

Chapter 3 Theories and Methods

Topic 9 Globalisation, Modernity and Postmodernity

Answers to QuickCheck Questions on page 241

1. The nation-state; bureaucratic institutions; capitalism; mass production; rationality; science; technology; individualism.
2. Technological development; global media; geographical mobility; the growth of transnational corporations; loss of power of nation-states.
3. A set of established ideas that determines how we view and think of things.
4. A theory or idea that claims to explain the totality of social life, e.g. Marxism.
5. Meta-narratives cannot be proved; they have been used by oppressive regimes; they silence minority views.
6. Signs that bear no relation to physical reality and stand for nothing other than themselves, e.g. tabloid newspaper reports about fictional characters in 'soaps'.
7. That in high or late modern society, individuals monitor and reflect on their actions, modifying them in the light of information about risks and opportunities that they might involve.
8. A society in which risks and dangers are increasingly human-made rather than natural and where individuals respond to these risks reflexively (see previous question).
9. If postmodernists are correct that no theory can claim to have the truth, then postmodernism itself cannot be true. Postmodernism ignores power and inequality; it ignores the effects of poverty and wealth on our ability to construct our identities; individuals can often differentiate between media image and reality; the idea that all views are equally valid is not morally defensible; postmodernism is too pessimistic about the potential for progress and for discovering true knowledge about society.
10. It enables production of customised products and this promotes cultural diversity. It allows production to switch easily from one product to another, encouraging constant shifts in fashion.