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Harbans Mukhia

Abstract

Until very recently, the notion of 'modernity' was, in C. A. Bayly's words, 'out there' for all to see, with no questions asked. Today, it is virtually in a shambles, under interrogation from numerous angles around the world, facilitated by the globalization of academia. Its early use to demarcate the present from the past gave way, Post-Enlightenment, to a value load of reason opposed to any sort of religion or religiosity, now derisively designated as superstition of the 'dark ages'. With positivism's privileging of science and technology, modernity evolved into an Abstraction, the approximation to which attested the degree of modernity of every society, institution, or even individual. Its paradigm was one of specific western 'rationality' and capitalist economy. In one powerful version, the approximation to this Abstraction in Asia, Africa, and Latin America was mediated through colonialism and its discourses; in another, even as colonialism was contested, 'modernity' was demonstrated through parallel and comparable indigenous developments, even prior to the colonial intervention, thus valorising the Abstraction. The movement of our ideas remains encircled by it. One severe effect of it all was the suppression of any expression of plurality of discourses. The circle is now being broken by postulates of alternative modernities, multiple modernities, Eurasian modernity, shared modernities, lost modernities, and several other versions. The dual value-loaded hiatus that Post-Enlightenment had posited between the then present and the past in Europe and between Europe and the rest

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of the world is today under severe strain. It seems arguable that European modernity was not quite the exception either with reference to its own 'medieval' past or, more emphatically, with reference to the rest of the world. It is possible to envisage it as a continuous process, and one that has evolved through multifaceted global interaction: economic, technological, cultural, ideational, or aesthetic. True, the pace of change since the seventeenth or especially the eighteenth-century dictated by the idea of progress lends 'modernity' special characteristics. Yet, both the idea of progress and the pace of change are conceivably cumulative effects of global historical evolution and have universal, not Euro-specific, validity.

Perhaps it is time to abandon 'ancient, medieval, and modern' (likely to become irrelevant in the near future anyway), and conceptualise value-neutral categories: Early, recent, contemporary, or simple demarcation by centuries.

Until just about two decades ago, 'modernity' was a given; accepted as an objective reality. In C. A. Bayly's words, it was 'out there' for everyone to see, and no questions asked.[1] Today, the notion is in a shambles. Today, modernity is constructed in innumerable different ways, none attributing to it the characteristics of an objective reality, and none speaking of it in the singular. Hence, 'subjective modernities'.

My own quest of modernity springs from its medieval antecedents. 'Medieval' remains essentially a residual category, as something that is 'un-modern'. It is thus that in order to understand 'medieval', one needs first to understand the 'modern', of which 'medieval' constitutes the other. But the quest ends up in questioning all these categories of the division of historical time.

I will restrict myself to exploring two dimensions of the problematic: The spatial and the temporal.

To begin with, we come across the early use of the term 'modern' in the fifth century.[2] Its use then was entirely as a descriptive term — to distinguish the present from the past, where the present was

designated the 'modern' and the rest comprised the past. There was no value judgment attached to it.

Value came to be attached to it in Europe in the Post-Renaissance, Post-Reformation, Post-Enlightenment period. I shall use Post-Enlightenment as shorthand for this period.

Post-Enlightenment gave us, *inter alia*, the tool of creating binary opposites by investing the 'modern age' with reason/rationality in opposition to the irrationality or superstition — it derisive designation for any semblance to religion or religiosity, which was established by it as the characteristic feature of the 'Dark Age', the 'medieval past'. 'Medieval' could thus be understood only in the perspective of the 'modern', as its other.

One might note here that pre-Enlightenment Europe was not unfamiliar with the category of binary opposites. In some fundamental ways, Christianity had divided humanity into the opposites of 'the truth' and 'falsehoods', where Christianity stood for the truth and all other religions or religious practices were relegated to the realm of falsehood. Implicitly there was interminable conflict between them, but also the ultimate universal triumph of the 'true religion' over all 'falsehoods'. The premise of universal triumph also lay at the base of the notion of the rational modernity over all superstitions. Yet, transformation of binary opposites from the religious to the societal sphere needs to be underlined.

Embedded in the rationality of the 'modern', was the assumption of its universal validity and therefore its ultimate universal triumph, which lent it the characteristics of objectivity in opposition to the intuitive and subjective character of knowledge obtained through, say, religious experience. It was a universalizing and totalizing project.[3]

Positivism, developed, and prevalent during the eighteenth, nineteenth, and much of the twentieth-century immensely reinforced the objective image of modernity by creating a dichotomy between an objective reality and its subjective perception. The objective reality was given and was universal; the subjective perception would, through

incremental knowledge, ultimately approximate to the objective reality and would also be universally valid. Its inevitable universal triumph was inherent in it. Let me illustrate this with an everyday sort of example.

Time was when it was thought that the earth was flat, and that the sun went round the earth. Gradually, through the growth of knowledge, it was realized that the earth was actually round, or nearly round, and that it was the earth which rotated round on its own axis and round the sun rather than the other way. In parenthesis, it might be noted that Galileo, who had, following Copernicus, declared that it was the earth which moved around the sun, had hurt the religious sentiments of the Pope and millions of Catholics for whom it was the divine truth that the sun moved around the earth, and the hurt was so intense that Galileo had to recant his observation and apologise to the Church; the apology notwithstanding, he was excommunicated. To his credit, in his dying moments he once again affirmed his conviction in the immortal words, 'It still moves'. It was only in the 1990s that the Church realized that its 'truth' was erroneous and exonerated the scientist after some 450 years of torment! An illuminating lesson in what havoc can 'hurt religious sentiment' wreak!

Clearly, Europe, especially western Europe was the home of the origin of Post-Enlightenment modernity. It is here that the tripartite division of historical time, Ancient, Medieval, and Modern occurs and the notion of value-loaded 'modern' evolves. The notion of an objective reality devolves from the positivist natural sciences down to the social sciences. Nothing captures the devolution more dramatically than Auguste Comte's insistence that the discipline he had founded, i.e. Sociology, had a higher rating as an exact science than Mathematics! Since the basic function of science is to capture the nature of phenomena and thereby to predict their future behaviour, sociology would be able to predict society's behaviour with absolute precision.[4] In my own discipline, Leopold von Ranke's pithy, succinct, and classic statement, 'history tells us as it really happened' is hard to excel in its positivist certitude. The seven-word statement carries three major, though implicit emphases: First, it is not the historian, or historians, who tell us what had happened in the past and how; it is the discipline of History which

tells us. How? A time will come when *all* the facts of history will have been collected. Until that happens, a historian or a group of historians, or indeed all historians put together, might still be giving us a partial and flawed picture of the past, for their own knowledge would be far from complete. Once, however, all facts had been put together, History in its totality would be before us, and what it would tell us would be the complete picture which would be immutable to alteration or subject to any doubt. The second emphasis is on 'telling'. When we wish to emphasise the finality of a truth, we often do so by 'telling' that truth. When we assert, 'I am telling you…', it is for us, the most definitive form of assertion. And finally, History in its completeness will tell us as it *really* happened; i.e. there would be no space for the slightest ambiguity about what History will tell us.

This is positivist, scientific history par excellence. Interestingly, embedded in this assertion is a self-destruct project that seems to have eluded von Ranke or positivists in general: What happens to the pursuit of History once all the facts have been collected sometime in the future, and History has told us unambiguously the complete story of the past, as it had *really* happened? Clearly, there would be nothing more left to be told and the pursuit of History must come to its end. In fact, the pursuit of knowledge forever renews itself through self-questioning; there is no terminal point for it, quite besides the fact that History can never tell us as it really happened, for, among several other reasons, a substantive part of the past has been lost to us irretrievably and is constantly getting lost every day.

The spatial location also privileges Europe for the universal realization of the implications of modernity. It enabled Europe first to achieve all that consensually – indeed near unanimously until the 1960s-70s, even 80s – comprised modernity: growth of science and rationality, therefore of technology, industrial revolution, capitalism, nation state, secularism, individualism, free market economy…. Summing it all up, S. N. Eisenstadt had concluded in 1966: '…historically, modernization is the process of change towards those types of social, economic and political systems that have developed in Western Europe and North America from the seventeenth century to the nineteenth century.'[5] Add or subtract some or the other element from these, but there was a fair

degree of unanimity on what constituted modernity and where its origins lay. It was 'out there', to recapitulate Bayly's memorable words.[6]

Indeed, the consensus was universal. Once the singularity and location of modernity had been established, and its inevitable universal expansion accepted, it acquired the characteristics of an Abstraction, derived from an objective reality. Historians of non-European regions could only explore the proximity or distance of their regions' histories from this Abstraction.

In the 1940s, 50s even 60s, Chinese historians were deeply immersed in debating whether there was evidence of the 'sprouts of capitalism' in the pre-colonial history of their country and the near uniform conclusion was that there indeed was strong evidence. The 'sprouts of capitalism' were usually identified with the growth of commerce culminating in the cumulative effect of the rise of commercial capitalism, precursor to the development of industrial capital, the hallmark of modernity. The terms of debate were clearly borrowed from the debates in Europe about the decline of feudalism and the rise of capitalism in which commerce was identified as the chief dissolvent of the former and the equally chief harbinger of the latter. In 1957, an anthology on the theme, *Essays on the Debate on Sprouts of Capitalism in China*, was published in Beijing.[7] That these premises of the crucial role of commerce had already been seriously queried in European historiography was yet to influence the 'sprouts of capitalism' debate.

A similar debate was brought to Indian history first by some eminent Soviet Indologists like Pavlov, Chicherov, Ashrafayan, and others. The contours of the argument were sometimes similar to the ones in Chinese historiography: The substantial rise of trade and commerce, and the extended use of money as the medium of exchange were adequate harbingers of fully fledged industrial capitalism, a process interrupted by colonial intervention; and sometimes quite different, even as different views evolved over time even among the same authors.[8] Among Indian historians a brief contribution by Satish Chandra outlining the growth of 'a money (sic) economy' during the seventeenth century, sought to substantiate the same argument, even as historians had for long pointed

to the extensive trade and commerce mediated through money that had characterized Indian economic history for centuries prior to the sixteenth and seventeenth.[9] The debate was brought to a closure by an outstanding contribution of Irfan Habib, where he explored the problematic by highlighting the very high level of commerce and an impressive level of accumulation of commercial capital, the substantial degree of technological change in the production sector to keep pace with the growth of commerce, and considerable penetration of money in the functioning of the economy; and yet, in Habib's vision, the rise of capitalism did not have a chance, regardless of colonial intervention.[10] Habib was employing the classic Marxist argument, that trade or commerce by itself was incapable of altering a mode of production; it is the 'internal articulation' of contradictions in a mode of production that led to its transformation into the next stage, a thesis developed by Maurice Dobb, which had great influence on Habib.[11] However, whichever way one stood on the debate, its terms were clearly borrowed from the Abstraction that we have talked about.

From the 1990s, the Abstraction, the singularity of modernity, the terms of debate began to open up. Today, there is consensus only that there was a consensus in the past; the Abstraction itself is in tatters. By 1998, the same Eisenstadt was to hold that, 'that there is only one modernity is a fallacy'.[12]

The querying of 'singular modernity',[13] or what Richard Wolin labels 'one-size-fits-all conception of development',[14] has come from a wide range of vantage points. The evolving notion of early modernity in different regions of the world itself was a pointer to alternative paths followed by different regions into the 'modern world', partaking of modernity in different ways. Thus Wang Hui was to boldly declare in 2004: 'Modern China emerged *before* its encounter with the West.'[15] This was a major inversion of the earlier frantic search for 'sprouts of capitalism' where an emulation of the Western trajectory of modernity was implicated; by the beginning of the twenty-first-century, a self-confident China could assert its 'exceptionalism', and perhaps imply an inverse emulation of China by the West.

It has been argued for several years now by some of the world's most distinguished historians that China and India were driving the

world's economy until about the middle of the eighteenth century — well into the 'modern age', whether it was in crafts production or agriculture or commerce.[16] Europe's 'Agricultural Revolution' of the eighteenth century allowed it to harvest one crop from every field in a year; India had grown on average two crops from each field for several centuries.[17] China and India were the homes for silk and cotton fabrics for which European Companies indulged in cut-throat competition with one another.[18] And just one big trader, Abdul Ghafoor of Surat was reputed to have commanded more capital by himself than all the East India Companies of Europe put together in the seventeenth-century; there were others besides, Virji Vora being a close second.

But many other markers of 'modernity', aside from the economy, were present in pre-colonial China and India. We are well aware of the prevalence of public examinations for recruitment to the huge bureaucracy that administered China and of its 'secular' nature. We are also aware of the 'secular', i.e. non-religious nature of the Confucian, especially the neo-Confucian philosophy that dominated the Chinese society, even though the counter positioning of 'secular' and 'religious' is not a very satisfactory endeavour.

In pre-colonial India too, as Jonardon Ganeri demonstrates, philosophy was far from statically rooted in its ancient soil.[19] There was the birth and flowering of navya nyāya, translated by Ganeri as 'new reason' in the mid-seventeenth century Hindu philosophy, which was often a reinterpretation of old doctrines as well as new modes of thought. It was at Nabadwipa (modern Nadia) and Varanasi that 'new reason' was making its mark. Ganeri also notes that the treatises of Descartes and Gassendi had been translated into Persian in India – suggesting deep interest of some elite intellectuals of the reigning Mughal dynasty – before these had been translated into European vernaculars. Ganeri then boldly asks, 'With Gassendi's work rendered into Persian even before it was properly available in French, and the monistic pantheism of the Upanishads and Dara Shukoh already in France and England years before Spinoza's *Ethics* were published, what more dramatic evidence could there be of intellectual globalization in the 1660s?'[20]

However, on a larger canvas it is evident that the Mughal state and society were enormously dynamic in virtually every sphere: economy, technology, social mores and relations, culture, aesthetics…. And while the state and society were far from irreligious, these were equally far from being theocratic.[21] In a remarkably innovative and unique concept, evolved at the ground level by illiterate and semi-literate saint-poets, the conflicts and tensions inherent in two rival concepts of God, and exclusive modes of worship practiced in Hinduism and Islam, the vision of one universal God, common to all of humanity, dissolved these tensions at the social level even as it recognized the space for differences. It is a telling testimony to the power of this vision that even as interminable battles were fought by the rulers of different denominations during the five and a half centuries or more of the 'Muslim' rule, often projecting these in communal terms, social peace prevailed. The first recorded riot between the two communities is dated to 1713-14 in Ahmadabad in the reign of Farrukhsiyar,[22] towards nearly the end of the period and the whole of the eighteenth century was witness to five such riots.[23] Compare this to several hundred riots occurring under the aegis of the secular state in India during the second half of the twentieth century and the first decade of the twenty-first.

The colonization of these vast regions and their introduction to colonial modernity is a historical fact. However, it does not establish the principle that this was the only route to modernity available to them. It is possible to envisage alternative paths to modernity as well as alternative modernities which have been proposed by several scholars around the world. Along with these the notion of multiple modernities has found great resonance. We thus have several alternatives to the singular modernity paradigm. There has been a proliferation of 'modernities' since the 1990s.

There have indeed been several versions of modernity recently. Besides Alexander Woodside's own, *Lost Modernites*, Huri Islamoglu and Peter C. Perdue introduce us to *Shared Modernities*,[24] Carol Gluck to 'blended modernities',[25] Nilüfer Göle to 'Islamic Modernities',[26] and Purushottam Agarwal to the idea of an Indian 'indigenous modernity'.[27] 'Multiple Modernities' was the theme of a special issue of *Daedalus* in 2000, edited by S. N. Eisendtat.[28] 'Early

Modernities' was that of the same journal in 1998,[29] although the term 'Early Modern' has been in use in the histories of several regions, even as it first appeared in Europe to qualify the one block of the long 'Modern Period', just as other long blocks were qualified with 'Late Antiquity', 'Early Medieval', 'Late Medieval' etc.

Arif Dirlik and Jack Goody have strongly, though separately, argued for a 'Eurasian Modernity' as an alternative to the association of modernity with Europe.[30] It is their case that the modern world that we inhabit was essentially created by the civilizations across Europe and Asia, and that Asia had been denied credit for its major contribution to it; the time had come to restore the balance. A fair argument for sure. Roxann Praznik adds yet more power to it by drawing attention to the creation of the vast Mongol empire which had connected regions across continents which prompted extensive exchanges of products and ideas.[31] However, this enlarged space still leaves yet larger space of Africa and Latin America out of consideration for enriching the life of the modern humanity in myriad ways. J. M. Blaut has sought to redress the balance by articulating a sharp critique of Eurocentrism in history and formulating a 'global modernity' in which all regions of the globe have uniformly contributed to the evolution of the modern human civilization; for it he coins the term 'uniformatization'.[32] We shall return to this theme in a while.

Meanwhile, it is also important to encounter the phenomenon of 'alternatives *to* modernity', not insignificant enough to be ignored. In some ways, the Taliban regime in Afghanistan had operated with the ideology of an alternative to modernity, although it recognized the usefulness of very modern means of transport, communications, and of destruction. Besides, the 'tribes' in India and indeed around the world have, to a small or large extent, remained outside the paradigm of modernity whether by choice or by compulsion.

All these, and several other formulations profoundly redefine the problematic of modernity as received wisdom. Yet, all of them are beset with problems of their own.

'Alternative modernities' and 'multiple modernities', while usefully

demolishing a single model that would amount to a 'total explanation', however, diffuses the focus altogether from what constitutes modernity and draws away substance from the concept, *any* concept, of modernity. Arif Dirlik has indeed strongly argued against this dissolution of substance.[33] On the other hand, the current state of the discussion ignores the problem of inequities that have resulted from the 'modernization' experienced by the societies that had been colonized during the early modern and modern history. Secondly, is it fair to speak of such large chunks of territory and of humanity contained in them such as Europe, China, India, Africa the Muslim world etc. as single units of analysis completely overlooking the internal differentiation in them, where 'modernization' also had highly differentiated impact, as it still does? Kenneth Pomeranz draws our attention to this major problem.[34]

So far we have focused on the spatial dimension of the problem; there is too the temporal dimension. The evolution of the tripartite division of historical time into Antiquity, the Middle Ages, and the Modern Age goes back to the sixteenth century,[35] although one author attributes it to the Dutch humanist Christian Cellarius or Christoph Keller towards the end of the seventeenth century, borrowing the preceding theological division of time into the pagan and the subsequent Christian which were bestowed the nomenclature of Ancient History and Medieval History.[36] Although the origin and the context of this division was Europe, by late nineteenth and early twentieth century, it had attained a universal application not because of its innate excellence but largely because of the expansion of Europe to the rest of the world, militarily, economically, and not least intellectually.[37] Initially, the neat dividing line between the medieval and the modern in Europe was drawn at 1453, with the fall of Constantinople. It then moved to 1492, the year of Christopher Columbus's voyage to America. The Industrial Revolution brought about a change in the historians' focus from particular events and precise dates to long term processes; thus economic and social history of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries began to occupy the space hitherto allotted to single events and the 'Modern' period got divided into Early Modern and Modern. The consensual characteristics of 'modernity' placed the modern period firmly in the

eighteenth and nineteenth centuries' bracket. Indeed, Björn Wittrock, while tracing the beginnings of 'modernity' to these centuries characterizes it as still tentative. 'Modern' for him, is an ensemble of 'promissory notes', opening up in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, and still sort of 'work in progress'.[38]

Others are not so sure.

Jack Goody traces it to the Italian Renaissance of the thirteenth-century and links it to the weakening of the Christian ecumene and the spread of education and of the opening of universities.[39] Oxford still opens its modern history courses with the fall of Roman empire and France operates with the fifteenth century as the marker of its beginning. Sheldon Pollock, on the other hand, has powerfully argued that the emergence of the vernaculars in different parts of the world – Europe, India, South East Asia – from the beginning of the second millennium is a good dividing line for tracing the origin of the 'modern' period.[40] Vernaculars clearly underline the process of modernization as a process of democratization.

With the opening up of the problematic of modernity to a whole range of spatial variations, temporal boundaries are prone to shifting base with even greater vigour; the consideration of differentiations within each space further compounds the problem.

So where do we go from here? We can either look upon 'modernity' in terms of some marked specificities. Let me mention two of these, both primarily part of the sphere of economy, although the list can become very long.

1. It is characterized by an unprecedented pace of growth, thanks to science, technology and therefore of industry; and

2. Following from it, the incorporation of the 'idea of progress' as the very premise of modernity, the idea finding its most emphatic articulation in the Marxian notion of the 'stages of development', although starting with Adam Smith and others in the eighteenth

century.[41] Today, the 'idea of progress' has sensitized us to the inherent threat of destruction of ecology, but this sensitivity has rather recent origins as a powerful discourse.

These specificities will necessarily locate the origin of modernity in Europe during the eighteenth and nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

Or else, we can look upon even the frantic pace of 'progress' of the 'modern' period as the cumulative effect of preceding developments. Pace of growth in the twenty-first century is much faster relative to the twentieth, which was much faster compared to the nineteenth and so forth, each precipitated by the antecedent accelerating pace. And we recognize that the 'modern world' that we inhabit has evolved not through the endeavours and energies of any single region, but through the multifaceted interactive globality, without either 'uniformatization' of contributions of different regions, or dwelling upon the ratios of each contribution. We thus move from 'world history' which usually comprises juxtaposition of histories of different regions, towards a genuinely 'global history' which gives us an integrated image of the evolution of human civilization through the long past to the present.

It is essential to recognize that the firmly closed problematic of modernity has been irrevocably opened up from the singular to plurality, and from certitudes to ambiguities in the context of the globalization of the economy, culture, and above all of knowledge. There has been a visibly general movement from the Positivist and Marxist certitudes to multiplicity of layers of meanings in the social sciences and philosophy, which itself implicates and reinforces ambiguity.

Second, since 'modernity', or for that matter division of historical time into ancient, medieval, and modern, with further qualifications to each, are all historiographical or cultural constructs and thus by their very nature transient, it might be worthwhile recognising this transience and transcending it. At any rate eighteenth, nineteenth and twentieth centuries are hardly likely to be characterized as 'modern' in, say, the twenty-second or the twenty-third century; clearly some other categories will have transcended this nomenclature and some other modes of analysis will have evolved.

It is time we started moving in that direction. One step could perhaps be dispensing with the loaded categories of ancient, medieval, and modern etc., and employing at least somewhat more value-neutral division in terms of early, recent, contemporary, or dividing historical time in terms of millennia, centuries, and decades; and leave it at that.

This would be no more than the first baby steps. Isn't that how long journeys begin?

Endnotes:

[1] C. A. Bayly, *The Birth of the Modern World, 1780-1914* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2004), p. 11.

[2] Jacques Le Goff, *History and Memory*, (trs.) Steven Rendall and Elizabeth Claman (New York: Columbia University Press, 1992), p.23; Fredric Jameson, *A Singular Modernity: Essay on the Ontology of the Present* (London: Verso, 2002), p. 17.

[3] Arjun Appadurai has a different and very interesting take on this theme. Post-Enlightenment Europe, for him, was far from unified or coherent in its understanding or its universal mission; there was indeed a plethora of cracks and contradictions in its understanding of Post-Enlightenment rationality. It was to cover up these that Europe engaged in a retrospective construction of a singular rationality and its expansion worldwide was to cement the image. See chapter 2 in his *The Future as Cultural Fact* (London: Verso, 2013).

[4] John Hassard, *Sociology and organization theory: Positivism, paradigms and postmodernity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), pp. 5-6. Comte placed sociology at the top of the hierarchy and mathematics at the bottom in terms of positivist precision. 'This positive approach will provide the key to human destiny, the key to one solid form of society. The vision is of a world in which scientific rationality forms the basis for the regulation of social order. For this, the discipline base lies in sociology, a science of society based on models and methods of natural sciences. Sociology will discover the scientific laws that explain relations between parts of society.' (p. 16).

[5] Eisenstadt, *Modernization, Protest and Change* (New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, 1966), p. 1.

[6] Modernity, for C. A. Bayly, 'encompassed the rise of the nation-state, demanding centralization of power or loyalty to an ethnic solidarity alongside a massive expansion of global commercial and intellectual links. The international spread of industrialization and a new style of urban living compounded these profound developments. The merging of all these trends does point to a step-change in human social organization. The scope and scale of change broadened dramatically. Modernity, then, 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 in various forms', Bayly, *The Birth*, p. 11.

[7] See for an illuminating discussion Arif Dirlik, 'Chinese Historians and

the Marxist Concept of Capitalism: A Critical Examination', *Modern China*, 8/1 (1982), pp. 359-375.

[8] A. I. Chicherov, *Indian Economic Development in the 16th-18th Centuries: Outline History of Crafts and Trade* (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1971), V. I.; Pavlov, *Historical Premises for India's Transition to Capitalism* (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1978). For a survey of Russian scholarly woks on medieval India, see Eugenia Vanina, 'Russian Studies in Medieval Indian History and Society: An Insider's View', *The Medieval History Journal*, 2/2 (1999), pp. 361-86. For Vanina's own indirect, but variant perceptions, see her *Urban Crafts and Craftsmen in Medieval India: Thirteenth-Eighteenth Centuries* (New Delhi: Munshilal Manoharlal Publishers, 2004), pp. 18-22.

[9] Satish Chandra, 'Some Aspects of the Growth of A Money Economy in India during the Seventeenth Century' in his *Medieval India: Society, Jagirdari Crisis and the Village* (New Delhi: McMillan Publishers, 1982), pp.155-65, [first published in *The Indian Economic and Social History Review,* 3/4 (1966)]. Purushottam Agarwal propounds the notion of 'indigenous modernity' (*deshaj ādhuniktā*) though he covers an earlier period in his *Akath Kahānī Prem kī: Kabir kī Kavitā aur un kā Samay* [in Hindi] (New Delhi: Rajkamal Prakashan, 2009).

[10] Irfan Habib, 'Potentialities of Capitalistic Development in the Economy of Mughal India', first published in the *Journal of Economic History*, 29 (1969); latest reproduction in Habib, *Essays in Indian History. Towards a Marxist Perception* (New Delhi: Tulika, 1995), pp. 180-232.

[11] Dobb's formulation of the decline of feudalism and the rise of capitalism in western Europe in his *Studies in the Development of Capitalism* (London: Routledge, 1946), which led to the classic debate, later edited by R. H. Hilton, *The Transition from Feudalism to Capitalism* (London: Verso, 1976), republished in India by Aakar Books, 2006.

[12] *Daedalus*, 127/3, Special Issue on Early Modernities, Summer, 1998, Introduction by S. N. Eisenstdat and Wolfgang Schulchter, p. 2.

[13] The title of Frederic Jameson's book: *A Singular Modernity. Essay on the Ontology of the Present* (London: Verso, 2009) (first pub. 2002).

[14] Richard Wolin, 'Modernity', *American Historical Review*: *Roundtable on Historians and the Question of Modernity*, 116/3 (2011), p. 747.

[15] This is the title of his interview in *New Perspectives Quarterly*, 25/4 (2008), pp. 10-15. Earlier he had argued thus in his *The Rise of Modern Chinese Thought* (in Chinese), Beijing, 2004 (emphasis added).

[16] Andre Gunder Frank's by now classic *ReOrient: Global Economy in the Asian Age* (Berkeley: University of California Press,1998); Kenneth Pomeranz, *The Great Divergence: China, Europe, and the Making of the Modern World Economy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000); Prasannan Parthasarathi, *Why Europe Grew Rich and Asia Did Not: Global Economic Divergence, 1600-1850* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011).

[17] Harbans Mukhia, 'Agricultural Technology in Medieval North India' in Mukhia's, *Exploring India's Medieval Centuries*: *Essays in History, Society, Culture, and Technology* (New Delhi: Aakar Books, 2010), pp. 277-306.

[18] Of the numerous works on the theme, see T. Raychaudhuri and Irfan Habib (eds.), *The Cambridge Economic History of India*-1 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), pp. 382-433.

[19] J. Ganeri, *Lost Age of Reason: Philosophy in Early Modern India, 1450-1700* (London: Oxford University Press, 2011).

[20] Ibid., Chapter 'India and the World, 1656', p. 16.

[21] The literature on these themes is vast. A quick list would include Tapan Raychaudhuri and Irfan Habib (eds.), *The Cambridge*; Monica Juneja (ed.), *Architecture in Medieval India*: *Forms, Contexts, Histories*, (Ranikhet: Permanent Black, 2001); Harbans Mukhia (ed.), *History of Technology in India*, 2 (New Delhi: Indian National Science Academy, 2012); Harbans Mukhia, *The Mughals of India* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 2004).

[22] Ali Muhammad Khan, *Mirat-i Ahmadi*, (Eng. Tr.) M. F. Lokhandwala (Baroda: Oriental Institute, 1965), pp. 358-59. The author clearly states that the riot was the culmination of tensions and jealousy between two jewelers, a Hindu and a Muslim, although it was sparked by Hindus playing *holi* and spraying colours on a passing Muslim and lasted two days in which 'many persons on both sides were slain and wounded'. Dawood Khan, the administrator 'marched for establishment of order', and brought the situation under control.

[23] Muhammad Umar, *Islam in Northern India during the Eighteenth Century* (New Delhi: Munshilal Manoharlal, 1993), p. 163.

[24] Islamoglu and Perdue, *Shared Histories of Modernities: China, India and the Ottoman Empire* (New Delhi: Routledge, 2009).

[25] Carol Gluck, 'The End of Elsewhere: Writing Modernity Now', *American Historical Review: Roundtable on Historians and the Question of Modernity*, 116/3 (2011), p. 685.

[26] Nilüfer Göle, 'Snapshots of Islamic Modernities', *Daedalus*, 129/1, Special Issue on Multiple Modernities (2000), pp. 91-117.

[27] Purushottam Agarwal's 'indigenous modernity' (deshaj ādhuniktā) is mostly grounded on the growth of commerce in medieval India (a term he disapproves of) as the indicator of modernity in his *Akath Kahānī Prem kī*. He is a historian of medieval Hindi literature.

[28] *Daedalus*, 129/1 (2000).

[29] *Daedalus*, 127/3 (1998), (eds.) S. N. Eisenstadt and Wolfgang Schluchter.

[30] Arif Dirlik, 'Revisioning Modernity: Modernity in Eurasian Perspectives,' *Inter-Asia Cultural Studies*, 12/2(2011), pp. 84-305; Jack Goody, *Capitalism and Modernity: The Great Debate* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2004), esp. ch. 6 and Jack Goody, *The Theft of History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), somewhat indirectly.

[31] Roxann Prazniak, 'Siena on the Silk Roads: Ambrogio Lorenzetti and the Mongol Global Century [1250-1350]', *Journal of World History*, 21/2 (2010), pp. 177-217.

[32] J. M. Blaut, *The Colonizer's Model of the World : Geographical Diffusionism and Eurocentric History* (New York: Guilford Press, 1993); and idem, *Eight Eurocentric Historians* (New York: Guilford Press, 2000).

[33] Arif Dirlik, 'Thinking Modernity Historically: Is "Alternative Modernity" the Answer?', *Asian Review of World Histories*, 1/1 (2013).

[34] Kenneth Pomeranz, *The Great Divergence*, pp. 3-10 and passim.

[35] Jacques Le Goff, *History and Memory*, p. 23: '…[T]he periodization of history into ancient, medieval and modern is established in the…sixteenth-century….'

[36] Harry Elmer Barnes, *A History of Historical Writing*, 2nd Rev. Ed. (New York: Dover Publications, 1963), pp. 16, 173.

[37] Among several writings, see the inaugural issue of *The Medieval*

History Journal, 1998, focused on the theme 'Contextualising the Medieval' in several regions: Europe, China, Japan, India, the Arab-Muslim world, and Central Asia.

[38] Björn Wittrock, 'Modernity: One, None or Many? European Origins and Modernity as Global Condition', *Daedalus*, 129/1 (2000), Special Issue on Multiple Modernities, pp. 31-60.

[39] Jack Goody, *The Theft of History*, ch. 5.

[40] Sheldon Pollock, ' India in the Vernacular Millennium: Literary Culture and Polity, 1000-1500', *Daedalus*, 127/3 (1998), Special Issue on Early Modernities, pp. 41-74.

[41] Susan Reynolds, *The Middle Ages without Feudalism: Essays in Criticism and Comparison on the Medieval West* (Farnham: Ashgate/ Variorum, 2012), p. 202.