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Western Marxism

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In investigating the origins and genesis of modern societies, Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels developed a new materialist theory of history and society, introducing the concepts of the mode of production, forces and relations of production, division of labor, ideology, and class struggle as keys to understanding society and history. They also produced a conception of history as a succession of modes of production, charting the emergence of modern bourgeois society and its future transition to a communist society. The Marxist vision of society and history was presented in the 1848 "Communist Manifesto" in dramatic narrative form, sketching out the rise of capitalism and bourgeois society and its revolutionary overthrow by the industrial proletariat. Capital and other classical Marxian texts developed a critical theory of capitalism, a model of socialism, and a project of revolution in a theory of modernity and globalization combining political economy, social theory, philosophy, history, and revolutionary politics that provoked both fervent adherence and passionate opposition.

Marx and Engels saw history as a process that moved through negation of old forms of life and the production of new ones. Modern capitalist societies in particular generated change, innovation, and development as their very mode of social reproduction. For classical Marxism, once the energies of modern industrial capitalism were unleashed, vigorous development of the means of production, the destruction of the old and the creation of the new, all constantly update and transform bourgeois society: "Constantly revolutionizing of production, uninterrupted disturbance of all social conditions, everlasting uncertainty and agitation distinguish the bourgeois epoch from all earlier ones. All fixed, fast-frozen relations, with their train of ancient and venerable prejudices and opinions, are swept away, all new-formed ones become antiquated before they can ossify. All that is solid melts into air, all that is holy is profaned, and man is at last compelled to face with sober senses his real conditions of life, and his relations with his kind" (Marx and Engels, Vol. 6: 487).

Many different versions of Marxism emerged after the deaths of Marx and Engels. While the first generation of Marxist theorists and activists tended to focus on the economy and politics, later generations of Western Marxists appeared in Europe after the Russian revolution and developed Marxian theories of culture, the state, social institutions, psychology, and other thematics not systematically engaged by the first generation of Marxism and attempted to update the Marxian theory to account for developments in the contemporary era. Many 20th century Marxian theorists ranging from Georg Lukacs, Karl Korsch, Antonio Gramsci, Ernst Bloch, Walter Benjamin, to Jean-Paul Sartre, Herbert Marcuse, Louis Althusser, Fredric Jameson, and Slavoj Zizek employed the Marxian theory to analyze past and present cultural, political, economic, and social forms in relation to their production, their imbrications with the economy and history, and their impact and functions within social life.

The term “Western Marxism” was first used by Soviet Communists to disparage the turn to more Hegelian and critical forms of Marxism in Western Europe, but it was soon adopted by thinkers like Lukacs and Korsch to describe a more independent and critical Marxism from the party and “scientific” Marxism of the Second and Third Internationals. Perry Anderson (1976) interprets the turn from economic and political analysis to cultural theory as a symptom of the defeat of Western Marxism after the crushing of the European revolutionary movements of the 1920s and the rise of fascism. Yet, theorists like Lukacs, Bloch, Benjamin, and Adorno were intellectuals who had deep and abiding interest in social and cultural phenomena, and so it is rather natural that they would bring these interests into Marxism.

In the 1960s and 1970s under the influence of a global range of revolutionary movements and struggles, young radicals and students turned to the study of the tradition of Western Marxism that emerged in Europe in the first decades of the twentieth century.[1] In this study, I will trace the rise of Western Marxism in Europe following the Russian revolution and the widespread dissemination of Marxian ideas, engaging the first generation of Western Marxists, the Frankfurt School, and post-1960s Western Marxism. I focus on describing their key ideas and assessing important contributions and limitations in understanding contemporary society and history in the tradition of Western Marxism.

The Rise of Western Marxism

For the dominant Marxist political movements ranging from German Social democracy to the Bolshevik party in Russia, Marxism functioned as a dogmatic and scientific theory of society and history. A large number of European intellectuals were attracted to Marxism after the Russian revolution and developed more critical models of Marxian theory developing tensions within Marxism between “scientific” and “orthodox” as opposed to “critical Marxism”.[2] The economic base of society for Marx and Engels consisted of the forces and relations of production in which culture and ideology are constructed to help secure the dominance of ruling social groups. This influential "base/superstructure" model considers the economy the base, or foundation, of society, and cultural, legal, political, and additional forms of life are conceived as “superstructures" which grow out of and serve to reproduce the economic base. Marxist science grasped the primacy of the base and the relation with superstructures, providing the foundation for a science of society and history.

[Box 1= **The Marxist Theory of Ideology** In general, for a Marxist approach, cultural forms always emerge in specific historical situations, serving particular socio-economic interests and carrying out important social functions. For Marx and Engels, the cultural ideas of an epoch serve the interests of the ruling class, providing ideologies that legitimate class domination. “Ideology” is a critical term for Marxian analysis that describes how dominant ideas of a ruling class promote the interests of that class and help mask oppression, injustices, and negative aspects of a given society. Marx and Engels argued that during the feudal period, ideas of piety, honor, valor, and military chivalry were the ruling ideas of the hegemonic aristocratic classes. During the capitalist era, values of individualism, profit, competition, and the market became dominant, articulating the ideology of the new bourgeois class that was consolidating its class power. Ideologies

appear natural, they seem to be common sense, and are thus often invisible and elude criticism.

Marx and Engels began a critique of ideology, attempting to show how ruling ideas reproduce dominant societal interests and relations serving to naturalize, idealize, and legitimate the existing society and its institutions and values. In a competitive and atomistic capitalist society, it appears natural to assert that human beings are primarily self-interested and competitive, just as in a communist society it is natural to assert that people are cooperative by nature. In fact, human beings and societies are extremely complex and contradictory, but ideology smoothes over contradictions, conflicts and negative features, idealizing human or social traits like individuality and competition that are elevated into governing conceptions and values.

Many later Western Marxists would develop these ideas, although they tended to ascribe more autonomy and import to culture than in classical Marxism. For Marx and Engels' classical conception of ideology, see The German Ideology in Marx and Engels, 1975. There are by now a library of books on Marx's concept of ideology and heated debates over which aspects to emphasize and its relative merits and limitations. For my position within these debates, see Kellner 1978 and for an interesting analysis of the dialectic of ideology and technology, see Gouldner 1977; on Marx and ideology, see also Hall 1983. END BOX

Marx and Engels focused their intellectual and political energies on analyzing the capitalist mode of production, current economic developments and political struggles, and vicissitudes of the world market and modern societies now theorized as globalization and modernity. The second generation of classical Marxists ranging from German Social Democrats and radicals to Russian Marxists focused even more narrowly on economics and politics. Marxism became the official doctrine of many European working class movements and was thus tied to requirements of the political struggles of the day from Marx's death in 1883 and into the twentieth century.

While Marxism was generally associated by the beginning of the 20th century with economic, political, and historical doctrines, a generation of Marxists, however, began turning concentrated attention to cultural phenomena and social theory in the 1920s. The Hungarian cultural critic Georg Lukacs wrote important books like Soul and Form (1900) and Theory of the Novel (1971b [1910]) before he converted to Marxism and briefly participated in the Hungarian revolution of 1918.[3] The ultra-Marxist Lukacs of the early 1920s focused intently on developing philosophical, sociological, and political dimensions of Marxism before returning to cultural analysis later in the 1920s. He then went to Russia where he withdraw internally from Stalinism, while working on a series of literary texts that have significant but largely unappreciated importance for cultural studies.

Lukacs' early literary studies were enriched in the 1920s in his turn to Marxism in which he used theories of the mode of production, class and class conflict, and Marx's analysis of capital to provide economic grounding for his socio-cultural analysis. History now was constructed by a mediation of economy and society and cultural forms are understood in their relation to socio-historical development within a mode of production, while cultural forms, properly interpreted, illuminate their historical circumstances.

In his most influential work History and Class Consciousness (1972a [1923]), Lukacs argued that the Marxian vision of totality and its focus on the primacy of the

commodity and economic production provided the best methodological tools to critically analyze contemporary capitalist society and discover forces that would overthrow it in the revolutionary proletariat. Lukacs asserted that adopting the standpoint of the working class enabled one to see how capitalist society produced reification, the transformation of human beings into things, in all dimensions of society from the labor process to cultural production and even sexual relations. For Lukacs, all domains of society, culture, and even intimate relations were pervaded with economic imperatives and became subject to laws of the economy. The proletariat, Lukacs believed, was in a privileged position to grasp societal reification and to organize to overcome it, becoming, in an ultra-Hegelian formulation, the "subject-object" of history. Adopting an orthodox communist position, Lukacs alleged that working class revolution and socialism were the solutions to the problems of bourgeois society and became a life-long adherent to the communist movement.

In Germany, following the abortive German revolution of 1918, political activist and theorist Karl Korsch also developed a Hegelian and critical version of Marxism.[4] In Marxism and Philosophy (1971 [1923]), Korsch argued that Marxism was a critical and dialectical theory, providing tools to criticize bourgeois theory and society and the forces to transform it. For Korsch, the unity of theory and practice was the criterion for authentic Marxism and he interpreted Marxism as the revolutionary theory of the working class movement and developed a concept of "practical socialism." In his later work, Karl Marx (1938), Korsch asserted that the principle of historical specificity was a key criterion of Marxian theory, maintaining that Marxism provided a historically specific critique of capitalist society and alternatives to it.

Ernst Bloch, another German theorist, also responded positively to the Russian revolution and European revolutionary movements of the 1920s, but developed a more messianic and utopian version of Marxism.[5] Bloch's massive three-volume The Principle of Hope (1986) provides a systematic examination of the ways that fairy tales and myths, popular culture, literature, theater, and all forms of art, political and social utopias, philosophy, and religion -- often dismissed tout court as ideology by some Marxist ideological critique -- contain emancipatory moments which project visions of a better life that put in question the organization and structure of life under capitalism (or state socialism). In his magnus opus, Bloch develops both a thorough examination of the ways that hope and visions of a better world exist in everything from daydreams to the great religions, and cultural studies which trace throughout history anticipatory visions of what would later be systematized, packaged, and distributed as socialism by Karl Marx and his followers. Consequently, Bloch provides a critical hermeneutic of the ways that cultural history and socio-economic developments point to socialism as the realization of humanities deepest dreams and hopes, and that encourages us to look for the progressive and emancipatory content of cultural artifacts (rather than the merely ideological and mystificatory).

Box 2= **Ernst Bloch's Concept of Ideology Critique**

Ernst Bloch developed a type of cultural theory and ideology critique that is quite different from, and arguably better than, Marxian models that presents ideology critique as the demolition of bourgeois culture and ideology, thus, in effect, conflating bourgeois culture and ideology. This model -- found in Lenin and most Marxist-Leninists like

Althusser, but also to some extent in the Frankfurt School -- interprets dominant ideology primarily as a process of mystification, error, and domination that are contrasted to science or Marxist critical theory. The function of ideology critique on this model is simply to demonstrate the errors, mystifications, and ruling class interest within ideological artifacts that are then smashed and discarded by the heavy hammer of the ideology critic.

Within the Marxian tradition, there is also a more positive concept of ideology, developed by Lenin, which sees socialist ideology as a positive force for developing revolutionary consciousness and promoting socialist development. Bloch, however, is more sophisticated than those who simply denounce all ideology as false consciousness, or who stress the positive features of socialist ideology. Rather, Bloch sees emancipatory-utopian elements in all living ideologies, and deceptive and illusory qualities as well. For Bloch, ideology is "Janus-faced," two-sided: it contains errors, mystifications, and techniques of manipulation and domination, but it also contains a utopian residue or surplus that can be used for social critique and to advance progressive politics. In addition, to reconstructing and refocusing the theory and practice of ideology critique, Bloch also perceived ideology in many phenomena usually neglected by Marxist and other ideology critiques: daydreams, popular literature, architecture, department store displays, sports, clothing, and other artifacts of everyday life. Thus, ideology critique should be a critique of everyday life, as well as critique of political texts and positions, or the manifestly evident political ideologies of certain films, television, or other forms of mass-mediated culture.

Bloch dismissed a merely denunciatory approach to ideology critique as "half-enlightenment," which he compares to genuine enlightenment. Half-enlightenment "has nothing but an attitude," i.e. rationalistic dismissal of all mystification, superstition, legend, and so on that does not measure up to its scientific criteria. Genuine enlightenment, on the other hand, criticizes any distortions in an ideological product, but then goes on to take it more seriously, to read it closely for any critical or emancipatory potential. Half-enlightenment deludes itself, first, by thinking that truth and enlightenment can be obtained solely by eliminating error rather than offering something positive and productive. Indeed, Bloch believes that part of the explanation for the Left was defeated by the Right in Weimar Germany is because the Left tended to focus simply on criticism, on negative denunciations of capitalism and the bourgeoisie, whereas fascism provided a positive vision and attractive alternatives to masses desperately searching for something better.

Against merely negative ideology critique, Bloch urges close attention to potential progressive contents within artifacts or phenomena frequently denounced and dismissed as mere ideology. For Bloch, ideology contained an "anticipatory" dimension, in which its discourses, images, and figures produced utopian images of a better world. Bloch's method of cultural criticism also suggests interrogation of ideologies for their utopian contents, for their anticipations of a better world. Such a dual hermeneutic can better illuminate what is deficient and lacking in this world and what should be fought for to produce a better (i.e. freer and happier) future.

For a collection of essays showing the usefulness of Bloch’s work, see Daniel and Moylan 1997; for examples of the application of Bloch’s dialectic of ideology and utopia to analyze contemporary cultural phenomena, see Jameson 1991 and Kellner 1995a. And for an utterly fascinating mode of cultural criticism, close to Bloch and Walter Benjamin, see Kracauer 1995. END BOX

From Gramsci to the Frankfurt School

For the Italian Marxist theorist, *Antonio Gramsci*, the ruling intellectual and cultural forces of the era constitute a form of hegemony, or domination by ideas and cultural forms that induce consent to the rule of the leading groups in a society. Gramsci argued that the unity of prevailing groups is usually created through the state (as in the American revolution, or unification of Italy in the 19th century), the institutions of "civil society" also play a role in establishing hegemony. Civil society, in this discourse, involves institutions of the church, schooling, the media and forms of popular culture, among others. It mediates between the private sphere of economic interests and the family and the public authority of the state.[6]

In Gramsci's conception, societies maintained their stability through a combination of "domination," or force, and "hegemony," defined as consent to "intellectual and moral leadership." Thus, social orders are founded and reproduced with some institutions and groups violently exerting power and domination to maintain social boundaries and rules (i.e. the police, military, vigilante groups, etc.), while other institutions (like religion, schooling, or the media) induce consent to the dominant order through establishing the hegemony, or ideological dominance, of a distinctive type of social order (i.e. market capitalism, fascism, communism, and so on). In addition, societies establish the hegemony of males and certain races through the institutionalizing of patriarchy and male supremacy, or the rule of a governing race or ethnicity over subordinate groups.

Gramsci's key example in his Prison Notebooks (1971) is Italian fascism that supplanted the previous liberal bourgeois regime in Italy through its control of the state and exerted, often repressive, influence over schooling, the media, and other cultural, social, and political institutions. Hegemony theory for Gramsci involves both analysis of current forces of domination and the ways that particular political forces achieved hegemonic authority, and the delineation of counterhegemonic forces, groups, and ideas that could contest and overthrow the existing hegemony. An analysis, for instance, of how the conservative regimes of Margaret Thatcher in England and Ronald Reagan in the United States in the late 1970s and early 1980s won power would dissect how conservative groups gained dominance through control of the state, and the use of media, new technologies, and cultural institutions such as think tanks and fund-raising and political action groups. Explaining the Thatcher-Reagan conservative hegemony of the 1980s would require analysis of how conservative ideas became dominant in the media, schools, and culture at large. It would discuss how on a global level the market rather than the state was seen as the source of all wealth and solution to social problems, while the state was pictured as a source of excessive taxation, overregulation, and bureaucratic inertia.

Gramsci defined ideology as the ruling ideas that constitute the "social cement" that unifies and holds together the dominant social order. He described his own "philosophy of praxis" as a mode of thought opposed to ideology and forms of practice that contested dominant institutions and social relations, which attempt to produce a socialist "counter-hegemony." In "Cultural Themes: Ideological Material" (1985), Gramsci notes that in his day the press was the dominant instrument of producing ideological legitimation of the existing institutions and social order, but that many other institutions such as the church, schools, and socio-cultural associations and groups also played a role. He called for sustained critique of these social institutions and the ideologies that legitimate them,

accompanied by creation of counter institutions and ideas that would produce alternatives to the existing system.

Gramsci's critique of the dominant mode of culture and society would be taken up by the Frankfurt School and British cultural studies, providing many valuable tools for social theory and cultural criticism. The concepts of ideology and utopia, and historical-materialist social theory developed by Lukacs and Bloch, influenced the trajectory of the *Frankfurt School.*

The term "Frankfurt School" refers to the work of members of the *Institut für Sozialforschung* (Institute for Social Research) which was established in Frankfurt, Germany, in 1923 as the first Marxist-oriented research centre affiliated with a major German university.[7] Under its director, Carl Grunberg, the institute's work in the 1920s tended to be empirical, historical and oriented towards problems of the European working-class movement.

Max Horkheimer became director of the institute in 1930, and gathered around him many talented theorists, including Erich Fromm, Franz Neumann, Herbert Marcuse and T. W. Adorno. Under Horkheimer, the institute sought to develop an interdisciplinary social theory that could serve as an instrument of social transformation. The work of this era was a synthesis of philosophy and social theory, combining sociology, psychology, cultural studies and political economy.

The first major institute project in the Horkheimer period was a systematic study of authority, an investigation into individuals who submitted to irrational authority in authoritarian regimes. This culminated in a two-volume work, *Studien über Autorität und Familie* (1936) and a series of studies of Fascism.[8] Most members were both Jews and Marxist radicals and were forced to flee Germany after Hitler's ascendancy to power. The majority emigrated to the USA and the Institute became affiliated with Columbia University from 1931 until 1949, when it returned to Frankfurt.

From 1936 to the present, the Institute referred to its work as the "critical theory of society". For many years, "critical theory" stood as a code for the Institute's Marxism and was distinguished by its attempt to found a radical interdisciplinary social theory rooted in Hegelian-Marxian dialectics, historical materialism, and the critique of political economy and theory of revolution. Members argued that Marx's concepts of the commodity, money, value, exchange and fetishism characterize not only the capitalist economy but also social relations under capitalism, where human relations and all forms of life are governed by commodity and exchange relations and values.

Horkheimer (1937) argued in a key article "Traditional and Critical Theory" that "traditional theory" (which included modern philosophy and science since Descrates) tended to be overly abstract, objectivistic, and cut off from social practice. "Critical theory," by contrast, was grounded in social theory and (Marxian) political economy, carried out systematic critique of existing society, and allied itself with efforts to produce alternatives to capitalism and bourgeois society (then in its fascist stage in much of Europe). Horkheimer wrote that critical theory's "content consists of changing the concepts that thoroughly dominate the economy into their opposites: fair exchange into a deepening of social injustice; a free economy into monopolistic domination; productive labour into the strengthening of relations which inhibit production; the maintenance of society's life into the impoverishment of the people's" (1972: 247). The goal of critical

theory is to transform these social conditions, and provide a theory of ”the historical movement of the period which is now approaching its end” (ibid.).

Critical theory produced theoretical analysis of the transformation of competitive capitalism into monopoly capitalism and fascism, and hoped to be part of a historical process through which capitalism would be replaced by socialism. Horkheimer claimed that: “The categories which have arisen under its influence criticize the present. The Marxist categories of class, exploitation, surplus value, profit, impoverishment, and collapse are moments of a conceptual whole whose meaning is to be sought, not in the reproduction of the present society, but in its transformation to a correct society” (1972: 218). Critical theory is thus motivated by an interest in emancipation and is a philosophy of social practice engaged in “the struggle for the future.” Critical theory must remain loyal to the “idea of a future society as the community of free human beings, in so far as such a society is possible, given the present technical means” (1972: 230).

In a series of studies carried out in the 1930s, the Institute for Social Research developed theories of monopoly capitalism, the new industrial state, the role of technology and giant corporations in monopoly capitalism, the key roles of mass culture and communication in reproducing contemporary societies, and the decline of democracy and of the individual. Critical theory drew alike on Heglian dialectics, Marxian theory, Nietzsche, Freud, Max Weber, and other trends of contemporary thought. It articulated theories that were to occupy the centre of social theory for the next several decades. Rarely, if ever, has such a talented group of interdisciplinary intellectuals come together under the auspices of one institute. They managed to keep alive radical social theory during a difficult historical era and provided aspects of a neo-Marxian theory of the changed social reality and new historical situation in the transition from competitive capitalism to monopoly capitalism.

Box 3= **Culture Industry, Walter Benjamin, and the Frankfurt School**

The Frankfurt School coined the term “culture industry” in the 1930s to signify the process of the industrialization of mass-produced culture and the commercial imperatives that constructed it (Horkheimer and Adorno 1972). 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 its way of life.

For the Frankfurt School, mass culture and communications therefore stand in the center of leisure activity, are important agents of socialization, mediators of political reality, and should thus be seen as major institutions of contemporary societies with a variety of economic, political, cultural and social effects. Furthermore, the critical theorists investigated the cultural industries politically as a form of the integration of the working class into capitalist societies. The Frankfurt school theorists were among the first neo-Marxian groups to examine the effects of mass culture and the rise of the consumer society on the working classes that 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.

The positions of Adorno, Lowenthal, and other members of the inner circle of the Institute for Social Research were contested by Walter Benjamin, an idiosyncratic theorist loosely affiliated with the Institute. Benjamin, writing in Paris during the 1930s, discerned progressive aspects in new technologies of cultural production such as photography, film, and radio. In "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction" (1969), Benjamin noted how new mass media were supplanting older forms of culture. In this context, the mass reproduction of photography, film, recordings, and publications replaced the emphasis on the originality and "aura" of the work of art in an earlier era. Freed from the mystification of high culture, Benjamin believed that mass culture could cultivate more critical individuals able to judge and analyze their culture, just as sports fans could dissect and evaluate athletic activities. In addition, Benjamin asserted that processing the rush of images of cinema helped to create subjectivities better able to parry the flux and turbulence of experience in industrialized, urbanized societies.

Himself a collaborator of the prolific German artist Bertolt Brecht, Benjamin worked with Brecht on films, created radio plays, and attempted to utilize the media as organs of social progress. In the essay "The Artist as Producer" (1999 [1934]), Benjamin argued that radical cultural creators should "refunction" the apparatus of cultural production, turning theater and film, for instance, into a forum of political enlightenment and discussion rather than a medium of "culinary" audience pleasure. Both Brecht and Benjamin wrote radio plays and were interested in film as an instrument of progressive social change. In an essay on radio theory, Brecht anticipated the Internet in his call for reconstructing the apparatus of broadcasting from one-way transmission to a more interactive form of two-way, or multiple, communication (in Silberman 2000: 41ff.)-- a form first realized in CB radio and then electronically-mediated computer communication.

Moreover, Benjamin wished to promote a radical cultural and media politics concerned with the creation of alternative oppositional cultures. Yet he recognized that media such as film could have conservative effects. While he thought it was progressive that mass-produced works were losing their "aura," their magical force, and were opening cultural artifacts for more critical and political discussion, Benjamin recognized that film could create a new kind of ideological magic through the cult of celebrity and techniques like the close-up that fetishized certain stars or images via the technology of the cinema. Benjamin was thus one of the first radical cultural critics to look carefully at the form and technology of media culture in appraising its complex nature and effects.

Benjamin also developed a unique approach to cultural history that is one of his most enduring legacies. In a micrological history of Paris in the 18th century, Benjamin used careful study of particulars and singular events to elucidate the more general contours of the epoch. This uncompleted project contains a wealth of material for study and reflection (see Benjamin 2000 and the studies in Buck-Morss 1977 and 1989) and illustrated his obsession with both intensely focusing on particulars and creating constellations of categories that would provide more comprehensive theoretical and historical vision and understanding.

Max Horkheimer and T.W. Adorno answered Benjamin's optimism concerning the mass media in a highly influential analysis of the culture industry published in their book Dialectic of Enlightenment, which first appeared in 1948 and was translated into English in 1972. They argued that the system of cultural production dominated by film, radio

broadcasting, newspapers, and magazines, was controlled by advertising and commercial imperatives, and served to create subservience to the system of consumer capitalism. While later critics pronounced their approach too manipulative, reductive, and elitist, it provides an important corrective to more populist approaches to media culture that downplay the way the media industries exert power over audiences and help produce thought and behavior that conforms to the existing society (see the discussions in Kellner 1989a and 1995a).ENDBOX

During the Second World War, the Institute split up due to pressures of the war. Adorno and Horkheimer moved to California, while Lowenthal, Marcuse, Neumann and others worked for the US government as their contribution in the fight against fascism. Adorno and Horkheimer worked on their collective book *Dialectic of Enlightenment* (1972 [1947]), which sketched out a vision of history from the Greeks to the present that discussed how reason and enlightenment became their opposite, transforming what promised to be instruments of truth and liberation into tools of domination. Under the pressure of societal systems of domination, reason became instrumental, reducing human beings to things and objects and nature to numbers. While such modes of abstraction enabled science and technology to develop apace, it also produced societal reification and domination, culminating in the concentration camps that generated an instrumentalization of death. In the "dialectic of Enlightenment," reason thus turned instrumental, science and technology had created horrific tools of destruction and death, culture was commodified into products of a mass-produced culture industry, and democracy terminated into fascism, in which masses chose despotic and demagogic rulers. Moreover, in their extremely pessimistic vision, individuals were oppressing their own bodies and renouncing their own desires as they assimilated and made their own repressive beliefs and allowed themselves to be instruments of labor and war.

Sharply criticizing enlightenment scientism and rationalism, as well as systems of social domination, Adorno and Horkheimer implicitly implicated Marxism within the "dialectic of enlightenment" since it too affirmed the primacy of labor, instrumentalized reason in its scientism and celebration of "socialist production," and shared in Western modernity and the domination of nature. After the Second World War, Adorno, Horkheimer and Pollock returned to Frankfurt to re-establish the institute in Germany, while Lowenthal, Marcuse and others remained in the USA.

In Germany, Adorno, Horkheimer and their associates published a series of books and became a dominant intellectual current. At this time, the term "Frankfurt School" became widespread as a characterization of their version of interdisciplinary social research and of the particular social theory developed by Adorno, Horkheimer, and their associates. They engaged in frequent methodological and substantive debates with other social theories, most notably "the positivism dispute," where they criticized more empirical and quantitative approaches to social theory and defended their own more speculative and critical brand of social theory. The German group around Adorno and Horkheimer was also increasingly hostile toward orthodox Marxism and were in turn criticized by a variety of types of "Marxism-Leninism" and "scientific Marxists" for their alleged surrender of revolutionary and scientific Marxian perspectives.

The Frankfurt School eventually became best known for their theories of "the totally administered society," or "one-dimensional society," which analyzed the increasing power of capitalism over all aspects of social life and the development of new forms of social control. During the 1950s, however, there were divergences between the

work of the Institute relocated in Frankfurt and the developing theories of Fromm, Lowenthal, Marcuse and others who did not return to Germany, which were often at odds with both the current and earlier work of Adorno and Horkheimer. Thus it is misleading to consider the work of various critical theorists during the post-war period as members of a monolithic Frankfurt School. Whereas there were both a shared sense of purpose and collective work on interdisciplinary social theory from 1930 to the early 1940s, thereafter critical theorists frequently diverge, and during the 1950s and 1960s the term the "Frankfurt School" can really be applied only to the work of the institute in Germany.

Jurgen Habermas, a student of Adorno and Horkheimer, produced a rich body of work that began in a Western Marxism problematic but eventually produced his own philosophy of communicative action and critical social theory. In his early work, Habermas provided useful historical perspectives on the transition from traditional culture and the democratic public sphere to a mass-produced media and consumer society. In his path-breaking book The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere, Habermas historicized Adorno and Horkheimer's analysis of the culture industry. Providing historical background to the triumph of the culture industry, Habermas discussed how bourgeois society in the late 18th and 19th century was distinguished by the rise of a public sphere that stood between civil society and the state and which mediated between public and private interests. For the first time in history, individuals and groups could shape public opinion, giving direct expression to their needs and interests while influencing political practice. The bourgeois public sphere made it possible to form a realm of public opinion that opposed state power and the powerful interests that were coming to shape bourgeois society.

Habermas analyzed a transition from the liberal public sphere which originated in the Enlightenment and the American and French Revolution to a media-dominated public sphere in the current stage of what he calls "welfare state capitalism and mass democracy." This historical transformation is grounded in Horkheimer and Adorno's theory of the culture industry, in which giant corporations have taken over the public sphere and transformed it from a site of rational debate into one of manipulative consumption and passivity. In this transformation, "public opinion" shifts from rational consensus emerging from debate, discussion, and reflection to the manufactured opinion of polls or media experts. For Habermas, the interconnection between the sphere of public debate and individual participation has thus been fractured and transmuted into that of a realm of political manipulation and spectacle, in which citizen-consumers ingest and absorb passively entertainment and information. "Citizens" thus become spectators of media presentations and discourse which arbitrate public discussion and reduce its audiences to objects of news, information, and public affairs. In Habermas's words: "Inasmuch as the mass media today strip away the literary husks from the kind of bourgeois self-interpretation and utilize them as marketable forms for the public services provided in a culture of consumers, the original meaning is reversed" (1989: 171).

Habermas's critics, however, contend that he idealizes the earlier bourgeois public sphere by presenting it as a forum of rational discussion and debate when in fact certain groups were excluded, and that he neglects various oppositional working class, plebeian, and women's public spheres developed alongside of the bourgeois public sphere to represent voices and interests excluded in this forum (see the studies in Calhoun 1992 and Kellner 2000). Yet Habermas is right that in the period of the democratic revolutions a public sphere emerged in which for the first time in history ordinary citizens could participate in political

discussion and debate, organize, and struggle against unjust authority. Habermas's account also points to the increasingly important role of the media in politics and everyday life and the ways that corporate forces have colonized this sphere, using the media and culture to promote their own agenda and interests.

In his own distinctive version of critical theory, Habermas engaged linguistic and communicative dimensions of philosophy and social theory ignored by other members of the Frankfurt School and incorporated a wide range of classic and contemporary theories into his work. In his 1963 text Theory and Practice (1973), Habermas championed normative and practical social theory aimed at emancipation and progressive social transformation. His Knowledge and Human Interests (1971) traced the differences between an analytical social theory aiming at control and objective knowledge; hermeneutic theory aimed at understanding (as in the model of the human sciences); and critical social theory that had an emancipatory interest.

Habermas's most distinctive break with previous Frankfurt School social theory, and Western Marxism, was undertaken in his two-volume Theory of Communicative Action (1983 and 1987). Habermas demonstrates in this magnus opus that both classical and critical theory failed to develop theories of communicative action that provided inadequate models for linguistic and normative analysis, as well as for democratic theory of consensus. Carrying out a dialogue with hermeneutics, systems theory, pragmatism, analytic and linguistic philosophy, and certain empirical social science, Habermas attempts to develop new normative foundations for critical theory and to connect it with the project of radical democracy.

Habermas and others influenced by the Frankfurt School have continued to develop a variety of models of critical social theory, linking it with feminism (Nancy Fraser, Shelia Benhabib, and others), multiculturalism, and many other topics and fields. In surveying the field of critical theory, one observes a heterogeneity of theories, theorists and projects loosely connected by commitment to interdisciplinary social theory, and an interest in social critique and transformation, all influenced by the work of theorists like Adorno, Horkheimer, Marcuse, Habermas or others. Critical theorists tend to be skeptical and distanced toward empirical and quantitative social theory and more sympathetic to theoretical construction, social critique and social transformation. It continues to be an active, though frequently marginal, tendency of social theory, which in the 1960s was contested by more activist and scientific forms of Marxism.

Western Marxism from the 1960s to the Present

A markedly revolutionary and revisionist form of Marxism developed by *Herbert Marcuse* was especially influential in the 1960s. Marcuse was a member of the Frankfurt School who went into exile with the group in 1934, but worked for U.S. intelligence during World War Two and then the State Department, after which he remained in the U.S. to pursue an academic career after Adorno, Horkheimer, and others of the group returned to Frankfurt.[9] During the 1960s, Marcuse ascended to the unlikely role of Guru of the New Left. A philosopher by training, Marcuse had produced perhaps the best book on Hegel and Marx in his 1941 Reason and Revolution and an excellent philosophical interpretation of Freud in his 1955 Eros and Civilization. Reason and Revolution introduced English-speak readers to the critical social theory and dialectical methods of Hegel and Marx, providing for later generations of critical social theorists and New Left

activists the tools of dialectical thought and theory-informed practice (or praxis in a terminology that would become popular in the 1960s). Eros and Civilization in turn provided a splendid access to Freud's thought and the ways that psychoanalytic ideas could be merged with critical social theory and emancipatory culture and practice. In an uncanny way, the text, with its emphasis on polymorphic sexual liberation, play, cultivation of an aesthetic ethos, and burning desire for another world and way of life, anticipated the counterculture of the 1960s which lived out many of the key ideas in Marcuse's text.

In 1964, Marcuse published a wide-ranging critique of both advanced capitalist and communist societies in One-Dimensional Man. This book theorized the decline of revolutionary potential in capitalist societies and the development of new forms of social control. Marcuse argued that "advanced industrial society" created false needs that integrated individuals into the existing system of production and consumption. Mass media and culture, advertising, industrial management, and contemporary modes of thought all reproduced the existing system and attempt to eliminate negativity, critique, and opposition. The result was a "one-dimensional" universe of thought and behavior in which the very aptitude and ability for critical thinking and oppositional behavior was withering away.

Not only had capitalism integrated the working class, the source of potential revolutionary opposition, but it had developed new techniques of stabilization through state policies and the development of new forms of social control. Thus Marcuse questioned two of the fundamental postulates of orthodox Marxism: the revolutionary proletariat and inevitability of capitalist crisis. In contrast with the locating of forces of revolutionary change in the working class of orthodox Marxism, Marcuse championed non-integrated forces of minorities, outsiders, and radical intelligentsia and attempted to nourish oppositional thought and behavior through promoting critical thinking and opposition, and what he called "the great refusal."

One-Dimensional Man emerged as an important influence on the young radicals who formed the New Left. While the Old Left embraced Soviet Marxism and the Soviet Union, the New Left combined forms of critical Marxism with participatory democracy and openness to a wide range of ideas and political alliances. Whereas the Old Left tended to be doctrinaire and puritanical, the New Left was pluralistic and engaged emergent cultural forms and social movements. While the Old Left, with some exceptions, tended to impose doctrinal conformity and cut itself off from "liberal" groups, the New Left embraced a wide range of social movements around the issues of gender, race, sexuality, the environment, peace, and other issues.

Marcuse embodied many of these defining impulses of the New Left in his own thought and politics. Hence, a younger generation of activists looked up to a white-haired German refugee in his mid-60s for theoretical and political guidance. Disgusted by the excessive affluence of the advanced industrial societies and the violence of neo-imperialist interventions against developing societies in what was then called "the Third World," the generation that would produce a New Left found theoretical and political inspiration and support in Marcuse's writings. Marcuse in turn tirelessly criticized "advanced industrial society," U.S. imperialism, racism, sexism, environmental destruction, and the forms of oppression and domination that he perceived as growing in intensity and scope.

Energized by the enthusiastic response of young radicals and large numbers of his academic colleagues and fellow travelers on the Left, Herbert Marcuse remarked on a remarkable odyssey, becoming a major figure in the growing antiwar movement, a hero to the counterculture, and a forceful defender of the New Left. Marcuse also engaged the emerging feminist, environmental, gay and lesbian, and other oppositional social movements of the era, and his writings, lectures, and political interventions became part of the history of the era.

The forms of "existential Marxism" developed in France in the 1960s and 1970s and associated with the works of Jean-Paul Sartre combined philosophy, politics, and social theory to criticize capitalist society and promote individual emancipation and social revolution (see Poster 1975). Existential Marxism focused on the sufferings and desires of concrete individuals and called for the liberation of the individual from all forms of oppression. Based on Sartre's concepts of freedom, existential Marxism criticized all forms of political oppression in an ultra-revolutionary and often political activist mode.

In his massive Critique of Dialectical Reason (1976), Sartre combined his existentialist-individualist categories with those of Marxism and in his writings of the period defended revolutionary opposition to capitalism and imperialism. Championing Franz Fanon's doctrine of revolutionary violence by "the wretched of the earth," Sartre evoked tremendous controversy and was criticized by his former colleague Raymond Aron and others.

In May 1968, radical students first took over universities in France and then joined with workers in a general strike that shocked the complacency of advanced capitalist societies that believed they were immune to revolution challenge and upheaval. The 1968 events were also influenced by the neo-Marxist ideas of Henri Lefebvre, who, like Bloch, had developed a critique of everyday life and by Guy Debord and the Situationist International who also radically criticized capitalist society and culture and militated for revolutionary alternatives.

Many young French intellectuals turned to forms of the new Marxism, including Jean Baudrillard and Jean-Francois Lyotard, who would later become part of a post-structuralist and postmodernist movement that went beyond Marxism.[10] In his early work, Baudrillard developed neo-Marxian critiques of the consumer and media society, but in The Mirror of Production (1973) criticized Marxism for mirroring the primacy of the economy also affirmed by capitalism, and he argued that Marxism did not radically enough break with the perspectives of capitalist and industrial societies and present a genuinely radical alternative. Influenced by George Bataille and other maverick French thinkers, Baudrillard explored various utopian and oppositional alternatives before declaring that the emergence of a new postmodernity required altogether different forms of theory and radical politics, thus breaking with Marxism.

Reacting against existential and Hegelian Marxism and the ultraleft political groups influenced by it, *Louis Althusser* and a school of *structural Marxists* developed more "scientific forms" of Marxism while maintaining a commitment to revolutionary politics. A member of the French Communist Party, Althusser argued in For Marx that Marxism provided scientific perspectives on capitalism which made possible a revolutionary transition to socialism (1970). In Reading Capital (1997), Althusser maintained that Marx provided a scientific critique of capitalist political economy that

provided the foundations for a theory of society. His "structuralist Marxism" analyzed relations between the structures of the economy, state, ideology, and social institutions and how they were grounded in capitalist relations of production that were "in the last instance" the determining force of all domains of social life.

Like Lukacs, Althusser presented Marxism as a theory of the "totality" of capitalist society and history, but he insisted that Marx undertook a sharp "epistemological break" with Hegel, and Althusser himself excoriated all "Hegelian" and "idealist" elements that had entered Western Marxism, calling for Marxist science. Championing what he called "theoretical practice," Althusser argued for the relative autonomy of ideology and theory and attempted to develop a Marxist philosophy that would provide tools for rigorous social analysis and political transformation.

Althusser was criticized for his "theoreticism" and highly abstract version of Marxism. Another quite academic form of Marxism developed in the English-speaking world known as "analytical Marxism." Like Althusser it was highly theoretical and most analytic Marxists espoused rigor, defended science and empirical research against Hegelian dialectics, and, like Althusser, attempted to clarify Marx's basic concepts and method. G.A. Cohen's influential Karl Marx's Theory of History (second edition, 2000) defended a strict functionalist reading of historical materialism, while Jon Elster (1985) in Making Sense of Marx argued that Marx's methodology could only be understood in terms of methodological individualism and rational choice theory. Marxian concepts of class and capital were explicated in the analytical Marxism of Eric Olin Wright (1998), while John Roemer explicated the Analytical Foundations of Marxist Economic Theory (1989).

In Italy in the 1970s, a form of ultra-revolutionary Marxism developed known as *autonomous Marxism* (see Cleaver 1977; Negri 1989; Hardt and Negri 2000). In Reading Capital Politically, Harry Cleaver (1977) criticized the Frankfurt School and other forms of Western Marxism for exaggerating the power of capitalist hegemony and underestimating the force of working class struggles. "Autonomous Marxism" sought to develop revolutionary theory and politics outside of the official Marxist parties that were deemed to be too reformist and compromised. The tendency has continued to be influential with Hardt and Negri's book Empire (2000) which presents contradictions within globalization in terms of an imperializing logic of "Empire" and an assortment of struggles by the "multitude," creating a contradictory and tension-full situation. Driving "post" discourses into novel realms of theory and politics, Hardt and Negri present the emergence of "Empire" as producing emergent forms of sovereignty, economy, culture, and political struggle that open the new millennium to an unforeseeable and unpredictable flow of novelties, surprises, and upheavals.

More culturally-oriented forms of Western Marxism were also highly influential throughout Europe and the Western world, especially in the 1960s and 1970s when Marxian thought was at its most prestigious and procreative. Theorists like Roland Barthes and the Tel Quel group in France, Galvano Della Volpe, Lucio Colletti, and others in Italy, and a large number of theorists throughout the world used cultural Marxism to develop modes of cultural studies that analyzed the production, interpretation, and reception of cultural artifacts within concrete socio-historical conditions that had contested political and ideological effects and uses (see Anderson 1976). One of the most famous and influential forms of cultural studies, initially under

the influence of Western Marxism, emerged within the Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies in Birmingham, England.

British Cultural Studies

While the Frankfurt School arguably articulates cultural conditions in the stage of state monopoly capitalism or Fordism that produced a regime of mass production and consumption, British cultural studies emerged in the 1960s when, first, there was widespread global resistance to consumer capitalism and an upsurge of revolutionary movements, and then emergence of a new stage of capital, described as "post-Fordism," postmodernity, or other terminology that attempted to describe a more variegated and contested social and cultural formation. Moreover, the forms of society and 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 came from 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 from the culture industries. Thompson's 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 during the late 1950s and early 1960s, 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 1960s work of the Birmingham school was continuous with the radicalism of the first wave of British cultural studies (the Hoggart-Thompson-Williams "culture and society" tradition) as well as, in important ways, with the Frankfurt school. Yet the Birmingham project also eventually paved the way for a postmodern populist turn in cultural studies.

During this period, the Centre developed a variety of critical approaches for the analysis, interpretation, and criticism of cultural artifacts (see Hall 1980b; Johnson 1986/7; McGuigan 1992; and Kellner 1995a). 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. The Birmingham scholars 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.

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 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.

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.

The forms of cultural studies developed from the late 1970s to the present, in contrast to the earlier stages, arguably 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 (see Best and Kellner 2001 and Kellner 2003).

> British cultural studies has had a complex relation to Marxism since its beginnings. Although Stuart Hall and Richard Johnson (1986/7) 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 practitioners of British and North American cultural studies from the 1980s to the present have pulled away from political economy altogether. Although Hall claimed that with Gramsci he would never deny "the decisive nucleus of economic activity" (1988: 156), it is not clear 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.

For Hall, 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 also 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 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 political and cultural arbitrators who threaten to constrict the range of cultural expression rather than to expand it.

Conclusion: The Collapse of Communism, Globalization, and Western Marxism

While the work of Marx and Engels was inspired and shaped by the revolutionary movements of 1848, the construction and spread of a tradition of Western Marxism was promoted, first, by the success of the Bolshevik revolution of 1917 that helped generate the tradition of European Marxism, and then by the global revolutionary movements of the 1960s. Students and young militants throughout the world sought a version of critical and revolutionary Marxism independent from the orthodox versions and compromises of political parties and regimes such as the Soviet Union; they also rejected the scientistic Marxism promoted by dominant political tendencies in the Second and Third international and by many academic Marxists in favor of a more critical, open-ended, and less dogmatic Marxism. Consequently, in the 1970s there were translations, discussions, many debates, and developments of the key trends of Western Marxism that I have discussed in this article, as well as critiques of the tradition.

By the 1980s, the political passions of the 1960s were cooling and an era of conservativism was inaugurated by the Thatcher and Reagan regimes. In this context, Western Marxism was largely limited to University audiences where, however, a large number of ex-militants and those inspired by the revolutionary passions of the 1960s found work. Individuals in many fields ranging from philosophy and social theory to economics and cultural studies found the critical and open versions of Western Marxism useful to present critiques of contemporary society, culture, economy, and politics.

With the collapse of communism in Eastern Europe and then the Soviet Union in the late 1980s and early 1990s, however, there was a turn against many versions of Marxism and toward newer forms of postmodern and poststructural theory and multicultural approaches of a variety of forms, often based on identity politics, as well as a turn by many former leftists to liberal theory and politics.[11] Ernest Laclau and Chantal Mouffe's Hegemony and Socialist Strategy (second edition; 2001) helped shape an influential version of post-Marxism that criticized the orthodox model and developed a model of "radical democracy" based on "new social movements." A later dialogue between Laclau, Judith Butler, and Slavoj Zizek continued to reconstruct the Western Marxist project on poststructuralist and multicultural lines (2000).

There were a number of books that attempted to explain the collapse of communism and to appraise the future of Marxism after the demise of the Soviet Union, sometimes using Marxism to explain the flaws of orthodox Marxism and the Soviet Union and the reasons for their collapse.[12] Kagarlitsky (1990), for instance, argued that Soviet communism was not Marxist enough, that it oppressed and alienated the working class, and thus produced its own opposition. Likewise, Callincos (1991) argued that the Soviet Union was Leninist and Stalinist from the beginning and that it was necessary to return to the more authentic modes of revolutionary Marxism that Trotsky represented.

Others argued that the Soviet Union did not adequately keep up with technological development and fell behind capitalism and that images of a more affluent life in neighboring capitalist countries created disillusion, opposition, and eventually upheaval.

Aronson (1995) polemicized that Marxism was a 19th century theory that was no longer completely relevant to the contemporary era and that Western Marxism as well never adequately addressed issues like gender, race, sexual, and myriad forms of oppression, focusing too narrowly on class and the economic dimension. For Aronson, classical Marxism represented the unity of theory and practice and its hopes for revolution and an alternative society were grounded in actual historical forces. When the parties and class that were the foundation of the hopes of classical Marxism are defeated and the original theory can no longer account for the complexities of contemporary reality, it is time, Aronson argues, to move beyond Marxism to new theories and politics.

Yet during the same period, there was an explosion of books on modernity and globalization, often influenced by Marxist positions. At this time, Marx emerged in most of the versions of classical social theory as one of its founders along with Durkheim, Weber, and others. While many Western Marxist thinkers declined in influence, generally its' version of a critical, dialectical, non-dogmatic, and open theory of present-day society mutated into many versions of contemporary theory and deeply shaped cultural studies.

In a sense, however, "Western Marxism" has been supplanted by more global forms of theory, but continues to be a vital strand of contemporary theory. In its initial phase, Western Marxism appeared on the European continent in response to the Russian revolution and then spread more globally as an after-affect of the wide spread revolutionary movements of the 1960s and 1970s. Its thinkers remain highly stimulating today, but many of its now classical versions are closely connected to their origins. Nonetheless, Lukacs, Gramsci, Bloch, Benjamin, Adorno, Marcuse, and others associated with Western Marxism continue to be of interest and relevance for contemporary theory, providing critical perspectives on all forms of social life, theoretical analysis of the present age, and practical-oriented theorizing intending to change. While Western Marxism no longer enjoys the hegemony it once accrued in certain circles of the Left, it remains an important part of the apparatus and tools of contemporary social theory. Theorists continue to draw upon Western Marxism in many different fields, including critical social theory. These forms of Western Marxism are highly interdisciplinary and encompass a wide range of disciplines and thematics, are often global in scope, and provide critiques of dominant academic disciplines as well as contemporary societies. Western Marxism thus continues to be theoretically productive, providing critical insights on the multiple problems and crises with capitalism and globalization, as well as newer problems like ecology, terrorism, and the proliferation of new forms of technology.

Study Questions

1. How do Western Marxists build on the classical doctrines of Karl Marx and what differences do you note?
2. What themes best characterize the works of the first generation of Western Marxists including Lukacs, Bloch, Korsch, and Gramsci?
3. What are the key ideas of the Frankfurt School?
4. What impact did the political events of the 1960s have on the genesis of Western Marxism? Discuss the involvement of Herbert Marcuse and the New Left.

5. Does the collapse of communism invalidate Western Marxism and mark its obsolescence, or does the tradition still have relevance in the present age?

6.

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Guide to Further Reading

Students wanting to study the classical texts of Marx and Engels can go to the Marx-Engels Reader (Tucker 1978) or the 40 volume Collected Works of Marx and Engels (1975-). Key studies of Western Marxism are found in the anthology edited by Howard and Klare (1972) and the works by Anderson 1976, Jacoby 1981, and Anderson 1995. Key texts of the Frankfurt School are collected in Arato and Gebhardt (1976) and Bronner and Kellner (1989). More contemporary versions of Western Marxism include Harvey 1989, Jameson 1991, Hardt and Negri, 2000, and Best and Kellner 2001. The latter four works draw on Western Marxist theory to help provide critical theories of the contemporary era.

Internet sources

On Marx and Engels and Marxism, see http://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/.
For the Frankfurt School, see the Illuminations Web-site at http://www.gseis.ucla.edu/faculty/kellner/Illumina%20Folder/index.html
For Herbert Marcuse, see http://www.marcuse.org/herbert/
For Mark Poster's Existential Marxism in Postwar France, see http://www.humanities.uci.edu/mposter/

Glossary

Civil society which the term used by Karl Marx and later popularized by Antonio Gramsci to describe the sphere of life defend by the church, schooling, the media and forms of popular culture, and other social institutions. It mediates between the private sphere of personal economic interests and the family and the public authority of the state, serving as the locus of what Habermas described as "the public sphere."

"*Culture industry*" is a term coined by the Frankfurt School to signify the process of the industrialization of mass-produced culture and the commercial imperatives that drove the system. The culture industries had the specific function, however, of providing ideological legitimation of the existing capitalist societies and of integrating individuals into its way of life and included broadcasting, fashion and advertising, film, and other forms of media culture.

Hegemony, in Italian Marxist Antonio Gramsci's conception, describes the process whereby societies maintained their stability through a combination of "domination," or force, and "hegemony," defined as consent to "intellectual and moral leadership." Thus, social orders are founded and reproduced with some institutions and groups violently exerting power and domination to maintain social boundaries and rules (i.e. the police, military, vigilante groups, etc.), while other institutions (like religion, schooling, or the media) induce consent to the dominant order through establishing the hegemony, or ideological dominance, of a distinctive type of social order (i.e. market capitalism, fascism, communism, and so on). In addition, societies establish the hegemony of males and certain races through the institutionalizing of male supremacy or the rule of a governing race or ethnicity over subordinate groups.

The p*ublic sphere, as defined by Frankfurt School theorist Jurgen Habermas,* Jurgen Habermas describes a set of institutions and public spaces that stood between civil society and the state and which mediated between public and private interests. What Habermas called the "bourgeois public sphere" consisted of literary salons and publications, pubs and cafes, and other spaces that made it possible to form a realm of public opinion that opposed state power and the powerful interests that were coming to shape bourgeois society. A vital public sphere is thus a key component of democracy for Habermas.

Notes

[1] While Soviet Marxists used the term "Western Marxism" to attack allegedly idealist and revisionist forms of Marxism associated with Lukacs and Korsch, French theorist Maurice Merleau-Ponty provided the term with more positive connotations (1955). For some examples of post-1960s efforts to promote and criticize Western Marxism, see Howard and Klare 1971; Anderson 1976; Jacoby 1981; Anderson 1995; and Bronner

2002.

[2] On the two forms of "scientific" versus "critical Marxism," see Gouldner 1982.

[3] On Lukacs, see Arato and Breines 1977 and Feenberg 1981.

[4] On Korsch, see Kellner 1977.

[5] On Bloch, see the articles collected in Daniel and Moylan 1987, including Kellner 1987.

[6] On Gramsci, see the collection of essays in Mouffe 1979 and Boggs 1981.

[7] On the Frankfurt School, see the readers edited by Arato and Gehardt 1977 and Bronner and Kellner 1989, and the critical studies in Jay 1973, Kellner 1989a, and Wiggerhaus 1994.

[8] On the Frankfurt School on fascism, see Neumann 1966; Marcuse 1968 and 1998, and the discussion in Kellner 1989a.

[9] On Marcuse, see Kellner 1984; Bokina and Lukes 1994; and the series of collected volumes of his writings that I am editing for Routledge (Marcuse 1998, 2001, forthcoming).

[10] On French Marxism, see Poster 1975, and on Baudrillard, postmodernism, and Marxism, see Kellner 1989b.

[11] For a sharp critique of Marxism from a former activist and Marxist theorist, see Aronson 1995. On the postmodern turn in theory, see Jameson 1991 and Best and Kellner 2001.

[12] For systematic analysis of the collapse of communism from Marxist perspectives, see Callincos 1991; Kagarlitsky 1990; and the studies in Blackburn et al 1991. For two collections of analysis of the collapse of communism and future of Marxism after the demise of the Soviet Union, see Magnus and Cullenberg 1995 and Callari, Cullenberg, and Biewener 1995; for my own view, see Kellner 1995b.