Conclusion

In forming a theory of the postmodern the early attempt was made by French theorists. During the 1980s the English-speaking nations started to involve in the issue. Perhaps the most important growth of that epoch was a wave of “neo-Marxist” cultural account. This was:

I. Widely opposed to the aesthetic principles of postmodernism.

II. Eager to illustrate how the forces of capitalism were at the center of contemporary cultural changes.

III. Involved in giving weight to the relationship between these changes and the feasibilities for human emancipation.
In this sense, the neo-Marxist evaluation of postmodernism and postmodernization depicts maybe the most salient line of criticism. This shows a tendency to revolve around three crucial themes: the timing, definition, and sphere (extent) of the change into postmodernity.

I

Problems of Timing
(Periodization)

Implied in the idea of “postmodernism” is the notion that it, in some way, comes after modernism. Yet when we probe into different fields, we understand that artistic modernism reached the highest level at various points:

I. In literature we consider the work of authors like T. S. Eliot, James Joyce, and Virginia Woolf, and work that reached a zenith of innovation in the 1920s and 1930s.

II. In architecture the central point is on the International Style, which emerged in the 1920s and proceeded vigorously until the 1970s.

III. In music the criterion of modernity is connected with the Vienna School. This developed by Schoenberg in the early 1900s but was already being called into question by the “postmodern” work of John Cage and others in the 1940s.

Our comprehension of the appearance of the postmodern will be different in
accordance with which of these areas we give importance. Considering social rather than artistic changes is not helpful, either. Harvey, for instance, determines the date of the change to the postmodern to the oil crisis of the early 1970s. But his comrade Marxist Jameson makes use of Ernest Mandel’s pattern of stages of capitalist development and suggests the early 1960s.

We can also add to this uncertainty the fact that for many writers, the postmodern is just an extension or logical progress of the modern. This indicates that it is feasible to find the origins of postmodernity several centuries ago. For instance, we can refer to the rise of “commodity fetishism” and the “narcissistic isolated individual” in the nineteenth century, or to the dominance of postmodern characteristics (irony, play, etc.) in the aesthetic codes of the seventeenth century baroque. Theorists of the present jeopardize the notion of a radical break, or even the approval of any endeavor at periodization. In the same way, Craig Calhoun in his *Critical Social Theory* labels postmodernism as a kind of “pseudohistory” and gives the idea that the support of an epochal shift is problematic. As he suggests, theorists of postmodernity often work with oversimplified caricature of artistic modernism, disregarding its complexity and the existence of anti-modern tendencies in earlier line of thinking.
Problems of Definition

Problems of definition are closely associated with those of periodization. Even advocates of postmodernism admit that there are multiple understandings. Bauman, for instance, mentions that postmodernity stands for many various things for many various people. He sets up to propose that for some it stands for an architectural style, for others the dimming of reality and television, for yet others consumerism and an increase in choice, while for philosophers it concerns a radical, skeptical state of mind. Bauman believes that “incoherence” is the most remarkable among the features of postmodernity. He maintains that it is helpful in putting a stop to the rise of a false, totalizing perception and helps the growth of partial observations and narratives.

While supporters such as Bauman consider “multiplicity” and “contradiction” as a sign of approval, critics give the idea that it only points to confusion. A typical assault in this line has been made by John Frow, who argues that postmodernism bears no transparent meaning. He suggests that most endeavors at definition happen in academic essays like his own. These intend to uncover a post-hoc-meaning of ideas that they have found themselves employing. He proposes that the term “postmodernism” is found productive just because of the “binarisms” inherent within it. These separate it as being different from, and after, modernism. As a result, unlimited acan-
ademic books and essays appear to work within and develop these preexisting factors. This discourse acts in the following manner: first we take for granted the existence of a historical change in sensibility, which we label "the postmodern," then we give the meaning of it by opposition to whatever we decide on "the modern" to have been, finally, we try to give a body of meaning to the postmodern according to this opposition. Frow maintains that a lack of transparent line of thinking is presented in the confused lists of things (Disneyland, irony, MTV, the simulacrum, and so forth) that postmodern writers inescapably give them instead of a transparent and terse definition.

III

Problems of Extent

The crux of the issue here deals with the degree and extent of social change. Critics propose that discussions that we are living in a completely new social and cultural order are exaggerated and have tendency to hyperbole. Craig Calhoun in his book Critical Social Theory maintains that many of the pamphlets demonstrate little or no evidence for excessive assertion that the industrial economy has turned to be less significant or that we have moved into a post-materialist information age. He gives the idea that writers such as Harvey have given weight to a shift- not the first- in the internal structure of capitalism. In the same way, Alex Callinicos in his book Against Postmodernism: A Marxist Critique admits that there has been a deterioration in industrial labor, but sets out to suggest that the point that
fewer people are engaged in material production does not change the fact that no one can remain alive without the industrial goods produced by these people. He, then, argues that the improvement of living standards and the related growth of mass consumption impose an expansion of material goods.

He further indicates that debates about the rise of Post-Fordist production (which are often associated with sociological issues of postmodernization) disregard uninterrupted need for standardized products (e.g. white goods) which do not have to be modified to a particular lifestyle condition in order to be marketable.

Postmodernists who write about culture emphasize cosmopolitanism, diversity, and consumption. Jean-François Lyotard in his influential book *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge* illustrates this view by saying that eclecticism is regarded as the degree zero of contemporary culture: a certain person listens to reggae, watches a western, eats McDonald’s food for lunch and local cooking for dinner, wears Paris perfume in Tokyo and “retro” garments in Hong Kong. Again Alex Callinicos’s book *Against Postmodernism: A Marxist Critique* is a point of reference here. He gives the idea that such discussions ignore “questions of access.” He believes that Lyotard turned a blind eye to the fact that the majority of the people living in the context of the advanced economies are denied to have such delights as French perfume and Far Eastern travel. However Lash in his book *Theory, Culture and Society* proposes that postmodernism indeed touched the working classes as a form of superficial consumerism of this type ex-
In order to react towards these sort of criticisms and debates, those writers who propose that change occurs have tendency to be rather more heedful than in the past. For instance, Steven Seidman in his book *The Postmodern Turn* acknowledges that the main signs of modernity have not vanished and that things such as the industrial economy, professions, trade union, political parties, state law and utopian perceptions of the public good continue to be significant. He sets up, then, to propose that we consider the "modern" and "postmodern" as investigative ideas that can be employed to give emphasis to current social tendencies and sensibilities. According to Seidman, while the postmodern shows its importance, we have to be sensitive to the idea that it does not play a dominant role in all field of studies.

**IV**

**Postmodernism, Globalization and Culture**

It is helpful to start here with a pivotal concept to postmodernism, namely "globalization." This is because debates about postmodernity often coincide partly with those about this process. A main reason for this is the social forces connected with the postmodernization of culture (e.g., the media, consumerism, tourism, the transnational corporation) have also played a vital role in building a world that is increasingly interrelated. Associated closely with cultures, globalization has also inspired acceptance of relativism, reflexivity, difference, and the evaluation of western modernity. As mentioned be-
fore, these are all main features of postmodern theory.

Globalization is the process by which the world is turning to be more and more interrelated, with existing cultural, political, and economic boundaries being discarded. Many debates of postmodernity include some debate of globalization. Globalization can be considered as a process including three salient aspects. They can be summed up as follows:

I. Economic globalization is connected with the growth of world finance markets and free-trade sectors, the global exchange of goods and services, and quick development of transnational corporations.

II. Political globalization deals with the way that the nation-state is being discarded by international organizations (e.g., the United Nations, the European Union) and the development of global politics.

III. Cultural globalization concerns the plethora of information, signs, and symbols around the world and responses towards that plethora.

The theories of Durkheim, Marx and Weber give different explanations of the ways that forms of social organization developing over ever larger realms of time and space came after one another during the wider period of history. Although there is the fact that we can rebuild past theoretical traditions in this way, most concern in research on globalization
revolves around contemporary milieu. Particularly in the realm of cultural globalization ideas connecting to capitalism, commodities, time / space distanciation, and information plethora deal with an inescapable unification between the globalization, postmodernization, and postmodernism essays.

In *Undoing Culture*, Mike Featherstone maintains that a lot of discussions about the cultural influence of globalization focus on two models. The first model proposes that we are living in a world marked by a rise in “Americanization,” “McDonaldization,” and “homogenization.” Early debates on the issue were often put forward by scholars on the Left and characterized attacks on Americanization. According to Schiller’s book *Communications and Cultural Domination*, they laid stress on “cultural imperialism” and the way that the culture of the United States was being transmitted to the rest of the world coupled with its free-market ideologies. Specific weight was given to the transmission of United States-sourced media and entertainment products, like Disney cartoons. More recent conformity to this situation has emphasized the way that local difference is vanished by the growth of global cultural preferences and governing systems. These are closely linked to a sweeping, rootless, and ever-proliferating capitalist rationality, and its related commodities and technologies, rather than to a particularly “American” value system.

Perhaps the most famous theory in this vein is put forward in Ritzer’s book *The McDonaldization of Society*. His idea of “McDonaldization” makes use of the work of Marx and Weber. The notion here is that the assump-
tions of fast-food organizations are encompassing more and more parts of society and regions of the world. These assumptions can be summarized as "efficiency," "calculability," "predictability," and "control." Ritzer shows that places like universities, funerals, track housing development, and motels are common areas of McDonaldizing activity. Although he observes some advantages regarding service delivery and affordability, there is also a negative side to the situation. The practical aftermath of change embraces a limited money-orientation rationality excluding any perception of larger social goals, the harshness of work and other activities into easy tasks, the supply of prepackaged, standardized modular choices, the severe use of market principles, and the subversion of authenticity and meaning in social life. For Ritzer all this has negative impacts. He, then, conclude that if the world were less McDonaldized, people would enable better to reach their human potential.

During the 1980s and 1990s this line of philosophy, along with its pessimistic stress on uniformity and the loss of authenticity as the aftermath of globalization increasingly called into question. A second model puts emphasis on the greatly perplexing interaction of the "global" and the "local." Here we should bear in mind that when we use these terms, their exact meaning is evasive and most debates begin problematizing the binary distinction rather than its explanation. Generally speaking, "the global" concerns the spatially large-scale social and cultural forces related to globalization (e.g., consumerism, satellite communications, culture industries, migration), but "the
local” deals with small-scale, geographically limited traditions and ways of life (e.g., ethnic traditions, language, religion). Academics in this field generally suggest that processes of globalization bring global and local cultures into conflict with each other. These conflicts have given rise to perplexing and dubious aftermath, with main results in any area embracing feasibilities for hybridization and difference, as well as homogenization. We can, then, sum up our discussion as follows:

I. In some cases homogenization occurs. For instance, there are many common preferences, desires, and lifestyles among the rich middle classes of all developed nations. This has shown a tendency to subvert or reduce the influence of local cultures and lifestyles. In many cases outcomes in this field are in tune with mainstream sociological theory on processes of modernization, which propose that the “rest” reaches the same stage with the “West.”

II. Hybridization can stem from the mixing of cultures and lifestyles. This is the idea illustrated by Lyotard’s depiction of the urban cosmopolitan, or Homi Bhabha’s depictions of postcolonial migrants, who have in common qualities of both center and margin. A main concept here can be the way that global forces and products are tailored or reshaped by local situations.
III. Difference and the local can also be re-asserted through globalization, while obviously different phenomena, indigenous revivals, striving for ethnic rights, religious fundamentalism, and racist reactions can all be regarded as defensive reactions to globalization. They have originated from an enthusiasm to defend and protect valued ways of life against what are proven to be the destructive aftermath of foreign and global powers.

Over recent years, academics have tended more to concentrate on the last issue of difference. They propose that difference seems to be the main aftermath of cultural globalization. Postcolonial thinkers particularly have proposed the idea that the process has created a new space for the margin to have a voice, with the massive, solid, and uniform power and authority of the center apt to challenge from multiple competing centers. The idea here consists of a boundlessly increasing babble of voices, with conventional hierarchies and points of reference subverted and with assertions of difference giving the only common basis. In this situation Western cultural values are relativized as just another form of the local that has come into contact with others through globalization, but at the present moment, is dominant.
In the eyes of many critics, particularly those inspired by Marxism, postmodern theory gives rise to a distant and aesthetic gaze which does not influence critique and which ignores real prejudice and suffering. A similar idea was proposed by Jürgen Habermas in an early analysis of postmodernism in the arts. For Habermas, postmodernism can be generally defined as “neoconservatism,” which stemmed from disenchantment with the project of aesthetic and artistic modernism. This disenchantment arose from the failure of modernism to moderate the aftermath of societal modernization and to impose cultural and moral limitations on the rationalization of everyday life. For Habermas, the neoconservative position of the postmodernists enhances this failure. It abandons endeavors to relate art to politics or emancipation, and stresses on the purely private nature of aesthetic experience. He proposes that this movement has been premature and maintains that instead of abandoning modernity and its project as a lost cause, we should learn from its mistakes.

Charges of conservatism brought against postmodern art have also been brought against postmodern cultural theory. For instance, Alex Callinicos argues that postmodern thinkers such as Baudrillard have given up on the conventional task of theoretical investigation, of unearthing the hidden and
basic structure responsible for the way things seem and have replaced a kind of “intellectual dandyism.” At the heart of this problem is the postmodern claim that the “real” does not exist outside of discourse, and that the world must therefore be perceived in aesthetic terms. For Callinicos, Baudrillard’s notion of the simulacrum indicates that we live in a world which is pure simulation and there is nothing beyond the image, no reality is hidden under direct sensory experience. Such postmodern comprehension repudiates as absurd a depth paradigm of interpretation which would search for an underlying essence and suggests instead that we absorb interesting, but intellectually shallow, descriptions of simulacra which lie on both sides of literature and philosophy.

While these kinds of attacks are often launched, it is worth mentioning that they show a tendency to be aimed at soft targets, like Baudrillard’s travel writing or Warhol’s pop art. As we have seen, most of the main figures in postmodern and poststructural cultural and art theory have made an analysis of power and launched an attack on this concept as a main feature of their work. They do not intend to deny oppression and reality. Such philosophers have attempted to provide tools so that we can better comprehend such notions as tyranny and reality. They have striven to speak on behalf of minority voices and challenge those who have authority and power in the contemporary world.

A more significant criticism, maybe, is that postmodern social philosophy becomes an unceasingly critical and deconstructive endeavor.
can say that it constantly repudiates the feasibility of truth and reason, and reveals power and contradiction wherever it looks. According to modernists, this ironic and relativistic view announces the intention to undermine the epistemological and moral principles that are needed for an emancipatory politics. Such an evaluation is nicely put forward by Zygmunt Bauman’s book *Intimations of Postmodernity*. In this book, he argues that postmodern theory is often censured for not being positive enough, for not being positive in any case, for not wanting to be positive. Of course, Bauman later supports postmodernism, proposing that its suspicion is a sound “siteclearing operation” which is subverting the deformations and pretensions of modernist philosophy.

Craig Calhoun in his book *Critical Social Theory* persists in being skeptical. He calls into question the emancipatory capacity of postmodernism. In his opinion, there is no transparent practical strategy suggested for dealing with inequality, capitalism, and so forth, even if the postmodern viewpoint is perceptive. Moreover, the inflexible stress on difference makes it hard to understand how collective identity, and therefore collective action, can come out to go beyond indigenous, racial or other identity boundaries. Finally, the decentering of the subject calls into question a theory that attempts to address agency and moral responsibility. While suggesting a convenient counter to an individualistic liberal humanism, postmodernism does not offer an ample explanation of human freedom and choice.
Finally, we have to face the question of relativism. Postmodern and poststructural views subvert our traditional ideas of truth. They propose that knowledge and values indicate preferences, experiences, perspectives, and identities. Therefore a perfect, exact knowledge of the world is infeasible. In fact, there is no universally accurate knowledge or system of morality. Modernist critics propose that such a way of thinking is perilous. It settles no procedure for evaluating a way in which interpretation or research finding can become more accurate. By revealing them as to be rambling traditions of modernity, it also intends to undermine key notions such as human rights, democracy, or freedom that have encouraged human emancipation. Far from helping rational discussion and argument, it undercuts the feasibility of interest to objective facts and universal values. This motivates the demagogues, racists, and bigots to promulgate their ideas and discard those of others without any further thought.

In spite of these different criticism, the view we have evaluated in this chapter goes on to develop in authority and obviously has much to offer to contemporary cultural and art theory. These advantages can be summed up as below:

I. Issues of morality, value, and politics are given a pivotal role in theoretical investigation.

II. The pivotal and semi-autonomous role of culture (as discourse, text, difference, and identity) in forming social life is emphasized.
III. Open endeavors are made to embrace minority ideas and standpoints.

IV. Intellectual paradigms formed by modernism, universalism, and scientism are made liable to suspicion and evaluation.

V. Weight is given to the local. This inspires the study of particular research issues rather than sweeping general theories.

These are significant achievements. By questioning conventional intellectual classifications and procedures, postmodern and poststructural cultural and art theories have questioned self-satisfaction and created new spaces for cultural and art research and transformation. This reflexivity and sensitivity will accommodate a key resource as we go into the global, multicultural, postmodern world that lies before. It demands the substitution of holy trinity of modernism (the ideals of freedom, equality and fraternity) for a holy trinity rested upon “contingency,” “difference,” and “respect for otherness.”

VI

Postmodernism in Theater: Evaluation and Critique

As we have seen, postmodernism is not the characteristic of a peculiar form or repertoire. In so far as postmodernism in art may be associated with an unstable “event” inspired by a challenge that questions clearly even itself,
then one feature of postmodernism would be its opposition to any simple limitation of its means and forms. As a subversion of "foundation" or a struggle for foundation, this postmodernism is best considered as an aftermath of peculiar strategies used in reaction to particular expectations. It supports, then, the idea that a definition of "postmodernism" must be devoted to a description of postmodernisms, and so to an acceptance of the multiple means by which peculiar types of contingencies are uncovered.

This idea of diverse and multiple postmodernisms is one that is suitable for addressing those types of presentations and activities in the arts which subvert traditional classifications and categories, or that are immune to the very forms of looking and reading which they invite. For these reasons, the postmodernism discussion can easily be employed to construct a body of ideas through which to scrutinize that reaching towards theater which stems from interdisciplinary practices and sensibilities. Significantly, too, this notion of the "postmodern event" gives rise to an investigation of links between very clearly diverse types of work which come together to reveal the unsteady agreements and circumstances on which the work of art and its meanings rest.

In this thesis, postmodernism is excessively described and "limited" in order to provide a peculiar address to occur. It supports a project which focuses on the production of such postmodern instabilities must also invite a challenge of its own terms and limits. This invitation is more in tune with postmodernism, as discussed here than could be any peculiar account of
postmodern forms or characteristics, as it is an invitation that asks for an opposition to a moving of postmodernism back towards the foundation it would undercut.

A postmodern account of the political value of specific types of formal strategies apparently enjoys a broader impact. After Lyotard, one cannot limit Lyotard's idea of "political" (e.g., incredulity towards political grand narratives) to that work which embraces excessively social and political narratives and images. In as far as the Beckettian dramas create a subversion of the "meaningful," dismantling the hierarchies and premise that would describe and maintain the stability of the formal and thematic framework of his work, his strategies reflect Brecht's assault on the stability of the "object." Making use of quotations and subversion of "texts," Beckett's plays and their performances also intervene into reading, exploring for humorous or poetic effect of the various meanings of particular words or phrases and problematising the audience's desire for "completion" and closure. Although avoiding narrative, they similarly challenge the authority of the "work," just as they make uncertain the status and meaning of the play which the audience faced through it. Such plays and their performances may easily support Lyotard's comprehension of the importance of aesthetic transgression (e.g., the postmodern avant-garde), and the enacting of the opposition to the "illusion" of totalisation for which he declares. "The price to pay for such an illusion," Lyotard maintains "is terror."

The atmosphere in Beckettian plays is undefined, unbounded; but is
it "unpresentable" in the sense in which Lyotard redefines the Kantian sublime for postmodernism? Lyotard argues that in postmodern aesthetics the unpresentable, the infinitely powerful and awesome, can be addressed in presentation itself to the degree that the latter stresses on incommensurabilities.

If we consider "unpresentable" as a modern metaphysics surrounding the convergence of human and universal metanarratives, Beckettian plays are repudiation of and war on that appeal to universality and its subsequent resolution of difference by the imposition of rule governing phrases. Through the invocation of little narratives and postmodern language games, narratives and games that do not claim or appeal to universality, Beckett offers a politico-aesthetic philosophy that pre-empts totalization and univocity in art and theater in particular.