would be sad to lose our tradition of defamiliarization, aspiration to coevalness in encounter, and two-way dialogue with initially unfamiliar and perhaps even alien-seeming persons and communities, only to learn that we can be at home, albeit away from home, there also. Then we come back and try to explain to colleagues, students and a larger public what we have learned in other places that they will never visit but in our globalizing world must attempt to meet with empathy. This is where we have to use every tool in our bricoleur's toolkit, as ethnographic writers and as theorists. I believe that our toolkit has been substantially expanded by postmodernism—as long as you let me define what it is. I promise to let you have your definitions also, as long as we both are clear about how you are using the term so we can talk about it productively.

References

Clifford, James, and George E. Marcus, eds.
    1986   Writing Culture: The Poetics and Politics of Ethnography. School of American Research Advanced Seminar Series. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.
Marcus, George E., and Michael M.J. Fischer
    1986   Anthropology as Cultural Critique: An Experimental Moment in the Human Sciences. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.

Fun with Fads: What Comes Next Was Probably Here Before (Plus Ça Change)

Pamela J. Stewart (Strathern)   *University of Pittsburgh*
Andrew Strathern   *University of Pittsburgh*

Why "posts"? Why "-isms"? And why "modern"? In two places early on in *Anthropology as Cultural Critique*, Marcus and Fischer spoke of the times as "post-conditions," all coming after contrasting terms, and defined in Lyotardian terms as "incredulity towards meta-narratives" (1999:8, 24). Yet, when they wrote about new exemplary texts (1999:67-73) they wrote of these as "modernist." Subsequently, much criticism emerged on the whole concept of modernity, not to speak of modernization. And the congeries of viewpoints said to be postmodern themselves turned into postmodernism, which became its own meta-narrative after all. What price, then, the triad encapsulated in "post" "modern" "-ism"? Is it just the creation of a new school out of the ruins of old ones, this time rejecting the fragmentary ruins themselves? Marcus and Fischer's own work was actually re-constructionist, looking for new ways to push the envelope of ethnographic writing. After the first shocks and aftershocks of negative critiques, ethnography emerged again as a prime instrument of anthropologists, as it was before, but equipped to move in a more thoughtful and reflective way to achieve its goals. Skeptical responses to earlier grand theory were rooted as much in changing historical times as in any independent turns of theory and so illustrated the point that everything exists in a historical flow.

To this context belong labels for historical periods, such as post-Socialist, post-colonial, post-Fordist, a potentially endless proliferation of posts which carry the potentially valuable message that the past still constrains the present, but tend to obscure the point that new social and political formations arise and entirely new responsibilities emerge from these. New political conflicts may develop from struggles between leaders whose styles and sources of support may nevertheless harken back even beyond the colonial period. No political system, for example, Socialism or Democracy, is a panacea: it can generate new conflicts. "Neoliberalism" is currently blamed for many ills: but like all "isms," it needs to be factored into its specific parts and itself seen in longer runs of time. No panaceas again. Nor does it help to add neos to neos (what would neo-neo-liberalism be?) Finally, here, the times can coincide: post-Fordist production, for example, has not simply replaced Fordist but co-exists with it.

The most stultifying and pretentious versions of postmodernist critiques have sometimes been labeled "post-Toasty" or solipsistic. However, while extreme doubt and uncertainty regarding knowledge would ultimately be self-defeating, knowledge challenged on reflexive grounds can emerge on a stronger basis: what does not kill, strengthens. At the same time, one learns to be wary of fashions, of statements, like "blue is the new red," portrayed with brilliant irony in the film *Wall-E* (Stanton 2008)—or as stated in a recent academic interaction, Agency is now old fashioned and we must speak of Creativity only (i.e., what fits with that particular academic's current work which they wish to impose on others). And if we have never been modern, as Bruno Latour claimed, we cannot really have been post-modern either.

The "post-modern condition" is best seen as a temporary halting in the flow of things, a moment of trying to step back and think. As such, it remains a useful corrective: the transition from "Saussure to not so sure after all" is a necessary moment in any enquiry, but it need not mean coming to a grinding halt.

The re-constructionist theories that have emerged after the post-modernist hiatus include various attempts to grasp the contemporary historical scene, such as the local–global distinction, which Thomas Hylland Eriksen

and his colleagues have examined critically in Eriksen's edited collection *Globalisation* (2003). What is local and what is global, or are these matters all mixed up together? Local and global are aspectual terms, issues of perception, yet there is a tendency to persist with them as though they were a natural dichotomy (like the mistaken opposition between tradition and modernity). As anthropologists, we may tend to gravitate toward the idea of the local, while when we are looking for explanatory frames we may gesture to the global; yet what we are actually dealing with is a continuous pattern of networks and relationships. Local may be seen as an old focus, global as new: but everyone recognizes that globalization is not new, while localities are constantly being newly created out of older ones.

These considerations raise a related concern: how to define what is contemporary as against what is past? How to define the dead, the alive, the reincarnate? Anthropology as a professional discipline now has quite a long history, in which postmodernism figures as an example of a phase of flux versus other phases of flux and of fixity. Does postmodernism really mark a rupture or an alteration in sensibility? One thing is clear. It is now possible to go backwards and forwards in the history of our subject and rediscover works that are no longer currently used but may suddenly become relevant again, for unforeseen historical reasons. In the contemporary struggles in Afghanistan and Pakistan, for example, Fredrik Barth's 1959 monograph on the Swat Pathans is suddenly relevant, as well as his debates with Akbar Ahmed. In the struggles in 2011 in Libya, a fundamental understanding of the longer term political divisions can be put together from Evans-Pritchard's book on the Sanusi of Cyrenaica (1949) and Emrys Peters' (1990) extensive re-discussion and critique of this work by Evans-Pritchard (his old mentor). Who could have predicted this? And how much general attention has been paid to this return into relevance of these works? The vernacular Scottish poet William Soutar wrote of his project to express himself in the Scots language, that words can be like leaves in a heap "that arena' deid but sleep. Bring the licht o' your e'en, And they will süne grow green" (Strathern and Stewart 2001:265).

Soutar's sentiment can be generalized further again. If an approach or theory has long gone out of fashion, it may come in again or be revived. Retro-anthropology may have a future. While we are unlikely to share entirely the views of long-dead predecessors, they may still have something valuable to tell us if we look carefully—both at their work, ourselves and our work, and the work of our colleagues. And the great debates of the past may be worth revisiting just to understand the terms of arguments (or their futility). We have to look both backward and forward—while never allowing those who wish to cut-off intellectual discourse (often for self-promotion or self-interested causes) to kill the spirit of the discipline and the enthusiasm of those seeking to contribute to it. Cognitive science recapitulates the psychic unity of humankind theme; indigenous knowledge reminds us of ethno-science (of which Roger Keesing once asked "whatever became of it?"). New themes press on us from the world: disaster anthropology, sustainability, violence and peacemaking, as well as re-formulated old ones, such as the effectivity of ritual. What comes next probably was here before, but not in the same way and not with the same results: a play of the novel and the familiar helps to keep those leaves green—spring returns: *Solvitur acris hiems*.

Pamela J. Stewart (Strathern), Department of Anthropology, 3302 WWPH, University of Pittsburgh, Pittsburgh, PA 15260, USA. E-mail: pamjan@pitt.edu.
Andrew Strathern, Department of Anthropology, 3302 WWPH, University of Pittsburgh, Pittsburgh, PA 15260, USA. E-mail: strather@pitt.edu.

References

Barth, Fredrik
  1959   Political Leadership among the Swat Pathans. London: The Athlone Press.
Eriksen, Thomas Hylland, ed.
  2003   Globalisation: Studies in Anthropology. London: Pluto Press.
Evans-Pritchard, Edward E.
  1949   The Sanusi of Cyrenaica. London: Clarendon Press.
Marcus, George E., and Michael M.J. Fischer
  1999   [1986] Anthropology as Cultural Critique: An Experimental Moment in the Human Sciences. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.
Peters, Emrys
  1990   The Bedouin of Cyrenaica. Jack Goody and Emanuel Marx, eds. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
Stanton, Andrew, dir.
  2008   Wall-E. Pixar Animation Studios. Emeryville, CA.
Strathern, Andrew, and Pamela J. Stewart
  2001   Minorities and Memories: Survivals and Extinctions in Scotland and Western Europe. Durham, NC: Carolina Academic Press.