

Postmodern Marketing?

Postmodern
Marketing?

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Q: What's the difference between the Mafia and a postmodernist?

A: A postmodernist makes you an offer you can't understand¹.

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Few terms have been so widely used, and abused, in recent years as "postmodern", "postmodernism" and "postmodernity". Appropriately, if somewhat cynically, described as "something that seems to entail buildings which have been constructed of Lego from designs commissioned by the Mayor of Toytown and novels about novelists experiencing difficulty in writing novels"[1], the postmodern condition appears to have infected almost every arena of late-twentieth century intellectual endeavour. Apart from architecture[2,3] and literary theory[4,5], postmodernist thinking is evident in academic specialisms as diverse as politics[6,7], philosophy[8,9], psychology[10], sociology[11,12,13], theology[14,15], geography[16,17], history[18,19], economics[20,21], anthropology[22,23], media studies[24,25], jurisprudence[26] and many more besides[e.g. 27,28,29]. Such is its prevalence indeed that Featherstone[30], encapsulating both the fashion for and ambiguity of "postmodernism", concluded that as the term has no meaning readers should endeavour to use it as often as possible!

For the marketer, perhaps the most intriguing aspect of the controversy surrounding this particular intellectual pursuit, is the pivotal role played by marketing phenomena. A glance at any of the copious analyses of postmodernization reveals that the accoutrements of marketing occupy centre stage. Postmodern advertising campaigns are two-a-penny; postmodern shopping malls occupy almost every corner of the landscape; postmodern products are developed and distributed; postmodern price wars are waged and customer services provided; and, postmodern shoppers purportedly indulge in a frenzy of marketer induced consumption. As the manifold "shopping" epithets clearly testify — "shop 'til you drop", "when the going gets tough, the tough go shopping" and, singularly appropriately, "I shop therefore I am" — the urge to consume is a characteristic symptom, perhaps *the* characteristic symptom, of the postmodern condition[31].

Given the hegemony of postmodern discourse in today's intellectual milieu and the prominent part played marketing artifacts and practices, it is not surprising that the concept has attracted the attention of a small but rapidly growing number of marketing academics. Broadly speaking, these contributions can be divided in three major categories. The first involves the use of the term as a chic synonym for "changed", "complex" or "new", often with regard to the dramatic political and economic upheavals of recent years — events in eastern Europe, the new world order, the rise of protectionism, fundamentalism, environmentalism, etc.[32,33]. The second strand stems from the sub-discipline

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of consumer research, where the term is closely associated with the advent of “naturalistic” or “interpretive” approaches to consumption activities and the seemingly internecine struggle for control of the subject area[34,35]. The third category of academic marketing research comprises “genuine”, for want of a better term, attempts to grapple with postmodernism and identify its ramifications for extant marketing practices and research methodology[36,37,38,39].

Important though the above studies are, they have tended to overlook the fact that postmodernism is primarily concerned with the nature of knowledge and the foundations of academic discourse[40]. This article, therefore, will endeavour to address these important issues, arguing that postmodernism has *very serious* implications for extant marketing thought, whilst acknowledging that it also offers a number of significant conceptual attractions. The discussion commences with an overview of the postmodern condition, continues with an assessment of its ramifications for marketing theory and concludes with an examination of the pros and cons of a postmodern marketing revolution or paradigm shift. The objective of this article, it must be emphasized, is not to provide an exegesis on postmodernity, nor does it pretend to be the first such marketing oriented analysis. The purpose, rather, is to present an accessible yet critical introduction to postmodernism for marketers and to highlight some of its profound implications for extant marketing thought.

The Postmodern Condition

Postmodern thinking involves rethinking — finding the places of difference within texts and institutions, examining the inscriptions of indecidability, noting the dispersal of signification, identity and centred unity across a plurivalent texture of epistemological and metaphysical knowledge production[41].

In light of its ascendancy in so many areas of intellectual endeavour, it comes as little surprise to discover that the postmodern condition has attracted manifold highly divergent — and, as the above quotation from Silverman exemplifies[41], often less than illuminating — attempts to define its principal characteristics. According to its leading exponents, postmodernism consists of “incredulity towards metanarratives”[42], “heterotopia”[43], “contrived depthlessness”[44], “a series of perpetual presents”[45], “excremental culture”[46], “bottomless fragmentation and ephemerality”[47], “the production and distribution of public attention”[48], “a regime of signification”[49] and so on *ad infinitum*.

If there is a lack of consensus — indeed clarity — on the nature of postmodernism and postmodernity, most authorities agree that it represents some kind of reaction to, or departure from, modernism and modernity. Dating from the Enlightenment of the eighteenth century and the debate between the ancients and the moderns, the project of modernity comprised an extensive effort to develop rational science, universal laws, absolute truths and, through the accumulation of objective knowledge, overthrow the irrationality of myth and religion[50,51]. Although the modern movement was far from monolithic, its archetypal exemplars — the architecture of Le Corbusier and Mies van der Rohe, the novels of Lawrence and Joyce, the art of Picasso and Pollock, the

economics of Marshall and Keynes, the philosophy of Russell and Popper, the management principles of Taylor and Ford, etc. — were all characterized by a search for objectivity, rationality and universality. The project of modernity, in short, embraced the idea of progress, rejoiced in the power of reason, lauded scientific discovery and technological innovation, espoused the ascent of man, anticipated freedom from oppression and held that, once its fundamental laws and mechanisms were understood, the physical and social world as we know it could be analysed, planned and controlled[52].

By the late 1960s-early 1970s, however, the modernist vision of ineluctable progress, scientific achievement and freedom from oppression had begun to pall. The counter-culture movements of this period, cognizant of modernity's less than illustrious legacy (death camps, nuclear weapons, environmental pollution, neo-colonialism and so on), ushered in an era of revolt against the authority, aspirations, assumptions and artifacts of the 'establishment'. In architecture, the austerity of the 'glass box' international style was replaced with the ornamentation, colour, pastiche and eclecticism of, among others, Sterling, Venturi, Jencks and Johnston[53]. In philosophy, the rigour of logical positivism was undermined by the neo-pragmatism of Rorty, Feyerabend's ethos of 'anything goes' and, thanks to Kuhn, the objectivity of scientific endeavour was exposed as a sham[54,55,56]. In science, the certainties of the modern era gave way to a heightened appreciation of the inherent indeterminacy of the natural world (chaos theory, catastrophe theory, fractal geometry etc.) and the bizarre sight of the scientific elite expounding on spirituality and religion[57,58]. In the arts, the distinction between high and low culture was progressively denuded (opera stars topping the hit parade, museums of the music hall and so on), participation substituted for contemplation (street art, body art, the 'happenings' of Christo) and linear narratives abandoned for montage, flashback, disorientation and a decentred view of the subject (the tendency, for example, in contemporary fiction for the narrator to 'step outside' the narrative and address the reader directly)[59]. In management, meanwhile, flexible work practices have been elevated over the specialization of labour, hierarchical management structures have been superseded by flat or matrix organizations, labour relations are increasingly characterized by consensus rather than confrontation and the Fordist model of mass production reputedly replaced by the computer-aided customization of the post-Fordist era[60].

Just as the project of modernity was by no means monolithic, so too the condition of postmodernity is less than clear cut and far from settled². Nevertheless, in general it can be contended that postmodernism is characterized by the celebration of scepticism, subversiveness, irony, anarchy, playfulness, paradox, style, spectacle, self-referentiality and, above all, by hostility towards generalizations (such as the totalizing 'metanarratives' of Marx, Weber and Freud, and, naturally, attempts to generalize about postmodernism!). Postmodernists reject attempts to impose order and coherence upon the chaos and fragmentation of reality. Instead, they argue, we should accept that knowledge is bounded, that our capacity to establish meaningful generalizations is limited and, rather than seeking the impossibility of universal truths, we should

rejoice in the ephemerality, contingency and diversity of the physical and human worlds as we experience them, be comfortable in the absence of certainty, learn to live without definitive explanations and recognize that the objectives of the Enlightenment project are utopian and unattainable.

Whereas, in other words, modernism stands for the "scientific" virtues of objectivity, rigour, detachment, precision, logic and rationality, postmodernism champions the "artistic" attributes of intuition, creativity, spontaneity, speculation, emotion and involvement. Indeed, in its assertion that everything — be it a haircut, holiday, personal crisis or political upheaval, — is a "text", to be interrogated, interpreted and deconstructed as the reader, *not* the author, sees fit; postmodernism in many respects represents a repudiation of the natural science model of academic attainment and a return to the once derided philosophical principles of literary theory, linguistics and the humanities generally [61,62]. Summarized in Table I, postmodernists prefer disorder to order; ambiguity to certainty; form to content; surface to depth; past to present and present to future; heterogeneity to homogeneity; plurality to consensus; differences to similarities; complexity to simplification; rhetoric to logic, individuality to universality; customization to commodification and; not least, consumption to production.

Table I.
The Modern and the
Postmodern
Characteristics and
Dichotomies

Modern/Modernity	Postmodern/Postmodernity
Order/Control	Disorder/Chaos
Certainty/Determinacy	Ambiguity/Indeterminacy
Fordism/Factory	Post-Fordism/Office
Content/Depth	Style/Surface
Progress/Tomorrow	Stasis/Today
Homogeneity/Consensus	Heterogeneity/Plurality
Hierarchy/Adulthood	Equality/Youth
Existence/Reality	Performance/Imitation
Deliberate/Outer-directed	Playful/Self-centred
Contemplation/Metaphysics	Participation/Parody
Congruity/Design	Incongruity/Chance
<i>Source:</i> adapted from Harvey[47] and Bouchet[86]	

Postmodern Marketing Theory

God is dead
History is dead,
Theory is dead,
And, I'm not feeling too good myself³

Although, as Firat[63,64] has cogently demonstrated, the postmodern condition now afflicts all manner of marketing practices (and vice versa), the fact remains that marketing thought has thus far been comparatively uncontaminated by postmodernism. As the title of arguably the best known marketing management textbook clearly illustrates, the conceptual underpinnings of the discipline are predicated on the essentially modernist assumptions of *analysis*, *planning*, *implementation* and *control*[65]. Academic marketers, in the main, maintain

that an external reality exists; that it can be understood, modelled and manipulated; that meaningful generalizations can be derived; and, predictions ultimately made. Whether it be any of the following:

- the 4 Ps, SWOT analyses, and marketing planning procedures;
- new product development processes;
- Maslow's hierarchy of needs;
- the EBK model of consumer behaviour;
- the trickle-down model of fashion diffusion;
- the strategic matrices of Ansoff, Porter and the Boston Consulting Group;
- Copeland's classification of goods;
- the typologies of retailing institutions;
- hierarchies of advertising effects, or whatever.

Marketing conceptualizations are implacably modernist in orientation. They represent attempts — admittedly imperfect attempts — to make universal statements about marketing related phenomena.

The modernity inherent in marketing scholarship is nowhere better illustrated than in the frequently recycled legend of the marketing concept and its development. From the ignorance of the “production era”, through the disreputable practices of the “sales era”, to the enlightened accomplishments of the “marketing era”, the archetypal modernist metaphor of ineluctable progress and the ascent of man comprises the received wisdom on marketing's “evolution” [66,67]. Equally teleological premisses underpin the manifold models of the marketing development of the firm [68,69]. Depicted in Figure 1, these typically involve three, four or five stages of marketing evolution, commencing with the crudity and ignorance of the pre- or incipient marketing phases, through the advances of the early and reactive marketing phases, to the sophistication of the explicit or proactive marketing stage and the bestowal on an organization of the ultimate accolade of “marketing oriented” (note how the figure implies an inexorably ascending trajectory of development).

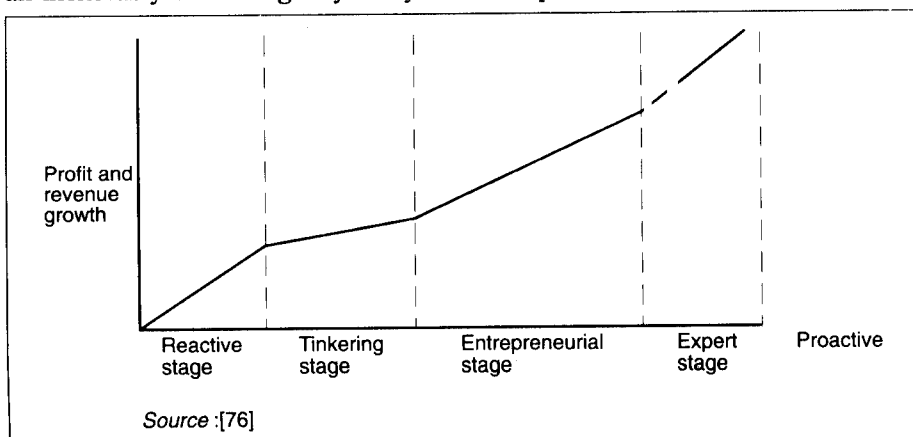


Figure 1.
The Evolution of
Marketing in Small
Firms

A postmodern perspective on marketing theory would not only eschew the above evolutionary conceptualizations (or their copious analogues, such as stage type models of internationalization), but it would also question the bulk of marketing generalizations. If, as noted earlier, postmodernism is defined as incredulity towards metanarratives, then bemusement is likely to be the postmodernist's reaction to many of marketing's theoretical achievements. Granted, not every conceptual accomplishment would necessarily be swept away by the tidal wave of postmodernism. Models based upon a cyclical, rise and decline metaphor, which would include such marketing stand-bys as the product life cycle, wheel of retailing, fashion cycle, innovation diffusion and adoption etc., may be exempt according to some — but by no means all — commentators on the nature of modernity and postmodernity[2,70]. Nevertheless, of the totality of marketing generalizations, comparatively few would escape the censure of the postmodernistically inclined.

Given the time invested in, careers made by and (apparent) achievements of modern marketing, one suspects that most academics may be somewhat reluctant to man the barricades of the postmodern marketing revolution. A moment's reflection, however, suggests that postmodernist scepticism towards extant marketing theory is not entirely misplaced. Despite decades of research, the validity, reliability, universality and predictive power of the product life cycle, Fishbein's behavioural intentions model, Maslow's hierarchy of needs, the Howard-Sheth model and so on, are far from established[71,72,73]. Likewise, the legend of the evolution of the marketing concept has been exposed on numerous occasions and the utility of stage type models of the firm/internationalization, etc. has been challenged more than once[74,75,76]. Indeed, even the strongest advocates of prominent marketing principles acknowledge that, when put to the test, the performance of the wheel of retailing, Porter's generic strategies model, the hierarchy of advertising effects and so on, is far from perfect, though dignity is usually preserved through allusions to the pedagogic utility of the conceptualization and the (predictably modernist) assertion that with a modicum of additional research superior versions of the models are attainable[77,78,79].

The reality, of course, is that the propagation of debatable concepts — even with all the appropriate health warnings and assurances of achievements to come — is counterproductive at best and pernicious at worst. The notion of the retail hierarchy, for instance, has given rise to decades of conflict between town planners and retail organizations and impeded the introduction of innovative retailing concepts[80]. It is not unknown, furthermore, for perfectly sound products to be killed-off, because of management's belief in the existence of a product life cycle[81]. A recent evaluation of the Boston matrix, moreover, concluded that, "It is a real worry that the original matrix is seductively simple, and the temptations and risk of using it off the shelf are real... Those who now use it may be boxed in terms of restrictive assumptions about both the nature of market and competitive dynamics... It is a badly taught, outmoded and discredited orthodoxy, which is seductive and dangerous for our young managers of tomorrow"[82]. Given the reflexive nature of knowledge — what

Giddens terms the “double hermeneutic” where the very existence of a concept influences and alters the phenomena to which it refers⁴, the dangers inherent in inappropriate theorizing are clear[70].

Postmodernism, in sum, highlights the inherent limitations of many extant marketing models and theories. It asks not only whether exposure to the Boston matrix causes “cows” to be milked and “dogs” put to sleep unnecessarily, or whether the inordinate failure rate of new products is due, not to the inadequacies of the products themselves, but to companies’ adherence to marketing’s misconceptualization of the NPD process. It also asks the all-important question of whether companies/products/campaigns, etc. succumb because they stray from the path of marketing righteousness, as marketers are wont to assume, or because the path itself is heading in the wrong direction. Postmodernism, in other words, implies that the fundamental issue to which we should address ourselves is not marketing myopia but the *myopia of marketing*.

Postmodern Marketing Revolution?

Roses are red
Violets are blue
I’m schizophrenic
And, so am I⁵

Although postmodernism provides a salutary, if harsh, reminder of the conceptual shortcomings and limitations of our discipline, it remains to be seen whether a postmodern marketing revolution or paradigm shift will actually occur. As Barnes[83] has shown, Kuhnian-style paradigm shifts are rare in the social sciences (Kuhn[56], remember, was at pains to stress the inapplicability of his model to human phenomena). The undeniable achievements and, after decades of research, the sheer inertia of modern marketing are sufficient to ensure that it will not be readily dislodged, particularly by a philosophy which, in its more extreme manifestations, appears primarily to propose nihilism, navel gazing and denigration as a substitute for rational thought, conceptual accomplishment and methodological rectitude. As a leading commentator on postmodernism has recently pointed out, “the postmodern mind seems to condemn everything, propose nothing. Demolition is the only job the postmodern mind seems to be good at. Destruction is the only construction it recognises”[48]. This is hardly an advertisement for its widespread acceptance. Indeed, one suspects that a philosophy which appears simply to deny and denigrate the achievements of modern marketing is likely to find few adherents, especially when it seems to offer so little in return. The premisses of postmodernity, what is more, are unlikely to escape close scrutiny and vigorous denunciation, especially when all manner of “successful” products/campaigns/companies, etc., can be held up as exemplars of modern marketing and the adoption of the marketing concept. In this respect, a backlash against the totalizing relativism and neo-Nietzschean nihilism of the concept is already apparent in a number of social sciences, such as politics and sociology[84,85], and Bouchet has recently emphasized that marketers should not be excessively uncritical in their enthusiasm for the postmodern condition[86].

Postmodernism, however, does more than merely provide a welcome challenge to the sacred cows of marketing thought. It offers a number of significant attractions for the marketer and provides the conceptual basis for issues with which the discipline is currently endeavouring to grapple. In the first instance, postmodernism holds out the prospect of a rapprochement between marketing theory and practice. If, as has often been noted, the practices of marketing are becoming increasingly influenced by postmodern perspectives, there is a danger that traditional, modernist marketing conceptualizations will become further divorced from "reality" than they reputedly already are [e.g. 87,88]. Although some scholars appear to welcome the prospect of a "pure" and "applied" disciplinary bifurcation (e.g. Hirschman), the consequences of such a rupture are likely to prove extremely serious if marketing practitioners then turn to other academic specialisms which appear to offer more meaningful insights into (say) the consumption behaviour of "post-shoppers".

Second, with its emphasis on academic ecumenism and epistemological plurality, postmodernism rejoices in and provides a rationale for the latter-day fragmentation of marketing thought — Hirschman's humanism[89], Mick's semiotics[90], Fullerton's historicism[91], Kelly's existentialism[92], Durgee's phenomenology[93], Morgan's critical theory[94], and so on. True, the term "postmodern" has been appropriated by some academics and taken to refer to the recent naturalistic turn in consumer research[34,35] even though some of the analyses thus lauded — such as McCracken's[95] anthropological insights — would be regarded as essentially "modernist" in their discipline of origin (despite claims to the contrary[96] "postmodern" is *not* a synonym or umbrella term for "non-traditional" approaches to marketing understanding). Nevertheless, when it comes to much-debated issues like realism versus relativism, subjectivism versus objectivism and positivism versus interpretivism, postmodernism suggests that it is not a question of either/or but of both/and, or, as one postmodernist aptly puts it, either/either[97].

The third attraction of the concept concerns the philosophical underpinnings that it provides for many of today's much-vaunted marketing restoratives — "micro-marketing"[98] "maxi-marketing"[99] "database marketing"[100], "new marketing"[101], "wrap-around marketing"[102], "value-added marketing"[103], "relationship marketing"[104] and so on (see Table II). Although the premisses of these panaceas are many and varied, they all possess one of two basic components: (a) an emphasis on dealing with the customer *as an individual*; or (b) a desire to *retain existing* customers, products or services rather than creating them anew. With regard to the former, however, the primacy of the individual — "different strokes for different folks"; "do your own thing", "there is no fashion only fashions", etc. — is precisely what postmodernism presupposes. Whereas modern marketing is predicated on the development of meaningful generalizations about consumers in the mass (or sizeable segments thereof), postmodernism emphasizes the uniqueness, diversity, plurality and idiosyncrasy of each and every individual. In terms of the latter, likewise, postmodernism is characterized by a predisposition towards the old, the

Terminology	Definition	Sources
Micro-marketing	Marketing so finely tuned that, if applied properly, it will speak to customers almost individually	Schlossberg[98]
Maxi-marketing	Direct contact, dialogue and involvement with the individual prospect or customer leading to increased sales and brand loyalty	Rapp and Collins[99]
Database marketing	Direct marketers' (ability) to talk to their audiences as individuals in very large numbers	Davies[100]
New marketing	We are witnessing the emergence of a new marketing paradigm not a "do more" marketing that simply turns up the volume on the sales spiels of the past but a knowledge and experience-based marketing that...finds a way to integrate the customer into the company, to create and sustain a relationship between the company and the customer	McKenna[101]
Wrap-around marketing	Two perennial problems in marketing are getting customers and keeping them. Traditionally, most marketers have spent their time getting customers. But the truth is we ought to start spending more time on the problem of how to retain the customers we have	Kotler, quoted in Caruso[102]
Value-added marketing	Improve existing products and concepts rather than launch new ones	Nilson[103]
Relationship marketing	Has as its concern the dual forces of getting and keeping customers. Traditionally much of the effort of marketing has been directed towards the getting of the customer rather than the keeping of them. Relationship marketing aims to close the loop	Christopher <i>et al.</i> [104]
Neo-marketing	The basic rule is break the old rules	Cova and Svanfeldt[107]

Table II.
Postmodern Marketing:
Some Synonyms and
Manifestations

established, the tried-and-tested, the recycled and, as noted earlier, the “perpetual present”. The complete opposite, in other words, of the progressive, modernist odyssey for the new and improved, the innovative, the futuristic, the revolutionary, the “washes whiter” and so on[105].

The fourth opportunity on offer pertains to marketing’s perennial search for academic respectability[106]. As a result possibly of the discipline’s lowly standing in the scholarly caste system (which descends from the illustrious, Nobel Prize garlanded “hard” sciences like physics and chemistry, through the softer and intellectually suspect social and historical sciences, to the academic “untouchables”, those concerned with the pursuit of profit and commercial activity), marketing has long felt obliged to prove itself “more scientific than science”, aspire to the most rigorous standards of research and, not infrequently, apologize for the inadequacy or immaturity of its conceptual accomplishments⁶. Yet, in endeavouring to emulate the (seemingly) logical, rigorous, model building, law seeking, nomothetic, etc. standards of the physical sciences, academic marketing has effectively downplayed and de-emphasized the creativity, spontaneity, adaptability and individual insight that often characterize successful marketing practices (see, for example, the case studies reported in Carson[76] and Cova and Svanfeldt[107], and which, in the *Economist*’s concluding words, “count for a lot more than (marketing) theory”[108]. Postmodernism not only provides the conceptual foundations for the individualistic, idiographic and intuitive end of the “art-science” continuum, but, in its espousal of heterarchy (flat or overlapping organizational structures) rather than hierarchy, the concept repudiates the premisses of the above academic caste system. In a postmodern world, therefore, marketing would no longer occupy the lowest level of the academic firmament, with its necessity for periodic *apologia* and a more scientific than science outlook. A self-confident marketing, secure in the knowledge that it is the equal of any discipline, physical or human, would be the ultimate outcome.

A final and arguably the most fundamental implication of the postmodern condition, however, is the unavoidable process of critical self-examination that it imposes upon the marketing discipline. Like it or not, postmodernism requires answers to the following questions: if the modernist marketing philosophy is so secure, why is marketing thought fragmenting?; why are so many marketing panaceas being touted?; why is the marketing concept unassailable, in that successful marketing practices are invariably lauded as exemplars of its principles and marketplace disasters summarily dismissed for failing to adhere to the “proper” approach? If, indeed, marketing science is omnipotent, how come so many other, older social sciences are uncertain about their epistemological foundations? Is marketing knowledge that much better or more secure? What, to adapt McLennan’s[40] challenge to (modern) sociology, gives us the right to assume that a coherent set of interrelated marketing phenomena exist “out there”? Are we sure that it isn’t just a motley collection of unrelated bits and pieces? How can we ever tell if our concepts genuinely reflect this thing called marketing? Who is to say what “knowledge” of marketing really amounts to?

Postmodernism, in sum, compels modern marketing to re-examine its

theoretical accomplishments, question its epistemological assumptions, appraise the appropriateness of its methodological procedures and, most importantly perhaps, justify its continuing existence. Are we prepared to accept the postmodern marketing challenge?

Conclusion

Postmodernism means never having to say you're sorry.⁷

In recent years the tsunami of postmodernism has swept over all manner of academic specialisms ranging from anthropology to women's studies. As marketing phenomena play a central role in the postmodern condition, marketing academics have not been slow to board the intellectual bandwagon. The bulk of these analyses, however, have concentrated on marketing practices rather than marketing theory and, in the case of some consumer researchers, appear to have confused the consequences of the concept with its premisses. This article has examined the nature of postmodernism, noting its very serious consequences for extant marketing theory. Set against this, the concept provides a salutary reminder of the limitations of the philosophy of modern marketing and a means of addressing key issues on the current academic research agenda. Although a postmodern revolution or paradigm shift in marketing thought is possible, only time will tell whether the concept provides a new approach to marketing understanding or, in keeping with its espousal of ephemerality, it too will evaporate in the heat of academic debate.

Notes

1. Adapted, with apologies, from Woolgar[109].
2. Some commentators, for example, see postmodernism as a continuation of modernism[110], others consider it to be a complete break with the past[111]. Some regard it as degenerative and destructive[112], others rejoice in its cynicism and irreverence[113]. Some draw distinctions between "postmodern", "postmodernity" and "postmodernism"[114], others treat the terms synonymously[2]. Indeed, some of the purportedly distinguishing features of postmodernism — discontinuity, ambiguity, self-referentiality, etc. — are indistinguishable from those normally associated with modernism, thereby compounding the confusion over the concept's domain[47].
3. Postmodern graffiti, adapted from Gregory[115].
4. As Giddens, the *bête noire* of theoretical sociology, points out, "concepts ... are not merely handy devices whereby agents are somehow more clearly able to understand their behaviour than they could do otherwise. They actively constitute what that behaviour is and inform the reasons for which it is undertaken"[116].
5. This postmodernist sentiment, expressed on T-shirts and lapel badges, reflects Jameson's[117] assertion that the postmodern condition is akin to that experienced by schizophrenics, in that they are unable fully to distinguish between times past, present and future, and hence live in a form of "perpetual present".
6. Consider the recent remarks of the AMA Task Force on Marketing Theory, "marketing remains a field of study scorned by its parent disciplines and by the major foundations and funding agencies"[118]. Consider also Greenley's comments on marketing planning, "the planning body of knowledge is still at an early stage of development, within a management science body of knowledge which itself is still poorly developed when compared to other disciplines"[119]. Or, indeed, those of Baker *et al.*, on marketing theory,

"to date ... theory is poorly developed in marketing ... Many of the major problems involved in using and developing theory are interrelated with the ... youth of the discipline and the nature of marketing phenomena"[120].

7. In making this statement Adair[121] is referring to the erosion of the (modernist) hierarchy of cultural values and the fact that it is now possible to expound, without apology, on formerly forbidden topics like rock music, soap operas, comic strips etc. Indeed, the relatively recent emergence of marketing as a "legitimate" academic discipline, has been cited as an example of postmodern pedagogy[62], though it is ironic that this legitimization process has been dominated by essentially modernist aspirations (laws, regularities, prediction, marketing as a "science" and suchlike).

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