

Black Modernity: Africa, African diaspora, and global social change

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[submitted to *American Historical Review* 11 December 2012; rejected 2013]

For just over two decades, scholars have debated modernity, seeking to clarify the dynamics of recent social transformation. “Modernity” provides a flexible and provocative framework that has facilitated exploration of the interplay among industrialization, nationalism, democracy, expanded state regulation, social movements, science, technology, and cultural change. The debate has strained the limits of the social sciences and humanities because of its breadth and complexity, yet the effort of participants to develop a comprehensive explanation of accelerating social change has attracted wide interest. Meanwhile, a debate on globalization unfolded at virtually the same moment: it focused initially on the expanded global interactions in economy and culture. With time, globalization came to be seen not just as an event of the late twentieth century but also as a process recurring over a longer period of time. While the debates on modernity and globalization overlap greatly, part of what distinguishes them is that the study of globalization emphasizes interaction on a world scale while the study of modernity emphasizes social transformation, as much locally as globally.¹

The debate on modernity, though intentionally comprehensive, has naturally focused on certain topical and geographic areas rather than others. Leading voices in the debate have come from Western Europe and North America, and the discussion has focused primarily on events and processes in those same regions. Some widely read contributions have come from South Asia while others have focused on the place of East Asia and the Middle East in an evolving modernity. Another segment of the literature has focused on the Soviet Union, China, and other communist-led states as a great experiment in modernity.² Interestingly, this debate on broad social transformation has some similarities to the debate on “modernization” that unfolded some fifty years earlier. The current discussion of modernity is at once more interdisciplinary, global, and multidirectional than the earlier analysis of modernization.³

People of the African continent and African diaspora, however, have been notably marginal and often entirely invisible in this debate. The main interpretations of modernity give brief references to the

experience of black people—in enslavement, emancipation, decolonization, and civil rights campaigns—but decline to situate these references in central discussions of the construction of modernity. Black people are virtually absent from the tales of constructing the modern economy, national identity, governance, or culture. As I will argue, this choice reflects more than a matter of selective or unbalanced coverage: it reveals fundamental biases in the overall understanding of modernity. While the contemporary debate on modernity has advanced substantially over the now-discredited precepts of modernization theory, I argue that it has yet to incorporate the advances in history, theory, and empirical scientific knowledge that would enable scholars to surmount the current myopia and develop a more satisfactory account of modernity.

Decolonization after World War II brought independence to nearly half of the world's population, including some fifty African nations and a dozen Caribbean nations. Demographic analysis, once brought up to date, revealed that black people comprise one sixth of the human population, spread widely through the world—a population very near to that of South Asia or East Asia and exceeding that of Europe.⁴ Racial discrimination met formal rejection at numerous levels, formal education of black people expanded dramatically, and black people entered many social arenas from which they had previously been excluded. Popular culture continued its twentieth-century revolution and expansion, with black people in roles of leadership not only as artists but as creators and producers. And in a basic revelation of the unity and equality within the human species, geneticists verified in the late 1980s that *Homo sapiens* had emerged in Africa roughly 200,000 years ago, thus demonstrating that humans had, in that brief period of genetic history, spread to all corners of the world and developed the remarkably parallel societies of today.⁵ If black people are the equal of others in individual intelligence and in the skills to construct societies, why should such a large proportion of humanity be so marginal to the main story of modernity?

This essay reconsiders the debate on global modernity from the standpoint of Africans and people of African descent. It contests the marginalization of blacks in studies of modernity by documenting black agency in construction of the modern world. In analytical terms, the essay contests the view of modernity as a *moment of innovation*, in which well-placed individuals or groups launch waves of historical change. Instead, it affirms a view of modernity as a *process of response* in interaction with existing conditions. Thus, the essay incorporates both analysis and historical narrative, although my approach gives more attention to modernity as a historical phenomenon than as an analytical category.

In analytical terms, I argue that the positivistic search to narrow the problem down and locate the most fundamental innovations in human development has distorted the understanding of society and history more broadly. In historical terms, I argue that black people of Africa and the diaspora, in elite roles but especially as common people, have shown an agency that has brought modernity to their own lives and transformation to society generally. The role of black people in modernity, if obscured in previous times, became unmistakably clear because of two shifts in social-science research during the past fifty years: the abandonment of previously dominant racially-based theories and the expanded historical study of the black experience on several continents. As a result, both racial inferiority and insufficient documentation can now be dismissed as reasons for the absence of black people in interpretations of global social change.

Calls from black scholars and black communities for updating the scholarly understanding of modernity have met with responses that must be labeled, in sum, as meager. Apparently, black people remain marginal in debates over modernity not only because of lingering racial discrimination but especially because of elite bias in the study of social change.⁶ Later sections of this essay highlight countervailing theoretical and practical work that has argued for the agency of common people in major social transformations and has traced social interactions across spaces. Overall, an expanded view of modernity, accounting for history from below and for interregional social interactions, confirms the place of black people in modernity's social transformations and opens the path toward revising the tale of modernity for every region of the world.

"MODERNITY," THE EXPANDED TRANSFORMATION OF SOCIETY, is commonly understood to be governed by forces for change emanating from centers of power. David Harvey added an influential impetus to the emerging discussion of modernity with his 1989 *The Condition of Postmodernity*. In it he gave particular emphasis to a shift in aesthetics, beginning in the 1970s, from a "modern" emphasis on grand narrative, metaphysics, and design to a "postmodern" emphasis on anti-narrative, irony, and chance.⁷ In the same analysis he linked these aesthetic shifts to changing patterns of capitalism, notably the expansion of economic inequality from c. 1970. He saw both of these shifts as associated with an accelerating time-space compression. For instance, he described the previous rise of modernism as associated with an explosion, from 1910 to 1915, of scientific and cultural work challenging the "categorical fixity" of the Enlightenment with "divergent systems of representation." As Harvey

summarized it, “It is not hard to conclude that the whole world of representation and of knowledge underwent a fundamental transformation during this short space of time.”⁸ In summarizing, he offered a sketch of the “condition of postmodernity” in the era after the 1970s—a summary of his effort to explore “the general relations between modernization, modernity, and the aesthetic movements that draw their energies from such conditions.”⁹ Harvey thus argued that the debate over modernity arose out of an immediate and specific conjuncture—the shifts in aesthetics and knowledge that drew energies from changing structures of capitalism.

Anthony Giddens—the British sociologist whose career shows how many applications there can be of the thought of Marx, Durkheim, and Weber—took a longer-term approach in his two books on modernity. In the first, published in 1990, Giddens articulated his “discontinuist” position, arguing that the real discontinuity between traditional and modern ways of life emerged in seventeenth-century Europe, while the late-twentieth-century era of social and epistemological disorientation arose from continuing consequences of this modernity rather than from a fundamentally new way of being.¹⁰ Giddens argued further that modernity brings a consistent reflexivity—reflections and comparisons of the contrasts of tradition and modernity, and especially a consistent review and critique of every type of convention.¹¹ In a modest contrast, the version of sociologist Stuart Hall—intended as a comprehensive introduction to modernity—was attentive to people of color, but assumed that modernity began in Europe and slowly expanded, nation by nation.¹²

In another large-scale historical interpretation of modernity, combining narrative and analysis, Immanuel Wallerstein investigated “the modern world-system” from 1500 to the 1890s. The four volumes of this work, which appeared over nearly 40 years, actually encompass the debates over modernization and modernity. The sparseness of Wallerstein’s references to Africans and blacks of the diaspora certainly did not arise from a lack of knowledge about Africa – his early specialization in African politics set up personal relations that persisted through his career.¹³ Yet Wallerstein drew especially on Fernand Braudel – taking more from the economic side of Braudel’s thinking than from his multiplicity of systemic factors.¹⁴ For other works, the pattern remains the same, and the main tale of the modern world unfolds with scant reference to the large and in many ways prominent African portion of humanity. Thus Michel Beaud’s history of capitalism, in multiple editions, leaves out Africans and people of African descent except for cursory references to slave labor.¹⁵

Perhaps most prominent among historians recently addressing modernity is C. A. Bayly. His synthetic volume discusses a world of growing uniformity (but also complexity) in state, economy, and ideology. It argues that changes after 1780 “were so rapid, and interacted with each other so profoundly,” that this period can be seen as “the birth of the modern world.” Bayly waits until late in this story to offer his only substantial discussion of the African diaspora: entitled “Slavery’s Indian Summer,” it rapidly recaps the history of slavery worldwide, and wonders about the persistence of slavery at the end of the nineteenth century. (The cover illustration of Bayly’s volume is a 1797 portrait of Jean-Baptiste Belley, a Haitian political leader, but the text offers concise examples rather than sustained argument on the place of blacks in the birth of the modern world.)¹⁶

In an attempt to extend the discussion of modernity beyond Europeans at home or abroad, some historians have come to treat modernity as *plural*. Thus Dominic Sachsenmaier, S. N. Eisenstadt and Jens Riedel, in their 2002 volume, chose to emphasize “multiple modernities” as a way of addressing the modernities of China, Japan, India, and other regions in addition to Europe or The West.¹⁷ Huri Islamoglu and Peter Perdue led in publishing a collection of studies proposing a “shared modernity” that focused on commerce and the state across Eurasia.¹⁸ The 2011 roundtable on modernity published by the *American Historical Review* includes a complex matrix of views reflecting the geographical and analytical perspectives of nine authors, again emphasizing plural modernities.¹⁹ In a more encompassing response to this comparative framework, Carol Gluck proposed the notion of “blended modernities” to include the “modern experiences produced by such improvisational experiences.”²⁰ Nevertheless, in this roundtable, black people came up for discussion only in Africanist Lynn Thomas’s essay; this also is the essay giving most attention to common people.²¹

Specialists in the history of Africa and its diaspora sought, without much success, to challenge the neglect of black people within the framework of modernity. In earlier years, many skilled writers on the black world declined to celebrate modernization, focusing critically on such negative aspects of global transformation as enslavement, racial discrimination, and cultural deprivation.²² Philosophers V. Y. Mudimbe and Kwame Anthony Appiah advanced additional such arguments in the 1980s.²³ Paul Gilroy, in his 1993 *The Black Atlantic*, offered the approach to modernity that has perhaps been the most influential not only among black people but more broadly, though perhaps because it too takes an elite perspective. His point is that, in post-emancipation society, black artists and intellectuals drew on their cosmopolitan experience to produce innovative works in literature and music. The “Black Atlantic,”

for him, was the cosmopolitan network of black artists whose vision of modernity inflected the dominant English-language culture.²⁴

Historians Tiffany Ruby Patterson and Robin D.G. Kelley advanced, in a 1998 article, a detailed claim for the universality and modernity of the African-American experience, identifying key issues in social, economic, and cultural history that demonstrated the global significance of transformations in African-American communities. In a somewhat parallel essay with a standpoint in the African homeland, Maghan Keita reviewed analytical narratives on Africa's place in the world and argued, point after point, that world-historical and even Africanist scholars had neglected the role of Africa in the past.²⁵ These two pleas for recognition of the universality and modernity of Africans and African-Americans might have carried more weight if they had been linked to each other in the debate as they were in history. But even when Colin Palmer wrote to encompass the whole world of black people and attempted to set them in the context of global modernity, the echoes from elsewhere in the literature remained faint indeed.²⁶

The debate on modernity has thus expanded over two decades to include additional issues: the analysis of unity and self-awareness, the place of the state in modernity, the analysis of multiple modernities (including colonial modernity), and interpretations of modernity based in all parts of the world.²⁷ Despite this broadening of the analysis, both sociological and historical analyses of modernity systematically consign the people of Africa and the African diaspora to the footnotes. More generally, the currently dominant understandings of modernity restrict their clarity by limiting the analysis to narrow social strata and limited regions. I seek to document these two restrictions and show how they provoke myopia in the understanding of modernity.

DECOLONIZATION BROUGHT THE DECLINE of racial and civilizational theory and the flowering of study in black history. Theories that postulated racial hierarchy at the individual level—and civilizational hierarchy at the social level—declined in influence gradually and unevenly in the aftermath of World War II. Notions of “race” suffered first, followed more erratically by declines in scholarly belief in the analytical integrity of “empire” and “civilization,” although with new formulations commonly replacing the old. The social changes of the era of decolonization and civil rights accelerated the critique of theories that had previously sustained white racial supremacy and Euro-American imperial hegemony.

This transition is perhaps best seen through the last gasp of several hierarchical theories. These theories of human behavior, posed both at the individual level and at the level of social groups, had offered explanations for difference among people's behavior that might correlate with race, class, or culture. In addition, some theories argued that differences in the land or climate of Africa (or the tropical lowlands of the Americas) made it inherently difficult for black societies to advance.²⁸ At the civilizational or societal level, modernization theory, developed in general by Talcott Parsons and applied in politics and economics especially in the 1960s, argued that most societies were mired in traditional structures and needed to be led forward by elites socialized in the ways of the Europeans. The theory thus privileged hierarchy in civilization and in social class, assuming that creativity came from Europe and from the upper classes.²⁹ In familial terms, Daniel Patrick Moynihan in the 1960s famously argued that African-American families were sociopathic, and that single motherhood condemned a whole social group to inferiority.³⁰

Occasionally such theses encountered glancing challenges, as when Africanist anthropologist Jacques Maquet tried to redefine "civilization" in terms of life style rather than in terms of high culture.³¹ At other times, the hierarchical paradigms met with frontal attack, as in psychology where Leon Kamin demonstrated in 1974 that Cyril Burt, in his earlier studies of twins to document the heritability of intelligence, had distorted the evidence by exaggerating the genetic correlation with high intelligence.³² In physiology and medicine, there were steady demonstrations of an overall, trans-racial physiological equality that greatly counterbalanced the small though persistent physiological specificities of various social groups.³³

In this same era of decolonization and citizenship, historical studies of black communities expanded in a dramatic, worldwide recovery of a neglected past. This research and publication came especially out of black communities, as expanding opportunities in education allowed the recording of community histories in Africa, the Caribbean, Latin America, North America, and in the expanding black communities of European cities and Asian workplaces. In Africa and Latin America, high schools and universities expanded; in the United States as elsewhere, black enrollment shot upward in schools at all levels. European and American university programs in area studies, which had already begun for Asia and Latin America, expanded to the study of Africa; a somewhat parallel wave of Black Studies programs arose in the late 1960s, although in response more to community demand than to the concerns of policy-makers.

The new historical studies amplified the slim thread of key works by black authors published from the sixteenth century forward. Writings composed in Africa and Europe were recovered, disseminated, and supplemented by an expanding sequence of authors from within black communities or in close contact with them during the era of emancipation.³⁴ By the twentieth century these works had expanded to include visions of the black world, interconnected analyses of social change, and sociological studies of plantation and urban life: the writings of W.E.B. Du Bois, C.L.R. James, and Eric Williams stand out as particularly formative.³⁵ Postwar publications included the first successful survey texts on African-American history and then on African and Caribbean history.³⁶ Studies of imperial and plantation dominance of black communities came to be supplemented by interactive studies of African trade and politics and then by chronicles of black nationalism throughout the diaspora. The search for African agency led researchers to document African kingdoms, commerce, and technology.³⁷

The studies of plantations hit a peak with the controversy over *Time On the Cross* (1974), at once a leading study in economic history and an apparent justification of slavery.³⁸ A census of the Atlantic slave trade launched a huge research effort that ultimately linked economic and demographic studies of the four Atlantic continents.³⁹ As of the 1970s, historical monographs and interpretations were appearing on every section of the black world.⁴⁰ Countless community studies appeared, documenting various regions of Africa, the Caribbean, and North America.⁴¹ Frederick Bowser's 1974 study of Africans in early colonial Peru was one of the strongest contributions of that era to social history. A. I. Asiwaju's study of cross-border communities documented some of the many breaches of colonial African borders. Walter Rodney's appropriation of the notion of underdevelopment enabled him to present a transhistorical interpretation of Africa and its interrelations with Europe. Studies of pan-African ideas and action linked regions on both sides of the Atlantic from the eighteenth to the twentieth centuries.⁴²

The literature in black history expanded in numerous languages, especially English, French, Portuguese, and Spanish.⁴³ Similarly, the studies of history and culture spanned all main religious groupings – Christianity (Catholic, Protestant, Monophysite, and Pentecostal), Islam (with a focus on Sufi orders), and religions of African heritage in Africa and the diaspora.⁴⁴ Small publishing houses and historical journals appeared in many regions. Not all survived, but the published works remain part of the historical record. Larger projects began in the 1980s, including the *Cambridge History of Africa*, the

UNESCO *General History of Africa*, and publications of the papers of Booker T. Washington and Marcus Garvey; later came a UNESCO history of the Caribbean.⁴⁵ From the 1980s, historical studies of black people gained increasing recognition as an established element of the social sciences and humanities, and the volume of publication expanded steadily—especially for the United States and anglophone Africa, but ultimately for every region of the African diaspora. Documentary collections added to the continuing stream of monographic studies.⁴⁶ Nationalism and nationhood gained growing recognition, although attempts to tie Africa to the global economy did not work out as well. To the degree that transnational trends gained attention, pride of place was given to the struggle with hegemonic power: that of imperial rulers for the eastern hemisphere, and the contest with colonial and national elites for the western hemisphere.⁴⁷ Studies of art and culture poured forth in these years; recognition of the literary skills of black and African writers deepened with the award of five Nobel prizes for literature in the seven years from 1986 to 1993, to Wole Soyinka, Naguib Mahfouz, Nadine Gordimer, Derek Walcott, and Toni Morrison.⁴⁸

From the 1990s forward, the expanded study of black history brought more regional breadth, topical depth, and attention to spatial and topical links. Historical publication and political activism grew in parallel among the African-descended populations of Latin America, the Indian Ocean region, and Europe. South American nations, especially Venezuela and Colombia, gave formal recognition to African ancestry as part of the national heritage, and thereby brought substantial change in education, law, and public recognition.⁴⁹ The African heritage in the Indian Ocean began to gain attention equivalent to that of Western Africa and the Atlantic.⁵⁰ The substantial black population of North Africa and the Sahara re-entered the historical record, helping to clarify relations among that region, sub-Saharan Africa, Europe, and the Middle East.⁵¹ Beyond regional specificity, links among regions of the black world began to gain increasing attention—especially through Michael Gomez’s tracing of the links of Africans to the American South and then again for the heritage of Islam in the Americas.⁵² Through recognition of such links in Africa and overseas, the notion of an “African diaspora” expanded in the 1990s from an academic formulation to become a broad and powerful popular identity.⁵³ With time, the similarities and connections in history of African-descended people across this wide region provided the basis for a reinterpretation of the African diaspora in terms of three great regions in historical evolution: Africa, the Americas, and Eurasia.

As of the early twenty-first century, this expanding literature reflected the continuing accumulation of scholarly explorations in numerous directions—innovative in some cases, reviewing long-debated issues in others. The literature in black history included achievements in the established genres of biography and political narrative.⁵⁴ At the same time, it brought pioneering work in application of multidisciplinary methods, including advances in oral history, quantitative history, social anthropology, archaeology, linguistics, and folklore.⁵⁵ Altogether, an immense and sophisticated literature on the history of Africa and the African diaspora is now at the disposal of historians.⁵⁶

DID THE INITIATIVES OF THE MODERN ERA spring only from elite agency or also from the choices of commoners? The call for more attention to history from below, while widely echoed, brought little response within social-historical studies of modernity. The absence of black people from the interpretations of modernity, reproduced as much by habit and tradition as by conscious choice, has been little challenged even as racial hierarchy and discrimination have been contested and in some sense vanquished in society at large. The problem is that the theorists and analysts of modernity are falling prey to elite assumptions.

Anthony Giddens—seeking an analysis of modernity that went beyond the political positioning of international relations and the economic hierarchy of world-system analysis—went on to identify four dimensions of global transformation: surveillance, military power, capitalism, and industrialization. These in turn led, he argued, to institutionalization through the nation-state system, the world capitalist economy, the international division of labor, and the world military order. This broader and more flexible framework incorporated a wider range of social phenomena, yet treated the initiative as coming from elites: only later, in Giddens' formulation, does space open up for popular responses in social movements of laborers and for free speech, peace, and ecological protection.⁵⁷ David Harvey, restricting his analysis to the late twentieth century, focused on the economic shift to what was later to be called neo-liberalism and to the equivalent aesthetic shifts in architecture and cinema.⁵⁸ In contrast to these formulations, it may be argued that the conjuncture of the 1980s and 1990s included shifts well beyond those in high culture and the commanding heights of the economy to which Harvey refers, and that a broader analysis of this conjuncture will help clarify the understanding of modernity. The authors in the AHR roundtable, focusing on such issues as the Nazi order and American liberalism, predominantly

addressed modernity as a transformation launched in privileged segments of society which only gradually evoked responses from society generally.

One interesting effort to broaden the issue of modernity is that of Robin Blackburn, whose *The Making of New World Slavery* makes a forceful effort to link the emergence of modernity and the rise of slavery. Blackburn explicitly contests Giddens' picture of modernity simply appearing in Europe by arguing that the expansion of slavery in the Americas, especially from the seventeenth century, brought social transformations in production and labor relations of a brutal sort that nonetheless contributed substantially to the rise of modernity overall. Blackburn's argument thus expands the hearth of modernity from one to three continents, allows for interregional connection in the development of modernity and, especially, emphasizes modernity's dark side in slavery's reliance on oppression and brutality.⁵⁹ In the end, however, his effort to broaden the scope of modernity extends only horizontally and not vertically: he allows no significant space for the agency of Africans, slave or free, in responding to the expanding system of slavery or in constructing alternatives. Blackburn's text is not lacking in sympathy for the enslaved, as he notes some of their techniques of survival and accommodation, yet the primary point of the book is that "the contribution of New World slavery to the evolution of industrial discipline and principles of capitalist rationalization has been neglected."⁶⁰ In sum, Blackburn demonstrates that initiative in the launching of modernity could be generated in the colonies as well as the metropole, but he shares with others the assumption that initiative was a monopoly of the elite.

The issue of initiative is thus, implicitly, central to the understanding of modernity. The elite version of modernity suggests that some early modern initiative, based on intellectual, political, or economic insight, broke the bounds of tradition and created an accelerating sphere of self-reflexivity and accumulation. In this view, regions and social strata outside of this homeland of modernity were put in the position of responding, with greater or lesser effectiveness, to this initiative. But if the world is seen as changing and interconnected rather than as a body at rest, then every initiative can be seen as a response—a reaction to some set of preceding conditions. The question no longer remains who acted first, but who reacted most effectively, most influentially. One historical basis for such an interpretation is to argue that the entire world—and not just Europe—was seriously shaken by the large-scale and ultimately planetary interactions from the thirteenth through the sixteenth century. The Mongol expansion, the waves of disease, the cultural encounters, the new trade routes, the innovative and often

exploitive social relations—these and other processes put every regional society and every social stratum in the position of responding.⁶¹

The critique of hierarchically-centered views of society, meanwhile, has developed along various paths. Social history has become a leading approach in historical studies of communities, though its impact at broader levels has been relatively weak.⁶² Various threads of social theory and social practice treat society in terms of the contestation of multiple interests rather than the imposition of hierarchical visions. These theoretical gambits have arisen in tandem with the decline of racial and civilizational theory. The literature on social movements, with its focus on revolutionary upheavals, peasant movements, and twentieth-century mobilizations, provides an arena where such theory is gathered and tested. The work of Antonio Gramsci, as it has become part of the academic canon, has a dual significance: in one sense his notion of hegemony has led to new and subtle analysis of domination from above; in another sense the same notion of hegemony provides a comprehensive framework for studying the interplay of ruling strata and subordinate strata. E.P. Thompson, in his effort to articulate the voices and consciousness of English workers, created a notion of *agency* in the lives of these often-anonymous workers that has come to be widely applied. Other analytical contributions to the study of history from below come from the work of Paolo Freire in education, Edward Said on orientalism, Frantz Fanon on the critique of national consciousness, and Charles Tilly on social movements.⁶³ In sum, these bodies of theory and research provide a basis for investigating how elite and bottom-up influences combined to create successive compromises, truces, and unanticipated transformations.

THE HISTORY OF THE AFRICAN DIASPORA REVEALS THE AGENCY OF BLACK PEOPLE IN THE CONSTRUCTION OF MODERNITY—agency which has made itself felt along two axes. Along a vertical axis, blacks in subaltern positions have repeatedly influenced both the hierarchical relationships with elites and cross-community social patterns generally. In addition, along a horizontal axis, developments in one part of the black world affected other regions. Of the many and complex historical processes, here are a few to illustrate the character and connections of that agency.

The European-African maritime contact of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries brought standoffs as much as great transformations for each continent. Africa had neither the concentrated wealth of Asian centers nor the vulnerability that brought chaos to the Americas, yet Africans of all

social stations found themselves caught up in the initial vortex of Atlantic connection. Artisans diverted a portion of their works from local elite consumers to an expanding Portuguese and European market for fineries from distant lands.⁶⁴ Emerging merchant elites included the “nhara” or “signares” of Senegambia and Upper Guinea, female merchants whose business model involved setting up marital and commercial alliances with immigrant Europeans.⁶⁵ African captives at home and abroad, while formally labeled as social inferiors, occasionally found openings enabling them to gain positions of security through marriage, artisanal and commercial skill, and through skills in political negotiation and religious practice. The legal framework of the Siete Partidas, adopted in thirteenth-century Castile and later influential throughout Iberian territories, confirmed the legality of slave status yet provided various protections and opportunities for redress for the enslaved.⁶⁶ To characterize this early modern era of social mobility, Ira Berlin coined the term “Atlantic creole” to represent those among the early generations of migrants who, in region after region, skillfully and imaginatively played leading roles in developing the colonial order, even while formally enslaved.⁶⁷

From the mid-seventeenth century, a wave of contradictory socioeconomic transformations surged throughout the Atlantic world. Best known of these shifts are the commercial, military, and settlement expansions of the Dutch, English, and French.⁶⁸ In addition, as brutal systems of enslavement expanded, Africans now moved across the Atlantic in greater numbers than Europeans, while African societies underwent new sorts of transformations. An outstanding economic initiative took place among free people of West Africa: the burst of artisanal production in villages of the Gold Coast during the seventeenth century, as documented by Ray Kea. This expansion in productive energy, in a region where the busy gold trade provided the basis of intensive commercial contacts, presents an economic initiative parallel to the contemporaneous “industrious revolution” identified by Jan de Vries for the Low Countries. In both cases, families of modest means took the initiative to invest in artisanal production to expand their consumption, notably of luxury goods.⁶⁹ In another pattern, the trade diasporas of Africa and elsewhere demonstrate ways in which commercial families and communities maintained their interconnections over great distances. New states arose in several African regions; their rulers apparently attempted to limit slave trade, but ended up being drawn more deeply into it.⁷⁰ In the diaspora, families struggled with occasional success to gain freedom; individual blacks rose to elite positions, and escapees formed maroon communities. The most remarkable such community was Palmares, which grew at several days’ distance from the sugar colony of Pernambuco, alternating for

most of the seventeenth century between peaceful trade and holding off Dutch and Portuguese expeditions.⁷¹

As individuals and as groups, blacks in the diaspora were arguably escaping the limits of elite control. Then events of the late seventeenth century put a cap on their ambitions. The French *Code noir* of 1685, commonly presented as a unilateral decision of Louis XIV and his minister Colbert, confirms in its text the preceding social conflicts that brought it into existence: too many enslaved people gaining freedom and recognition through marriage, self-purchase, and escape. With this code came an affirmation that African ancestry was a perpetual condemnation to social inferiority.⁷² At virtually the same moment, the Moroccan sovereign Mawlay Isma'il took the unprecedented step of forcing all black males within Morocco into his army, incorporating their families as well. A large and upwardly mobile black population had grown up in Morocco, including long-time inhabitants and recently arrived captives from the Sudan. Mawlay Isma'il, whose mother was born in the Niger Valley, effectively enslaved these free Muslims and imposed a legal rationalization for his acts.⁷³ He sent an elaborate dossier to legal scholars at al-Azhar University in Cairo, seeking and in effect gaining their approbation for his unprecedented action. The pairing of this action with the enactment of the *Code noir* shows how the racialization of slavery expanded simultaneously in both Christian and Islamic worlds.⁷⁴ As a confirmation of this timing, an escalating set of Portuguese attacks destroyed Palmares in 1694.

Such concerted repression of black initiative was by no means universally successful. In this same era, especially from 1690 to 1730, the prices of captives on the African coast rose by a factor of roughly four, perhaps because of a shortage of people to enslave but perhaps also because the prospective captives found ways to make their enslavement more costly.⁷⁵ Black women and men, in Africa and abroad, their lives disrupted by captivity and migration, nevertheless developed adaptive social practices including fictive kinship constructed out of informal associations and female-headed households, able to nurture the next generation. All the same, women in slavery cared for children born from their wombs who were in an important sense not theirs; the very institutions of marriage slipped away for people who had little access to property. Still, in the realms of culture and ideas, specific conceptions of witchcraft and divination developed to handle major conflicts; at a more general level beliefs and practices of toleration in religion and social affairs arose and spread among peoples of the American colonies.⁷⁶ In artistic representation, a growing distance developed between African purveyors of elite visions of dominance and the more widespread, communal notions of community solidarity and

renewal. Thus the militaristic King Agaja of Dahomey, wrapped in garments from India, took the image of a Portuguese slave ship as his icon; while the Yoruba-speaking Nago, within reach of his armies, developed instead the tradition of *gelede* masks to portray senior women in terms both humorous and respectful. It is the latter which have more recently become iconic representations of African creativity.⁷⁷

For the remainder of the eighteenth century the expanded Atlantic system of enslavement became a multipolar system in which the British and French warred for dominance in slave trade and colonial production, while the Dutch, Portuguese, and Spanish continued to play significant roles. Late in the century, however, the system ran into two sorts of limits: first, the increasingly militant rebellion of the enslaved (most effectively in what became Haiti); and second, a growing anti-slavery movement in imperial homelands, especially in Britain.

The campaign for emancipation and its ramifications, from roughly 1800 to 1930, brought additional creative struggles in modernity. For the people of Africa and the diaspora, the nineteenth century was a time of continued enslavement, movements for emancipation, and consolidation of free communities. In one of the key global dynamics of emancipation, the restriction of oppression in some regions brought its expansion in others. Thus slavery ended in Haiti and declined in the British Empire but expanded in other regions (Cuba, Brazil, much of Africa, and some of Asia) so that the total number of persons held in bondage rose until the late 1860s, even as the number of emancipated blacks rose at key moments throughout the century.⁷⁸ The end of slavery came often through warfare, and black men fought in war after war to create social change and gain personal advance. The Haitian initiation of this process is widely known, as is the follow-up in the U.S. Civil War. Equally significant, in the aggregate, were the sacrifices of black warriors in the civil wars of Venezuela and Colombia, the wars of Brazil, the Cuban rebellions of 1868 and 1895, the many wars of Africa, and the Great War of 1914-1918. Perhaps most distinguished of these warriors was Antonio Maceo, a general in each of Cuba's wars for independence.⁷⁹ Freedom from slavery was not enough – those who gained formal freedom sought full emancipation and citizenship. Free but still subaltern communities relied on the systems of informal self-government developed in days of slavery and colonialism. Quite aside from formal political theory, they worked through village and religious institutions, social movements, and long experience in governance among the subaltern. The methods of their claims for land, civil rights, and a share of national political power provide a central part of modern political tradition.

The rise of militant white supremacy and explicit racial theory, starting in the 1870s, may be seen as a response to the accelerating wave of emancipation. White supremacy advanced a new form of ideological control to replace the expiring system of legal subjugation over a large, subordinate population.⁸⁰ This backlash and wave of social oppression, in response to the assertive social organization by emancipated people of Africa and the diaspora, came as a clear echo of the crackdown of the late seventeenth century. Remarkably, however, this era of maximal white supremacy and cultural chauvinism coincided with the post-emancipation burst of cultural creativity in black communities on every continent. Urban popular culture expanded with new forms of music, dance, literature and film in every region of the Americas, throughout Africa, and in Eurasia.⁸¹ Jazz and blues are well known for the U.S.; rumba for Cuba, samba for Brazil, calypso for Trinidad, costeño for Colombia, high life for Ghana, and Swahili songs for East Africa. Black popular culture renewed itself repeatedly through new technology, new audiences, improvisation, and continued borrowing. It aimed at popular not elite audiences; it relied on new venues and new media. In fact, improvisation and attention to new audiences or new techniques characterized not only jazz but most genres within black popular culture, diaspora-wide. In all these cases, urban music generated by black communities came to be adopted by wider communities.

Perhaps the most striking case of innovation in black popular culture came from a rural African anthem, “Nkosi Sikelel’i Afrika.” This song, created at the end of the nineteenth century in the Xhosa-speaking region of South Africa and translated as “God Bless Africa,” was sung *a capella* by communities as a statement of identity and destiny. With time, it was heard in many languages up and down the eastern African littoral. The musical and social power of this anthem brought repetition within the communities and expressions of amazement by observers from outside the community.⁸² The choirs relied on an inherited medium but a new social organization, and they demonstrated that the processes of modern transformation had been taking place in Africa as well as in the diaspora. By the mid-twentieth century, this and other instances verified that black cultural production provided a platform for political mobilization: struggles over land, literacy, and urban work congealed into a planetary challenge to racial discrimination and colonial rule.

To restate this historical case for black agency through more recent events: the great outbursts of social struggle in 1968 and 1989 are told in sharply contrasting fashions according to whether they

include or exclude the lives of black people. The versions centering on Paris in 1968 and Berlin in 1989 reaffirm a modernity that is European-centered, racially white, elite-focused, and diffusionist in its dynamics. But the inclusion of black people shifts the perspective: the story of 1968 includes decolonization, civil rights, expanding education, and national liberation struggles; the story of 1989 extends to majority rule in southern Africa, the wave of African national conferences, the succeeding wave of African civil wars, the expansion in Latin American social reform, and the tightening web of communication among prominent black figures everywhere.⁸³ Soon “Nkosi Sikelel’i Afrika” became a national anthem of a reconstituted South Africa.

Narrating the African diaspora as a whole reveals not only remarkable patterns in cultural and social transformation, but also in politics. With the peak of white supremacy at the end of the nineteenth century, black people in every region lost almost all positions of responsibility. Yet equally suddenly, in the 1960s, black people gained positions of public trust on four continents. The narrative—expulsion from leadership, sixty years of exile from formal politics, and return to official roles—was distinctive in each region, but the pattern was synchronous and interdependent everywhere.

THIS INTERVENTION IN THE DEBATE ON MODERNITY is not just a claim for inclusion of blacks in the discussion on modernity—though it is that—but a critique of the conceptualization of modernity. It contests the logic of a modernity that proclaims the equality of all yet leaves out of bounds one sixth of the world’s population. To summarize the argument to this point: the inherited debate over modernity inquires into the accelerating transformations of modern society, but it gives disproportionately small attention to black people in the African homeland or the many lands of the diaspora. Participants in the debate on modernity tend to focus on elite initiatives as the forces shaping modernity, and tend to carry out their analyses within the limits of nations or continental regions. The neglect of blacks in the debate seems illogical, given that social science analysis no longer labels black people as individually inferior and no longer claims that social structures of black societies are inferior—and given that information on black people and their historical experience is now ample. The neglect, in global analysis, of people of the African continent and diaspora may continue in practice but it no longer has the support of historical analysis or social science theory. Analysis of modernity, meanwhile, has been unreasonably narrowed by the focus on elite initiative to the exclusion of social initiatives from below, and by the continued drawing of civilizational lines so as to study regions separately rather than in interaction with each other.

Analysis crossing these limits would provide an approach to modernity highlighting the struggles, exchanges, and compromises of elites and common people as they result from both local and interregional interaction.

The experience of black people, because it is so distinctive, has served as a natural experiment. Black people, since they lost much of their elite from the seventeenth century on, counted for little in elite history. But black commoners continued to make history and forge modernity—in economic innovation, in social organization, in popular culture, and in subaltern governance—and, once we look, we find an unmistakable record of their role. Drawing on this lesson, we can rewrite modernity for blacks and, by extension, for humanity in general.⁸⁴ This will be a more complex history of modernity, treating it as an interactive process rather than as sequential moments of inspiration. The historical perspective of the African continent and diaspora highlights a distinctive list of big issues and turning points in modernity. From the standpoint of black people throughout the world, the interpretation of modernity gives attention to family and community (more than empire), to work (more than industry), to political protest and citizenship (more than nationhood), to basic education (more than higher education), to popular culture (more than elite culture), and to the recurring problems in social and economic inequality. These experiences of modernity need to be included in global debates rather than limited to local discussions.⁸⁵

This focus on modernity as broad social process does not mean that Harvey and Giddens – or even Parsons in his day – were mistaken in seeking out specific and localized changes in the unfolding of modernity: we need to continue their search for specific factors and key moments in social change. But by describing these changes as *the start*, rather than as another step in a long process, analysts have accommodated to the exclusion of black people from the dynamic factors in their analysis. The result was demeaning to the people excluded, and it fatally narrowed the effectiveness of the analysis. In contrast, a broader handling of modernity will lead in two beneficial directions. It will bring exploration of more social groups and levels of society to identify the innovations (both creative and destructive) that have combined to propel the overall process of modernity. And it will direct our analyses toward the question of inequality in the socio-economic divergence of elites from common people, helping historians to ask: has inequality been productive of overall social advance? Has it been deleterious to social welfare?⁸⁶

Historians would do well to keep in mind a broadly systemic framework, with attention at once to developments within each community, to interactions up and down the social scale, and to interconnections linking one region to others both near and far. The view of modernity in such a framework may overcome some of the myopia that has characterized past discussions. By implication, for study of human social dynamics in the past few centuries, there is great advantage to treating the world as a set of interacting subsystems rather than as distinct, autonomous societies. The problem with concepts of “plural” or “multiple” modernities is that they tend to reaffirm the notion of unchanging tradition in each region of the world, challenged successively by various sorts of European intervention. Of course it is logical that modernity should take varying social forms in different communities. The problem arises when acknowledgment of local distinctiveness leads the analyst back to a default, positivistic approach to plurality – assuming that each modernity was independent of the other.

Widespread initiative, arising in response to life’s challenges, has showed up both vertically and horizontally at all levels of society and in all directions. The unique experience of black people was that the marginalization of their elite strata for centuries—by empire, slavery, and racial categorization—left black initiatives in modernity to come overwhelmingly through the lives of commoners. Black commoners, while they paid heavy prices both in resisting and accommodating to their status, contributed to modernity beyond the shadows cast by an elite. As a result, their innovations in popular society and culture gained attention not only within their own communities but well beyond. The experience of the African diaspora teaches one to seek out a vision of modernity based on the heterogeneity of interaction, not only on the purity of localized innovation. Instead of inventiveness resulting unilaterally from the insights of a privileged elite, it has come from broad exchange of ideas and experience. True, there commonly arises a struggle over who gets control of the benefits of innovations, and sometimes that control comes to be guarded tightly by a small group. That big historical question—the expansion of social inequality—may be easier to address once we have written a broader history of modernity.

NOTES

¹ C.A. Bayly has been one of the few to participate prominently in the debates on both globalization and modernity. Bayly, “ ‘Archaic’ and ‘Modern’ Globalization in the Eurasian and African Arena, c. 1750 – 1850,” in A. G. Hopkins, *Globalization in World History* (London: Pimlico, 2002), 47 – 73; Bayly, *The Birth of the Modern World, 1780-1914: Global Connections and Comparisons*, (Oxford: Blackwell, 2004), 402-410. *Globalization* refers to "the compression of the world and the intensification of consciousness of the world as a whole." Roland Robertson, *Globalization: Social Theory and Global Culture* (Newbury Park, CA: Sage, 1992), 8.

² Zygmunt Bauman, *Modernity and The Holocaust* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press 1989); Bauman, *Liquid Modernity* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2000); Yinghong Cheng, *Creating the “New Man”: From Enlightenment Ideals to Socialist Realities* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2009).

³ On the terms “modernity,” “modernization,” and “modernist,” see “Introduction” to “*AHR* Rountable: Historians and the Question of ‘Modernity’,” *American Historical Review* 116 (2011): 631-634. The debate on modernization in the mid-twentieth-century focused heavily on economics and politics; it worked within national units, and the change it considered was unidirectional influence from a hegemonic center. See, for instance, W. W. Rostow *The Stages of Economic Growth: A Non-Communist Manifesto* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1960). Still earlier, a debate on “the modern” in the mid-nineteenth century focused on the transitions of industrialization, for instance as portrayed by Charles Beaudelaire and Karl Marx.

⁴ According to United Nations estimates, in 2000 the total world population was 6.1 billion. Of this total, continental populations were 820 million for Africa, 840 million for the total of North and South America, 727 million for Europe, 1.27 billion for China, and an even 1.0 billion for India. For sub-Saharan Africa and its diaspora, the totals were 700 million in Africa, 150 million in the Americas, 10 million in North Africa, and 50 million in Eurasia. This yields a total black population of some 900 million for 2000, roughly 15% of the global total. For earlier African populations, see Patrick Manning, “African Population, 1650-2000: Comparisons and Implications of New Estimates,” in Emmanuel Akyeampong, Nathan Nunn, and James Robinson, eds., *Africa’s Development in Historical Perspective* (in press).

⁵ Rebecca L. Cann, Mark Stoneking, and Allan C. Wilson, “Mitochondrial DNA and Human Evolution,” *Nature* 325 (1 January 1987), 31-36. As this study implied and subsequent research has confirmed, the “racial” differences among humans arose as superficial modifications in response to the different environments in which communities came to live in the past 40,000 years.

⁶ The identifications of “black people,” “Africans,” “elites,” and “commoners” are all, of course, imprecise, though they are recurring categories in historical interpretation. Similarly, distinctions and categorizations in gender are commonly oversimplified, thereby leading to undervaluing the role of women in major historical processes. Thus W.E.B. Du Bois found in formulating *The Negro* (1915) that, though the category of “race” had to be rejected in scientific terms, it was also necessary to accommodate to dominant social conventions by using racial terms in the structure and argument of his book. Du Bois, *The Negro*, introduced by George Shepperson (1915; reprinted,

London: Oxford University Press, 1970), 9; see also Patrick Manning, *The African Diaspora: A History through Culture* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2009), 11 – 16, 18 – 19, 54 – 57.

⁷ David Harvey, *The Condition of Postmodernity* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1989), 43.

⁸ Harvey, *Condition of Postmodernity*, 28 – 29. Harvey’s “whole world of representation and knowledge” was to be found within the elite strata of western Europe and the United States.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ As Giddens defined his topic, “... ‘modernity’ refers to modes of social life or organization which emerged in Europe from about the seventeenth century onwards and which subsequently became more or less worldwide in their influence.” “Rather than entering a period of post-modernity, we are moving into one in which the consequences of modernity are becoming more radicalized and universalized than before.” Anthony Giddens, *The Consequences of Modernity* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1990), 1, 3. See also Giddens, *Modernity and Self-Identity: Self and Society in the Late Modern Age* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1991).

¹¹ “In all cultures, social practices are routinely altered in the light of ongoing discoveries which feed into them. But only in the era of modernity is the revision of convention radicalized to apply (in principle) to all aspects of human life, including technological intervention into the material world.” Giddens, *Consequences of Modernity*, 38-39. Agnes Heller’s theory of modernity bridges the gaps between the approaches of Harvey and Giddens, emphasizing the establishment of new sorts of domination, including the logic of science and technology. It systematizes the logic of modernity, yet from largely diffusionist assumptions. Agnes Heller, *A Theory of Modernity* (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishers, 1999).

¹² Stuart Hall, et al., eds., *Modernity: An Introduction to Modern Societies* (Cambridge, MA: Blackwell, 1996).

¹³ Immanuel Wallerstein, *The Modern World-System*, 4 vols. (New York: Academic Press, 1974, 1980, 1989, 2011).

¹⁴ Fernand Braudel, *The Mediterranean and the Mediterranean World In the Era of Philip II*, trans. Sian Reynolds (New York: Harper, 1976). Braudel’s paradigm extended to the study of Africa particularly through the work of his associate Joseph Ki-Zerbo, author of *Histoire de l’Afrique noire : d’hier à demain* (Paris: Hatier, 1972).

¹⁵ Michel Beaud, *A History of Capitalism, 1500-2000*, trans. Tom Dickman and Anny Lefebvre (New York: Monthly Review Press, 2001). See also Robert B. Marks, *The Origins of the Modern World: A Global and Ecological Narrative from the Fifteenth to the Twenty-first Century*, 2nd ed. (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 2007); David Landes, *The Wealth and Poverty of Nations: Why some are so rich and some so poor* (New York: Norton, 1998); and Ian Morris, *Why the West Rules—for now: The patterns of history and what they reveal about the future* (New York: Farrar, Strauss, and Giroux, 2010).

¹⁶ Bayly, *Birth of the Modern World*, 402 – 410. For other references to African and African-descended people, see pages 215 – 216 (on empire and nation) and pages 344 – 349 (on religion). Modernity, according to Bayly, “was not only a process, but also a *period* which began at the end of the eighteenth century and has continued up to the present day in various forms.”(p. 11)

¹⁷ Dominic Sachsenmaier, Shmuel Eisenstadt, and Jens Riedel, eds., *Reflections on Multiple Modernities: European, Chinese and Other Interpretations* (Leiden: Brill, 2002). In addition, as some have pointed out, the proliferation of modernities to “multiple locations on the time-space continuum” raises the question of the meaning and value of

modernity as a useful analytical category (Zvi Ben-Dor Benite, "Modernity: The Sphinx and the Historian," *American Historical Review* 116 (2011), p. 650).

¹⁸ "Here, modernity refers to the continuous process of exploring new institutional configurations in the world historical context of the Eurasian land mass (subsequently to include the Americas and other continents) since the fifteenth century." Huri Islamoglu and Peter Perdue, eds., *Shared Histories of Modernity: China, India and the Ottoman Empire* (2009), 5.

¹⁹ "To avoid the imperious and ethnocentric assumptions implicit in most formulations of modernity, many commentators propose that we think of it in plural terms." Anon., "Introduction: AHR Roundtable, Historians and the Question of 'Modernity,'" *American Historical Review* 116 (2011), 634; see also Marc Roseman, "National Socialism and the End of Modernity," *American Historical Review* 116 (2011): 692.

²⁰ Carol Gluck, "The End of Elsewhere: Writing Modernity Now," *American Historical Review* 116 (2011): 685.

²¹ Lynn M. Thomas, "Modernity's Failings, Political Claims, and Intermediate Concepts," *American Historical Review* 116 (2011): 715 – 726. Thomas recommends analyzing, individually, each of the parts of the broad general definition of modernity to "generate more useful, mid-level analytical concepts."

²² James Baldwin, *The Fire Next Time* (New York: Dial Press, 1963); Cheikh-Anta Diop, *Black Africa: The Economic and Cultural Basis for a Federated State*, trans. Harold Salemson (Westport, CT: L. Hill, 1978); Aimé Césaire, *Discourse on Colonialism*, trans. Joan Pinkham (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1972); C. L. R. James, *A History of Negro Revolt* (New York: Haskell House Publishers, 1969); Walter Rodney, *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa*, rev. ed. (Washington DC: Howard University Press, 1981); see also Chancellor Williams, *The destruction of Black civilization : great issues of a race from 4500 B.C. to 2000 A.D.*, rev. ed. (Chicago: Third World Press, 1976).

²³ V. Y. Mudimbe, *The Invention of Africa: Gnosis, Philosophy, and the order of Knowledge* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1988); Anthony Appiah, *In my Father's House: Africa in the Philosophy of Culture* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992).

²⁴ Paul Gilroy, *The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double Consciousness* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1993).

²⁵ Tiffany Ruby Patterson and Robin D. G. Kelley, "Unfinished Migrations: Reflections on the African Diaspora and the Making of the Modern World," *African Studies Review* 43 (2000): 11-45; Maghan Keita, in "Africa and the Construction of a Grand Narrative in World History," in Eckhardt Fuchs and Benedikt Stuchtey, eds., *Across Cultural Borders: Historiography in Global Perspective* (Lanham, Md.: Rowman and Littlefield, 2002). For an emphasis on the pervasiveness of African connections in the pre-modern world, see Maghan Keita, "Africans and Asians: Historiography and the Long View of Global Interaction," *Journal of World History* 16 (2005): 1-30.

²⁶ Colin Palmer, "Defining and Studying the Modern African Diaspora," *Perspectives* [American Historical Association] 36, 6 (1998): 1, 22-25.

²⁷ Arif Dirlik, *Global Modernity: Modernity in the Age of Global Capitalism* (Boulder: Paradigm, 2007); Arjun Appadurai, *Modernity at Large: Cultural Dimensions of Globalization* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1996).

²⁸ Marvin P. Miracle and Bruce Fetter, “Backward-sloping Labor-Supply Functions and African Economic Behavior,” *Economic Development and Cultural Change* 18 (1970):240 – 251; Jorge Cañizares-Esguerra, *How to Write the History of the New World: Histories, Epistemologies, and Identities in the Eighteenth-Century Atlantic World* (Stanford University Press, 2002); Manning, *African Diaspora*, xvii. In addition, the field of political science, centered on national politics, largely neglected the politics of colonies, and communities, and small-scale polities.

²⁹ On modernization, see Talcott Parsons and Neil Smelser, *Economy and Society* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1956); Manfred Halpern, *The Politics of Social Change in the Middle East and North Africa* (Santa Monica, CA: Rand, 1963). Rostow’s *Stages of Economic Growth* was a policy-oriented version, adopted by the U.S. government in its Alliance for Progress. For one last try at civilizational analysis, see Samuel Huntington, *The Clash of Civilizations?* (Cambridge, MA: Olin Institute, 1993).

³⁰ Daniel Patrick Moynihan, *The Negro Family: The Case for National Action* (Washington DC: Office of Planning and Research, United States Department of Labor, 1965). Later on, in the early days of the AIDS epidemic, the U.S. Centers for Disease Control briefly identified Haitian nationality as a disease factor, breaking all the rules of science by conflating race and nationality in the explanation of an individual-level pathology.

³¹ Maquet attributed African with civilizations of the hoe, pastoralists, hunters. Jacques Maquet, trans. Joan Rayfield, *Civilizations of Black Africa* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1972). For a later and broader application of this notion of civilization, see Felipe Fernandez-Armesto, *Civilizations: Culture, Ambition, and the Transformation of Nature* (New York: Free Press, 2001).

³² Leon J. Kamin, *The Science and Politics of I.Q.* (Potomac, MD: Erlbaum, 1974). Kamin later went on to argue that the inheritability of intelligence must be close to zero.

³³ One consequence of the decline of racial theory was that positivist, universalist, individual-level theory gained new support. Thus rational choice theory arose in an era when racial and civilizational theory declined.

³⁴ West African writers included Abd al-Sadi, *Tarikh al-Sudan* (c. 1655); Mahmud Kati, *Tarikh al-Fattash* (c. 1664); and Ahmad Baba (d. 1627). On black writers in early modern Europe, see Dieudonné Gnamankou and Yao Modzinou, eds., *Les Africains et leurs descendants en Europe avant le XXe siècle* (Toulouse: MAT Editions, 2008).

³⁵ For global visions, see Edward W. Blyden, *Christianity, Islam and the Negro Race* (London: W. B. Whittingham, 1887); W. E. B. Du Bois, *The Negro* (New York: H. Holt, 1915); Du Bois, *The World and Africa: an inquiry into the part which Africa has played in world history* (New York: Viking, 1947); and Cheikh-Anta Diop, *Nations nègres et culture* (Paris: Editions Africaines, 1955). For interconnected social change, see C.L.R. James, *Black Jacobins: Toussaint Louverture and the San Domingo Revolution* (New York: Dial Press, 1938) ;W.E.B. Du Bois, *Black Reconstruction: an essay toward a history of the part which black folk played in the attempt to reconstruct democracy in America, 1860-1880* (New York: Russell and Russell, 1935) ; and Eric Williams, *Capitalism and Slavery* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1944). For sociological studies, see W.E.B. Du Bois, *The Philadelphia Negro: A Social Study* (Philadelphia: Published for the University, 1899); Gilberto Freyre, *The Masters and the Slaves: A study in the development of Brazilian civilization*, trans. Samuel Putnam (New York: Knopf, 1956); Fernando Ortiz, *Cuban Counterpoint: Tobacco and Sugar*, trans. Harriet de Onís (New York: Knopf,

1947); E. Franklin Frazier, *The Negro Family in the United States* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1939); St. Clair Drake and Horace Cayton, *Black Metropolis: A study of Negro life in a northern city* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1945). For a review of African-American historical writing, see Maghan Keita, *Race and the Writing of History: Riddling the Sphinx* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000).

³⁶ John Hope Franklin, *From slavery to freedom; a history of American Negroes*. New York, A. A. Knopf, 1947; Roland Oliver and John D. Fage, *A Short History of Africa* (Baltimore: Penguin, 1962); William Claypole and John Robottom, *Caribbean Story* (Longman, 1981).

³⁷ K. O. Dike, *Trade and Politics in the Niger Delta*; B. A. Ogot, *Building on the Indigenous: Selected Essays 1981 - 1998* (Kisumu: Angange Press, 1998); Jan Vansina, *Kingdoms of the Savanna*; A. G. Hopkins, *An Economic History of West Africa*.

³⁸ Robert W. Fogel and Stanley L. Engerman, *Time on the Cross: The Economics of American Negro Slavery* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1974).

³⁹ Philip D. Curtin, *The Atlantic Slave Trade: A Census* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1969);

⁴⁰ August Meier, *Negro thought in America, 1880-1915 : racial ideologies in the age of Booker T. Washington* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1969); Joseph E. Harris, *The African presence in Asia: Consequences of the East African slave trade* (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1971); Edward A. Alpers, *Ivory and Slaves: Changing pattern of international trade in East Central Africa to the later nineteenth century* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1975); James Walvin, *Black and White: The Negro and English Society, 1555 – 1945* (London: Penguin, 1973); Jean-Louis Miège, *Le Maroc* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1950); Terence Walz, *Trade between Egypt and bilad as-Sudan, 1700 – 1820* (Cairo, 1978)..

⁴¹ Bethwell A. Ogot, *History of the Southern Luo: Volume I, Migration and Settlement, 1500-1900*, (Nairobi, East African Publishing House, 1967). In addition, numerous unpublished theses written at African and New World universities, some of them quite valuable, await digitization and inclusion in the broader corpus of research.

⁴² Frederick Bowser, *The African Slave in Colonial Peru, 1524-1650* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1974); Colin Palmer, *Slaves of the White God: Blacks in Mexico, 1570 – 1650* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1976); Walter Rodney, *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa* (London: Bogle-L'Ouverture Publications, 1972); A. I. Asiwaju, *Western Yorubaland under Colonial Rule: A comparative analysis of French and British colonialism* (London: Longman, 1976); Elikia M'Bokolo, *Mirambo: Un grand chef contre les trafiquants d'esclaves* (Paris: ABC, 1976); B. W. Higman, *Slave population and economy in Jamaica, 1807-1834* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976); Imanuel Geiss, *The pan-African movement; a history of pan-Africanism in America, Europe, and Africa*, trans. Ann Keep (New York: Africana Publishers, 1974); J. Ayodele Langley, *Pan-Africanism and nationalism in West Africa, 1900-1945; a study in ideology and social classes* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1975).

⁴³ Laënnec Hurbon, *Comprendre Haïti: essai sur l'Etat, la nation, la culture* (Paris : Karthala, 1987); Nina S. de Friedemann and Jaime Arocha, *De sol a sol: Génesis, transformación y presencia de los negros en Colombia* (Bogotá, 1986); Luiz Felipe de Alencastro, *O Trato dos Videntes: Formação do Brasil no Atlântico Sul. Séculos XVI e XVII* (São Paulo, 2000). Other languages of publication included Arabic, Dutch, German, Swahili, Amharic, Italian, and Russian.

⁴⁴ João José Reis, *Death is a festival : funeral rites and rebellion in nineteenth-century Brazil*, trans. H. Sabrina Gledhill (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2003 [first published 1991]); Jean Copans, *Les marabouts de l'arachide : la Confrérie mouride et les paysans du Sénégal* (Paris : Le Sycomore, 1980) ; James Fernandez, *Bwiti: An ethnography of the religious imagination in Africa* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1982); James Lorand Matory, *Sex and the empire that is no more : gender and the politics of metaphor in Oyo Yoruba religion* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1994); Laënnec Hurbon, *Dieu dans le vaudou haïtien* (Paris: Payot, 1972).

⁴⁵ *Cambridge History of Africa* (1975 – 1986); *Unesco General History of Africa* (1978 – 1993); Papers of Booker T. Washington (from 1972); Marcus Garvey and UNIA Papers (from 1983); *Unesco General History of the Caribbean* (2003 – 2004).

⁴⁶ James Walvin, *The black presence: a documentary history of the Negro in England, 1555-1860* (London: Orbach and Chambers, 1971); John Hope Franklin and August Meier, eds., *Black leaders of the twentieth century* (Urbana : University of Illinois Press, c1982); David Barry Gaspar and Darlene Clark Hine, eds., *Beyond bondage: free women of color in the Americas* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2004).

⁴⁷ Jan S. Hogendorn and Marion Johnson, *Shell Money of the Slave Trade* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986); John Iliffe, *The African Poor: A History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987); Boubacar Barry, *Senegambia and the Atlantic Slave Trade*, trans. Ayi Kwei Armah (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998 [first published 1988]); John Holm, *Pidgins and Creoles*, 2 vols. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980); Hilary McD. Beckles, *Natural rebels : a social history of enslaved Black women in Barbados* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1989).

⁴⁸ Robert Farris Thompson, *Flash of the Spirit: African and Afro-American art and philosophy* (New York: Random House, 1983); Richard J. Powell, *African and Afro-American art : call and response* (Chicago: Field Museum of Natural History, 1984). Sterling Stuckey, *Slave culture : nationalist theory and the foundations of Black America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987); Robin D. G. Kelley, *Hammer and hoe : Alabama Communists during the Great Depression* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1990).

⁴⁹ Peter Wade, "El movimiento negro en Colombia," *America Negra* no. 5 (1993), 173 – 191.

⁵⁰ Abdul Sheriff, *Slaves, spices, and ivory in Zanzibar: Integration of an East African commercial empire into the world economy, 1770 – 1873* (London: James Currey, 1987); Gwyn Campbell, ed., *Structure of Slavery in Indian Ocean Africa and Asia* (London: Frank Cass, 2004); and Indrani Chatterjee and Richard Eaton, eds., *Slavery and South Asian History* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2006).

⁵¹ On Europe, see Allison Blakely, *Blacks in the Dutch world : the evolution of racial imagery in a modern society* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1993); Peter Martin, *Schwarze Teufel, edle Mohren* (Hamburg: Junius, 1993); Jayne Ifekwunigwe, *Scattered belongings : cultural paradoxes of "race," nation and gender* (London: Routledge, 1999); Claude Ribbe, *Le chevalier de Saint-George : biographie* (Paris: Perrin, 2004). On the Middle East: Ehud Toledano, *The Ottoman slave trade and its suppression, 1840 – 1890* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1982); William Gervase Clarence-Smith, *Islam and the abolition of slavery* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006). On North Africa, see Eve Troutt Powell, *A different shade of colonialism: Egypt, Great Britain, and the*

mastery of the Sudan (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003); John Hunwick and Alida Jay Boye, *The hidden treasures of Timbuktu : rediscovering Africa's literary culture* (New York: Thames and Hudson, 2008); and Chouki El Hamel, *Black Morocco: A History of Slavery, Race, and Islam* (Cambridge University Press, 2012).

⁵² Michael Gomez, *Exchanging our country marks : the transformation of African identities in the colonial and antebellum South* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1998); Gomez, *Black crescent : the experience and legacy of African Muslims in the Americas* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005). Richard J. Powell, *Black art and culture in the twentieth century* (New York: Thames and Hudson, 1997); Suzanne Preston Blier, *African vodun: art, psychology, power* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995).

⁵³ For key articles on conceptualization of the African diaspora, see Carlton Wilson, "Conceptualizing the African Diaspora," *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa, and the Middle East* 17, 2 (1997): 118-122; Palmer, "Defining and Studying the Modern African Diaspora"; Robin D. G. Kelley, "But a Local Phase of a World Problem": Black History's Global Vision, 1883-1950," *Journal of American History* 86 (1999): 1045 – 1077; Brent Hayes Edwards, "The Uses of Diaspora," *Social Text* 66 (2001): 45-73; Patrick Manning, "África and the African Diaspora: New Directions of Study," *Journal of African History* 44 (2003), 487 - 506.

⁵⁴ Taylor Branch, *Parting the waters : America in the King years, 1954-63* (New York : Simon and Schuster, c1988); Fatima Meer, *Higher than hope : the authorized biography of Nelson Mandela* (New York : Harper & Row, 1990)

⁵⁵ Maureen Warner Lewis, *Central Africa in the Caribbean: transcending time, transforming cultures* (Kingston: University of the West Indies Press, 2003); George Reid Andrews, *Afro-Latin America 1800 – 2000* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004); Kim D. Butler, *Freedoms Given, Freedoms Won: Afro-Brazilians in post-abolition São Paulo and Salvador* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2003); Christopher Ehret, *An African classical age : eastern and southern Africa in world history, 1000 B.C. to A.D. 400* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1998).

⁵⁶ The AHR, while it gives the most general overview of historical studies through its book reviews, has given disproportionately small attention to Africa and the African diaspora in its review section. For more complete book reviews in these fields of scholarship, see *Journal of African History*, *International Journal of African Historical Studies*, *Journal of African-American History*, ...

⁵⁷ Giddens *Consequences*, 59, 159.

⁵⁸ Harvey, *Condition of Postmodernity*.

⁵⁹ "The conjunction of modernity and slavery is awkward and challenging since the most attractive element in modernity was always the promise it held out of greater personal freedom and self-realization." Robin Blackburn, *The Making of New World Slavery: From the Baroque to the Modern 1492 – 1800* (London: Verso, 1997), 17.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 588. This argument, evoking and extending the thesis of Eric Williams, not only minimizes the agency of black people in the Americas but assumes that it is appropriate to neglect any possible place of Africa in the slavery-era development of modernity. In his earlier work, *The Overthrow of Colonial Slavery*, Blackburn gives somewhat more attention to the agency of black people in the emancipation campaign of the Americas, but leaves completely aside the parallel and immense issue of emancipation in Africa. Blackburn, *The Overthrow of Colonial Slavery*

(London: Verso, 1988); see also Eric Williams, *Capitalism and Slavery* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1944).⁰

⁶¹ Thomas Allsen, *Culture and Conquest in Mongol Eurasia* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001); Janet Abu-Lughod, *Before European Hegemony: The World System A.D. 1250 – 1350* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989); Alfred Crosby, *The Columbian Exchange: Biological and Cultural Consequences of 1492* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Publishers, 1972). This argument can only be hinted here, and must be developed separately.

⁶² Peter Gran has been among the most insistent on the potential benefits of including social-history approaches at the global level. See his *Beyond Eurocentrism: A New View of Modern World History* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1996); and his *Rise of the Rich: A New View of Modern World History* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press,

⁶³ Frantz Fanon, *Wretched of the Earth*; Charles Tilly, *Social Movements, 1768 – 2004* (Boulder: Paradigm Publishers, 2004); Antonio Gramsci, trans. Joseph Buttigieg, *Prison Notebooks* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1992); Paulo Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (New York: Continuum, 2008 [first published 1970]); Edward Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Pantheon, 1978); E.P. Thompson, *The Making of the English Working Class* (London: V. Gollancz, 1963); Simone de Beauvoir, *Le Deuxième sexe* (Paris: Gallimard, 1949); Nancy F. Cott, *The Grounding of Modern Feminism* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1987); Stuart Schwartz, *All Can Be Saved: Religious Tolerance and Salvation in the Iberian Atlantic World* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008). Peter Linebaugh and Marcus Rediker produced what is arguably the most sustained, large-scale application of history from below in *The many-headed hydra: sailors, slaves, commoners, and the hidden history of the revolutionary Atlantic* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2000). For a further application, see Rediker, *The Amistad Rebellion: An Atlantic Odyssey of Slavery and Freedom* (New York: Viking, 2012).

⁶⁴ Mario Pereira, "West African Art in Renaissance Portugal," unpublished paper.

⁶⁵ George Brooks, *Eurafricans in western Africa : commerce, social status, gender, and religious observance from the sixteenth to the eighteenth century* (Athens, OH: Ohio University Press, 2003), 124 – 129, 206 – 221.

⁶⁶ The Siete Partidas, drawing on Roman and canon law, recognized slaves as persons who had suffered misfortune; its approach was reflected in slave law for Portugal, France, and the Dutch until plantation interests gained power in American colonies in the seventeenth century. Elsa Goveia, "The West Indian Slave Laws of the Eighteenth Century," *Revista de Ciencias Sociais* 4 (1960), 75 – 105.

⁶⁷ Ira Berlin, "From Creole to African: Atlantic Creoles and the Origins of African-American Society in Mainland North America" *William and Mary Quarterly* 53, Number 2 (April, 1996), 251-288. Also include Lauren Benton, *Law and Colonial Cultures: Legal Regimes in World History, 1400 – 1900* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002).

⁶⁸ C. R. Boxer, *The Dutch Seaborne Empire 1600–1800* (London: Hutchinson, 1965).

⁶⁹ The latter consisted of seemingly spontaneous decisions by some seventeenth-century European farmers and artisans to extend their hours of work and expand their consumption. Ray A. Kea, *Settlements, trade, and politics in the seventeenth-century Gold Coast* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1982); Jan de Vries, (1994). "The Industrial Revolution and the Industrious Revolution". *Journal of Economic History* 54: 249–270. Other writers

have described the skills and output of artisans in Africa and the Americas: Colleen E. Kriger, *Pride of Men: Ironworking in 19th Century West Central Africa* (1999); Kriger, *Cloth in West African History* (2006). For a different conceptualization of “industrious revolution,” see Bayly, *Birth of the Modern World*, 49 – 54.

⁷⁰ On trade diasporas: Claude Meillassoux, *The development of indigenous trade and markets in West Africa* (London: Oxford University Press, 1971); Philip D. Curtin, *Cross-cultural Trade in World History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984). On states: Barry, *Senegambia*; Jan Vansina, *Kingdoms of the Savanna* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1966).

⁷¹ On Palmares, see Décio Freitas, *Palmares: A Guerra dos Escravos*, 5th ed. (Rio de Janeiro: Graal, 1990); and Raymond K. Kent, “Palmares: An African State in Brazil,” *Journal of African History* 6 (1965): 161 – 176.

⁷² Louis Sala-Molins, *Le Code noir, ou, Le calvaire de Canaan* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1987); Goveia, “West Indian Slave Laws.”

⁷³ El Hamel, *Black Morocco*.

⁷⁴ In addition the Spanish state revised its law on slavery in 1680, sharply limiting the recognition of slave rights. Bernard Lewis, in a conflicting interpretation, chose to neglect this temporal shift and treat racial discrimination as a constant within Islamic society. Lewis, *Race and Slavery in the Middle East: An Historical Inquiry* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990).

⁷⁵ Patrick Manning, *Slavery and African Life: Occidental, Oriental, and African Slave Trades* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990).

⁷⁶ Stuart Schwartz, *All Can Be Saved: Religious Tolerance and Salvation in the Iberian Atlantic World* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008).

⁷⁷ The struggle between those who sought to benefit from enslavement and hierarchy and those who sought to maintain the autonomy of communities manifested itself in artistic representation. Increasingly, those associated with monarchy, war, and enslavement created realistic images of war and monarchy; the opposing communities, drawing on the same ancestral artistic traditions, emphasized abstract representations of basic forces such as fertility. Patrick Manning, “Primitive Art and Modern Times,” *Radical History Review* No. 33 (1985), 165 – 181.

⁷⁸ The growth of slave labor within Africa can only have taken place if there was economic growth among some sectors, in parallel to the slavery-linked economic growth of Europe, North America, and Asia.

⁷⁹ George Reid Andrews, *Afro-Latin America 1800 – 2000* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), 54 – 62, 76 – 82; Ada Ferrer, *Insurgent Cuba : race, nation, and revolution, 1868-1898* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1999). A half million enslaved persons gained emancipation in the 1790s, and roughly an equal number gained emancipation worldwide in each succeeding decade from the 1820s to the 1920s. The pace of emancipation worldwide came to exceed enslavement after about 1860, though the burst of enslavement in Africa and Asia did not yield to emancipation until the 1920s.

⁸⁰ A new wave of anti-Semitism fit the same calendar. Neil MacMaster, *Racism in Europe, 1870 – 2000* (New York: Palgrave, 2001).

⁸¹ Manning, *The African Diaspora*, 209 – 272.

⁸² It became incorporated into the national anthem of South Africa in 1997 alongside the Afrikaner anthem, “Die Stem van Suid Africa”—hence, a symbolic compromise to accompany long social struggle.

⁸³ August Meier, John Bracey, Jr., and Elliott Rudwick, eds., *Black protest in the sixties* (New York: M. Wiener Pub., 1991); Patrick Manning, “1789-1792 and 1989-1992. Global Interactions of Social Movements.” *World History Connected* 3, 1 <<http://worldhistoryconnected.org/3.1/manning.html>> .

⁸⁴ Arif Dirlik, *Global Modernity: Modernity in the Age of Global Capitalism* (Boulder: Paradigm Publishers, 2007). The work already done, privileging elite perspectives, will continue to stand, but it can now be put more explicitly into interplay with people’s history

⁸⁵ Such an interactive research agenda is not easily implemented by individual scholars: some form of collaboration will be necessary to study modernity at the interregional level.

⁸⁶ Barbara Weinstein’s AHA 2008 presidential address, which raised the conundrum of inequality for historical scrutiny, especially with regard to Latin America, has not led yet to many responses. Her essay did however contribute to convening the AHR roundtable on modernity; the roundtable in turn has the potential of bringing the problem of inequality into clearer view. Barbara Weinstein, “Developing Inequality,” *American Historical Review*, 113 (2008): 1-18.