

---



---

## Toward a Critical Theory of Television

---



---

*Television will be of no importance in your lifetime or mine.*

—Bertrand Russell

*Once television is truly national it will become the most important medium that exists. Everything that it does or does not do will be important.*

—Norman Collins

*Chewing gum for the eyes.*

—Frank Lloyd Wright

*The luminous screen in the home carries fantastic authority. Viewers everywhere tend to accept it as a window on the world, and to watch it for hours each day. Viewers feel that they understand, from television alone, what is going on in the world. They unconsciously look to it for guidance as to what is important, good, and desirable, and what is not. It has tended to displace or overwhelm other influences such as newspapers, school, church, grandpa, grandma. It has become the definer and transmitter of a society's values.*

—Erik Barnouw

In excess of 750 million TV sets in more than 160 countries are watched by 2.5 billion people per day. Although there is no consensus regarding television's nature and impact (as the quotes that open this chapter attest), the ubiquity and centrality of television in our everyday lives are obvious. At present, almost every home in the United States has a television set that is turned on for more than seven hours per day. Individuals spend more time watching television than in any other leisure activity and, cumulatively, far more time in front of the television than in school; only work absorbs more waking time. Furthermore, polls reveal that more people

depend on television for news and information than on any other source, and that it is the most trusted source of news and information.<sup>1</sup>

Given television's penetration into everyday life, the controversy surrounding it is not surprising. The controversy intensifies in the light of debates over its social and political functions. Television has been deeply implicated in post-World War II presidential elections, the cold war, the Vietnam War and other struggles of the 1960s, and the major political controversies of its era, sometimes referred to as the Age of Television (Bogart 1956). There is little agreement, however, concerning television's social and political effects. Some commentators argue that television has overwhelmingly defended conservative economic and political interests. Others have argued that television has had a primarily liberal bias, bringing down such conservatives as Joseph McCarthy and Richard Nixon, undermining the U.S. intervention in Vietnam, and promoting a liberal agenda of social reform and change.<sup>2</sup>

A series of equally heated controversies surround television's impact on everyday life. Whereas some claim that television promotes violence, others maintain that its effects are primarily "pro-social." Defenders of the industry see television as promoting a democratic, egalitarian, populist culture; critics argue that it is creating a vast cultural wasteland. Some see it as a "tube of plenty" that provides a wealth of entertainment and information; others attack it as promoting ideological domination and manipulation of the masses by dominant social groups and forces. And some social scientists perceive television as a powerful instrument of socialization, while others dismiss it as harmless entertainment, "chewing gum for the eyes."<sup>3</sup>

### 1.1 Theorizing Television

Despite these and other controversies, few attempts have been made to provide a systematic theory of television that articulates its relations with the chief institutions of contemporary capitalist society and defines its impact on social and political life. Surprisingly, it has not received the sort of systematic theoretical scrutiny that has been directed toward other major institutions, such as the state, the corporation, the military, the family, and the education system. Of all contemporary institutions, the system of television is the one most neglected, mystified, and undertheorized.

Of course, many books on television have emerged. Several detail the history and economics of television, and a growing number are concerned with analyzing its influence on contemporary politics. Its impact on socialization has been widely studied, and many criticisms of its effects have been mounted, ranging from attacks on its promotion of sex and violence to its alleged political biases. In addition, there are countless books about the television industry as well as about its programming and personalities.

An even greater amount of material is published daily in newspapers, magazines, and journals, ranging from scholarly and academic studies to TV reviews and gossip. Yet there are few critical theories of television that situate it within the institutional and systemic framework of the existing social order.

Television thus has many critics, commentators, and celebrants—but few theorists. The critiques themselves have largely been determined by the political views of the critics. Conservatives, for example, claim that television is a liberal medium that subverts traditional values. Liberals and radicals, by contrast, often criticize television for its domination by business imperatives and conservative values. Liberals decry trends toward monopoly in television, restrictions on freedom of the press, and what they see as distortions and misuse of television in certain instances (Skornia 1965, 1968; Bagdikian 1987). Radicals argue that television reproduces a conservative status quo and provides powerful tools for managing social conflict and for selling the values and life-styles of corporate capitalism. Theories of television thus tend to focus on television's political functions and values, and often reproduce the political perspectives of theorists.

### **The Politics of Theory**

Conservatives frequently criticize new forms of popular culture and mass media that they see as a subversive threat to traditional values and institutions.<sup>4</sup> In the 1960s conservative values were under attack by the new social movements of that era and, as noted, some conservatives saw television as a primarily liberal medium. In 1969, for example, Vice President Spiro Agnew carried out an assault against "Eastern-establishment" news media. Noting that a recent Vietnam speech by Richard Nixon was followed immediately by critical analysis on the television networks, Agnew complained that the president's talk had been "subjected to instant analysis and querulous criticism . . . by a small band of network commentators and self-appointed analysts, the majority of whom expressed in one way or another their hostility to what he had to say." Agnew claimed that a "small group of men" decide what the country will learn each day, and that they have acquired the power to make or break politicians or policies. These journalists, Agnew continued, are highly parochial and share the same liberal biases. Such concentration of cultural power is intolerable, he argued, and should be carefully scrutinized by the government (Agnew, cited in Emery and Smythe 1972, 309ff.).

In later speeches, Agnew referred to this "Eastern, liberal-biased" media establishment as an "effete corps of impudent snobs" and as "nattering nabobs of negativism" (Barnouw 1975, 443ff.) A variety of conservative scholars and commentators have subsequently taken the position that network

television has a "liberal bias." In a study of the 1968 election, Edith Efron (1972) concluded that television was overwhelmingly prejudiced against Richard Nixon and in favor of Hubert Humphrey, given the positive and negative presentations of the two candidates on the nightly news programs. Ernest Lefever (1974) found that CBS's coverage of defense-related issues in 1972-1973 reflected unfavorably on the U.S. military and was slanted toward detente with the Soviet Union. Still others argue that, according to their research, reporters for the major news media were overwhelmingly liberal in their political orientations (Lichter, Rothman, Lichter 1986). (Some of these claims, however, were contested: see Stevenson, et al. 1973.)

These conservatives critiques have formed part of the ideology of the "New Right," which emerged in the late 1970s. The New Right became increasingly critical of the "new class" within the media, claiming that its biases are liberal, "collectivist," and "anti-free enterprise." This position was promoted for several years by TV Guide, which employed conservatives such as Edith Efron, Patrick Buchanan, Kevin Phillips, and others who argued that television subverted traditional values and promoted a left-liberal sociopolitical agenda. Efron, for instance, claimed that television became a mouthpiece for "ecological stop-growth types," "nuclear Luddites and plutonophobes," and "Third World and socialist tyrannies," all the while exhibiting hostility toward "U.S. business, U.S. labor, the U.S. military and U.S. technology." In short, she claimed, it promotes the agenda of the New Left (TV Guide, October 8, 1977, pp. A5-A6).

In a series of corporate ads, Mobil oil corporation claimed that "leading reporters and editors of major newspapers and television networks have distinct hostilities toward businessmen" (cited in Dreier 1987: 64). A similar position concerning television entertainment was advanced by Ben Stein (1979), who attacked television programming for promoting antibusiness, antimilitary, and antitraditional values. Stein contends that the Hollywood community, which produces TV entertainment, is an "extremely energetic and militant class" that uses its cultural power to attack competing social elites and to propagate its ultraliberal views. Segments of the New Right have focused their critiques on television entertainment as well, claiming that it subverts traditional religious values while promoting "secular humanism."

Another group of critiques emerged in the 1970s. For instance, Daniel Bell (1976) argued that television and the mass media have been instrumental in promoting a new consumer ethic and hedonistic life-style that contradict the older capitalist-protestant production ethic with its emphasis on hard work, saving, delayed gratification, the family, religion, and other traditional values.<sup>5</sup> "Neoconservative" critics such as Daniel Moynihan, Robert Nisbet, and Samuel Huntington maintain that television has eroded respect for authority by exposing political scandals (as well as business corruption and

failures) while fostering cynicism, distrust, and disrespect for the system as a whole. These critics complain that the media have gone too far in their "adversary" function and have eroded the president's power, thus "seriously and dangerously" weakening "the state's ability to govern" (Moynihan 1973, 315). The neoconservatives claim that television has helped produce an "adversary culture," and Crozier et al. (1975) specifically assert that it has promoted a "democratic distemper."

The liberal approach to television and popular culture is divided into two camps. One critical position focuses on television's institutional setting and function within contemporary capitalist democracies (Siepmann 1950; Friendly 1967; Skornia 1965; and Bagdikian 1987). The other, more pluralist position focuses, often affirmatively, on the cultural and social functions of television. Liberal critics usually document the abuses of television caused by excessive corporate control of television and the placement of profit above all other values and goals. They hold that if television were both more fully competitive and in the service of democratic goals, the medium could be embraced as an important institution in a pluralist, democratic social order.

The liberal pluralist position is detailed, along with some conservative and radical critiques, in the anthology *Mass Culture*, edited by Bernard Rosenberg and David White (1957). White presents television and popular culture as parts of a democratic, pluralistic cultural system that provides a marketplace of ideas and entertainment as well as a diversity of choices. This position is also elaborated in Herbert Gans's (1974) study of "taste cultures," which celebrates the liberal pluralist view of culture—and television—in the United States. The affirmative liberal position is reflected as well in James Carey's (1988) description of television and popular culture as a "communalistic ritual" in which a culture celebrates its dominant values, institutions, and way of life. This view is elaborated by Paul Hirsch and Horace Newcomb (1987), who present television as a "cultural forum" in which society presents, debates, and works out its values, problems, and identity. The liberal position also shapes some of the work being done by members of the Popular Culture Association, which views television positively as an important expression of dominant values in the United States.

Although liberals have not developed a distinct and systematic institutional theory or critique of television, most sociological studies of how news is produced tend to take a liberal bent. These studies see the production of news as a consequence of complex organizational imperatives, which in turn result from the interplay of economic and ideological constraints by management, professional codes and news values, and the interaction of a variety of reporters. Most of these liberal sociological studies (Epstein 1973; Altheide 1976; Gans 1979) see news in terms of a liberal consensus produced through a series of compromises and complex interactions. They call into

question the conservative claim that television has a liberal bias by emphasizing how the allegedly liberal bias of reporters is countered by the processes of gatekeeping and filtering, which tend to exclude socially critical stories and radical points of view. The studies also point to the ways in which the constraints in news production force the news media to rely on establishment sources and, hence, to disproportionately favor pro-business and pro-government points of view.

Radicals have variously conceptualized television as part of "an ideological state apparatus" (Althusser, 1971), as a "mind manager" (Schiller 1973), as "the cultural arm of the industrial order" (Gerbner 1976), as an instrument that "maintains hegemony and legitimates the status quo" (Tuchman 1974), as a "looking glass" that provides a distorted and ideological view of social life (Rapping 1987), as an instrument that "invents reality" according to the needs and imperatives of corporate capitalism (Parenti 1987), and as a propaganda machine that "manufactures consent" to the existing sociopolitical order (Herman and Chomsky 1988; Herman 1988; Chomsky 1989). In a sense, only the radicals have attempted to provide even a rudimentary account of television's place in the system of institutions established in the United States and to analyze its sociopolitical functions and effects. The conservative critique focuses on television's alleged liberal bias, and I have seen no systematic liberal attempt to theorize television as a key institution within contemporary U.S. society.

### *The Logic of Accumulation and Exclusion*

In this book, I shall generally take the radical position, although I argue that television has contradictory social functions and effects: Sometimes it reproduces the status quo in a highly conservative manner, and sometimes it promotes (liberal) change and social reforms. Against models of contemporary U.S. society that project a pluralist concept of television as a major institutional force between big business and big government, I argue that, in a capitalist society, the state, media, and other major institutions are predominantly controlled by business—that is, by the capitalist class. A capitalist society is a system of commodity production defined by a set of social relations marked by private ownership of the means of production and production for private profit. In such a society, workers are forced to sell their labor power to the capitalists, who own the means of production; and the capitalists extract at least part of their profit from unpaid labor time (Marx and Engels 1978).

A capitalist society is therefore a class society divided between those who own and control the means of production and those who do not and are thus forced to sell their labor.<sup>6</sup> This class division is often described as an opposition between the ruling (or capitalist) class and the working

class. The ruling class, in turn, is divided into various class sectors, just as capital is divided into various fields. The capitalist class is divided between big and small business sectors and between transnational and national corporations. Big business is divided into various sectors such as heavy manufacturing, finance, communications, and oil.

The ruling class often competes internally, as when struggles erupt between big business and small business or between the manufacturing and finance sectors. In a competitive market society, competition among different firms within a sector constitutes another form of conflict. Business sometimes unites to struggle against workers or reform movements; but, on the whole, capitalist society is characterized by conflict and struggle among the different class sectors and classes. In a highly competitive society, such conflict is inevitable—especially if certain groups are oppressed or exploited. Thus, tension, structural antagonism, and struggle are permanent and constituent features of capitalist society.

Marx and Engels argued that the ruling ideas in a given society are those of the ruling class, and that these ideas express the interests of the dominant class in an idealized form (1978, 172). Thus in feudal society, the ruling ideas were those of chivalry, honor, valor, and spirituality—precisely the ideas of the ruling strata. In capitalist society, individualism, competition, winning, material success, and other capitalist ideas are highly esteemed and likewise reflect the interests and ideas of the ruling class.

"Ideology" smooths over differences between classes and presents idealized visions of class harmony and consensus. Ruling classes attempt to present their ideas as universal and their interests as the common interests; thus ideology presents historically contingent ideas, such as the "innate" aggressiveness and egotism of human beings, as the "ways of the world." Ideas such as competition and the right to accumulate unlimited amounts of money and property, which reflect the interests of the capitalist class, are presented as the interests of everyone, as universally valid ideas. The media—one of a series of "ideological apparatuses" along with the state, the church, schooling, and the family (Althusser 1971)—produce ideology and thus serve the interests of the ruling class by idealizing existing institutions, practices, and ideas. In this context, ideology refers to a set of ideas that legitimate the existing organization of society and obscure class/gender/race domination, oppression, exploitation, inequality, and the like (Kellner 1978).

Ideology thus attempts to obscure social antagonisms and conflicts—a function that the media carry out in their entertainment and information programs. In opposition to liberals and others who conceptualize U.S. society as a pluralistic system that maintains a balance and harmony of power, I view U.S. society as a terrain of struggle, as a terrain contested by various economic, gender, and racial groups and forces that is nevertheless

dominated by the state, media, and big business. My working assumption is that the capitalist mode of production structures dominant institutions, technologies, media, social practices, and ideologies into a capitalist system. But I also assume that individuals will struggle against their exploitation and oppression, that the interests of capitalists and workers are fundamentally opposed, and that tension and struggle are thus inherent features of capitalist society.

Capitalism is a system of production of commodities in which private corporations attempt to maximize their profits through accumulation of capital in a system of private enterprise. To protect their interests and to expand their wealth and power, the most powerful capitalist forces attempt to control such institutions as the state and the media. Television enters into this terrain and mediates between different institutions and social forces, all the while growing in power and influence within the contemporary sociopolitical scene in the United States. In capitalist society, the logic of capital accumulation is the key constitutive force in the economy. By the same token, in the system of commercial broadcasting that has developed in the United States, capital accumulation is the primary motor of the television industry. In this system, the commercial television corporations are primarily business enterprises concerned with the maximum accumulation of capital. Like other corporations, they are organized to extract the maximum of profit from the production process. This involves producing programming that will attract large audiences for the advertisers who support the commercial system of television in the United States. It also involves, like other enterprises, exploitation of producers and consumers, though the process of exploitation is more subtle in the extraction of profit in the television industry. Like other productive enterprises, the television industry will obviously pay their employees cumulatively less than the total amount of value produced by their labor. Yet exploitation in the television industry is highly uneven, as top executives are regularly paid over one million dollars a year and celebrities, ranging from newscast anchors to top-dollar stars, are paid in the millions. Thus exploitation of the labor force concentrates on lower-level employees such as technicians, researchers, secretaries, writers, and the like.

In addition, exploitation takes place through the extraction of higher prices from consumers for the products advertised on television. Networks charge the corporations who purchase advertising time according to how many viewers watch a given ad and, in some cases, which viewers in specific demographic categories are supposedly viewing a given program (i.e., upscale women from 30-45). The corporations in turn pass these charges on to the viewers in the form of higher prices; because businesses can still, incredibly, take tax write-offs from advertising expenses, viewers pay for their "free" television with both higher taxes and the growing public

squalor caused by a system in which corporations have paid a dramatically lower tax rate since the beginning of the reign of the pro-business Republican administrations of Reagan and Bush (see Harms/Kellner 1991).

Yet the television industry is different from other businesses in that it has the crucial ideological functions of legitimating the capitalist mode of production and delegitimizing its opponents (e.g., socialist and communist governments, Third World liberation movements, labor, and various anti-capitalist social movements). As I argue in Chapters 2 and 3, television's dual functions of accumulation and legitimation sometimes conflict, but for the most part they work together in defining television's specificity as an institution within corporate capitalism.

Television's logic of accumulation dictates a logic of exclusion that condemns to silence those voices whose criticisms of the capitalist mode of production go beyond the boundaries allowed by the lords of the media. Although specific politicians, corporations, and business practices can be criticized, television does not undertake criticism of the capitalist system in terms of any positive alternatives (such as socialism) and rarely questions foundational capitalist values (such as the right to accumulate unlimited amounts of wealth and power). The opinion spectrum that dominates television thus includes only those liberals and conservatives who tacitly agree that all discourse must take place within the framework of the existing system of production and representative democracy, from which more radical views are rigorously excluded.

This logic of exclusion helps determine which views are aired on television and which are not. As Herman and Chomsky (1988) have demonstrated, the media in the United States usually follow the foreign policy agendas advanced by the existing government and exclude views critical of its policies. They demonize the official enemies of the state while idealizing the client states of the U.S. empire. For example, Chomsky argues that the media consistently projected negative images of Nicaragua, deemed an enemy by the Reagan and Bush administrations, while glossing over the crimes of U.S. client states such as El Salvador or Guatemala (Chomsky 1989). Yet ideological hegemony is neither one-dimensional nor conflict-free. If there are significant differences among political or corporate elites on specific policies, then this debate will be reproduced in the media, which otherwise systematically exclude criticism of the existing economic-political system and its institutions and policies.

To be sure, the logic of exclusion shifts and reflects social struggles and changes. Blacks were excluded from television almost completely during the 1940s and 1950s, in part because television executives feared that affiliates in the South would not play programs featuring blacks or dealing sympathetically with their problems. By the same token, views critical of U.S. policy in Vietnam were excluded until significant cracks had occurred in

the consensus and debate over the policy itself, and positive views of the Soviet Union were excluded until Gorbachev provided the impetus for more sympathetic and even positive coverage.

The range of ideas allowed by the media depends on the level of social struggle and crisis. Because television is a ubiquitous eye that focuses on social existence twenty-four hours a day, challenges to existing policies and values will occasionally be aired. Such challenges help legitimate television as an independent voice of criticism, which in turn helps produce a balance of power in a democratic society. In the following pages, however, I shall question this view of television and argue, instead, that television has taken on the function of systems maintenance within the structure and dynamics of corporate capitalism and liberal democracy—that is, within the dominant economic and political institutions that together constitute technocapitalist societies in the present age.<sup>7</sup> Accordingly, the development of a theory of television requires one to situate television within a theory of society.

### 1.2 Critical Theory, the Culture Industries, and the Public Sphere

A critical theory of television should provide analysis of the historical development, socioeconomic structure, and political effects of the system of commercial television. The concept of "critical theory" used in this book derives from the work of the Institute for Social Research, which has provided radical perspectives on the transition from entrepreneurial market capitalism to the system of state corporate capitalism (Jay 1973; Kellner 1989a; Bronner and Kellner 1989). In exile from Nazi Germany, the Institute moved in the 1930s from Frankfurt, Germany, to Columbia University in New York. In the United States, the Institute theorists (Max Horkheimer, T. W. Adorno, Herbert Marcuse, Erich Fromm, Leo Lowenthal, and Frederick Pollock, among others) developed a critical theory of society, which consisted, in part, of analyses of the new synthesis between the state and economy in the configuration of state and monopoly capitalism that emerged during the 1930s in both fascist and democratic forms. These critical theorists also developed one of the first critiques of the roles being played by mass culture and communication in contemporary capitalism, one of the first theories of the consumer society, and one of the first appreciations of the new forms of science, technology, and instrumental rationality in the constitution of a "totally administered society." In addition, they developed theories and methods that can be used to analyze the ways in which culture, social institutions, the state, and the economy work together to form a capitalist system (Kellner 1989a).

These critical theorists conceptualize the mass media as a "culture industry" that systematically indoctrinates individuals with the ideological

values and ways of life of established society (Horkheimer and Adorno 1972 [orig. 1947]; Marcuse 1964). The media, according to this account, thus serve as instruments of social control and mass deception. Generalizing from the fascism that the theorists observed in Germany and the rise of the consumer society that they experienced in the United States, they initially postulated a model of a monolithic capitalist society in which the media served as powerful instruments of domination in the hands of the ruling class. In the process, they focused on popular entertainment and its ideological nature and functions, to the exclusion of media presentations of news, information, and actual political struggles. They assumed that mass culture was a powerful instrument that integrated the working class into capitalist society and managed their consciousness, needs, and behavior. Yet, although their study provided important insights into capitalist modes of domination, it lacked specificity and empirical analysis of the history, political economy, and effects of the media in actual historical constellations.

The limitations of this model of the culture industry were somewhat overcome by a second-generation critical theorist, Jürgen Habermas. In his first major book, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere*, Habermas (1989 [orig. 1962]) analyzed the transformation of the public sphere under the pressure of a rising system of mass media. During the eighteenth century, he claimed, the democratic public sphere initially provided a free space of mediation between state and everyday life in the construction of liberal bourgeois societies. Habermas analyzed the role of newspapers, literary and political clubs, coffee houses, and institutions of political debate and discussion in producing what he calls a "bourgeois public sphere." The media composed of the press, journals, and books fostered this public sphere and thus produced at least a potential space for political debate, opposition, and struggle.

A free press, according to Habermas, is an essential component of a democratic social order. In his account, a critical press began to emerge in England during the late 1600s and, during the 1700s, became an important voice of political opposition and criticism. Official state recognition of "freedom of speech" was initially restricted to parliament, but the press eventually won this right. In the Virginia Bill of Rights, written a month before the Declaration of Independence in 1776, George Mason recognized that "[t]he freedom of the press is one of the great bulwarks of liberty and can never be restrained but by despotic governments" (Mason, cited in Stoler 1986, 19–20). The First Amendment of the U.S. Constitution institutionalized this freedom by stating that Congress shall make no law abridging freedom of speech, of the press, of religion, and of the people to assemble peaceably. Likewise, in the French Constitution of 1791, which adopted the "Declaration of the Rights of Man and of Citizens" of August 26, 1789, it was written that "[t]he free communication of ideas and opinions

is one of the most precious rights of man. Everyone can therefore speak, write, and print freely, with the proviso of responsibility for the misuse of this liberty in the cases determined by law" (cited in Habermas 1989, 70).

The press was deemed necessary as a source of information that would enable citizens to democratically participate in public affairs. It was also intended to provide a balance of power, as a bulwark against excessive state power. In practice, the press during the nineteenth century was often partisan, providing support or opposition to existing regimes. In 1832 the Englishman Lord Macaulay wrote that, in addition to the estates of the "Lords Spiritual," "Lords Temporal," and "Commons" in the British Parliament, "[t]he gallery in which the reporters sit has become a Fourth Estate of the realm." Thereafter, the term *fourth estate* was popularly used to describe the press. It came to signify that the press was a major institution in a democratic society that would serve as a watchdog against government abuse of power or corruption (Hulteng and Nelson 1983).

Habermas argues, however, that in the late nineteenth century, the state increasingly intruded into the public sphere, censoring groups and publications that challenged its interests and agenda while operating as an instrument of political indoctrination. In addition, private corporations began taking control of the state and the media to promote their own interests and power. Advertising became a crucial component of mass communication, providing the advertisers with power over these media and the depoliticized public of the consumer society that emerged after World War II. Not only were the media subject to new forms of state and economic control, but the very space of the public sphere receded with the development of new suburbs, consumerism and shopping malls, new electronic media, and a declining interest in both book culture and politics. Under these conditions, the public was transformed from participants in political and cultural debates into consumers of media images and information.

The result, according to Habermas, was a crisis of the public sphere and a threat to democracy. Democracy required a vital and well-informed public, eager to participate in debates and struggles concerning political issues of common interest. In a privatized society, however, individuals withdrew from the public sphere and contented themselves with consumption, private family lives, and individual pursuits and pleasure. In this book, I shall delve further into television's contributions to this crisis of the public sphere. The focus of my analysis is the United States, in contrast to Habermas's wide-ranging, multisocietal study.

The crisis of the public sphere is arguably much more intense in the United States than it was in 1962, when Habermas published his text. Transnational entertainment and information conglomerates have streamlined cultural production to an extent far beyond that analyzed by Hork-

heimer and Adorno (1972) and earlier critical theorists. New technologies have been developed and introduced by communications and electronic conglomerates that are attempting to control vast sectors of the information and entertainment industries. This development is part of a new configuration of technocapitalism, which combines new technologies with neocapitalist forms of economic organization. Whereas the individual firm in a single industry was the model during the earlier phase of competitive capitalism, today giant corporate conglomerates such as the television networks, Time-Warner, Murdoch communications, and other transnational corporations control huge segments of the communications, information, and entertainment market (Bagdikian 1987, 1989).

Centralized corporate control gives these corporations enormous power to decide what people will read, see, and experience. Moreover, the conglomerization of media and communications seriously threatens democracy and gives the major transnational corporations massive political, economic, and cultural power. The entertainment and information industries in particular have rationalized cultural production and produced new forms of cultural hegemony through the new electronic media. Television stands at the center of the new media in that cable and satellite delivery systems, video-recorders, disk systems, and computer/information systems also operate through television, providing it with even more power than it had during the era of over-the-air broadcasting.

The new media experience, which is primarily imagistic (i.e., grounded in image production and proliferation), is producing new forms of experience, culture, and hegemony. Interestingly, in the same year that Habermas's *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere* was released, Daniel Boorstin (1962) published *The Image* in which he analyzed the growing role of image in many domains of life in the United States. Boorstin included some discussion of advertising and the media, but he was mainly concerned with contrasting the bad new modes of experience and culture with the good old ones. Indeed, he saw nothing progressive in any of the new forms of culture and experience. A similar conservative nostalgia marked the earlier critique of the cultural industries by Horkheimer and Adorno (1972), who bemoaned the demise of elite culture and the highly prized forms of individuality in the new mass societies.

More recent "postmodern" theory has conceptualized contemporary capitalist society in terms of proliferation and dissemination of images. In this new image culture, "reality" is effaced and the media constitute a new realm of "hyperreal" experience where images replace reality and the distinction between reality and irreality blurs (Baudrillard 1983a, 1983b). As I have discussed postmodern theory in detail elsewhere (Kellner 1987; Best and Kellner 1987; Kellner 1989b; Best and Kellner 1990), I shall limit my discussion in this book to a consideration of postmodern theories of

the politics of the image (see Chapter 4). Extreme postmodern theory claims that in a media society it is impossible to delineate institutional structures, historical trajectories, or political effects (Baudrillard 1983b); it also views the media as a black hole that absorbs all content, social reality, politics, and so on, into a vortex of noise, meaninglessness, and implosion. Although this articulation may well express the experience of some media-saturated denizens of the TV world, I contend that the effects of television are quite different and considerably more specific.

### 1.3 Contested Terrain and the Hegemony of Capital

In contrast to postmodern media theory and the study by Horkheimer and Adorno (1972), I shall take a multidimensional approach, discussing both the regressive and progressive potential of new media and forms of culture. According to the first-generation thinkers of the Frankfurt School and many of their followers, the very forms of mass culture are regressive, exemplifying commodification, reification, and ideological manipulation. Commodity culture, from this viewpoint, follows conventional formulas and standardized forms to attract the maximum audience. It serves as a vehicle of ideological domination that reproduces the ideas and ways of life in the established order, but it has neither critical potential nor any progressive political uses.

The classic "culture industry" analysis focuses on mass culture as a cultural form. Whereas the critical theory of the 1930s developed a model of social analysis rooting all objects of analysis in political economy, the critical theory of mass culture neglects detailed analysis of the political economy of the media, conceptualizing mass culture merely as an instrument of capitalist ideology. My aim, by contrast, is to develop a critical theory that analyzes television in terms of its institutional nexus within contemporary U.S. society. Moreover, rather than seeing contemporary U.S. society as a monolithic structure absolutely controlled by corporate capitalism (as the Frankfurt School sometimes did), I shall present it as a contested terrain traversed by conflicting political groups and agendas. In my view, television—far from being the monolithic voice of a liberal or conservative ideology—is a highly conflictual mass medium in which competing economic, political, social, and cultural forces intersect. To be sure, the conflicts take place within well-defined limits, and most radical discourses and voices are rigorously excluded; but the major conflicts of U.S. society over the last several decades have nonetheless been played out over television. Indeed, contrary to those who see the logic of capital as totally dominating and administering contemporary capitalist societies, I contend that U.S. society is highly conflictual and torn by antagonisms and struggles, and that

television is caught up in these conflicts, even when it attempts to deny or cover them over, or simply to "report" them.

My response to the first generation of critical theorists (Adorno, Horkheimer, Marcuse, and so on) is the argument that the capitalist system of production and its culture and society are more riven with conflicts and contradictions than are present in the models of "one-dimensional society" or the "totally administered society" presented by earlier critical theorists. In addition, I stress that U.S. society is not only a capitalist society but also (in part) a democratic one. Democracy is perhaps one of the most loaded and contested terms of the present era. In its broadest signification, democracy refers to economic, political, and cultural forms of self-management. In an "economic democracy," workers would control the work place, just as citizens would control their polity through elections, referenda, parliaments, and other political processes. "Cultural democracy" would provide everyone access to education, information, and culture, enabling people to fully develop their individual potentials and to become many-sided and more creative.

"Political democracy" would refer to a constitutional order of guaranteed rights and liberties in a system of political decisionmaking, with governance by rule of law, the consent of the governed, and public participation in elections and referenda. The form of representational democracy operative in the United States approximates some, but not all, of these features of political democracy. (See Barber 1984 for another model of "strong democracy.") While I admit that full-fledged democracy does not really exist in the United States, I shall argue in this book that conflicts between capitalism and democracy have persisted throughout U.S. history, and that the system of commercial broadcasting in the United States has been produced by a synthesis of capitalist and democratic structures and imperatives and is therefore full of structural conflicts and tensions (see Chapter 3). As we shall see, television is its contradictions.

Furthermore, I stress the importance of conflicts within the ruling class and challenges to liberal and conservative positions by radical movements and discourses more than do previous critical studies of television. Given the ubiquity and power of television, it is a highly desired prize for ruling groups. Unlike most critical theorists, however, I attempt to specify both the ways in which television serves the interests of dominant economic and political forces, and the ways in which it serves to reproduce conflicts among these groups and to mediate the various antagonisms and conflicts that traverse contemporary capitalist societies. Accordingly, I shall attempt to present a more comprehensive and multidimensional theoretical analysis than the standard Marxist and neo-Marxist accounts, which tend to conceptualize the media and the state simply as instruments of capital. I shall also discuss current efforts at restructuring capitalist society in relation

to the movements of the 1960s and 1970s, the world economic crisis of the 1970s, and the challenges of utilizing new technologies and media as additional sources of profitability and social control. In contrast to mechanistic "instrumentalist" accounts, which conceptualize the media merely as instruments of capital and of the ruling class and class domination, the "hegemony" model presented in this book provides an analysis of the ways in which television serves particular class interests in forging specific forms of hegemony at specific points in time.

### ***Hegemony, Counterhegemony, and Instrumentalist Theories***

The hegemony model of culture and the media reveals dominant ideological formations and discourses as a shifting terrain of consensus, struggle, and compromise, rather than as an instrument of a monolithic, unidimensional ideology that is forced on the underlying population from above by a unified ruling class.<sup>6</sup> Television is best conceptualized, however, as the terrain of an ever-shifting and evolving hegemony in which consensus is forged around competing ruling-class political positions, values, and views of the world. The hegemony approach analyzes television as part of a process of economic, political, social, and cultural struggle. According to this approach, different classes, sectors of capital, and social groups compete for social dominance and attempt to impose their visions, interests, and agendas on society as a whole. Hegemony is thus a shifting, complex, and open phenomenon, always subject to contestation and upheaval.

Ruling groups attempt to integrate subordinate classes into the established order and dominant ideologies through a process of ideological manipulation, indoctrination, and control. But ideological hegemony is never fully obtained; and attempts to control subordinate groups sometimes fail. Many individuals do not accept hegemonic ideology and actively resist it. Those who do accept ideological positions, such as U.S. justification for the Vietnam war, may come to question these positions as a result of exposure to counter-discourses, experiences, and education. Accordingly, hegemony theories posit an active populace that can always resist domination and thus point to the perpetual possibility of change and upheaval.

Hegemony theories of society and culture can therefore be contrasted with instrumentalist theories. The latter tend to assume that both the state and the media are instruments of capital, and to play down the conflicts among the state, the media, and capital. Examples include the structuralist Marxist theories of Althusser (1971) and Parenti (1986). Instrumentalist theories tend to assume a two-class model of capitalist society divided into a ruling class and a working class. These theories see the state and media as instruments used to advance the interests of the ruling class and to

control the subjugated class. The model assumes a unified ruling class with unitary interests. A hegemony model, by contrast, posits divisions within both the working class and the ruling class and sees the terrain of power as a shifting site of struggle, coalitions, and alliances. Instrumentalist theories of television tend to be ahistorical in their assumption that television, under capitalism, has certain essential and unchanging functions. The hegemony model, by contrast, argues that media take on different forms, positions, and functions in different historical conjunctures and that their very constitution and effects are to some degree the result of the balance of power between contending groups and societal forces.

Hegemony itself takes different forms at different historical junctures. After the disruption of the conservative hegemony of the 1950s in the United States by the radical political movements of the 1960s, the 1970s witnessed intense struggles among conservatives, liberals, and radicals. The radicals were eventually marginalized and the liberals defeated with the victory of Ronald Reagan in 1980. During the 1980s it became clear that television had been taken over by some of the most powerful forces of corporate capitalism and was being aggressively used to promote the interests of those forces (see section 2.5 and Chapters 3 and 4 for documentation).

### **Gramsci and Hegemony**

The term *hegemony* is derived from the work of the Italian Marxist theorist Antonio Gramsci.<sup>9</sup> In analyzing power relations, Gramsci (1971) distinguished between "force" and "consent," two ways in which the ruling class exercises power and maintains social control. Whereas institutions such as the police, military, and prisons use force to maintain social control, ideology wins consent for the social order without force or coercion. Hegemonic ideology attempts to legitimate the existing society, its institutions, and its ways of life. Ideology becomes hegemonic when it is widely accepted as describing "the way things are," inducing people to consent to the institutions and practices dominant in their society and its way of life. Hegemony thus involves the social transmission of certain preconceptions, assumptions, notions, and beliefs that structure the view of the world among certain groups in a specific society. The process of hegemony describes the social construction of reality through certain dominant ideological institutions, practices, and discourses. According to this view, experience, perception, language, and discourse are social constructs produced in a complex series of processes. Through ideological mediation, hegemonic ideology is translated into everyday consciousness and serves as a means of "indirect rule" that is a powerful force for social cohesion and stability.

For a hegemony theory, therefore, all beliefs, values, and so on, are socially mediated and subject to political contestation. In every society,

there is a contest over which assumptions, views, and positions are dominant. In Gramsci's (1971) analysis, ideologies "cement and unify the social bloc" and are embodied in everyday experience. Specific cultural forms—such as religion, philosophy, art, and common sense—produce consent and serve as instruments of ideological hegemony. In Gramsci's view, hegemony is never established once and for all but is always subject to negotiation and contestation. He pictures society as a terrain of contesting groups and forces in which the ruling class is trying to smooth out class contradictions and incorporate potentially oppositional groups and forces. Hegemony is opposed and contested by efforts to produce a "counterhegemony" on behalf of such groups and forces.

For Gramsci, it was the communist movement and party that provided the genuine progressive alternative to bourgeois/capitalist hegemony. A counterhegemonic movement would thus attempt to fundamentally alter the existing institutional arrangements of power and domination in order to radically transform society. The concept of hegemony has recently been reconstructed by theorists such as Laclau and Mouffe (1985), who root counterhegemony in new social movements struggling for democracy. Television in the United States helps establish capitalist hegemony—the hegemony of capital over the state, media, and society. Because of the power of the media in the established society, any counterhegemonic project whatsoever—be it that of socialism, radical democracy, or feminism—must establish a media politics (see Chapter 5).

According to the hegemony model, television thus attempts to engineer consent to the established order; it induces people to conform to established ways of life and patterns of beliefs and behavior. It is important to note that, from the standpoint of this model, media power is productive power. Following Foucault (1977), a hegemony model of media power would analyze how the media produce identities, role models, and ideals; how they create new forms of discourse and experience; how they define situations, set agendas, and filter out oppositional ideas; and how they set limits and boundaries beyond which political discourse is not allowed. The media are thus considered by this model to be active, constitutive forces in political life that both produce dominant ideas and positions and exclude oppositional ones.

Media discourse has its own specificity and autonomy. Television, for instance, mobilizes images, forms, style, and ideas to present ideological positions. It draws on and processes social experience, uses familiar generic codes and forms, and employs rhetorical and persuasive devices to attempt to induce consent to certain positions and practices. Yet this process of ideological production and transmission is not a one-dimensional process of indoctrination, but, rather, is an active process of negotiation that can

be resisted or transformed by audiences according to their own ends and interests.

Gramsci's work is important because it provides as a model of society one that is made up of contending forces and groups. It thus avoids the monolithic view of the media as mere instruments of class domination. The two most prolific radical critics of the media, Herman and Chomsky (1988), come close to taking an instrumentalist position, assuming that the media are "adjuncts of government" and the instruments of dominant elites that "manufacture consent" for the policies that support their interests. Herman and Chomsky also argue that a series of "filters" control media content, beginning with the size of the media and their ownership and profit orientation, and continuing through advertisers, media sources, pressure groups, and anticommunist ideology. All of these forces filter out content and images that would go against the interests of conservative powers and characterize the media as a propaganda machine. To document their thesis, Herman and Chomsky carry out a detailed analysis of mainstream media coverage of U.S. foreign policy, including studies of television coverage of Vietnam and Indochina, Central America, and the alleged plot to assassinate the pope, as well as studies of the individuals deemed worthy or unworthy to be represented as victims of their respective governments.

Lacking a theory of capitalist society, Herman and Chomsky tend to conceptualize the media as instruments of the state that propagandize on behalf of ruling elites and their policies. Whereas they see ownership of the media and commercial imperatives as filters that exclude views critical of established institutional arrangements of power, I would argue that the media are organized primarily as capitalist media and only further foreign policy and other perspectives that are perceived to be in the interests of the groups that own and control the media. Nonetheless, Herman and Chomsky quite rightly contest the self-image of the media as robust and feisty critics that help maintain a balance of power and promote liberal democracy. Arguing instead that the media are primarily propagandists for the status quo, they conclude:

A propaganda model suggests that the "societal purpose" of the media is to inculcate and defend the economic, social, and political agenda of privileged groups that dominate the domestic society and the state. The media serve this purpose in many ways: through selection of topics, distribution of concerns, framing of issues, filtering of information, emphasis and tone, and by keeping debate within the bounds of acceptable premises. (1988, 296)

The concept of *hegemony*, rather than that of *propaganda*, better characterizes the specific nature of commercial television in the United States. Whereas *propaganda* has the connotation of self-conscious, heavy-handed,

intentional, and coercive manipulation, *hegemony* has the connotation, more appropriate to television, of induced consent, of a more subtle process of incorporating individuals into patterns of belief and behavior. By the same token, the propaganda model assumes that its subjects are malleable victims, who willy-nilly fall prey to media discourse. The hegemony model, by contrast, describes a more complex and subtle process whereby the media induce consent. It also allows for aberrant readings and individual resistance to media manipulation (Hall et al. 1980).

The ideological effects of television are not limited to its content, contrary to the dictates of the propaganda model. The forms and technology of television have ideological effects too, as I shall argue in this book. I therefore present perspectives different from those of Parenti (1986) and Herman and Chomsky (1988), who tend to utilize a somewhat monolithic model of capitalist society in their interpretation of the media as mere instruments of class rule and propaganda. My viewpoint also differs from that of radical critics of the media who focus on cultural imperialism and on the nefarious effects of the importation of U.S. television throughout the world. I supplement this important work by emphasizing the roles of commercial television within contemporary U.S. society, and my case study (Chapter 4) indicates the ways in which television has processed domestic politics during the 1980s. Much of Parenti's work, and almost all of Herman and Chomsky's work focuses on how U.S. television presents foreign affairs and how its anticommunist bias reflects the dominant lines of U.S. foreign policy while ignoring, or obscuring, unpleasant events that put U.S. policy and alliances in question. The works of Parenti and of Herman and Chomsky are indeed valuable as damning indictments of U.S. foreign policy and of the ways in which the media serve the interests of dominant corporate and political elites in these areas. But a more comprehensive theoretical perspective on television would focus on television's domestic functions and political effects and the ways in which it is structured by the conflicting imperatives of capitalism and democracy.

### **Critical Theory and Television**

This book provides a more differentiated model of power, conflict, and structural antagonisms in contemporary capitalist societies than previous radical accounts. Although television can be seen as an electronic ideology machine that serves the interests of the dominant economic and political class forces, the ruling class is split among various groups that are often antagonistic and at odds with one another and with contending groups and social movements. Under the guise of "objectivity," television intervenes in this matrix of struggle and attempts to resolve or obscure conflict and to advance specific agendas that are prevalent within circles of the ruling strata whose positions television shares.

Because television is best conceptualized as a business that also has the function of legitimating and selling corporate capitalism, a theory of television must be part of a theory of capitalist society. Contrary to those who view television as harmless entertainment or as a source of the "objective" information that maintains a robust democratic society, I interpret it as a "culture industry" that serves the interests of those who own and control it. Yet, in contrast to Horkheimer and Adorno (1972), whose theory of the culture industry is somewhat abstract and ahistorical, I analyze television's mode of cultural production in terms of its political economy, history, and sociopolitical matrix. In the process, I stress the interaction between political, economic, and cultural determinants.

From the perspective of critical theory, in order to adequately understand a given object or subject matter, one must understand its historical genesis, development, and trajectory. Chapter 2 accordingly outlines the history of television in the United States, focusing on the ways in which powerful economic and political forces have determined the course of the established commercial broadcasting system. Indeed, the broadcast media have served the interests of corporate hegemony from the beginning and took on even more blatantly pro-corporate agendas and functions during the 1980s. Chapter 3 follows with a sketch of my theoretical perspectives on television in the United States. Here I discuss the ways in which the capitalist mode of production has structured contemporary U.S. society and the system of commercial television. I also analyze the methods and strategies with which corporations and the state have attempted to control broadcasting; the ways in which commercial imperatives have shaped the organization, content, and forms of commercial broadcasting; the structural conflicts between capitalism and democracy in constituting the system of commercial television in the United States; and the major conflicts among broadcasting, government, and business over the past several decades.

A critical theory of society must not only ground its analyses in historical and empirical studies but also develop a comprehensive theoretical perspective on the present age. Chapter 4 accordingly reveals the role of television in maintaining conservative hegemony in the United States during the 1980s. In this chapter I document the conservative turn in the media during this decade and suggest that television promoted the Reagan/Bush agenda of deregulation, tax breaks for the rich and for the biggest corporations, and pursuit of a pro-business and interventionist foreign policy agenda. Television's role in the 1988 election, especially, dramatizes the current crisis of democracy in the United States. Indeed, television has increasingly reinforced conservative hegemony during an era in which corporate capitalism was aided and abetted by a political administration that was aggressively pro-business and hostile to the interests of working people as well as to those of progressive organizations and social movements.

Normative and political perspectives are also crucial to the conception of critical theory, which has traditionally been structured by a dialectic of liberation and domination that analyzes not only the regressive features of a technology like television but also its emancipatory features or potential. Critical theory promotes attempts to achieve liberation from forces of domination and class rule. In contrast to the classic critical theory of the Frankfurt school, which is predominantly negative in its view of television and the media as instruments of domination, this book follows Benjamin (1969), Brecht (1967), and Enzensberger (1977), who conceptualize television as a potential instrument of progressive social change. My studies thus maintain a doubled-edged focus on the media in which the progressive and democratic features are distinguished from the negative and oppressive aspects.<sup>10</sup>

Critical theory is motivated by an interest in progressive social change, in promoting positive values such as democracy, freedom, individuality, happiness, and community. But the structure and system of commercial network television impedes these values. In Chapter 5, I have proposed an alternative system that promotes progressive social transformation and more democratic values and practices. This alternative system embodies such values as democratic accountability of the media, citizens' access and participation, increased variety and diversity of views, and communication that furthers social progress as well as enlightenment, justice, and a democratic public sphere.

In short, critical theory criticizes the nature, development, and effects of a given institution, policy, or idea from the standpoint of a normative theory of the "good society" and the "good life." Capitalism defines its consumerist mode of life as the ideal form of everyday life and its economic and political "marketplace" as the ideal structure for a society. Critical theory contests these values from the standpoint of alternative values and models of society. In this way, critical theory provides a synthesis of social theory, philosophy, the sciences, and politics. Accordingly, I shall draw on a range of disciplines to provide a systematic and comprehensive critical theory of television. To elucidate the nexus between television and the crisis of democracy, I begin by situating television within the fundamental socioeconomic processes of corporate capitalism and by charting its growing influence and power in contemporary U.S. society.

### Notes

1. The number of TV sets in the world was cited in the documentary "Television," broadcast in 1989 by the Public Broadcasting Service (PBS). In 1988, 90.4 million homes in the United States (i.e., more than 98 percent of the population) had televisions, with 1.651 viewers per TV home (*Broadcasting/Cable Yearbook 1989*,

G16). By the end of the 1980s, televisions were turned on more than 7 hours per day, and the average adult watched television more than 32 hours per week. Eight out of 10 people spent 2 or more hours watching television every night (Gilbert 1988). The Roper Organization Poll indicated that 64 percent of the people questioned chose television as their chief source of news; that from 1959 to 1980 there was a dramatic reversal in the number of people who chose television over newspapers (Roper 1981, 3); and that television was deemed the most "believable" news media by a large margin (Roper 1981, 4). The results are consistent with those reported in Bower (1985). They also concur with Gilbert (1988, 234), who states that 44 percent of the people polled chose television as their preferred source for local news and 60 percent chose it as their preferred source for national and international news. A whopping 96 percent believed that local TV news is "very or fairly" accurate, while 89 percent believed that network news was "very or fairly" accurate (*ibid.*).

2. For some characteristic conservative attacks on television's "liberal bias," see Efron (1972), Lefever (1974), Phillips (1975), Herschensohn (1976), and Lichter, Rothman, and Lichter (1986). The terms *conservative* and *liberal* are constantly being redefined. Whereas conservatives were once allied with state institutions against the emerging capitalist economy and liberals defended a *laissez-faire* political economy and criticized state regulation, conservatives today tend to be critical of big government and liberals defend government programs and state intervention in the economy. Previous U.S. conservatives were isolationist in their foreign policy, but since World War II they have been generally interventionist. In this book I characterize "conservatives" as those individuals who criticize big government and liberal welfare state measures while championing deregulation, a relatively unrestricted free market, an interventionist foreign policy, and traditional social values. By contrast, I identify "liberals" with welfare state reform measures, redistribution of wealth, less interventionist foreign policy (although this often shifts), egalitarian reform of social values, and more permissive attitudes toward social and cultural change. And, finally, I describe "radicals" as those who champion more extensive social transformation, ranging from socialist attempts to reform the capitalist economy to feminist attempts to dismantle the institutions of male dominance.

3. Meyer (1979) argues that television is pro-social, whereas Gerbner and Gross (1976) maintain that it promotes violence and a "mean world" vision that supports conservative ideologies. Apologists for television include industry spokespeople, their academic allies, and TV fans who publish "fanzines" and celebrate TV trivia.

4. For discussions of earlier conservative critiques of popular culture, see Swinge-wood (1977) and Brantlinger (1983).

5. On "neoconservatism" and the New Right, see Crawford (1979). Bell (1978) is sometimes labeled a neoconservative because he defends traditional values against the movements of the 1960s and new cultural forms such as television; Bell himself admits that he is a cultural conservative but also a liberal in politics and a socialist in economics (1978, xi). Still, his critique of television and of contemporary hedonist, "sensate" culture parallels the neoconservative critique.

6. For theories about capitalist society, see Marx and Engels (1978), Marcuse (1964), Baran and Sweery (1966), Mandel (1975), Lash and Urry (1987), and Kellner (1989a), which discusses the Frankfurt school's theories of capitalist society.

7. By "technocapitalism" I mean contemporary, transnational, corporate capitalism in which the capitalist mode of production and new technologies are creating new products, a new organization and structure of labor, and new forms of society, culture, and experience. For a preliminary delineation of the concept of technocapital, see Kellner (1989a). As the television industry is a crucial component of technocapitalism, the present book can be read as an attempt to theorize the nature, form, and structure of contemporary capitalist societies via the perspective of television.

8. This position is elaborated in Kellner (1979, 1980, 1982), in Best and Kellner (1987), and in Kellner and Ryan (1988). By contrast, the present book provides a more critical/institutional analysis of television. (I shall later devote a separate book to analysis of television as a cultural form.)

9. On hegemony see Gramsci (1971) and Boggs (1986), and on ideology and hegemony see Kellner (1978, 1979). Among those others who utilize a hegemony approach as opposed to a capital logic or instrumental approach to conceptualizing the media in relation to the economy and society are Stuart Hall and the Birmingham school (see Hall et al. 1980) as well as Gitlin 1980, and Rapping 1987.

10. Brecht (1967), Benjamin (1969), and Enzensberger (1974, 1977) developed perspectives in which new technologies, as in film and broadcasting, could be used as instruments of liberation—by "refunctioning" the media to serve progressive goals. The present volume follows this tradition, which attempts to develop progressive uses for existing technologies and media. I should note that the first generation of the Frankfurt school also discussed emancipatory uses of popular culture and new technologies (Kellner 1989a), but for the most part they took a negative stance toward mass culture and communication.