

## Liberal Humanism and the European Critical Tradition

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The birth of the modern European critical tradition can be traced back to the Enlightenment and in particular the philosopher Immanuel Kant's (1724-1804) critique of reason. Kant's revision of the liberal humanist tradition replaced metaphysics (speculation about external reality) with critique. For Kant, critique consisted of tracing the origins of experience back to the faculties of the mind. Stated simply, before Kant, science described the world passively, but after Kant, science was seen to write onto the world what human categories imposed upon it. For Kantians, science no longer extracted knowledge from the proverbial thing-in-itself (which remains fundamentally unknowable): rather science produced knowledge of the phenomena of the world.

Kant's analysis of the human mind attempted to understand cognitive faculties in order to determine the proper usages and limits of reason; hence his critique of pure reason was boundary setting. His work built a structured architecture of the mind in order to address three important questions: What can I know? How can we act morally? What can I hope for? Broadly speaking, Kant divided the mind into three components or faculties. First, the faculty of sensibility organizes the raw and chaotic manifold of sense materials in accordance with the forms of sensibility: space and time. These forms are an *a priori* possession of the mind rather than observed phenomena. Understanding, the second faculty of the mind, takes these appearances and files them under categories (unity, cause, etc.) producing objects of cognition. Reason occurs when the

understanding no longer applies itself to appearances or sensory objects. The result of reason is the production of ideas in the noumenal realm. Because ideas cannot be experienced directly, they do not have causes and are positioned in the a-temporal or metaphysical dimension. As such, no one can properly know that ideas such as God, freedom, or immortality exist; they cannot be subject to understanding.

Thus in the end, Kant's critique of metaphysics does in fact rehabilitate a supersensible reality. Only now, universals exist within the interior of the human mind rather than in external, objective reality. These ideas are not simply flights of fancy or chimeras. Although we cannot experience them, they nevertheless follow logical rules of thought, and we can reasonably act as if they exist. For Kant, acting as if freedom were possible is not delusional. In fact, it makes us act morally to conceptualize and act upon the ideas of God or freedom.

Kant's humanistic side is most clearly articulated in his theory of freedom. For Kant, humans are not simply the aggregate of natural forces. Humans are distinctly unique because we freely give to ourselves an imperative to follow. To be moral is to act in accordance with a universal law. In Kant's writings there are essentially two versions of this categorical imperative: act according to a maxim which can be a universal principle and act in such a way that you treat humanity as an ends not as a means. To be moral is to act beyond the contingency and particularity of everyday life and to act in unison with a transcendentally possible imperative. Society as a whole must be measured against this imperative to see if it is rationally and thus morally true. In the end, by using reason properly and not confusing the faculties of the mind, Kant believed that pre-enlightenment superstition, cruelty, and ignorance would be replaced by both individual

liberty and universal peace. Thus as Kant writes in the influential essay ‘An Answer to the Question: What is Enlightenment?’ (originally published in 1784) enlightenment is the courage to use our individual understanding properly to critique the irrationality of the world.

While Kant’s intentions were progressive for the time, the results of his liberal humanist tradition of critique are to be questioned. As liberal humanism became a dominant cultural logic of Western society, it became increasingly problematic. For many later critical theorists, liberal humanism led to elitist, colonialist, and patriarchal ideologies. Thus many of the central figures we will discuss below are in some way responding to this crisis in Kant’s universalizing position, either attempting to reconstruct reason or reject it completely.

### **Hegel’s Critical Dialectic**

If Kant’s philosophical project can be summarized as an attempt to define a-historical categories and their functions, G. W. F. Hegel’s (1770-1831) work could be seen as the interjection of time into such a system, rendering Kant’s systematic absolutism into a historical organization of concepts. Whereas Kant sees the categories as timeless, Hegel sees in them a dimension of temporal unfolding through a series of immanent negations. Thus reality is no longer static but rather dynamic and developmental. This dialectical process will become central to the future of western theories of criticism; hence we must explain what Hegel means by dialectical movement.

For Kant, contradictions formed a series of antinomies that were permanently irreconcilable. Yet for Hegel, contradictions are not so much problems as the motor through which concepts become increasingly more determinant. Contradictions are in fact the internal development of concepts. As such, negation is not simply destruction but is productive, leading onto ever higher levels of reason and ever more generalized and universal knowledge. In short, thinking is not simply the manipulation of preformed concepts but is a movement and a development in which what has come before is not simply abandoned to the dustbin of history but rather understood as necessary phases on the road to absolute knowledge itself.

Hegel's dialectic sought to overcome a gap that Kant initiated between the thing-in-itself as a radically unknowable external object and the knowing subject. Through negation, Hegel is able to state that the object that is not a subject is an object. Seemingly redundant, this dialectical formulation proposes that the subject is at its core mediated by the object, and the object, mediated by the subject. In other words, the subject becomes objectified and the object becomes subjectified. Thus the object contains within itself its negation (subjectivity) and the subject contains within itself a negative movement towards the object, thus producing a conceptual space for critique.

Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit*, published in 1807, thus teaches us how absolute knowledge is arrived at through negation, mediation, and synthesis in the necessary unfolding of contradictions of consciousness. His is a philosophy of overcoming dualisms, synthesizing, and summing up. It is a retrospective exercise that results in a new way of connecting with the past. This relationship to what has come before must be, for Hegel, complete without omissions (thus incorporating contradictions

as inherent rather than aberrant) and transparent (rationally organized in a series of immanent negations through which problems are solved and new problems produced). In this sense, what is more inclusive, more complete, and more transparent becomes absolute knowledge and what is not complete, transparent, and inclusive is up for critique.

Although it is arguably true that Hegel's philosophy justified Prussian oppression as well as slavery and exploitation as necessary stages in historical development, his dialectical method is also a critical tool that opened many new paths for future philosophers and social theorists. Ideas and concepts emerge as historically conditioned, and thus never totally innocent, constructs that are partial, subject to critique, and thus provisional.

### **Genealogy, Power, and Critique**

Friedrich Nietzsche (1844-1900), like Hegel before him, historicized Kant's version of critique through a technique called genealogy. Nietzsche argued that Kant's a priori universals are born from historical struggles between competing interests. A particular idea gains ascendancy not because it is universally valid, but rather because a particular will to power animates it. Thus Nietzsche's critical method attempts to uncover the hidden will to power behind necessary and absolute truth claims. Yet Nietzsche must be separated from Hegel on two important accounts. For Hegel, this process of historical development is a self-contained internal movement of reason towards absolute knowledge but, for Nietzsche, such movement is violent and linked with a will to power

that constantly attacks status quo ideas, personalities, and institutions. Second, Hegel values synthesis and the ‘truth’ lies at the end of the process of development, gazing back upon itself. For Nietzsche on the other hand, ‘truth’ lies at the beginning where terms are pure, before they are corrupted and debased by certain historical struggles between the powerful and the weak. Thus the origin rather than the summation becomes the source and fundament of critique.

Nietzsche’s radical skepticism and critical force are amply on display in *On the Genealogy of Morals* (originally published in 1887). Here Nietzsche traces the descent of moral ideals back to their rather questionable origins. For Kant, to know the self was to understand the structure of the mind, but for Nietzsche, to know the self is to understand the legacy of war and violence carried within seemingly neutral and self-evident concepts like morality. Thus Nietzsche poses a simple question that in the end has radical implications for our self-understanding: How were the concepts ‘good’ and ‘bad’ invented? In Nietzsche’s historical analysis, those who are strong willed, virile, healthy, and noble created the words that we use to describe social relations and actions. Thus the nobility invented the term “good” to describe themselves and their activities.

Opposed to the superior stood the common people. Because they were not noble, healthy, or strong, the aristocracy called them ‘bad’. Yet soon there was a radical inversion of these terms, and this inversion was the result of a third class between the nobility and the commoners: the priests. The priests were, according to Nietzsche, jealous of the aristocrats and identified with the common, suffering peasants. In an act of revenge, the priests appropriated the language of the nobility and labeled the good as bad and the bad as good. The result is a slave morality that values malice, sickness, and

vengefulness over health, vitality, and righteousness. For Nietzsche, the result of this inversion for human evolution is tragic. As the priests led a slave revolt against the masters, the world witnessed the rise of Christianity, which is a religion of physical and moral disease.

Overall, Nietzsche is not a complete relativist. It is not simply that he is critiquing all concepts, but rather that he is critiquing those ideas that generate cultural, moral, and biological illness (such as Christian morality). Through the act of critique Nietzsche liberates himself from the constraints of limiting concepts and in the process increases his life power. By overcoming social constraints and taboos, Nietzsche strives to become the ‘superman’, a figure unbounded by conventions. The superman holds nothing above his or her freedom to invent, create, and cultivate great genius.

Perhaps the philosopher most widely recognized as carrying on Nietzsche’s genealogical criticism is the French postmodernist Michel Foucault (1926-1984). Like Nietzsche, Foucault desires to disrupt enlightenment narratives of progress, teleology, and monumental history. For both, history is not so much a linear process as it is a chaotic and violent war of positions, full of fissures, fault lines, and radical breaks. Genealogy as a form of critique exposes these fault lines and focuses on contingency, rather than continuity and internal necessity. Whereas Nietzsche proclaimed the death of God, Foucault, in an equally dramatic flourish, proclaimed the death of ‘man’ as a historical category, which like all other ephemeral things will be washed away in the sand. Also, like Nietzsche, Foucault takes a great interest in the concept of the body. For Nietzsche, the life force emanating from the body cannot be contained or controlled by slave morality or else illness will ensue. For Foucault, the body is the primary site for the

inscription of power relations and of resistance. Yet there are also radical differences separating the two theorists. Whereas Nietzsche is unabashedly elitist, Foucault sides with the dispossessed, the forgotten, the marginalized, and the ‘abnormal’. Whereas Nietzsche’s will to power is biological and highly individual, Foucault’s theory of power is social and relational. Thus Foucault is not simply appropriating Nietzsche’s methodology. He is also critiquing and reworking many of Nietzsche’s central ideas.

Foucault provides a compelling example of the genealogical, critical method in *Discipline and Punish* (1979). Here Foucault examines the rise of disciplinary power as the dominant mode of power in the modern era. Emphasizing a break from feudal society and the spectacular might of the sovereign, Foucault outlines the mechanisms, instruments, institutions and discourses that collectively function to maintain a homogenized, passified, normalized and docile population of workers/consumers. Rather than grand displays of awesome force, disciplinary power functions covertly, silently, and on the micro-level of common everyday reality. It is dispersed throughout society as a whole, functioning to train the body and the soul of individuated subjects. The perfect example of a disciplinary technology is Jeremy Bentham’s panopticon. The panopticon was originally a plan for the ideal prison. In the panopticon, prisoners are subjected to the gaze of the guards who sit in a tower overlooking a circular cellblock. The prisoners themselves do not know if the guards are present in the tower or not. Thus over time, the prisoners, suspecting they are constantly under the watchful eyes of the guards, become self-regulating, internalizing the disciplinary gaze. According to Foucault, the panopticon became a generalizable principle organizing all of our major social institutions including schools and clinics.

Thus, Foucault's genealogy enables us to critique normalizing power relations and pinpoint their various instruments of application. He asks the question: How do institutions both subject us to discipline and through this subjection produce us as subjects? The next question, one which Foucault himself could not fully answer before his untimely death, is thus: What are forms of resistance that enable subjects to produce themselves according to their own pleasures and desires? On this level, Foucault and Nietzsche once again meet, for both advocated a strong sense of aesthetic creativity against a mass culture of conformity.

### **Psychoanalysis and the Critique of Culture**

Sigmund Freud (1856-1939) originally saw psychoanalysis as a clinical technique used for the treatment of hysteria in late nineteenth century society. Yet as he developed his dynamic theory of the mind, the broad social and political implications of his analysis of the unconscious became more and more explicit. For Freud, there are essentially three fundamental tenets to psychoanalysis. First, Freud rejects the Kantian transcendental notion that the mind can fully and completely grasp its essence through critical self-reflection. Drawing inspiration from the Romantics, Freud viewed the mind as ultimately unknowable by the individual subject. Inside of the mind are active and dynamic forces resisting conscious realization of our motives or desires. While these motives may be analyzed through the analysis of slips in language, free association word games, or dreams, the unconscious remains largely impenetrable. Second, Freud's theory of the mind is located at the frontier between the body and the psyche. Neither simply

biological nor purely mental, psychological drives are Freud's attempt to understand the relation between the somatic reality of the senses and language itself. Third, and perhaps most controversial, Freud argued that the origin of physical symptoms such as hysteria is to be found in childhood sexual development and the inadequate resolution of what Freud calls the Oedipal complex. With these fundamental assumptions, Freud expanded psychoanalysis out of the clinic and into the realm of social critique.

In 1929, Freud's book *Civilization and its Discontents* was an important foray into social and political analysis. As opposed to Kant's optimistic teleology that ends with perpetual peace and individual freedom, Freud argues that as civilization becomes increasingly complex, the pressures exerted on the individual psyche become increasingly difficult to bear. In exchange for perceived safety and security, the individual enters into a social contract, agreeing to renounce his or her instinctual satisfaction. Society fundamentally demands that limits be placed on our innate sexual desires (Eros) and aggressive tendencies (Thanatos). Sexuality is sublimated into productive work, which results in the perpetual deferral of gratification. By placing restrictions on the externalization of our aggressive drives, Thanatos turns inward, producing self-destructive tendencies in the form of an overly punitive conscience. While this eternal struggle between individual happiness and the constraints of civilization cannot be fully resolved, Freud does suggest that civilization must begin to take into account the impact of its severe demands on our fragile psyches. As long as social demands ignore the reality of instinctual forces, civilization will inevitably produce neurotics and hysterics, as well as much unhappiness and misery. Thus Freud's work ends with a great warning, a warning that has yet to be adequately heeded.

While there have been many revisions of Freud's theories, Jacques Lacan's (1901-1981) return to Freud is compelling and important for the history of critique. In his many seminars, Lacan utilized structural linguistics to unlock the radical kernel at the heart of Freud's theory of the subject. This linguistic turn is most succinctly summarized in Lacan's famous aphorism: 'the unconscious is structured like a language'. Here we see an interesting rejection of one of Freud's fundamental tenets of psychoanalysis: that the human psyche is composed of a dynamic relation between the somatic and the linguistic. For Lacan, the pre-linguistic imago of the unconscious is replaced by the broader category of the signifier. With these significant revisions of Freudian theory, Lacan then turns to an analysis of social relations through what he terms 'the four discourses', which include the discourses of the hysteric, the university, the master, and the analyst. These discourses articulate the structural relations between social agents and the 'other', revealing that below the conscious level of interaction there is always already operating a dimension that is repressed. Here critique amounts to the uncovering of this 'obscene' dimension below a constituted social fantasy.

Today Slavoj Žižek (1949-) is the most widely recognized proponent of Lacanian psychanalysis. In his many books and articles, this Slovenian philosopher combines Lacanian theory with ideology critique (see below) to expose the fundamental phantasy supplying the support for many contemporary social and political debates. Žižek's goal is to traverse the underlying phantasy structure suturing social relations, thus opening up a space where subjects can 'act' in the world. The act for Žižek is a fundamental rupture, a decisive move beyond the logic of capitalism and its attending ideology of neo-liberal democracy. Žižek's Lacanian theory of the act is meant to disrupt two notions of action

prevalent in Western philosophy. Against Kant's notion of a fully conscious self who freely acts according to a universal imperative, ōiñek argues that acts occur in a moment of miraculous surprise that does not support the idealist notion of a self-transparent gesture. Second, ōiñek is firmly against what he labels as 'postmodern identity politics'. As opposed to Foucault whose resistance takes place within the preexisting networks of disciplinary power and normalizing discourses, ōiñek calls for a radical revolutionary split that opens a new space of possibilities. It is Lacan's notion of traversing the fundamental phantasy that opens a space for rethinking politics beyond what has been labeled as Foucauldian forms of postmodern resistance.

If Lacan's reading of Freud is controversial, then *Anti-Oedipus* (originally published in 1979) by Gilles Deleuze (1925-1995) and Felix Guattari (1930-1992) is often viewed as a mad postmodern masterpiece. In this text, the authors argue that capitalism unleashes a massive flow of unbridled desire. Yet because desire is inherently revolutionary, capitalism at the same time must recode, or reterritorialize these very same flows. According to Deleuze and Guattari, Freudian psychoanalysis is a technology that attempts to recode desire and control it by inextricably linking desire to the Oedipal complex and the guilt of incest. For these authors, Lacan is equally an agent of capitalist territorialization. Where Lacan sees desire as a lack in the signifying chain, Deleuze and Guattari argue that desire is always productive.

As opposed to psychoanalysis, Deleuze and Guattari propose schizoanalysis. Here the goal is to expose the discourses, social structures, institutions, and practices that constrict desire and to open up fissures where desire can escape these recodifications. Schizoanalysis smashes the Freudian ego and de-Oedipalizes desire itself. Because

Deleuze and Guattari reject notions of conformity, discipline, and homogenization, they embrace the figure of the schizo or of nomadic tribes, both of which are unbound by striated society. Here the figure of the schizo recalls Nietzsche's concept of the superman who is essentially an individual lacking the internal agent of the Oedipal complex: the punitive super-ego.

In these three cases, psychoanalysis provides many important tools of social, political, and cultural critique. From the psychoanalytic perspective we begin to recognize the tensions between the individual and society, the problematic of desire, and the role of unconscious forces in determining our perception of the world. Whether Freudian, Lacanian, or Deleuzian, psychoanalytic critique is an important tradition whose basic assumptions are constantly being revised and/or rejected by critical theorists in a variety of fields and disciplines.

## **Marxism and the Critique of Capitalism**

Karl Marx's (1818-1883) critique of capitalism began with his rejection of German Idealist philosophy. The young Marx defined his project through a sustained criticism of Hegel's philosophy of the Spirit. As interpreted by Marx and his contemporaries, Hegel properly grasped human history as a process of continual development yet for him labor was always mental labor. All struggles were simply mental struggles in the conscious unfolding of Spirit. Thus Hegel retreated into the idealist sphere of pure thought and denied the true motor of history: concrete, physical labor.

As opposed to Hegel's idealist philosophy, Marx instead adopted a historical materialist view of social reality. Historical materialism is historical in the sense that all ideas are embedded in their social contexts, and it is materialist in the sense that such ideas are the result of the organization of the material relations of society. Thus different modes of economic ownership produce different social relations and different sets of ideas. Whereas Nietzsche traced morals, cultural norms, and common sense beliefs back to the hidden source of power animating them, Marx traced cultural manifestations back to their economic determinants. And unlike Freud, who saw consciousness as determined by unconscious, libidinal forces, Marx saw personal consciousness as a reflex of the individual's particular location within the relations of production.

History for Marx is a dynamic process precisely because of the continual conflict that emerges between forms of ownership and the mode of production. For instance, in capitalism, there is a central contradiction between the individual ownership of the means of production by the capitalist class and the communal mode of production in the factories. Here, the unknowable thing-in-itself, which Kant's idealism could not adequately approach, is transformed by Marx's materialism into class struggle as the objective motor of history. In order to resolve this contradiction, the workers have to take over the means of production. Thus the truth of capitalist productivity and its promised wealth lies only with overcoming the limitations of the capitalist system with socialism.

As long as we live within a capitalist society, the class that controls the economic base also controls the production of ideas. Ideology articulates the ideas of the ruling class (individualism, profit, market logic, and the entrepreneurial spirit), transforming

class specific interests into common, social interests. Thus ideology acts to universalize and naturalize bourgeois ideas, and in the process conceals the fundamental and inescapable reality of class conflict. Because of its mystifying nature, ideology is conceived of as producing a false consciousness or a set of false ideas that merely act to reinforce the ruling class's dominance and ensure their position of power and prestige in the society. Therefore ideology for Marx is almost always associated with negative or pejorative connotations. Ideology is imposed upon the subjugated working class as a form of domination, preventing the working class from consciously recognizing that their objective interests stand opposed to those of the bourgeoisie.

While the basic premises of historical materialism remain largely unchallenged within Marxist debates, the function of ideology is hotly contested. For the Italian Marxist Antonio Gramsci (1891-1937), military/economic domination by a single class is not enough to maintain its position of power within a society; instead the ruling class must *legitimate* this rule. In order to lead the people, the dominant class cannot simply impose upon them a set of distorting and oppressive, ideologically infused ideas. The answer for Gramsci is that ideology must become common sense and is constructed in a struggle over hegemony and control between social groups. Hegemony is thus a contested terrain, a negotiated space, and a relationship of social power over subordinate groups. As opposed to Marx's concept of ideology, hegemony is not simply a false consciousness imposed upon the masses by the ruling class, obliterating working class values. In order to gain the consent of the subordinate class, hegemony attempts to take into account the needs, fears, and hopes of the populace. Put another way, hegemony must contain rhetorical constructs that attempt to *persuade* and *convince*. As such,

hegemony is never absolute domination of one class position over another. In summary, opposing class interests need to be addressed and rearticulated by a hegemonic political process. Hegemony thus incorporates subordinate groups into its coalition. The subordinate groups accept their inferior position without contestation, consenting to the domination of the ruling class. Put another way, they consent to be led by the ruling class. The important point here is that hegemonic power is not guaranteed simply by class position but must be won.

Struggles for hegemony take place in the realms of media culture and civil society. As Gramsci states, the press is most important weapon in constructing an ‘ideological front’. Also, civil societies, i.e. churches, schools, clubs, and so on, are all sites of hegemonic struggle. In order to understand how a hegemonic coalition is being formed, Gramsci argued that media culture and civic institutions are politically charged fields of contestation. As such, Gramsci moved Marxian analysis beyond its focus on economic relations of production and into the sphere of media culture.

As we can see, Gramsci’s view of hegemony is more dynamic than Marx’s formulation of ideology in three very distinct ways. 1) The hegemonic social position is never absolute but must be continually constructed, maintained, and defended. Domination over ideas is never guaranteed by one’s position in a system of economic production. 2) It is not purely false consciousness, but is a negotiation between a variety of voices that are stitched together into a dominant ideology that supports the ruling class agenda, and that will take different forms in different historical contexts and eras. 3) The struggle over culture and politics takes precedence in Gramsci’s theory as a necessary

component for gaining economic power, and as such, analysis of civic institutions and media culture becomes paramount for understanding hegemonic struggles.

Another central figure in rethinking historical materialism is Louis Althusser's (1918-1990) version of structural Marxism. First, Althusser seriously complicates any reductive reading of the Marxian base-superstructure distinction. While insisting that the mode of production is determinant in the last instance, Althusser grants a certain relative autonomy to the superstructure. Here society exists in an always already complex totality from which an originary class struggle cannot be extracted. The various elements within the superstructure relate to one another in terms of a differentiated unity wherein all struggles are 'overdetermined' by a series of antagonisms (political, cultural, and of course, economic). Second, Althusser, in contradistinction to Marx's purely negative reading of ideology, argues that ideology is productive and necessary for the individual to imagine his or her relationship to the social totality. Ideology might be illusory but it is also an allusion to very real material conditions. Furthermore, ideology is, as opposed to both Marx and Gramsci, largely unconscious and embedded in our material practices. Finally, by reading Marx closely, Althusser theorizes a new method of critical analysis which he coins 'symptomatic reading'. Symptomatic reading is the philosophical equivalent to clinical psychoanalysis, both of which expose the latent content that causes contradictions and inconsistencies within the manifest text: class conflict. These innovations, while controversial, offer important syntheses of Marxism with two other strains of cultural critique: structuralism and Lacanian psychoanalysis respectively. Thus Althusser, more than any other French Marxist of his generation, explored the

relationship between historical materialism, linguistics, and theories of the subject, producing a powerful form of Marxist criticism.

While there have been many different lineages of critical thought derived from historical materialism and ideological critique, the following sections of this text will look in some detail at two of the most influential: Frankfurt School critical theory and British Cultural Studies.

### **Frankfurt School Critical Theory**

The ‘Frankfurt School’ refers to a group of German American theorists who developed powerful analyses of the changes in Western capitalist societies that have occurred since the classical theory of Marx. Notably, the theorists loosely affiliated with the Frankfurt School shifted Marxism away from economic determinism towards a primary concern with the superstructure and with questions of culture and subjectivity. This radical shift in emphasis came about after failed revolutions in the early decades of the twentieth century, the subsequent disillusionment with classical Marxism, and the rise of advanced cultural institutions and media communications (all of which seemed to prevent mass movements from rebelling against capitalism).

Working at the *Institut für Sozialforschung* in Frankfurt, Germany in the late 1920s and early 1930s, theorists such as Max Horkheimer (1894-1972), T. W. Adorno (1903-1969), Herbert Marcuse (1898-1979), Leo Lowenthal (1900–1993), and Erich Fromm (1900-1980) produced some of the first accounts within critical social theory of the importance of mass culture and communication in social reproduction and domination

(Kellner, 1989). The Frankfurt School also generated one of the first models of a critical cultural studies that analyzes the processes of cultural production and political economy, the politics of cultural texts, and audience reception and use of cultural artifacts. Moving from Nazi Germany to the United States, the Frankfurt School experienced at first hand the rise of a media culture involving film, popular music, radio, television, and other forms of mass culture. In the United States, where they found themselves in exile, media production was by and large a form of commercial entertainment controlled by big corporations. Two of the Frankfurt School's key theorists, Max Horkheimer and T. W. Adorno, developed an account of the 'culture industry' to call attention to the industrialization and commercialization of culture under capitalist relations of production. This situation was most marked in the United States where there was little state support of film or television industries, and where a highly commercial mass culture emerged that came to be a distinctive feature of capitalist societies and a focus of critical cultural studies. As we shall see, their critical cultural studies model drew on Max Weber's theory of rationalization, Marxist categories such as alienation and ideology, and finally Freudian notions of repression, projection, and displacement.

During the 1930s, the Frankfurt School developed a critical and transdisciplinary approach to cultural and communications studies, combining political economy, textual analysis, and analysis of social and ideological effects of socio-cultural institutions and forms. They coined the term 'culture industry' to signify the process of the industrialization of mass-produced culture and the commercial imperatives that drove the system. The critical theorists analyzed all mass-mediated cultural artifacts within the context of industrial production, in which the commodities of the culture industries

exhibited the same features as other products of mass production: commodification, standardization, and massification. The culture industries had the specific function, however, of providing ideological legitimization of the existing capitalist societies and of integrating individuals into their way of life. Adorno's analyses of popular music, television, and other phenomena ranging from astrology columns to fascist speeches, Löwenthal's studies of popular literature and magazines (1961) and the perspectives and critiques of mass culture developed in Horkheimer and Adorno's famous study of the culture industries provide many examples of the Frankfurt School approach. In their view, mass culture and communications stand in the center of leisure activity, are important agents of socialization, mediators of political reality, and should thus be seen as major institutions of contemporary societies with a variety of economic, political, cultural and social effects.

Furthermore, the critical theorists investigated the cultural industries in a political context as a form of the integration of the working class into capitalist societies. The Frankfurt School theorists were among the first neo-Marxian groups to examine the effects of mass culture and the rise of the consumer society on the working classes which were to be the instrument of revolution in the classical Marxian scenario. In particular, Horkheimer and Adorno turned to Freud rather than to Marx in order to explain the lack of revolution in the working class. Because the proletariat was 'repressed' or, to use Fromm's language, 'feared freedom', they could not easily be transformed into the revolutionary subjects that Marx hypothesized. As such, questions of subjectivity came to dominate Frankfurt analyses of radical opposition. Horkheimer and Adorno also

utilized Freudian concepts such as projection in order to explain the role of racism in Nazi Germany.

As we can see, the project of the Frankfurt School required rethinking Marxian theory and produced many important contributions -- as well as some problematical positions. The Frankfurt School focused intently on technology and culture, indicating how technology was becoming both a major force of production and a formative mode of social organization and control. In a 1941 article, 'Some Social Implications of Modern Technology', Herbert Marcuse argued that technology in the contemporary era constitutes an entire 'mode of organizing and perpetuating (or changing) social relationships, a manifestation of prevalent thought and behavior patterns, an instrument for control and domination'. In the realm of culture, technology produced mass culture that habituated individuals to conform to the dominant patterns of thought and behavior, and thus provided powerful instruments of social control and domination.

Victims of European fascism, the Frankfurt School experienced first hand the ways that the Nazis used the instruments of mass culture to produce submission to fascist culture and society. While in exile in the United States, the members of the Frankfurt School came to believe that American 'popular culture' was also highly ideological and worked to promote the interests of American capitalism. Controlled by giant corporations, the culture industries were organized according to the strictures of mass production, churning out mass-produced products that generated a highly commercial system of culture, which in turn sold the values, life-styles, and institutions of 'the American way of life'. Thus within liberal democracy, the Frankfurt School witnessed

the seeds of fascism, deconstructing tried and true dichotomies that at the time positioned American ‘freedom’ in opposition to German ‘totalitarianism’.

Furthermore, both liberal democracy and fascism represented the dialectic of enlightenment whereby rationality turned against itself, becoming a mythology and a tool to promote ongoing domination of the self and of nature. Unlike Kant and Hegel who saw reason as an instrument of emancipation, members of the Frankfurt School, in particular Adorno, realized that reason itself contains within its own concept its negation. The germinal seeds of totalitarianism and domination inherent within reason were precisely the preconditions that enabled reason to be appropriated by capitalism in the name of labor exploitation and allowed science to divorce itself from ethical concerns and critical self-awareness. Thus with the Frankfurt School, philosophical criticism of enlightenment projects intersects with political and economic analysis to create one of the most impressive and comprehensive forms of criticism within the Marxist tradition. The net result is a dialectical, totalizing social theory which describes the contours, dynamics and tendencies of the philosophical, political, social, and economic historical situation.

Max Horkheimer and T. W. Adorno developed this dialectical theory of critique in a highly influential analysis of the culture industry published in their book *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, which first appeared in 1948 and was translated into English in 1972. They argued that the system of cultural production dominated by film, radio broadcasting, newspapers, and magazines, was controlled by advertising and commercial imperatives, and served to create subservience to the system of consumer capitalism. While later critics pronounced their approach too manipulative, reductive, and elitist, it provides an important corrective to more populist approaches to media culture that

downplay the way the media industries exert power over audiences and help produce thought and behavior that conforms to the existing society.

The Frankfurt School also provided useful historical perspectives on the transition from traditional culture and modernism in the arts to a mass-produced media and consumer society. In his path-breaking book *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere*, Jürgen Habermas (1929-) further historicizes Adorno and Horkheimer's analysis of the culture industry. Providing historical background to the triumph of the culture industry, Habermas notes how bourgeois society in the late 18th and 19th century was distinguished by the rise of a public sphere that stood between civil society and the state and which mediated between public and private interests. For the first time in history, individuals and groups could shape public opinion, giving direct expression to their needs and interests while influencing political practice. The bourgeois public sphere made it possible to form a realm of public opinion that opposed state power and the powerful interests that were coming to shape bourgeois society.

Habermas notes a transition from the liberal public sphere which originated in the Enlightenment and the American and French Revolutions to a media-dominated public sphere in the current stage of what he calls 'welfare state capitalism and mass democracy'. This historical transformation is grounded in Horkheimer and Adorno's analysis of the culture industry, in which giant corporations have taken over the public sphere and transformed it from a site of rational debate into one of manipulative consumption and passivity. In this transformation, 'public opinion' shifts from rational consensus emerging from debate, discussion, and reflection to the manufactured opinion of polls or media experts. For Habermas, the interconnection between the sphere of

public debate and individual participation has thus been fractured and transmuted into that of a realm of political manipulation and spectacle, in which citizen-consumers ingest and passively absorb entertainment and information. ‘Citizens’ thus become spectators of media presentations and discourse which arbitrate public discussion and reduce its audiences to objects of news, information, and public affairs.

Habermas's critics however, contend that he idealizes the earlier bourgeois public sphere by presenting it as a forum of rational discussion and debate when in fact the proletariat, many social groups, and most women were excluded (see the essays in Calhoun, 1992). These critics contend that Habermas neglects various oppositional working classes, plebeian, and women's public spheres developed alongside the bourgeois public sphere to represent voices and interests excluded in this forum. Yet Habermas is right that in the period of the democratic revolutions a public sphere emerged in which for the first time in history ordinary citizens could participate in political discussion and debate, organize, and struggle against unjust authority. Habermas's critical theory which focuses on communicative action also points to the increasingly important role of the media in politics and everyday life and the ways that corporate interests have colonized this sphere, using the media and culture to promote their own interests.

The American literary critic and philosopher Fredric Jameson (1934-) is today one of the leading figures in the second generation of Frankfurt School theorists. His widely influential text *Postmodernism or, the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism* (1991) utilizes Frankfurt School critical theory to analyze the ‘postmodern condition’ of late capitalism. Here Jameson argues for the centrality of meta-critique, periodization, and

totalization as methodological principles necessary for grasping the crisis in representation which accompanies globalization and is figured in much of postmodern media culture. Central to Jameson's political project is his insistence on 'cognitive mapping' as a precondition for renewed revolutionary activism. Here cognitive mapping refers to the necessary yet impossible representation of the social, political, and labor networks that structure relations between first and third worlds within the overall framework of transnational corporations and global economics. Without an adequate form of cognitive/aesthetic mapping, we remain disoriented and unable to effectively critique and combat new modes of capitalist oppression and exploitation. Thus Jameson reinvigorates the political thrust of Frankfurt School social theory in order to take into account the ever changing and ever expanding dimensions of capitalism.

### **British Cultural Studies and the Birmingham School**

The forms of culture described by the earliest phase of British cultural studies in the 1950s and early 1960s articulated conditions in an era in which there were still significant tensions in Britain and much of Europe between an older working class-based culture and the newer mass-produced culture whose models and exemplars were the products of American culture industries. The initial project of cultural studies developed by Richard Hoggart(1918-), Raymond Williams (1921-1988), and E. P. Thompson (1924-1993) attempted to preserve working class culture against onslaughts of mass culture produced by the culture industries. Thompson's historical inquiries into the history of British working class institutions and struggles, the defenses of working class culture by Hoggart

(1958) and Williams (1961), and their attacks on mass culture were part of a socialist and working class-oriented project that assumed that the industrial working class was a force of progressive social change and that it could be mobilized and organized to struggle against the inequalities of the existing capitalist societies and for a more egalitarian socialist one. Williams and Hoggart were deeply involved in projects of working class education and oriented toward socialist working class politics, seeing their form of cultural studies as an instrument of progressive social change.

The early critiques in the first wave of British cultural studies of Americanism and mass culture, in Hoggart, Williams, and others, thus paralleled to some extent the earlier critique of the Frankfurt School, yet valorized a working class that the Frankfurt School saw as defeated in Germany and much of Europe during the era of fascism and which they never saw as a strong resource for emancipatory social change. The early work of the Birmingham School was continuous with the radicalism of the first wave of British cultural studies (the Hoggart-Thompson-Williams ‘culture and society’ tradition) as well, in important ways, with the Frankfurt School. Yet the Birmingham project also paved the way for a postmodern populist turn in cultural studies, which responds to a later stage of capitalism.

It has not yet been recognized that the second stage of the development of British cultural studies -- starting with the founding of the University of Birmingham Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies in 1963/64 by Hoggart and Stuart Hall -- shared many key perspectives with the Frankfurt School. During this period, the Centre developed a variety of critical approaches for the analysis, interpretation, and criticism of cultural artifacts. Through a set of internal debates, and responding to social struggles and

movements of the 1960s and the 1970s, the Birmingham group came to focus on the interplay of representations and ideologies of class, gender, race, ethnicity, and nationality in cultural texts, including media culture. They were among the first to study the effects of newspapers, radio, television, film, and other popular cultural forms on audiences. They also focused on how various audiences interpreted and used media culture in varied and different ways and contexts, analyzing the factors that made audiences respond in contrasting ways to media texts.

The now classical period of British cultural studies from the early 1960s to the early 1980s continued to adopt a Marxian approach to the study of culture, one especially influenced by Althusser and Gramsci. Yet although Hall (1980a), Bennett (1982), and others usually omit the Frankfurt School from this narrative, some of the work done by the Birmingham group replicated certain classical positions of the Frankfurt School, in their social theory and methodological models for doing cultural studies, as well as in their political perspectives and strategies. Like the Frankfurt School, British cultural studies observed the integration of the working class and its decline of revolutionary consciousness, and studied the conditions of this catastrophe for the Marxian project of revolution. Like the Frankfurt School, British cultural studies concluded that mass culture was playing an important role in integrating the working class into existing capitalist societies and that a new consumer and media culture was forming a new mode of capitalist hegemony. Both traditions focused on the intersections of culture and ideology and saw ideology critique as central to a critical cultural studies. Both saw culture as a mode of ideological reproduction and hegemony, in which cultural forms help to shape the modes of thought and behavior that induce individuals to adapt to the social

conditions of capitalist societies. Both also saw culture as a form of resistance to capitalist society and both the earlier forerunners of British cultural studies, especially Raymond Williams, and the theorists of the Frankfurt School see high culture as forces of resistance to capitalist modernity. Later, British cultural studies would valorize resistant moments in media culture and audience interpretations and use of media artifacts, while the Frankfurt School tended, with some exceptions, to see mass culture as a homogeneous and potent form of ideological domination -- a difference that would seriously divide the two traditions.

From the beginning, British cultural studies was highly political in nature and focused on the potentials for social critique in oppositional subcultures, first, valorizing the potential of working class cultures and, then, youth subcultures to resist the hegemonic forms of capitalist domination. Unlike the classical Frankfurt School (but similar to Herbert Marcuse), British cultural studies turned to youth cultures as providing potentially new forms of opposition and social change. Through studies of youth subcultures, British cultural studies demonstrated how culture came to constitute distinct forms of identity and group membership and appraised the oppositional potential of various youth subcultures (see for instance Dick Hebdige, 1979). Cultural studies came to focus on how subcultural groups resist dominant forms of culture and identity, creating their own style and identities. Individuals who conform to dominant dress and fashion codes, behavior, and political ideologies thus produce their identities within mainstream groups, as members of specific social groupings (such as white, middle-class conservative Americans).

But British cultural studies, unlike the Frankfurt School, has not adequately engaged modernist and avant-garde aesthetic movements, limiting its focus by and large to products of media culture and ‘the popular’ which has become an immense focus of its efforts. It appears that in its anxiety to legitimate study of the popular and to engage the artifacts of media culture, British cultural studies has turned away from so-called ‘high’ culture in favor of the popular. But such a turn sacrifices the possible insights into all forms of culture and replicates the bifurcation of the field of culture into a ‘popular’ and ‘elite’ (which merely inverts the positive/negative valorizations of the older high/low distinction).

Against academic formalism and separatism, cultural studies-- like the metatheoretical framework of the Frankfurt School-- insists that culture must be investigated within the social relations and system through which culture is produced and consumed, and that thus analysis of culture is intimately bound up with the study of society, politics, and economics. Employing Gramsci's model of hegemony and counter-hegemony, it sought to analyze ‘hegemonic’, or ruling, social and cultural forces of domination and to seek ‘counter-hegemonic’ forces of resistance and struggle. The project was aimed at social transformation and attempted to specify forces of domination and resistance in order to aid the process of political struggle and emancipation from oppression and domination.

Some earlier authoritative presentations of British cultural studies stressed the importance of a transdisciplinary approach to the study of culture that analyzed its political economy, process of production and distribution, textual products, and reception by the audience -- positions remarkably similar to the Frankfurt School. For instance, in

his classical programmatic article, ‘Encoding/Decoding’ (1980b), Stuart Hall began his analysis by using Marx's *Grundrisse* as a model to trace the articulations of ‘a continuous circuit’, encompassing ‘production - distribution - consumption – production’. Hall concretizes this model with focus on how media institutions produce meanings, how they circulate, and how audiences use or decode the texts to produce meaning.

In more recent cultural studies, however, there has been a turn to what might be called a postmodern problematic which emphasizes pleasure, consumption, and the individual construction of identities in terms of what Jim McGuigan (1992) has called a ‘cultural populism’. Media culture from this perspective produces material for identities, pleasures, and empowerment, and thus audiences constitute the ‘popular’ through their consumption of cultural products. During this phase -- roughly from the mid-1980s to the present -- cultural studies in Britain and North America and then globally turned from the socialist and revolutionary politics of the previous stages to postmodern forms of identity politics and less critical perspectives on media and consumer culture. Emphasis was placed more and more on the audience, consumption, and reception, and displaced focus on production and distribution of texts and how texts were produced in media industries. Yet it could be argued that this form of postmodern cultural studies theorizes a shift from the stage of state monopoly capitalism, or Fordism, rooted in mass production and consumption to a new regime of capital and social order described by Jameson as postmodern and characterizing a transnational and global capital that valorizes difference, multiplicity, eclecticism, populism, and intensified consumerism in a new information/entertainment society. As such, a postmodern cultural studies is a response to an

emergent era of global capitalism, functioning both as a symptom and as a diagnostic tool.

During the current stage of cultural studies there is a widespread tendency to decenter, or even ignore completely, economics, history, and politics in favor of emphasis on local pleasures, consumption, and the construction of hybrid identities from the material of the popular. This cultural populism replicates the turn in postmodern theory away from Marxism and its alleged reductionism, master narratives of liberation and domination, and historical teleology. In fact, as McGuigan (1992) has documented, British cultural studies has had an unstable relationship with political economy from the beginning. Generally speaking, rather than take up Frankfurt School insights into industrial capitalism, Hall and other practitioners of British cultural studies (i.e. Bennett, Fiske, Hartley, et al) either simply dismiss the Frankfurt School as a form of economic reductionism or simply ignore it. Yet this dismissal seriously misrepresents the dialectic strengths of the Frankfurt School's theory of capitalism and critically hinders the explanatory power of British Cultural Studies.

The emphasis in postmodernist cultural studies articulates experiences and phenomena within an emerging mode of social organization. The emphasis on active audiences, resistant readings, oppositional texts, utopian moments, and the like describes an era in which individuals are trained to be more active media consumers, and in which they are given a much wider choice of cultural materials, corresponding to a developing global and transnational capitalism with a much broader array of consumer choices, products, and services. In this regime, difference sells, and the differences, multiplicities, and heterogeneity valorized in postmodern theory describes the proliferation of

differences and multiplicity in a new social order predicated on proliferation of consumer desires and needs. The forms of hybrid culture and identities described by postmodern cultural studies correlate with a globalized capitalism with an intense flow of products, culture, people, and identities and with novel configurations of the global and local and new forms of struggles and resistance. Corresponding to the structure of a globalized and hybridized culture are proliferations of cultural studies, which, in order to regain their critical capacities, must combine with the more progressive elements in Frankfurt School social theory and thus produce a more synthetic and comprehensive analysis of cultural resistance and cultural homogenization within techno-capitalism.

### **Social Movements, the Politics of Representation, and Postcolonial Critique**

Following the poststructuralist moment of the late 1960s and 1970s, there was a proliferation of new critical theories that connected with new social movements, producing a proliferation of ‘posts’ and theory wars from the 1970s to the present. Critical theories turned to a ‘politics of representation’ during the 1960s and 1970s that linked critique with social movements. This enterprise involved analysis of the ways that images, discourses, and narratives of a wide range of cultural forms from philosophy and the sciences to the advertising and entertainment of media culture were embedded in texts and reproduced social domination and subordination. Critical theories thus developed within feminisms, critical race theory, gay and lesbian theory, and other groupings associated with new oppositional political movements. Feminists, for instance, demonstrated how gender bias infected disciplines from philosophy to literary study and

was embedded in texts ranging from classics of the canon to the mundane artifacts of popular culture. In similar ways, critical race theorists demonstrated how racial bias permeated cultural artifacts, while gay and lesbian theorists demonstrated sexual bias. Although each of these movements constitutes its own unique notion of critique, here we will focus on two trajectories: feminism and post-colonialism.

Although most often associated with the sixties and the seventies, feminism is far from a contemporary theoretical and political invention. Mary Wollstonecraft's (1759-1797) *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* first published in 1792 argued that Enlightenment freedom could not be fully achieved without equality of men and women. Thus Wollstonecraft clearly recognized the centrality of gender in political and economic struggles against oppression. Developing a wide range of critical tools, feminism has, since Wollstonecraft, made a variety of important interventions into many of the critical traditions we have thus far discussed, including psychoanalysis, Marxism, and critical theory, while at the same time forming unique projects for the liberation of women and society as such.

In relation to psychoanalysis, theorists such as Simone de Beauvoir (1908-1986) furthered the feminist theoretical project by famously arguing that women (and by extension, men) are made, not born. In *The Second Sex* (1952) she drew a critical distinction between sex and gender missed by Freud, wherein sex is biological and gender is constructed socially and politically. As such, gender becomes contingent, the product of a certain power relationship within cultural traditions. Nancy Chodorow (1944-) has further exposed Freud's sexism by systematically criticizing his more patriarchal concepts and his normative reliance on male sexuality to define women as

castrated and scarred. Emerging from such studies are two principle concepts in feminist criticisms of ideology: phallocentrism and patriarchy. Here phallocentrism refers to male dominance both in the collective imagination and in the history of production, reproduction, and social formations. French psychoanalyst and philosopher Luce Irigaray (1932-) has attempted to construct a theory of female sexual pleasure outside of such phallocentrism. In Irigaray's comprehensive criticism of western phallocentrism, female sexuality has been systematically foreclosed. Thus patriarchy operates via the exclusion of the feminine, which returns as a silence or as an absent presence within male, heterosexual discourses. Irigaray then proposes a series of psychoanalytic concepts which do not fall into the trap of phallocentrism, reorienting questions of sexual pleasure away from male genitals towards unique configurations of female sex organs and the resulting pleasures.

Others have utilized feminist critique to address serious lacks, oversights, and gender biases in Marxian theory. Nancy Hartsock's (1943-) work provides some theoretical concepts needed to understand gendered relations of domination (Harding, 2004). Drawing on both Marx's historical materialism as well as Georg Lukács' standpoint theory, Hartsock argues that women's position in social relations generates positive knowledge of the social totality lost in more traditional, male-centered accounts of the proletariat. Women are in a privileged social position to understand the politics of phallocentrism embedded in the sexual division of labor and thus reveal a level of oppression barely touched upon in classical Marxism. For Hartsock, feminist consciousness-- predicated on human reproduction-- reaches a level of social strata beneath class-consciousness, which is located in the sphere of economic production

alone. As such, Hartsock's Marxian infused feminist standpoint theory opens up an important theoretical problematic: the relation between reproduction of life and the reproduction of labor-power.

Judith Butler (1956-) offers a uniquely postmodern form of feminist criticism that calls upon a variety of traditions including psychoanalysis, deconstruction, and queer theory, as well as Foucault's theory of power. Butler further complicates analysis of gender by arguing that the classical distinction between sex and gender ultimately deconstructs itself and that sex is always already gendered and as such socially constituted and performed. By limiting feminist scholarship to the sex/gender binary, feminism has become complicit with heteronormative values which ultimately maintain the concepts of 'man' and 'woman' as essentialized substances. Here heterosexuality becomes an exclusive domain of truth that excludes queer subjectivities from being incorporated into feminist thought, and as such feminism itself becomes a mode of oppression.

Patricia Hill Collins (1948-) and bell hooks (1952-) further feminist scholarship by introducing the dimension of racism and race relations. Hill Collins (Harding, 2004) in particular theorizes a black feminist epistemology which emphasizes the centrality of the African American experiences as a source for producing new knowledge as well as powerful criticisms of the sexism and racism within a white, male dominated patriarchal society. Most importantly, bell hooks critiques both male patriarchy as well as white feminism for marginalizing issues of race, racism, and class. For hooks, class, race, and gender are integral factors in the constitution of subjectivity and must be discussed together in order to have a more comprehensive notion of the critique of representation

and of oppression. Other feminists such as Uma Narayan (1958-) (Harding, 2004) place feminism within a global sphere, offering a third world critique of Eurocentric feminist epistemologies, methodologies, and practices and open up a ‘third space’ for the articulation of non-western women’s voices, standpoints, and epistemologies. Thus Narayan merges postcolonial theory and feminism, moving us onto the last topic in this review: postcolonial criticism.

Postcolonial criticism, in its broadest definition, concerns the analysis of colonization, neocolonization, and postcolonization within a global economic, political, and social context. Emerging from multiple struggles to liberate the ‘third world’ from European colonial enterprises, postcolonial theory is most often associated with resistance movements against cultural appropriation/misrepresentation (‘orientalism’) by the west as well as economic exploitation. Also of importance is the analysis of the subjectivity of both the colonizer and the colonized. In *Black Skins, White Masks* (1967), Franz Fanon (1925-1961) developed a psychoanalytic/existential theory of psychological alienation which results from the colonial condition. According to Fanon, the colonized are forced to identify with and, in turn, internalize the image of the colonizer, thus becoming their own oppressors. The result is a form of psychological alienation which Fanon articulates using Marxist theories of alienation and psychoanalysis, as well as his own experiences as a black psychologist working during the Algerian War.

Third, postcolonial studies attempts to deconstruct Eurocentric representations of the cultural ‘other’. Critics such as Edward Said (1935-2003) have demonstrated the imperialist assumptions at work within the western canon of literature and art. He exposes how racist images of the ‘exoticized’ east legitimated European and United

States colonial occupations. Finally, Homi Bhabha (1949-) and Gayatri Spivak (1942-) search for forms of resistance in subversion and mimicry. These authors, heavily influenced by deconstruction, always foreground their analyses with an understanding that such resistance-- far from the total revolution advocated by Fanon in *The Wretched of the Earth* (1961) -- is itself informed by and inscribed within the very matrix of the colonizer's views of freedom, liberty, etc. As such hybridity (the constantly shifting and intersecting relationship between cultural, economic, and political systems within colonization) becomes a central issue for postcolonial theorists interested in the question of national culture, identity politics, and the deconstruction of reductive dichotomies that separate out the 'civilized' west from the 'primitive' east.

## **Conclusion**

In conclusion we would advocate that critique must, as Hegel suggested, become familiar with its own historically conditioned past. Rather than support one theory over the other, we would also argue that a 'multiperspectival' approach to critique is necessary in order to account for all forms of political, economic, and social oppression, subjugation, and exploitation. Thus we must analyze each theory of critique in terms of its strength and weaknesses, progressive moments and conservative limitations, and work towards a more robust theory of criticism that is capable of cognitively mapping the vast system of global capitalism that functions within and conditions a predominantly Eurocentric, patriarchal, white, heteronormative, male-dominated global economy and networked society.

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