

Alternative Modernities in African Literatures and Cultures

Stephan Meyer & Thomas Olver

C'est l'Afrique ton Afrique qui repousse
Qui repousse patiemment obstinément
Et dont les fruits ont peu à peu
L'amère saveur de la liberté.¹

(“Afrique”, David Diop)

The quarrel about the nature and value of modernity and its alternatives has been going on since the inception of modernity itself, so much so that self-reflective questioning is often deemed one of modernity's defining characteristics. What keeps on changing though, is the vocabulary, dynamics and – to the extent that one can speak in such terms – the conclusions drawn from these quarrels. With each modification in the participants, the disciplinary and the geographical location, the discussion takes on different inflections. Consequently Jean Comaroff describes modernity as “colorless, odorless, and tasteless” (Jean & John Comaroff 2002b: s.p.). Till quite recently though, what has remained constant is the notion that there is only one modernity, even if definitions of and alternatives to this singular modernity are multiple. By contrast, the papers collected in this special issue on alternative modernities in African literatures, cultures and histories suggest that a genuine debate about modernity and the alternatives to it requires a rigorous understanding of the alternatives *within* modernity.

The title of this double volume consciously picks up on the collection *Alternative Modernities* (2001) edited by Dilip Parameshwar Goankar.² It shares the view of modernity Goankar takes over from Baudelaire and from Foucault's reading of Kant, namely that it is an “attitude of questioning the present” (Goankar 2001: 13) and that this questioning itself takes different forms in different parts of the globe.³ Modernity, as the essays in *Alternative Modernities* as well as this special volume of the *Journal of Literary Studies* attest, “always unfolds within a specific cultural or civilizational context” with the result that “different starting points for the transition to modernity lead to different outcomes” (Goankar 2001: 17). The articles offered here differ though from the ones in the *Alternative Modernities* collection in two respects. Firstly, while it shares Goankar's view that “modernity is global” and “multiple and no longer has a governing centre or master-narrative to accompany it” (p. 14), this collection takes a decidedly African perspective on

this global phenomenon. Whereas Goankar's collection spreads its site-based inquiry into the specificities of modernity across various parts of the globe (from imperial Russia to Mexico, India and Australia), the present special issue underlines the necessity of extending the focus of the inquiry in the geocultural direction of Africa.⁴ Secondly, it explores the continuities in the threefold relationship between traditionalism, modernity, and postmodernity rather than the binary oppositions of tradition – modernity and modernity-postmodernity, adding that an inquiry into alternative modernities (in Africa as elsewhere) requires placing the middle term – modernity – firmly in its relationship to both traditionalism and postmodernity.

Where Europeans have multiplied modernity it has at best been in the alternative definitions they give to modernity in inter- and intra-disciplinary disputes. Although these definitions vary greatly according to discipline and the ideological leanings of those drawing up the definitions, they remain constant in their European focus. Thus in European philosophy, modernity is generally associated with the prominence granted to reason in the writings of Descartes, Kant, and Hegel. In religion it is tied to Luther's protestant revolution and in literature it is associated with the rise of the novel and the names of Cervantes and Fielding. In economics it evokes the industrial and capitalist revolutions, whilst in politics and society it is tied to the belief in the routes progress, democracy, and nationalism have taken in Europe, which is accompanied with the belief in the imperative to spread these values through colonialism. In anthropological studies of material culture, modernity evokes the increasing significance afforded to urban lifestyles,⁵ technologies of production, and the importance of commodities.⁶ Whilst such disciplinary disputes provide evidence of the internal complexity of modernity, what they leave intact is the view that there is only one modernity and that it is a franchise in European hands which is reproduced in accordance with a single corporate style wherever it appears. Curiously, modernity is placed in a lineage of tradition, modernity and post-modernism with the first and the last terms marked by their multiplicity. By contrast, those who wish to dupe others into accepting the purported superiority of the European variant of modernity declare its singularity to be its trademark, thereby seeking to monopolise the power over its distribution.

From the European perspective, a common way of approaching discussions on modernity is through the history of ideas. This approach often identifies European philosophy as the font of modernity, thus also allocating the power to define and set the parameters of discussions on the definition and merit of modernity to European thought. Within this approach modernity is associated with arguments regarding the ability of a coherent subject to emancipate himself from delusion and oppression through the use of reason (Descartes, Kant) and the extrapolation of this individual subject into a collective

European subject whose history constitutes a grand narrative of the history of the world (Condorcet, Hegel, Marx). In the wake of Horkheimer and Adorno's *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, modernity thus described has been subject to various criticisms. Most notably, reason is no longer seen merely as a medium of emancipation but, in its instrumental guise, as a medium of domination. This take on modernity sees its more recent theoretical challenge in what is often lumped together as postmodern philosophy (cf Butler (1995: 36-38) for a critique of this lumping together of divergent "postmodern" positions). Announcing the now already canonised death of grand narratives (Lyotard), of the rational subject (Freud and Lacan), and of the regime of truth (Nietzsche and Foucault), postmodern European philosophers initiated a discussion which soon made its way into different disciplines, paradigms and locations.

The sophisticated challenges postmodern theorists of the continental tradition presented to modern philosophy were, however, largely deflected as postmodern philosophy edged its way into the UK and North America. Jonathan Culler's *On Deconstruction: Theory and Criticism after Structuralism* (1989) arguably became the canonical text effecting this double translation from the continental to the Anglo-American world and from philosophy to literary and cultural studies. Linguistic boundaries and disciplinary prejudices meant that the challenges to modernity posed by postmodern philosophy first found a sympathetic ear in places such as the Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies at the University of Birmingham⁷ and in the literary studies departments on the far side of the North Atlantic. From there it was rapidly but punctually disseminated to those former colonies which sustain strong links with the metropolitan academy. With its various publications devoted to deconstruction and postmodernism, the *Journal of Literary Studies* has achieved groundbreaking work in convincing scholars of the value of postmodernism to South African literary and cultural studies. Locally, as elsewhere, the once fierce arguments separating postmodernists and modernists have since given way to some guarded attempts at entente, with modern and postmodern positions continuing to have knowledgeable and erudite adherents in the social sciences, the humanities and literary studies.

These multiple disciplinary and linguistic translocations of postmodernism have had far-reaching implications for the debate on modernity. One of the consequences has been that it is often posed as a mutually exclusive two-dimensional choice between modernity or postmodernism. Bar many valuable exceptions, this drawing of battlefronts within cultural and literary studies meant that the modernity which was slandered was but a caricature of the original and that the postmodern alternatives themselves degenerated into slogans of the arguments they stem from so as to be better instrumentalised in this melee. Biddy Martin and Chandra Mohanty's following point on feminism applies equally to modernity:

Antihumanist attacks on “feminism” usually set up “American feminism” as a “straw man” and so contribute to the production – or, at the very least, the reproduction – of an image of “Western feminism” as conceptually and politically unified in its monolithically imperialist moves.

(Martin & Mohanty 1986: 194)

Under siege by neoliberalism, some theorists of culture and literature sought solace in popularised postmodern critiques of modernity which served as an easy vindication of a lack of rigour that was soon stylised into the true mark of succession to the “reasoned utopia” (Parry 2002: 2) of the New Left. For a similar point, see Bartolovich (2002). Fixated on deflecting critiques from their opponents, advocates of modernity in turn seldom paused to reconceptualise and refine their own notions of modernity. At the present stage, a return to modernity in the face of the many trenchant critiques by postmodernists harbours the risk of being usurped into a restoration. But in the light of the many valuable critiques, a renewed reflection on modernity can (as many of the authors collected here demonstrate) also be an attempt to do justice to those original postmodern critiques which would not rest satisfied with merely metaphorical victories over a caricature of the arguments proffered by advocates of modernity.

Alongside these postmodern critiques of modernity, another inflection of the quarrel over modernity emerged as feminists and gender theorists broached the topic. This is reflected in exchanges between feminist proponents of the pursuit of a transformed modernity such as Seyla Benhabib and Nancy Fraser and those who, like queer theorist Judith Butler, believe that we will fare better if we dispose of the definitive hegemonic ideals and concepts of modernity altogether. Modernity, so the now familiar argument of its critics claims, is misogynist beyond reform. Since it is impossible to bring down the master’s house using his tools, women and men alike are better served if they take leave of this masculinist project. Alternatives to the misogynist project of modernity are therefore sought in various kinds of feminism, ranging from those positions which favour the pursuit of a women-oriented epistemology and ethics, to those who seek to deconstruct notions of gender, with some of the most challenging critiques of modernity coming from a combination of feminism, postmodernism and postcolonialism.⁸

It is especially postcolonial critics who have focussed on the geographic translocation of the debate on modernity and who have pointed out the significance of “the absence of a concern with race or ethnicity from most contemporary writings about modernity” (Gilroy 1993: ix). In the course of the nineties, however, North Atlantic race theorists too increasingly entered the quarrel on the nature and value of modernity. Citing familiar passages from Hume, Kant, Hegel and Heidegger, authors such as David Theo Goldberg

(1993), Lucius Outlaw (1996), and Emmanuel Chukwudi Eze (1997) argue that modernity is Janus-faced, not only when gender is concerned, but as far as race goes too. Gilroy therefore suggests that

[t]racing the racial signs from which the discourse of cultural value was constructed and their conditions of existence in relation to European aesthetics and philosophy as well as European science can contribute much to an ethnohistorical reading of the aspirations of western modernity as a whole and to the critique of Enlightenment assumptions in particular.

(Gilroy 1993: 8)

Gilroy's foregrounding of race in his interpretation and evaluation of modernity is accompanied by a shift from discrete, land-based national cultures to hybridity and diasporic movement. This encompasses both slavery and the voluntary movement of African-American intellectuals across the Atlantic. One aim of Gilroy's prioritisation of the dark side of modernity as a social, political, and economic practice in the torrid zones in which the violent abduction of Africans into racial slavery is the key moment, is to foreground the failure of modernity to deliver on its professed emancipatory ideals propounded by North European philosophers.

Whilst these postmodernists, feminists and postcolonialists criticise modernity for its mixture of emancipatory potential and its misogynist and racist tendencies, a different challenge to Euromodernity has been to wrest the monopoly over modernity from its European claimants. Challenging notions of modernity which locate it in European history of ideas, collections such as Goankar's demonstrate that modernity is a global material phenomenon. This counter is not only meant as a thesis about the nature of ideas and society in our present times or about the success of the imposition of European ways on the world. Rather, in its more interesting form, it is also a historical claim, asserting that modern society in Africa, the Americas, South East Asia and Europe is a function of global exchanges of goods and ideas within a capitalist framework which has been evolving since the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries (Hall 1996: 185 et seq.; Lazarus 1999: 24-25). This multiply-coupled shift in the understanding of modernity from the dominance of the discipline of philosophy to sociology, history, political economy; from the history of ideas to material culture; and from northern Europe to global interaction in the colonial contact zone, is also advocated by the Argentinean theorist Enrique Dussel (1998). According to this view, which goes back to Wallerstein's (1976) notion of the world system⁹, modernity is a global phenomenon which has its origins in the contact zones¹⁰ in which "discoverers", colonisers, settlers, traders, missionaries and scientists interacted with a variety of peoples in a variety of ways: through the barter of goods and slaves, translation,

conversion, negotiation, colonisation and wars.¹¹

Seen in this light, racial slavery as a modern phenomenon and Africans' engagement with modernity do not only become visible once Africans are hauled through the gates of no return, demonstrated by Gilroy. Rather, both the European trade in slaves across the Atlantic and the supply of those slaves by African conquerors from the hinterland in exchange for material goods or political favours, both European technology and the indigenous African labour and resources that were exploited for its making, can be seen as part of an interlocking modern phenomenon. Granted, in this scheme European travels of expansion and conquest and the technologies on which they were premised would still constitute a precondition to the possibility of modernity. But these European technologies are not sufficient to any understanding of modernity and Europeans themselves do not have sole claim to modernity. Instead, these exchanges, violent as well as peaceful, between indigenous peoples of Africa, Asia, the Americas and Europeans become a necessary element in the emergence of modernity as a philosophical, social, political, and economic practice for everyone concerned.

From the thesis that modernity was not exported from northern Europe but that it is a phenomenon of global interaction, it follows that Africa was always as modern as the rest of the world. It is the increasingly frequent confrontation with other ways of life – be they those of the colonisers, or the colonised – that foisted an attitude of questioning tradition in the light of the present upon everyone in the contact zones and thus, along with the technology which accompanied it, ushered in global modernity. This perspective on modernity as a set of ideas related to social practices which entrenched exchanges amongst different parts of the globe, questions the belief which can be found even amongst African defenders of an African modernity, namely that it is the invention of European philosophers. Dussel's view thus allows us to question positions such as those of Olufemi Taiwo (who, in his advocacy of African modernity still regards modernity as the invention of European philosophers (Taiwo 2002)) and Kwesi Yankah (cf Yankah in Mbele 1998: s.p.). Indeed, the contribution of the writings of European "discoverers", conquistadors and settlers to the construction of notions of modernity by European philosophers is further evidence for the conclusion that even the ostensible origins of modernity in European philosophy are tied to Europeans' experiences of African and other cultures (cf Strother 1999; Harvey 2000).

Modernity then is more appropriately thought of in dual terms: both as a singular modernity (cf Jameson 2002) and as multiple modernities. As a singular term, modernity is associated with the process which is nowadays described as globalisation, through which places, people, goods, and ideas are increasingly linked to each other in various networks of communication, exchange, and distribution. Modernity is one in the sense that we coexist on

one globe in ever closely-knit relations of exchange. The unification of the globe, through increasingly interlocking systems which threaten to pull more and more people and cultures into a uniformity imposed by NATO capital, is a historical contingency used by an expansionist West to legitimate its imperial designs. There is no logical necessity for everyone to take on the coloniser's notions of modernity as a phenomenon of global exchange. In Jean Comaroff's words, "'modernity' has no *a priori* telos" (Comaroff 2002: s.p.). As Tana Worku Anglana (2002) puts it, "[t]he link between westernisation and modernity can be only empirical and not conceptual. Therefore, it is possible to think of a modernity that does not neglect its movement within a substratum of traditional knowledge and wisdom" (Anglana 2002: s.p.)

A major consequence of viewing modernity as a conglomerate of ideas and social practices emerging in acts of global exchange is that the various forms modernity takes in its various locales become visible as a function of the connection of modernity to the various local traditions from which it arises. This, as Charles Taylor (2001) suggests and as Peter Amato (1997) illustrates, applies as much to modernity in Europe as to modernity in other parts of the world. In similar vein, T.K. Oommen (2000) notes that

the tradition-modernity dichotomy postulated many traditions; nobody ever talked about one tradition. Many traditions, and one modernity was the refrain. But this is empirically unsustainable because if there were multiple traditions the interaction between them and modernity should have produced different permutations and combinations. To ignore this possibility is to reduce traditions to the receiving end, to deny their creative potential.¹²

(T.K. Oommen 2000: s.p.)

Looking both towards the past and the future, the unifying force of modernity does not logically spell uniformity and the increasing rate of exchange does not logically subject everyone to the same form of modernity. If modernity were the same all over the globe, the very exchanges on which it is premised would be superfluous.

Rather, if modernity is a successor to tradition, then any analysis of modernity has to consider the ways in which various modernities' attempts to create their normativity out of themselves by breaking with the models supplied by another epoch will inevitably be marked by those traditional models from which that specific form of modernity distances itself.¹³ As a plural term, *modernities* is associated with the specific form modernity as a world system of exchange takes in different contexts of interaction. Like Oommen, Taylor therefore concludes from the assertion that

transitions to what we might recognize as modernity, taking place in different civilizations, will produce different results that reflect their divergent starting points. Different cultures' understandings of the person, social relations, states of mind, good and bads, virtues and vices, and the sacred and the profane are likely to be distinct. The future of our world will be one in which all societies will undergo change, in institutions and outlook, and some of these changes may be parallel, but they will not converge, because new differences will emerge from the old

(Taylor 2001: 182)

that "instead of speaking of modernity in the singular, we should better speak of 'alternative modernities' and that a viable theory of alternative modernities has to be able to relate both the pull to sameness and the forces making for difference" (Taylor 2001: 182)¹⁴

Viewing alternative modernities as the range of responses specific to various traditions and, by all sides involved, to modernity in the sense of a world system, rather than as the export of Western ideas to the rest of the world, implies a multiplicity of reconceptualisations. It breaks the stranglehold of philosophy and the history of ideas over the definition of modernity, extending it to include the political, economic and technological practices associated with globalisation. This goes hand in hand with breaking the monopoly of Europe over the definition and distribution of modernity. Shifting the moment of modernity from the publication of Descartes's *Meditations* to Dias's navigation of the globe; the location of modernity from the European north to the sites of colonial contact; and its bearers from the colonisers to everyone affected by colonisation, opens the way to reading black culture (literature, music and sociology) as a counterculture within modernity (Gilroy 1993: 1 et seq.). Finally, it denies those self-proclaimed bearers of the enlightening torch of political, economic and cultural modernity any right to enforce their own brand of modernity on others, be it through military or other colonising means.

Gilroy's proposals for reading black culture of the diaspora as a counterculture internal to modernity are largely programmatic. In their wake there has been a veritable flood of readings which locate cultural and literary expression within the larger geographic frame of the Atlantic and the hybrid exchanges between African, American and European peoples and ideas (cf e.g. Pettinger (1998) and the Black Atlantic seminar series offered by the Center for Historical Analysis (Rutgers <http://rcha.rutgers.edu/blackatlantic.html>)). More recently, Gilroy himself has sought to frame the critique of modernity and the search for alternatives in more global terms, adding in *Between Camps: Nations, Cultures and the Allure of Race* that the memories of peoples in camps too "might usher in and give value to some of the alternate and devalued

experiences of modernity that were organized through ‘race’ and to the dissident democratic cultures to which struggles against race-thinking have made such extensive contributions” (Gilroy 2000: 77). Rephrasing Hardt and Negri’s thesis that “toward the end of challenging and resisting Empire and its world market, it is necessary to pose any alternative at an equally global level” (Hardt & Negri 2000: 206), one could say that modernity in the singular, understood as the evolution of global exchange and a consciousness of our coexistence on a single planet, produces alternative modernities understood as various forms of “questioning the present” and a consciousness of the different ways in which we are logged into that world system.¹⁵ Despite his insistence on seeing modernity as an Atlantic phenomenon, Gilroy’s take on it in *The Black Atlantic* is framed by the perspective of “striving to be both *European* and black” (Gilroy 1994: 1; our italics). Even though he breaks the racial hold on modernity in the European context, Gilroy too is constrained by “a specific parameter having been set to define modernity” which “has made studies dedicated to it geographically selective” (Anglana 2002: s.p.). This has prompted Ntongela Masilela to comment that “in a deeply saddening way, *The Black Atlantic* expresses an unremitting disdainfulness for Africa, for things African, and for things that come from our “Dark Continent”. In these refusals the book is reflective of the late European modernity experience, even though it seeks to locate itself in the black diasporic modernity articulations” (Masilela 1996: 89).

In order to correct this European focus on modernity, and because he argues that “the historical issue of the so-called ‘Black Atlantic’ is fundamentally about the construction of African modernities”, Masilela (forthcoming: a) is engaged in an extensive website project which maps the discussions on modernity by intellectuals in South Africa.¹⁶ Masilela’s collection of newspaper clippings, covering the period from Tiyo Soga’s 1862 contributions to the missionary newspaper *Indaba* up to the discussions in the nineteen fifties (when for Masilela, the apartheid state bludgeoned a then flourishing modernity), provides detailed evidence of the lively debates on modernity in South African culture and of the ties between modernity and the public sphere. With reference to Sol Plaatje and John Dube’s *Umteteli wa Bantu*, Masilela remarks, “It was this newspaper that proclaimed in unambiguous terms that the fundamental national project that all African intellectuals had to confront was the construction of modernity. Previous to *Umteteli wa Bantu* modernity had been theorised as merely the product of history, but following its appearance, modernity was understood as the consciousness the African intelligentsia had of it as a historical process in which they could intervene” (Masilela forthcoming: b).

This challenge to Euromodernity is an ongoing discourse which, according to Dussel (1998: 15), is already evident in Bartholomaeus de Las Casas’s

critique of the Spanish conquest of the Indies. It has its proponents amongst nineteenth-century West Africans such as Samuel Ajayi Crowther, James Africanus Beale Horton, and S. R. B. Attoh Ahuma (cf Taiwo 2002); and is central to the dispute between Dhlomo and Vilakazi (cf Attwell 2002). According to Jean and John Comaroff, it can also be witnessed in recent witchcraft trials “at the frontiers opened up by postcolonies, where, in the white heat of practice, the categories of Euromodernity are being fundamentally challenged – and are being revised from the bottom up. It is a world in which Afromodernity is speaking back” (Comaroff 2002a: 30).

Whereas the Euromodernist debate centres on the two-dimensional confrontation between modernity and postmodernism – as if modernity were an ahistorical start on a clean slate – several of the contributions to this collection show that the quarrel is a three-dimensional one between traditionalists (the *anciennes*), the moderns, and the postmodernists. They illustrate that the alternatives are not simply either in favour of or against modernity, be that understood as a revival of traditional ideals and practices as some versions of the African Renaissance would have it, or a postmodern farewell to modernity. Rather, describing the situation as one in which a simple choice between traditional, modern, and postmodern alternatives forces itself upon us is out of touch with a reality which pays witness to the simultaneity of the traditional, the modern and the postmodern. Most importantly, several of the essays show that even within the larger framework of modernity there are choices to be made. Some of these alternatives within modernity are decidedly African in that they arise from experiences made by Africans on the continent and/or abroad.

If plantation slavery is complicit with the rise of Euromodernity, as Gilroy (1993) argues, and the middle passage is the foundational moment in the rise of modernity in Africa, then the Berlin Conference of 1884/1885 can be seen as the culmination of this long history of slavery, as the transposition of the plantation system onto Africa itself in the aftermath of the abolition of slavery. The partition of Africa in the late nineteenth century has codetermined the pattern of Africa’s modernity ever since in the same way as the Congress of Vienna and the post-Napoleonic constitution of European nation-states still underscores European modernity today. The partition of Africa was undertaken by emerging nation states and reflected the top-down approach taken with the partition of Europe itself in the post-aristocratic era of the nineteenth century. In contrast to a clan-based system of alliance by marriage and empire-building through allegiances to ruling families, the modern nation state was formed around emerging bourgeois capitalism and class structures, only in part inherited from the aristocrats. This modern national identity would later form the foundation for creating governable territories in Africa. The Berlin Conference eagerly mirrored the national boundaries of Europe in a carto-

graphic puzzle of Africa cut up and reassembled to ensure a “peaceful” division of the colonial spoils. The patchy, uneven process of African independence followed the divisions rehearsed in the European map-drawing exercise of the previous century, and the Organisation for African Unity (OAU) chose to confirm the “boundaries at independence” approach favoured by the postcolonial elite, once again confirming Africa’s investment in modernity.

Publishing a volume on African modernity at this point in time in no way implies that Africans are only catching up with modernity and coming of age now.¹⁷ Consequently, this volume does not claim to usher in modernity in Africa, but to reflect on the specific form already existing modernities have taken in Africa, which, according to the arguments offered above, is as old in Africa as it is elsewhere. This includes reflection on the ways in which rationality figures in the “attitude of questioning the present” and the social concretisations given in the current African context to the belief in the possibility of emancipation and progress. These decisively modern ideas are reflected in views expressed by Kofi Annan,¹⁸ by proponents of the African Renaissance, and in political and social programmes such as the African Union and NEPAD.

At the 38th Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the OAU on 8 July 2002, Thabo Mbeki spoke of the need to

overcome the debilitating effect of inertia, which makes us to act in the old ways to which we are accustomed, to do things as we have always done them because this is the way we have always done them. We have to work with the masses of our people, in a vibrant partnership for the fundamental reconstruction of our continent.

(Mbeki 2002: s.p.)

The formation of the African Union is seen not as a break with the OAU, but rather its “further evolution”. It is striking that the constitutive act of the African Union enshrines (in the original wording of the OAU itself) the principle of “[r]espect of borders existing on achievement of independence” (Art. 4b). This stands in contrast to the Union’s objective to “[a]chieve greater unity and solidarity between African countries and the peoples of Africa” (Art. 3a). The fact that the political borders of African countries and the cultural identities of African peoples do not overlap in the way in which the Euromodern notion of the nation state assumes is recognised in the double formulation of the text. This contains a recognition that the (post)colonial borders were drawn up thousands of miles away from Africa itself with no consideration given to Africa’s own geopolitical formations, inescapably tying these ultimately to a postcolonial future aligned with Euromodernity. The

extent to which we Africans (as individuals (cf De Kock 2001) and collectives) collude with those who proselytise Euromodernity, and the extent to which we promote the flourishing of alternative modernities, calls for serious scrutiny. The Janus-faced nature of modernity means that a reflection on alternative modernities in Africa needs to go beyond an uncritical celebration of progress so as to include reflections on the truncated notions of progress; the obstacles to progress; and the ways in which legitimate counters to Afropessimism may shade into denialist attitudes and practices with fatal consequences. Thus the ways in which notions of modernity and tradition are mobilised to erode sexual rights (Hoad 1998) and the connections between modernity HIV/AIDS and death (Posel s.a.) become equally central to our engagement with alternative modernities. In this regard Deborah Posel raises the following pertinent questions:

What is the manner of modernity under these conditions, of rampant death amidst the fervent celebration of new life [the “new South Africa”]? In what ways do notions of life and death inhere in, and contribute to, the philosophical projects of modernity? And how have particular versions of life and death, living and dying, been implicated in the development of, and differentiation between, “multiple” modernities? What place, therefore, does an analytic of death occupy within the theorisation of modernity?

(Posel s.a.: 3)

Referring to Shula Marks’s “An Epidemic Waiting to Happen? The Spread of HIV/AIDS in South Africa in Social and Historical Perspective” (2002), Posel concludes, “In reconfiguring death and dying, AIDS has become a major factor in the refashioning of modernity itself” (Posel s.a.: 5).

Encompassing theoretical and applied papers, this issue on *Alternative Modernities in African Literatures and Cultures* seeks to engage modernity as a global phenomenon, as theory and practice, from concrete African contexts. It is premised on the assumption that modernity is not only Janus-faced in that it harbours both emancipatory and destructive forces, but that these potentials are differently inflected depending on their location in a global context and the subjects who are its bearers. Whether one takes gender, race, class, or globalisation (or any combination of these) as epistemic or ideological category in an interpretation of modernity, the essays in this collection suggest that the location, not only in terms of discipline and ideological orientation but also in geopolitical and cultural terms, affects the specific forms modernity and its alternatives take. The contributors thus explore a variety of ways in which African cultural expression and social practices can be said to be modern and yet pose alternatives to North Atlantic notions of modernity.

The essays in this double volume have various genealogies. Some were

submitted in response to a call for papers, whilst others originated within the context of colloquia on *South African Writers and Writing* and *The Black Atlantic* and a doctoral course *Writing the Self – Writing the Other: South African and Postcolonial Writing* organised by the editors and held at the Universities of Zurich and Basel. The editors would like to thank the participants as well as members of the departments of English at these universities – especially Patrizia Hasler-Manfrini, Martin Heuser, Peter Hughes, Hartwig Isernhagen and Ursula Otto – for their commitment to the various projects. In addition, we gratefully acknowledge the support provided by the University of Zurich *Hoch-schulstiftung* and the Swiss National Foundation for the Sciences. Finally, we wish to thank the editors and staff of the *JLS* and the contributors to this issue for their enthusiasm.

In the first contribution, “A Proper Conversation: Some Reflections on the Role of Psychoanalysis in Literary Study in South Africa”, Judith Lütge Coullie suggests ways in which, what may be considered epitomes of tradition and postmodernism respectively, *isibongi* and psychoanalysis can be brought into a mutually enriching dialogue. Problematising easy universalisations of a theory which developed out of European modernity and its critique, she insists that the relevance and persuasiveness of psychoanalysis depend on the extent to which students can draw on it to come to grips with traditional and contemporary African literary and cultural practices. Consequently, she proposes a curriculum in which autobiographical and biographical representation in *isibongi* constitute points of departure for students to explore the nature of the subject, consciousness, and society and examine the extent of the translatability of psychoanalysis to contemporary southern Africa.

The Zimbabwean author Dambudzo Marechera’s challenge to received notions of modernity and modernism are the topic of Annie Gagiano’s “Marecheran Postmodernism: Mocking the Bad Joke of ‘African Modernity’”. Gagiano argues that, in addition to validating European expansionism, a further distinctive feature of European modernity is its confident solemnity. The recognition of the fissures in modernity’s doubtful legitimacy begins to show though in the modernism of Joseph Conrad’s *Heart of Darkness*. Marechera’s complex response to modernity consists of a debunking of its solemnity through audacious sophisticated joking. Gagiano illustrates how Marechera’s preferred response to modernity, namely mocking it, is evident in his parody on Conrad’s classic with which *Black Sunlight* opens and that, laced as it is with corrosive humour, Marechera’s *The Black Insider* takes a dig at modernisation which has harmed gifted Africans with false promises of acceptance.

The excessiveness of Marechera’s audacious style finds echoes in the outrageousness of witchburning and its representation, which is the focus of Helen Kapstein’s article “A Town Called Nobody: Violence, Nationalism, and

Witch-burning”. Taking the representational economy of witchburning in the South African and US American press in the period leading up to the Mandela Republic as her point of departure, Kapstein explores the ways in which witchcraft and witchburning are used to entrench a modernity/rational-traditionalism/irrational dichotomy. She argues that laws such as the Witchcraft Suppression Act (1957) are attempts to enshrine an imagined boundary between modernity and tradition, with modernity paradoxically caught in a system of “naming witches even as it suppresses the possibility of their existence”. This supports her conclusion that modernity and tradition are mutually dependent and that the discourse around witchcraft troubles this dichotomy, revealing a permanent instability as a condition of modernity.

Moving beyond the transition to the Mandela Republic, Gugu Hlongwane questions the applicability of Paul Gilroy’s views on modernity and Black Atlantic culture as a counterculture to modernity to a “new” South Africa. She counters his valorisation of diaspora culture – the enabling site of rootlessness – and hybridity, and his more recent advocacy of a postracial humanism with arguments that race and geography still matter in contemporary South Africa. Race and place still serve as criteria for domination which is merely camouflaged if *postracial humanism* and *hybridity* displace *race* as analytical category. According to Hlongwane, hierarchies of racial domination persist in literature in the canonical position afforded to white authors. It is equally evident in discourses on coloured identity. Hlongwane argues that the awareness of an ongoing need for race consciousness is also evident in current political discourse. An analysis of Thabo Mbeki’s speeches shows the shift from his early celebrations of hybridity to a language of discrete racial camps. Hlongwane allies herself with such an awareness, adding that *ubuntu*, which she interprets via Desmond Tutu and Steve Biko as a transitory consciousness of blackness, would serve as a possible African alternative to Eurocentred modernity.

The mutabilities of modernity and its aporias are central to Benda Hofmeyr and Matthias Pauwels’s article “To Be or Not to Be Modern?” They pose the question, what alternatives are there for Europe besides “re-engag[ing] in African affairs as ‘saviour’, as bearer of the dubious torch of enlightening reason. The same torch that lit the original flame of a modernity which we now seek an alternative for?” In their comparative analysis of Thabo Mbeki’s Millennium Africa Renaissance Programme (in which he addresses the so-called first world for economic investment) and the Harvard Design School Project on the City (in which North Atlantic researchers write on the city of Lagos), they ask how Mbeki’s discourse on the self compares to the Harvard Project’s discourse on the other and whether either of them “succeed[s] in offering us an alternative African modernity, an ethical alternative that leaves the alterity of the Other intact?” Their answer to this question leans towards the

negative. Lurking behind Mbeki's notion of an African Renaissance, they claim, is the deep-seated modern ideal of identity. Nor does the Harvard project's valorisation of Lagos as the forefront of globalising modernity offer an alternative modernity. It is rather an "extension or globalisation of European modernity". Siding with Nietzsche and Heidegger, they conclude that "yet no system that has 'overcome' the errors of modernity and 'progressed' beyond them is currently available to us, and there is no choice but to continue to use the existing system".

The wedge between the rational and the irrational which was central to the constitution of modernity and surfaces in the representations of witchcraft treated by Kapstein also occupies Tiffany Magnolia in her "A Method to her Madness: Bessie Head's *A Question of Power* as South African National Allegory". Magnolia offers an alternative to the differentiation into the private and the public which was so important to the development of bourgeois modernity in Europe and which poses autobiographical literature and the history of the nation as opposite poles. Instead, she takes Jameson's assertion that "the story of the private individual destiny is always an allegory of the embattled situation of the public third-world culture and society" as key to show how the autobiographical portrayal of madness in Head's novel serves as an allegory of the nation, the crises of apartheid and a prophecy of the potential for national healing.

Continuing the modern concern with the self exemplified in autobiography, Mante Mphahlele's "A Gesture of Defiance: Selected Texts by Black South African Women Writers" concerns itself with autobiographical writing by Black women from South Africa, sketching the emergence of an alternative tradition of self-representation and an "alternative history of the country". Such an alternative history emerges from an alternative matrilineal line of heroes and women writers. According to Mphahlele, shaping one's own identity in autobiographical writing constitutes a "gesture of defiance" to authorities who "obliterate all traces of the narrator's history". The continuum of self and community which Tiffany Magnolia traces in *A Question of Power*, Mphahlele adds, "looms even larger within [autobiographical] texts whose themes are about the imperative for nation building within the context of political suppression".

Several of the strands touched on in these articles are picked up in the interview with Zoë Wicomb, which concludes this first volume of the special issue. Regarding the significance of place and race in the writing of modernity, Wicomb's views coincide with those of Gugu Hlongwane: the romanticised notion of exile associated with modernist writing is experienced differently by African authors, suggesting that the rootlessness this brings with it is both a condition of possibility and of constraint. The effects of writing about South Africa from within a metropolitan position in Empire, she finds,

rubs off on her own style, with the result that *You Can't Get Lost in Cape Town* is an “over-written book”. Flirting with the modern genre of autobiography in that collection, she flouted its conventions *and* claimed the label of a minor literature for herself, thereby in a sense allying herself with what is often pejoratively called an alternative modern tradition for Black women. The extent to which writers work within and against existing traditions handed down from modernity is also evident, according to Wicomb, in other terrains. In the echolalia of postcolonial writing, one finds “repetition with difference”. Thus, she herself had to grapple with “established forms”, moulding them to the specificities of her own project in her novel *David's Story*. Whilst the novel is in some regards intimately tied to the modern idea of the nation, it is also capacious in that it questions typically modern notions, namely that there is only one truth or that nations are immutable identities of exclusion. On a larger scale, the canon, with its connections to the construction of modern nationalism, too “produces resistance in the culture it purports to serve” triggering alternatives, so that, in the case of South Africa, one may even speak of alternative canons existing side by side. Consequently, even a persistent theme stretching throughout these canons, namely the land, thus finds itself “inflected according to race”. Returning to the modernity/postmodernism debate, Wicomb asserts, carefully using the conditional form, that “if postmodernism simply means giving up on the project of enlightenment then it is inappropriate for a culture that believes in an emancipatory politics”. Whilst the interview concludes the first volume, it does not close the debate on alternative modernities in Africa. Rather, it identifies lines of discussion explored in the second volume, which contains contributions by Zoë Wicomb, Michael Chapman, Lewis Nkosi, Devi Sarinjeive, Sailaja Sastry, Patricia Purtschert, Nancy Pedri, and Kay Sulk.

It is our modest hope that this special issue on alternative modernities in African literatures, cultures, and histories will make some contribution to what Taylor describes as “perhaps the most important task of social sciences in our day”, namely “understanding the full gamut of alternative modernities which are in the making in different parts of the world” (Taylor 2001: 185). Such an understanding may contribute to an understanding of why Euromodernity has failed to deliver on its promises of emancipation and indicate alternative ways in which these promises can be fulfilled. This is a precursor to reformulating Jürgen Habermas's (1996: 45-46) all too sweeping question – whether we should “hold fast to the intentions of the Enlightenment, however fractured they may be”, or whether we should “rather relinquish the entire project of modernity” in more appropriate terms such as: which alternatives within modernity should we hold on to, and how do we relate these alternatives *within* modernity to traditional and postmodern alternatives *to* modernity?

Notes

1. That is your Africa springing up anew
Springing up patiently obstinately
Whose fruits bit by bit acquire
The bitter taste of liberty.

(<http://www.kirjasto.sci.fi/diop.htm>)
2. Goankar's collection is the outcome of a conference on Alternative Modernities he convened under the auspices of the India International Center and the Center for Transcultural Studies in New Delhi in December 1997. Along with volumes on *Globalisation*, *Millennial Capitalism*, and *Cosmopolitanism* the issue on *Alternative Modernities* constitutes *Public Culture's* millennial quartet. For related publications, see also the "Multiple Modernities" issue of *Daedalus* 129 (1); Deutsch, Probst & Schmidt (eds) (2001); and the forthcoming *Black Modernity* edited by Ntongela Masilela.
3. Compare also Habermas's view that being modern means being conscious of time as rupture. Consequently, "[m]odernity can and will no longer borrow the criteria by which it takes its orientation from the models supplied by another epoch; it has to create its normativity out of itself" (Habermas 1987: 7). Similarly, Balcomb (1996) asserts: "Pre-modern societies pass on knowledge by means of tradition. This knowledge is intrinsically meaningful. It offers security by sustaining trust in the continuity of past, present, and future. Modernity destabilizes pre-modern society by replacing tradition with reason. But reason itself is subverted by reflexivity – the ability to question the reasoning process itself. In other words, through the processes of reflexivity knowledge itself continually changes. In such a situation there is no certainty, only change" (Balcomb 1996).
4. Goankar's collection contains one contribution ("Afro-Modernity: Temporality, Politics, and the African Diaspora" by Michael Hanchard) which pays scant attention to modernity in Africa. Even that article has a strong USAmerican emphasis. Like Paul Gilroy's *The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double Consciousness*, the emphasis is on the diaspora, thereby unintentionally providing support for those who seek to turn Africa into the prehistory of modernity.
5. Anglana, who asserts that "[t]he city is the site of technological diffusion, commercial exchange and social and institutional innovation; in short, the city is the symbol of modernity" (Anglana 2002: s.p.) therefore devotes extensive attention to African urbanity. See also the contributions by Hofmeyr and Pauwels in this volume.
6. To quote Jean and John Comaroff, the "(post)modern person is a subject made with objects" (Comaroff 2000: 294).

7. As if to underscore the movement from postmodernism back to a re-evaluation of modernity, the Centre of West African Studies at the University of Birmingham is offering a Postgraduate Certificate in African Modernity.
8. For the exchange amongst Benhabib, Fraser, Butler and others, see Linda Nicholson (1995, 1996). For the debate on various postmodern feminist positions in the South African context, see Margaret Daymond (ed.) (1996). For a womanist alternative, see Abrahams (2000).
9. For the Africanist background to Wallerstein's theory, see Fitch (2002: 75-77) and Wallerstein (1961).
10. These contact zones need not be reduced to face-to-face interaction in the colonies. Rather it extends through the extraction of resources and labour and the exchange of commodities, currency, beliefs and information and through the awareness of the existence of Empires to the everyday life even of people who have never had face-to-face contact with either colonisers or colonised people.
11. By analogy the ancestors of the modern European emphasis on rationality would not be the Europeanised Plato and Aristotle, but a *Black Mediterranean* which takes cognisance of the interaction between European and African thinkers of the fourth century BCE as well as the contribution of Islamic thinkers to the reintroduction of Aristotelian thought into Europe.
12. For the specificity of modernity in South Africa, see Comaroff (1997). For the Indian context, see Dipesh Chakrabarty (2002).
13. See for instance Oksenberg Rorty's (1986) analysis of the influence of Jesuit meditation on the structure of Descartes's quintessentially modern *Meditations on First Philosophy* despite his insistence that he had broken with the ideas of his teachers.
14. Belinda Bozzoli made a similar point regarding capitalism (which exists in close proximity to modernity) and gender relations when she already asserted in 1983 that we should not assume that capitalism produces a uniform patriarchy wherever it exists.
15. Similarly Van der Merwe comments:

The logic of modernity thus presupposed a detachment of or emancipation from a particular cultural community or collectively shared horizon of significance. For this reason modernity could expand transculturally and develop into a global world culture. But for this very same reason – and this is the resolution of the paradox – it cannot provide people with an attachment to those specific meanings and values for which they are dependent on cultural forms of life. Thus as a global world culture modernity does not

eradicate cultural differences, but creates an existential vacuum which can only be covered by a falling back onto specific forms of collective identity and cultural attachment. The expansion of the cultural “forms of life” of modernity is therefore not a process of transcultural unification, but the global extension of the conditions which make it possible to affirm cultural differences and claim public recognition for and protection of culture-specific values.

(Van der Merwe 2000: 22-23)

16. The website, which is currently under construction, includes newspaper clippings, critical and biographical essays and bibliographies on a host of intellectuals in South Africa.
17. We would like to thank Annie Gagiano for bringing this possible misconstrual to our attention.
18. This belief in progressive emancipation from material need and political oppression is evident in Kofi Annan’s statement delivered to the United Nations on Africa Day. According to Annan, “Africans are moving steadily towards democratic and economic empowerment, and showing courage, determination and responsibility in their struggle to lift their countries out of war and poverty” (Annan 2002: s.p.).

References

- Abrahams, Yvette
2000 “We’re Here Because We’re Here ...”: Speaking African Womanism. Paper delivered at the Discourses on Difference and Oppression Conference, Venda University, 19 July.
<http://www.geocities.com/culdif/abraham.htm>
- Amato, Peter
1997 African Philosophy and Modernity. In: Eze, E. (ed.) *Postcolonial African Philosophy: A Critical Reader*. Oxford: Blackwell, pp. 71-99.
- Anglana, Tana Worku
2002 Africa Between Tradition and Modernisation. *African Societies*. Issue 3 (December). <http://www.africansocieties.org>
- Annan, Kofi
2002 Message of the Secretary General on the Occasion of Africa Day. 25 May.
<http://www.africansocieties.org/n1/annaing.htm>
- Attwell, David
2002 Modernizing Tradition/Traditionalizing Modernity: Reflections on the Dholomo-Vilakazi Dispute. *Research in African Literatures* 33(1): 94-119.

- Balcomb, A.O.
 1996 Modernity and the African Experience. *Bulletin for Contextual Theology* 3(2). <http://www.hs.unp.ac.za/theology/bct-afth.htm>
- Bartolovich, Crystal
 2002 Introduction to C. Bartolovich & Neil Lazarus (eds) *Marxism, Modernity and Postcolonial Studies*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Bozzoli, Belinda
 1983 Marxism, Feminism and Southern African Studies. *Journal of Southern African Studies* 9(2): 139-171.
- Butler, Judith
 1995 Contingent Foundations: Feminism and the Question of "Postmodernity". In: Nicholson (ed.) *Feminist Contentions*. New York: Routledge, pp. 35-57.
- Chakrabarty, Dipesh
 2002 *Habitations of Modernity: Essays in the Wake of Subaltern Studies*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Comaroff, Jean & John
 1997 *Of Revelation and Revolution: The Dialectics of Modernity on a South African Frontier*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
 2000 Millennial Capitalism: First Thoughts on a Second Coming. *Public Culture* 12(2): 291-343.
 2002a Criminal Justice, Cultural Justice: The Limits of Liberalism and the Pragmatics of Difference in the New South Africa. Manuscript of paper delivered at Basel University, 24 January.
 2002b Interview with Jean & John Comaroff conducted by Peter Probst. http://www.uni-bayreuth.de/sfbs/sfb-fk560/newsletter/nab_1-1_2002.htm
- Culler, Jonathan
 1989 *On Deconstruction: Theory and Criticism after Structuralism*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.
- Daymond, Margaret (ed.)
 1996 *South African Feminisms: Writing, Theory, and Criticism 1990-1994*. New York: Garland.
- De Kock, Leon
 2001 Sitting for the Civilization Test: The Making(s) of a Civil Imaginary in Colonial South Africa. *Poetics Today* 22(2): 391-412.
- Deutsch, Jan-Georg, Probst, Peter & Schmidt, Heike (eds)
 2001 *African Modernities: Entangled Meanings in Current Debate*. London/New York: James Currey & Heinemann.
- Dussel, Enrique
 1998 Beyond Eurocentrism: The World-system and the Limits of Modernity. In: Jameson, Frederic & Miyoshi, Masao (eds) *The Cultures of Globalization*. Durham: Duke University Press, pp. 3-29.
- Eze, Emmanuel Chukwudi
 1997 *Race and the Enlightenment: A Reader*. Oxford: Blackwell.

ALTERNATIVE MODERNITIES ...

- Fitch, Robert
2002 Immanuel Wallerstein's Planet. *Logos* 1(1): 61-80.
- Gilroy, Paul
1993 *The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double Consciousness*. London: Verso.
2000 *Between Camps: Nations, Cultures and the Allure of Race*. London: Penguin.
- Goankar, Dilip Parameshwar (ed.)
2001 *Alternative Modernities*. Durham: Duke University Press.
- Goldberg, David Theo
1993 *Racist Culture: Philosophy and the Politics of Meaning*. Cambridge: Blackwell.
- Habermas, Jürgen
[1981]1996 Modernity: An Unfinished Project. Reprinted. In: Passerin d'Entrèves, M. & Benhabib, S. (eds) *Habermas and the Unfinished Project of Modernity*. Cambridge: Polity, pp. 38-58.
- Hall, Stuart
1996 The West and the Rest: Discourse and Power. In: Hall, Stuart, Held, David, Hubert, Don & Thompson, Kenneth (eds) *Modernity: An Introduction to Modern Societies*. Oxford: Blackwell, pp. 185-227.
- Hardt, Michael & Negri, Antonio
2000 *Empire*. Cambridge Mass.: Harvard University Press.
- Harvey, David
2000 Cosmopolitanism and the Banality of Geographical Evils. *Public Culture* 12(2): 529-564.
- Hoad, Neville
1998 Tradition, Modernity and Human Rights: An Interrogation of Contemporary Gay and Lesbian Rights. Claims in Southern African Nationalist Discourses. *Development Update*. Special Issue *The Right to Be: Sexuality and Sexual Rights in Southern Africa* 2 (2): s.p..
<http://www.interfund.org.za/vol2no21998.html>
- Jameson, Fredric
2002 *A Singular Modernity*. London: Verso.
- Lazarus, Neil
1999 *Nationalism and Cultural Practice in the Postcolonial World*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Marks, Shula
2002 An Epidemic Waiting to Happen? The Spread of HIV/AIDS in South Africa in Social and Historical Perspective. *African Studies* 61(1): 13-26.
- Martin, Bidy & Mohanty, Chandra
1986 Feminist Politics: What's Home Got To Do With It? In: De Lauretis, Teresa (ed.) *Feminist Studies/Critical Studies*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, pp. 191-212.

- Masilela, Ntongela
 1996 *The Black Atlantic and African Modernity in South Africa. Research in African Literatures* 27(4): 88-96.
 - forthcoming a: New Negro Modernity and New African Modernity. (Manuscript of paper delivered at Zurich University. Forthcoming in Website project *New African Intellectuals in South Africa*).
 - forthcoming b: The Vernacular Press and African Literature. (Manuscript of paper delivered at Zurich University. Forthcoming in Website project *New African Intellectuals in South Africa*).
 - forthcoming c: *Black Modernity: 20th Century Discourses Between the United States and South Africa*. Trenton: Africa World Press.
- Mbeki, Thabo
 2002 Opening Address at the 38th Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the OAU, Durban, 8 July.
<http://www.sarpn.org.za/NEPAD/july2002/mbeki.pdf>
- Mbele, Joseph
 2000 Review of Kwesi Yankah's *Free Speech in Traditional Society: The Cultural Foundations of Communication in Contemporary Ghana. African Studies Quarterly* 4 (3): s.p..
<http://web.africa.ufl.edu/asq/v4/v4i3a9.htm>
- Nicholson, Linda (ed.)
 1995 *Feminist Contentions*. New York: Routledge.
 1996 *Feminism / Postmodernism*. London: Routledge.
- Oksenberg Rorty, Amélie
 1986 The Structure of Descartes' *Meditations*. In: Oksenberg Rorty, A. (ed.) *Essays on Descartes' Meditations*. Berkeley: University of California Press, pp. 1-20.
- Oommen, T.K.
 2000 Interview on the Cultural, Political and Social Aspects of the Process of Globalization. www.zmk.uni-freiburg.de/Oommen/default_page.htm
- Outlaw, Lucius
 1996 *On Race and Philosophy*. London: Routledge.
- Parry, Benita
 2002 Internationalism Revisited or in Praise of Internationalism. Manuscript of paper delivered at Zurich University, 26 June.
- Pettinger, Alisdair (ed.)
 1998 *Always Elsewhere: Travels in the Black Atlantic*. London: Cassell.
- Posel, Deborah
 s.a. A Matter of Life and Death: Revisiting "Modernity" from the Vantage Point of the "new" South Africa. Ms.
<http://wiserweb.wits.ac.za/PDF%20Files/biopolitics%20-%20posel.PDF>
- Strother, Z.S.
 1999 Display of the Body Hottentot. In: Lindfors, B. (ed.) *Africans on Stage: Studies in Ethnological Show Business*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.

ALTERNATIVE MODERNITIES ...

Taiwo, Olufemi

- 2002 Prophets without Honour: African Apostles of Modernity in the Nineteenth Century. *West Africa Review* 3(1).
<http://www.africansocieties.org>

Taylor, Charles

- 2001 Two Theories of Modernity. In: Goankar Dilip, Parameshwar (ed.) *Alternative Modernities*. Durham: Duke University Press, pp. 172-196.

Van der Merwe, W.L.

- 2000 African Philosophy and the Contextualisation of Philosophy in a Multicultural Society. *Polylog*. <http://www.polylog.org/them/1.1/asp1-en.htm>

Wallerstein, Immanuel

- 1961 *Africa: The Politics of Independence*. New York: Vintage.
1976 *The Modern World-System: Capitalist Agriculture and the Origins of the European World-Economy in the Sixteenth Century*. New York: Academic Press.