Jackson Pacheco

Prof. McKenzie Wark

Intro to Cultural Studies

MW 10:15

20 November 2017

Glossary

1. **Adorno, Theodor**

   Theodor Adorno was one of the foremost social philosophers of the twentieth century. Perhaps the foremost critical theorist of the Frankfurt School, Adorno's works covered a wide spectrum of philosophical ground, everything from sociology and psychoanalysis to musicology and epistemology [2]. A scholar of everyone from Marx, Hegel, and Nietzsche to his contemporaries like Ernst Bloch, Adorno became generally interested in how the replacement (or perhaps lack thereof) of mythology with reason plays into the institution of dominance and suffering in post-Enlightenment social and cultural systems [3]. Adorno also acted a serious social critic. In his 1947 seminole work *Dialectic of Enlightenment,* Adorno and co-writer Max Horkheimer laid out the failures of the Enlightenment and how they manifested in new, "reformed" systems of social domination [3].

   Culture Industry

   It is in Adorno and Horkheimer's influential, definitive text that Adorno first coined the term "**culture industry**", which put a name to the new phenomenon in which the driving forces of a capitalistic society mass produce cultural good in order to indoctrinate society into a realm of homogenized, non-threatening passivity [1]. Adorno saw **popular culture** as a way of manipulating society into a mindset in which needs are created and fulfilled by capitalism, rendering genuine human needs and freedoms foggy, and to an extent unascertainable. Adorno claims that "everywhere proves to be freedom to choose what is always the same" [1], and this homogenized alleviation of created needs renders people ignorantly content, regardless of economic climate, invariably doomed in a system that tells the same story in a million different ways. He calls the ability to choose within a system that reproduces "**pseudo-individualization**", and labels the driving reason for this manipulation as ultimately economic. Above all else, Adorno's main concern with the

culture industry seems to be the dangerous commodification of high art, which poses a threat to pervade the relative market "purposelessness" of art with exchange value.

[1] Adorno, Theodor W., and Max Horkheimer. *Dialectic of Enlightenment*. Verso, 1979.

[2] Fagan, Andrew. "Theodor Adorno." *Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, University of Essex, Nov. 2007, www.iep.utm.edu/adorno/.

[3] Zuidervaart, Lambert. "Theodor W. Adorno." *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, Stanford University, 5 May 2003, plato.stanford.edu/entries/adorno/.

2. Althusser, Louis

Louis Althusser was one of the most influential Marxist philosophers of his generation, and perhaps one of the most influential of all time. Although his life was marked by tragedy and mental illness, his theories of ideology and structuralist Marxism were widely studied, debated, and potent in their times, and were foundational in later post-Marxist theory [2]. In his best known 1970 essay, *Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses: Notes Toward an Investigation,* Althusser redefines Marx and Engels' vague theory of ideology, drawing upon works of Gramsci, Lacan, and Freud to lay the groundwork for modern ideological understanding [2].

Ideology

In *Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses: Notes Toward an Investigation,* Althusser draws upon Marx and Engels' notion of ideology as "false consciousness" — seemingly define ideas reflective of the interests of a particular class at a particular time — and redefines **ideology** as one's imaginary relation to the real conditions of existence, while also analyzing the psychological relationship between state and subject in which the state attempts to maintain control by reinforcing that their subjects' positions in the world are their natural ones [2]. He also labels ideology as a reflection of the economy, having a material element that makes it vital to culture, and as something that helps give sense to the individual. Althusser also discusses **Repressive State Apparatuses** and **Ideological State Apparatuses**, meaning the respective physical, violent, repressive forces of the state that attempt to maintain the status quo through force and then the law, religion, education, politics, and other aspects of culture that attempt to reinforce the state's ideology in order to indoctrinate populations into a catholically-followed status quo [1].

Althusser also discusses **interpellation**, defining it as the process by which the subject's identity becomes inseparable from the state's ideology. He offers up the example of a subject turning around when a policeman yells, "Hey, you!", saying that in turning around and "answering the call", the individual submits himself to subjectivity of the state.

[1] Durham, Meenakshi Gigi, and Douglas M. Kellner. *Media and Cultural Studies:*
    Keyworks. 2nd ed.,Wiley-Blackwell, 2012. Pages 80-86.
[2] Lewis, William. "Louis Althusser." *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, Stanford University, 16 Oct.
    2009, plato.stanford.edu/entries/althusser/.

3. Ang, Ien

Ien Ang is a cultural theorist and critic whose 1985 book ***Watching Dallas*** was an ethnographic approach to how audiences respond to an international cultural export. In the work, she discussed surveys she sent out and had air in advertisement along 80's hit US serial show *Dallas,* and interpreted the information to understand how Dutch viewers interpreted a series that was at times absurdly American. She called the work **interpretive ethnography,** as ethnography was typically anthropological, and she wished to use data sets for critical interpretation of cultural viewership [1].

The Active Audience
Ang's research revealed a new way of surveying and studying audiences. She realized the value of not simply just studying audiences' viewership "nominalistically, decontextualized from the larger network of social relationships in which it occurs" [1]. Ang found that the situation and context in which we study the media is in and of itself a sort of construct; i.e., if scientifically testing how children watch TV, it's essential to not just set a child in a room with a TV but to replicate the environment in which he normally would. Ang uses the term "**active audience"** to describe the modern media consumer as someone who creates the meaning of their media without having made the media [1]. The term also aids in her research as to how relations of power are organized within the heterogeneous practices of media use and consumption [1].

[1] Durham, Meenakshi Gigi, and Douglas M. Kellner. *Media and Cultural Studies:*
    Keyworks. 2nd ed.,Wiley-Blackwell, 2012. Pages 14-9.

4. **Azuma, Hiroki**

   Hiroki Azuma is a Japanese cultural critic and philosopher, who is most known for his 2009 work *Otaku: Japan's Database Animals*, a work that discusses the implications of "otaku culture" on the philosophical future of history. He defines **otaku culture** as, quite simply, the subculture of those with indulgent interests in of anime, video game, science fiction, and the technologically-obsessed [1]. In his work, Azuma, like Fukuyama before him in ***The End of History*** (1990), is interested in the end of history as the complete triumph of liberal capitalism; although, Azuma is more interested in the contemporary aesthetic practices of those in such a time [2]. Azuma is poignantly interested in taking a step back to ask what happens in this time when culture becomes massively pathologized, fragmented, and simulated.

   Database

   Azuma realizes that in a time where the prevalence of liberal capitalism has signified the end of history, otaku culture is something of a response to what Lyotard called "the decline in grand narratives", meaning that as culture progressively becomes more and more constructed of simulacra and without an overarching, consistent narrative backbone, it becomes more of a **database**. Azuma argues that otaku culture signifies a more positive outlook of postmodernism, in which "database culture" doesn't lend itself to nihilism so much as organized simulation [2]. The idea of **moé**, meaning the emotional appeal of some fictional character, show this, as it represents the construction of character as a mapping of certain emotional points without subtext or demand for continuity. Database and moé allow for the scrambling of immediate emotional needs, in which the ability to reach for moé in the database allow any animalistic post-historical human to satisfy their emotional needs without fear of subtext or grander narrative.

[1] Azuma, Hiroki. *Otaku: Japan's Database Animals*. University of Minnesota Press, 2009.

[2] Wark, McKenzie. "Otaku Philosophy: On Hiroki Azuma." w*ww.publicseminar.org*, The New School, 23 Sept. 2015, www.publicseminar.org/2015/09/otaku-philosophy/#.Wg6CFLT81E4.

5. **Barthes, Roland**

Roland Barthes was a philosopher, cultural critic, literary theorist, and linguist known for his work with structuralism theory and criticism as well as his pioneering of the field of semiotics. In his 1957 book *Mythologies,* he uses methods of analyses he developed to investigate codes and meanings embedded in popular culture that serve to naturalize and eternalize the historically contingent forms of bourgeois culture [3]. His deep, vested interest in the underlying meanings of presentation have been widely traceable and influential to nearly all cultural critics since. His own immersion in French culture and obsession with the cultural purpose of minutiae made him widely relevant of of interest [2].

Semiotics

Barthes passions for philosophy, philology, and culture often drove him to intense study and practical application of **semiotics,** the study of fundamental rules, codes, and practices of language uses, and to Barthes, assuming that society and culture are texts able to be analyzed for their structures, significance, and effects [3]. Through the exploration of **myths** — patterns of narrative that represents certain ideological intentions — he revealed "objects were organized into meaningful relationships via narratives that expressed collective cultural values", forming socially constructed notions and assumptions in order to become **naturalized**, or feeling as though unquestionably non-created [1]. However, through the study of semiotics and chart he created to better understand semiology, Barthes actively tried to link signs with cultural myths or the ideologies they articulated. This work produced many investigative, thorough, explorative essays describing the connotative backbones of everything from current literature to detergent commercials that helped define how society understands and interacts with mythology, narrative, and pop culture.

[1] Barthes, Roland. *Mythologies*. Points, 2014.

[2] Brody, Richard. *The Uses of "Mythologies"*. The New Yorker, 18 June 2017, www.newyorker.com/
culture/richard-brody/the-uses-of-mythologies.

[3] Durham, Meenakshi Gigi, and Douglas M. Kellner. *Media and Cultural Studies:
Keyworks*. 2nd ed.,Wiley-Blackwell, 2012. Page 10.

6. **Benjamin, Walter**

Walter Benjamin was a philosopher and cultural critic who came to be heavily associated with the German Frankfurt School of Cultural Studies, often considered to be one of its most influential contributors to aesthetic and literary theory. Benjamin is perhaps the first hipster, as he reveals in his 1936 essay ***The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction*** — perhaps the most influential text to come from the Frankfurt school — the importance of liking something before everyone else does. Benjamin is thoroughly concerned with and intrigued by the effects of mass reproducibility on the emotional and cultural value of art, and writes in a tone that is both pessimistic and hopeful.

Reproducibility

In *The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction*, Benjamin discusses the dependence of human perception on history, and how the back half of the 19th century caused such massive shifts in the substructure, proletarization, and information of masses that art has thoroughly and irreversibly changed. Benjamin insists that technology allowing for the **reproducibility** of art implies a detachment of meaning and loss of connection to the past. He argues that historicity guarantees authenticity, and a copied object becomes ahistorical: Benjamin refers to this loss of historical authenticity as the decay of the **aura**. This loss of aura and sudden equality and proximity of art detaches it from tradition, and embeds it in the political. Benjamin also notes that the advent of film causes the viewer to identify with the camera rather than the subject, which becomes a foundational idea for future film theorists and critics. Yet, Benjamin's mourning of the aura foes not prevent him from hoping that film will enrich the perceptions of the masses in the same way that psychoanalysis did with the unconscious mind. He also contemplates the future of aura-less media, as he weighs the fascist aestheticization of politics against the communist politicization of art, understanding the two phenomena as symptoms of ahistorical, reproducible technologies.

[1] Durham, Meenakshi Gigi, and Douglas M. Kellner. *Media and Cultural Studies:*
    Keyworks. 2nd ed.,Wiley-Blackwell, 2012. Pages 80-86.

[2] Osborne, Peter. "Walter Benjamin." *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, Stanford University, 18 Jan.
    2011, plato.stanford.edu/entries/benjamin/.

7. **Butler, Judith**

Judith Butler is an American gender theorist and political philosopher whose work has significantly contributed to third-wave feminism and queer theory. Her influences are vast — including Derrida, Arendt, and Althusser among others — and her works are wide ranging, and more often than not controversial. The ideas Butler lays out in her 1990 book ***Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*** are often cited as foundational for the field of queer theory and gender studies [3].

Performativity

In her 1990 book ***Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity****,* Butler disagrees with one of the central assumptions of feminist theory: that there exists an inherent identity that demands political and social representation. Instead, Butler insists that gender is *performative*, saying: "We act as if that being of a man or that being of a women is actually an internal reality or something that is simply true about us, a fact about us, but actually it's a phenomenon that is being produced all the time and reproduced all the time, so to say gender is performative is to say that nobody really is a gender from the start" [2]. This leads Butler to the conclusion that a certain kind of **policing**, be it institutional practices like psychiatric normalization or societal practices like bullying, exists to prevent a disruption of the status quo in order to maintain a normalized and placid society [2]. Butler also calls gender **precarious**, meaning not only the standard definition of fragile and uncertain, but also that it creates a differential exposure to suffering, that when observed by people within the confines of a **heteronormative** (societally acceptant of a gender binary and biological essentialism) society, can act politically and disruptively by simply existing, demanding to be recognized in order for social acceptance and responsibility.

[1] Butler, Judith. *Notes Towards a Performative Theory of Assembly*. Harvard, 2015.

[2] Butler, Judith. "Your Behavior Creates Your Gender." *Big Think*, 6 June 2011, www.youtube.com/ watch?v=Bo7o2LYATDc. Accessed 15 Nov. 2017.

[3] Wark, McKenzie. "What the Performative Can't Perform." w*ww.publicseminar.org*, The New School, 8 June 2016, www.publicseminar.org/2016/06/butler/#.WhIgvbT81E5.

8. **Césaire, Aimé**

   Aimé Césaire was a Martinican Francophone poet and writer who founded and gave name to the négritude movement in the French colonies the 1930s and 40s. Raised in Martinique but having matriculated in Paris, he founded a black student magazine at which he worked out the ideology behind négritude [2], a movement toward rejecting imperialist attempts at dismantling African culture. He later expanded upon his feelings of resentment for attempted French cultural assimilation of Africans and other colonialist over-reachings into African culture in his ***Discourse On Colonialism*** (1955), in which he states, "It is a new society that we must create, with the help of all our brother slaves, a society rich with all the productive power of modern times, warm with all the fraternity of olden days [1]". This passage clearly echoes his affection for Marx, although Césaire said that he felt Marx did not say enough to satisfy the demands of the négritude movement: he believed Marx called for too purely a political emancipation when what he and his people longed for was cultural freedom as well [1]. In his later life, he served as a Martinican politician, pursuing equal representation in France rather than political emancipation.

   Negritude

   Négritude is the socio-political movement developed across colonized Africa in the 1930s in opposition to the attempt of the French to assimilate their colonized populations into their own culture [1]. Corresponding with the **Harlem Renaissance** in the United States and **Negrismo** in Cuba, the goal of négritude was to re-establish pride in Pan-African cultural values among those struggling with their identities in wake of what was seen as almost an attempted cultural assassination of black identity, having been labeled by oppressing nations as relatively "barbaric" [1]. Named in defiance through reappropriation of the often-slurred *negre*, the movement held up Marxist ideals and generally did not advocate for political independence from France; rather, leaders of the movement - creatives and politicians alike, such as Aimé Césaire and Léopold Sédar Senghor - supported garnering political power as equals in France [1].

[1] Césaire, Aimé. *Discourse on Colonialism*. 1955. Translated by Joan Pinkham, Monthly Review Press, 1972, *http://www.rlwclarke.nettheorySourcesPrima*ry CesaireDiscourseonColonialism.pdf.

[2] Thieme, John. "Aimé Cesaire: Founding Father of Negritude." The Independent, 18 Apr. 2008, *www.independent.co.uk/news/obituaries/aime-cesaire-founding-father- of-negritude-811812.html.*

9. **Citton, Yves**

Yves Citton is a literary theorist, economist, and philosopher who is best known for his 2017 book *The Ecology of Attention*. In it, he draws upon influences from Spinoza, Guattari, and Berardi to attempt to understand a new kind of economy of attention, that does not presuppose the individual [2].

Attention

In *The Ecology of Attention,* Citton attempts answer the question of how to mediate rationality in an economy and ecology that is both abundant with information and lacking attention. Citton identifies four regimes of **attention: alertness**, which excites; **immersion**, which fascinates; **loyalty**, which hypnotizes; and **projection**, which bedazzles [2]. Citton deliberates the idea of appearing to attract the attention of others as a job and ethical goal, and notes that in a world with a culture industry in which you "pay" or "invest" attention, corporations act more banks than manufacturers [2]. He takes a Marxist approach to understanding the economic structure of this system, noting the existence of a **vectorial class**, which controls the conditions of combining and displacing attention, and its two means of extracting wealth from attention: by owning icons, and by controlling the platforms that measure and standardize attention [1].

[1] Read, Jason. "Distracted by Attention." *The New Inquiry*, New Inc., 18 Dec. 2014, thenewinquiry.com/ distracted-by-attention/.

[2] Wark, McKenzie. "TL;DR: This Attention Economy Needs Work…" *Verso Books*, Verso, 21 August 2017, https://www.versobooks.com/blogs/3366-tl-dr-this-attention-economy-needs-work.

10. **Debord, Guy**

Guy Debord was a French Marxist theorist an avant-garde artist with a very eclectic and kinetic career. He was the founding member of **Letterists International**, which is something like the French counterpart to the Beat Generation, and a branch off of another French revolutionary artists' movement consisting of a motley true of young radical artists. This movement sort of evolved into the **Situationist International** — a more intellectual collective of anti-authoritarian, Marxist artists — who famously, paradoxically never made

art or took jobs. Debord rationalizes this in saying that it is the price put on art that ruins it by commodifying it, and thus opposes artists, but not "everyday art" [1]. In his most important and influential work, **The Society of the Spectacle**, Debord sets the foundation for the Situationists' movement [1]. A great portion of the book consists of borrowed, paraphrased, and plagiarized passages, as Debord thoroughly believes in the use of reappropriation as a means of treating culture as a commons.

Spectacle

In his 1967 work **The Society of the Spectacle**, Debord opens with a passage from the Young Hegelians: "But for the present age, which prefers the sign to the thing signified, the copy to the original, representation to reality, appearance to essence … truth is considered profane, and only illusion is sacred. Sacredness is in fact held to be enhanced in proportion as truth decreases and illusion increases, so that the highest degree of illusion comes to be the highest degree of sacredness" [1]. This very telling passage leads him to define the **spectacle** as the mass media: part of the cycle of production in which there is perceived totality, allowing for the imagining of consumptive desire [1]. Debord states that society of the spectacle arose in the 1920s with the advent of public relations and advertising, and to an extent predicts performativity, understanding that mass media insists on the image and appearance. Debord often sounds contradictory, but notably insists that it is the totality of society that is false, and the truth lies somewhere within it. This leads him to also define **détournement,** subversive use of the means of the media as the analysis of something bigger than it, but within it [1]. This is Debord's idea of revolutionary rebellion, and why he insists on treating the culture as a commons, as a way of trying to find the truth in an entirety of falsehood.

[1] Debord, Guy. Society of the Spectacle. Black and Red, 1977.

11. **Dyer, Richard**

Richard Dyer is a gay film critic and theorist who specializes in queer theory and race relations. His most notable work *White: Essays on Race and Culture*, which discusses the hyper visibility and yet invisibility of **whiteness**, the white-normative representational frame-of-reference persistent throughout media [3]. His work mainly focuses on representation in

film, and how film has been used historically to promote, convey, and instill certain racial identities while maintaining direct correlation to entertainment value [2]. He also specializes in Italian Cinema.

Stereotypes

In his 1993 compilation of essays **Gays and Film**, Dyer's essay *Stereotypes* talks about the negative impact of **stereotypes** — usually pejorative and demeaning reductions of an identity to a racist caricature in order to portray — on homosexual viewers, but broadening the spectrum to include stereotypes of all minority groups [1]. Dyer talks of how due to their continual representation in our culture, stereotypes often have been shown to convince people of their characteristics. Dyer relegates this to the most popular form of stereotyping, the **iconography of types,** which is the use by a film of certain visual and aural signs which immediately bespeak homosexuality and connote the qualities associated, often obtusely and insultingly so [1]. Dyer discusses how some form of typing might actually benefit homosexuals or other minority groups represented in film, saying that so long as "the representation doe not dissolve concrete social distinctions into psychological ones, but emphasizes such distinctions as the basis of collective identity and the heart of historical struggle" [1].

[1] Dyer, Richard. *Stereotyping*. "Gays and Film." 27-39. New York: Zoetrope, 1984.

[2] Dyer, Richard. "University of St Andrews." *Department of Film Studies*, University of St. Andrews, 2002, www.st-andrews.ac.uk/filmstudies/staff_profiles/professor-richard-dyer/.

[3] Dyer, Richard. *White: Essays on Race and Culture. Routledge. 1997.*

12. **Gramsci**, **Antonio**

Antonio Gramsci was a prominent Marxist figure in early twentieth century Italy. Imprisoned by Mussolini in 1926 - Gramsci's political wit so dangerous to Mussolini's fascism that his prosecutor explicitly stated the need to "prevent him from thinking" - he did a majority of his writing in jail, only to be smuggled out after his death [1]. Perhaps his most notable contribution to cultural theory is that of hegemony, in which he establishes physical force by the ruling class as only one part of their system of domination. The other part being hegemony, or the ideological makeup propagated by the ruling class throughout civil society in order to manufacture consent from the subaltern classes, who

are thus under the impression that their best interests are being looked out for. With hegemony as a foundation, Gramsci expounded upon the essential role of traditional, organic **intellectuals** ingrained within the working class to speak on their behalf in order to contradict and counter hegemonic forces, and also provided much suspicion under advanced capitalism: cautioning against the ruling class' attempts to change the forms of hegemony to bypass potential revolution [1,2].

Hegemony

Hegemony is defined as "consent to an intellectual and moral leadership [2]", as societies stabilize themselves through a duality of domination and hegemony. **Domination** is the physical force (through the the army, police force, etc.), whereas hegemony attempts to procure ideological consent (through the media, schools, churches, etc. [2]). Thus, without hegemony, there is no conviction amongst a peoples that their interest are being looked after. This system of rule thus contains a **hegemonic bloc** - an assemblage of the subaltern classes who maintain the social order - and the counter-hegemonic bloc - an assemblage of the subaltern classes who oppose the hegemony and dominance. This two-part theory was devised in the early twentieth century by Italian Marxist Antonio Gramsci, who was particularly interested in showing how the social fabrication of a status quo by the ruling class would make submission of the subaltern classes seem acceptable, even beneficial [2].

[1] Burke, Barry. "Antonio Gramsci, Schooling and Education." Infed.org, 1 Jan. 2013,
    infed.org/mobi/antonio-gramsci-schooling-and-education/.

[2] Durham, Meenakshi Gigi, and Douglas M. Kellner. *Media and Cultural Studies:
    Keyworks*. 2nd ed.,Wiley-Blackwell, 2012. Pages 4-9.

13. Hall, Stuart

If Bejamin and Adorno are emblematic of the Frankfurt School, **Stuart Hall** is certainly the cultural theorist at the center of the institution's British counterpart, **The Birmingham School** [2]. Hall said that the central question at the core of all of his works is "how did we get here, to this present, with our imaginations limited by a common sense of possibility that we did not choose?" [2]. And surely this simple question inspired all of his complex research as one of the central figures responsible for legitimizing the

study of popular culture as a means of discovering how those in power communicate with the masses. Not only did Hall investigate broad pop culture, but he is responsible for clearly defining some of the key terms at the roots of **communications** — the process of sending and receiving messages — and culture.

Encoding and Decoding

In Hall's 1973 essay *Encoding and Decoding in the Television Discourse,* Hall offers a theoretical approach of how the media produces messages to be disseminated and subsequently interpreted by viewers [1]. Hall posits that there are four stages to communicating in which **messages** — frameworks of knowledge, relations of production, or technical infrastructure — are **encoded,** where meanings are coded coinciding with the sender's understanding of how the world is comparable to the receiver, then and **decoded,** or unpacked by a recipient and proceeded to interpret and translate the coded message they were sent [1]. Hall believes there are four stages to this process of communication in terms of the mass media: **production**, where the encoding happens as the message is framed by meanings and ideas having drawn on society's dominant ideologies; **circulation**, in which individuals receive a message based on how they were aligned with a certain audience or demographic; **use**, in which the message has to be adopted as a likely means of discourse and must have been appropriately decoded; and then **reproduction**, where recipients interpret the decoded message based on their experiences and beliefs, and act on them accordingly[1]. Hall's theoretical investigation into this elaborate process laid the groundwork for many communications and cultural theorists to better understand how people interpret the media.

[1] Durham, Meenakshi Gigi, and Douglas M. Kellner. *Media and Cultural Studies: Keyworks*. 2nd ed.,Wiley-Blackwell, 2012. Pages 137-145 .

[2] Hsu, Hua. "Stuart Hall and the Rise of Cultural Studies." *Page-Turner*, The New Yorker, 17 July 2017, www.newyorker.com/books/page-turner/stuart-hall-and-the-rise-of-cultural-studies.

14. Haraway, Donna

Donna Haraway is a notable feminist essayist and prominent scholar of technological studies. She originally aspired to the sciences, but realized her true interests lied in studying the sciences. Her work has often been hailed as prescient and has often been widely

controversial as it has challenged establishment feminist views. Her most prominent essay is the self-professedly blasphemous *A Cyborg Manifesto* (1984), in which she challenges the traditional myths of the feminine [1].

Cyborg

In *A Cyborg Manifesto,* Haraway sets up the **ironic political myth** — a morally insulated yet communally compassionate rhetorical method of subverting a modern political apparatus — in order to challenge some tenants of traditional feminism *[1]*. She originally postures the female as something traditionally mythically aligned with nature, but famously quotes that she "would rather be a cyborg than a goddess"*[1]*. Haraway defines a **cyborg** as a **cybernetic** (viewing the world through as a series of information systems) organism, where the technological and biological are blended [1]. In saying this, Haraway would like to land in an ambivalent, anti-essentialist compromised view from inside a sort of a controlling "cybernetic regime". She says this to coincide with her prediction of the **home work economy**, in which she predicts that male breadwinning and old versions of labor/home structures are dying, and that the manufacturing of technology is going to bifurcate jobs and split them into an upper and lower tier in which women will have access to upper jobs, but there will no longer be a separation between home and work as jobs become more precarious and technologically skilled. Haraway's ultimate words are a call for better female political myths that create a less essentialist and limiting future for women.

[1] Haraway, Donna Jeanne. *Simians, Cyborgs, and Women: the Reinvention of Nature*. Routledge, 2015.

15. Hebdige, Dick

Dick Hebdige is a media theorist and sociologist, whose book *Subculture: The Meaning of Style* contains several essays that define and discuss terms related to the resistance of mainstream society. He draws influences from Marx, Barthes, Hall, and many other foundational cultural critics and theorists in order to discuss not their ideas of culture, but those subverting those ideas in order to prop revolutionary social change [1].

Subculture

In *Subculture: The Meaning of Style,* Hebidge quotes the Oxford English Dictionary, Ray Williams, T.S. Eliot, and others in order to thoroughly lay out a base definition of

culture so that he may delve into the alternative resistance [1]. Hebidge discuss **subcultures**, groups of people within a culture that conscientiously object to mainstream aesthetics while still maintaining some of its founding principles, and presents a theoretical model for analyzing their existence [1]. Hebidge says subcultures act as "noise: interference in the orderly sequence which leads from real events and phenomena to their representation in media" [1]. Hebidge refuses to underestimate the power of a subculture as representative of potential anarchy and an actual blockage in the system of representation [1]. Hebidge also tells of how subcultures might then be integrated into mainstream society, either through **the commodity form**, in which subcultural signs are entrepreneurially converted in mass-produced objects, or else by the **ideological form**, in which policing institutions re-define deviant behavior in order to seize control of image management and make a subculture undesirable to those it originally attracted.

[1] Durham, Meenakshi Gigi, and Douglas M. Kellner. *Media and Cultural Studies:*
    Keyworks. 2nd ed.,Wiley-Blackwell, 2012. Pages 263-272.

16. **Marx, Karl**

Karl Marx was a nineteenth century sociologist, economist, and political and cultural theorist. Born in Prussia but raised in Germany and studied extensively in England, he is perhaps the most prominent and influential critic of capitalism, and his collective theories about the intrinsic relation between class struggles and the development of human societies have resounded throughout political and philosophical history. He theorized that human societies exist in a two-part, kinetic structure; consisting of the base - the mode/ means of production - and the superstructure - everything not related to production: i.e. culture and ideology. The base shapes the superstructure, which serves to maintain and legitimize the base. About this relationship, in *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy* (1859) Marx says, "The totality of these relations of production constitutes the economic structure of society, the real foundation, on which arises a legal and political superstructure and to which correspond definite forms of social consciousness. [2]". Marx establishes in this the basis for culture: a reflection of the driving forces of production. It is also in *A Contribution* that Marx first defines **commodity fetishism** as the dangerous, mistaken idea that the abstract, subjective perception of an object's economic value into

and oHe points to this socio-political cycle to show culture as something driven by external forces, and ultimately, utterly important in understanding class struggles throughout human history, and the potential path toward preventing them in the future.

Base and Superstructure

Base and superstructure are two parts of a system first mapped out by Karl Marx in the mid-nineteenth century to understand the history of human society as a series of class struggles. In his system, founded on **historical materialism**, where, according to Marx, "the mode of production of material life conditions the social, political and intellectual life process in general [2]", the **base** is the means of production and people's relation to it, while **superstructure** is essentially everything else: culture, law, ideology, and every other function of society [1]. The base shapes the superstructure from the bottom up, which in turn serves to cyclicly legitimize and maintain the base. It is through this ebb and flow of social order that struggle insists, as the superstructure is formed by the base and comes to represent the interests of the ruling class, with any disruption to the means of production providing fuel for social revolution [1].

Modernity

In his ***Manifesto of the Communist Party*** (1848), Marx marks the establishment of new classes and systems of oppression in the wake of feudalism as the beginning of modernity [3]. In his view of modern capitalistic ways of life following the Industrial Revolution, the **bourgeoisie** (owners of means of production) have callously converted the **proletariat** (working class) into nothing more than wage slaves, reduced to simple laborers [3]. The proletariat "sinks deeper and deeper below the conditions of existence of his own class" at levels too rapid to not quickly outweigh the bourgeoisie [3]. Marx looks ahead at the implied, unparalleled growth that modernity seems to necessitate from his place and time, also recognizing the factors that lead to its inception, while maintaining that the bourgeoisie cannot exist without constantly revolutionizing the instruments of production and thereby the relations of production, and with them the whole relations of society [3]. Thus, he sees a phase in which capitalist exploitation muzzles modern technological advancement, only to a point at which it implodes and is stripped of its antagonism.

[1] Harman, Chris. "Base and Superstructure." Marxists Internet Archive, 1 June 1986,

   www.marxists.org/archive/harman/1986/xx/base-super.html.

[2] Marx, Karl. *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy*. 1859. Progress Publishers, 1977,
   https://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1859/critique-pol-economy/preface.html.

[3] Marx, Karl, and Friedrich Engels. *Manifesto of the Communist Party*. 1848. Hierofalcon, 2017, *https://
   www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1848/communist-manifesto/   ch01.html.*

17. **Mulvey, Laura**

   Laura Mulvey is a feminist film theorist and essayist who brought knowledge of
   psychoanalysis — particularly the works of Sigmund Freud and Jacques Lacan — into
   the world of film theory [1]. Her seminole work, ***Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema***
   (1973), is now widely regarded as a classic work of critical cultural studies, as it was the
   first text to seriously investigate the relationship between the viewing subject and the
   evident cinematic text.

   Male Gaze

   Mulvey's knowledge of the **Fruedian** notion of thinking of culture in terms of
   unconscious desires and the **Lacanian** notion of understanding the imaginary and
   symbolic as the domain of ideology allowed her to investigate the viewer/cinematic text
   relationship from a psychoanalytic, feminist perspective [2]. Mulvey notices that in
   exploring the relationship between a viewer's "look" and the diegetic "look" of a film,
   she has found the cinematic text to cater in the form of feminine objectification to a male
   audience. She calls this predominant theme of implicit male viewership and notion of
   objectified female subjects the **male gaze**, and contends that this institution legitimizes
   and perpetuates a predominantly patriarchal order [2]. Mulvey also insists that the male
   scopophilia — the pleasure of looking — portrayed in films serves to maintain a
   fetishistic trend of replacing females with objective, non-threatening doubles. The
   continuing of this institution can later be seen in the popularity of the **Bechdel Test**, a test
   created to determine the portrayal of subjective, non-romantically driven women in film,
   perhaps subverting the male gaze. Mulvey's theories about the male gaze continue to be
   critiqued to this day, where her system's assumed heterosexuality has come into question.

   [1] Burke, Eleanor. "Laura Mulvey." *Screenonline.org*, British Film Institute, 2003,
          www.screenonline.org.uk/people/id/566978/.

[2] Durham, Meenakshi Gigi, and Douglas M. Kellner. *Media and Cultural Studies: Keyworks*. 2nd ed.,Wiley-Blackwell, 2012. Pages 263-272.

18. **Ngai, Sianne**

Sianne Ngai is a cultural and critical theorist whose work is primarily concerned with the analysis of aesthetic forms and judgements specific to late capitalism. She is perhaps most known for her 2015 work ***Our Aesthetic Categories: Zany, Cute, and Interesting***, in which she lays out as the three predominant and overarching aesthetic categories specifically corresponding to the cultural attitude of late capitalism, and established in place of older, perhaps obsolete aesthetic values [2].

Cute, Interesting and Zany

Ngai recognizes the everyday obsolescence of aesthetic categories of the sublime and the beautiful, and sees a shift toward three new, more suitable categories under information capitalism [2]. As the commodity becomes increasingly inseparable from the deliberation of surrounding, seemingly omnipresent information, Ngai sees **beauty** — the feeling of wonder as a result of distance, disinterest, and contemplation — and **sublimity** — the sense of wonder as a result of enveloping and disruptive phenomena — as rapidly becoming more rare. Rather she sees the **zany** as a kind of performative aesthetic that can be prescribed to precarious emotional labor, as a hot and sweaty modern take on the classic theatrical notion of the *zanni,* a sort of innocently crazed double; the **cute** as perhaps a cheaper, fallen version of the beautiful to describe the commodity in an age where culture is responsible for the mass production of an immediate attempt to satiate human desires, perhaps inspiring a slightly sadistic undertone to something so straightforwardly eliciting of the intimate; and the **interesting** as the sort of descriptor of the information in-between, responsible for the categorization of the circulative, the distant, and the lacking universality by way of repetition and loss in form [2]. Ngai believes that art survived through weakness, and the result is the data-filled aestheticization of everyday life [2].

[1] Ngai, Sienne. "Personal Profile." *Department of English Language and Literature*, The University of Chicago, 2016, english.uchicago.edu/sianne-ngai.

[2] Wark, McKenzie. "Our Aesthetics." *Verso Books*, Verso, 27 June 2017, www.versobooks.com/blogs/
3291-our-aesthetics.

19. **Pasolini, Pier Paolo**

Pier Paolo Pasolini was a multitalented Marxist artist, theorist, and linguist whose "original and perceptive theory of neo-capitalism came from direct engagement with the problems of making a postwar, post-Fascist culture" [2]. He is perhaps most notable for his highly-controversial, often hard-to-watch films, and his coinciding film theory. Pasolini had a passion for language a means of both understanding and interpreting the cultural effects of changes in the mode of production [1].

Cinema

In dealing with language and attempting to understand the cultural effects of shifting base, Pasolini found it important to define and fully understand the modern tools at hand in revealing cultural shifts. In doing so, Pasolini became devoted to understanding and using **cinema** as a tool, considering it the "audiovisual language" with which the debate of neo-capitalism will be argued, as unlike the literary, the cinematic is itself formed within the infrastructures of production [2]. Pasolini thought that cinema's ability to take advantage of **free-indirect discourse** — a type of third person narration where the artist can render a character's consciousness as a tool for expressing an authorial voice within the character while simultaneously addressing a class of readers — would allow for a new type of truth in art: inseparable from reality. In further defining cinema, Pasolini notes the four phases of creation cinema-reality, which lay out a definitive rhetoric by which to understand the craft: the **reproduction**, in which one must consider and apply the proper artistic and technical aspects of filmmaking; **creating substances**, which is to say crafting a new reality within the context of our own; **qualification**, which is to say allowing the actors and the process of filmmaking to subjectively interpret the created reality; and finally **verbalization,** which can aid in the aesthetic rendering of the cinematic reality [2].

[1] Fennell, Chris. "An Introduction to Pier Paolo Pasolini." *British Film Institute*, 27 Feb. 2017,
www.bfi.org.uk/news-opinion/news-bfi/features/introduction-pier-paolo-pasolini.

[2] Wark, McKenzie. "Pasolini: Sexting the World." Public Seminar, The New School, 15 July 2015,
www.publicseminar.org/2015/07/pasolini-sexting-the-world/#.WhJhaLT81E4.

20202020. **Radway, Janice**

Janice Radway is an acclaimed essayist, sociologist, cultural anthropologist, and scholar of literary studies. She is best known for her 1984 essay ***Reading the Romance: Women, Patriarchy, and Popular Literature***, which first delves into a history of the publishing of romance novels, the historical means of book distribution, and the narrative conventions of the genre before beginning to analyze why its audience is predominantly female. Her writing style is highly readable and informational, making her work widely accessible, readily informative, and highly acclaimed [2].

Ethnography

In her 1984 essay ***Reading the Romance: Women, Patriarchy, and Popular Literature,*** Radway takes an **ethnographic** approach to understanding the genre's conventions and audience appeal; that is, she utilized reader-response criticism rather than conventional textual criticism and thoroughly immersed herself both personally (through interview, cohabitation, and relationship-forming), intellectually, culturally in the material which she studied [2]. Radway then utilized **interpretive ethnographic** — attempted exploration of cultural causes through and with a subject of analysis — in attempting to better understand female readers' relationships with the romance genre, saying "They rely on standard cultural codes correlating signifiers and signifieds that they accept as definitive. It has simply never occurred to them that those codes might be historically or culturally relative" [1]. This method of investigation provides Radway with clear insight into a subject that belongs itself to the personal, yet that is culturally-instilled.

[1] Durham, Meenakshi Gigi, and Douglas M. Kellner. *Media and Cultural Studies: Keywords*. 2nd ed.,Wiley-Blackwell, 2012. Pages 152, 283-307.

[2] Matthews, Jessica. "Studying the Romance Reader, Then and Now: Rereading Janice Radway's Reading the Romance." *Journal of Popular Romantic Studies*, vol. 4, no. 2, 24 Oct. 2014, doi: http://jprstudies.org/2014/10/studying-the-romance-reader-then-and-now-rereading-janice-radways-reading-the-romancejessica-matthews/.

21. Williams, Raymond

Raymond Williams was a prominent Welsh member of the New Left, whose works "dominated the development of cultural studies [1]" in their time. I,.n his 1976 book ***Keywords***, Williams describes "culture" as "one of the two or three most complicated

words in the English language [3]", and proceeds to thoroughly investigate and chart how its intricate development has lended to its complex modern meaning. Williams' meticulous theorizing of culture in coordination with his dedication to socialist thought lead to his championing of cultural materialism, allowing for informed and relevant analysis and critique of systems of oppression [1]. In his 1961 book ***The Long Revolution***, he wrote, "Since our way of seeing things is literally our way of living, the process of communication is in fact the process of community: the sharing of common meanings, and thence common activities and purposes; the offering, reception and comparison of new meanings, leading to the tensions and achievements of growth and change. [4]" It is furthering widespread interest in these ideas to which Williams dedicated the bulk of his academic works, hoping to achieve productive social change through the study of culture.

Culture

In his 1976 book ***Keywords***, Raymond Williams describes ***culture*** as "one of the two or three most complicated words in the English language [3]". Williams recognizes the word's extensive and intricate etymology - referencing its close connections to words like *cultivation* and *civilization* - and goes on to recognize **three distinct modern definitions** of *culture* taken from many different historical sources: the first being an abstract descriptor of a general process of intellectual, spiritual and/or aesthetic development; the second being a noun used to in some way describe a specific way of living; and the third being a representative noun for a group of cross-medium works of artistic or philosophic activity, such as music and art and literature [3]. Other common debates on culture are whether it is **exogenous**, developing from external factors, or **endogenous**, developing from within itself; for instance, in *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy* (1859) Marx says, "It is not the consciousness of men that determines their being, but, on the contrary, their social being that determines their consciousness [1]", thus theorizing culture as determined by external forces. The study of culture lends itself to the study of its human-affective factors: economics, politics, philosophy, etc.

Structure of Feeling

In defining culture a whole way of life and seeking to understand its driving forces, Williams takes a firm stance against reductionist Marxism, insisting that culture has its own materiality and historical force and that its study can be equivalent to the amoral and affective study of the **structure of feeling** [4]. In studying "the deep community that

makes communication possible", Williams identifies three layers to further understanding the complicated development of culture; that is, the lived culture of a time and place, the recorded culture, and the culture of **selective tradition** [4]. Selective tradition, of course, is the class-based apparatus that controls what is and is not chosen to be a cultural signifier, making it important to understand culture as a very bourgeoisie-edited aspect of the superstructure. And yet, culture is in its own right the base for the experience-organizing superstructure of art, which is one of William's most important theses in *The Long Revolution*. He seeks to understand the importance of **creativity** in culture as it has come to be a signaled by those wishing to shape culture. Considering the **Neo-Platonic** view that creativity allows one to see beyond the surface of the world to its foundational mechanisms, the creative abilities to innovate and disrupt are therefore responsible for the changing and shaping of culture. This makes the attribute dangerously desirable, and ever-increasingly fetishized and democratized moreso than naturally utilized.

[1] Hall, Stuart. "The Life of Raymond Williams." *The New Statesman*, 5 Feb. 1988,
        www.newstatesman.com/society/2008/02/work-life-williams-english.

[2] Wark, McKenzie. "The Long Counter-Revolution" w*ww.publicseminar.org*, The New School,
        23 Sept. 2015, www.publicseminar.org/2014/10/the-long-counter-revolution/#.WhCr9LT81E4.

[3] Williams, Raymond. "Culture." *Keywords*, Rev. ed., Oxford University Press, 1983, pp. 87–
        93, http://faculty.georgetown.edu/irvinem/theory/Williams-Keywords-*Culture.html*

[4] Williams, Raymond. *The Long Revolution*. 1961. Parthian Books, 2011.