

MISSING THE POST(MODERN): CORES, PERIPHERIES AND GLOBALISATION

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Is it possible to identify the town square at the heart of the global village? In a networked world is there still a core and the periphery—or are all places equally enmeshed and interdependent?

Core/periphery theory suggests a usefulness, within each particular sphere, for distinctions of have and have-not. It addresses the issue that nations, communities, individuals are linked by relationships of power and dependency which vary according to the specific circumstances of the situation considered. I will be arguing that core/periphery theory is best related to aspects of our life which might be called 'modern' (with a specific usage of that word) and industrial.

Two of the key theorists to work in this field are Immanuel Wallerstein with his global systems theory, and Harold Innis. Innis' book *Empire and communications* (1950) analyses the role of communication in defining the centre and the margin, and the relative dependencies which result. For nearly 50 years core and periphery concepts have served technological theory, and communications theory, well.

This chapter examines ways of seeing the centre and the margin, especially as they concern the third world and cultural imperialism. Offering alternatives to simple oppositions it goes on to look at issues of gender—female/male distinctions remain a cross-cultural core/periphery demarcation.

Australians and New Zealanders live in societies which have been characterised as post-colonial and post-industrial. Post-coloniality identifies a past (and present?) peripheralisation. Post-industrial refers to the status of information societies (Bell 1973). These societies also include many aspects referred to as postmodern. This chapter asks—what is in the post? Are these new organising principles required to examine social relationships and power between different groups of people?

Technology and society in the global village

There is no doubting the relevance of certain places to people's lives. At the neighbourhood level, the community focuses its common life upon certain buildings and services. These meeting places include shopping malls, schools, hospitals, cinemas, libraries and shire halls. At a state level, policy

formation and decision-making centre on the capital city—other areas of the state become peripheral, linked to the core via communication technologies. Nationally, Australia has a number of cores: Canberra is the political capital, Sydney the business capital, and Melbourne the centre of high culture and the arts—including gourmet food and Victorian architecture.

According to some accounts, core/periphery distinctions resemble a set of Russian dolls in which each figure contains a smaller figure at its core and an element of peripheral space. Yet with Australia the area of life considered—the context (economic, political, cultural)—decides the core. Areas do not neatly overlap, each enclosed within another. Further, there is an ambiguity as to the direction of the power relationship. As Angus and Shoesmith (1993) point out, 'Innis has provided us with . . . an understanding that centres are as much dependent upon their margins as the margins are on the centre'. If the core is dependent upon the periphery, can the core be the determining factor? Does the periphery determine the core?

Deconstructive philosophies and discourse analysis—postmodern tools—address these concerns. Ann Game, in her book, *Undoing the social: towards a deconstructive sociology*, starts with 'the basic semiotic assumption that culture or the social is written, that there is no extra-discursive real outside cultural systems' (Game 1991, p. 4). In other words, the way people look at core/periphery issues creates the text which is analysed. There is no 'real' core and periphery apart from what is seen that way.

Questions of 'reality' intensify with internationalisation—a process by which nation-states become increasingly interdependent. Yet cores and peripheries continue to be determined by context. In currency, for example, Australia accepts the United States as its core reference point—the Australian dollar is most likely to be quoted in terms of the US dollar. Australia's democratic and administrative infrastructure, however, remains closely modelled on the Westminster system (Britain's most abiding export of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries). Discussions of trade and exports, foreign policy and free-market trading partners, increasingly concentrate upon the nations of South-East Asia: our nearest neighbours, and the fastest growing region of the world economically.

In globalised systems, even the *desire* to construct core/periphery distinctions can be thwarted; for example, the contest between the Yen, the US dollar and the Deutsche Mark to be the core world currency. Can any country control the value of its currency on the foreign exchange markets? National financiers may try—by changing interest base rates, or by buying or selling their currency—to affect the price, but the money market is too big to be ruled by such measures. Many authorities believe that power is now vested in the market itself, beyond the control of any particular nation.

No longer distinguishable, cores and peripheries link together forming global networks.

As early as 1968, Marshall McLuhan and Quentin Fiore commented that 'Today, electronics and automation make mandatory that everybody adjust to the vast global environment as if it were his little home town' (1968, p. 11). Communications media return to us images of village-like encounters, but on a global scale; with Bill Clinton more easily recognisable than a neighbour, and Bart Simpson more endearing than any local child.

In the developed world new communications media create an environment founded upon electronics. People are no longer members of social networks according to proximity alone. The 'psychological neighbourhood' permitted by technologies such as the telephone and E-mail allow individuals to keep in touch with those who might be hundreds or thousands of kilometres away (at a price). Microelectronic pervasiveness is accelerated by digitisation (which allows information to be standardised for multiple applications and transmissions) and by miniaturisation (which allows the incorporation of electronic components into more and more areas of life).

Whatever is considered: international phone calls, transnational corporations, the communications systems of the Gulf War, the power of information networks is to relocate human experience in a global arena. At one time news of a murder, like two-year-old James Bulger's, could terrorise a community—nowadays such stories terrorise a world. James' abduction from a British shopping centre by two 10-year-old boys was recorded on video by security cameras, and broadcast as international news. In communities linked by the image of the child led to his murder, anxiety and tension rose. It was as if he were led away time and time again, in thousands of towns and cities; not once, in Bootle. The experience of loss, sorrow and horror was relocated globally. Yet the audience could do nothing practical or personal—they could not cook meals for the family or leave flowers on the railway bank where James' body was found. They experienced the emotional power without the release of a response (Steenbergen 1993).

The technology captured, distilled and reproduced the moment of the abduction, concentrating the visual impact by simultaneously voicing the child's eventual death. The emotional essence of the event was stripped from any context other than that which heightened the effect upon the audience, and exported to the world. The commentary offered was one congruent with postmodernity: random, senseless, arbitrary, fragmented. Very little coverage added that Britain has 'one of the lowest murder rates in the world' (Kettle & Phillips 1993, p. 2), or that the probability of an under-five in that country dying at the hands of a stranger is only slightly higher than the risk of spontaneous human combustion. In a country of 55 million people an average of one child a year is killed in this way.

While packaging and commodifying the moment when James was led away, the technology lacked the resolution to allow easy identification of the abductors:

The fact that it is all recorded on a security camera makes it even worse. Powerlessly we see the tragedy unfold through a medium installed ostensibly to protect the innocent from criminal wrongdoing. We are therefore doubly affronted, both by being made complicit in this terrible tragedy and by the demonstrable fact that such 'security' devices are clearly anything but (Kettle & Phillips 1993, p. 2).

We are all totally frustrated . . . Why are those video pictures so crap? Why didn't they go into Dixons [a British chain of electronics shops] and buy one of those home video machines? (Mrs Connolly, cited in O'Kane 1993, p. 21)

Neighbourless electronic neighbourhoods, the trading of vital information for capital gain, the packaging and sale of images—all result from the commodification of individual lives. This disembodiment of the communication from the communicant, of information from the informant, is sometimes seen as the prime constituent of the postmodern, and of post-industrial society.

Postmodernism, peasants and the proletariat

For much of human history (as James Carey 1989, pp. 203–4 reminds us), communication travelled at the same pace as physical transport. A letter, or an order, sped as fast as the human carrier could; by horse for example, or by boat. There were exceptions. The network of bonfires throughout England at the time of the Armada were intended to signal invasion by the Spanish. Similarly, Native Americans used line-of-sight smoke signals, while African drumming relied on aural range.

These communication patterns characterised agricultural societies where a majority of people worked on the land. In such communities most important communications took place between individuals and their immediate social network; there was little need to send messages outside. Only a small proportion of people were geographically mobile, and travel for any distance involved danger and difficulty. Although messages might enter the community, their relevance was determined by the ability of the communicator to enforce the communication. A call to arms was always more serious when it was accompanied by a press-gang and/or a hanging judge to deal with 'deserters'.

Industrial cities brought a completely new challenge in terms of organisation and communication. Subsistence-farming communities,

whose notional surplus had been used for the enrichment of the church or the gentry, were caught up in changes associated with the creation of a new urban market. The accompanying agricultural revolution allowed the hundreds of thousands in the cities to be fed by a much reduced population working the land. The flow of primary products from the periphery to the core, and of manufactured goods from the core to the periphery, characterises industrial societies, and apparently supports core/periphery theory.

Since new technologies—rail services and the electric telegraph—allowed communication systems to be divorced from the limitations of living carriers, people no longer needed to transact business face to face (Carey 1989). Trading, and the taking of profit, became an impersonal activity. Much of core/periphery theory embodies a sense of manipulation of the periphery by the rapacious agencies of the core, for financial advantage. Consequently a critical (radical left) perspective characterises much of the analysis. The transition from agricultural production to a modern, industrial, society is seen in cataclysmic terms:

All revolutions are epoch-making that act as levers for the capitalist class in the course of its formation; but this is true above all for those moments when great masses of men are suddenly and forcibly torn from their means of subsistence and hurled onto the labour market as free, unprotected and rightless proletarians. The expropriation of the agricultural producer, of the peasant, from the soil is the basis of the whole process (Marx 1976, pp. 875–6).

Compared with the romantic reinterpretation of peasant life as harmonious, communal and natural, modernist perspectives communicate negativity and loss. Identifying Edvard Munch's image *The Scream* as quintessentially modernist, Frederic Jameson comments that the modern involves the 'alienation of the subject' (1984, p. 63). Modernist texts include the early industrial city, mass production, mass broadcast communications and the theories of Marx and Freud: individual *angst*.

Postmodernism, on the other hand, displaces the alienation of the subject 'by the fragmentation of the subject' (Jameson 1984, p. 63). A filmic illustration might be a comparison of the modernist *1984* with the postmodern *Brazil*. Postmodernism fragments both the subject and the self. According to Jameson it means:

the end for example of style, in the sense of the unique and the personal, the end of the distinctive individual brushstroke (as symbolised by the emergent primacy of mechanical reproduction). As for expression and feelings or emotions, the liberation, in contemporary society, from the older *anomie* of the centred subject may also mean, not merely a liberation from anxiety, but a liberation from every other kind of feeling as well, since there is no longer a self present to do the feeling (Jameson 1984, p. 64).

The postmodern promotes surface rather than modernist depth, commodification rather than exchange, and consumption rather than production. Put crudely it reduces human society to its icons and to its material possessions. Communities no longer need members, they need consumers. Jameson, comparing *The Scream* with Andy Warhol's (postmodern) images, comments that Warhol's work:

turns centrally around commodification, and the great billboard images of the Coca-Cola bottle or the Campbell's Soup Can, which explicitly foreground the commodity fetishism of a transition to late capital, *ought* to be powerful and critical political statements (Jameson 1984, p. 60).

Jameson perceives the dissociation of form from content as a political development. In describing postmodernism he does not celebrate it. Surfacing is not necessarily *good*, it simply *is*. Postmodern analysis lacks the political up-frontness of tortured core/periphery commentaries, yet the politics behind postmodern theories remain oppositional to the interests of those elites which benefit financially from the promotion of consumption.

To concentrate on a political underpinning of postmodernism, however, is to frustrate the utility of a surface analysis. Fragmentation and commodification are appropriate conceptual frameworks for examining the technological realities of mobile phones, global networks, transnational capitalism and international markets. Fragments and surfaces in many respects characterise the technologies, and the lives, of people today. There is a positive aspect to fragments—it is easier to integrate fragments than wholes.

The polarisation which marks a modern society, with all its core/periphery overtones, is particularly obvious in the spheres of work and gender relations. The housewife—that modern invention of the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries—was socialised to espouse a house because the productive work of men (in the factories and offices) would otherwise be compromised by all the messy jobs of daily life (Oakley, 1974). Never before industrialisation had society as a whole been rich enough to consign young women exclusively to home duties. In pre-industrial societies child-rearing past toddlerhood was the traditional role of grandparents (mainly grandmothers, but with grandfathers duly teaching masculine behaviours). Young mothers (carrying their nursing babies) worked in cultivation and cottage industries, usually cooperatively, assisted by older children. Men spent their time hunting, gambling, building, trading and herding. Occupational divisions, although gendered, lacked the isolation, specialisation and rigidity which characterise work in the modern world.

The economic prosperity of industrialisation created a society in which a man was paid enough to support him and his family, and in which a woman resigned her job upon marriage. The 'career girl' could not also be

a wife or mother. The distinctions would not tolerate ambiguity. The single mother gave her child up for adoption, the unhappy marriage rarely ended in divorce. Category boundaries were only negotiable by the immensely strong, or the immensely wealthy. (Usually people had to be both.) Industrial society is marked by the litter of lives of people who do not want—or cannot fit—such rigid compartments.

In Australia in the 1990s, a post-industrial society, the concept of work is one of the most abiding bastions of modernity. Why is it that faced with 10 per cent unemployment, and increasing mechanisation, politicians (mainly male) continue to talk about ways of creating 'new jobs'? Why is there so much talk about stress, and so little talk about integrating fragmented lives by encouraging teleworking or more *secure* part-time work? A postmodern approach might be to challenge the given of the 8-hour day and the 5-day week. If society guaranteed the rights of people negotiating their own working hours, or the number of weeks they work in a year, or the right to take unpaid leave, then greater flexibility in the workplace could help the 90 per cent of jobs stretch to the 100 per cent of people who want them. It might also allow for a more flexible, responsive, needs-centred society. Technology could help in this:

The lack of boundaries both in hunting and gathering and in electronic societies leads to many striking parallels. Of all known societal types before our own, hunting and gathering societies have tended to be the most egalitarian in terms of the roles of males and females, children and adults, and leaders and followers . . . play and work often take place in the same sphere and involve similar activities . . . work and play have begun to merge in our electronic age. Both children and adults now spend many hours a week staring at video monitors (Meyrowitz 1985, pp. 315–6).

The thoroughly modern first, second and third world

The duality of core/periphery theory involves oppositional distinctions between places or cultures which may be seen as 'peripheral' and those at the core. Cores benefit at the expense of their peripheries. There is otherness, and self with the self conceived as positive to the negatives of otherness (whether or not the self is at the periphery).

Colin McArthur (1985) discusses the creation of the periphery (Scottish people—*homo celticus*) by the core (English/French society—*homo oeconomicus*) in terms of binary oppositions: 'Oppressed people the world over know this discourse to their bitter cost . . . What is important is that the Celt (or African, or Polynesian, etc.) is allocated his/her place, is constructed, in a discourse enunciated elsewhere' (1985, p. 65). McArthur's oppositions are

followed and adapted here to compare conceptions of *homo informaticus* (first world) and *homo incommunicatus* (third world).

<i>Homo informaticus</i>	<i>Homo incommunicatus</i>
urban	rural
civilised	wild
rational	emotional
Christian	nonbeliever
astute	gullible
innovative	traditional
rich	poor
generous	needy

This duality is not offered as a 'real' explanation of differences between the first and third worlds, but as a demonstration of how a periphery can be constructed in opposition to the core. Such a construction demonstrates the ignorance caused by an economic bias—the third world receives scant attention from the first except as a potential market or as the recipient of aid. The information poor and the information rich rarely communicate, so ignorance is perpetuated.

People in the third world have less information, and less access to information technologies:

The data listed below were gathered by UNESCO (1989); the base year for these figures is 1984 . . .

- Of the world's 700 million telephones, 75% can be found in the 9 richest countries. The poor countries possess less than 10%, and in most rural areas there is less than one telephone for every 1,000 people . . .
- In the United States a daily newspaper enjoys a circulation of about 268 copies per 1,000 people; in Japan the comparable figure is 562. The African average is 16.6 copies per 1,000.
- Europe produces an average of 12,000 new book titles every year. African nations produce fewer than 350. Europe has an average of 1,400 public libraries per country where the public has free access to information. African countries have an average of 18 libraries per country (Hamelink 1990, p. 219).

Technology intensifies the disparity between information rich and information poor. The west lays fibre optic cables, introduces broadband ISDN, and develops international mobile phone links. When comparative disadvantage is considered in terms of telephones, newspapers and books, what hope is there for bridging the information gulf?

Wambi, in Brizzio (1990) identifies a second problem: 'Technology is like a genetic material. It is encoded with the characteristics of the society

which developed it, and it tries to reproduce that society.' Information societies are post-industrial societies; their wealth relies not on industrial labour but in the processing, packaging and use of data. Information markets and related activities—such as teaching, law and the media—dominate post-industrial economies. Their technologies demonstrate the importance of communications. Is this social organisation a desirable model for the third world? Is it possible to create an information society which avoids the problems of the first world?

Even if the third world could equalise technological resources and technology use with the first, it would not necessarily wish to do so. Given that the Scots resent being constructed by the English then *homo incommunicatus* would resist being modelled by, or in the negative image of, *homo informaticus*. Yet a result of the core/periphery mind-set is the dynamic of have/have not—it perpetuates generalisations and sidesteps the possibility of developing 'equal and individual' alternatives.

This either/or is a genuinely modern problem—if the information gap continues, the first world is (morally) untenable: if the gap is filled, the third world is (effectively) engulfed. There is a compartmentalised division between the core and the periphery. The boundaries are hard to blurr, except at the price of difference itself.

Further, the core/periphery duality is inadequate for conceptualising power disparities, or interdependencies, in networked systems. An appearance of integration is underlined by the dislocation and fragmentation within and between societies which is the common experience of individuals living in them. Boundaries are illusory. There are elements of information poverty within all first world countries, and tranches of information wealth within the third world. There were capitalists in the second (Soviet Bloc) world and revolutionary socialists in the first. A theory appropriate to the analysis of post-industrial life—networked and excluded—would take account of this fragmentation. Postmodernism rules OK.

McKenzie Wark, analysing the end of the Berlin Wall, uses postmodern analysis to contrast the ('equally real') *territory*—or physical spaces of Berlin, and the *psychological map*. According to Wark, people use both physical and mental schema to locate themselves and form their sense of place:

Where territory is filled up by people and their interactions, the map is composed of broadcast areas, satellite footprints, telephone networks, and the signs and images which accumulate through interactions in this abstract placeless space . . . In the territory people know where they are because they have roots there. On the map people know where they are by tuning into it: here we no longer have roots, we have aerials (Wark 1990, pp. 36–7).

Indeed the aerials of East Germany, receiving broadcasts which the authorities were powerless to block, were an important destabilising influ-

ence. Psychologically people had stormed the Berlin Wall even before the first unauthorised footstep into no-man's land.

Modernist, industrial verities of core/periphery theory—endorsing such geographical certainties as the Iron Curtain and the Free West—give way to the postmodern. A psychological mesh without a centre encircles a technological network without a core in a globe which has no periphery. The one truth offered globally is that there is no one truth, everything is negotiable and all perspectives are relative to the discourse through which they are constructed.

This is not to claim that core/periphery theories are entirely bankrupt: they have their uses. In an analysis constructed upon the dichotomy of have/have not—upon comparisons—modernism is an appropriate discourse. There is no doubting the accelerating impoverishment of the majority of the third world by the action of economic systems which arise in, and enrich, the first world. To talk about the first world, however, only in terms of core/periphery does not help create understanding of the new realities of networked culture—for those who are part of the net. Where people try to analyse the nature of the information, post-industrial, late capitalist society, postmodern analyses offer fruitful ways forward.

Speaking American and the globalisation of culture

The historical manifestation of empire was prochronistic (the opposite of anachronistic): it anticipated the structural divisions of modern, industrial societies. Empires depend upon soldiery, specialised administrators and rigid divisions of labour. By the time imperial theory and practice had become incorporated into the British Empire, the institution was undoubtedly modernist and indisputably organised according to a core/periphery model. Imperialism became the *bête noire* of critical theorists—and of millions of oppressed peoples.

Herbert Schiller, an American academic, argues that whereas people theoretically live in a post-imperialist era, the impetus of imperialism is served by the empires of vast transnational corporations. A colonising media communicates an 'all-encompassing cultural package':

the English language itself, shopping in American-styled malls . . . the music of internationally publicised performers, following newsagency reports or watching the Cable News Network in scores of foreign locales, reading translations of commercial best-sellers, and eating in franchised fast food restaurants around the world . . . The domination that exists today, though still bearing a marked American imprint, is better understood as *transnational corporate cultural domination* (Schiller 1991, p. 15).

Cultural imperialism serves the economic and industrial ends of transnational corporate power by fostering an environment which promotes consumerism. Media products, portrayed lifestyles and marketed goods are all consumed by the colonised culture. According to this core/periphery model, globalisation—which has been defined by Featherstone as ‘the increase in the number of international agencies and institutions, the increasing global forms of communication . . . the development of standard notions of citizenship, rights and conception of humankind’ (Featherstone 1990, p. 6)—offers nothing new, just more of the same. The haves are exporting to the have nots, at a profit. Global communications are dominated by American multinationals, valorising the American way of life. Standard notions of citizenship are essentially American in nature. To be American is to be at the centre of global culture: the modernist Empire is dead, but core/periphery distinctions strike back.

This analysis is stuck in a non-digital groove. Apart from bemoaning the situation there are few alternatives on offer from the core/periphery mind-set. The postmodern response goes beyond post-imperialism to examine the appropriation of cultural communication by the recipient, rather than the power disparity between producer and receiver. There is more to be discussed than relative disadvantage. The analysis of absence is likely to miss the presence of alternatives. Nobody doubts the pre-eminence of American transnationals in cultural production on a global scale: the question is whether this amounts to mass Americanisation.

Worldwide audiences are not mindlessly receptive of American cultural products. The image of a hypodermic injection of media messages into the psyche of passive consumers has been repeatedly discredited. Are core/periphery theorists guilty of culturalist assumptions—believing that other cultures will necessarily crumble beneath the American onslaught? The postmodern interpretation of media effects involves a call to ethnography—the study of ‘the irreducible dynamic complexity of cultural practices and experiences’ (Ang 1991a, p. 161).

Objective analysis of television viewers tends to concentrate, as audience measurement strategies do, upon gross data such as whether a television set is on, which channel it is tuned to, and the number of people watching. It is a boundary-confined analysis: on/off, core/periphery. At this level of analysis global culture is American because United States corporations produce and market the lion’s share of global media products. The subjective level, however, interprets the on/off as having a more subtle meaning. The fragmentary nature of fine-grained ethnographic observation paradoxically allows a reconception of the whole. Technology is less an instrument of cultural domination and more a medium of expression. Ien Ang offers this example of Hermann Bausinger’s (1984) ethnographic research:

'Early in the evening we watch very little TV. Only when my husband is in a real rage. He comes home, hardly says anything and switches on the TV.' Here, comments Bausinger, 'watching television' has a very particular meaning, profoundly immersed in 'the specific semantic of everyday': 'pushing the button doesn't signify "I would like to watch this", but rather, "I would like to hear and see nothing"' (Ang 1991a, p. 161).

These observations make sense from individual experience of family life. The fragmentary nature of postmodern analysis does not prevent an overview. Understanding of such closely observed data is achieved through a series of disconnected, jump-cut images. The oppositional nature of the audience, their ability to interpret in their own way the programming they view, runs counter to the soft-imperialist claims of the industrialised, core/periphery models. Further, the Australian and New Zealand experience is that cultures do survive (sometimes through resentment) the disproportionate influence of other powers—British or American. We may watch 'The Cosby Show', we do not live it.

Ang asserts that the globalisation of culture:

should not be conceived as a process of straightforward homogenisation, but rather as a checkered process of systematic integration in which local cultures lose their autonomous sovereignty and become thoroughly interdependent, relying for their active continuation precisely on the appropriation of global flows of mass-mediated forms and technologies (Ang 1991b, p. 5).

Ang suggests, for example, that the 'curry eastern' is an appropriation by Indian cinema of the conventions of the American spaghetti western, while the burgeoning popularity of martial arts movies for Cantonese audiences incorporates and transforms 'James Bond style film narratives by using fists and martial arts as weapons, as well as drawing on traditional Cantonese values' (Ang 1991b, p. 6).

At one level this involves the assertion that the more globalised the communication, the more specific is the local interpretation; the more homogenous the product, the more fragmented are the meanings taken from it. The dominant reading (the intended or obvious interpretation of the media text from the point of view of the producers) is resisted or subverted. Postmodernism invokes its own duality of oppositions to discuss these issues, addressing globalisation/localisation, and homogenisation/ fragmentation. A rich, deep usage of the postmodern perspective is available through concurrent consideration of homogeneity and fragmentation—the global in the local and the local in the global.

Postmodernism, therefore, offers a valuable perspective for understanding the complex nature of the information society. Many attempts to ground postmodern theory in the lives of individuals are frustrated, however, by the

need to generalise, to express an overview. The postmodernist is uncomfortable with the notion of betraying the fragmentary by privileging the integrated. The postmodern theorist holds onto the (fragmentary) core at the expense of the (integrated) periphery—avoiding a return to the dichotomies of modernity. The possible way forward however, is grounded in feminist theory—a celebration of the principal of equal *and* individual.

Women are arguably the group in western culture most versed in the politics of resistance and renegotiation, and the women's movement has achieved some success in the fight against the peripheralisation of women's issues. What women want—in the researching of women and advertising, in the case of the example to be quoted—may illuminate an approach which would allow more research of the global within the context of an agenda set by the local. Not surprisingly, Chris Adams rejects the core/periphery organising principle of defining by difference and otherness. Instead she embraces the recognition of individuality (the fragmenting of homogeneity?):

This is what consumers mean when they demand realism in advertising; it is projecting the woman as she wants herself to be, not as men would have her. It is through radiating power and status through a means other than a svelte figure or the vogue look. It is all about understanding her as she sees herself, rather than shackling her in the outmoded and restricted images of idealised woman . . . It means when you talk to women about [traditionally gendered pursuits] you do not assume they are different from men, you do not take men as the norm and women as the exception, [it] means you do not separate your message when talking to women . . . Individuality implies, firstly, no preconceptions about, and secondly constant monitoring of, your target market's needs. That's what women want (Adams 1991, videotape).

Conclusion

In examining core/periphery theories, and finding them more appropriate to industrial rather than post-industrial societies, this analysis rejects rigid differentiation and looks for flexibility. Postmodernism offers the more appropriate starting point for investigating globally networked societies: it represents the dynamic disjointedness which concurs with individual experience of human community. When combined with the lived experience underpinning feminist theories, postmodernism grounds its networked surface in a philosophy which is born historically from a universal experience of being peripheralised by the core. (Wherever the town centre is, at the heart of the global village, it is certain to be male.) A postmodern future based in resistance and renegotiation has the potential to move beyond rigid boundaries, enabling expression of the richness of difference.

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