of post-Marxism are scattered around places like western Massachusetts and North Carolina. A leading journal here is *Rethinking Marx*, sometimes abbreviated as *Remarx*. A leading book is *The End of Capitalism as We Knew It* (1996) by Catherine Gibson-Graham. The most influential Marxist intellectual writing on culture today, Fredric Jameson, is equally a candidate for the prize of post-Marxism, though his trajectory is more consistently aligned to the melancholic element of critical theory than to French Marxism. Perhaps the most exemplary case of post-Marxism in the mixed sense is Žižek. Žižek's mix of bolshevism and psychoanalysis is wilfully provocative and iconoclastic. Combining a strong sense of humour, sparkling prose, and vernacular example from film and television, Žižek manages nevertheless to remain a bolshevik comic in a decisively postbolshevik world. In his essay in *Revolution at the Gates* (2002), as in Hardt and Negri's *Empire*, Lenin is reconstructed as a nice guy who stumbled into bolshevism, but whose practice remains exemplary. Žižek postmodernizes Marxism by putting Lenin into cyberspace. Where Lenin in 1917 called for socialism = electrification and Soviets, Žižek calls for socialism as free access to the Internet and Soviets.

The irony of post-Marxism abounds. As with the postmodern, Marxists cannot be after themselves. The awkwardness of the category reflects the long and ambivalent relationship between Marxism and intellectual revisionism. An ever-changing world needs a changing theory. Marxism has to be open to revision; this is what compelled Western Marxists like Lukács and Korsch to insist that Marxism was a method, not a set of axioms, and which led Gramsci not to talk about Marxism but to do it by applying it to the local, Italian situation. In terms of social theory, the controversy over post-Marxism or revision indicates the fundamental nature of the Marxist claim to universal or total knowledge. Through its twentieth-century history as a social theory, Marxists have sought out supplements to strengthen Marx's work or to make it comprehensive—or to cover its lack— Darwin, Hegel, Freud. In sociology they have added Weber, in philosophy analytic or rational choice categories; for Althusser, Freud and structuralism, for Žižek, Lacan. Viewed from a distance, this theoretical will-to-synthesise in order to strengthen Marxism looks like an attempt to save Marxist theory against the world. In the long run, post-Marxism will surely be known as Marxism. An alternative approach, more often adopted by Marxist historians like Eric Hobsbawm or Bernard Smith, is to wear Marxism as a light cloak, to seek to apply it historically and comparatively. A more generalised cultural approach would be to acknowledge that Marxism emerged from European modernity and allow it to return there, to cease to be Marxist, truly to be after Marx.

— Peter Beilharz

See also Marxism; Revolution; Structuralist Marxism

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POSTMODERNISM

The current historical moment goes by a variety of names, including postmodern, postnational, global, transnational, postindustrial, late capitalist, and the society of the spectacle. The ingredients of postmodernism and the postmodern self are given in three key cultural identities, those derived from the performances that define gender, social class, race and ethnicity. The patriarchal, and all too often racist, contemporary cultures of the world ideologically code the self and its meanings in terms of the meanings brought to these three cultural identities. The postmodern self has become a sign of itself, a double dramaturgical reflection anchored in media representations, on one side, and everyday life, on the other. All too often this self is reduced to its essential markers, which carry the traces of these three terms.

The postmodern terrain is defined almost exclusively in visual terms, including the display, the icon, the representations of the real seen through the camera's eyes, captured on videotape, and given in the moving picture. The search for the meaning of the postmodern moment is a study in looking. It can be no other way. This is a televisual, cinematic age.

Classical sociological ways of representing and writing about society require radical transformation. If sociology and the other human disciplines are to remain in touch with the worlds of lived experience in this new century, then new ways of inscribing and reading the social must be found (Lemert 1997; Lyon 1999).

DEFINING AND WRITING THE POSTMODERN

The postmodern as postmodernism is four things at the same time. First, it describes a sequence of historical

moments from World War II to the present. These moments include the Vietnam War, the two Gulf Wars, the worldwide economic recessions of the 1970s and 1980s, the rise to power of conservative or neoliberal political regimes in Europe and America, the failure of the Left to mount an effective attack against these regimes, the collapse in the international labor movement, the emergence of a new, conservative politics of health and morality centering on sexuality and the family, totalitarian regimes in Europe, Asia, Latin America, and South Africa, the breakdown of the Cold War and the emergence of glasnost, and increased worldwide racism.

Second, the postmodern references the multinational forms of late capitalism that have introduced new cultural logics and new forms of communication and representation into the world economic and cultural systems. Third, it describes a movement in the visual arts, architecture, cinema, popular music, and social theory that goes against the grain of classic realist and modernist formations. Fourth, it references a form of theorizing and writing about the social that is antifoundational, postpositivist, interpretive, and critical.

Postmodern theorizing is preoccupied with the visual society, its representations, cultural logics, and the new types of personal troubles (AIDS, homelessness, drug addiction, family and public violence) and public problems that define the current age. At the most abstract level, the cultural logics of late capitalism define the postmodern moment (Jameson 1991).

But postmodernism is more than a series of economic formations. The postmodern society is a cinematic, dramaturgical production. Film and television have transformed American, and perhaps all other societies touched by the camera, into video, visual cultures. Representations of the real have become stand-ins for actual, lived experience. Three implications follow from the dramaturgical view of contemporary life.

First, reality is a staged, social production. Second, the real is now judged against its staged, cinematic-video counterpart. Third, the metaphor of the dramaturgical society or "life as theater" has now become interactional reality. The theatrical aspects of the dramaturgical metaphor have not "only creeped into everyday life" (Goffman 1959:254), they have taken it over. Art not only mirrors life, it structures and reproduces it. The postmodern society is a dramaturgical society.

Accordingly, the postmodern scene is a series of cultural formations that impinge upon, shape, and define contemporary human group life. These formations are anchored in a series of institutional sites, including the mass media, the economy and the polity, the academy, and popular culture itself. In these sites, interacting individuals come in contact with postmodernism, which, like the air we breathe, is everywhere around us: in the omnipresent camera whenever

lives and money exchange hands, in the sprawling urban shopping malls, in the evening televised news, in soap operas and situation comedies, in the doctor's office and the police station, at the computer terminal.

The cultural formations of postmodernism do not have a direct, unmediated effect on the worlds of lived experience. The meanings of postmodernism are mediated and filtered through existing systems of interpretation. These meanings may be incorporated into a group's ongoing flow of experience and become part of their collective vocabulary and memory (i.e., the New York postmodern art scene during the 1970s and 1980s). Here the postmodern supports and strengthens a group's scheme of life. On the other hand, the multiple, conflicting cultural meanings of postmodernism may be judged to have no relevance to what the members of a group do, and hence be rejected (i.e., the rejection of postmodernism by mainstream American sociologists). Still other groups may incorporate portions of the postmodern and reject its other features (i.e., the cultural conservatives who value nostalgia). In this case, the postmodern will have a disjunctive effect, settling into one part of a group's way of life, without incorporation into its overall interpretive scheme. For still other groups, postmodernism may disrupt a way of life and even undermine it, as when postmodernists in the academy challenge the traditional literary canons of Western civilization and propose radical new reading lists that express the positions of racial, ethnic, and gender minorities.

In writing about this historical moment, the sociologist understands that there is no privileged position of absolute spectator, for how can the postmodern self write about itself when the very postmodern stuff it is made of conditions what it says, sees, feels, and hears? Of course, any hint of objectivity predicated on the privileged position of the absolute spectator must be relinquished. As an observer of the postmodern scene, I must recognize that I am grafted into every action and situation I write about. My point of contact with the contemporary postmodern world is the origin of my insights into this world.

THE TERM *POSTMODERN*

The term *postmodern* is a paradoxical oxymoron with a short history. How can something be post, or after the modern, when the modern represents the present, or recent moment (Hassan 1985:121). What comes after the present but another present, or period in history, which is a continuation of the present? It is a paradoxical oxymoron because it comes at the end of a series of other "post-isms," most important, poststructuralism, that amorphous theoretical formation that has theorized language, meaning, and textuality after the semiotic-structural revolution inspired by Saussure (1959). In a sense, postmodernism should have come first, for it describes the very conditions of experience these

earlier isms responded to. Predictably, as postmodernism emerges as a distinct theoretical formation, it comes under attack from the very perspectives it seeks to surround and make sense of.

Users of the word are attempting to describe fields of political, cultural, aesthetic, scientific, and moral experiences that are distinctly different from those that were taken for granted in an earlier historical, commonly called modern or Enlightenment, phase of world history. It is not possible to give a precise date to the beginning of the postmodern period, as Virginia Woolf did for modernism, which she said began "in or about December, 1910" (Hassan 1985:122), although we may with, Hassan (p. 122), "woefully imagine that postmodernism began 'in or about September, 1939.'"

For present purposes, postmodernism will be defined as the cultural logic of late capitalism (see Jameson 1991). I intend the following meanings with this phrase. First, I reference the self-reflective working through of a multitude of contradictory meanings and understandings concerning human experience and its aesthetic, sociological, media, and textual representations in the current historical moment. This is commonly called intertextuality. Second, I ask, after Mills (1959), "[W]hat varieties of men, women [and children] now prevail in this . . . period" (p. 7), what personal troubles and public issues define this epoch, and how are these troubles and lived experiences represented in the cultural texts that cultural experts like sociologists, anthropologists, journalists, politicians, philosophers, and artists write?

Third, by cultural logic, I designate the logics of use, utility, exchange, and status or prestige value (Baudrillard 1981:66), which surround the production, distribution, and consumption of cultural commodities in the present moment, including human experience. That is, how are cultural objects transformed into instruments, commodities, symbols, and signs that circulate in fields of productive and conspicuous consumption (Baudrillard 1981:125–26)? A political economy of signs, unique to late capitalism, now mediates the worlds of cultural objects and lived experience. A double ideology of prestige and work ethic invades the signs that surround the objects that are consumed in this culture (Baudrillard 1981:32–3). This ideology is stitched into the linguistic fabrics of everyday life. More deeply, this ideology is now communicated via the print and electronic media in a way that transcends pure production and consumption. The new cold universe of the TV screen becomes a site where, as one skips from channel to channel, multiple texts split and fracture the self and its images. A near obscene, ecstasy of communication, which has eliminated all boundaries between the public and private self, is experienced. The viewer quietly sits with a channel switcher in hand, moving from one world to another, controlling a universe of experiences emanating from the cold screen that just sits and stares (gazes) back.

Fourth, by late capitalism is meant contemporary multinational, state-sponsored capitalist activities that cross-cut political regimes and national boundaries. Late capitalism corresponds to Baudrillard's (1983:25–6, 83) fourth historical order, the hyperreal, or the fourth order of the simulacrum (the previous three historical orders being pre-Renaissance, Renaissance, and the Industrial Age, and the previous regimes of representation being the orders of: sign = reality (pre-Renaissance), the counterfeit (Renaissance), and the simulation (Industrial Revolution).

This extended definition views postmodernism as a worldview, or unique set of structured experiences, shaped by late capitalism and given expression in new artistic, representational, and theoretical practices. Postmodernism may not be what we want it to be, but it is, as Jameson (1991:56) and Lemert (1997:xiii) argue, a condition that is no longer an option.

— Norman K. Denzin

See also Baudrillard, Jean; Deleuze, Gilles; Fordism and Post-Fordism; Jameson, Frederic; Modernity; Postmodernist Feminism; Simulation; Virilio, Paul

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POSTMODERNIST FEMINISM

Like ecofeminism, postmodernist feminism is an amalgam of two distinct perspectives. This strand of feminist theory combines postmodernist with feminist standpoints, albeit in diverse shapes. The result is extremely powerful expressions of resistance to or rejection of Enlightenment notions, especially universalism, human nature, and

around object worlds. In areas of self-testing "edgework" (extreme sports, high-speed trading, etc.), individuals also appear to gain empowerment from their engagements and show a similar tendency to aggregate in object-focused groups. Human relations may take second place vis-à-vis these engagements. The welfare state, with its goals of social solidarity and redistribution, also operates in terms of a logic orthogonal to a culture of life. It is geared to horizontal social structural divisions rather than to intra- and intergenerational life, skeptical vis-à-vis some of the newly feasible life advantages, and dedicated to the provision of services that often seem deficient in the light of projected and phantasized technological possibilities and the powers of collective human, nonhuman, and hybrid agents.

Postsocial systems include sociality, but in reconfigured, specialized, more mediated, and limited ways, as liminal forms of sociality. Postsocial relations are human ties triangulated with object relations and forming only with respect to these relations. A postsocial system may be one where information structures have replaced previous forms of social coordination, as when sophisticated hardware and software systems substitute for social networks and enable expanded, accelerated, and intensified global financial markets. Postsocial is what one might call a level of intersubjectivity that is no longer based on face-to-face interaction and may in fact not involve interaction at all but rather "communities of time" formed by the joint observation of common, electronically transmitted content. Postsocial systems may arise around the sort of relatedness enabled by the Internet, for which the characteristics that have traditionally defined human relationships (feelings of obligation and trust, etc.) are not constitutive or even relevant. Postsocial forms are not rich in sociality in the old sense, but they may be rich in other ways, and the challenge is to analyze and theorize these constellations.

— Karin Knorr Cetina

See also Actor Network Theory; Consumer Culture; Freud, Sigmund; Identity; Individualism; Latour, Bruno; Mead, George Herbert; Self and Self-Concept; Social Studies of Science

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POSTSTRUCTURALISM

Poststructuralism is a loosely connected set of reflections on and extensions and critiques of structuralism that emerged mostly in France in the mid-1960s. Poststructuralism does not advocate a wholesale rejection of the premises and arguments of structuralism; rather, poststructuralist thought is best viewed as a sequel to the structuralist works of Ferdinand de Saussure and Claude

Lévi-Strauss. It is most often associated with the work of thinkers such as Roland Barthes, Hélène Cixous, Gilles Deleuze, Jacques Derrida, Michel Foucault, Luce Irigaray, Julia Kristeva, and Richard Rorty, although few of these theorists apply the term to their work. Poststructuralism is known primarily for its critiques of humanism, essentialism, and foundationalism; its rejection of the search for absolute meanings and lawlike generalizations; its decentering of the subject and the death of the author; and its skeptical attitude toward the so-called project of modernity.

Structuralism, as exemplified in the linguistics of Ferdinand de Saussure, the anthropology of Claude Lévi-Strauss, and the early literary theory of Roland Barthes, sought to create a theoretical apparatus that would become a foundation for rigorous analysis and research in all of the human and social sciences. Structuralism propounds four basic tenets. First, it rejects the argument that all meanings, practices, and actions can be understood in terms of and are propelled by subjective consciousness. Second, structuralism holds that meanings, practices, and actions can be explained only by studying the relations among elements in structures or systems. Third, structuralism views the binary opposition as the key to understanding structural relationships among elements (e.g., signifier/signified, raw/cooked, male/female). Finally, structuralists tend to be concerned mainly with synchronic analysis, that is, studying the relations among elements of a structure at a moment in time. Poststructuralists generally agree with the first tenet, but for various reasons to be explored in what follows, reject the others. For present purposes, the work of Jacques Derrida and Michel Foucault best illustrates the poststructuralist critique of structuralism.

Derrida's most trenchant critique of structuralism takes issue with the second and third tenets of structuralist thought. Derrida argues that the structuralist view of language as a stable system that can be studied only by reference to the relations among its elements relies on a number of untenable assumptions. The most problematic of these assumptions is what Derrida calls logocentrism, which is, moreover, a problematic assumption of most of Western thought. Logocentrism is a term that describes the tendency of Western thinkers to privilege one term in a binary opposition over the other term, thus creating a hierarchy that organizes thought (e.g., speech over writing, male over female, reason over superstition). This hierarchy then appears to be a stable and natural one that has its roots in a stable system of language and its elements. Derrida aims to upset these hierarchical relationships by showing that binary oppositions are rarely exhaustive and mutually exclusive, and are often contradictory, rendering the binary useless for any descriptive or epistemological purposes. In addition, the two terms of a binary opposition define themselves against each other (which he calls supplementarity), and any hierarchy is therefore merely arbitrary. Derrida's

project can be described as the deconstruction of logocentrism, which involves breaking down the ways in which logocentrism operates in order to dismantle its hegemony in Western society. In short, Derrida takes aim at the assumed stability of language and the ways in which structuralists construct binary oppositions.

Foucault's early work on the archaeology of knowledge, particularly *The Order of Things* (1966), proceeds in structuralist fashion and actually praises structuralism for providing the human sciences with a theoretical framework for analysis that discards the centrality of meaning and action based on subjective consciousness and its representations. The "death of man," according to Foucault, opens up opportunities for social science to think about phenomena of life, language, and labor without encountering the many philosophical pitfalls of subjectivity. Foucault's archaeology of knowledge also demonstrates the early influence of structuralism in his work insofar as it represents a search for the rules that govern what can be said in any particular discourse at a given historical moment.

While Foucault's *The Order of Things* and other archaeological works employ structuralist methods and underscore the ingenuity of structuralist thinking, they also provide many reflections on the shortcomings of structuralist thought. The most important critique of structuralism, for present purposes, concerns its inability to explain how systems and structures change over time. Foucault considered himself a historian of systems of thought, and, as a historian, he was interested in how systems and structures change (change over time is diachronic), while structuralism limits itself to studying the relations among elements of structures in synchronic fashion, that is, at one moment in time.

In order to ask and answer questions about historical change, then, Foucault began to develop a method of inquiry that became known as the genealogy of power, which is exemplified in his book *Discipline and Punish* (1979). Adopting a genealogical method provides a way to approach historical problematizations of knowledge and governing. A genealogical method, according to Foucault, studies events, but not the events of traditional political history or the history of great men; rather, genealogy may take the formation and articulation of a problem (e.g., how a society deals with those who have violated its laws) as its event. Genealogy focuses on problems, moreover, in order to study the heterogeneous lines of descent that form assemblages of practices, the multitude of problematizing discourses that such practices generate, and the regimes of truth that these practices and problematizing discourses instantiate. In addition, Foucault characterized the genealogy of power as a "history of the present." This does not, however, imply that the present is a necessary outcome of past historical events. Instead, it tries to make use of history to understand the present and to demonstrate the contingency

of what has transpired historically. The genealogy of power is therefore often viewed as a form of social criticism.

Foucault's genealogy of power contends that power and knowledge are inextricably linked. This is known as the power/knowledge nexus. Critical to Foucault's genealogy is the contention that power is a source of dynamism that is productive (i.e., not simply repressive) and dispersed throughout society into many local centers. Through this lens of power, Foucault traces the ways in which early modern European states responded to such problems of governing as criminality, the practices of punishment and social control that emerged as ways of dealing with criminality, and the bodies of knowledge (e.g., penology, criminology, and other social sciences) that emerged alongside these practices. Foucault adds that, while power is pervasive, it always meets some form of resistance. While Foucault's genealogy of power does not indict bodies of knowledge that emerge from practices of power as false or invalid (some of them may even state universally objective truths), it does challenge scholars and practitioners to consider alternative practices and discourses in order to counter the established regimes of truth and practice.

James M. Murphy

See also Deconstruction; Deleuze, Gilles; Derrida, Jacques; Foucault, Michel; Irigaray, Luce; Kristeva, Julia; Lévi-Strauss, Claude; Logocentrism; Postmodernism; Rorty, Richard; Saussure, Ferdinand de; Structuralism

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POWER

In its broadest sense, *power* refers to the capacity to produce effects on the world, to bring about changes in it. The entity or agent possessing this capacity may be natural, organic, or human. Thus, we speak of the power of windstorms, electric grids, and animals, including human beings. Both Thomas Hobbes's definition of power as "man's present means to any future apparent good" and Bertrand Russell's as "the production of intended effects" refer solely to humans and are therefore relevant to the social sciences, Russell's on the assumption that humans alone are capable of full intentionality, that is, of conscious purposive action. Hobbes identified power with the possession of "means" to achieve desired ends (or "goods"), whether they are employed to that effect or not, but like Russell he restricted power, at least implicitly, to intended action. Russell's definition by contrast specifies only the actual exercise of power rather than regarding power as a *capacity* or *potential* when not exercised. These limits are overcome by defining human power broadly as any capacity for action that produces effects or outcomes and then proceeding to enumerate the diverse forms it may take. Such a definition recognizes the possession, or latent existence, of power when it is not actually being exercised, nor does it exclude the unintended effects of an action. These may on occasion be more consequential than those intended, although since most human conduct involves intended action, unintended effects are often one of its by-products.

Power as the production of effects by some persons on others clearly includes social interaction with at least a minimal mutuality or reciprocity of influence, which indeed *defines* social interaction. "Power" and "influence" are here synonymous. Asymmetrical power "over" other people exists when an actor regularly produces more and greater effects on others than the reverse, although so long as there is some reciprocal response by the subordinate party, it is a *social* rather than a physical relation affecting only a person's body, as in bodily obstruction or confinement or violence and the infliction of pain. Such regular *social* power relations are clearly a primary concern of the social sciences.

Power may be exercised over few or many persons; its scope, the spheres of life and range of actions of the power subject it governs, may be narrow or comprehensive; it may be limited or intensive in its effects, that is, relatively unrestricted in the kinds of effects it produces from life-and-death concerns to minor adjustments of behavior. Power described as "absolute" is highly comprehensive and intensive but is likely to be low in extensiveness, even limited to a single person, as in the power of a master over a slave (Aristotle's original example of unrestricted power), a parent over an infant or small child, or a jailer over a prison inmate, although such dyadic power relations are usually regulated by law and custom. The extremely comprehensive, intensive, and extensive power exercised in the twentieth century by several states with large populations, notably Nazi Germany and Soviet Russia, came to be described as "totalitarian" and was regarded as identifying a new and altogether unprecedented kind of political regime dependent