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BECK, ULRICH

German social theorist of modernity Ulrich Beck (b. 1944) is an advocate of a cosmopolitan approach to the social sciences. Alongside Jürgen Habermas and Niklas Luhmann, Beck is one of the three most prominent contemporary German sociologists. He recognizes Habermas's influence on his work through his intellectual obligation to the continuation of the Enlightenment project. He distinguishes himself from Niklas Luhmann by grounding his work in a strong subject-oriented approach.

RISK SOCIETY

Ulrich Beck is widely recognized for developing the concept of the *risk society*. Indeed, Beck published *Risk Society* in 1986, and only a few months later, the Chernobyl nuclear disaster confirmed his claim that our society is being transformed by technologies that are beyond our immediate control. Risk societies are borderless societies characterized by the distribution of dangers, rather than the state's distribution of goods. Risks are uncontrolled and the consequences incalculable. Society is being transformed into a risk society or a *world risk society*. Beck continued to develop his thoughts on the transformation of modernity in the books *Reflexive Modernization* and *Risky Freedoms*. One of the central ideas he put forth in *Risky Freedoms* was the importance to modern individuals of "do-it-yourself"

biographies, which are based on his notion of risk and free the individual from determination by society. The old classical elite ideal of relating to one's biography as a work of art has become a necessity in the age of globalization, as people increasingly lack the opportunity to construct orderly and linear self-histories. As such, in his theory of individualization, Beck tries to put the Subject back into social theory. This theory highlights new potentialities of social action, which can no longer be based on the traditional patterns of social participation and political manipulation.

SECOND MODERNITY

In addition to the concept of risk and individualization, Beck also examined the concepts of globalization, cosmopolitanization, and "second modernity." For Beck, the term *globalization* refers to a reflexive rather than a linear process, taking the global and the local (or the universal and the particular) not as opposites, but as combined and mutually implicit principles. For him, these concepts indicate a transition between historical epochs, or more precisely, to the transition from a "first modernity," characterized by the congruence between nation and state (with an emphasis on the welfare state), to a "second modernity," characterized by a world society and transnationalism. This does not mean, of course, that the first modernity is over and done with, and it does not mean that we live in a postmodern society in which everything is being deconstructed. Ulrich Beck does not see himself as a postmodern thinker. Indeed, in nearly all of his major works, Beck claims that he is intellectually committed to the project of the Enlightenment. This means that he sees in the European traditions of reason and liberty the chance for people to realize freedom. Unlike postmodern theorists, he does not hold these notions as spurious or as mechanisms of oppression. For Beck, social theory is an instrument of human emancipation. For him, sociology's problem is that it identifies its subject matter, "society," with the nation-state. In this view, the territorial state is society's container—a final victory for Hegel, so to speak. In fact, it was not long ago that sociologists were demanding to "bring the state back in." Ulrich Beck does not want to throw the state back out. But he wants to break the state's theoretical identification with society in order to demonstrate the sociological possibilities of reconstructing the nation-state into a cosmopolitan state to serve the needs of a cosmopolitan society.

COSMOPOLITAN SOCIOLOGY

The cultural, political, and economic processes of globalization are undermining the foundations of the first modernity. Therefore, what Beck refers to as "internal globalization," or even the "cosmopolitanization" of nation-state

societies from within, becomes central to understanding contemporary society. In this connection, one central thesis for Beck is the *pluralization of borders*, such as those between nature and society, knowledge and ignorance, subject and object, peace and war, life and death, and We and Other. The concept "second modernity" tries to catch both the continuity with and the epochal break with a first modernity. What remains from the first modernity is the valuation of the single individual and his or her political liberties (individualization). What is new is the spacelessness of capital, labor, and even home that is created through the processes of globalization. Modernity is not over. Indeed, Beck uses the term second modernity to announce that the end of modernity celebrated by postmodernism has not yet arrived.

Beck argues that one can begin to examine the second modernity by employing a new kind of methodology called *methodological cosmopolitanism*, which implicitly provides a critique of *methodological nationalism*. This shift broadens the horizons for social science research. The nation-state-centered understanding of society and politics is replaced by the opening up of that nation-centered perspective. This blurs the traditional distinction between the national and the international and opens new research horizons in the study of inequality and power. Through these concepts, Beck (2002) is able to answer the criticism that his theory lacked a conception of power. In his latest book on power in the global age, he claims that the real power of multinational corporations is not their power to *march in*, but their power to *march out*, or their refusal to enter in the first place, their refusal to invest. They form a network of cooperating actors, none of whom will do business with a country until it meets their standards. And this, according to Beck, is the model of deterritorialized power that states should seek to emulate: something that is built up through networks of cooperation and is exercised through the denial of that cooperation. This is how states could build a counterpower to the power of multinational corporations. States should not strive toward a world state, but rather toward deterritorialized power, toward a network of political cooperation that could exercise the same power of denial and that, once activated, would trump those of the corporations. Beck also emphasizes that while corporations exert this new power, they also have new vulnerabilities precisely because of the moral campaigns to which they can now be subjected. They have a need for legal security with which no one state can provide them. As such, the denial of cooperation can be all the more dangerous for them, the need for it all the more compelling, and the power it wields all the more effective. Similarly, such a network of cooperation—and the denial of that cooperation—could be used by networks of states to force the compliance of noncooperates, not by compelling them through military force, but by denying them the opportunities for development and legitimacy

that they can gain only through being allowed into the network, and making them wither on their own until they give in.

— Natan Sznajder

See also Cosmopolitan Sociology; Habermas, Jürgen; Individualism; Luhmann, Niklas; Modernity; Postmodernism: Risk Society

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BECKER, HOWARD

An American sociologist who has pursued diverse interests over a long career, Howard S. Becker (b. 1928) is a prominent advocate of qualitative research methods in a discipline increasingly given to abstraction and quantification. Educated at the University of Chicago in the 1940s under Everett Hughes, Becker self-consciously inherits from the Chicago School a commitment to fine-grained field studies, and from symbolic interactionism an abiding concern with the intersubjective negotiation of meaning. In addition to definitive substantive contributions to the sociology of education, deviance, and art, Becker has been an

The structural characteristics of social contingencies define both the kind of interaction produced and the relation between the individuals. For example, social contingencies in which each of two person's reinforcers are contingent solely on the other person's behavior produce the interaction known as *social exchange*; that is, each person's behavior produces outcomes that are reinforcing for the other person, as in Homans's famous example of the exchange of advice for approval. Social contingencies in which the reinforcers of two or more persons are contingent on their *joint* behaviors produce the interaction known as *cooperation*; for example, two people coauthoring a book. The maintenance of social behavior rests on reciprocal or mutual rewards (reinforcement), and the establishment of this reciprocity is unique to social contingencies.

While work specifically characterized as behavioral sociology is now less evident than in the 1960s and 1970s, the influence of behaviorism on sociology is still quite visible in much of the research on the structure and processes of human groups, including theories and research on social exchange, cooperation, social dilemmas, and related topics. This tradition adheres to the emphasis of behaviorism on observable behavior, experimental analysis, the effects of rewards and costs on behavioral choices, and the role of learning and adaptation in the ongoing interaction between individuals and their social environments. Thus, George Ritzer's (1992) characterization of the social-behavior paradigm as one of the three major images of the subject matter of sociology still has merit, although the paradigm is now somewhat of a hybrid, blending behaviorist views with related (but distinct) tenets from rational choice and micro-economic theories.

Both in psychology and in the social sciences, a distinctive feature of behaviorism is the extent to which its principles have been applied to modify behavior and ameliorate social problems. *Behavior modification* refers to the gradual, systematic shaping of behavior toward some previously established state by reinforcing behaviors that successively approximate the desired outcome, while eliminating (when appropriate) existing reinforcement for undesirable behaviors. For example, a hyperactive child might gradually learn to sit and work at a desk for an hour at a time if a parent or teacher reinforces successive approximations of that goal: sitting for 5 minutes, then for 10 minutes, and so on, while simultaneously eliminating reinforcing attention for disruptive behaviors. Behavior modification has been used in numerous therapeutic situations to change behaviors that are self-destructive, address family problems, reduce phobic reactions, improve academic performance, and stop drug abuse, among other things.

The principles of behavioral sociology have also been applied to group interactions, most notably in classrooms. The design of classroom reward structures that use team performance, peer tutoring, and classroom-wide contingencies

to enhance the academic performance of large numbers of students are one primary example. Some applications occur in an even broader social context, such as community recycling or energy conservation programs.

— Linda D. Molm

See also Emerson, Richard; Homans, George; Learning Theory; Social Exchange Theory

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BELL, DANIEL

Daniel Bell (b. 1919) is best known for the conception of postindustrial society found in *The Coming of Post-Industrial Society* (1973) and for the analysis of contemporary culture found in *The Cultural Contradictions of Capitalism* (1976). These are two major case studies in Bell's larger project to theorize macro-social organization. Bell argues that the integration of the three major realms of society—the techno-economic sphere, the polity, and the culture—is not more common historically than a disjuncture between realms. Bell's position contrasts sharply with functionalism and Marxism, both of which emphasize as the typical condition the integration of society in relation either to consensus values and norms (as in the case of functionalism) or a dominant mode of production (as in the case of Marxism). Bell's general conception of social organization, while less rigorously developed than either functionalism or Marxism, provides a preferable level of analytical flexibility.

Bell provides examples of societies in which the three realms are well integrated, mentioning the church-dominated society of early medieval Europe and the bourgeois society that emerged in Western Europe and North America following the Industrial Revolution. However, in the case of the emerging postindustrial society, Bell is clear that the major principles of organization of the three realms are in

conflict. The axial principle of the techno-economic sphere is functional rationality, a combination of efficiency and productivity oriented to material growth. The axial principle of the polity is legitimacy, based on equality and participation and oriented to obtaining the consent of the governed for the use of power. The axial principle of the culture is development of the self, encouraging a denial of any limits or boundaries to experience and a distance from bourgeois norms. From this framework, Bell describes a key contradiction of the emerging postindustrial society: between a social structure based on the discipline of occupational specialization within bureaucratic hierarchies and a culture based on the enhancement and fulfillment of the self and the "whole person." The two are in contradiction because one requires self-renunciation in the service of institutional goals, while the other promotes an uninhibited pursuit of self-realization. Bell observes that other contradictions also exist in postindustrial society, for example, between the ideal of meritocracy and equality, reflecting the tensions between a social structure of graded occupational specializations and a polity based on equal rights.

Bell's approach to the study of social change is to extract the underlying principles of change in contemporary industrial societies and to develop a portrait of societies of the future based on the more complete realization of these principles. Industrial society is based on commodity production, a mix of scientific and empirical knowledge in the service of industrial technology, corporations as the key institutions, and market competition as society's primary steering mechanism. In Bell's formulation, postindustrial society is based on a shift from goods to services production, the centrality of theoretical knowledge both in the development of new technological breakthroughs and professional services, universities as the key institutions, and the subordination of the market to economic and social planning based on analytical tools. Bell argues that the idea of postindustrial society concerns the means of production only and that postindustrialism can exist in societies marked either by capitalist or socialist relations of production.

Bell used this vision of postindustrial society as a means to define emerging labor and political issues. He argued that the emergence of postindustrial society leads to the emergence of new status groups, notably scientific and professional elites, who would find themselves in conflict at times with older, monied elites but also internally divided by institutional location. He envisioned new opportunities for some groups, notably women, who would be able to compete with men more equally given the new occupational structure emphasizing relations with people and data rather than relations with machines and heavy physical labor. He predicted dilemmas for other groups, such as African Americans, who have been heavily concentrated in manufacturing industries, and technicians, who would find themselves in a cross-pressured social location between

skilled workers and professional elites. Although Bell's concept of postindustrial society is widely recognized as prescient and instructive, it has been criticized by some for failing to emphasize the preeminence of financial and business services professions in postindustrial society and the declining opportunities for less educated workers in the service sector (see, e.g., Sassen 1991).

A self-described cultural conservative, Bell is deeply critical of the antinomian thrust of contemporary culture—and indeed hopeful of a rebirth of religious sensibility. Bell's writings nevertheless helped to inform influential analyses of postmodern culture by theorists who were far more sympathetic to contemporary culture than was Bell himself. Following Bell, theorists such as Jean-François Lyotard, Jean Baudrillard, and Fredric Jameson also emphasized the hedonistic and antinomian thrust of contemporary consumer culture, the disruption of genres by syncretism in the arts and popular culture, and the compression of time and space due to advances in technology and capitalism's relentless pursuit of profits. The inspiration provided by the cultural conservative Bell to theorists who embraced the fragmentation of contemporary "post-modern" culture is surely one of the least predictable in the history of contemporary theory, but it attests to Bell's influence even among theorists who do not share his value commitments or political views.

Bell grew up in a family that would today be considered part of the working poor. His father died when he was an infant, and his mother worked as a pattern maker in the garment industry. Bell attended City University of New York, where he associated with a number of fellow socialist students who would, like himself, later become central figures in New York intellectual circles. These early associates included the sociologist Nathan Glazer, the essayist Irving Kristol, the literary critic Irving Howe, and the political scientist/sociologist Seymour Martin Lipset. Bell's first career was as a journalist, writing during World War II for *The New Leader* and later for *Fortune* magazine. In 1945, he began to combine stints in academe with his primary work as a journalist. He taught at the University of Chicago from 1945 to 1948 and at Columbia University from 1952 to 1956.

By the mid-1950s, Bell had already established a name for himself as an important social commentator. Early works include *Marxian Socialism in the United States* (1952), an outstanding analysis of the history of Marxist sectarianism. *The New American Right* (1955), which examined McCarthyism, the John Birch Society, and other anticommunist movements and helped to develop the idea that status politics provided underlying motivation for social movements. *Work and Its Discontents* (1956) offered a socialist-influenced critique of the dehumanizing impact of work under industrial capitalism. In 1958, he resigned from *Fortune* to assume a full-time post as associate

professor at Columbia. Bell's first widely cited book, *The End of Ideology* (1960), popularized the idea that all-embracing political worldviews, whether communist, socialist, fascist, nationalist, or liberal, were giving way to technocratic and piecemeal solutions to social and economic problems. A second book written while at Columbia, *The Reforming of General Education* (1966), remains among the most penetrating studies of the impact of demographic and organizational change on higher education in the United States, and an important defense of the arts and sciences. Bell left Columbia for Harvard University in 1969, and there he wrote his renowned books on postindustrial society and contemporary culture. He was appointed Henry Ford II Professor of Social Sciences at Harvard in 1980 and retired to become scholar-in-residence at the American Academy of Arts and Sciences in 1990.

Bell is often described as one of the leading midcentury intellectuals in the United States. Beyond the valuable ideas found in his books, Bell's influence can be attributed to his service as a government advisor on technology, energy, and social indicators; as an officer and editorial advisor of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences; as coeditor of and contributor to *The Public Interest*, a preeminent journal of policy and public affairs in the 1960s and 1970s; and as a challenging and dedicated teacher of social analysis.

— Steven Brint

See also Fordism and Post-Fordism; Industrial Society; Postmodernism

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BELLAH, ROBERT N.

Robert Neelly Bellah (b. 1927) is an American cultural sociologist and sociologist of religion. His contributions have exerted a supreme influence on American postwar cultural studies and the sociology of religion. His widely acclaimed efforts to explore the intellectual roots of contemporary American culture have been repeatedly awarded. He received the U.S. "National Humanities Medal" in 2000.

Bellah grew up in Los Angeles. What proved to be of some significance for his scientific development is the strong Protestant-Presbyterian climate of the family in which he was raised, which likely prepared him for his academic interest. During the course of the Second World War, his studies in sociology, anthropology, and Far Eastern languages at Harvard fostered a shift away from his familiar religious convictions, toward Marxism. Under the influence of his major sociological teacher, Talcott Parsons, he became acquainted with the works of Max Weber and Émile Durkheim, and finally committed himself to a neutral sociological perspective. He received his PhD in 1955 and, after a brief appointment at the Islamic Institute at McGill University, Canada, resumed his academic work at Harvard until he left for a full professorship at the University of California, Berkeley, in 1967. He taught at Berkeley until 1997.

Bellah's most important contribution to social science is grounded in a single but most consequential idea that he first published in 1967 and later developed in his award-winning book *The Broken Covenant* (1992). He argued for the existence of a "civil religion in America" that, accordingly, would constitute a form of collective religious commitment besides traditional religious practice, on one hand, and patriotism—its secular version—on the other. Bellah's thesis raised a number of theoretical and empirical issues in cultural sociology. Furthermore, it has been the subject of various academic and public disputes and even has produced, in the words of its originator, a "minor academic industry" (Bellah 1992:ix). Bellah's subsequent scientific work can be considered a further elaboration on several tacit issues of his original postulate and his defense against critical objections to that postulate.

Bellah (1971) defined the complex of civil religion as "a set of beliefs, symbols and rituals" and, referring to Durkheim, as a "reality *sui generis*" (p. 171). On the basis of his initial cultural comparison of religious systems, Bellah could avoid the risk of universalizing the results he observed in the American field. He argued that a fundamental structural core problem of any society was the institutionalization of the connection between political and religious functions. All cultural studies had to begin with the study of this problem. In this regard, he took the American society as a unique and unequalled case. Drawing on a close interpretation of inaugural speeches of American presidents from the late eighteenth century to the present, Bellah pointed to the constituents and theological roots of American civil religion. They consisted of a historically relative combination of several intellectual traditions: republicanism, utilitarianism, and liberalism, on one hand, and Judeo-Christian religion, on the other.

Bellah went through a comprehensive historical analysis of the various public manifestations of American civil religion. He observed that it persisted in a distorted form until

inevitable, more often than not results in a power struggle. Insofar as psychic and social structures buttress subject/object splitting (e.g., male versus female, mother versus child, giver versus taker, doer versus "done to," powerful versus powerless), so that individuals are allowed to take on only one role or the other, then the capacity for mutual recognition is thwarted. Similarly, gender and sexual polarities also restrict the range of human identification and desire wherein maleness is posed in opposition to femaleness and homosexuality is posed in opposition to heterosexuality. Benjamin (1995) emphasizes that the ability to "see the world as inhabited by equal subjects" (p. 31) is key to transforming sexual and gender relations that cast women as objects of men's desire and not as desiring subjects in their own right.

One of Benjamin's (1995, 1998) most important contributions is to foreground the paradoxical process of recognition and delineate its role in development. Her outline of the developmental trajectory of intersubjectivity and mutual recognition begins with a reconsideration of the mother-child relationship and extant theorizing about separation-individuation. She critiques lopsided accounts, including those of object relations theorists, that center on the child as self/subject moving toward autonomy and separation while portraying the mother as the other/object who either facilitates or hinders this development. Acknowledging pathbreaking findings in infant research (Stern 1985), Benjamin poses an alternative view of mother-child development that emphasizes reciprocity as well as the mutual reinforcement of both the child's and the mother's need for and enjoyment of recognition.

While Benjamin (1988) commends the feminist object relational theorists for explaining gender and sexual divisions in terms of the object relation to the mother (e.g., Chodorow 1978), she also emphasizes the symbolic role that the father plays in the separation-individuation phase, especially for girls. She argues that both boys and girls retain their ambivalent early attachments to and identifications with aspects of both parents, and as a result, she views gender "inclusiveness" (fantasies of being both sexes or having characteristics of both sexes) as a desirable as well as necessary aspect of development.

As a theorist and clinician, Benjamin is concerned about the quality of interaction and cocreation of knowledge between two knowing subjects, whose experiences of each other comprise both fantasy and reality. The epistemological and clinical ideal, however, is not to resolve the necessary tension that exists, but to sustain it. For Benjamin, this is the promise of an intersubjective view. Her elaboration of this view is her enduring contribution to a social theory that integrates psychoanalysis, feminist theory, and clinical experience.

— Wendy Luttrell

See also Chodorow, Nancy; Freud, Sigmund; Psychoanalysis and Social Theory

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BENJAMIN, WALTER

Walter Benjamin (1892–1940) was born in Berlin in 1892, the son of a Jewish art dealer. After schooling at a humanistic gymnasium, he studied philosophy and literature at Freiburg and started a friendship with the poet C. F. Heinle. Heinle and his wife committed suicide in 1914, an event that devastated Benjamin, and the memory of the young poet stayed with Benjamin for the rest of his life. Benjamin himself would, even before the fatal day in Port Bou in 1940 when he took a lethal dose of morphine, contemplate suicide in Paris in 1931 in light of the worsening political situation in Germany.

In 1915, Benjamin met Gershom Scholem (1897–1982), whose friendship was decisive, as was his friendship with Theodor Adorno (1903–1969), whom Benjamin met for the first time in 1923. And in 1929, through the aegis of his Russian lover, Asja Lacis, Benjamin met Bertold Brecht (1898–1956) for the first time in the latter's Berlin apartment. Indeed, at one level, Benjamin's life was a series of friendships and love affairs initiated and ended. Apart from Brecht, Benjamin met many of the literary figures of the interwar period, including Rilke, Gide, Hofmannsthal, Desnos, Aragon, and Kraus, as well as the philosophers Klages, Wolfskehl, and Ernst Bloch. In addition, Benjamin published, especially between 1927 and 1940, literally dozens of reviews and essays, including pieces on figures such as Baudelaire, Hölderlin, Proust, Green, Valéry, Stephan George, and Kafka.

Benjamin was also very peripatetic. His preferred ports of call, where he could often live cheaply and still write, were Capri, Paris, Moscow, and Ibiza, Spain. Each trip provided Benjamin with fuel for articles, with his posthumously published *Moscow Diary of 1926–1927* being one of his most distinguished efforts in ethnographic description and personal reflection.

Walter Benjamin's life as an independent scholar unable to secure a permanent academic position is also emblematic

of the thinker. For he stands apart from almost every thinker in the twentieth century in his individual approach to scholarship and writing and in his singular distillation of the nature of modernity.

Characteristic of his singularity is the fact that Benjamin published only two books in his lifetime, both in 1928: a book of aphorisms, *One-Way Street*, and a monograph study, *The Origin of German Tragic Drama*, initially submitted, then rejected, in 1925 as an *Habilitationschrift* that would qualify him for a university post. The rest of his writings, including the vast, unfinished Arcades Project, are in the form of essays, articles (academic and journalistic), translations, and fragments, many published posthumously. For Benjamin, the fragment took precedence over the whole, the pastiche and collage over unity, difference over identity. Famously, Benjamin is quoted as saying that he dreamed of producing a book that was nothing but a series of quotations.

In his interest in art, translation, storytelling, memory, time, and tradition, the persona of Benjamin also emerges along with profound insights. These insights are indebted to the rise of modernity itself and the loss of tradition that comes in its wake, a loss that effectively means the loss of the origin—what Benjamin calls, in the field of art, “aura.” We could also see this as the loss of context in which the original was produced in a community, whether this original is a work of art or a story. Also evoked here is the ritual aspect of art, to the extent that art as ritual constitutes community. “In the beginning. . .” so the story goes (and the story itself was the beginning). The story bound people together; it made community and thus the context equivalent to an original understanding.

In his famous essay “The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction” ([1955] 1973), on a key aspect of modernity, Benjamin analyses the nature and impact on society of processes of reproduction, notably those of photography and film. A key point is that when the “aura” of the original work of art disappears in modernity, a factor concomitant with techniques of reproduction and, no doubt, with technology in general, the perception of art changes and a certain reversibility develops: The work of art as reproduced leads to the work being designed for reproducibility. For Benjamin, then, it is not a matter of decrying reproduction and the loss of aura, but of understanding the profound impact it has had on the nature of society.

In this vein, photography and cinema—the arts, par excellence, of reproduction—begin to change society because, like the telescope and the microscope albeit in a different way, they reveal a different society, a society not entirely available to ordinary human perception. This is to say that the technologies of photography and cinema extend human perception in the realm of the image, where the image becomes a mirror of society.

Furthermore, though, the audience in the new *technik* of film, organised as cinema, occupies, says Benjamin, the

same position as the camera, and this implies that the audience is not incidental, but fundamental to cinema. Through the camera, film changes the field of perception. In this sense, film is transformative, because it becomes integrated into the audience into itself.

Reproduction figures in three other contexts for Benjamin, and in such a way that it is not subordinate to the original, but reveals and completes it. First, in “the task of the translator” (cf. Benjamin [1955] 1973:69–82), we find that it is not a matter of assuming that every translation is in principle inadequate in relation to the original, but of recognising that the original contains the potential for translation within it. Translation and the original are not opposed to one another, but are complementary.

In Benjamin’s essay, “The Storyteller,” written in 1923, a similar structure is in evidence. Here, what allows the story told by the storyteller to be communicated is not the content of the story, but the story in memory, a fact evoking the story’s transmission, also called “tradition” by Benjamin, which is the afterlife of the story and integral to its being a story. Transmission, the telling, or tradition or, more generally, reproduction, are not distortions of the story’s true message but are part of the message itself. And indeed, on this interpretation of the nature of story, the listener’s place becomes the place of the reproduction of the story. For the listener’s place is where transmission, telling, tradition, and communication come together. Put more schematically, the place of the listener becomes both sender and receiver of the story’s message (which is, in part, the story itself) because, through memory, the contingent listener is the recipient of the previous listener’s telling. In this way, tradition speaks to itself and reaffirms itself as community. In modernity, however, the art of storytelling has gradually disappeared.

In relation to language, as Benjamin understands it, a similar reciprocal scheme of the speaker’s relation to the recipient of language is in evidence. For language is not just an instrument, or medium, of communication; it is the space in which the speaker speaks. That the speaker is *in* language implies that in speaking, “man” reveals himself and that language reveals itself; it is never simply a matter of revealing the objective world. A further point is that unlike the structuralist view, which says that the relation between signifier and signified is arbitrary and therefore that naming is not the essential task of language, Benjamin says that on the contrary, it is in naming things that things become what they are and that as a result, there is an essential link between word and thing.

There are two additional, and important, aspects of Benjamin’s work. One concerns the unfinished Arcades Project, which shows a fascination for the iron and glass of modern city architecture and the consequent interrelation, through the use of glass, between interior and exterior. The second aspect, important for social theory, is Benjamin’s

intelligent article "Critique of Violence" (1996). In it, he points out that violence cannot easily be separated into legitimate, legal violence and natural "illegal" violence. For legal violence weakens the law, rather than strengthens it.

Moreover, law is the result of a prior, mythic violence, violence committed in the interest of creating a particular form of life, rather than preserving pure existence, or "mere life." From this ancient tradition of myth comes the idea that to live is, constantly, to create new forms of the social world—ultimately through violence, not through the law. For to the extent that the law itself is founded in violence, in the sense that the very presence of the law means that violence has already taken place, it is thus already immanent in the law. Because, in Benjamin's view, humanity cannot be said to coincide with mere life; the prospect of violence is always present. Indeed, Benjamin goes further and suggests that it is even "ignominious" for humanity to protect existence for its own sake. The sacred thus does not emerge here in the "sacredness of life" for its own sake, but rather in the violent act that creates a new form of life. Such is the view many moderns find so unpalatable.

— John Lechte

See also Cultural Marxism and British Cultural Studies; Frankfurt School; Industrial Society; Modernity; Post-Marxism; Sociologies of Everyday Life

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BERGER, JOSEPH

Joseph Berger (b. 1924), theorist and founder of research programs in status processes, served in the U.S. Army in England, France, and Germany during World War II, and studied at Brooklyn College (AB, 1949) and Harvard University (PhD, 1958).

Berger taught at Dartmouth College from 1954 to 1959 and then moved to Stanford University, where he resides today. Berger, Bernard P. Cohen, Morris Zelditch Jr., and other sociologists established a distinctive approach that came to be called "Stanford Sociology." It entails abstractly conceptualizing aspects of social structures and social processes, developing explicit abstract explanatory principles, and extending and testing theories, often with laboratory methods. While such work was sometimes characterized as experimental sociology, Berger insisted that the true subject matter was the theories, to be tested and extended using all appropriate empirical methods. This approach was at that time relatively unusual in sociology.

Berger's most significant contributions to theory appear in two programs. Substantively, he pioneered and sequentially developed theories in the Expectation States Theory Program, concerned with the operation of status processes in goal-oriented situations. Philosophically, throughout his career, Berger has been concerned with how sociological knowledge grows and accumulates. Both programs continue today.

THE EXPECTATION STATES PROGRAM IN STATUS PROCESSES

This program encompasses a growing set of interrelated theories aimed at understanding how features of the larger society, including cultural beliefs about statuses, such as gender, race, and age, and social structures, such as the distribution of statuses in a particular situation, affect interpersonal behavior and beliefs leading to a group's power and prestige hierarchy.

Within the Expectation States Program, Berger, working with Hamit Fisek, Robert Z. Norman, and others, developed theories to address a wide range of substantive phenomena. Those include, among others, theories on (1) processes by which multiple status characteristics organize interpersonal behavior; (2) how reward expectations form in status situations; (3) processes by which different types of social justice and injustice are created; (4) ways in which expectations formed in one situation transfer to new persons, new tasks, and new status distinctions; (5) ways in which group hierarchies can acquire and lose legitimacy; (6) the effects of public evaluations by outsiders and interactants; (7) processes of social control; (8) interrelations between sentiments and status processes; and (9) processes that create and maintain institutionalized status distinctions. Theories in the Expectation States Program have also served as bases for extensive applications and engineering research (see also Wagner and Berger 2002).

THE PROGRAM IN THEORY GROWTH

Working primarily with David G. Wagner and Morris Zelditch Jr. and building on the research of the philosopher

believed that there were many advantages to using a bureaucratic means of organization, including maximum efficiency, precision in execution of decisions and functions, stability over time, high levels of predictability, ease of disciplinary control, and an overall greater level of applicability to a broader range of tasks. In addition, because bureaucracies are more concerned with offices than with the individuals who fill those offices, there is generally less discrimination. (Ironically, however, if discriminatory practices or protocols are written into the formal governing of the bureaucracy, they also provide the most efficient means of realizing discrimination.)

Despite all the benefits of a bureaucracy, Weber recognized a number of pitfalls associated with them. For example, there is often a great deal of "red tape" with which to contend when one is dealing with a bureaucratic structure, which can lead to increased levels of stress and inefficiency. The biggest concern for Weber, however, was that the ultimate efficiency of the bureaucracy also makes it nearly indestructible. It has a self-maintaining momentum that is difficult, if not impossible, to stop once it has been set in motion.

Although Weber was primarily concerned with the structure of the bureaucracy, he also theorized a number of effects it would have on the individuals who filled its offices. The structure of the system, claimed Weber, would cause the individuals in the system to view themselves as cogs in the larger machine. This mentality would discourage them from looking for ways out in lieu of looking for ways of moving up in the organization.

Another theorist who was interested in bureaucracies and their impact on the actions of individuals within them was Robert Merton (1968). For example, the "bureaucratic personality" adhered to organizational rules as ends in themselves rather than as means of achieving some goal.

Alvin Gouldner (1954) was interested in the conflict that often occurs within a bureaucracy when there is a change in the status quo. In his analysis of a gypsum-manufacturing plant, he observed a set of informal norms that had developed alongside, and often in contradiction to, the more formal set of bureaucratic rules. For example, tardiness, using company materials for personal uses, extended lunches, and other violations of company protocol were often overlooked by the management. Gouldner labeled this an "indulgency pattern." When new management came in and no longer indulged these violations, workers became resentful and eventually staged a strike. The concept of an indulgency pattern provides a good conceptual tool for understanding informal rules and how they can develop alongside formal rules in a strict bureaucracy.

Weber's concern with the increasing rationality of society has been validated over the past century. His analysis of the bureaucracy as the paradigm of increasing rationalization was fitting for his time. Others (Ritzer 2000),

however, have suggested that in contemporary society, the fast-food restaurant, not the bureaucracy (although certainly fast-food restaurants could be considered part of a bureaucracy), is the modern-day paradigm of rationalization.

— Michael Ryan

See also McDonaldization; Merton, Robert; Weber, Max

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BUTLER, JUDITH

Judith Butler's (b. 1956) intellectual base is philosophy; she is recognized as a postmodern feminist and the canonical queer theorist. Her work is important to social theorists, as she has contributed to the corpus of postmodern knowledge considering sex, gender, the body, and social identity. In accordance with postmodern feminist paradigms, Butler challenges the liberal and radical feminist tendency to employ the sex-gender distinction and thereby separate natural categories of sexual identity from socially constructed gender identities. While Butler identifies several propositions in postmodernism, particularly the French poststructuralism of Foucault that inform her work, Butler has questioned the appropriateness of referring to postmodernism as a coherent and consistent branch of social theory insofar as those labeled as such often do not read each other's work or base their work on a similar set of presuppositions. Her articulations of the postmodern subject and her treatment of the body and sexuality have rendered her work particularly influential.

Specifically, she has offered an extensive critique of the modernist assumption of a stable, already-constituted subject pre-given as a point of departure for theorizing or for sustained political action. Such a subject is seen as constituted outside of power, confronting power. The modernist claim to a position beyond power, she argues, depends on power, or a kind of cultural imperialism, for its legitimacy. Moreover, Butler refuses to assume a stable subject separate from power; rather, the subject is constituted by the organizing principles of material practices and the institutional arrangements of a power matrix.

In her view, the subject is not a ready-made thing, but a process of signification within a system of discursive possibilities that are regulated, normative, exclusionary, and often habitual. She does not negate or dispense with the notion of the subject altogether, but instead seeks to understand and critique the process of the social production and regulation of certain forms of subjectivity. Significantly, she argues against the notion that power ceases at the moment the subject is constituted; as a signifying process, the subject is never fully constituted, but is subjected and produced again and again. It is in these two notions—of the subject as always constituted by power and the subject as a resignifying process—that Butler's notion of the subject as agent with "permanent possibility" emerges and with that, possibility of critical, transformative, and subversive strategies.

In accordance with her paradigm of power and identity, Butler locates the female/male binary in hegemonic constructions of sexuality and identity, thereby challenging the notion that an essential difference exists between biological sex and socially constructed gender. Her work attempts to deconstruct the accepted relationship between sex and gender, to expose the socially constructed contours of heterosexuality and the female/male binary.

In her view, one can never return the female or male body to a "pure" or natural essence. Sex is always already gendered, as observation and interpretation of the body are two components of a singular process insofar as the body is intelligible only within a socially determined context. Indeed, the concept of naturalized male and female sexual categories is already socially constructed in gendered language. The body is made intelligible through this same gendered language. With the birth of a baby, the body is assigned to a predetermined male or female sexual category. If assigned female, she is immediately called a "girl," wrapped in pink or pastel blankets, given a name that signifies her femininity, and described using feminine gendered language and female sexual categories. Her acts become stereotypically sweet, soft, and charming. Butler (1997) asserts that while language does not bring the body into being in a literal sense, it does make a certain social existence of the body possible insofar as the body is interpellated within the terms of language. According to Butler, one exists not by being recognized, but by being recognizable. The terms that constitute the identifiable body are conventional, ritualistic, and naturalized.

Sex and gender are thereby achieved only through existing hegemonic social polarities. For example, a person can be described as "black," "female," and "lesbian." But these descriptors are significant only in relation to their deviation from the dominant categories of identity: "white," "male," and "heterosexual." Consequently, Butler articulates dominant categories of identity as "regulatory regimes" because they often limit categories of the self to mutually exclusive binaries.

According to Butler, by reinforcing the sex-gender distinction, feminist theoretical explanations of women's oppression are limited to heterosexual male/female binaries. Significantly, Butler's immanent critique of feminism has given considerable attention to what she sees as its heterosexist assumptions; the received notorious and restricted meanings of femininity and masculinity that are idealized by the movement. As she sees it, many feminist theorists have assumed "woman" and "man" as fixed, stable, and essential identities. Butler moves beyond liberal and radical stances that link gender to natural sex differences and constructs gender in terms of the body's participation in intensely regulated activities that coagulate, or naturalize, over time, thus producing the appearance of natural sex categories. In this sense, her work challenges feminist constructions of sex and gender to posit the body as "sedimented acts rather than a predetermined foreclosed structure, essence or fact, whether natural, cultural or linguistic" (Butler 1988:523).

For feminist theory, Butler's work on the subject has had far-reaching consequences in terms of both the subject who theorizes and the subject who is theorized about. Within any regime of power, subjects are constituted through a set of exclusionary and selective procedures. A subject who theorizes, for example, both produces and is produced by institutional histories of subjection and subjectivation that "position" her as an authorized theorizing subject. Regarding herself as a theorizing feminist involves, for example, positioning herself as "I"; replaying, resignifying, and reworking available theoretical positions; and taking account of the possibilities those available positions exclude. Moreover, who gets constituted as a feminist theorist, who frames the issues, publishes the debates, and popularizes the platforms and for whom, all presuppose the operation of exclusionary procedures that create a domain of deauthorized subjects. In this sense, Butler sees her position in mainstream feminism as "embattled and oppositional" insofar as the movement is normatively white, middle class and heterosexual. The conceptual apparatus produced within this power matrix, the regime of truth it produces, is a precondition of critique. Insofar as she engages in a critical examination of the basic vocabulary and assumptions of the movement, she produces an "immanent critique" aimed at provoking a more democratic and inclusive movement.

Importantly, when a set of expressive categories of gender are idealized and appropriated by feminists, they become hegemonic and establish a normative matrix of prescriptive requirements. Furthermore, Butler does not see such categories as mere descriptions of reality; rather, they produce realities insofar as bodies come into cultural intelligibility through them. They both limit and enable theorists in their efforts to define the female/feminine subject as well as the male/masculine subject. Insofar as they are heterosexist,

such idealized gender categories set up new forms of hierarchy and exclusion, a heterosexual domain that constitutes a new regime of truth. Butler refuses such categorization of identity and pointedly critiques the heterosexist assumptions within feminist theory and politics.

Against the position of identity politics, for example, Butler argues that there is no essential woman constituting the ground and reference point of feminist theory and practice. There is no stable feminine subject that precedes and prefigures political interests, a point from which subsequent political action is taken. For Butler, "woman" does not exist independently of each performance of the stylized acts that constitute gender. The heterosexist, restricted, and normalized meanings of woman do not adequately capture the variety of gender positions that subjects can and do occupy. In this sense, normative categories of sex, gender, and sexuality become subjugating categories and sites of oppression.

Butler argues that feminist theory and political practice should open up subject possibilities. She actively calls for opposition and resistance to the heterosexual matrix and its expressive categories of gender. Insofar as the gendered body is performative, requiring a continuous display of discursive practices and corporeal signs, gender norms are potentially open to perpetual displacement by every performer during every performance. In this sense, performance of gender is always, to some degree, "drag." Subversive strategies may include parodic performances of

gender that pointedly disrupt the presumed coherence of gendered bodies, categories, and identities.

While every subject position is a potential site of resistance, Butler has given particular attention to the subject positions available to homosexuals. Within the heterosexual matrix, homosexuals are deauthorized, erased from view, placed in an "other" category, and labeled "queer." For Butler, homosexuals should not passively accept the category of queer; they can and should use it as a site of resistance. Such resistance does not mean doing the opposite of what a category authorizes; it means to become "critically queer" and engage in transformative agency.

— Candice Bryant Simonds and Paula Brush

See also Essentialism; Feminism; Feminist Epistemology; Foucault, Michel; Postmodernist Feminism; Postmodernism; Queer Theory; Sexuality and the Subject

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