968; 1969) Use, then, of depth-psychological imagery can thus in some cases raise the stakes of investigation tremendously.

model, in particular, place a strong emphasis on the key actors' worldviews and meaningful repertoires (causal imagery 2). These analytical approaches orient the investigator, methodologically speaking, to actors' experiences of modernity—an attempt to understand what it was like to attend a Jacobin meeting or to plan the Russian Revolution. Shapin's study brings this same methodological orientation to the epistemic rift model: his study of etiquette manuals for English gentlemen sheds light on the transition precisely insofar as it sensitizes us to the lifeworlds of the men who started the scientific revolution in England.

Conclusion

We began by setting out seven models of culture in the transition because we expect research on transitions to modernity to draw from at least some of the seven in attempting to grasp the workings of culture in history. We offer this combinatorial pluralism as a starting point for theoretical argument and empirical investigation. The next step, as we see it, is to ask questions about how these models condition each other theoretically, and thus consider the possibility that certain of these mechanisms could be shown to produce the socio-cultural conditions under which other mechanisms can become active and relevant. In other words, we have put forward here an analytical ground, against which the figures of various actual historical transitions to modernity could emerge in research.[18]

Our strong preference is for synthesis. In Colonial New England, for example, the transition that saw the demise of Puritan society and the advent of the early republic raises questions about how the familiar problems of political sovereignty are connected to shifts in knowledge and cultural practices. In particular, it appears that both the advent of science and the transformation of gender ideologies were important aspects of the turbulent years of 1684–1720. How precisely did the epistemic rift that separates Puritan from Republican New England connect to the fall of Puritan patriarchy? Certainly, at the Salem Witch Trials in 1692, the Puritan elite were attempting to defend both their knowledge of the cosmos and their gendered power. For in their understanding, God's mastery over the fate of the colony was mirrored by a man's mastery of his family, as husband and father. Witches who manipulated the invisible world were women out of place, in two senses of the term: both cosmically dangerous, and in breach of familial norms (Reed 2007).

Thus, in spite of our own view of what constitutes the original modern break, we ultimately think of the distinctive processes modeled here as either pillars whose entablature constitutes modernity; or as streams that, when they run together, become strong sources of social dynamism in transitions to modernity. As for culture: it should be clear that the authors of this paper have repeatedly found that the elaborate processes of signification and meaning-making that accompany the advent of modern societies take place, inevitably, in the context of state-making, profit-taking, family formation, pursuit of the sacred, technical development, the

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[18] For an explication of this figure-ground metaphor as a conceptual methodology for historical research, see (Clemens 2005).

genesis of publics, and so forth. But the way in which culture encodes social power cannot be predicted by attending only to what have been understood as purely economic, political, and social causes. Culture also contributes to the massive reorganization of social structure, bodies, and souls that we call the transition to modernity.

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Isaac Ariail Reed is Assistant Professor of Sociology at the University of Colorado at Boulder, where he is also the director of the Sociology Honors Program. He is the author of *Interpretation and Social Knowledge* (University of Chicago Press, 2011), and of several articles in social theory, cultural sociology, and historical sociology, including "Why Salem Made Sense: Culture, Gender, and the Puritan Persecution of Witchcraft" (2007). One of his current projects addresses power and performance in conflicts over science and religion in American history.

Julia Adams is Professor of Sociology and International and Area Studies at Yale University, where she currently chairs the Sociology Department. She is the author of *The Familial State: Ruling Families and Merchant Capitalism in Early Modern Europe* (Cornell University Press, 2005) and co-editor, with Elisabeth S. Clemens and Ann Shola Orloff, of *Remaking Modernity: Politics, History, and Sociology* (Duke University Press, 2005). One of her current projects is a book on agency in contemporary America.