Modern, Anti, Post, and Neo: How Social Theories Have Tried to Understand the "New World" of "Our Time"[1]

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Abstract: This article links the cognitive contents of the different theoretical perspectives that have emerged since World War II to their meaning-making functions, and links both to their social origins broadly understood. It views social theorists as intellectuals who try to understand the crisis of their times. In doing so, they draw not only upon the cognitive resources of earlier social theories but upon the structured traditions of cultural codes and narratives. In order to explain the new and often unnerving experiences of their changing societies, intellectuals develop binary oppositions whose constructions of sacrality and profanity allow them to place the present in relation to a simplified past and future, thus creating "history." Social theory is also built upon changing narrative forms, genres of collective heroism, romantic individualism, tragedy, comedy, realism, and irony. The author suggests that in recent years the comic and ironic perspectives of postmodern theory have been challenged by a neo-modern perspective that is more heroic and romantic and more confident about solving the "problems of our time."

History is not a text, not a narrative, master or otherwise. [Yet] as an absent cause, it is inaccessible to us except in textual form, [and] our approach to it and to the Real itself necessarily passes through its prior textualization. Fredric Jameson

Sometime during the mid-1970s, at the annual meeting of the American Sociological Association, a major debate erupted around modernization theory that crystallized a decade of social and intellectual change. Two speakers were featured, Alex Inkeles and Immanuel Wallerstein. Inkeles reported that his studies of "modern man" (Inkeles/Smith 1974) had demonstrated that personality shifts toward autonomy and achievement were crucial and predictable results of social modernization, which revolved most centrally around the industrialization of society. The response to Inkeles was appreciative from many of the senior members of the audience, skeptical from the younger. Wallerstein responded to Inkeles in a manner that pleased the younger generation more. "We do not live in a modernizing world but in a capitalist world," he proclaimed (1979: 133), asserting that "what makes this world tick is not the need for achievement but the need for profit." When Wallerstein went on to lay out "an agenda of intellectual work for those who are seeking to understand the *world systemic transition from capitalism to socialism in which we are living*" (1979: 135, original italics), he literally brought the younger members of the audience to their feet.[2]

[1] Drafts of this essay were delivered at colloquia organized by the UCLA Center for Comparative Social Analysis; the Research Committee on Theory of the International Sociological Association and the Swedish Collegium for Advanced Study in the Social Sciences; the UCLA Center for Social Theory and History; and the Sociology Departments of the Universities of Montreal and McGill. Colleagues on each of these occasions offered helpful criticisms. Among them, the comments of Piotr Sztompka and Bjorn Wittrock were particularly helpful. Critical readings were also supplied by Donald N. Levine, Robin Wagner-Pacifici, Hans Joas, Bernard Barber, and Franco Crespi. I acknowledge with particular gratitude Ron Eyerman, whose ideas about intellectuals stimulated the present work, and John Lim, whose work on the New York intellectuals proved particularly helpful. This essay is dedicated to Ivan Szelenyi.

[2] As I remember the event, and it was certainly an event, the entire audience became rather heated up. One leading leftist sociologist of development offered the sarcastic intervention that modernization theory had actually produced world-wide poverty, and made the pointed suggestion that Inkeles try selling his tired modernization line somewhere else. At this point, shouts arose from various quarters of the audience and this distinguished social scientist had to be physically restrained from underscoring his theoretical point in a decidedly nonintellectual manner. The article from which I am quoting, written by Wallerstein and published in a collection published by him in 1979, clearly was drawn from the A.S.A. talk referred to above, although my references to the talk are drawn from memory. Tiryakian (1991) places Wallerstein's article in a similar historical perspective

Fifteen years later, the lead article in the *American Sociological Review* was entitled "A Theory of Market Transition: From Redistribution to Markets in State Socialism." The transition referred to in this article was rather different from the one Wallerstein had in mind. Written by Victor Nee, once inclined to Maoism and now a rational choice theorist specializing in China's burgeoning market economy, the article suggested that the only hope for organized socialism was capitalism. In fact, Nee portrayed socialism exactly as Marx had depicted capitalism, and provoked remarkably similar expectations. State socialism, he wrote, was an archaic, out-dated mode of production, one whose internal contradictions were leading to capitalism. Employing the class conflict analytic of Marx to the productive system that Marx believed would end such conflict for all time, Nee argued that it is state socialism, not capitalism, that "appropriates surplus directly from the immediate producers and creates and structures social inequality through the processes of its reallocation" (1989: 665). Such expropriation of surplus – exploitation – can be overcome only if workers are given the opportunity to own and sell their own labour power. Only with markets, Nee insisted, could workers develop the power to "withhold their product" and protect their "labor power" (p. 666). This movement from one mode of production to another would shift power to the formerly oppressed class. "The transition from redistribution to markets," he concluded, "involves a transfer of power favoring direct producers" (ibid.).

1. A New "Transition"

In the juxtaposition between these formulations of modernity, socialism, and capitalism there lies a story. They describe not only competing theoretical positions but deep shifts in historical sensibility. We must understand both together, I believe, if either contemporary history or contemporary theory is to be understood at all.

Social scientists and historians have long talked about "the transition." An historical phrase, a social struggle, a moral transformation for better or for worse, the term referred, of course, to the movement from feudalism to capitalism. For Marxists, the transition initiated the unequal and contradictory system that produced its antithesis, socialism and equality. For liberals, the transition represented an equally momentous transformation of traditional society but created a set of historical alternatives – democracy, capitalism, contracts and civil society – that did not have a moral or social counterfactual like socialism ready to hand.

In the last five years, for the first time in the history of social science, "the transition" has come to mean something that neither of these earlier treatments could have foreseen. It is the transition from communism to capitalism, a phrase that seems oxymoronic even to our chastened ears. The sense of world-historical transformation remains, but the straight line of history seems to be running in reverse.

In this recent period we have witnessed perhaps the most dramatic set of spatially and temporally contiguous social transformations in the history of world. The more contemporary meaning of transition may not entirely eclipse the earlier one, yet there is no doubt that it has already diminished its significance and will arouse significantly more intellectual interest for a long time to come.

This second great transformation, to redirect Polanyi's (1944) famous phrase, has produced an unexpected, and for many an unwelcome, convergence in both history and social thought. It is impossible even for already committed intellectuals to ignore the fact that we are witnessing the death of a major alternative not only in social thought but in society itself.[3] In the foreseeable future, it is unlikely that either citizens or elites will try to structure their primary allocative systems in non-market ways.[4]

and provides an analysis of the fate of modernization theory that bears a marked similarity to the one I undertake here.

[3] This impossibility is strikingly expressed in the cri de coeur issued by Shoji Ishitsuka, one of Japan's leading Lukacs scholars and "critical theorists":
"The whole history of Social Enlightenment, which was so great for its realization of the idea of equality, has well as so tragic for its enforcemnt of dictatorship, has ended ... The crisis of the human sciences [which as resulted] can be described as a crisis of recogniton. The progress-oriented historical viewpoint has totally disappeared because the historical movement is now toward capitalism from socialism. The crisis also finds its expression in the whole decline of stage-oriented historical theory in general." (Ishitsuka 1994)

[4] "We should henceforth conclude that the future of socialism, if it has one, can only lie within capitalism," writes Steven Lukes (1990: 574) in an effort to come to grips with the new transitions. For an intelligent, often anguished, and revealing intra-left de-

For their part, social scientists will be far less likely to think of antimarket "socialist societies" as counterfactual alternatives with which to explain their own. They will be less likely to explain economic stratification by implicitly comparing it with an egalitarian distribution produced by publicly rather than privately held property, a "plausible world" (Hawthorn 1991) that inevitably seems to suggest that economic inequality is produced by the existence of private property itself. Social scientists will, perhaps, also be less likely to explain status stratification by postulating the counterfactual tendency to communal esteem in a world that is uncorrupted by individualism of a bourgeois rather than socialist kind. Similarly, it will become much more difficult to speak about the emptiness of formal democracy, or to explain its limitations by pointing merely to the existence of a dominant economic class, for these explanations, too, require counterfactuals of a traditionally "socialist" kind. In brief, it will be much less easy to explain contemporary social problems by pointing to the capitalist nature of the societies of which they are a part.

In this essay, I do not propose a return to "convergence" or modernization theories of society as such, as some reinvirgorated propnents of the early tradition (Inkeles 1991, Lipset 1990) apparently do.[5] I will propose, however, that contemporary social theory must be much more sensitive to the apparent reconvergence of the world's regimes and that, as a result, we must try to incorporate some broad sense of the universal and shared elements of development into a critical, undogmatic, and reflective theory of social change. Indeed, in the conclusion of this essay I will demonstrate that a growing range of widely diverse contemporary social theorists, from literary radicals and rational choice theorists to postcommunists, are speaking convergence even if (apologies to Moliere) they don't believe it is prose, and I will address the challenging question, recently raised so trenchantly by Muller (1992), of whether this emerging conversation can avoid the relatively simplistic and totalizing form that obliterated the complexities of earlier societies and the particularisms of our own.

Despite this new and more sophisticated form, however, what I will later call neo-modern theory will remain as much myth as science (Barbour 1974), as much narrative as explanation (Entrikin 1991). Even if one believes, as I do, that such a broader and more sophisticated theory of social development is now historically compelling, it remains the case that every general theory of social change is rooted not only in cognition but in existence, that it possesses a surplus of meaning in Ricoeur's (1977) deeply suggestive phrase. Modernity, after all, has always been a highly relativist term (Pocock 1987, Habermas 1981, Bourricaud 1987). It emerged in the fifth century when newly Christianized Romans wished to distinguish their religiosity from two forms of barbarians, the heathens of antiquity and the unregenerate Jews. In medieval times, modernity was reinvented as a term implying cultivation and learning, which allowed contemporary intellectuals to identify backward, with the classical learning of the Greek and Roman heathens themselves. With the Enlightenment, modernity became identified with rationality, science, and forward progress, a semantically arbitrary relationship that seems to have held steady to this day. Who can doubt that, sooner or later, a new historical period will displace this second "age of equipoise" (Burn 1974) into which we have so inadvertently but fortuitously slipped. New contradictions will emerge and competing sets of world-historical possibilities will arise, and it is unlikely that they will be viewed in terms of the emerging neo-modernization frame.

It is precisely this sense of the instability, of the imminent transitoriness of the world, that introduces myth into social theory. Despite the fact that we have no idea what our historical possibilities will be, every theory of social change must theorize not only the past but the present and future as well. We can do so only in a nonrational way, in relation not only to what we know but to what we believe, hope, and fear. Every historical period needs a narrative that defines its past in terms of the present, and suggests a future that is fundamentally different, and typically "even better," than contemporary time. For this reason, there is always an eschatology, not merely an epistemology, in theorizing about social change.

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bate on the ideological and empirical implications of these events, see the debate to which Lukes' essay forms a part: Goldfarb (1990), Katznelson (1990), Heilbroner (1990) and Campeanu (1990).

[5] For some contentious and revealing formulations of these issues, see the debate between Nikolai Genov, Piotr Sztompka, Franco Crespi, Hans Joas, myself, and other theorists in the 1991 and 1992 issues of Theory, the Newsletter of the Research Committee on Sociological Theory of the International Sociological Association. Those exchanges, which reproduced many of the old lines of modernization versus antimodernization debate, demonstrated how difficult it is to step outside of binary thinking on the convergence issue, for reasons that the following analysis of codes will make clear.

I proceed now to examine early modernization theory, its contemporary reconstruction, and the vigorous intellectual alternatives that arose in the period between.[6] I will insist throughout on the relation of these theoretical developments to social and cultural history, for only in this way can we understand social theory not only as science but also as an ideology in the sense made famous by Geertz (1973). For unless we recognize the interpenetration of science and ideology in social theory, neither element can be evaluated or clarified in a rational way. With this stricture in mind, I delineate four distinctive theoretical-cum-ideological periods in postwar social thought: modernization theory and romantic liberalism; antimodernization theory and heroic radicalism; postmodern theory and comic detachment; and the emerging phase of neo-modernization or reconvergence theory, which seems to combine the narrative forms of each of its predecessors on the post-war scene.

While I will be engaging in genealogy, locating the historical origins of each phase of post-war theory in an archaeology way, it is vital to keep in mind that each one of the theoretical residues of the phases which I examine remains vitally alive today. My archeology, on other words, is not only an investigation of the past but of the present. Because the present is history, this genealogy will help us to understand the theoretical sedimentation within which we live intellectually today.

2. Modernization: Code, Narrative, and Explanation

Drawing from a centuries-long tradition of evolutionary and Enlightenment inspired theories of social change, "modernization" theory as such was born with the publication of Marian Levy's book on Chinese family structure (1949) and died sometime in the mid-60s, during one of those extraordinarily heated rites of spring that marked student uprisings, antiwar movements, and newly humanist socialist regimes, and which preceded the long hot summers of the race riots and Black Consciousness movement in the U.S.

Modernization theory can and certainly should be evaluated as a scientific theory, in the postpositivist, *wissenschaftliche* sense.[7] As an explanatory effort, the modernization model was characterized by the following ideal-typical traits.[8]

1. Societies were conceived as coherently organized systems whose subsystems were closely interdependent.

2. Historical development was parsed into two types of social systems, the traditional and the modern, statuses which were held to determine the character of their societal subsystems in determinate ways.

3. The modern was defined with reference to the social organization and culture of specifically Western societies, which were typified as individualistic, democratic, capitalist, scientific, secular, and stable, and as dividing work from home in gender-specifc ways.

4. As an historical process, modernization was held to involve nonrevolutionary, incremental change.

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[6] Paul Colomy and I (1992) have introduced the term "reconstruction" to indicate a path of scientific cumulation that is more radical vis-a-vis the originating tradition than the kinds of efforts at specification, elaboration, or revision that more typically mark the efforts of social scientists who wish to keep their theoretical tradition alive in response to intellectual challenge and the loss of scientific prestige. Reconstruction suggests that fundamental elements of the founder's "classical" work are changed, often by incorporating elements from its challengers, even while the tradition as such is defended, e.g., Habermas's effort to "reconstruct historical materialism" in the mid-1970s. Reconstruction should also be distinguished from "theory creation," in which a fundamentally different theoretical tradition is created, e.g., Habermas' later effort to create the theory of communicative action.

[7] By scientific, I do not evoke the principles of empiricism. I do mean to refer, however, to the explanatory ambition and propositions of a theory, which must be evaluated in their own terms. These can be interpretive and cultural, eschew narrative or statistical causality and, indeed, the natural scientific form. By extra-scientific, I mean to refer to a theory's mythical or ideological function.

[8] I draw here from a broad range of writings that appeared in the 1950s and early 1960s by such figures as Daniel Lerner, Marion Levy, Alex Inkeles, Talcott Parsons, David Apter, Robert Bellah, S. N. Eisenstadt, Walt Rostow, and Clark Kerr. None of these authors accepted each of these propositions as such, and some of them, as we will see, "sophisticated" them in significant ways. Nonetheless, these propositions can be accepted as forming the common denominator upon which the great part of the tradition's explanatory structure was based. For an excellent overview of this traditon that, while more detailed, agrees in fundamental respects with the approach taken here, see Sztompka 1993: 129–136.

5. The historical evolution to modernity – modernization – was viewed as likely to succeed, thus assuring that traditional societies would be provided with the resources for what Parsons (1966) called a general process of adaptive "upgrading," including economic take-off to industrialization, democratization via law, and secularization and science via education.

There were important aspects of truth in these models, which were articulated by thinkers of considerable historical and sociological insight. One truth, for example, lay in the insight that there are functional not merely idealistic exigencies that push social systems toward democracy, markets, and the universalization of culture, and that shifts toward "modernity" in any subsystem create considerable pressures on the others to respond in a complementary way.[9] This understanding made it possible for the more sophisticated among them to make prescient predictions about the eventual instability of state socialist societies, thus avoiding the rational-is-the-real embarrassments encountered by theorists of a more leftist kind. Thus, Parsons (1971: 127) insisted long before Perestroika "that the processes of democratic revolution have not reached an equilibrium in the Soviet Union and that further developments may well run broadly in the direction of Western types of democratic government, with responsibility to an electorate rather than to a self-appointed party." It should perhaps also be emphasized that, whatever their faults, modernization theorists were not provincials. Despite their ideological intent, the most important of them rarely confused functional interdependence with historical inevitability. Parsons' theorizing, for example (1962: 466, 474), stressed that systemic exigencies actually opened up the possibility of historical choice.

> Underneath the ideological conflicts [between capitalism and communism] that have been so prominent, there has been emerging an important element of very broad consensus at the level of values, centering in the complex we often refer to as "modernization" ... Clearly, definite victory for either side is not the only possible choice. We have another alternative, namely, the eventual integration of both sides – and of uncommitted units as well – in a wider system of order.[10]

Despite these important insights, however, the historical judgment of subsequent social thought has not erred in its evaluation of modernization theory as a failed explanatory scheme. Neither nonwestern nor precontemporary societies can be conceptualized as internally homogeneous (cf., Mann 1986). Their subsystems are more loosely coupled (e.g., Meyers/Rowan 1977, Alexander/Colomy 1990) and their cultural codes more independent (e.g., Hall 1985). Nor is there the kind of dichotomized historical development that can justify a single conception of traditional or modern, as Eisenstadt's (e.g., 1964; cf., Alexander 1992) extensive investigations of "Axial Age" civilizations makes clear. Even the concept, "western society," built upon spatial and historical contiguity, fails sufficiently to recognize historical specificity and national variation. Social systems, moreover, are not as internally homogeneous as were supposed, nor are there necessarily grounds for optimism that modernization will succeed. In the first place, universalizing change is neither imminent nor developmental in an idealist sense; it is often abrupt, involving contingent positions of power, and can have murderous results.[11] In the second place, even if one were to accept a linear conceptual scheme, one would have to acknowledge Nietzsche's observation that historical regression is just as possible as progress, indeed, perhaps even more likely. Finally, modernization, even if it does triumph, does not necessarily increase social contentment. It may be that the more highly developed a society, the more it produces, encourages,

[9] Probably the most sophisticated formulation of this truth is Smelser's elaboration (e.g., 1968), during the final days of modernization theory, of how modernization produced leads and lags between subsystems, a process which, borrowing from Trotsky, he called uneven and combined development. Like virtually every other important younger theorist of the period, Smelser eventually gave up on the modernization model, in his case for a "process" model (Smelser 1991) that delineated no particular epochal characteristics and which allowed subsystems to interact in a highly open-ended way.

[10] I am grateful to Muller (1992: 118) for recalling this passage. Muller notes the "acute sense of reality" (ibid., 111) displayed in modernization theory's "amazing hypotheses" (ibid., p. 112) about the eventual demise of state socialism. He insists, quite correctly in my view, that "it was not the [neo-Marxist] critique of capitalism in the 1970s which correctly read the secular trends of the late twentieth century – it was Parsons' theory" (ibid.).

[11] "Seen historically, 'modernization' has always been a process propelled by inter-cultural exchange, military conflicts and economic competition among states and power blocks – as, likewise, Western postwar modernization took place within a newly created world order" (Muller 1992: 138). See also the critiques of classical differentiation theory in Alexander (1988) and Alexander/Colomy (1990).

and relies upon strident and often utopian expressions of alienation and criticism (Durkheim 1937).

When we look back on a "scientifically invalidated" theory that dominated the thinking of an entire intellectual stratum for two decades, those of us who are still committed to the project of a rational and generalizing social science will be inclined to ask ourselves, why was it believed? While we would ignore at our peril the partial truths of modernization theory, we would not be wrong to conclude that there were extra-scientific reasons involved. Social theory (Alexander/Colomy 1992) must be considered not only as a research program but as a generalized discourse, one very important part of which is ideology. It is as a meaning structure, as a form of existential truth, that social scientific theory functions effectively in an extrascientific way.[12]

To understand modernization theory and its fate, then, we must examine it not only as a scientific theory but as an ideology – not in the mechanistic Marxist or more broadly Enlightenment sense (e.g., Boudon 1986) of "false consciousness" but in the Geertzian (1973) one. Modernization theory was a symbolic system that functioned not only to explain the world in a rational way, but to interpret the world in a manner that provided "meaning and motivation" (Bellah 1970b). It functioned as a metalanguage that instructed people how to live.

Intellectuals must interpret the world, not simply change or even explain it. To do so in a meaningful, reassuring, or inspiring manner fashion means that intellectuals must make distinctions. They must do so especially in regard to phases of history. If intellectuals are to define the "meaning" of their "time", they must identify a time that preceded the present, offer a morally compelling account of why it was superseded, and tell their audiences whether or not such a transformation will be repeated vis-a-vis the world they live in. This is, of course, merely to say that intellectuals produce historical narratives about their own time.[13]

The ideological dimension of modernization theory is further illuminated by thinking of this narrative function in a structuralist, or semiotic way (Barthes 1977). Because the existential unit of reference is one's own time, the empirical unit of reference must be totalized as one's own society. It must, in other words, be characterized as a whole regardless of the actual nature of its divisions and inconsistencies. Not only one's own time, then, but one's own society must be characterized by a single linguistic term, and the world that preceded the present must be characterized by another single broad term as well. In light of these considerations, the important ideological, or meaning-making function that modernization theory served seems fairly clear. For Western but especially American and American-educated intellectuals, modernization theory provided a telos for postwar society by making it "historical." It did so by providing postwar society with a temporal and spatial identity, an identity that could be formed only in a relation of difference with another, immediately preceding time and place. As Pocock has recently emphasized, "modernity" must be understood as the "consciousness rather than the condition of being 'modern'." Taking a linguistic model of consciousness, he suggests that such consciousness must be defined as much by difference as identification. The modern is a "signifier" that functions as an "excluder" at the same time.

[12] This existential or mythical dimension of social scientific theory is generally ignored in interpretations of social scientific thought, except for those occasions when it is glossed as political ideology (e.g., Gouldner 1970). Simmel acknowledged a genre of speculative work in social science, which he called "philosophical sociology," but he carefully differentiated it from the empirical disciplines or parts thereof. For example, he wrote in his Philosophy of Money that a philosophical sociology was necessary because there exist questions "that we have so far been unable either to answer or to discuss" (quoted in Levine 1991: 99, italics added). As I see it, however, questions that are essentially unanswerable lie at the heart of all social scientific theories of change. This means that one cannot neatly separate the empirical from the non-empirical. In terms I employ below, even theorists in the social sciences are intellectuals, even if most intellectuals are not social scientific theorists.

[13] "We can comprehend the appeal of historical discourse by recognizing the extent to which it makes the real desirable, makes the real into an object of desire, and does so by its imposition, upon events that are represented as real, of the formal coherency that stories possess ... The reality that is represented in the historical narrative, in 'speaking itself,' speaks *to* us .. and displays to us a formal coherency that we ourselves lack. The historical narrative, as against the chronicle, reveals to us a world that is putatively 'finished,' done with, over, and yet not dissolved, not falling apart. In this world, reality wears the mask of a meaning, the completeness and fullness of which we can only *imagine*, never experience. Insofar as historical stories can be completed, can be given narrative closure, can be shown to have had a *plot* all along, they give to reality the odor of the *ideal*." (White 1980: 20, original italics)

We call something (perhaps ourselves) modern in order to distance that of which we speak from some antecedent state of affairs. The antecedent is most unlikely to be of neutral effect in defining either what is to be called "modern" or the "modernity" attributed to it (Pocock 1987: 48).

If I may give to this approach a late-Durkheimian turn (Alexander 1989), I would like to suggest that we think of modernity as constructed upon a binary code. This code serves the mythological function of dividing the known world into the sacred and profane, thereby providing a clear and compelling picture of how contemporaries must act to manoeuvre the space in between.[14] In this sense, the discourse of modernity bears a striking resemblance to metaphysical and religious salvation discourse of diverse kinds (Weber 1964, Walzer 1965). It also resembles the more secular dichotomizing discourses that citizens employ to identify themselves with, and to distance themselves from, the diverse individuals, styles, groups, and structures in contemporary societies (Wagner-Pacifici 1986, Bourdieu 1984).

It has been argued, in fact (Alexander 1992, Alexander/Smith 1993), that a "discourse of civil society" provides a structured semiotic field for the conflicts of contemporary societies, positing idealized qualities like rationality, individuality, trust, and truth as essential qualities for inclusion in the modern, civil sphere, while identifying qualities such as irrationality, conformity, suspicion, and deceit as traditional traits that demand exclusion and punishment. There is a striking overlap between these ideological constructions and the explanatory categories of modernization theory, for example Parsons' pattern variables. In this sense, modernization theory may be seen as a generalizing and abstracting effort to transform an historically specific categorical scheme into a scientific theory of development applicable to any culture around the entire world.

Because every ideology is carried by an intellectual cadre (Konrad/Szelenyi 1974, Eisenstadt 1986), it is important to ask why the intellectual cadre in a particular time and place articulated and promoted a particular theory. In regard to modernization theory, despite the importance of a small number of influential Europeans like Raymond Aron (e.g. Aron 1962), we are speaking primarily about American and American-educated intellectuals.[15] Following some recent work by Eyerman (1992; cf., Jamison/Eyerman 1994) on the formation of American intellectuals in the 1950s, I would begin by emphasizing the distinctive social characteristics of the postwar period in the United States, particularly the sharpness of the transition to the postwar world. This transition was marked by massive suburbanization and the decline of culturally-bounded urban communities, a dramatic reduction in the ethnicity of American life, an extraordinary lessening of labor-capital conflict, and by unprecedented long term prosperity.

These new social circumstances, coming as they did at the end of two decades of massive national and international upheaval, induced in postwar American intellectuals a sense of a fundamental historical "break."[16] On the left, intellectuals

[14] Of course, as Caillois (1959) pointed out, and as Durkheim's original work obscured, there are actually three terms that so classifiy the world, for there is also the "mundane." Myth disdains the very existence of the nundane, moving between the highly charged poles of negative repulsion and positive attraction.

[15] The retrospective account by Lerner, one of the architects of modernization theory, indicates the pivotal nature of the American reference:

"[After] World War II, which witnessed the constriction of European empires and the diffusion of American presence ... one spoke, often resentfully, of the Americanization of Europe. But when one spoke of the rest of the world, the term was "Westernization". The postwar years soon made clear, however, that even this larger term was too parochial... A global referent [was needed.] In response to this need, the new term 'modernization' evolved." (Lerner 1968: 386)

An interesting topic of investigation would be the contrast between European theorists of modernization and Americans ones. The most distinguished European and the most original, Raymond Aron, had a decidedly less optimistic view of convergence than his American counterparts, as he demonstrated, e.g., in his *Progress and Disillusion* (1968), which forms an extremely interesting counterpart to his convergence argument in *Eighteen Lectures on Industrial Society.* While there seems little doubt that Aron's version of convergence theory also represented a response to the cataclysm of World War II, it was a more fatalistic and resolute reaction than an optimistic and pragmatic one. See the account in his *Memoires* (Aron 1990).

[16] "The Forties was a decade when the speed with which one's own events occurred seemed as rapid as the history of the battlefields, and for the mass of people in America a forced march into a new jungle of emotion was the result. The surprises, the failures, and the dangers of that life must have terrified some nerve of awareness in the power and the mass, for, as

like C. Wright Mills and David Riesman issued jeremiads against what they feared was the massification of society. In the liberal center, theorists like Parsons suggested how the same transition had created a more egalitarian, more inclusive, and significantly more differentiated society.[17] On the right, there were cries of alarm about the disappearance of the individual in an authoritarian and bureaucratic welfare state (Buckley 1951, Ayn Rand 1957). On every side of the political spectrum, in other words, American intellectuals were motivated by a sense of dramatic and bifurcating social change. This was the social basis for constructing the traditional/modern binary code, an experience of bifurcation that demanded an interpretation of present anxieties, and future possibilities, in relation to the imagined past.

To fully understand the interrelation between history and theory that produced the new intellectuals, however, we must think about narrativity in addition to symbolic structure. In order to do so, we will draw upon the dramaturgical terms of genre theory, which stretches from Aristotle's poetics to the path-setting literary criticism of Northrop Frye (1957), which inspired the more recent "negative hermeneutics" of historically-oriented literary critics like White (1987), Jameson (1980), Brooke (1984), and Fussell (1975).[18]

In such dramaturgical terms we can characterize the historical period that preceded the era of modernization theory as one in which intellectuals "inflated" the importance of actors and events by emplotting them in a heroic narrative. The 1930's and the war years that followed defined a period of intense social conflict that generated millennial – world-historical – hopes for utopian social transformation, either through communist and fascist revolutions or the construction of an unprecedented kind of "welfare state." Post-war American intellectuals, by contrast, experienced the social world in more "deflationary" terms. With the failure of revolutionary proletarian movements in Europe and the head-long rush to normalization and

if stricken ... the retreat to a more conservative existence was disorderly, the fear of communism spread like an irrational hail of boils. To anyone who could see, the excessive hysteria of the Red wave was no preparation to face an enemy, but rather a terror of the national self." (Mailer 1987 [1960]: 14).

[17] It terms of the break induced in American intellectuals by the postwar period, it is revealing to compare this later change theory of Parsons with his earlier one. In the essays on social change he composed in the decade after 1937, Parsons consistently took Germany as his model, emphasizing the destablilizing, polarizing, and antidemocratic implications of social differentiation and rationalization. When he referred to modernization in this period, and he rarely did, he employed the term to refer to a pathological, overrationalizing process, one that produced the symptomatic reaction of "traditionalism." After 1947, Parsons took the United States as the type case for his studies of social change, relegating Nazi Germany to the status of deviant case. Modernization and traditionalism were now viewed as structural processes rather than as ideologies, symptoms, or social actions.

[18] It is ironic that one of the best recent explications of, and justifications for, Frye's version of generic history can be found in the Marxist criticism of Jameson, which purports to refute its bourgeois form yet makes heavy use of its substantive content. Jameson (1980: 130) calls Frye's method a "positive hermeneutic" because "his identification of mythic patterns in modern texts aims at reinforcing our sense of the affinity between the cultural present of capitalism and the distant mythical past of tribal societies, and at awakening a sense of the continuity between our psychic life and that of primitive peoples." He offers his "negative hermeneutic" as an alternative, asserting that it uses "the narrative raw material shared by myth and 'historical' literatures to sharpen our sense of historical difference, and to stimulate an increasingly vivid apprehension of what happens when plot falls into history ... and enters the force fields of the modern societies" (ibid.)

Despite the fact that Jameson is wedded to a reflection theory of ideology, he produces, in fact, an excellent rationale for the use of genre analysis in understanding historical conflicts. He argues that an influential social "text" must be understood as "a socially symbolic act, as the ideological – but formal and immanent – response to a historical dilemma" (ibid., p. 139). Because of the strains in the social environment that call texts forth, "it would seem to follow that, properly used, genre theory must always in one way or another project a model of the coexistence or tension between several generic modes or strands." With this "methodological axiom," Jameson suggests, "the typologizing abuses of traditional genre theory criticism are definitely laid to rest" (ibid., p. 141).

For the relevance of generic theory to the analysis of social rather literary texts, see the historical writings of Slotkin (1973), the sociological studies of Wagner-Pacifici (1986) and Gibson (1991), and more recently the work of Margaret R. Somers (e.g., 1992).

For the particularities of my own approach to social genre and its relation to cultural codes, I am indebted to conversations with Philip Smith (1991, 1993) and Steven Sherwood (1994), whose own writings are important theoretical statements in their own right.

demobilization in the United States, the heroic "grand narratives" of collective emancipation seemed less compelling.[19] No longer was the present perceived primarily as a way station to an alternative social order, but, rather, as more or less the only possible system there ever could be.

Such a deflationary acceptance of "this world" was not necessarily distopian, fatalistic, or conservative. In Europe and America, for example, there emerged a principled anticommunism that wove together the bare threads of a collective narrative and committed their societies to social democracy. Yet, even for these reformist groups, the deflation of prewar social narratives had strong effects, effects that were very widely shared. Intellectuals as a group became more "hard-headed" and "realistic." Realism diverges radically from the heroic narrative, inspiring a sense of limitation and restraint rather than idealism and sacrifice. Black and white thinking, so important for social mobilization, is replaced by "ambiguity" and "complexity," terms favored by New Critics like Empson (1927) and particularly Trilling (1950), and by "skepticism," a position exemplified in Niebuhr's writings (e.g., Niebuhr 1952). The conviction that one has been "born again" – this time to the *social* sacred – which inspires utopian enthusiasm, is succeeded by the "thrice born" chastened soul described by Bell (1962c) and by an acute sense that the social God has failed (Crossman 1950). Indeed, this new realism convinced many that narrative itself – history – had been eclipsed, which produced the representations of this newly "modern" society as the "end of ideology" (Bell 1962a) and the portrayal of the postwar world as "industrial" (Aron 1962, Lipset/Bendix 1960) rather than as capitalistic.

Yet, while realism was a significant mood in the postwar period, it was not the dominant narrative frame through which postwar social science intellectuals charted their times. Romanticism was.[20] Relatively deflated in comparison with heroism, romanticism tells a story that is more positive in its evaluation of the world as it exists today. In the postwar period it allowed intellectuals and their audiences to believe that progress would be more or less continuously achieved, that improvement was likely. This state of grace referred, however, more to individuals than to groups, and to incremental rather than revolutionary change. In the new world that emerged from the ashes of war, it had finally become possible to cultivate one's own garden. This cultivation would be an enlightened, modernist work, regulated by the cultural patterns of achievement and neutrality (Parsons and Shils 1951), culminating in the "active" (Etzioni 1968) and "achieving" (McClelland 1953) society.

Romanticism, in other words, allowed America's postwar social science intellectuals, even in a period of relative narrative deflation, to continue to speak the language of progress and universalization. In the United States, what differentiates romantic from heroic narratives is the emphasis on the self and private life. In America's social narratives, heroes are epochal; they lead entire peoples to salvation, as collective representations like the American revolution and the civil rights movement indicate. Romantic evolution, by contrast, is not collective; it is about Tom Sawyer and Huck Finn (Fiedler 1955), about the yeoman farmer (Smith 1950), and Horatio Alger. American intellectuals, then, articulated modernization as a process that freed the self and made society's subsystems responsive to its needs. In this sense modernization theory was behavioral and pragmatic; it focussed on real individuals rather than on a collective historical subject like nation, ethnic group, or class.

Existentialism was basic to the romantic American ideology of "modernism." American intellectuals, indeed, developed an idiosyncratic, optimistic reading of Sartre. In the milieu saturated with existentialism, "authenticity" became a central criterion for evaluating individual behavior, an emphasis that was central to Lionell Trilling's (1955) modernist literary criticism but also permeated social theory that ostensibly did not advocate modernization, for example, Erving Goffman's (1956) micro-

[19] By using the postmodern term "grand narrative" (Lyotard 1985), I am committing anachronism, but I am doing so in order to demonstrate the lack of historical perspective implied by the postmodernist slogan, "the end of the grand narrative." Grand narratives, in fact, are subjected to periodic historical deflation and inflation, and there are always other, less inflated generic constructions "waiting" to take their place. I will point out below, indeed, that there are important similarities between the postwar period of narrative deflation and the 1980s, which produced a broadly similar inturning that postmodernism characterized to such great effect as an historically unprecedented social fact.

[20] Romanticism is used here in the technical, genre sense suggested by Frye (1957), rather than in the broad historical sense that would refer to postclassical music, art, and literature, which in the terms employed here was more "heroic" in its narrative implications.

sociology, with its equation of freedom with role distance and its conception of back-versus-front stage,[21] and David Reisman's (1950) eulogy for the inner-directed man.

These individualistic romantic narratives stressed the challenge of being modern, and they were complemented by an emphasis on irony, the narrative Frye defines as deflationary vis-a-vis romance but not downright negative in its effects. In the 1950s and early 1960s, the modernist aesthetic in England and America stressed irony, introspection, ambiguity. The dominant literary theory, so-called New Criticism, while tracing its origins back to Empson's *The Seven Types of Ambiguity* (1927), came into its own only after the heroic and much more historicist criticism of the 1930s. The key contemporary figure in American letters was Lionel Trilling, who defined the psychological and aesthetic goal of modernity as the expansion of complexity and tolerance for ambiguity. Psychoanalysis was a major critical approach, interpreted as an exercise in introspection and moral control (Rieff 1959). In graphic art, "modern" was equated with abstraction, the revolt against decoration, and with minimalism, all of which were interpreted as drawing attention away from the surface and providing pathways into the inner self.

It is evidently difficult, at this remove, for contemporary postmodern and post-postmodern intellectuals to recapture the rich and, indeed, often ennobling aspects of this intellectual and aesthetic modernism, almost as difficult as it is for contemporaries to see the beauty and passion of modernist architecture that Pevsner (1949) so effectively captured in his epoch-defining *Pioneers of Modern Design*. The accounts of intellectual-cum-aesthetic modernism proffered by contemporary postmodernists – from Baumann (1989), Seidman (1991, 1992, and Lasch (1985) to Harvey (1989) and Jameson (1988) – is a fundamental misreading. Their construction of it as dehumanizing abstraction, mechanism, fragmentation, linearity, and domination, I will suggest below, says much more about the ideological exigencies that they and other contemporary intellectuals are experiencing today than it does about modernism itself. In culture, in theory, and in art, modernism represented a spareness that devalued artifice not only as decoration but as pretension, and undercut utopianism as a collective delusion that was homologous with neurosis of an individual kind (Fromm 1955, 1956). It was precisely such admirable qualities that Bell (1976) designated as early or "classical modernity" in his attack on the sixties in *The Cultural Contradictions of Capitalism*.

This picture was not, of course, an entirely homogeneous one. On the right, engagement in the Cold War provided for some intellectuals a new field for collective heroism, despite the fact that America's most influential modernist thinkers were not as a rule Cold Warriors of the most righteous kind. On the Left, both within and outside the U.S., there were important islands of social criticism that made self-conscious departures from Romanticism of both a Social Democratic and individualist ironic sort.[22] Intellectuals influenced by the Frankfurt school, like Mills and Riesman, and other critics, like Arendt, refused to legitimate the humanism of this individualist turn, criticizing what they called the new mass society as forcing individuals into an amoral, egotistical mode. They inverted modernization theory's binary code, viewing American rationality as instrumental rather than moral and expressive, big science as technocratic rather than inventive. They saw conformity rather than independence; power elites rather than democracy; and deception and disappointment rather than authenticity, responsibility, and romance.

In the 50s and early 60s, these social critics did not become highly influential. To do so they would have had to pose a compelling alternative, a new

[21] When I arrived at the University of California, Berkeley, for graduate school in Sociology in 1969, some of the Department's Chicago school sociologists, influenced by Goffman and Sartre, announced an informal faculty-student seminar on "authenticity." This represented an existentialism-inspired response to the alienation emphasis of the sixties. As such, it was historically out of phase. Nobody attended the seminar.

[22] The present account does not, in other words, assume complete intellectual consensus during the phases described. Counter trends existed, and they should be noted. There is also the very real possibility (see n. 28, below) that intellectuals and their audiences had access to more than one code/narrative at any given point in historical time, an access that Wagner-Pacifici (personal communication) calls discursive hybridity. My account does suggest, however, that each of these phases was marked, indeed was in part constructed by, the hegemony of one intellectual framework over others. Narratives are constructed upon binary codes, and it is the polarity of binary oppositions that allows historicizing intellectuals to make sense of their time. "Binarism" is less an esoteric theoretical construct than an existential fact of life.

heroic narrative to describe how the sick society could be transformed and a healthy one put in its place.[23] This was impossible to do in the deflationary times. Fromm's *Art of Loving* (1956) followed his denunciation of *The Sane Society* (1956); in the fifties, social solutions often were contained in individual acts of private love. No social program issued from Adorno's *Authoritarian Personality* (1950). Not only did C. Wright Mills fail to identify any viable social alternatives in his stream of critical studies, but he went out of his way to denounce the leaders of the social movements of the thirties and forties as "the new men of power" (Mills 1948). After nearly twenty years of violence-producing utopian hopes, collective heroics had lost their sheen. The right-wing populism of McCarthy reinforced the withdrawal from public life. Eventually, however, Americans and Western Europeans did catch their breath, with results that must be related, once again, to history and social theory alike.

3. Antimodernization Theory: The Heroic Revival

Sometime in the later 1960s, between the assassination of President Kennedy and the San Francisco "love" summer of 1967, modernization theory died. It died because the emerging younger generation of intellectuals could not believe it was true.

Even if we regard social theory as semiotic system rather than pragmatically inducted generalization, it is a sign system whose signifieds are empirical reality in a rather strictly disciplined sense. So it is important to recognize that during this second postwar period serious "reality problems" began to intrude on modernization theory in a serious way. Despite the existence of capitalist markets, poverty persisted at home (Harrington 1962) and perhaps was even increasing in the third world. Revolutions and wars continually erupted outside of Europe and North America (Johnson 1983), and sometimes even seemed to be produced by modernization itself. Dictatorship, not democracy was spreading throughout the rest of the world (Moore 1966); postcolonial nations seem to require an authoritarian state (Huntington 1968) and a command economy to be modern, not only in the economy and state but in other spheres as well. New religious movements (Bellah/Glock 1976) emerged in Western countries and in the developing world, with sacralization and ideology gaining ground over secularization, science, and technocracy. These developments strained the central assumptions of modernization theory, although they did not necessarily refute it.[24]

[23] This points to one quibble I have with Jameson and Eyerman's *Seeds of the Sixties* (1994), their brilliant account of these critical intellectuals in the 1950's. Jameson and Eyerman argue that they failed to exert influence, not primarely because of the conservatism of the dominant society. It seems important to add, however, that their own ideology was partly responsible, for it was insufficiently historical in the future-oriented, narrative sense. A more important disagreement would be that Jameson and Eyerman seem to accept "mass society" as an actual empirical description of both social structural and cultural modernization in the fifties. In so doing, they may be mistaking an intellectual account for a social reality. These vestiges of a realist epistemology – in what is otherwise an acutely cultural and constructivist approach – makes impossible to appreciate the compelling humanism that informed so much of the work of the very fifties intellectuals whom these critics often attacked.

[24] A publication that in retrospect takes on the appearance of a representative, and representational, turning point between these historical phases, and between modernization theory and what succeeded it, is David Apter's edited book, *Ideology and Discontent* (1964). Among the contributors were leading modernization social scientists, who grappled with the increasingly visible anomalies of this theory, particularly the continuing role of utopian and revolutionary ideology in the third world, which inspired revolutions, and, more generally, with the failure of "progressive" modernizing development. Geertz's "Ideology as a Cultural System," so central to developments in post-modernization theories, appeared first in this volume. Apter himself, incidentally, demonstrated a personal theoretical evolution paralleling the broader shifts documented here, moving from an enthusiastic embrace, and explication, of Third World modernization, which concentrated on universal categories of culture and social structure (see, e.g., Apter 1963), to a post-modern skepticism about "liberating" change and an emphasis on cultural particularity. This latter position is indicated by the self-consciously antimodernist and antirevolutionary themes in the striking deconstruction of Maoism that Apter (1987) published in the late 1980s. The intellectual careers of Robert Bellah and Michael Walzer (cf., my discussion of Smelser's shifting concerns in n. 9, above) reveal similar though not identical contours.

These examples and others (see n. 21, above) raise the intriguing question that Mills described as the relationship between history and biography. How did individual intellectuals deal with the historical succession of code/narrative frames, which pushed them

Factual problems, however, are not enough to create scientific revolutions. Broad theories can defend themselves by defining and protecting a set of core propositions, jettisoning entire segments of their perspective as only peripherally important. Indeed, if one looks closely at modernization theory during the middle and late 1960s, and even during the early 1970's, one can see an increasing sophistication as it geared up to meet its critics and to address the reality problems of the day. Dualistic simplifications about tradition and modernity were elaborated – not replaced by – notions that portrayed a continuum of development, as in the later neo-evolutionary theories of Parsons (1964, 1966, 1971), Bellah (1964), and Eisenstadt (1964). Convergence was reconceptualized to allow parallel but independent pathways to the modern (e.g., Shils [1972] on India, Eisenstadt [1963] on empires, Bendix [1965] on citizenship). Notions like diffusion and functional substitutes were proposed to deal with the modernization of nonWestern civilizations in a less ethnocentric manner (Bellah 1957; Cole 1979). The postulate of tight subsystem links was replaced by the notion of leads and lags (Smelser 1968), the insistance on interchange became modified by notions of paradoxes (Schluchter 1979), contradictions (Eisenstadt 1963), and strains (Smelser 1963). Against the metalanguage of evolution, notions about developmentalism (Schluchter/Roth 1979) and globalism (Nettle and Robertson 1968) were suggested. Secularity gave way to ideas about civil religion (Bellah 1970b) and by references to "the tradition of the modern" (Gusfield 1976).

Against these internal revisions, antagonistic theories of antimodernization were proposed on the grounds that they were more valid explanations of the reality problems that emerged. Moore (1966) replaced modernization and evolution with revolution and counterrevolution. Thompson (1963) replaced abstractions about evolving patterns of industrial relations with class history and consciousness from the bottom up. Discourse about exploitation and inequality (e.g., Goldthorpe 1969, Mann 1973) contended with, and eventually displaced, discussions of stratification and mobility. Conflict theories (Coser 1956, Dahrendorf 1959, Rex 1961) replaced functional ones; state centered political theories (Bendix et al. 1968, Collins 1976, Skocpol 1979, Evans et al., 1985) replaced value centered and multidimensional approaches; and conceptions of binding social structures were challenged by microsociologies that emphasized the liquid, unformed, and negotiated character of everyday life.

What pushed modernization theory over the edge, however, were not these scientific alternatives in and of themselves. Indeed, as I have indicated, the revisors of the earlier theory had themselves begun to offer coherent, equally explanatory theories for many of the same phenomena. The decisive fact in modernization theory's defeat, rather, was the destruction of its ideological, discursive, and mythological core. The challenge that finally could not be met was existential. It emerged from new social movements that were increasingly viewed in terms of collective emancipation – peasant revolutions on a world-wide scale, black and Chicano national movements, indigenous people's rebellions, youth culture, hippies, rock music, and women's liberation. Because these movements (e.g., Weiner 1984), profoundly altered the *Zeitgeist* – the experienced tempo of the times – they captured the ideological imaginations of the rising cadre of intellectuals.

In order to represent this shifting empirical and existential environment, intellectuals developed a new explanatory theory. Equally significant, they inverted the binary code of modernization and "narrated the social" (Sherwood 1994) in a new way. In terms of code, "modernity" and "modernization" moved from the sacred to the profane side of historical time, with modernity assuming many of the crucial characteristics that had earlier been associated with traditionalism and backwardness. Rather than democracy and individualization, the contemporary modern period was represented as bureaucratic and repressive. Rather than a free market or contractual society, modern America became "capitalist," no longer rational, interdependent, modern, and liberating but backward, greedy, anarchic, and impoverishing.

This inversion of the sign and symbols associated with modernity polluted the movements associated with its name. The death of liberalism (Lowi 1969) was announced, and its reformist origins in the early twentieth century dismissed as a camouflage for extending corporate control (Weinstein

into interstitial positions vis-a-vis the "new world of our time"? Some remained committed to their earlier frameworks and became, as a result, either permanently or temporarily "obsolete." Others changed their frameworks and became contemporary, not necessarily for opportunistic reasons but because of personal encounters with profoundly jarring historical experiences, which sometimes gave them a keen appreciation for "the new."

1968, Kolko 1967). Tolerance was associated with fuzzy-mindedness, immorality, and repression (Wolfe et al. 1965). The asceticism of Western religion was criticized for its repressive modernity and Eastern and mystical religious were sacralized instead (Brown 1966, cf., Brown 1959). Modernity was equated with the mechanism of the machine (Roszak 1969). For the third world, democracy was defined as a luxury, strong states a necessity. Markets were not luxuries but enemies, for capitalism came to be represented as guaranteeing underdevelopment and backwardness. This inversion of economic ideals carried into the first world as well. Humanistic socialism replaced welfare state capitalism as the ultimate symbol of the good. Capitalist economies were held to produce only great poverty and great wealth (Kolko 1962), and capitalist societies were viewed as sources of ethnic conflict (Bonacich 1972), fragmentation, and alienation (Ollman 1971). Not market society but socialism would provide wealth, equality, and a restored community.

These recodings were accompanied by fundamental shifts in social narratives. Intellectual myths were inflated upwards, becoming stories of collective triumph and heroic transformation. The present was reconceived, not as the denouement of a long struggle but as a pathway to a different, much better world.[25] In this heroic myth, actors and groups in the present society were conceived as being "in struggle" to build the future. The individualized, introspective narrative of romantic modernism disappeared, along with ambiguity and irony as preferred social values (Gitlin 1987: 377–406). Instead, ethical lines were sharply drawn and political imperatives etched in black and white. In literary theory, the new criticism gave way to the new historicism (e.g., Veeser 1989). In psychology, the moralist Freud was now seen as anti-repressive, erotic, and even polymorphously perverse (Brown 1966). The new Marx was sometimes a Leninist and other times a radical communitarian; he was only rarely portrayed as a social democrat or humanist in the earlier, modernist sense.[26]

The historical vignette with which I opened this essay provides an illustration of this shift in sensibility. In his confrontation with Inkeles, Wallerstein portentously announced, "the time has come to put away childish things, and look reality in the face" (1979: 133). He was not adopting here a realist frame but rather donning a heroic guise. For it was emancipation and revolution that marked the narrative rhetoric of the day, not, as Weber might have said, the hard dreary task of facing up to workaday demands. To be realistic, Wallerstein suggested, was to realize that "we are living in the transition" to a "socialist mode of production, our future world government" (1979: 136). The existential question he put to his listeners was, "How are we relating to it?" He suggested that there were only two alternatives. They could relate to the imminent revolution "as rational militants contributing to it or as clever obstructors of it (whether of the malicious or cynical variety)." The rhetorical construction of these alternatives demonstrates how the inversion of binary coding (the clear line between good and bad, with modernity being polluted) and the creation of a newly heroic narrative (the militantly millennial orientation to future salvation) were combined.[27] Wallerstein made these remarks, it will be recalled, in a scientific presentation, later published as "Modernization: requiescat in pace." He was one of the most influential and original social scientific theorists of the anti-modernization theory phase.

The social theories that this new generation of radical intellectuals produced can and must be considered in scientific terms (see, e.g., van den Berg 1980 and Alexander 1987). Their cognitive achievements, indeed, became dominant in the 1970s and have remained hegemonic in contem-

[25] See, for example, the millennial tone of the contemporary articles collected in *Smiling through the Apocalypse: Esquire's History of the Sixties* (1987).

[26] An illustrative case study of one dimension of this evolution would be the British *New Left Review*. Created initially as a forum for disseminating humanistic Marxism – oriented towards existentialism and consciousness – vis-a-vis the mechanistic perspective of the Old Left, in the late 1960s it was an important forum for publishing Sartre, Gramsci, Lefebvre, Gorz, and the early Lukacs. By 1970, it had turned into a forum for Leninism and Althusserianism. The cover of its Fall, 1969, issue was emblazoned with the solgan, "Militancy."

[27] In order to forestall misunderstanding in regard to the kind of argument I am making here, I should emphasize that this and other correlations I am positing between code, narrative, and theory constitute what Weber, drawing on Goethe, called "elective affinities" rather than historically, sociologically, or semiotically causal relations. Commitment to these theories could, in principle, be induced by other kinds of ideological formulations, and have been, in earlier times and other national milieux. Nor need these particular versions of code and narrative always be combined. Nonetheless, in the historical periods I consider here, the positions did mesh in complementary ways.

porary social science long after the ideological totalities in which they were initially imbedded have since disappeared.[28] Yet to study the decline of a mode of knowledge, I would insist once again, demands broader, extra-scientific considerations as well. Theories are created by intellectuals in their search for meaning. In response to continuing social change, generational shifts occur that can make the scientific and ideological efforts of earlier intellectual generations seem not only empirically implausible but psychologically shallow, politically irrelevant, and morally obsolete.

By the end of the 1970s, the energy of the radical social movements of the preceding period had dissipated. Some of their demands become institutionalized; others were blocked by massive backlash movements that generated conservative publics and brought right-wing governments to power. The cultural-cum-political shift was so rapid as to seem, once again, to represent some kind of historical-cum-epistemological break.[29] Materialism replaced idealism among political influentials, and surveys reported increasingly conservative views among young people and university students. Maoist ideologues – one thinks of Bernard-Henri Levy (1977) in Paris and David Horowitz (1989) in the U.S. – became anticommunist *nouvelle philosophes* and, some of them, neoconservatives. Yippies became yuppies. For many intellectuals who had matured during the radicalism of the 1960s and 1970s, these new developments brought unbearable disappointment. Parallels with the 1950s were evident. The collective and heroic narrative of socialism once again had died, and the end of ideology seemed once again to be at hand.

4. Postmodernization Theory: Defeat, Resignation, and Comic Detachment

"Postmodernism" can be seen as an explanatory social theory that has produced new middle range models of culture (Lyotard 1984, Foucault 1976, Huyssen 1984), science and epistemology (Rorty 1979), class (Bourdieu 1984), social action (Crespi 1992), gender and family relations (Halpern 1990, Seidman 1991), and economic life (Harvey 1989, Lasch 1985). In each of these areas, and others, postmodern theories have made original contributions to the understanding of reality.[30] It is not as a

[28] This brief aside about the "lag" in generational production is important to emphasize. It is primarily new generations coming to political and cultural self-consciousness that produces new intellectual ideologies and theories, and, as Mannheim first emphasized, generational identities tend to remain constant despite shifts in historical time. The result is that, at any given point, the "intellectual milieu" considered as a totality will contain a number of competing ideological formulations produced by historically-generated archaeological formations. Insofar as there remain authoritative intellectual figures within each generation, furthermore, earlier intellectual ideologies will continue to socialize some members of succeeding generations. Authoritative socialization, in other words, exacerbates the lag effect, which is further increased by the fact that access to the organizational infrastructures of socialization – e.g., control of graduate training programs in major universities, editorships of leading journals – may be attained by the authoritative members of generations whose ideology/theory may already be "refuted" by developments that are occurring among younger generations. These considerations produce layering effects that make it difficult to recognize intellectual successions until long after they are crystallized.
These inertial effects of generational formations suggest that new ideologies/theories may have to respond not only to the immediately preceding formation – which is their primary reference point – but in a secondary way to all the formations that remain in the social milieu at the time of their formation. For example, while postmodernism will be portrayed here as a response primarily to antimodernization theories of revolutionary intent, it is also marked by the need to posit the inadequacy of postwar modernism and, indeed, of prewar Marxism. As I indicate below, however, postmodernism's responses to the latter movements are mediated by their primary response to the ideology/theory immediately preceding it. Indeed, it only understands the earlier movements as they have been screened by the sixties generation.

[29] This sense of imminent, apocalyptic transformation was exemplified in the 1980s by the post-Marxist and postmodern British magazine, *Marxism Today,* which hailed, in millennial language, the arrival of "New Times."

> Unless the Left can come to terms with those New Times, it must live on the sidelines [...] Our world is being remade [...] In the process our own identities, our sense of self, our own subjectivities are being transformed. We are in transition to a new era. (*Marxism Today,* October 1988; quoted in Thompson 1992: 238)

[30] A compendium of postmodernism's middle level innovations in social scientific knowledge has been compiled by Crook, Pakulski, and Waters 1992. For a cogent critique of the socio-economic propositions such middle-range theories of the postmodern age either advance or assume, see Herpin 1993. For other critiques, Archer 1987, Giddens 1991, and Alexander 1991, 1992.

theory of the middle range, however, that postmodernism has made its mark. These discussions have become significant only because they are taken to exemplify broad new trends of history, social structure, and moral life. Indeed, it is by intertwining the levels of structure and process, micro and macro, with strong assertions about the past, present, and future of contemporary life that postmodernism has formed a broad and inclusive general theory of society, one which, like the others we have considered here, must be considered in extra-scientific terms, not only as an explanatory source.

If we consider postmodernism as myth – not merely as cognitive descriptions but as their coding and narration into a "meaningful" frame – we must deal with it as the successor ideology to radical social theory, animated by the failure of reality to unfold in a manner that was consistent with the expectations generated by that antimodernization creed. From this perspective, we can see that while postmodernism seems to be coming to grips with the present and future, its horizon is fixed by the past. Initially (at least) an ideology of intellectual disappointment, Marxist and postMarxist intellectuals articulated postmodernism in reaction to the fact that the period of heroic and collective radicalism seemed to be slipping away.[31] They redefined this exalted collective present, which had been held to presage an even more heroic imminent future, as a period that was now passed. They declared that it had been superseded not for reasons of political defeat but because of the structure of history itself.[32] The defeat of utopia had threatened a mythically incoherent possibility, namely that of historical retrogression. It threatened to undermine the meaning structures of intellectual life. With postmodern theory, this imminent defeat could be transformed into an immanent one, a necessity of historical development itself. The heroic "grand narratives" of the Left had merely been made irrelevant by history; they were not actually defeated. Myth could still function. Meaning was preserved.

The most influential early attributions of postmodernism were filled with frank revelations of theoretical perplexity, testimonies to dramatic shifts in reality, and expressions of existential despair. Frederick Jameson (1988: 25), for example, identified a "new and virtually unimaginable quantum leap in technological alienation." Despite his methodological commitments, Jameson resists the impulse to fall back on the neo-Marxism certainties of the earlier age. Asserting that shifts in the productive base of society had created the superstructural confusions of a transitional time, he bemoaned (ibid., 15) "the incapacity of our minds, at least at present, to map the great global multinational and decentered communication network in which we find ourselves caught as individual subjects." Referring to the traditional role of art as a vehicle for gaining cultural clarity, Jameson complained that this meaning-making reflex had been blocked: we are "unable to focus our own present, as though we have become incapable of achieving aesthetic representations of our own current experience" (ibid., 20).[33]

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[31] In December, 1986, *The Guardian,* a leading independent British newspaper broadly on the Left, ran a three-day long major series, "Modernism and Post-Modernism." In his introductory article, Richard Gott announced, by way of explanation, that "the revolutionary impulses that had once galvanized politics and culture had clearly become sclerotic" (quoted in Thompson 1992: 222). Thompson's own analysis of this event is particularly sensitive to the central role played in it by the historical deflation of the heroic revolutionary myth.

"Clearly this newspaper thought the subject of an alleged cultural shift from modernism to post-modernism sufficiently important for it to devote many pages and several issues to the subject. The reason it was considered important is indicated by the sub-heading: "Why did the revolutionary movement that lit up the early decades of the century fizzle out. In a major series, Guardian critics analyze late twentieth century malaise" ... "The subsequent articles made it even clearer that the cultural "malaise" represented by the shift from modernism was regarded as symptomatic of a deeper social and political malaise." (ibid.).

The stretching of revolutionary fervor, and the very term "modernism," to virtually the entirety of the pre-postmodernism twentieth century – sometimes, indeed, to the entire post-Enlightenment era – is a tendency common to postmodernist theory. A natural reflection of its binary and narrative functions, such broad claims play a vital role in situating the "postmodern" age vis-a-vis the future and the past.

[32] "La révolution qu'anticipaient les avant-gardes et les partis d'éxtrème gauche and que dénouncaient les penseurs et les organisations de droit ne s'est pas produite. Mais les sociétés avancés n'en ont pas moins subiés une transformation radicale. Tel est le constat commun que font les sociologues ... qui ont fait de la postmodernitié le thème de leurs analyses." (Herpin 1993: 295)

[33] This mood of pessimism should be compared to the distinctly more optimistic tone of Jameson's "Preface" to *The Political Unconscious,* his collection of essays written during the 1970s, in which he seeks to "anticipate ... those new forms of collective thinking

Yet, the intellectual meaning-making triumph of mature postmodernism is already visible in Jameson's depiction of this new order as privatized, fragmented, and commercial. With these terms, the perplexities and blockages of rationality which Jameson succeeded in articulating can be explained not as personal failure but as historical necessities based on reason itself. What threatened meaninglessness now becomes the very basis for meaning; what has been constructed is a new present and a new past. No wonder that Jameson described (ibid., p. 15) postmodernism as first and foremost a "periodizing concept," suggesting that the term was created so that intellectuals and their audiences could make sense of these new times: "The new postmodernism expresses the inner truth of that newly emergent social order of late capitalism" (ibid.).

Postmodern theory, then, may be seen, in rather precise terms, as an attempt to redress the problem of meaning created by the experienced failure of "the sixties." Only in this way can we understand why the very dichotomy between modern and postmodern was announced, and why the contents of these new historical categories are described in the ways they are. From the perspective developed here, the answers seem clear enough. Continuity with the earlier period of antimodern radicalism is maintained by the fact that postmodernism, too, takes "the modern" as its explicit foe. In the binary coding of this intellectual ideology, modernity remains on the polluted side, representing "the other" in postmodernism's narrative tales.

Yet, in this third phase of postwar social theory, the contents of the modern are completely changed. Radical intellectuals had emphasized the privacy and particularism of modern capitalism, its provinciality, and the fatalism and resignation it produced. The post-modernization alternative they posited was, not postmodern, but public, heroic, collective, and universal. It is precisely these latter qualities, of course, that postmodernization theory has condemned as the very embodiment of modernity itself. In contrast, they have coded privacy, diminished expectations, subjectivism, individuality, particularity, and localism as the embodiments of the good. As for narrative, the major historical propositions of postmodernism – the decline of the grand narrative and the return to the local (Lyotard 1984), the rise of the empty symbol, or simulacrum (Baudrillard 1983), the end of socialism (Gorz 1982), the emphasis on plurality and difference (Seidman 1991, 1992) – are transparent representations of a deflationary narrative frame. They are responses to the decline of "progressive" ideologies and their utopian beliefs.

The resemblances to radical antimodernism, then, are superficial and misleading. In fact, there is a much more significant connection between postmodernism and the period that preceded radicalism, that is, modernization theory itself. Modernization theory, we recall, was itself a deflationary ideology following an earlier heroic period of radical quest. It, too, contained emphases on the private, the personal, and the local.

While these similarities reveal how misleading the intellectual self-representations of intellectual ideologies can be, it is obviously true that the two approaches differ in fundamental ways. These differences emerge from their positions in concrete historical time. The postwar liberalism that inspired modernization theory followed upon a radical movement that understood transcendence within a progressivist frame, one which, while aiming to radicalize modernism, hardly rejected it. Thus, while the romantic and ironic dimensions of postwar liberalism deflated heroic modernism, its movement away from radicalism made central aspects of modernism even more accessible.

Postmodernism, by contrast, followed upon a radical intellectual generation which had condemned not only liberal modernism but key tenets of the very notion of modernization as such. The New Left rejected the Old Left in part because it was wedded to the modernization project; they preferred the Frankfurt School (e.g., Jay 1970), whose roots in German romanticism coincided more neatly with its own, antimodernist tone. While postmodernism, then, is indeed a deflationary narrative vis-a-vis heroic radicalism, the specificity of its historical position means that it must place both heroic (radical) and romantic (liberal) versions of the modern onto the same negative side. Successor intellectuals tend to invert the binary code of the previously hegemonic theory. For postmodernism, the new code, modernism: postmodernism, implied a larger break with "universalist" Western values than did the traditionalism:

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and collective culture which lie beyond the boundaries of our own world," describing them as the "yet unrealized, collective, and decentered cultural production of the future, beyond realism and modernism alike" (1980: 11). Scarcely a decade later, what Jameson found to beyond modernism turned out to be quite different from the collective and liberating cultural he had sought.

modernism of the immediate postwar period or the capitalist modernism: socialist anti-modernization dichotomy that succeeded it.[34]

In narrative terms as well there are much greater deflationary shifts. Although there remains, to be sure, a romantic tenor in some strands of postmodernist thought, and even collectivist arguments for heroic liberation, these "constructive" versions (Thompson 1992; Rosenau 1992) focus on the personal and the intimate and tend to be offshoots of social movements of the 1960s, e.g., gay and lesbian "struggles," the women's "movement," and the ecology activists like Greens. Insofar as they do engage public policy, such movements articulate their demands much more in the language of difference and particularism (e.g., Seidman 1991 and 1992) than in the universalistic terms of the collective good. The principal, and certainly the most distinctive thrust of the postmodern narrative, moreover, is strikingly different. Rejecting not only heroism but romanticism as well, it tends to be more fatalistic, critical, and resigned, in short more comically agnostic, than these more political movements of uplift and reform suggest. Rather than upholding the authenticity of the individual, postmodernism announced, via Foucault and Derrida, the death of the subject. In Jameson's (1988: 15) words, "the conception of a unique self and private identity [are] thing[s] of the past." Another departure from the earlier, more romantic version of modernism is the singular absence of irony. Rorty's political philosophy is a case in point. Because he espouses irony and complexity (e.g., Rorty 1985, 1989), he maintains a political if not an epistemological liberalism, and because of these commitments he must distance himself from the postmodernist frame.

Instead of romance and irony, what has emerged full blown in postmodernism is the comic frame. Frye calls comedy the ultimate equalizer. Because good and evil cannot be parsed, the actors – protagonists and antagonists – are on the same moral level, and the audience, rather than being normatively or emotionally involved, can sit back and be amused. Baudrillard (1983) is the master of satire and ridicule, as the entire Western world becomes Disneyland at large. In the postmodern comedy, indeed, the very notion of actors is eschewed. With tongue in cheek but a new theoretical system in his mind, Foucault announced the death of the subject, a theme that Jameson canonized with his announcement that "the conception of a unique self and private identity [are] thing[s] of the past." Postmodernism is the play within the play, an historical drama designed to convince its audiences that drama is dead and that history no longer exists. What remains is nostalgia for a symbolized past.

Perhaps we may end this discussion with a snapshot of Daniel Bell, the intellectual whose career neatly embodies each of the scientific-cum-mythical phases of history I have thus far described. Bell came to intellectual self-consciousness as a Trotskyist in the 1930s. For a time after World War II he remained in the heroic anticapitalist mode of figures like C. Wright Mills, whom he welcomed as a colleague at Columbia University. His famous essay on the assembly line and deskilled labor (1962b [1956, 1947]) demonstrated continuity with prewar leftist work. By insisting on the concept of alienation, Bell committed himself to "capitalism" rather than "industrialism," thus championing epochal transformation and resisting the postwar modernization line. Soon, however, Bell made the transition to realism, advocating modernism in a more romantically individualist than radical socialist way. Although *The Coming of Post-Industrial Society* appeared only in 1973, Bell had introduced the concept as an extension of Aron's industrialization thesis nearly two decades before. Postindustrial was a periodization that supported progress, modernization, and reason while undermining the possibilities for heroic transcendence and class conflict. Appearing in the midst of antimodernist rebellion, *The Coming of Post-Industrial Society* was reviewed with perplexity and disdain by many intellectuals on the antimodernist left, although its oblique relationship with theories of postscarcity society were sometimes noted as well.

What is so striking about this phase of Bell's career, however, is how rapidly the modernist notion of post-industrial society gave way to postmodernism, in content if not explicit form. For Bell, of course, it was not disappointed radicalism that produced this shift but his disappointments with what he came to call late modernism. When Bell

[34] Postmodern theorists are fond of tracing their antimodern roots to Romanticism, to anti-Enlightenment figures like Nietzsche, to Simmel, and to themes articulated by the early Frankfurt school. Yet the earlier, more traditionally Marxist rebellion against modernization theory often traced its lineage in similar ways. As Seidman (1983) demonstrated before his postmodern turn, Romanticism itself had significant universalizing strains, and between Nietzsche and Simmel there exists a fundamental disagreement over the evaluation of modernity itself.

turned away from this degenerate modernism in *The Cultural Contradictions of Capitalism*, his story had changed. Post-industrial society, once the epitome of modernism, now produced, not reason and progress, but emotionalism and irrationalism, categories alarmingly embodied in sixties youth culture. Bell's solution to this imminent self-destruction of Western society was to advocate the return of the sacred (1977), a solution that exhibited the nostalgia for the past that Jameson would later diagnose as a certain sign of the coming of the postmodern age.

The comparison of Bell's postindustrial argument with Harvey's post-Fordism (1989) is revealing in this regard. Harvey takes similar developments in the productive arrangements of high-information capitalism but draws a far different conclusion about their effects on the consciousness of the age. Bell's anti-Marxism – his (1978) emphasis on the asynchronicity of systems – allows him to posit rebellion in the form of youth culture and to posit cultural salvation in the ideal of "the sacred return" (cf., Eliade 1954). Harvey's continued commitment to orthodox base-superstructure reasoning, by contrast, leads him to postulate fragmentation and privatization as inevitable, and unstoppable, results of the post-Fordist productive mode. Bell's conservative attack on modernism embraces nostalgia; Harvey's radical attack on postmodernism posits defeat.

Postmodern theory is still, of course, very much in the making. As I have already mentioned, its middle range formulations contain significant truths. Evaluating the importance of its general theorizing, by contrast, depends upon whether one places poststructuralism under its wing.[35] Certainly theorists of the strong linguistic turn – thinkers like Foucault, Bourdieu, Geertz, and Rorty – began to outline their understandings long before postmodernism appeared on the scene. Nevertheless, their emphasis on relativism and constructivism, their principled antagonism to an identification with the subject, and their skepticism regarding the possibility of totalizing change make their contributions more compatible with postmodernism than either modernism or radical antimodernization. Indeed, these theorists wrote in response to their disappointment with modernism (Geertz and Rorty vis-a-vis Parsons and Quine), on the one hand, and heroic antimodernism (Foucault and Bourdieu vis-a-vis Althusser and Sartre), on the other. Nonetheless, Geertz and Bourdieu can scarcely be called postmodern theorists, and strong culturalist theories cannot be identified with the broad ideological sentiments that term postmodernism implies.

I would maintain here, as I have earlier in this paper, that scientific considerations are insufficient to account for shifts either towards or away from an intellectual position. If, as I believe to be the case, the departure from postmodernism has already begun, we must look closely, once again, at extra-scientific considerations, at recent events and social changes that seem to demand yet another new "world-historical frame."

5. Neo-Modernism: Dramatic Inflation and Universal Categories

In postmodern theory intellectuals have represented to themselves and to society at large their response to the defeat of the heroic utopias of radical social movements, a response that, while recognizing defeat, did not give up the cognitive reference to that utopic world. Every idea in postmodern thought is a reflection upon the categories and false aspirations of the traditional collectivist narrative, and for most postmodernists the distopia of the contemporary world is the semantic result. Yet, while the hopes of Left intellectuals were dashed by the late 1970s, the intellectual imagination of others was rekindled. For when the Left lost, the

[35] It depends upon a number of other contingent decisions as well, for example upon ignoring postmodernism's own claim that it does not have or advocate a general theory. (See, e.g., my exchange with Seidman [Alexander 1991 and Seidman 1991].) There is, in addition, the much more general problem of whether postmodernism can even be spoken of as a single point of view. I have taken the position here that it can be so discussed, even while I have acknowledged the diversity of points of view within it. There is no doubt, indeed, that each of the four theories I examine here only exists, as such, via an act of hermeneutical reconstruction. Such an ideal-type methodology is, I would argue, not only philosophically justifiable (e.g., Gadamer 1975) but intellectually unavoidable, in the sense that the hermeneutics of common sense continually refers to "postmodernism" as such. Nonetheless, these considerations should not obscure the fact that a typification and idealization is being made. In more empirical and concrete terms, each historical period and each social theory under review contained diverse patterns and parts.

Right won and won big. In the 1960s and 1970s, the right was a backlash, reactive movement. By 1980 it had become triumphant and began to initiate far-reaching changes in Western societies. A fact that has been conveniently overlooked by each of the three intellectual generations we have considered thus far – and most grievously by the postmodernist movement that was historically coterminous with it – is that the victory of the neoliberal Right had, and continues to have, massive political, economic, and ideological repercussions around the globe.

The most striking "success" for the Right was, indeed, the defeat of Communism, which was not only a political, military, and economic victory but, as I suggested in the introduction to this essay, a triumph on the level of the historical imagination itself. Certainly there were objective economic elements in the bankruptcy of the Soviet Union, including growing technological deficiencies, sinking export proceeds, and the impossibility of finding desperately needed capital funds by switching to a strategy of internal growth (Muller 1992: 139). Yet the final economic breakdown had a political cause, for it was the computer-based military expansion of America and its NATO allies, when combined with the right-wing inspired technology boycott, that brought the Soviet party dictatorship to its economic and political knees. While the lack of access to documents makes any definitive judgment decidedly premature, there seems no doubt that these policies were, in fact, among the principal strategic goals of the Reagan and Thatcher governments, and that they were achieved with signal effect.[36]

This extraordinary, and almost completely unexpected triumph over what once seemed not only a socially but an intellectually plausible alternative world (see pp. 166f, above) has had the same kind of destabilizing, de-ontologizing effects on many intellectuals as the other massive historical "breaks" I have discussed above. It has created, as well, the same sense of imminence and the conviction that the "new world" in the making demands a new and very different kind of social theory.[37]

This negative triumph over state socialism has been reinforeced, morever, by the dramatic series of "positive successes" during the 1980s for aggressively capitalist market economies. This has been most often remarked upon (most recently by Kennedy 1993) in connection with the NIC's, the newly industrialized, extraordinarily dynamic Asian economies which have arisen in what was once called the Third World. It is important not to underestimate the ideological effects of this world-historical fact: high level, sustainable transformations of backward economies were achieved not by socialist command economies but by zealously capitalist states.

What has often been overlooked, however, is that during this same time frame the capitalist market was also reinvigorated, both symbolically and ob-

[36] The link between Glasnost and Perestroika and President Ronald Reagan's military build-up – particularly his Star Wars project – has been frequently stressed by former Soviet officials who participated in the transition that began in 1985. For example:

"Former top soviet officials said Friday that the implications of then-President Reagan's "Star Wars" proposal and the Chernobyl accident combined to change Soviet arms policy and help end the Cold War. Speaking at Princeton university during a conference on the end of the Cold War, the officials said ... Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev was convinced that any attempt to match Reagan's Strategic Defense Initiative of 1983 ... could do irreparable harm to the Soviet economy." (Reuters News Service. February, 27, 1993)

[37] This sense of fundamental, boundary-destroying break is clearly exhibited in the recent work of Kenneth Jowitt, which searches for biblical imagery to communicate a sense of how widespread and threatening is the contemporary genuine intellectual disorientation:

"For nearly half a century, the boundaries of international politics and the identities of its national participants have been directly shaped by the presence of a Leninist regime world centered in the Soviet Union. The Leninist extinction of 1989 poses a fundamental challenge to these boundaries and identities... Boundaries are an essential component of a recognizable and coherent identity ... The attenuation of or dissolution of boundaries is more often than not a traumatic event – all the more so when boundaries have been organized and understood in highly categorical terms ... The Cold war was a "Joshua" period, one of dogmatically centralized boundaries and identities. In contrast to the biblical sequence, the Leninist extinction of 1989 has moved the world from a Joshua to a Genesis environment: from one centrally organized, rigidly bounded, and hysterically concerned with impenetrable boundaries to one in which territorial, ideological, and issue boundaries are attenuated, unclear, and confusing. We now inhabit a world that, while not "without form and void," is one in which the major imperatives are the same as in Genesis, "naming and bounding.""

Jowitt comparies the world-reshaping impact of the vents of 1989 with those of the Battle of Hastings in 1066.

jectively, in the capitalist West. This transpired not only in Thatcherite England and Reaganite America, but perhaps even more dramatically in the more "progressive" and interventionist regimes like France and, subsequently, in countries like Italy, Spain, and even more recently, in Scandinavia itself. Not only was there, in other words, the obvious and ideologically portentous bankruptcy of most of the world's Communist economies, but there was the marked privatization of nationalized capitalist economies in both authoritarian-corporatist and socialist-democratic states. The world-wide recession that followed the longest period of sustained growth in capitalist history does not seem to have dampened the revival of market commitments, as the recent triumph of Clinton's neoliberalism in the United States demonstrates very well. In the late 1960s and 1970s, the intellectual successors to modernization theory, neo-Marxists like Baran and Sweezy (1964) and Mandel (1968), announced the imminent stagnation of capitalist economies and an inevitably declining rate of profit.[38] History has proved them wrong, with far-reaching ideological results (Chirot 1992).

"Rightward" developments on the more specifically political plane have been as far-reaching as those on the economic. As I mentioned earlier, during the late 1960s and 1970s it had become ideologically fashionable, and empirically justifiable, to accept political authoritarianism as the price of economic development. In the last decade, however, events on the ground seem to have challenged this view, and a radical reversal of conventional wisdom is now underway. It is not only Communist tyrannies that have opened up since the mid-1980s, but the very Latin American dictatorships that seemed so "objectively necessary" only an intellectual generation before. Even African dictatorships have recently begun to show signs of vulnerability to this shift in political discourse from authoritarianism to democracy.

These developments have created social conditions – and mass public sentiment – that would seem to belie the postmodern intellectuals' coding of contemporary (and future) society as fatalistic, private, particularistic, fragmented, and local. They also would appear to undermine the deflated narrative frame of postmodernism, which has insisted either on the romance of difference or, more fundamentally, on the idea that contemporary life can only be interpreted in a comic way. And, indeed, if we look closely at recent intellectual discourse, we can observe, in fact, a return to many earlier, modernist themes.

Because the recent revivals of market and democracy have occurred on a world-wide scale, and because they are categorically abstract and generalizing ideas, universalism has once again become a viable source for social theory. Notions of commonality and institutional convergence have re-emerged, and with them the possibilities for intellectuals to provide meaning in an utopian way.[39] It seems, in fact, that we are witnessing the birth of a

[38] One of the little noticed battle grounds of intellectual ideology over the last 30 years has been the "shopping center," a.k.a. "the mall." Making its appearance after World War II in the United States, it came to represent for many conservative liberals the continuing vitality – contrary to the dire predictions of Marxist thought in the 1930s – of "small business" and the "petit bourgeoisie." Later, neo-Marxists like Mandel devoted a great deal of space to the shopping centers, suggesting that this new form of organization had staved off capitalism's ultimate economic stagnation, describing it as the organizational equivalent of advertising's "artificial creation" of "false needs." In the 1980s, these same sprawling congeries of mass capitalism, now transformed into upscale but equally plebeian malls, became the object of attack from postmodernists, who saw them not as wily stop gaps to stagnation but as perfect representations of the fragmentation, commercialism, privatism, and retreatism that marked the end of Utopian hope (and possibly of history itself). The most famous example of the latter is Jameson (e.g., 1988) on the Los Angeles Bonaventure Hotel.

[39] For example in his recent plea to fellow members of the academic Left – many if not most of whom are now postmodern in their promotion of difference and particularism – Todd Gitlin argues not only that a renewal of the project of universalism is necessary to preserve a viable critical intellectual politics but that such a movement has already begun:

"If there is to be a Left in more than a sentimental sense, its position ought to be: This desire for human unity is indispensable. The ways, means, basis, and costs are a subject for disciplined conversation ... Now, alongside the indisputable premise that knowledge of many kinds is specific to time, place, and interpretive community, thoughtful critics are placing the equally important premise that there are unities in the human condition and that, indeed, the existence of common understandings is the basis of all communication (= making common) across boundaries of language and history and experience. Today, some of the most exciting scholarship entails efforts to incorporate new and old knowledge together in unified narratives. Otherwise there is no escape from solipsism, whose political expression cannot be the base of liberalism or radicalism." (Gitlin 1993: 36–7).

fourth postwar version of myothopeic social thought. "Neo-modernism" (cf. Tiryakian 1991) will serve as a rough-and-ready characterization of this phase of postmodernization theory until a term appears that represents the new spirit of the times in a more imaginative way.

In response to economic developments, different groupings of contemporary intellectuals have reinflated the emancipatory narrative of the market, in which they emplot a new past (antimarket society) and a new present/future (market transition, full-blown capitalism) that makes liberation dependent upon privatization, contracts, monetary inequality, and competition. On one side, a much enlarged and more activist breed of intellectual conservatives has emerged. Although their policy and political concerns have not, as yet, greatly affected the discourse of general social theory, there are exceptions that indicate the potential is there. James Coleman's massive *Foundations of Social Theory* (1989), for example, has a self-consciously heroic cast; it aims to make neo-market, rational choice the basis not only for future theoretical work but for the re-creation of a more responsive, law-abiding, and less degraded social life.[40]

Much more significant is the fact that within liberal intellectual life, among the older generation of disillusioned utopians and the younger intellectual groups as well, a new and positive social theory of markets has reappeared. For many politically engaged intellectuals, too, this has taken the theoretical form of the individualistic, quasi-romantic frame of rational choice. Employed initially to deal with the disappointing failures of working class consciousness (e.g., Wright 1985 and Pzeworski 1985; cf. Elster 1989), it has increasingly served to explain how state communism, and capitalist corporatism, can be transformed into a market-oriented system that is liberating or, at least, substantively rational (Pzeworski 1991, Moene/Wallerstein 1992, Nee 1989). While other politically engaged intellectuals have appropriated market ideas in less restrictive and more collectivist ways (e.g., Szelenyi 1988, Friedland/Robertson 1990), their writings, too, betray an enthusiasm for market processes that is markedly different from the left-leaning intellectuals of earlier times. Among the intellectual advocates of "market socialism," there has been a similar change. Kornai, for example, has expressed distinctly fewer reservations about free markets in his more recent writings than in the path-breaking works of the 1970s and 1980s that brought him to fame.

This neo-modern revival of market theory is also manifest in the rebirth and redefinition of economic sociology. In terms of research program, Granovetter's (1974) earlier celebration of the strengths of the market's "weak ties" has become a dominant paradigm for studying economic networks (e.g., Powell 1991), one that implicitly rejects postmodern and antimodern pleas for strong ties and local communities. His later argument for the "imbeddedness" (1985) of economic action has transformed (e.g., Granovetter and Swedberg 1992) the image of the market into a social and interactional relationship that has little resemblance to the deracinated, capitalist exploitator of the past. Similar transformations can be seen in more generalized discourse. Adam Smith has been undergoing an intellectual rehabilitation (Hall 1986; Heilbroner 1986; Boltanski/Thevenot 1991: 60–84; Boltanski 1993: 38–98). Shumpter's "market realism" has been revived; the individaulism of Weber's marginalist economics has been celebrated (Holton/Turner 1989); so has the market-acceptance that permeates Parsons' theoretical work (Turner/Holton 1986 and Holton 1992).

In the political realm, neo-modernism has emerged in an even more powerful way, as a result, no doubt, of the fact that it has been the political revolutions of the last decade that have reintroduced narrative in a truly heroic form and challenged the postmodern deflation in the most direct way. The movements away from dictatorship, motivated in practice by the most variegated of concerns, have been articulated mythically as a vast, unfolding "drama of democracy" (Sherwood 1994), literally as an opening up of the spirit of humanity. The melodrama of social good triumphing, or almost triumphing, over social evil – which Peter Brooke (1984) so brilliantly discovered to be the root of the nineteenth century narrative form – has populated the symbolic canvas of the late 20-century West with heroes and conquests of truly world-historical scope. This drama started with the epochal struggle of Lech Walesa, and what seemed to be virtually the entire Polish nation (Tiryakian 1988) against Poland's coercive party-state. The day-to-day dramaturgy that captured public imagi-

[40] The massive negative response among contemporary social theorists to Coleman's tome – the review symposium in *Theory and Society* (e.g., Alexander 1991) is not an untyptical example – is less an indication that rational choice theory is being massively rejected than an expression of the fact that neo-modernism is not, at this time, sympathetic to a conservative political tilt. This may not be true in the future.

nation ended initially in Solidarity's inexplicable defeat. Eventually, however, good did triumph over evil, and the dramatic symmetry of the heroic narrative was complete. Mikhail Gorbachev began his long march through the Western dramatic imagination in 1984. His increasingly loyal world-wide audience fiercely followed his epochal struggles in what eventually became the longest running public drama in the postwar period. This grand narrative – which might be entitled "The Making, Unmaking, and Resurrection of an American Hero: Gorbachev and the Discourse of the Good" (Alexander/Sherwood, ms.) – produced cathartic reactions in its audience, which the press called "Gorbymania" and Durkheim would have labelled the collective effervescence that only symbols of the sacred inspire. This drama was reprised in what the mass publics, media, and elites of Western countries construed as the equally heroic achievements of Nelson Mandela and Vaclav Havel, and later of Boris Yeltsin, the tank-stopping hero who succeeded Gorbachev in Russia's post-Communist phase (Alexander/Sherwood 1992). Similar experiences of exaltation and renewed faith in the moral efficacy of democratic revolution were produced by the social drama that took place in 1989 in Tianamen Square, with its strong ritualistic overtones (Chan 1994) and its classically tragic denouement.

It would be astonishing if this reinflation of mass political drama did not manifest itself in equally marked shifts in intellectual theorizing about politics. In fact, in a manner that parallels the rise of the "market," there has been the powerful re-emergence of theorizing about democracy. Liberal ideas about political life, which emerged in the eighteen and nineteenth centuries and which were displaced by the "social question" of the great industrial transformation, seem like contemporary ideas again. Dismissed as historically anachronistic in the anti- and post-modern decades, they have become quite suddenly à la mode (cf., Alexander 1991).

This re-emergence has taken the form of the revival of the concept of "civil society," the informal, non-state, and non-economic realm of public and personal life that Tocqueville, for example, defined as vital to the maintenance of the democratic state. Rising initially from within the intellectual debates that helped spark the social struggles against authoritarianism in Eastern Europe (cf., Arato and Cohen 1992) and Latin American (Stepan 1985), the term was "secularized" and given more abstract and more universal meaning by American and European intellectuals who were connected with these movements, like Cohen and Arato and Keane (1989ab). Subsequently, they utilized the concept to begin theorizing in a manner that sharply demarcated their own "left" theorizing from the anti-modernization, anti-formal democracy writings of an earlier day.

Stimulated by these writers and also by the English translation (1989) of Habermas's early book on the bourgeois public sphere, debates about pluralism, fragmentation, differentiation, and participation have become the new order of the day. Frankfurt theorists, Marxist social historians, and even some post-modernists have become democratic theorists under the sign of the "public sphere" (see, e.g., the essays by Postpone, Ryan, and Eley in Calhoun 1992 and the more recent writings of Held, e.g., 1987).[41] Communitarian and internalist political philosophers, like Walzer (1991, 1992), have taken up the concept to clarify the universalist yet non-abstract dimensions in their theorizing about the good. For conservative social theorists (e.g., Banfield forthcoming, Wilson forthcoming, and Shils 1991 and forthcoming), civil society is a concept that implies civility and harmony. For neo-functionalists (e.g., Sciulli 1992, Mayhew 1992, and Alexander 1992), it is an idea that denotes the possibility of theorizing conflicts over equality and inclusion in a less anticapitalist way. For old functionalists (e.g., Inkeles 1991), it is an idea that suggests that formal democracy has been a requisite for modernization all along.

But whatever the particular perspective that has framed this new political idea, its neo-modern status is plain to see. Theorizing in this manner suggests that contemporary societies either possess, or must aspire to, not only an economic market but a distinctive political zone, an institutional field of universal if contested domain (Touraine 1994). It provides a common empirical point of referent, which implies a familiar coding of citizen and ene-

[41] There is clear evidence that this transformation is world-wide in scope. In Quebec, for example, Arnaud Sales, who worked earlier in a strongly Marxist tradition, now insists on a universal relatedness among conflict groups and incorporates the language of "public" and "civil society":

"If, in their multiplicity, associations, unions, corporations, and movements have always defended and represented very diversified opinions, it is probable that, despite the power of economic and statist systems, the proliferation of groups founded on a tradition, a way of life, an opinion or a protest has probably never been so broad and so divesified as it is at the end of the twentieth century." (Sales 1991: 308).

my, and allows history to be narrated, once again, in a teleological manner that gives the drama of democracy full force.

6. Neo-Modernism and Social Evil: Nationalism as Polluted Representation

This problem of the demarcation of civil as opposed to uncivil society points to issues that go beyond the narrating and explanatory frameworks of neo-modern theory that I have described thus far. Romantive and heroic narratives that describe the triumph, or possible triumph, of markets and democracies have a reassuringly familiar form. When we turn to the binary coding of this emerging historical period, however, certain problems arise. Given the resurgence of universalism, of course, one can be confident that what is involved is a specification of the master code, described earlier as the discourse of civil society. Yet, while this almost archetypical symbolization of the requisites and antonyms of democracy establishes general categories, historically specific "social representations" (Moscovici 1984) must also be developed to articulate the concrete categories of good and evil in a particular time and place. In regard to these secondary elaborations, what strikes one is how difficult it has been to develop a set of binary categories that is semantically and socially compelling, a black-versus-white contrast that can function as a successor code to postmodern: modern or, for that matter, to the socialist: capitalist and modern: traditional symbolic sets that were established by earlier intellectual generations, and which by no means have entirely lost their efficacy today.[42]

To be sure, the symbolization of the good does not present a real problem. Democracy and universalism are key terms, and their more substantive embodiments are free market, individualism, and human rights. The problem comes in establishing the profane side. The abstract qualities that pollution must embody are obvious enough. Because they are produced by the principle of difference, they closely resemble the qualities that were opposed to modernization in the postwar period, qualities that identified the pollution of "traditional" life. But despite the logical similarities, earlier ideological formulations cannot simply be taken up again. Even if they effectuate themselves only through differences in second order representations, the differences between present day society and the immediate postwar period are enormous. Faced with the rapid onrush of "markets" and "democracy," and the rapid collapse of their opposites, it has proven difficult to formulate equally universal and far-reaching representations of the profane. The question is this: Is there an oppositional movement or geo-political force that is a convincingly and fundamentally dangerous, that is a "world-historical" threat to the "good"? The once powerful enemies of universalism seemed to be historical relics, out of sight and out of mind, laid low by an historical drama that seems unlikely soon to be reversed. It was for this semantic reason that, in the interim period after "1989", many intellectuals, and certainly broad sections of Western publics, experienced a strange combination of optimism and self-satisfaction, energetic commitment and moral disrepair.

In comparison with the modernization theory of the postwar years, neo-modern theory involves fundamental shifts in both symbolic time and symbolic space. In neo-modern theory, the profane can neither be represented by an evolutionarily preceding period of traditionalism nor identified with the world outside of North America and Europe. In contrast with the postwar modernization wave, the current one is global and inter-national rather than regional and imperial, a difference articulated in social science by the contrast between early theories of dependency (Frank 1966) and more contemporary theories of globalization (Robertson 1992). The social and economic reasons for this change center on the rise of Japan, which this time around has gained power, not as one of Spencer's military societies – a category that could be labelled backward in an evolutionary sense – but as a civilized commercial society.

Thus, for the first time in 500 years (see Kennedy 1987), it has become impossible for the West to dominate Asia, either economically or culturally. When this objective factor is combined with the pervasive de-Christianization of Western intellectuals, we can understand the remarkable fact that "orientalism" – the symbolic pollution of Eastern civilization that Said (1978) articulated so tellingly scarcely more than a decade ago – seems no longer to be a forceful spatial or temporal representation in Western ideology or social theory, although it has by no means entirely disappeared.[43] A social

[42] See my earlier remarks (n. 28, above) on the inertial effects of intellectual ideologies and on the social conditions that exacerbate them.

[43] This would seem, at first glance, to confirm Said's quasi-Marxist insistence that it was the rise of the

scientific translation of this ideological fact, which points the way to a post- postmodern, or neo-modern code, is Eisenstadt's (1987: vii) call for "a far-reaching reformulation of the vision of modernization, and of modern civilizations." While continuing to code modern in a thoroughly positive way, this conceptualization explains it, not as the end of an evolutionary sequence, but as a highly successfully globalizing movement.

> Instead of perceiving modernization as the final stage in the fulfillment of the evolutionary potential common to all societies – of which the European experience was the most important and succinct manifestation and paradigm – modernization (or modernity) should be viewed as one specific civilization or phenomenon. Originating in Europe, it has spread in its economic, political and ideological aspects all over the world ... The crystallization of this new type of civilization was not unlike the spread of the great religions, or the great imperial expansions, but because modernization almost always combined economic, political, and ideological aspects and forces, its impact was by far the greatest. (ibid.)

Original modernization theory transformed Weber's overtly Western-centric theory of world religions into a universal account of of global change that still culminated in the social structure and culture of the postwar Western world. Eisenstadt proposes to make modernization itself the historical equivalent of a world religion, which relativizes it, on the one hand, and suggests the possibility of selective indigenous appropriation (Hannerz 1987), on the other.

The other side of this decline of orientalism among Western theorists is what seems to be the virtual disappearance of "third world-ism" – what might be called occidentalism – from the vocabulary of intellectuals who speak from within, or on behalf of, developing countries. A remarkable indication of this discursive shift can be found in an opinion piece that Edward Said published in the *New York Times* protesting the imminent Allied air war against Iraq in early 1991. While reiterating the familiar characterization of American policy toward Iraq as the result of an "imperialist ideology," Said justified his opposition not by pointing to the distinctive worth of national or political ideology but by upholding universality: "A new world order has to be based on authentically general principles, not on the selectively applied might of one country" (Said 1991). More significantly, Said denounced Iraqi President Saddam Hussein and the "Arab world," representing them in particularizing categories that polluted them as the enemies of universalism itself.

> The traditional discourse of Arab nationalism, to say nothing of the quite decrepit state system, is inexact, unresponsive, anomalous, even comic ... Today's Arab media are a disgrace. It is difficult to speak the plain truth in the Arab world ... Rarely does one find rational analysis – reliable statistics, concrete and undoctored descriptions of the Arab world today with its ... crushing mediocrity in science and many cultural fields. Allegory, complicated symbolism and innuendo substitute for common sense. (ibid.)

When Said concludes that there appears to be a "remorseless Arab propensity to violence and extremism," the end of occidentalism seems complete.

Because the contemporary re-coding of the antithesis of universalism can be geographically represented neither as nonWestern nor temporally located in an earlier time, the social sacred of neo-modernism cannot, paradoxically, be represented as "modernization." In the ideological discourse of contemporary intellectuals, it would seem almost as difficult to employ this term as it is to identify the good with "socialism." Not modernization but democratization, not the modern but the market – these are the terms that the new social movements of the neo-modern period employ. These difficulties in representation help to explain the new saliency of non-national, international organizations (Thomas/Louderdale 1988), a salience that points, in turn, to elements of what the long-term representation of a viable ideological antinomy might be. For European and American intellectuals, and for those from outside of the West as well, the United Nations and European Community have taken on new legitimacy and reference, providing institutional manifestations of the new universalism that transcend earlier great divides.

The logic of these telling institutional and cultural shifts is that "nationalism" – not traditionalism, communism, or the "East" – is coming to represent the principal challenge to the newly universalized discourse of the good. Nationalism is the name intellectuals and publics are now increasingly giving to the negative antinomies of civil society.

West's actual power in the world – imperialism – that allowed the ideology of orientalism to proceed. What Said does not recognize, however, is that there is a more general code of sacred and profane categories of which the "social representations" of orientalism is an historically specific subset. The discourse of civil society is an ideological formation that proceeded imperialism and that informed the pollution of diverse categories of historically encountered others – Jews, woman, slaves, proletarians, homosexuals, and more generally enemies – in quite similar terms.

The categories of the "irrational," "conspiratorial," and "repressive" are taken to be synonymous with forceful expressions of nationality, and equated with primordiality and uncivilized social forms. That civil societies have always themselves taken a national form is being conveniently neglected, along with the continuing nationalism of many democratic movements themselves.[44] It is true, of course, that in the geo-political world that has so suddenly been re-formed, it is the social movements and armed rebellions for national self-determination that trigger military conflicts that can engender large scale wars.

Is it any wonder, then, that nationalism is now routinely portrayed as the successor of communism, not only in the semantic but in the organizational sense? This equation is made by high intellectuals, not only in the popular press. "Far from extinguishing nationalism," Liah Greenfeld (1992) wrote recently in *The New Republic*, "communism perpetuated and reinforced the old nationalist values. And the intelligentsia committed to these values is now turning on the democratic regime it inadvertently helped to create."

> The democratic intelligentsia, which took shape in opposition to the Communist state, is, in fact, much more motivated by nationalist than by democratic concerns ... To accomplish a transition from communism to democracy, Russia needs to renounce the traditions that made communism possible: the anti-democratic values of its nationalism. (ibid.)

It does not seem surprising that some of the most promising younger generation of American social theorists have shifted from concerns with modernization, critical theory, and citizenship to issues of identity and nationalism. In addition to Greenfeld, one might note the new work of Rogers Brubaker, whose studies of central European and Russian nationalism (e.g., Brubaker 1994) make similar links between Soviet communism and contemporary nationalism, although from a less culturalist, more neo-institutional perspective. One might note also some of the recent writings of Craig Calhoun (e.g., 1992).

It is the failure to confirm such a semantic and organizational analogy with communism that has prevented religious fundamentalism from occupying a similar categorically polluting role. It has been unable to do so despite the currency of fundamentalism-versus-modernity in everyday speech (e.g., Barber 1992) and the myriad examples of its very real dangers to democracy, markets, and social differentiation that are ready to hand.[45] On the one hand, because intellectuals in democratic nations are continually criticising the renewal of fundamentalist forms of religiosity in their democratic countries, it is difficult for them to equate secular with democratic or to place fundamentalist religiosity completely outside the pale of democratic life. On the other hand, postcommunist nations are not particularly fundamentalist; nor has fundamentalism posed the same kind of real politik basis for the renewal of large scale conflict as the militant assertion of national rights.

In Winter, 1994, *Theory and Society*, a bellweather of intellectual currents in Western social theory, devoted a special issue to nationalism. In their introduction to the symposium, John Comaroff and Paul Stern make particularly vivid the link between nationalism-as-pollution and nationalism-as-object-of-social-science.

> Nowhere have the signs of the quickening of contemporary history, of our misunderstanding and misprediction of the present, been more clearly expressed than in the ... assertive renaissance of nationalisms ... World events over the past few years have thrown a particularly sharp light on the darker, more dangerous sides of nationalism and claims to sovereign identity. And, in so doing, they have revealed how tenuous is our grasp of the phenomenon. Not only have these events confounded the unsuspecting world of scholarship. They have also shown a long heritage of social theory and prognostication to be flatly wrong. (Comaroff and Stern 1994: 35)

While these theorists do not, of course, deconstruct their empirical argument by explicitly relating it to the rise of a new phase of myth and science, it is noteworthy that they do insist on linking the new understanding of nationalism to the rejection of Marxism, modernization theory, and postmodern thought (ibid., 35–37). In their own contribution to this special revival issue, Greenfeld and Chirot insist on the fundamental antithesis between democracy and nationalism in the strongest terms. After discussing Russia, Germany, Roumania, Syr-

[44] Exceptions to this amnesia can, however, be found in the current debate, particularly among those French social theorists who remain strongly influenced by the Republicain tradition. See, for example, Michel Wieviorka's (1993: 23–70) lucid argument for a contested and double-sided understanding of nationalism and Dominique Schnapper's (1994) powerful defense of the national character of the democratic state. For another good recent statement of this more balanced position, see Hall 1993.

[45] Most recently, see Khosrokhavar's (1993) illumating discussion of how the negative utopia of shi'ite religion undermine the more universalistic strains in the Iranian revolution.

ia, Iraq, and the Cambodian Khmer Rouge, they write:

The cases we discuss here show that the association between certain types of nationalism and aggressive, brutal behavior is neither coincidental nor inexplicable. Nationalism remains the world's most powerful, general, and primordial basis of cultural and political identity. Its range is still growing, not diminishing, throughout the world. And in most places, it does not take an individualistic or civic form. (Greenfeld/Chirot 1994: 123).

The new social representation of nationalism and pollution, based upon the symbolic analogy with Communism, also has permeated the popular press. Serbia's expansionist military adventures have provided a crucial field of collective representation. See, for example, the categorical relationships that are established in the following editorial from the *New York Times*.

Communism can pass easily into nationalism. The two creeds have much in common. Each offers a simple key to tangled problems. One exalts class, the other ethnic kinship. Each blames real grievances on imagined enemies. As a Russian informant shrewdly remarked to David Shipler in *The New Yorker*: "They are both ideologies that liberate people from personal responsibility. They are united around some sacred [read profane] goal." In varying degrees and with different results, old Bolsheviks have become new nationalists in Serbia and many former Soviet republics.

The *Times* editorial writer further codes the historical actors by analogizing the current break-up of Czechoslovakia to the nationalism that preceded it, and which ultimately issued from World War I.

And now the same phenomenon has surfaced in Czechoslovakia ... There is a ... moral danger, described long ago by Thomas Masaryk, the founding president of Czechoslovakia, whose own nationalism was joined inseparably to belief in democracy. "Chauvinism is nowhere justified," he wrote in 1927, "least of all in our country ... To a positive nationalism, one that seeks to raise a nation by intensive work, none can demur. Chauvinism, racial or national intolerance, not love of one's own people, is the foe of nations and of humanity." Masaryk's words are a good standard for judging tolerance on both sides. (June 16, 1992; reprinted in the *International Herald Tribune*)

The analogy between nationalism and communism, and their pollution as threats to the new internationalism, is even made by government officials of formerly Communist states. For example, in late September, 1992, Andrei Kozyrev, Russia's Foreign Minister, appealed to the United Nations to consider setting up international trusteeships to oversee the move to independence by former Soviet non-Slavic republics. Only a UN connection, he argued, could prevent the newly independent states from discriminating against national minorities. The symbolic crux of his argument is the analogy between two categories of pollution. "Previously, victims of totalitarian regimes and ideologies needed protection," Kozyrev told the U.N. General Assembly. "Today, ever more often one needs to counter aggressive nationalism that emerges as a new global threat."[46]

7. Modernization Redux? The Hubris of Linearity and the Dangers of Theoretical Amnesia

In 1982 (p. 144), when Anthony Giddens confidently asserted that "modernization theory is based upon false premises," he was merely reiterating the common social scientific sense of the day, or at least his generation's version of it. When he added that the theory had "served ... as an ideological defence of the dominance of Western capitalism over the rest of the world," he reproduced the common understanding of why this false theory had once been believed. Today both these sentiments seem anachronistic. Modernization theory (e.g., Parsons 1963) stipulated that the great civilizations of the world would converge towards the institutional and cultural configurations of Western society. Certainly we are witnessing something very much like this process today, and the enthusiasm it has generated is hardly imposed by Western domination.

The sweeping ideological and objective transformations described in the preceding section have begun to have their theoretical effect, and the theoretical gauntlet that the various strands of neomodernism have thrown at the feet of postmodern theory are plain to see. Shifting historical conditions have created fertile ground for such post-postmodern theorizing, and intellectuals have responded to these conditions by revising their earlier theories in creative and often far-reaching ways. Certainly, it would be premature to call neomodernism a "successor theory" to postmodernism. It has only recently become crystallized as an intellectual alternative, much less emerged as the

[46] In a telling observation on the paradoxical relationship of nationalism to recent events, Wittrock (1991) notes that when West Germany pressed for reunification, it both affirmed the abstract universalism of notions like freedom, law, and markets and, at the same time, the ideology of nationalism in its most particularistic, ethnic and linguistic sense, the notion that the "German people" could not be divided.

victor in this ideological-cum-theoretical fight. It is unclear, further, whether the movement is nourished by a new generation of intellectuals or by fragments of currently competing generations who have found in neo-modernism a unifying vehicle to dispute the postmodern hegemony over the contemporary field. Despite these qualifications, however, it must be acknowledged that a new and very different current of social theorizing has emerged on the scene.

With this success, however, there comes the grave danger of theoretical amnesia about the problems of the past. Retrospective verifications of modernization theory have begun in earnest. One of the most fulsome and acute apologias appeared recently in the *European Journal of Sociology*. "With an apparently more acute sense of reality," Muller (1992: 111) writes, "the sociological theory of modernity had recorded the long-term developments within the Eastern European area, currently taking place in a more condensed form, long before they were empirically verifiable." Muller adds, for good measure, that "the *grand theory* constantly accused of lacking contact with reality seemingly proves to possess predictive capacity – the classical sociological modernization theory of Talcott Parsons" (ibid., original italics). Distinguished theorists who were once neo-Marxist critics of capitalist society, like Bryan Turner, have become believers, defending Western citizenship (Turner 1986) against radical egalitarianism and lauding Parsons for his "anti-nostalgic" endorsement (Holton/Turner 1986) of the basic structures of modern life. Among former Communist apparatchiks themselves, there is growing evidence (i.e., Borko cited in Muller 1992: 112) that similar "retro-dictions" about the convergence of capitalist and communist societies are well underway, tendencies that have caused a growing number of "revisits" to Schumpeter as well.

The theoretical danger here is that this enthusiastic and long overdue re-appreciation of some of the central thrusts of postwar social science might actually lead to the revival of convergence and modernization theories in their earlier forms. In his reflections on the recent transitions in Eastern Europe, Habermas (1990: 4) employs such evolutionary phrases as "rewinding the reel" and "rectifying revolution." Inkeles' (1991) recent tractatus to American policy agencies is replete with such convergence homilies as a political "party should not seek to advance its objectives by extra political means." Sprinkled with advice about "the importance of locating ... the distinctive point where additional resources can provide greatest leverage," the article displays the kind of over-confidence in controlled social change that marked the hubris of postwar modernization thought. When Lipset (1990) claims the lesson of the second great transition as the failure of the "middle way" between capitalism and socialism, he is no doubt correct in an important sense, but the formulation runs the danger of reinforcing the tendentious, either/or dichotomies of earlier thinking in a manner that could justify not only narrow self-congratulation but unustified optimism about imminent social change. Jeffrey Sachs and other *simpliste* expositors of the "big bang" approach to transition seem to be advocating a rerun of Rostow's earlier "take-off" theory. Like that earlier species of modernization idea, this new monetarist modernism throws concerns of social solidarity and citizenship, let alone any sense of historical specificity (Leijonhofvud 1993), utterly to the winds.

While the recent social scientific formulations of market and democracy discussed above avoid the most egregious distortions of the kind I have just described, the universalism of their categories, the heroism of their Zeitgeist, and the dichotomous strictures of their codes make the underlying problems difficult to avoid. Theories of market transition, even in the careful hands of a scholar as conscientious as Victor Nee, sometimes suggests a linearity and rationality that historical experience belies. Civil society theory, despite the extraordinary self-consciousness of philosophers like Cohen and Walzer, seems unable to theorize empirically the demonic, anti-civil forces of cultural life that it normatively proscribes (cf., Alexander 1994 and Sztompka 1991).

If there is to be a new and more successful effort at constructing a social theory about the fundamentally shared structures of contemporary societies (cf., Sztompka 1993: 136–41), it will have to avoid these regressive tendencies, which resurrect modernization ideas in their most simplistic forms. Institutional structures like democracy, law, and market are functional requisites if certain social competencies are to be achieved and certain resources to be acquired; they are not, however, either historical inevitabilities or linear outcomes, nor are they social panaceas for the problems of non-economic subsystems or groups (see, e.g., Rueschemeyer 1992). Social and cultural differentiation may be an ideal-typical pattern that can be analytically reconstructed over time; however, whether or not any particular differentiation occurs – market, state, law, or science – depends on the normative

aspirations (e.g., Sztompka 1991), strategic position, history and powers of particular social groups. No matter how socially progressive in itself, morever, differentiation displaces as much as it resolves, and can create social upheaval on an enormous scale. Social systems may well be pluralistic and the causes of change multidimensional; at any given time and in any given place, however, a particular subsystem and the group that directs it – economic, political, scientific, or religious – may successfully dominate and submerge the others in its name. Globalization is, indeed, a dialectic of indigenization and cosmopolitanism, but cultural and political asymmetries remain between more and less developed regions, even if they are not inherent contradictions of some imperialistic fact. While the analytic concept of civil society must by all means be recovered from the heroic age of democratic revolutions, it should be de-idealized so that "anti-civil society" – the countervailing processes of decivilization, polarization, and violence – can be seen also as typically "modern" results. Finally, these new theories must be pushed to maintain a decentered, self-conscious reflexivity about their ideological dimensions even while they continue in their efforts to create a new explanatory scientific theory. For only if they become aware of themselves as moral constructions – as codes and as narratives – will they be able to avoid the totalizing conceit that gave early modernizing theory such a bad name. In this sense, "neo-" must incorporate the linguistic turn associated with "post-" modern theory, even while it challenges its ideological and more broadly theoretical thrust.

In one of his last and most profound theoretical meditations, Francois Bourricaud (1987: 19–21) suggested that "one way of defining modernity is the way in which we define solidarity." The notion of modernity can be defended, Bourricaud believed, if, rather than "identify[ing] solidarity with equivalence," we understand that the "'general spirit' is both universal and particular." Within a group, a generalizing spirit "is universal, since it regulates the intercourse among members of the group." Yet, if one thinks of the relations between nations, this spirit "is also particular, since it helps distinguish one group from all others." In this way, it might be said that "the 'general spirit of a nation' assures the solidarity of individuals, without necessarily abolishing all their differences, and even establishing the full legitimacy of some of them." What of the concept of universalism? Perhaps, Bourricaud suggested, "modern societies are characterized less by what they have in common or by their structure with regard to well-defined universal exigencies, than by the fact of their involvement in the *issue* of universalization" as such (italics added).

Perhaps it is wise to acknowledge that it is a renewed sense of involvement in the project of universalism, rather than some lipid sense of its concrete forms, that marks the character of the new age in which we live. Beneath this new layer of the social top soil, moreover, there lies the tangled roots and richly marbled subsoil of earlier intellectual generations, whose ideologies and theories have not ceased to be alive. The struggles between these interlocutors can be intimidating and confusing, not only because of the intrinsic difficulty of their message but because each presents itself not as form but as essence, not as the only language in which the world makes sense but as the only real sense of the world. Each of these worlds does make sense, but only in an historically bounded way. Recently, a new social world has come into being. We must try to make sense of it. For the task of intellectuals is not only to explain the world; they must interpret it as well.

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