

CRITICAL
THEORY,
MARXISM
AND
MODERNITY

DOUGLAS KELLNER

*For five terrific friends: Bob Antonio,
Steve Best, Steve Bronner, Judy Burton
and Gloria Gannaway*

Copyright © Douglas Kellner 1989

First published 1989 by
The Johns Hopkins University Press
701 West 40th Street
Baltimore, Maryland 21211-2190

Second printing, paperback, 1992

All rights reserved. Except for the quotation of short passages for the purposes of criticism and review, no part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted, in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise, without the prior permission of the publisher.

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Kellner, Douglas, 1943-

Critical theory, Marxism, and modernity / Douglas Kellner.

p. cm.—(Parallax : re-visions of culture and society)

Bibliography: p.

Includes index.

ISBN 0-8018-3913-0.—ISBN 0-8018-3914-9 (pbk.)

1. Critical theory. I. Title. II. Series: Parallax (Baltimore, Md.)

HM24.K445 1989 89-32113

301'.01-dk20 CIP

Contents

Preface and Acknowledgments	vii
Bibliographical Abbreviations	ix
1 THEORY, POLITICS AND HISTORY	1
1.1 Critical Theory and Modernity	3
1.2 Critical Theory and the Crisis of Marxism	9
1.3 The Institute for Social Research	13
2 FROM SUPRADISCIPLINARY MATERIALISM TO CRITICAL THEORY: THE 1930s PROGRAM	22
2.1 Supradisciplinary Materialism	22
2.2 Toward a Materialist Social Psychology	35
2.3 Traditional and Critical Theory	43
3 ECONOMY, STATE, SOCIETY: NEW THEORIES OF CAPITALISM AND FASCISM	51
3.1 Political Sociology and Political Economy	52
3.2 From Market to Monopoly/State Capitalism	55
3.3 Fascism	66
3.4 Fragments of a Theory of Society	76
4 FROM DIALECTIC OF ENLIGHTENMENT TO THE AUTHORITARIAN PERSONALITY: CRITICAL THEORY IN THE 1940s	83
4.1 Science, Reason and <i>Dialectic of Enlightenment</i>	85
4.2 <i>Eclipse of Reason</i>	101
4.3 Critical Theory, the Proletariat and Politics	104
4.4 <i>Studies in Prejudice</i> and the Return to Germany	114

5	FROM 'AUTHENTIC ART' TO THE CULTURE INDUSTRIES	121
5.1	Dialectics of Culture	122
5.2	Critical Theory and the Culture Industry	130
5.3	New Critical Perspectives on Mass Communications and Culture	140
6	FROM THE CONSUMER SOCIETY TO POSTMODERNISM	146
6.1	Critical Theory and the Consumer Society	147
6.2	New Critical Perspectives on Commodities, Needs and Consumption	158
6.3	Critical Theory, Modernity and Postmodernity	167
7	TECHNO-CAPITALISM	176
7.1	Technology, Capitalism and Domination	178
7.2	The Capitalist State	191
7.3	Toward a New Crisis Theory: Habermas and Offe	196
8	THEORY AND PRACTICE: THE POLITICS OF CRITICAL THEORY	204
8.1	Critical Theory and Radical Politics	205
8.2	Techno-Capitalism, Crisis and Social Transformation	211
8.3	New Social Movements and Socialist Politics	218
8.4	For Supradisciplinary Radical Social Theory with a Practical Intent	230
	Notes	234
	Index	268

Literature

A Johns Hopkins Paperback

From its beginnings in the 1930s, the critical theory of the so-called Frankfurt School has refused to situate itself within any arbitrary or conventional academic divisions. Traversing and undermining boundaries between competing disciplines, it stresses interconnections among philosophy, economics and politics, culture and society.

In *Critical Theory, Marxism, and Modernity* Douglas Kellner sets out the fundamental ideas and arguments of critical theory as they relate to the central issues in radical social theory and offers incisive interpretations of the theoretical tradition from its beginnings to the present.

Critical theory began as a Marxian critique of capitalist modernity, Kellner contends, and moved away from orthodox Marxism in response to the events of twentieth-century history. Kellner explores the effects of historical crises of capitalism and Marxism on critical theory and reflects on the continued relevance or obsolescence of Marxism and critical theory. "During the 1960s, many among my generation of New Left radicals turned for theoretical and political guidance to the works of Max Horkheimer, Herbert Marcuse, T.W. Adorno, Erich Fromm, Leo Lowenthal, Frederick Pollock, Jürgen Habermas, and their colleagues," he writes. "As we move into the 1990s critical theory might help produce theoretical and political perspectives which could be part of a Left Turn that could reanimate the political hopes of the 1960s, while helping overcome and reverse the losses and regression of the 1980s."

Douglas Kellner is professor of philosophy at the University of Texas, Austin.

Parallax: Re-visions of Culture and Society

Stephen G. Nichols, Gerald Prince, and Wendy Steiner, Series Editors

Cover design by Hybert • Design & Type • Maidenhead

The Johns Hopkins University Press
Baltimore



ISBN 0-8018-3914-9



9 780801 839146