Illuminations: The Critical Theory Project

The Frankfurt School and British Cultural Studies: The Missed Articulation

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For some decades now, British cultural studies has tended to either disregard or caricature in a hostile manner the critique of mass culture developed by the Frankfurt school. [1] The Frankfurt school has been repeatedly stigmatized as elitist and reductionist, or simply ignored in discussion of the methods and enterprise of cultural studies. This is an unfortunate oversight as I will argue that despite some significant differences in method and approach, there are also many shared positions that make dialogue between the traditions productive. Likewise, articulation of the differences and divergences of the two traditions could be fruitful since, as I will argue, both traditions to some extent overcome the weaknesses and limitations of the other. Consequently, articulation of their positions could produce new perspectives that might contribute to developing a more robust cultural studies. Thus, I will argue that rather than being antithetical, the Frankfurt school and British cultural studies approaches complement each other and can be articulated in new configurations.

As we approach the year 2000 and enter a new cultural environment being dramatically transformed by global media and computer technologies, we need a cultural studies that analyzes the political economy of the now global culture industries, the proliferation of new media technologies and artifacts, and their multifarious appropriations by audiences. In this article, I will discuss some of the theoretical resources needed for these tasks. My argument is that the Frankfurt school is extremely useful for analyzing the current forms of culture and society because of their focus on the intersections between technology, the culture industries, and the economic situation in contemporary capitalist societies. Since the present age is being dramatically shaped by new media and computer technologies, we need perspectives that articulate the intersection of technology, culture, and everyday life. In my view, both the Frankfurt school and British cultural studies offer us resources to critically analyze and transform our current social situation and thus to develop a critical social theory and cultural studies with a practical intent.

The Frankfurt School, Cultural Studies, and Regimes of Capital

To a large extent, the Frankfurt school inaugurated critical studies of mass communication and culture, and thus produced an early model of cultural studies (see Kellner 1982, 1989a and 1995a). During the 1930s, the Frankfurt school developed a critical and transdisciplinary approach to cultural and

communications studies, combining critique of political economy of the media, analysis of texts, and audience reception studies of the social and ideological effects of mass culture and communications. [2] They coined the term 'culture industries' to signify the process of the industrialization of mass-produced culture and the commercial imperatives which drove the system. The critical theorists analyzed all mass-mediated cultural artifacts within the context of industrial production, in which the commodities of the culture industries exhibited the same features as other products of mass production: commodification, standardization, and massification. The culture industries had the specific function, however, of providing ideological legitimation of the existing capitalist societies and of integrating individuals into the framework of the capitalist system.

Adorno's analyses of popular music (1978 [1932], 1941, 1982, and 1989), Lowenthal's studies of popular literature and magazines (1984), Herzog's studies of radio soap operas (1941), and the perspectives and critiques of mass culture developed in Horkheimer and Adorno's famous study of the culture industries (1972 and Adorno 1991) provide many examples of the value of the Frankfurt school approach. Moreover, in their theories of the culture industries and critiques of mass culture, they were the first to systematically analyze and criticize mass-mediated culture and communications within critical social theory. They were the first social theorists to see the importance of what they called the 'culture industries' in the reproduction of contemporary societies, in which so-called mass culture and communications stand in the center of leisure activity, are important agents of socialization, mediators of political reality, and should thus be seen as major institutions of contemporary societies with a variety of economic, political, cultural and social effects. [3]

Furthermore, they investigated the cultural industries in a political context as a form of the integration of the working class into capitalist societies. The Frankfurt school were one of the first neo-Marxian groups to examine the effects of mass culture and the rise of the consumer society on the working classes which were to be the instrument of revolution in the classical Marxian scenario. They also analyzed the ways that the culture industries and consumer society were stabilizing contemporary capitalism and accordingly sought new strategies for political change, agencies of political transformation, and models for political emancipation that could serve as norms of social critique and goals for political struggle. This project required rethinking the Marxian project and produced many important contributions -- as well as some problematical positions.

The Frankfurt school focused intently on technology and culture, indicating how technology was becoming both a major force of production and formative mode of social organization and control. In a 1941 article, "Some Social Implications of Modern Technology," Herbert Marcuse argued that technology in the contemporary era constitutes an entire "mode of organizing and perpetuating (or changing) social relationships, a manifestation of prevalent thought and behavior patterns, an instrument for control and domination" (414). In the realm of culture, technology produced mass culture that habituated individuals to conform to the dominant patterns of thought and behavior, and thus provided powerful instruments of social control and domination.

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

In retrospect, one can see the Frankfurt school work as articulation of a theory of the stage of state and monopoly capitalism which became dominant during the 1930s. [4] This was an era of large

organizations, theorized earlier by Hilferding as 'organized capitalism' (1980 [1910]), in which the state and giant corporations managed the economy and in which individuals submitted to state and corporate control. This period is often described as 'Fordism' to designate the system of mass production and the homogenizing regime of capital which wanted to produce mass desires, tastes, and behavior. It was thus an era of mass production and consumption characterized by uniformity and homogeneity of needs, thought, and behavior producing a 'mass society' and what the Frankfurt school described as 'the end of the individual.' No longer was individual thought and action the motor of social and cultural progress; instead giant organizations and institutions overpowered individuals. The era corresponds to the staid, ascetic, conformist, and conservative world of corporate capitalism that was dominant in the 1950s with its organization men and women, its mass consumption, and its mass culture.

During this period, mass culture and communication were instrumental in generating the modes of thought and behavior appropriate to a highly organized and massified social order. Thus, the Frankfurt school theory of 'the culture industries' articulates a major historical shift to an era in which mass consumption and culture was indispensable to producing a consumer society based on homogeneous needs and desires for mass-produced products and a mass society based on social organization and homogeneity. It is culturally the era of highly controlled network radio and television, insipid top forty pop music, glossy Hollywood films, national magazines, and other mass-produced cultural artifacts.

Of course, media culture was never as massified and homogeneous as in the Frankfurt school model and one could argue that the model was flawed even during its time of origin and influence and that other models were preferable (such as those of Walter Benjamin, Sigfried Krakauer, Ernst Bloch and others of the Weimar generation and, later, British cultural studies, as I argue below). Yet the original Frankfurt school model of the culture industry did articulate the important social roles of media culture during a specific regime of capital and provided a model, still of use, of a highly commercial and technologically advanced culture that serves the needs of dominant corporate interests, plays a major role in ideological reproduction, and in enculturating individuals into the dominant system of needs, thought, and behavior.

British cultural studies, then, from historical perspective emerges in a later era of capital, on the cusp of what became known as "post-Fordism" and a more variegated and conflicted cultural formation. The forms of culture described by the earliest phase of British cultural studies in the 1950s and early 1960s articulated conditions in an era in which there were still significant tensions in England and much of Europe between an older working class-based culture and the newer mass-produced culture whose models and exemplars were the products of American culture industries. The initial project of cultural studies developed by Richard Hoggart, Raymond Williams, and E.P. Thompson attempted to preserve working class culture against onslaughts of mass culture produced by the culture industries. Thompson's historical inquiries into the history of British working class institutions and struggles, the defenses of working class culture by Hoggart and Williams, and their attacks on mass culture were part of a socialist and working class-oriented project that assumed that the industrial working class was a force of progressive social change and that it could be mobilized and organized to struggle against the inequalities of the existing capitalist societies and for a more egalitarian socialist one. Williams and Hoggart were deeply involved in projects of working class education and oriented toward socialist working class politics, seeing their form of cultural studies as an instrument of progressive social change.

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

suggest below, for a postmodern populist turn in cultural studies, which responds to a later stage of capitalism.

The Trajectories of Cultural Studies

It has not yet been recognized (as far as I know) that the second stage of the development of British cultural studies -- starting with the founding of the University of Birmingham Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies in 1963/64 by Hoggart and Stuart Hall -- shared many key perspectives with the Frankfurt school. During this period, the Centre developed a variety of critical approaches for the analysis, interpretation, and criticism of cultural artifacts. [5] Through a set of internal debates, and responding to social struggles and movements of the 1960s and the 1970s, the Birmingham group came to focus on the interplay of representations and ideologies of class, gender, race, ethnicity, and nationality in cultural texts, including media culture. They were among the first to study the effects of newspapers, radio, television, film, and other popular cultural forms on audiences. They also focused on how various audiences interpreted and used media culture in varied and different ways and contexts, analyzing the factors that made audiences respond in contrasting ways to media texts.

The now classical period of British cultural studies from the early 1960s to the early 1980s continued to adopt a Marxian approach to the study of culture, one especially influenced by Althusser and Gramsci (see, especially Hall 1980a). Yet although Hall usually omits the Frankfurt school from his narrative, some of the work done by the Birmingham group replicated certain classical positions of the Frankfurt school, in their social theory and methodological models for doing cultural studies, as well as in their political perspectives and strategies. Like the Frankfurt school, British cultural studies observed the integration of the working class and its decline of revolutionary consciousness, and studied the conditions of this catastrophe for the Marxian project of revolution. Like the Frankfurt school, British cultural studies concluded that mass culture was playing an important role in integrating the working class into existing capitalist societies and that a new consumer and media culture was forming a new mode of capitalist hegemony.

Both traditions focused on the intersections of culture and ideology and saw ideology critique as central to a critical cultural studies (CCCS 1980a and 1980b). Both saw culture as a mode of ideological reproduction and hegemony, in which cultural forms help to shape the modes of thought and behavior that induce individuals to adapt to the social conditions of capitalist societies. Both also see culture as a form of resistance to capitalist society and both the earlier forerunners of British cultural studies, especially Raymond Williams, and the theorists of the Frankfurt school see high culture as forces of resistance to capitalist modernity. Later, British cultural studies would valorize resistant moments in media culture and audience interpretations and use of media artifacts, while the Frankfurt school tended, with some exceptions, to see mass culture as a homogeneous and potent form of ideological domination -- a difference that would seriously divide the two traditions.

From the beginning, British cultural studies was highly political in nature and focused on the potentials for resistance in oppositional subcultures, first, valorizing the potential of working class cultures, then, youth subcultures to resist the hegemonic forms of capitalist domination. Unlike the classical Frankfurt school (but similar to Herbert Marcuse), British cultural studies turned to youth cultures as providing potentially new forms of opposition and social change. Through studies of youth subcultures, British cultural studies demonstrated how culture came to constitute distinct forms of identity and group membership and appraised the oppositional potential of various youth subcultures (see Jefferson 1976 and Hebdige 1979). Cultural studies came to focus on how subcultural groups resist dominant forms of culture and identity, creating their own style and identities. Individuals who conform to dominant dress

and fashion codes, behavior, and political ideologies thus produce their identities within mainstream groups, as members of specific social groupings (such as white, middle-class conservative Americans). Individuals who identify with subcultures, like punk culture, or black nationalist subcultures, look and act differently from those in the mainstream, and thus create oppositional identities, defining themselves against standard models.

But British cultural studies, unlike the Frankfurt school, has not adequately engaged modernist and avant-garde aesthetic movements, limiting its focus by and large to products of media culture and 'the popular' which has become an immense focus of its efforts. However, the Frankfurt school engagement with modernism and avant-garde art in many of its protean forms strikes me as more productive than the ignoring of modernism and to some extent high culture as a whole, especially during the last decade or so, by British cultural studies. It appears that in its anxiety to legitimate study of the popular and to engage the artifacts of media culture, British cultural studies has turned away from so-called 'high' culture in favor of the popular. But such a turn sacrifices the possible insights into all forms of culture and replicates the bifurcation of the field of culture into a 'popular' and 'elite' (which merely inverts the positive/negative valorizations of the older high/low distinction). More important, it disconnects cultural studies from attempts to develop oppositional forms of culture of the sort associated with the 'historical avant-garde' (Burger 1984). Avant-garde movements like Expressionism, Surrealism, and Dada wanted to develop art that would revolutionize society, that would provide alternatives to hegemonic forms of culture.

The oppositional and emancipatory potential of avant-garde art movements was a primary focus of the Frankfurt school, especially Adorno, and it is unfortunate that British and North American cultural studies have largely neglected engaging avant-garde art forms and movements. Indeed, it is interesting that such a focus was central to the project of **_Screen_**, which was in some ways the hegemonic avant-garde of cultural theory in Britain in the 1970s, with powerful influence throughout the world. In the early 1970s, **_Screen_** developed a founding distinction between 'realism' and 'modernism' and carried out a series of critiques of both bourgeois realist art and the sorts of media culture that reproduced the ideological codes of realism. In addition, they positively valorized avant-garde modernist aesthetic practices, that were championed for their political and emancipatory effects. This project put **_Screen_** theory in profound kinship with the Frankfurt school, especially Adorno, though there were also serious differences.

British cultural studies developed systematic critiques of the theoretical positions developed by **_Screen_** in the 1970s and early 1980s which, as far as I know, were never really answered. [6] Indeed, what became known as '**_Screen_** theory' itself fragmented and dissolved as a coherent theoretical discourse and practical program by the 1980s. While many of the critiques of **_Screen_** theory developed by British cultural studies were convincing, I would argue that the emphasis on avant-garde practices championed by **_Screen_** and the Frankfurt school constitute a productive alternative to the neglect of such practices by current British and North American cultural studies.

British cultural studies -- like the Frankfurt school -- insists that culture must be studied within the social relations and system through which culture is produced and consumed, and that thus study of culture is intimately bound up with the study of society, politics, and economics. The key Gramscian concept of hegemony led British cultural studies to investigate how media culture articulates a set of dominant values, political ideologies, and cultural forms into a hegemonic project that incorporates individuals into a shared consensus, as individuals became integrated into the consumer society and political projects like Reaganism or Thatcherism (cite sources). This project is similar in many ways to that of the Frankfurt school, as are their metatheoretical perspectives that combine political economy, textual analysis, and study of audience reception within the framework of critical social theory.

British cultural studies and the Frankfurt school were both founded as fundamentally transdisciplinary enterprises which resisted established academic divisions of labor. Indeed, their boundary-crossing and critiques of the detrimental effects of abstracting culture from its socio-political context elicited hostility among those who are more disciplinary-oriented and who, for example, believe in the autonomy of culture and renounce sociological or political readings. Against such academic formalism and separatism, cultural studies insists that culture must be investigated within the social relations and system through which culture is produced and consumed, and that thus analysis of culture is intimately bound up with the study of society, politics, and economics. Employing Gramsci's model of hegemony and counterhegemony, it sought to analyze 'hegemonic,' or ruling, social and cultural forces of domination and to seek 'counterhegemonic' forces of resistance and struggle. The project was aimed at social transformation and attempted to specify forces of domination and resistance in order to aid the process of political struggle and emancipation from oppression and domination.

Some earlier authoritative presentations of British cultural studies stressed the importance of a transdisciplinary approach to the study of culture that analyzed its political economy, process of production and distribution, textual products, and reception by the audience -- positions remarkably similar to the Frankfurt school. For instance, in his classical programmatic article, 'Encoding/Decoding,' Stuart Hall began his analysis by using Marx's Grundrisse as a model to trace the articulations of 'a continuous circuit,' encompassing 'production - distribution - consumption - production' (1980b: 128ff.). Hall concretizes this model with focus on how media institutions produce meanings, how they circulate, and how audiences use or decode the texts to produce meaning. Moreover, in a 1983 lecture published in 1985/1986, Richard Johnson provided a model of cultural studies, similar to Hall's earlier model, based on a diagram of the circuits of production, textuality, and reception, parallel to the circuits of capital stressed by Marx, illustrated by a diagram that stressed the importance of production and distribution. Although Johnson emphasized the importance of analysis of production in cultural studies and criticized Screen for abandoning this perspective in favor of more idealist and textualist approaches (63ff.), much work in British and North American cultural studies has replicated this neglect.

In more recent cultural studies, however, there has been a turn -- throughout the English-speaking world -- to what might be called a postmodern problematic which emphasizes pleasure, consumption, and the individual construction of identities in terms of what McGuigan (1992) has called a 'cultural populism.' Media culture from this perspective produces material for identities, pleasures, and empowerment, and thus audiences constitute the 'popular' through their consumption of cultural products. During this phase -- roughly from the mid-1980s to the present -- cultural studies in Britain and North America turned from the socialist and revolutionary politics of the previous stages to postmodern forms of identity politics and less critical perspectives on media and consumer culture. Emphasis was placed more and more on the audience, consumption, and reception, and displaced focus on production and distribution of texts and how texts were produced in media industries.

A Postmodern Cultural Studies?

In this section, I wish to argue that the forms of cultural studies developed from the late 1970s to the present, in contrast to the earlier stages, theorize a shift from the stage of state monopoly capitalism, or Fordism, rooted in mass production and consumption to a new regime of capital and social order, sometimes described as 'post-Fordism' (Harvey 1989), or 'postmodernism' (Jameson 1991), and characterizing a transnational and global capital that valorizes difference, multiplicity, eclecticism, populism, and intensified consumerism in a new information/ entertainment society. From this perspective, the proliferating media culture, postmodern architecture, shopping malls, and the culture of the postmodern spectacle became the promoters and palaces of a new stage of technocapitalism, the latest stage of capital, encompassing a postmodern image and consumer culture. [7]

Consequently, I would argue that the turn to a postmodern cultural studies is a response to a new era of global capitalism. What is described as the 'new revisionism' (McGuigan 1992: 61ff) resolutely severs cultural studies from political economy and critical social theory. During the current stage of cultural studies there is a widespread tendency to decenter, or even ignore completely, economics, history, and politics in favor of emphasis on local pleasures, consumption, and the construction of hybrid identities from the material of the popular. This cultural populism replicates the turn in postmodern theory away from Marxism and its alleged reductionism, master narratives of liberation and domination, and historical teleology. [8]

In fact, as McGuigan (1992: 45ff.) has documented, British cultural studies has had an unstable relationship with political economy from the beginning. Although Stuart Hall and Richard Johnson grounded cultural studies in a Marxian model of the circuits of capital (production-distribution-consumption-production), Hall and other key figures in British cultural studies have not consistently pursued economic analysis and most practioners of British and North American cultural studies from the 1980s to the present have pulled away from political economy altogether. Hall's swervings toward and away from political economy are somewhat curious. Whereas in the article cited above Hall begins cultural studies with production and recommends traversing through the circuits of capital (1980b) and while in 'Two Paradigms' (1980a), Hall proposes synthesizing on a higher level ˆ la the Frankfurt school 'culturalism' and 'structuralism,' he has been rather inconsistent in articulating the relationship between political economy and cultural studies, and rarely deployed political economy in his work.

In the 'Two Paradigms' article, for example, Hall dismisses the political economy of culture paradigm because it falls prey to economic reductionism. Hall might be right in rejecting some forms of the political economy of culture then circulating in England and elsewhere, but, as I will argue below, it is possible to do a political economy of culture ˆ la the Frankfurt school without falling prey to reductionism yet using the same sort of model of reciprocal interaction of culture and economy. In particular, the Frankfurt model posits a relative autonomy to culture, that is often defended by Hall, and does not entail economic reductionism or determinism.

Generally speaking, however, Hall and other practioners of British cultural studies (i.e. Bennett, Fiske, McRobbie, et al) either simply dismiss the Frankfurt school as a form of economic reductionism or simply ignore it. [9] The blanket charge of economic reductionism is in part a way of avoiding political economy altogether. Yet while many practioners of British cultural studies ignore political economy totally, Hall, to be sure, has occasionally made remarks that might suggest the need to articulate cultural studies with political economy. In a 1983 article, Hall suggests that it is preferable to conceive of the economic as determinate in 'the first instance' rather than in 'the last instance,' but this play with Althusser's argument for the primacy of the economic is rarely pursued in actual concrete studies (see the critique in Murdock 1989 and McGuigan 1992: 34).

Hall's analysis of Thatcherism as 'authoritarian populism' (1988) related the move toward the hegemony of the right to shifts in global capitalism from Fordism to Post-Fordism, but for his critics (Jessop et al 1984) he did not adequately take account of the role of the economy and economic factors in the shift toward Thatcherism. Hall responded that with Gramsci he would never deny 'the decisive nucleus of economic activity' (1988: 156), but it is not certain that Hall himself adequately incorporates economic analysis into his work in cultural studies and political critique. For example, Hall's writing on the 'global postmodern' suggests the need for more critical conceptualizations of contemporary global capitalism and theorizing of relations between the economic and the cultural of the sort associated with the Frankfurt school. Hall states (1991):

> the global postmodern signifies an ambiguous opening to difference and to the margins and makes a certain kind of decentering of the Western narrative a likely possibility; it is

> matched, from the very heartland of cultural politics, by the backlash: the aggressive resistance to difference; the attempt to restore the canon of Western civilization; the assault, direct and indirect, on multicultural; the return to grand narratives of history, language, and literature (the three great supporting pillars of national identity and national culture); the defense of ethnic absolutism, of a cultural racism that has marked the Thatcher and the Reagan eras; and the new xenophobias that are about to overwhelm fortress Europe.

For Hall, therefore, the global postmodern involves a pluralizing of culture, openings to the margins, to difference, to voices excluded from the narratives of Western culture. But one could argue in opposition to this interpretation in the spirit of the Frankfurt school that the global postmodern simply represents an expansion of global capitalism on the terrain of new media and technologies, and that the explosion of information and entertainment in media culture represents powerful new sources of capital realization and social control. To be sure, the new world order of technology, culture, and politics in contemporary global capitalism is marked by more multiplicity, pluralism, and openness to difference and voices from the margins, but it is controlled and limited by transnational corporations which are becoming powerful new cultural arbitrators who threaten to constrict the range of cultural expression rather than to expand it.

The dramatic developments in the culture industries in recent years toward merger and consolidation represent the possibilities of increased control of information and entertainment by ever fewer super conglomerates. One could argue already that the globalization of media culture is an imposition of the lowest denominator homogeneity of global culture on a national and local culture, in which CNN, NBC, BBC, the Murdock channels, and so on impose the most banal uniformity and homogeneity on media culture throughout the world. To be sure, the European cable and satellite television systems have state television from Germany, France, Italy, Spain, Sweden, and Russia, and so on, but these state television systems are not really open to that much otherness, difference, or marginality. Indeed, the more open channels, like public access television in the United States and Europe, or the SBS service which provides multicultural television in Australia, are not really part of the global postmodern, and are funded or mandated for the most part by the largess of state and are usually limited and local in scope and reach.

Certainly, there are some openings in Hall's global postmodern, but they are rather circumscribed and counteracted by increasing homogenization. Indeed, the defining characteristics of global media culture is the contradictory forces of identity and difference, homogeneity and heterogeneity, the global and the local, impinging on each other, clashing, simply peacefully co-existing, or producing new symbioses as in the motto of MTV Latino which combines English and Spanish: Chequenos!-- meaning 'Check us out!' Globalization by and large means the hegemony of transnational cultural industries, largely American. In Canada, for instance, about 95% of films in movie theaters are American; U.S. television dominates Canadian television; seven American firms control distribution of sound recordings in Canada; and 80% of the magazines on newsstands are non-Canadian (Washington Post Weekly, September 11-17, 1995: 18). In Latin America and Europe the situation is similar with American media culture, commodities, fast-food, and malls creating a new global culture that is remarkably similar on all continents. [10] Evocations of the global postmodern diversity and difference should thus take into account countervailing tendencies toward global homogenization and sameness -- themes constantly stressed by the Frankfurt school.

For Hall (1991), the interesting question is what happens when a progressive politics of representation imposes itself on the global postmodern field, as if the global field was really open to marginality and otherness. But in fact the global field itself is structured and controlled by dominant corporate and state powers and it remains a struggle to get oppositional voices in play and is probably impossible where there is not something like public access channels or state-financed open channels as in Holland. Of course, things look different when one goes outside of the dominant media culture -- there is more pluralism, multiplicity, openness to new voices, on the margins, but such alternative cultures are hardly

part of the global postmodern that Hall elicits. Hall's global postmodern is thus too positive and his optimism should be tempered by the sort of critical perspectives on global capitalism developed by the Frankfurt school and the earlier stages of cultural studies.

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

The forms of hybrid culture and identities described by postmodern cultural studies correspond to a globalized capitalism with an intense flow of products, culture, people, and identities with new configurations of the global and local and new forms of struggles and resistance (see Appadurai 1990 and Cvetkovich and Kellner 1997). Corresponding to the structure of a globalized and hybridized global culture, are new forms of cultural studies which combine traditions from throughout the world. Cultural studies has indeed has become globalized during the past decade with proliferation of articles, books, conferences, and internet sites and discussions throughout the world.

The question arises as to the continued use-value of the older traditions of Frankfurt school theory and British cultural studies in this new and original condition. To begin, these traditions continue to be relevant because there are continuities between our present stage and the earlier ones. Indeed, I would argue that we are in an interregnum period, between the modern and the postmodern, and that the current regime of capital has strong continuities with the mode of production and social organization of the earlier stages described by the Frankfurt school and British cultural studies. Contemporary culture is more commodified and commercialized than ever and so the Frankfurt school perspectives on commodification are obviously still of fundamental importance in theorizing our current situation. The hegemony of capital continues to be the dominant force of social organization, perhaps even more so than before. Likewise, class differences are intensifying, media culture continues to be highly ideological and to legitimate existing inequalities of class, gender, and race, so that the earlier critical perspectives on these aspects of contemporary culture and society continue to be of importance.

My argument will be that the new global constellation of technocapitalism is based on configurations of capital and technology, producing new forms of culture, society, and everyday life. I have been arguing that the Frankfurt School furnishes resources to analyze this conjuncture because their model of the culture industries focuses on the articulations of capital, technology, culture, and everyday life that constitute the current socio-cultural environment. Although there is a tendency of Frankfurt School thinkers to occasionally offer an overly onesided and negative vision of technology as an instrument of domination -- building on Weber's theory of instrumental rationality -- there are also aspects that make possible a critical theory of technology that articulates both its emancipatory and oppressive aspects (see Marcuse 1941; Kellner 1984 and 1989a). The Frankfurt school thus complements British cultural studies in providing a more intense focus on the articulations of capital and technology, and thus theorizing contemporary culture and society in the context of the current constellation of global capitalism.

In the next section, accordingly, I will examine what theoretical resources the Frankfurt school and tradition of British cultural studies contain to critically analyze and transform contemporary societies and culture. I will be concerned to articulate some overlapping similarities in perspective between the two traditions, but also differences in which the traditions complement each other and force us to produce yet new perspectives in order to do cultural studies in the present conjuncture. My argument is that cultural

studies today should return to the earlier models of British cultural studies and put in question the current rejection of political economy, class, ideology, and other concepts central characteristic of the postmodern turn in cultural studies. I believe that the turn away from the problematic shared to some extent with the Frankfurt school has vitiated contemporary British and North American cultural studies and that a return to critical social theory and political economy is a necessary move for a revitalized cultural studies. This project requires a new cultural studies that articulates the sort of analysis of political economy developed by the Frankfurt school with the emphasis on subversive moments of media culture, oppositional subcultures, and an active audience developed by British cultural studies. I believe that the neglect of political economy truncates cultural studies and would argue for its importance, not only for generally understanding media culture, but also for analyzing texts and audience use of texts which are deeply influenced by the system of production and distribution within which media products circulate and are received (see Kellner 1995a). [11]

Border Crossing, Transdisciplinarity, and Cultural Studies

I have been arguing that there are many important anticipations of key positions of British cultural studies in the Frankfurt school, that they share many positions and dilemmas, and that a dialogue between these traditions is long overdue. I would also propose seeing the project of cultural studies as broader than that taught in the contemporary curricula and as encompassing a wide range of figures from various social locations and traditions. There are indeed many traditions and models of cultural studies, ranging from neo-Marxist models developed by Lukacs, Gramsci, Bloch, and the Frankfurt school in the 1930s to feminist and psychoanalytic cultural studies to semiotic and post-structuralist perspectives. In Britain and the United States, there is a long tradition of cultural studies that preceded the Birmingham school. [12] And France, Germany, and other European countries have also produced rich traditions that provide resources for cultural studies throughout the world.

The major traditions of cultural studies combine -- at their best -- social theory, cultural critique, history, philosophical analysis, and specific political interventions, thus overcoming the standard academic division of labor by surmounting specialization arbitrarily produced by an artificial academic division of labor. Cultural studies thus operates with a transdisciplinary conception that draws on social theory, economics, politics, history, communication studies, literary and cultural theory, philosophy, and other theoretical discourses -- an approach shared by the Frankfurt school, British cultural studies, and French postmodern theory. Transdisciplinary approaches to culture and society transgress borders between various academic disciplines. [13]In regard to cultural studies, such approaches suggest that one should not stop at the border of a text, but should see how it fits into systems of textual production, and how various texts are thus part of systems of genres or types of production, and have an intertextual construction -- as well as articulating discourses in a given socio-historical conjuncture.

Rambo is a film, for instance, that fits into the genre of war films and a specific cycle of return to Vietnam films, but also articulates anti-communist political discourses dominant in the Reagan era (see Kellner 1995a). It replicates the rightwing discourses concerning PoWs left in Vietnam and the need to overcome the Vietnam syndrome (i.e. shame concerning the loss of the war and overcoming the reluctance to again use U.S. military power). But it also fits into a cycle of masculist hero films, anti-statist rightwing discourses, and the use of violence to resolve conflicts. The figure of Rambo itself became a 'global popular' which had a wide range of effects throughout the world. Interpreting the cinematic text of Rambo thus involves the use of film theory, textual analysis, social history, political analysis and ideology critique, effects analysis, and other modes of cultural criticism.

One should not, therefore, stop at the borders of the text or even its intertexuality, but should move from text to context, to the culture and society that constitutes the text and in which it should be read and

interpreted. Transdisciplinary approaches thus involve border crossings across disciplines from text to context, and thus from texts to culture and society. Raymond Williams was especially important for cultural studies because of his stress on borders and border crossings (1961, 1962, and 1964). Like the Frankfurt school, he always saw the interconnection between culture and communication, and their connections with the society in which they are produced, distributed, and consumed. Williams also saw how texts embodied the political conflicts and discourses within which they were embedded and reproduced.

Crossing borders inevitably pushes one to the boundaries and borders of class, gender, race, sexuality, and the other constituents that differentiate individuals from each other and through which people construct their identities. Thus, most forms of cultural studies, and most critical social theories, have engaged feminism and the various multicultural theories which focus on representations of gender, race, ethnicity, and sexuality, enriching their projects with theoretical and political substance derived from the new critical discourses that have emerged since the 1960s. Transdisciplinary cultural studies thus draw on a disparate range of discourses and fields to theorize the complexity and contradictions of the multiple effects of a vast range of cultural forms in our lives and, differentially, demonstrate how these forces serve as instruments of domination, but also offer resources for resistance and change. The Frankfurt school, I would argue, inaugurated such transdisciplinary approaches to cultural studies combining analysis of the production and political economy of culture, with textual analysis that contextualize cultural artifacts in their socio-historical milieu, with studies of audience reception and use of cultural texts. [14]

Yet there are serious flaws in the original program of critical theory which requires a radical reconstruction of the classical model of the culture industries (Kellner 1989a and 1995a). Overcoming the limitations of the classical model would include: more concrete and empirical analysis of the political economy of the media and the processes of the production of culture; more empirical and historical research into the construction of media industries and their interaction with other social institutions; more empirical studies of audience reception and media effects; more emphasis on the use of media culture as providing forces of resistance; and the incorporation of new cultural theories and methods into a reconstructed critical theory of culture and society. Cumulatively, such a reconstruction of the classical Frankfurt school project would update the critical theory of society and its activity of cultural criticism by incorporating contemporary developments in social and cultural theory into the enterprise of critical theory.

In addition, the Frankfurt school dichotomy between high culture and low culture is problematical and should be superseded for a more unified model that takes culture as a spectrum and applies similar critical methods to all cultural artifacts ranging from opera to popular music, from modernist literature to soap operas. In particular, the Frankfurt school model of a monolithic mass culture contrasted with an ideal of 'authentic art,' which limits critical, subversive, and emancipatory moments to certain privileged artifacts of high culture, is highly problematic. The Frankfurt school position that all mass culture is ideological and homogenizing, having the effects of duping a passive mass of consumers, is also objectionable. Instead, one should see critical and ideological moments in the full range of culture, and not limit critical moments to high culture and identify all of low culture as ideological. One should also allow for the possibility that critical and subversive moments could be found in the artifacts of the cultural industries, as well as the canonized classics of high modernist culture that the Frankfurt school seemed to privilege as the site of artistic opposition and emancipation. [15] One should also distinguish between the encoding and decoding of media artifacts, and recognize that an active audience often produces its own meanings and use for products of the cultural industries.

British cultural studies overcomes some of these limitations of the Frankfurt school by systematically rejecting high/low culture distinctions and taking seriously the artifacts of media culture. Likewise, they

overcome the limitations of the Frankfurt school notion of a passive audience in their conceptions of an active audience that creates meanings and the popular. Yet it should be pointed out that Walter Benjamin -- loosely affiliated with the Frankfurt school but not part of their inner circle -- also took seriously media culture, saw its emancipatory potential, and posited the possibility of an active audience. For Benjamin (1969), the spectators of sports events were discriminating judges of athletic activity, able to criticize and analyze sports events. Benjamin postulated that the film audience can also become experts of criticism and dissect the meanings and ideologies of film. Yet I believe that we need to synthesize the concepts of the active and manipulated audience to grasp the full range of media effects, thus avoiding both cultural elitism and populism.

Indeed, it is precisely the critical focus on media culture from the perspectives of commodification, reification, technification, ideology, and domination developed by the Frankfurt school that provides a perspective useful as a corrective to more populist and uncritical approaches to media culture which surrender critical perspectives -- as is evident in some current forms of British and North American cultural studies. In fact, the field of communications study was initially bifurcated into a division, described by Lazarsfeld (1941) in an issue edited by the Frankfurt school on mass communications, between the critical school associated with the Institute for Social Research contrasted to administrative research, which Lazarsfeld defined as research carried out within the parameters of established media and social institutions and that would provide material that was of use to these institutions -- research with which Lazarsfeld himself would be identified. Hence, it was the Frankfurt school that inaugurated critical communications research and I am suggesting that a return to a reconstructed version of the original model would be useful for media and cultural studies today.

Although the Frankfurt school approach itself is partial and one-sided, it does provide tools to criticize the ideological forms of media culture and the ways that it provides ideologies which legitimate forms of oppression. Ideology critique is a fundamental constituent of cultural studies and the Frankfurt school is valuable for inaugurating systematic and sustained critiques of ideology within the cultural industries. The Frankfurt school is especially useful in providing contextualizations of their cultural criticism. Members of the group carried out their analysis within the framework of critical social theory, thus integrating cultural studies within the study of capitalist society and the ways that communications and culture were produced within this order and the roles and functions that they assumed. Thus, the study of communication and culture became an important part of a theory of contemporary society, in which culture and communication were playing ever more significant roles. [16]

In the next section, I will argue that the neglect in current versions of British cultural studies of the sort of political economy and critical social theory found in the Frankfurt school work has vitiated contemporary cultural studies that can be enriched by incorporation of the version of political economy -- closely connected with critical social theory -- found in the Frankfurt school. I develop this argument with engagement of some key texts within British cultural studies, and criticize some current versions which are shown to be problematical precisely through their abandoning of the earlier, more Marxist-oriented, perspectives that defined earlier versions of British cultural studies and the work of the Frankfurt school.

Political Economy and Cultural Studies

Thus, against the turn away from political economy in cultural studies, I believe it is important to situate analysis of cultural texts within their system of production and distribution, often referred to as the 'political economy' of culture. [17] But this requires some reflection on what sort of political economy might be useful for cultural studies. The references to the terms 'political' and 'economy' call attention to the fact that the production and distribution of culture takes place within a specific economic system, constituted by relations between the state, the economy, the media, social institutions and practices,

culture, and everyday life. Political economy thus encompasses economics and politics and the relations between them and the other central dimensions of society and culture.

In regard to media institutions, for instance, in Western democracies, a capitalist economy dictates that cultural production is governed by laws of the market, but the democratic imperatives mean that there is some regulation of culture by the state. There are often tensions within a given society concerning which activities should be governed by the imperatives of the market alone and how much state regulation or intervention is desirable, to assure a wider diversity of broadcast programming, or the prohibition of phenomena agreed to be harmful, such as cigarette advertising or pornography (see Kellner 1990).

Political economy highlights that capitalist societies are organized according to a dominant mode of production that structures institutions and practices according to the logic of commodification and capital accumulation so that cultural production is profit- and market-oriented. Forces of production (such as media technologies and creative practice) are deployed according to dominant relations of production which are important in determining what sort of cultural artifacts are produced and how they are consumed. However, 'political economy' does not merely refer solely to economics, but to the relations between the economic, political, and other dimensions of social reality. The term thus links culture to its political and economic context and opens up cultural studies to history and politics. It refers to a field of struggle and antagonism and not an inert structure as caricatured by some of its opponents.

Political economy also calls attention to the fact that culture is produced within relationships of domination and subordination and thus reproduces or resists existing structures of power. Such a perspective also provides a normative standard for cultural studies whereby the critic can attack aspects of cultural texts that reproduce class, gender, racial, and other hierarchal forms of domination and positively valorize aspects that resist or subvert existing domination, or depict forms of resistance and struggle against them. In addition, inserting texts into the system of culture within which they are produced and distributed can help elucidate features and effects of the texts that textual analysis alone might miss or downplay. Rather than being antithetical approaches to culture, political economy can actually contribute to textual analysis and critique, as well as audience reception and uses of media texts -- as I attempt to demonstrate below. The system of production often determines what sort of artifacts will be produced, what structural limits there will be as to what can and cannot be said and shown, and what sort of audience expectations and usage the text may generate.

Consideration of Stuart Hall's famous distinction between encoding and decoding (1980b), I believe, suggests some of the ways that political economy structures both the encoding and decoding of media artifacts. As the Frankfurt school pointed out, media culture is produced within an industrial organization of production in which products are generated according to codes and models within culture industries that are organized according to industrial models of production (Horkheimer and Adorno 1972). What codes are operative and how they are encoded into artifacts is thus a function of the system of production. In a commercial system of media culture, production is organized according to well-defined genres with their own codes and modes of production.

Film, television, popular music, and other genres of media culture are highly codified into systems of commercial enterprise, organized in accordance with highly conventional codes and formulas. In the system of commercial broadcasting in the United States, for instance, network television is organized into a few dominant genres such as talk shows, soap operas, action-adventure series, and situation comedies. Each genre has its own codes and format, with situation comedies invariably using a structure of conflict and resolution, with the solving of the problem suggesting a moral message or upholding dominant values or institutions. Within the genre, each series has its own codes and formats which are followed according to the dictates of the production company; each series, for instance, uses a manual (or 'story bible') that tells writers and production teams what to do and not to do, defines characters and plot

lines, and the conventions of the series; continuity experts enforce the following of these codes rigorously (as do network censors that do not allow content that transgresses dominant moral codes).

Sometimes, of course, the codes of media culture change, often dramatically and usually in accordance with social changes that lead media producers to conclude that audiences will be receptive to new forms more relevant to their social experience. So for some years during the 1950s and 1960s happy, middle-class nuclear families ruled the U.S. situation comedy during an era of unparalleled post-World War Two affluence that came to an end in the early 1970s. Precisely then new working class comedies appeared, such as Norman Lear's **_All in the Family_**, which focused on social conflict, economic problems, and which did not offer easy solutions to all of the standard conflicts. Lear's subsequent series on the working class, **_Mary Hartman_**, combined situation comedy codes with soap opera codes which endlessly multiplied problems rather than providing solutions. During the protracted economic recession of the 1980s and 1990s, triggered by a global restructuring of capitalism, new 'loser television' situation comedy series appeared featuring the victims of the economic downswing and restructuring (i.e. **_Roseanne_**, **_Married with Children_**, and **_The Simpsons_**). **_Beavis and Butt-Head_** takes loser television even further, combining situation comedy formats with music video clips and the commentary of two mid-teenage animated cartoon characters without apparent families, education, or job prospects (see the discussion in Kellner 1995a).

Other popular 1990s sitcoms feature singles, reflecting the decline of the family and proliferation of alternative life styles in the present moment (e.g., **_Murphy Brown_**, **_Seinfeld, Friends_**, etc.). The most popular U.S. sitcoms of the 1990s thus break the codes of happy affluent families easily solving all problems within the nuclear family ('It's all in the family'). The codes of the texts are produced by changes in production codes with media corporations deciding that audiences want a new sort of program that better reflect their own situation and in turn create new audience codes and expectations. The concept of 'code' therefore intersects articulations of media industries and production, texts, and audience reception in a circuit of production-consumption-production in which political economy is crucial.

Increased competition from ever-proliferating cable channels and new technologies led network television in the 1980s and 1990s to break many of the conventions rigorously followed in series TV in order to attract declining audiences. Programs like **_Hill Street Blues_**, **_L.A. Law_**, **_Law and Order_**, and **_N.Y.P.D._**, for instance, broke previous conventions and taboos of the television crime drama. **_Hill Street Blues_** employed hand-held cameras to create a new look and feel, multiplied its plot lines with some stories lasting for weeks, and did not always provide a positive resolution to the conflicts and problems depicted. Previous TV police dramas rigorously followed a conflict/resolution model with a crime, its detection, and an inevitable happy ending, projecting the message that crime did not pay and providing idealizations of the police and the criminal justice system. But the later police shows mentioned above depicted corrupt members within the law enforcement and judicial system, police committing crimes, and criminals getting away with their misdeeds.

Yet even the code-breaking series have their own codes and formulas which cultural analysis should delineate. The relatively young and liberal production team of **_Hill Street Blues_**, for instance, conveyed socially critical attitudes toward dominant institutions and sympathy for the oppressed marked by the experiences of 60s radicalism (see Gitlin 1983's study of the Bochco-Kozoll production team). The team's later series **_L.A. Law_** negotiates the emphasis on professionalism and rising mobility of the Reaganite 80s with concern for social problems and the oppressed. Their 1990s series **_N.Y.P.D._** reflects growing cynicism toward police, law enforcement, and the society as a whole. The success of these series obviously points to an audience which shares these attitudes and which is tiring of idealized depictions of police, lawyers, and the criminal justice system.

Thus, situating the artifacts of media culture within the system of production and the society that generate

them can help illuminate their structures and meanings. The encoding of media artifacts is deeply influenced by systems of production so that study of the texts of television, film, or popular music, for instance, is enhanced by studying the ways that media artifacts are actually produced within the structure and organization of the culture industries. Since the forms of media culture are structured by well-defined rules and conventions, the study of the production of culture can help elucidate the codes actually in play and thus illuminate what sorts of texts are produced. Because of the demands of the format of radio or music television, for instance, most popular songs are three to four minutes, fitting into the format of the distribution system. Because of its control by giant corporations oriented primarily toward profit, film production in the U.S. is dominated by specific genres and since the 1970s by the search for blockbuster hits, thus leading to proliferation of the most popular sorts of comedies, action/adventure films, fantasies, and seemingly never ending sequels and cycles of the most popular films. This economic factor explains why Hollywood film is dominated by major genres and subgenres, explains sequelmania in the film industry, crossovers of popular films into television series, [18] and a certain homogeneity in products constituted within systems of production with rigid generic codes, formulaic conventions, and well-defined ideological boundaries.

Likewise, study of political economy can help determine the limits and range of political and ideological discourses and effects, and can help indicate which discourses are dominant at a specific conjuncture. The rigid production code implemented for Hollywood films in 1934, for instance, strictly forbade scenes showing explicit sexuality, use of drugs, critical references to religion, or stories in which crime did indeed pay. By the 1960s, the Production Code was thoroughly subverted and eventually abandoned during an era of falling audiences where the film industries broke previous taboos in order to attract audiences to the movie theaters. In addition, the wave of youth and counterculture films of the 1960s responded to what film studios saw as a new film generation which made up a significant chunk of the audience (Kellner and Ryan 1988). Low-budget films like **_Easy Rider_** made high profits and Hollywood spun off genre cycles of such films. Likewise, when low-budget blaxploitation films made high profits a cycle of films featuring black heroes, often outlaws, against the white power structure proliferated. After consolidation of the film industry in the 1970s, however, and megablockbuster hits like **_Jaws_** and **_Star Wars_**, Hollywood aimed at more mainstream genre blockbuster films, driving more subcultural fare to the margins.

Thus, economic trends in the film industry help explain what sorts of films were made over the past decades. Television news and entertainment and its biases and limitations can also be illuminated by study of political economy. My study of television in the United States, for instance, disclosed that the takeover of the television networks by major transnational corporations and communications conglomerates was part of a 'right turn' within U.S. society in the 1980s whereby powerful corporate groups won control of the state and the mainstream media (Kellner 1990). For example, during the 1980s all three U.S. networks were taken over by major corporate conglomerates: ABC was taken over in 1985 by Capital Cities, NBC was taken over by GE, and CBS was taken over by the Tisch Financial Group. Both ABC and NBC sought corporate mergers and this motivation, along with other benefits derived from Reaganism, might well have influenced them to downplay criticisms of Reagan and to generally support his conservative programs, military adventures, and simulated presidency -- and then to support George Bush in the 1988 election (see the documentation in Kellner 1990).

Reaganism and Thatcherism constituted a new political hegemony, a new form of political common sense, and the trend in the 1990s has been for deregulation and the allowing of 'market forces' to determine the direction of cultural and communications industries. Hence, in 1995-6 megamergers between Disney and ABC, Time Warner and Turner Communications, CBS and Westinghouse, and NBC and Microsoft, and mergers among other major media conglomerates were negotiated. Merger mania was both a function of the general atmosphere of deregulation and a FCC ruling under the Clinton Administration which allowed television networks to own and produce their own programming (whereas

previously independent Hollywood production companies created programs and the networks distributed it). Relaxing of these rules and visions of 'synergy' between production and distribution units has led to even greater concentration of media conglomerates and will thus probably lead to a narrower range of programming and voices in the future.

Thus, analysis of political economy allows illumination of the major trends in the information and entertainment industries. Furthermore, one cannot really discuss the role of the media in specific events like the Gulf War without analyzing the production and political economy of news and information, as well as the actual text of the war against Iraq and its reception by its audience (see Kellner 1992 and 1995a). Likewise, in appraising the full social impact of pornography, one needs to be aware of the sex industry and the production process of, say, pornographic films, and not just limit analysis to the texts themselves and their effects on audiences. Nor can one fully grasp the success of Michael Jackson or Madonna without analyzing their marketing strategies, their use of the technologies of music video, advertising, publicity, and image management.

Toward A Multiperspectival Cultural Studies

To conclude: I am proposing that cultural studies develop a multiperspectival approach which includes investigation of a wide range of artifacts interrogating relationships within the three dimensions of: 1) the production and political economy of culture; 2) textual analysis and critique of its artifacts; and 3) study of audience reception and the uses of media/cultural products. [19] This proposal involves suggesting, first, that cultural studies itself be multiperspectival, getting at culture from the perspectives of political economy and production, text analysis, and audience reception. [20] I would also propose that textual analysis and audience reception studies utilize a multiplicity of perspectives, or critical methods, when engaging in textual analysis, and in delineating the multiplicity of subject positions, or perspectives, through which audiences appropriate culture. Moreover, I would argue that the results of such studies need to be interpreted and contexualized within critical social theory to adequately delineate their meanings and effects.

Which perspectives will be deployed in specific studies depends on the subject matter under investigation, the goals of the study, and its range. Obviously, one cannot deploy all the perspectives I have proposed in every single study, but I would argue if one is doing a study of a complex phenomena like the Gulf war, Madonna, the Rambo phenomena, rap music, or the O.J. Simpson trial, one needs to deploy the perspectives of political economy, textual analysis, and audience reception studies to illuminate the full dimensions of these spectacles of media culture. In this paper, I have limited myself to some arguments concerning how Frankfurt school perspectives on the cultural industries can enrich cultural studies, and for a final example of the fruitfulness of this approach let us reflect on the Madonna and Michael Jackson phenomena. There have been a large number of readings of their texts and a vast literature on Madonna's effects on her audiences, but less study of how their mode of production and marketing strategies have helped create their popularity.

My argument would be that Madonna and Michael Jackson have deployed some of the most proficient production and marketing teams in the history of media culture and this dimension should therefore be considered in analyses of their meanings, effects, and uses by their audiences. Just as Madonna's popularity was in large part a function of her marketing strategies and her production of music videos and images that appealed to diverse audiences (see Kellner 1995a), so too has Michael Jackson's media machine employed topflight production, marketing, and public relations personnel. Both Madonna and Michael Jackson reached superstardom during the era when MTV and music videos became central in determining fame within the field of popular music and arguably became popular because of their look and spectacular presentations in expensive music videos with exceptionally high production values. In

both cases, it is arguably the marketing of their image and the spectacle of their music videos or concerts -- rather than, say, their voices or any specific musical talent -- that account for their popularity. Both deployed top musical arrangers, choreographers, and cinematographers in the production of music videos and performed in highly spectacular and well-publicized concerts that were as much spectacle as performance. Both employed powerhouse publicity machines and constantly kept themselves in the public eye. In particular, both were celebrated constantly by MTV which had entire weekends, and even weeks, devoted to publicizing their work and fame.

Both therefore succeeded because of their understanding and use of the machinery of musical production and promotion by the culture industries. Interestingly, Michael Jackson targeted mainstream audiences from the beginning, attempting to appeal equally to black and white, preteen and teenage, audiences. Indeed, his look erased racial markers as he became whiter and whiter after recurrent plastic surgery; likewise, he cultivated an androgenous look and image that collapsed distinctions between male and female, child and adult, appearing both childlike and sexy, as a naive innocent and canny businessperson, thus appealing to multiple audiences. Madonna, by contrast, targeted first teenage girl audiences, then various ethnic audiences with performers of color and distinct ethnic markers appearing in her music videos and concerts.

Both also appealed to gay audiences with Madonna in particular pushing the boundaries of the acceptable in music videos, leading MTV to ban a 1990 video 'Justify My Love' with what was deemed excessively extreme sexuality. Both became highly controversial, Madonna because of her exploitation of sexuality and Michael Jackson because of accusations of child molestation. Indeed, the latter created a serious public relations problem for Jackson who had presented himself as a lover of children. But when this image became too literal he needed to refurbish his public persona. After settling financially with the family of the boy who had claimed that Jackson had sexually abused him, Jackson undertook a series of desperate attempts to refurbish his image in the mid-1990s. He married Lisa Marie Presley, Elvis' daughter in 1994, thus positioning him as a husband, a father (of Lisa Marie's children by a previous marriage), and as in the lineage of the King of Rock, the successor to the throne. With the 1995 release of **_His Story_**, a multi-record collection of his greatest hits and current work, Jackson undertook a massive publicity campaign with Sony records supported with a $30 million budget. The record did not match his earlier sales, but at least brought Jackson back into the limelight as it was accompanied by an unparalleled media blitz in summer 1995 with ABC Television dedicating entire special programs to Jackson and his wife, and to Jackson on-line with his fans in a live Internet interaction. Not to be outdone, MTV devoted an entire week's prime time programming to Jackson.

Yet Jackson and Lisa Marie Presley split up in 1996 and once again rumors circulated that he was continuing to engage in pedophilia, and these rumors and the break-up of his marriage created bad press and retarnished his image. In the midst of this crisis, Jackson declared that a long time friend was pregnant with his child and he married her in Fall 1996, once again, trying to produce a positive image as husband and father. But, again, negative media reports circulated and Jackson's image is again in crisis. He who lives by the media can also die by the media, though like old soldiers, media celebrities sometimes just fade away rather than merely disappearing.

In any case, analyzing the marketing and production of stardom and popularity can help to demystify the arguably false idols of media culture and to produce more critical audience perception. Analyzing the business dimension of media culture can help produce critical consciousness as well as better understanding of its production and distribution. Such a dimension, I have been arguing, enhances cultural studies and contributes to developing a critical media pedagogy that supplements analysis of how to read media texts and how to study audience use of them.

Consequently, a cultural studies that is critical and multiperspectival provides comprehensive approaches

to culture that can be applied to a wide variety of artifacts from pornography to Michael Jackson and Madonna, from the Gulf War to Beavis and Butt-Head, from modernist painting to postmodern architecture. Its comprehensive perspectives encompass political economy, textual analysis, and audience research and provide critical and political perspectives that enable individuals to dissect the meanings, messages, and effects of dominant cultural forms. Cultural studies is thus part of a critical media pedagogy that enables individuals to resist media manipulation and to increase their freedom and individuality. It can empower people to gain sovereignty over their culture and to be able to struggle for alternative cultures and political change. Cultural studies is thus not just another academic fad, but can be part of a struggle for a better society and a better life.

Notes

1. As I argue in this text, the classical texts of British cultural studies ignore or denigrate the Frankfurt school and most succeeding texts on cultural studies continue to either superficially caricature or hostilely attack the tradition of critical theory. For my own earlier appreciations and criticisms of the Frankfurt school tradition that I draw upon here, see Kellner 1989a and Kellner 1995a.

2. On the Frankfurt school theory of the cultural industries, see Horkheimer and Adorno 1972; Adorno 1991); the anthology edited by Rosenberg and White 1957; the readers edited by Arato and Gebhardt 1982 and Bronner and Kellner 1989; the discussions of the history of the Frankfurt school in Jay 1971 and Wiggershaus 1994; and the discussion of the Frankfurt school combination of social theory and cultural criticism in Kellner 1989a.

3. I've analyzed some of these effects from a reconstructed critical theory perspective in analyses of Hollywood film with Michael Ryan (1988), two books on American television (Kellner 1990 and 1992), and a series of media cultural studies (in Kellner 1995a and Best and Kellner, forthcoming).

4. See Kellner 1989a and the texts in Bronner and Kellner 1989.

5. For standard accounts of this phase of British cultural studies, see Hall 1980b; Johnson 1986/7; Fiske 1986; O'Conner 1989; Turner 1990; Grossberg 1989; Agger 1992; and McGuigan 1992. For readers which document the positions of British cultural studies, see the articles collected in Grossberg, Nelson, Triechler 1992 and During 1992.

6. See the critique of 'Screen theory' in Hall et al 1980.

7. For detailed description of this new form of culture and society, see Best and Kellner 1997 and forthcoming; for critical analysis of the postmodern theories that emerged during the 1970s and 1980s, see Best and Kellner 1991.

8. The most extreme version of 'the end of political economy' is found in Baudrillard (1993) and French postmodern theory, but is present in some versions of British and North American cultural studies. See Kellner 1989b and 1995a.

9. Among the few engagements with the Frankfurt School in the vast literature explaining the origins and trajectory of British cultural studies, or on the positions the Birmingham school critically engaged, are an article by Tony Bennett (1982: 30ff) who tended to read the Frankfurt School as a left variant of the mass society model which cultural studies was rejecting in an anthology containing Open University texts used for cultural studies. Earlier, there was an article by Phil Slater in the Birmingham Centre journal on "The Aesthetic Theory of the Frankfurt School" which was highly dismissive and "A Bibliography of the

Frankfurt School" by Chris Pawling in the journal published by the Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies, _Cultural Studies_ 6 (Autumn 1974): 172-215). In one of his genealogies of the Centre, Hall (1990: 16) notes how the British New Left encountered major works of European Marxism -- including "the Frankfurt School, then of Benjamin, and then of Gramsci" -- through the translations of _New Left Review_, but Hall never describes his wrestling with the devilish angels of the Frankfurt School -- as he frequently does vis-a-vis Althusser and Gramsci. Thus, there has been no real critical engagement with the Frankfurt School that I could find and certainly no recognition of the shared positions.

10. In Europe, American films constitute between 75 to 80 percent of the market; Time, February 27, 1995: 36. It is predicted that new digital technologies will create even greater penetration of world markets by American media products.

11. Here I agree with McGuigan who writes that "the separation of contemporary cultural studies from the political economy of culture has been one of the most disabling features of the field of study. The core problematic was virtually premised on a terror of economic reductionism. In consequence, the economic aspects of media institutions and the broader economic dynamics of consumer culture were rarely investigated, simply bracketed off, thereby severely undermining the explanatory and, in effect, critical capacities of cultural studies" (1992: 40-41).

12. On earlier traditions of cultural studies in the U.S., see Aronowitz 1993 and for Britain, see Davies 1995.

13. Articles in the 1983 _Journal of Communications_ issue on Ferment in the Field (Vol. 33, No 3 [Summer 1983]) noted a bifurcation of the field between a culturalist approach and more empirical approaches in the study of mass-mediated communications. The culturalist approach was largely textual, centered on the analysis and criticism of texts as cultural artifacts, using methods primarily derived from the humanities. The methods of communications research, by contrast, employed more empirical methodologies, ranging from straight quantitative research, empirical studies of specific cases or domains, or historical research. Topics in this area included analysis of the political economy of the media, audience reception and study of media effects, media history, the interaction of media institutions with other domains of society and the like. See Kellner 1995b for analyses of how the Frankfurt school, British cultural studies, and French postmodern theory all overcome the bifurcation of the field of culture and communications into text- and humanities-based approaches opposed to empirical and social science-based enterprises. As I am arguing here, a transdisciplinary approach overcomes such bifurcation and delineates a richer and broader perspective for the study of culture and communications.

14. The contributions of the Frankfurt school to audience reception theory is often overlooked completely, but Walter Benjamin constantly undertake studies of how audiences use the materials of popular media and inaugurated a form of reception studies; see Benjamin 1969: 217ff. Leo Lowenthal also carried out reception studies of literature, popular magazines, political demagogues, and other phenomena (with Norbert Gutterman 1949; and 1957; 1961). On Frankfurt experiments with studies of media effects see Wiggershaus 1994: 441ff.).

15. There were, to be sure, some exceptions and qualifications to this "classical" model: Adorno would occasionally note a critical or utopian moment within mass culture and the possibility of audience reception against the grain; see the examples in Kellner 1989a. But although one can find moments that put in question the more bifurcated division between high and low culture and the model of mass culture as consisting of nothing except ideology and modes of manipulation which incorporate individuals into the existing society and culture, generally, the Frankfurt school model is overly reductive and monolithic, and thus needs radical reconstruction -- which I have attempted to do in work over the past two decades.

16. In the 1930s model of critical theory, theory was supposed to be an instrument of political practice. Yet the formulation of the theory of the culture industries by Horkheimer and Adorno (1972 [1947]) in the 1940s was part of their turn toward a more pessimistic phase in which they eschewed concrete politics and generally located resistance within critical individuals, like themselves, rather than within social groups, movements, or oppositional practices. Thus, the Frankfurt School ultimately is weak on the formulation of oppositional practices and counterhegemonic cultural strategies with the exception, as noted, of Walter Benjamin.

17. For a survey of recent literature on the political economy of the media and efforts at "rethinking and renewal," see Mosco 1995.

18. Curiously, whereas during the 1970s and the 1980s, there were frequent spin-offs of television series from popular movies, in more recent years the trend has reversed with popular classical television series spun-off into films like The Fugitive, The Beverly Hillbillies, The Flintstones, The Adams Family series, The Brady Bunch, and many others. Yet the synergy continues with a 1995 TV-series based on a film derived from John Grisham's The Client and 1996 series based on the films Dangerous Minds and Clueless.

19. I set out this multiperspectival approach in an earlier article and book on the Gulf war as a cultural and media event (Kellner 1992a and 1992b), and illustrate the approach in studies of the Vietnam war and its cultural texts, Hollywood film in the age of Reagan, MTV, TV entertainment like Miami Vice, advertising, Madonna, cyberpunk fiction and other topics in Kellner 1995a. Thus, I am here merely signaling the metatheory that I have worked out and illustrated elsewhere.

20. Curiously, Raymond Williams (1981) equates precisely this multiperspectival approach in his textbook on the sociology of culture to a mainstream "observational sociology" perspective, though I am suggesting more critical approaches to production, textual analysis, and audience reception. Yet, interestingly, Williams privileges an institution and production approach in his sociology of culture, whereas British and North American cultural studies have neglected these dimensions for increasing focus on audiences and reception.

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