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## Culture in the Transitions to Modernity: Seven Sociological Models

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What were the cultural meanings that helped engender modernity? Sociologists should be able to answer this question, given the myriad books and articles produced under the sign of the cultural turn, and the fact that the transition to modernity is one of the core topics of comparative historical sociology. In this paper, we theorize how culture participated in the making of modernity – that is, how it helped bring about what are now recognized as modern societies. We do this by drawing on a wide variety of empirical and theoretical literature to develop a typology of seven models of culture in the transition to modernity. We then explore the affinities and contradictions among these models of culture in the transition. Finally, we explicate the models’ implicit or explicit causal imagery, and discuss how cultural explanations of the transition might, and might not, be integrated with other acultural models.

The body of this paper adopts a deliberately one-sided approach to the longstanding sociological problem of how modern societies originated. By bracketing or transgressing some of the conventional conceptual oppositions that organize the field – for example, materialism vs. idealism; political economy vs. ideology; interpretation vs. explanation – we attempt to bypass the increasingly sterile arguments over whether or not culture makes some sort of difference and to move toward normal research on just how it matters.

### *Preliminary Definitions*

We define culture as 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 not unlike that of human language. Thus when we use the term culture we mean, at the most general level, ‘structures of meaning shared by many social actors at a given time or place of interest.’ We are interested in these structures because we think they both generate and explain social action and social transformation.

We take as a starting point for our definition of modernity the argument in Adams, Clemens, and Orloff (2005) that modernity as a concept can and should be “remade.” This remaking starts with the inheritance from the second wave of comparative-historical sociology, which in its heyday in the latter decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century grouped under “modernity” *at least* the following unevenly related dimensions or characteristics: “calculation, bureaucracy, rationality, capitalism, disenchantment, industrialization, secularization, individualism.”(Adams, Clemens et al. 2005: 14) They then argue that these concerns are now mediated by a concern to make room for new topics in the study of modernity. These include (1) the theorization of agency over and against structural determinism (2) the inclusion as objects of study actors who were both *oppressed in* modernity and *repressed by* previous scholarship on modernity (e.g. women, colonized and enslaved populations, deviant sexualities), and (3) the reconsideration of the role of various supposed “irrationalities”—such as habit, emotion, religion, violence, and of course culture—in the transitions to modernity. Culture has therefore emerged in the heart of

contemporary third wave historical sociology both as substantive focus and form of analysis, via the many versions of the cultural turn.

We propose that theorizing the cultural processes that explain how people, places, and societies became “modern” contributes to the third wave of historical sociology in a particular way. One of the weaknesses of sociological theory in its classical and modern forms was the tendency to associate what was understood as “culture” with religious tradition, pre-modernity and the non-West as opposed (in pattern variable fashion) to rationalism and secularism, modernity, and the democratic and/or capitalist West. It seems to us that third wave historical sociologists are seeking an account of tradition, modernity, and the transitions between the two that is more polyvalent. Considering cultural sources of those transitions may be a particularly fruitful way to pursue this goal, for the very reason that for so much of the original scholarship on transitions to modernity “modern culture” was either an oxymoron or a euphemism for the idea that, when presented with modern institutions, people would automatically adopt and value them. We take it as neither. Rather, as we argue, the definitions of modernity prevalent in sociology—ultimately derived from Marx and Weber—need to be understood culturally, which is to say, as involving socially powerful meanings that differ significantly from those found in “non-modern” societies. Science and industrial capitalism, democracy and colonialism, etc. are thus understood as essential elements of modern life, but as ones which demand as aspects of their sociological definition such notoriously slippery and controversial terms as “scientific worldview,” “spirit of capitalism,” “democratic ethos,” and “colonial encounter.” It should become clear over the course of this paper, however, that each of our models makes these rather broad definitions of culture and modernity more precise in its own way.

## Seven Models of Culture in the Transitions to Modernity

Cultural accounts of the transition to modernity have, up to this point, suffered from two interrelated problems. First, they have been overwhelmingly concerned with refuting or setting themselves against more materialist or political-economic accounts of the transition—either at the level of presuppositions, or at level of the individual case. Perhaps related to this trend, these models have been expressed in an “all-or-nothing” idiom of cultural theory—excluding other cultural explanations for a variety of reasons. A more mundane approach is pursued here, one that remains relatively agnostic about the merits of these theories-turned-models—both in comparison with each other and in comparison with economic and political models of the transition. Before weighing their merits and deficiencies, it seems useful to lay them out as clearly as possible.

### *(1) Epistemic Rift*

In this model, the fundamental break which 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 original 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 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 or the superstructural effect political and economic transformation. Instead, it is understood as a dynamically created worldview that itself has cultural sources.<sup>1</sup> In this theory, 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 on early modern England, *A Social History of Truth* (1994), Steven Shapin investigates the origins of this epistemic rift.

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

## *(2) 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 of ‘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 and 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 repeated and permanently ambivalent.

It is also iterative, 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” 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 of the chaos that they project onto their subordinates, and the colonized internalize a permanent sense of lack which leads to a desire for the metropolis. As we will 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’ provocative question and answer—“How can the Enlightenment be interpreted? Only with the *Code Noir* in hand” (Sala-Molins 2006: 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 based, originally, in their experiences of attempting 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: 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: 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". 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.' 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 German archive (Steinmetz 2007). 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 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.

### *(3) The Fall of Patriarchy*

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.<sup>2</sup> 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 (2005a) 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 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, 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 fall of patriarchy 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: 204) In Landes’ 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: 158) Landes' and Adams' accounts potentially converge with respect to the cross-class alliances of men in service of disciplining 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 analytically address oneself to this struggle necessarily involves attending to the shaping power of familial signification in the evolving sphere of patrimonial politics.

#### *(4) Social Subjectification*

In this model, the transition to modernity occurs with the invention, via manners, discipline, and knowledge, of modern subjects. In one version of the tale, common to both western 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 1982, Ikegami 1995). A second version 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, on the other (Gorski 2003, Weber 1958) A third 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, Burchell, et al 1991). Researchers have taken up the governmentality idea with significant vigor, and used to explain a wide variety of modern phenomena: the welfare state in twentieth century Europe and the United States, modern economic policy and Fordism, the actuarial sciences (insurance, credit, etc), public and reproductive health and regulation, and the systematic management of metropolitan and colonial populations.

In each version of this model, culture is understood slightly differently. In the first version, exemplified by Elias' work on the "civilizing process," culture comes in as the gestures and manners that provide status and distinction for a formerly violent elite which has been, to use 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 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> 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: xviii).

#### *(5) Compensatory 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. In this model, 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 theory builds off one of the core claims of the classic social theories of Marx, Durkheim, Simmel 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, in this model one 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.

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 a Religious 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” which 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: 5) Thus, in this example, the popularity and power of nineteenth century melodrama is explained as a response to the ‘disenchantment’ of modern life.<sup>3</sup>

### *(6) 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, 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, and once again) the French Revolution. Beyond these exemplars, one can see a series of

modern ideological movements with an often-explicit Jacobin dimension—Haitian, Napoleonic, Bolshevik, National Socialist, Maoist.<sup>4</sup>

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: 79). Furet's work, overall, can be understood as an attempt to grasp and evaluate the egalitarian and authoritarian dimensions of 'totalizing modernity.'

One need not share Furet's political commitments, however, to use his texts as a prompt for more sociological investigations based on the totalizing model. In this regard, the second dimension of his notorious *Penser la Revolution Francaise* points to an understanding of the totalization model as iterative and performative, in a manner similar to how we interpreted the racial recognition model above. Furet (in)famously argued that the Marxist historians of the French Revolution shared with the Revolutionaries this ritualized imagination of total transformation.<sup>5</sup> 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.

We find another example of totalization theory in the new explanation of the Glorious Revolution, and the new theory of modern revolutions, offered in Steven Pincus’ 1688: The First Modern Revolution.<sup>6</sup> 1688 is devoted to showing how James II was, contrary to the Whiggish wisdom of English historiography, a “Catholic Modernizer” deeply influenced by Louis XIV.<sup>7</sup> During James’ short reign, this 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 which, 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.” 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.<sup>8</sup> 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 modernization. For example, James’ 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.”

### *(7) Memetic Replication*

As mentioned in the introduction, there are certain ideas, institutions, and formal organizations that are deeply associated with modernity. Those include rights; the capitalist wage-labor relation; the nation-state; bureaucracy and regulatory regimes; scientific research institutions; mass education; citizenship and voting; constitutions, and so on. In the memetic replication

model of the transition to modernity, these social forms—including the modern actor—become templates that are copied, transposed, diffused and otherwise reproduced across time and space. For John Meyer and his collaborators, for example, the cultural system that makes such modern ideas and institutions available copying is, in the first instance, European, and—because of the mechanism of memetic reproduction—is now global.

This approach bears a family resemblance to Richard Dawkins’ evolutionary-memetic approach to 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 to Dawkins’ philosophical project, but rather to highlight the divergences of this understanding of what causes transitions from the depth psychological claims of racial recognition theory. The memetic mechanism of transition, in this theory, refers to the exporting of pieces of modernity around the globe *after* it has been established in Europe. In a sense, then, this argument is 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 their classic 1977 paper, Meyer and Rowan argued that “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.”(Meyer and Rowan 1977: 341) Perhaps the most well-known application of this idea to the global advent of ‘modernity’ is the argument, made 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, Ramirez et al. 1992: 129). More recently, Meyer and Jepperson (2000) have argued that the modern actor itself is subject to such an analysis. The “cultural rules that constitute agentic actorhood in the first place and that subsequently structure it” derive, in their view, from the “development, expansion, and secularization of the principally religious models of Western Christendom”(Meyer and Jepperson 2000: 102). This model of the agent has, however, “been globalized to an astonishing degree” (Meyer and Jepperson 2000: 103). It continues to spread, and to find fertile new ground.

### Relations between the models: affinities and contradictions

By parsing these different models of modernity (as opposed to grouping them all under “rationalization” or “modernization”—terms which often induce tautological definitions or teleological explanations), we intend to make broad, cultural-theoretic accounts of modernity into a set of articulated, and empirically adjudicable, models about how meaning and signification mattered in the transitions to modernity. Still, one is inclined to ask: could some of these models be bundled together? Do others directly contradict each other? What is the relationship among them? In our view, though many combinations may be possible, there are certain affinities and contradictions at the level of theoretical logic that really stand out.

At the level of their definition and characterization of modernity, the ideological totalization model and the compensations of meaning model are at odds. The former views modernity—as several philosophers and political theorists have done—as a project of creating unity and replacing confusion with authenticity, transparency, and a single coherent meaning system (usually a Jacobin-esque political culture). The latter model, on the other hand, views modernity as a sort of explosion and differentiation of different meaning-systems. In the former, the dynamics of modernity are a product of the central conundrum of totalization—how to build and control a totally new society, when the people living in it bring with them habit, memory, and tradition. In the latter, it is precisely the loss of a sense of total organization that sends modernity in many different directions, as Weberian “value-spheres” multiply and fracture.

The totalization model and the compensations model could, furthermore, be linked up with different conceptualizations of what the epistemic rift model entails. Does the epistemological break consist in a breaking apart of different sorts of beings and knowledge as Bruno Latour proposes? If this is the case, the epistemic rift would appear to precipitate a search for compensations of meaning. Or does the epistemological break involve—as Carl Becker (1932) argued so elegantly—the replacement of a totalizing Christian meaning system with a totalizing meaning system centered around reason, liberty, and posterity? This would entail that the epistemic rift is a precondition of ideological totalization. In both cases, however, it is the worldviews of actors (often elites) that is the central problematic here. In other words, despite the manifest contradiction between the way the ideological totalization and compensations of meaning models characterize modernity, the *motivations* of the actors involved in each model are the same. Actors are motivated by a desire for a clear and coherent system of meaning by which

to organize one's own life, and to morally regulate the actions of others close to them. Thus there is a way in which these models speak the same theoretical language—an issue that we take up below.

However, in the construction of a dialogue between the epistemic rift, ideological totalization, and compensations of meaning models, we have painted a picture of the transition that remains internal to the West and its publically leading agents and representatives. In contrast to this, we can identify in the supersession of patriarchy, racial recognition, and social subjectification models a common focus on the relationality of modern meanings and identities. From this perspective, “science” and “reason” are essential aspects of modern power/knowledge formations, key appendages to a reconfiguration of meaning and social power that constitutes the fundamentally new social orders of modernity.

Modernity, in this multi-causal cultural account, is invented in the social imagination in so far as the human being possessed of rational capacities (or, to use the eighteenth century word, “faculties”) is taken—sometimes explicitly, sometimes implicitly—to be male and racially superior. Thus, modernity would emerge from the creation of the modern subject in opposition not only to the state, but to his dependent or abject others: women and non-Western peoples. This would capture the ways in which the colonized/colonizer relationship, for example, was conducted in the name of a modern state, and the ways in which supposedly rational states in modern metropolises repeatedly performed exclusions inspired by discourses of virility and male authority. The combination of these models would allow a certain, generalized theoretical idea to emerge and be tested in research: that the very invention of modern political democracy as a

band of brothers was dependent upon the conception that they—and not their dependent female others, consigned to the private sphere, or their alternately abject, enslaved, or noble savage others, stuck in the state of nature—were inherently possessed of the ability to self-govern.

Finally, in contrast to all of the other models, the memetic replication model seems to work in a different register. *Prima facie*, of course, this model could be seen as a mechanism for the dispersion of any of the other six versions of cultural modernity. In one way or another, certain aspects of a new epistemology or worldview, a binary understanding of civilized and savage, a new ideology of brother-rule or sexual contract, the construal of individuals as agents of their own destiny who are nonetheless subjected to surveillance, a set of compensatory meanings, or a total ideology for remaking society could be transported across the globe. Yet the extent to which the mechanism of memetic transfer—which of course itself depends upon the more material-technological aspects of modernity to “work”—could really transport the cultural structures and dynamics proposed by each of the previously elaborated theories is itself an issue. It is not at all clear, for example, such a transfer of information could really account for the authenticity and deep meaning that vanguard parties ascribe to their totalizing ideologies.

But perhaps the most fundamental contradiction is that between the memetic replication model and the racial recognition model. Both models address ‘modernity’ as a global phenomenon, the dynamics of which continue today, and both insist that in addressing the dynamics of modernity, one cannot be limited to local or national trends or histories. In the memetic model, certain signs of a modern, rationalized society develop “on their own” in the West. Then, when certain global events or turning points (such as World War II, the anti-colonial

revolutions, or the fall of the Soviet Union) lower the barriers to the globalization of these signs, they are transmitted across the globe, and this brings about massive social changes. In the case of mass education, for example, the massive shift in higher education enrollments across the globe after 1960 is caused by “global cultural change.”(Schofer and Meyer 2005: 902). This, in turn, is understood as “the triumph of optimistic rationalized ideologies—of science, democratic participation, and national development—in the contemporary world.”(Schofer and Meyer 2005: 917).

The racial recognition model has a radically different understanding of the nature and causes of modernity. In this model, the notion that western modernity developed certain proclivities and institutions, and then was ‘globalized’ after 1960, under the sway of American influence, is exactly *not* what happened. Rather, the structured relationship between the West and its Others that *began at the end of the fifteenth century* was essential to the building of all of the institutions and cultural frames that we associate with modernity. This structural relationship existed, in various forms, at the economic, political, cultural levels and—in some versions of the model—at the level of the psyche as well. In this account of the transition, then, relations of conflict and complicity run deep, both historically and psychologically speaking. Furthermore, in the racial recognition model, many of the cultural aspects of this structural relationship reiterate themselves, albeit in a new form, even after the political changes wrought by the nationalist revolutions of the 1940s, 1950s and 1960s (as do, we might add, many of the economic structures). Thus, the hegemony of Western models of higher education is not due to a triumph of ‘democratization’ or ‘global connection’, but rather to the latest iteration and modulation of a

cultural power relation that produces, in the post-colonial third world, the “captive mind” (Alatas 2006).

The radical contradiction between the racial recognition and the memetic replication models brings us to the more general issue of why these affinities and contradictions obtain. Why do some of these models appear to fit so well together (the fall of patriarchy, social subjectification, and racial recognition), while others speak the same language but with different characterizations of modernity (epistemic rift, ideological totalization, and the compensations of meaning models), and still others appear to be radically incommensurable (racial recognition and memetic replication)? A key part of the explanation, we think, rests with the causal imageries implicit in the models.

### Cultural Causation in the Models of Transition

Much of the theoretical literature from which these models derive is colloquially understood to be ‘interpretive’ rather than ‘explanatory’ theory. But we do not see this as an immutable philosophical divide, but rather as an indication that the causal imagery implied by these cultural models is quite different from that used in models of the transition based in politics and markets—and perhaps less well understood. Thus, some clarification about the basic causal structure of these cultural arguments is a useful prerequisite to a fully empirical attempt to test these models’ scope and accuracy, as well as a key to understanding the affinities and contradictions that exist between them. Let us set forth the three central causal images in the theories outlined above.<sup>9</sup>

#### *Causal Image 1: Semiotic mechanisms*

In structural linguistics,<sup>10</sup> 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 in so far 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 sometimes understood to be themselves motors of economic and 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 more stable and to 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 empirically identify certain processes of signification that have been consequential sources of 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);

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

It is worth noting that the memetic model of the transition is – at the level of its causal imagery -- the sparsest and the most specific of the models we have outlined. The replication of signs from one organization to another, via the 'myths' that make up an organization's environment, is perhaps an example of a semiotic mechanism that requires very little depth of meaning. Notoriously, the memetic model also excludes actors as part its explanatory apparatus; this differentiates cultural memesis from many other cultural explanations which rely upon an imagery of actors somehow encountering people, problems, and processes in a meaningful world.

### *Causal image 2: Culture in Action, or, Experience and pragmatics*

Part of what makes meaning effective upon social life may involve the subjective experiences and predispositions of actors. Actors in the social world solve problems, resolve contradictions, construct identities, and so on. These projects of human agents are an important part of many causal explanations that call upon culture. In this causal imagery, one must show

that a set of actions or events were brought about by actors with certain purposes and with affinities for 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.<sup>11</sup> 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).

### *Causal Image 3: Depth Psychological*

Finally, some of our theories of culture in the transition to modernity—in particular racial recognition theory, and the second, more violent model of the symbolic transformation of patriarchy—invoke a causal imagery in which collective representations interact with libidinal impulses such as sexual desire or aggression. This involves both a ‘thicker’ or ‘deeper’ model of the actor—in which they have not only purposes and experiences, but also unconscious energies, repressed memories, etc.—and 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), 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) call forth are in fact deeply bound up with the already energized symbolic meanings of black skin and white skin. In a famous footnote, he amends Hegel’s model:

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: 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. Furthermore, these fantasies and projections come to structure the minds of both colonizer and colonized, engaging them in a relationship that outlasts any particular arrangement of resources and labor. Thus, in this imagery, social life is pushed forward by a dynamic link between sexuality, aggression, and power that, in individuals, occurs in the unconscious, and, at the collective level, plays itself 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.<sup>12</sup>

(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.

*The presuppositions of the different causal imageries*

It is worth pointing out that all of the theories of the transition that we discussed above rely to some degree on the causal imagery of semiotic mechanisms or, perhaps more broadly, semiotic conditions for action. The ontological commitment here is relatively minimal (at least for the cultural sociologist): 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 and post-structuralist linguistics. But beyond this, the investigator can be an empiricist or a historicist—drawing the ‘nature’ of actors or social structures from the historically variable content of the collective representations.<sup>13</sup>

The causal imagery of experience and action-in-the-world adds another level of commitment, but again the ontological baggage added is relatively minimal: one must conceive of agents that 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, and/or morality. But, as with the previous causal image, the specific content of what actors are seeking remains underdetermined by this

phenomenology—though, as we discuss below, commitment to even the more pragmatist causal image of ‘culture-in-action’ may separate these models from those based on rational choice or economic calculation.

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 really 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 (or interpretive leaps!) 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 not only of causal analysis but also of 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 (Fanon 1968, 1969). Use, then, of depth-psychological imagery raises the stakes of investigation tremendously.

### *Affinities and Contradictions Reconsidered*

What we can see, then, is that the memetic replication and the racial recognition models are radically opposed to each other not only in their substantive accounts of the history of modernity, but also in the causal imagery that they use to explain this history. The memetic replication model has an austere and parsimonious mechanism at its core: the replication of signs and, thus,

the diffusion of information. The racial recognition model, on the other hand, has a much more weighty set of presuppositions, combining as it does semiotic systems that create difference, experience and historical trauma, and a model of power relations that extends to the level of the psyche. Clearly there are significant analytical trade-offs here.

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, transformation of patriarchy, and racial recognition models, to depth psychology. But we should also recognize that the ideological totalization model and the compensations of meaning model, in particular, place a strong emphasis on the worldviews and meaningful repertoires of certain key actors (causal imagery 2). These analytical approaches orient the investigator, methodologically speaking, to a hermeneutics of modernity—an attempt to understand *what it was like* to attend a Jacobin meeting, to plan the Russian Revolution, or to construct a new science of nature. Shapin's study brings this same methodological orientation to the epistemic rift model: his study of etiquette manuals to understand what it meant and what it felt like to be an English gentleman sheds light on the transition precisely in so far as it sensitizes us to the lifeworlds of the men who started the scientific revolution.

In contrast, the language that attends the models that make the relationship between modernity and its others central (fall of patriarchy, racial recognition, social subjectification) always contain a certain degree of doubt about explaining with lifeworlds in this way. Whether or not these models use depth psychological imagery, they all contain strong imperatives for the

investigator to consider how, where, and when certain relations of power are written into, and by, culture. Here, socially meaningful differences—between male and female, public and private, civilized and savage, etc.—are grafted to differences in capacity that we normally associate with power or domination.

### Conclusion: Reintegration and invention

In the frame supplied by these causal imageries, more models for culture in the transition to modernity could be developed. Herein we have only attempted to identify and articulate seven models that we find particularly salient to research on the transitions to modernity, and we have to do so in a deliberately agnostic manner. We do not view them as exhaustive, but we do see the causal imagery associated with them as requiring a definitive transformation of the causal stories and accounts that make up the social science lexicon. Most immediately, the cultural models of the transition to modernity imply that the notion of a unitary actor with certain readily understandable, indeed rational, interests that drive the otherwise static social order into dynamism is an artifact of modernity's own universalizing ideological project, rather than a sustainable theoretical presupposition. These models also imply that semiotic structures can work with the force and power usually ascribed to economic imperatives and political opportunities. And the agents that act within in and through various cultural, political, and economic structures may take their cues from previous experience and intersubjectively produced symbols.

It is clear, then, that culturalist models of the transition to modernity will be at odds with models that presuppose a rational or highly strategic agent *tout court*. Some of the models above

simply reject this limited account of agents' motivations. Both the totalization model, for example, and the depth psychological reading of the colonial encounter presuppose actors whose motivations are infused by emotion and value as well as being rational-strategic. Other cultural models of the transition make rationality—and the calculating, contract-making agent—a historical problem *to be explained*. The social subjectification model clearly takes the self-actualizing individual who pursues his or her interests in a calculated way as an essential aspect of modernity, an orientation whose advent has to be explained by cultural dynamics. The symbolic supersession of patriarchy model also proposes to explain the advent of a certain sort of agent (the democratic citizen, especially as he figures as a property-owning white male) as the product of the transition to modernity.

On the other hand, several of the cultural models of the transition could be integrated into a more overarching and multidimensional account of the origins of modern societies, if cultural formations—theorized as structures of signification—are seen as one dimension of dynamic, conflicted social processes that produce certain tendencies and proclivities in acting persons. The ideal here is not a grand theory of modernity or modernization, but rather the ability to produce sociologically multidimensional accounts of contingent and conjunctural historical processes.<sup>14</sup> At the structural level cultural theories are more easily integrated with radical political economy, wherein the idea that market structures call into being certain sorts of agents with certain sorts of subjective orientations is a frequent sociological refrain (Polanyi 2001, Block 1990).

So, for example, there is no reason *in principle* why Stephen Shapin's account of the origins of the scientific worldview could not be combined with an account of England's

economic and political history. Shapin already implies one connection that could be drawn 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. Likewise, in Adams' 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. For Adams, the games of signification are always already games of profit and power, as her analysis of Elizabeth I's remarkable ability to manipulate the gendered signs of royal authority shows (Adams 2005b).

Ultimately, then, if the methods for the study of social meaning—semiotics, hermeneutics, and, to a certain degree, psychoanalysis—are given their place beside the standard conceptual approaches of political economy, then “culture” can become part of the historical sociologist's toolkit. It is to this end that we have diagnosed and reconstructed seven major models of how culture matters for modernity.

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<sup>1</sup> In *We Have Never Been Modern*, for example, Bruno Latour 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.”(Latour 1993: 13)

<sup>2</sup> 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 (2005a: 31-33) 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).

<sup>3</sup> Mark Schneider’s work on the re-enchantment of contemporary American life could also be interpreted along these lines (Schneider 1993).

<sup>4</sup> In the register of grand theory, of course, both Eisenstadt (1999) and Voegelin (2000) have explored this ‘Jacobin’ or ‘gnostic’ aspect of modernity.

<sup>5</sup> 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.

<sup>6</sup> Manuscript in press.

<sup>7</sup> Once again, we see the iterative nature of the totalizing ideal.

<sup>8</sup> 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.

<sup>9</sup> 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 (White 1973) and cultural-theoretical arguments (White 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 investigator’s 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).

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<sup>10</sup> We do not elaborate on debates within structural linguistics here. The classic references are Saussure(1966); Jakobson(1962). For theoretical overviews of structuralism and post-structuralism, see Culler (1975, 1982).

<sup>11</sup> 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 (Davidson 2006, Davidson 2004, Risjord 2000, Henderson 1993)

<sup>12</sup> Here we use a post-Lacanian reading of Freud, wherein the unconscious is constituted by *both* drives and representations. See Lacan (1977).

<sup>13</sup> Another way of putting this would be to draw John Hall’s distinction between ‘cultural structures,’ which repeat themselves across time and spaces, and ‘cultural meanings,’ which have specific histories (Hall 2000).

<sup>14</sup> For one philosophical outline of this sort of epistemology, see Daniel Little’s “contingent, conjunctual, meso-history” or “CCM” (Little 2000). For another, based on a historicist reading of critical realism, see Steinmetz (1998).