

| Modernism/Modernity  | Postmodern/Postmodernity   |
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| <p>Master Narratives and metanarratives of history, culture and national identity as accepted before WWII (American-European myths of progress). Myths of cultural and ethnic origin accepted as received.</p> <p>Progress accepted as driving force behind history.</p> | <p>Suspicion and rejection of Master Narratives for history and culture; local narratives, ironic deconstruction of master narratives: counter-myths of origin.</p> <p>"Progress" seen as a failed Master Narrative.</p>   |
| <p>Faith in "Grand Theory" (totalizing explanations in history, science and culture) to represent all knowledge and explain everything.</p>  | <p>Rejection of totalizing theories; pursuit of localizing and contingent theories.</p>  |
| <p>Faith in, and myths of, social and cultural unity, hierarchies of social-class and ethnic/national values, seemingly clear bases for unity.</p>   | <p>Social and cultural pluralism, disunity, unclear bases for social/national/ ethnic unity.</p>   |
| <p>Master narrative of progress through science and technology.</p>  | <p>Skepticism of idea of progress, anti-technology reactions, neo-Luddism; new age religions.</p>  |
| <p>Sense of unified, centered self; "individualism," unified identity.</p>   | <p>Sense of fragmentation and decentered self; multiple, conflicting identities.</p>   |
| <p>Idea of "the family" as central unit of social order: model of the middle-class, nuclear family. Heterosexual norms.</p>  | <p>Alternative family units, alternatives to middle-class marriage model, multiple identities for couplings and childraising. Polysexuality, exposure of repressed homosexual and homosocial realities in cultures.</p>    |
| <p>Hierarchy, order, centralized control.</p>  | <p>Subverted order, loss of centralized control, fragmentation.</p>  |
| <p>Faith and personal investment in big politics (Nation-State, party).</p>  | <p>Trust and investment in micropolitics, identity politics, local politics, institutional power struggles.</p>  |
| <p>Root/Depth tropes.</p> <p>Faith in "Depth" (meaning, value, content, the signified) over "Surface" (appearances, the superficial, the signifier).</p>   | <p>Rhizome/surface tropes.</p> <p>Attention to play of surfaces, images, signifiers without concern for "Depth". Relational and horizontal differences, differentiations.</p>  |
| <p>Crisis in representation and status of the image after photography and mass media.</p>  | <p>Culture adapting to simulation, visual media becoming undifferentiated equivalent forms, simulation and real-time media substituting for the real.</p>  |
| <p>Faith in the "real" beyond media, language, symbols, and representations; authenticity of "originals."</p>  | <p>Hyper-reality, image saturation, simulacra seem more powerful than the "real"; images and texts with no prior "original".</p> <p>"As seen on TV" and "as seen on MTV" are more powerful than unmediated experience.</p> |

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| Dichotomy of high and low culture (official vs. popular culture).<br>Imposed consensus that high or official culture is normative and authoritative, the ground of value and discrimination. | Disruption of the dominance of high culture by popular culture.<br>Mixing of popular and high cultures, new valuation of pop culture, hybrid cultural forms cancel "high"/"low" categories. |
| Mass culture, mass consumption, mass marketing.  | Demassified culture; niche products and marketing, smaller group identities.  |
| Art as unique object and finished work authenticated by artist and validated by agreed upon standards.   | Art as process, performance, production, intertextuality.<br>Art as recycling of culture authenticated by audience and validated in subcultures sharing identity with the artist.           |
| Knowledge mastery, attempts to embrace a totality. Quest for interdisciplinary harmony.<br>Paradigms: The Library and The Encyclopedia.  | Navigation through information overload, information management; fragmented, partial knowledge; just-in-time knowledge.<br>Paradigms: The Web.  |
| Broadcast media, centralized one-to-many communications. Paradigms: broadcast networks and TV.   | Digital, interactive, client-server, distributed, user-motivated, individualized, many-to-many media.<br>Paradigms: Internet file sharing, the Web and Web 2.0.                             |
| Centering/centeredness, centralized knowledge and authority.   | Dispersal, dissemination, networked, distributed knowledge.   |
| Determinacy, dependence, hierarchy.  | Indeterminacy, contingency, polycentric power sources.  |
| Seriousness of intention and purpose, middle-class earnestness.  | Play, irony, challenge to official seriousness, subversion of earnestness.  |
| Sense of clear generic boundaries and wholeness (art, music, and literature).  | Hybridity, promiscuous genres, recombinant culture, intertextuality, pastiche.  |
| Design and architecture of New York and Berlin.  | Design and architecture of LA and Las Vegas   |
| Clear dichotomy between organic and inorganic, human and machine.  | Cyborgian mixing of organic and inorganic, human and machine and electronic.  |
| Phallic ordering of sexual difference, unified sexualities, exclusion/bracketing of pornography.   | Androgyny, queer sexual identities, polymorphous sexuality, mass marketing of pornography, porn style mixing with mainstream images.  |
| The book as sufficient bearer of the word.<br>The library as complete and total system for printed knowledge.  | Hypermedia as transcendence of the physical limits of print media.<br>The Web as infinitely expandable, centerless, interconnected information system.                                      |

Source: <http://www9.georgetown.edu/faculty/irvinem/theory/pomo.html>; Irvine, Martin. *Approaches to Po-Mo*. Revised 1.23.12