Cultural Studies, Multiculturalism and Media Culture

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Radio, television, film and the other products of media culture provide materials out of which we forge our very identities, our sense of selfhood; our notion of what it means to be male or female; our sense of class, of ethnicity and race, of nationality, of sexuality, of "us" and "them." Media images help shape our view of the world and our deepest values: what we consider good or bad, positive or negative, moral or evil. Media stories provide the symbols, myths and resources through which we constitute a common culture and through the appropriation of which we insert ourselves into this culture. Media spectacles demonstrate who has power and who is powerless, who is allowed to exercise force and violence and who is not. They dramatize and legitimate the power of the forces that be and show the powerless that they must stay in their places or be destroyed.

We are immersed from cradle to grave in a media and consumer society, and thus it is important to learn how to understand, interpret and criticize its meanings and messages. The media are a profound and often misperceived source of cultural pedagogy: They contribute to educating us about how to behave and what to think, feel, believe, fear and desire—and what not to. The media are forms of pedagogy that teach us how to be men and women; how to dress, look and consume; how to react to members of different social groups; how to be popular and successful and avoid failure; and how to conform to the dominant system of norms, values, practices and institutions. Consequently, the gaining of critical media literacy is an impor-

tant resource for individuals and citizens in learning how to cope with a seductive cultural environment. Learning how to read, criticize and resist media manipulation can help empower oneself in relation to dominant media and culture. It can enhance individual sovereignty vis-à-vis media culture and give individuals more power over their cultural environment.

In this essay, I will discuss the potential contributions of a cultural studies approach to media literacy. In recent years, **cultural studies**[1] has emerged as a new set of approaches to the study of culture and society. The project was inaugurated by the University of Birmingham Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies, which developed a variety of critical approaches for the analysis, interpretation and criticism of **cultural artifacts**.[2] 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 differently, analyzing the factors that made different audiences respond in contrasting ways to various media texts.

Through studies of youth subcultures, British cultural studies demonstrated how culture came to constitute distinct forms of identity and group membership. For cultural studies, media culture provides the materials for constructing identities, behavior and views of the world. Those who uncritically follow the dictates of media culture tend to "mainstream" themselves, following the dominant fashion, values and behavior. Yet cultural studies is also interested in 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 the mainstream group, as members of specific social groupings (such as White, middle-class conservative Americans). Individuals who identify with subcultures, such as 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.

Cultural studies insists that culture must be studied within the social relations and system through which culture is produced and consumed and that the study of culture is therefore intimately bound up with the study of society, politics and economics. Cultural studies shows how media culture articulates the dominant values, political ideologies and social developments and novelties of the day. American culture and society is a contested terrain with various groups and ideologies struggling for dominance. Television, film, music and other popular cultural forms are thus often liberal or conservative or occasionally express more radical or oppositional views.

Cultural studies is valuable because it provides some tools that enable one to read and interpret one's culture critically. It also subverts distinctions between "high" and "low" culture by considering a wide continuum of cultural artifacts, ranging from novels to television, and by refusing to erect

any specific cultural hierarchies or canons. Previous approaches to culture tended to be primarily literary and elitist, dismissing media culture as banal, trashy and not worthy of serious attention. The project of cultural studies, by contrast, avoids cutting the field of culture into high and low or popular against elite. Such distinctions are difficult to maintain and generally serve as a front for normative aesthetic valuations and, often, a political program (i.e., either dismissing mass culture for high culture or celebrating what is deemed "popular" while scorning "elitist" high culture).

Cultural studies, however, allows us to examine and critically scrutinize the whole range of culture without prior prejudices toward one or another sort of cultural text, institution or practice. It also opens the way toward more differentiated political, rather than aesthetic, valuations of cultural artifacts in which one attempts to distinguish critical and oppositional from conformist and conservative moments in a cultural artifact. For instance, studies of Hollywood film show how key 1960s films promoted the views of radicals and the counterculture and how film in the 1970s was a battle-ground between liberal and conservative positions; late 1970s films, how-ever, tended toward conservative positions that helped elect Ronald Reagan as president (see Kellner & Ryan, 1988).

There is an intrinsically critical and political dimension to the project of cultural studies that distinguishes it from empirical and apolitical academic approaches to the study of culture and society. British cultural studies, for example, analyzed culture historically in the context of its societal origins and effects. It situated culture within a theory of social production and reproduction, specifying the ways that cultural forms served either to fur-ther social domination or to enable people to resist and struggle against domination. It analyzed society as a hierarchical and antagonistic set of social relations characterized by the oppression of subordinate class, gen-der, race, ethnic and national strata. Employing Gramsci's (1971) model of **hegemony** and **counterhegemony**, it sought to analyze **"hegemonic,"** or ruling, social and cultural forces of domination and to seek "counter-hegemonic" forces of resistance and struggle. The project was aimed at social transformation and attempted to specify forces of domination and resistance to aid the process of political struggle and emancipation from oppression and domination.

For cultural studies, the concept of **ideology** is of central importance, for dominant ideologies serve to reproduce social relations of domination and subordination.[3] Ideologies of **class**, for instance, celebrate upper-class life and denigrate the working class. Ideologies of **gender** promote sexist repre-sentations of women, and ideologies of **race** use racist representations of people of color and various minority groups. Ideologies make inequalities and subordination appear natural and just and thus induce consent to relations of domination. Different groups, of course, have different ideolo-gies (liberal, conservative, radical, etc.), and cultural studies specifies what, if any, ideologies are operative in a given cultural artifact. In the course of this study, I will provide some examples of how different ideologies are operative in media cultural texts and will accordingly provide examples of ideological analysis and critique.

Because of its focus on representations of race, gender and class and its critique of ideologies that promote various forms of oppression, cultural studies lends itself to a multiculturalist program that demonstrates how culture reproduces certain forms of racism, sexism and biases against members of subordinate classes, social groups or alternative lifestyles. **Multiculturalism** affirms the worth of different types of culture and cultural groups, claiming, for instance, that Black, Latino, Asian, Native American, gay and lesbian and other oppressed and marginal voices have their own validity and importance. A critical multiculturalism attempts to show how various people's voices and experiences are silenced and omitted from mainstream culture and struggles to aid in the articulation of diverse views, experiences and cultural forms, from groups excluded from the mainstream. This makes it a target of conservative groups who wish to preserve the existing canons of White male, Eurocentric privilege and thus attack multiculturalism in fierce cultural wars now raging over education, the arts and the limits of free expression.

Cultural studies thus promotes a multiculturalist politics and media pedagogy that aims to make people sensitive to how relations of power and domination are **encoded**, or embodied, in cultural texts, such as those of television or film. But it also specifies how people can resist the dominant encoded meanings and produce their own critical and alternative readings. Cultural studies can show how media culture manipulates and indoctrinates us and therefore can empower individuals to resist the dominant meanings in media cultural products and to produce their own meanings. It can also point to moments of **resistance** and criticism within media culture and thus help promote development of more critical consciousness.

A critical cultural studies—embodied in many of the articles collected in this reader—develops concepts and analyses that will enable readers to critically dissect the artifacts of contemporary media culture and to gain power over their cultural environment. By exposing the entire field of culture to critical scrutiny, cultural studies provides a broad, comprehensive framework to undertake studies of culture, politics and society for the purposes of individual empowerment and social and political struggle and transformation. In the following pages, I will therefore indicate some of the chief components of the type of cultural studies that I find most useful.

COMPONENTS OF
CRITICAL CULTURAL STUDIES

At its strongest, cultural studies contains a threefold project of analyzing the production and **political economy** of culture, cultural **texts** and the **audience reception** of those texts and their effects. This comprehensive approach avoids too narrowly focusing on one dimension of the project to the exclusion of others. To avoid such limitations, I propose a multiperspective approach that (a) discusses production and political economy, (b) engages in textual analysis, and (c) studies the reception and use of cultural texts.[4]

Production and Political Economy

Because it has been neglected in many trends of recent cultural studies, it is important to stress the importance of analyzing cultural texts within their system of production and distribution, often referred to as the *political economy* of culture.[5] 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, knowledge of political economy can actually contribute to textual analysis and critique. 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 effects the text may generate.

Study of the codes of television, film or popular music, for instance, is enhanced by studying the formulas and conventions of production. These cultural forms are structured by well-defined rules and conventions, and the study of the production of culture can help elucidate the codes actually in play. Because of the demands of the format of radio or music television, for instance, most popular songs are 3 to 5 minutes long, fitting into the format of the distribution system. Because of their control by giant corporations oriented primarily toward profit, film and television production in the United States is dominated by specific genres, such as talk and game shows, soap operas, situation comedies, action/adventure shows and so on. This economic factor explains why there are cycles of certain genres and subgenres, sequelmania in the film industry, crossovers of popular films into television series 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. My study of television in the United States, for instance, disclosed that 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 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.

Furthermore, one cannot really analyze the role of the media in the Persian Gulf war without analyzing the production and political economy of news and information, as well as the actual text of the Persian Gulf war and its reception by its audience (see Kellner, 1992). Or one cannot fully grasp the Madonna phenomenon without analyzing her marketing strategies, her political environment and her cultural artifacts and their effects

(Kellner, 1994). 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, not just of the texts themselves and their effects on audiences.

Yet political economy alone does not hold the key to cultural studies, and important as it is, it has limitations as a single approach. Some political economy analyses reduce the meanings and effects of texts to rather circumscribed and reductive ideological functions, arguing that media culture merely reflects the ideology of the ruling economic elite that controls the culture industries and is nothing more than a vehicle for capitalist ideology. It is true that media culture overwhelmingly supports capitalist values, but it is also a site of intense struggle between races, classes, genders, and social groups. Thus, to fully grasp the nature and effects of media culture, one needs to develop methods to analyze the full range of its meanings and effects.

Textual Analysis

The products of media culture require multidimensional close textual readings to analyze their various forms of discourses, ideological positions, narrative strategies, image construction and effects. There have been a wide spectrum of types of textual analysis of media culture, ranging from quantitative **content analysis** that analyzes the number of, say, episodes of violence in a text, to qualitative analysis that applies various critical theories to explain how texts function to produce meaning. Traditionally, the qualitative analysis of texts has been the task of **formalist** literary criticism, which explicates the central meanings, values and ideologies in cultural artifacts by attending to the formal properties of imaginative literature texts—such as style, verbal imagery, characterization, narrative structure and point of view, symbolism, and so on. In more recent years, literary-critical textual analysis has been enhanced by methods derived from **semiotics**, a system for analyzing the creation of meaning not only in written languages but also in other, nonverbal languagelike codes, such as the visual and auditory languages of film and TV.

Semiotics analyzes how linguistic and nonlinguistic cultural "signs" form widely understood systems of meanings, as when giving someone a rose is a sign of love or getting an A on a college paper is a sign of mastery of the rules of the specific assignment. Semiotic analysis can be connected with **genre analysis** (the study of conventions governing established cultural forms, such as soap operas) to reveal how the codes and forms of particular genres help to produce meaning. A semiotic and generic analysis of *Rambo*, for instance, would show how this film follows the conventions of the Hollywood genre of the "war film," which dramatizes conflicts between the United States and its "enemies," and provides a happy ending that portrays the victory of good over evil. It would study the strictly cinematic and formal elements of the film, dissecting the ways that camera angles present Rambo as a god or how slow-motion images of him gliding through the jungle "code" him as a force of nature. One would also notice

that images of Rambo being tortured adopt familiar crucifixion iconography, valorizing him as a Christlike martyr, and images of his headband and clothing code him as an individualist, thus appropriating 1960s countercultural iconography for the political right.[6]

If it is not to be purely formalistic, however, textual analysis needs to be concerned with showing how the cultural meanings encoded into a text's various "languages" convey ideological effects. A textual critic can combine a variety of different analytical methods with a Marxist, feminist, Third World anti-imperialist, antiracist, or other political perspective—or indeed with some combination of more than one of these—to produce **ideological textual analysis.**

Each critical perspective and analytical method has its own strengths and limitations, its optics and blind spots. Traditionally, Marxian ideology critiques have been strong on class and historical contextualization and weak on formal analysis, and some approaches include analyses of gender and race, whereas some versions are highly "reductionist"—reducing textual analysis to denunciation of ruling class ideology. Feminism excels in gender analysis, and in some versions it is formally sophisticated, drawing on such methods as semiotics and psychoanalysis, although some versions are reductive, and early feminism often limited itself to analysis of gender, ignoring important differences of race and class.

Ideally, to provide a full and adequate reading of texts such as the *Rambo* and *Rocky* films of Sylvester Stallone, one would use textual analysis and a Marxist, feminist, and anti-imperialist perspective to see how ideologies of class, gender and race intersect in the films. For example, one would note that the *Rocky* films provide a fantasy of class transcendence, whereby the White, male working-class fighter becomes wealthy and successful, while at the same time women are inscribed in roles of domesticity in the text, and negative images of both Blacks and of Soviet communists are provided, thus promoting racist and anti-Communist ideologies.

Of course, each reading of a text is still only one possible reading from one critic's **subject position,** no matter how multiperspectival, and may or may not be the reading preferred by audiences (who themselves will be significantly different according to their class, race, gender, ethnicity, sexuality, ideologies and so on). Because there is a split between **textual encoding** and **audience decoding** (see Bobo, Chapter 9, for further elaboration of this key concept in cultural studies), there is always the possibility of a multiplicity of readings of any text of media culture (Hall, 1980b). There are limits to the openness or **polysemic** nature of any text, of course, and textual analysis can explicate the parameters of possible readings. Yet to carry through a full cultural studies analysis, one must also examine how diverse audiences actually read media texts, and attempt to determine what effects they have on audience thought and behavior.

Audience Reception and Use of Media Culture

All texts are subject to multiple readings depending on the perspectives and subject positions of the reader. Members of distinct genders, classes,

races, nations, regions, sexual preferences and political ideologies are going to read texts differently, and cultural studies can illuminate why diverse audiences interpret texts differently. It is indeed one of the merits of cultural studies to have focused on audience reception in recent years, and this focus provides one of its major contributions, although there are also some limitations and problems with the standard cultural studies approaches.[7]

A standard way to discover how audiences read texts is to engage in ethnographic research, in an attempt to determine how texts affect audiences and shape their beliefs and behavior. Ethnographic cultural studies have indicated some of the various ways that audiences use and appropriate texts, often to empower themselves. Radway's (1983) study of women's use of Harlequin novels, for example, shows how these books provide escapism for women and could be understood as reproducing traditional women's roles, behavior and attitudes. Yet they can also empower women by promoting fantasies of a different life and may thus inspire revolt against male domination. Or they may enforce, in other audiences, female submission to male domination and trap women in ideologies of romance, in which submission to Prince Charming is seen as the alpha and omega of happiness for women. (See Chapter 23 for a selection from Radway's work.)

John Fiske (1989a, 1989b) suggests that young teenage girls use Madonna as a resource to inspire gestures of independence and fashion rebellion and thus are empowered to "express themselves." Teenagers use video games and music television as an escape from the demands of a disciplinary society. Males use sports as a terrain of fantasy identification, in which they feel empowered as "their" team or star triumphs. Such sports events also generate a form of community, currently being lost in the privatized media and consumer culture of our time. Indeed, fandoms of all sorts, ranging from *Star Trek* fans ("Trekkies") to fans of *Beavis and Butt-Head* or various soap operas, also form communities that enable people to relate to others who share their interests and hobbies.

This emphasis on audience reception and appropriation helps cultural studies overcome the previous one-sided textualist orientations to culture. It also focuses on the actual political effects that texts have and how audiences use texts—sometimes in ways that subvert the intentions of the producers or managers of the cultural industries that supply them, as when stoned hippies laugh at the antidrug scenarios of a cop show such as *Dragnet* (see de Certeau, 1984, for more examples). Audience research can reveal how people are actually using cultural texts and what sort of effects they are having on everyday life. Combining quantitative and qualitative research, new reception studies, including some of the essays in this reader, are providing important contributions into how audiences actually interact with cultural texts (e.g., Brown & Schulze, Chapter 57; Lee & Cho, Chapter 41; see Bobo, Chapter 8, for further elaboration of decoding and audience reception).

Yet there are several problems that I see with reception studies as they have been constituted within cultural studies, particularly in the United

States. First, there is a danger that class will be downplayed as a significant variable that structures audience decoding and use of cultural texts. Cultural studies in England were particularly sensitive to class differences—as well as subcultural differences—in the use and reception of cultural texts, but I have noted several dissertations, books and articles in cultural studies in the United States in which attention to class has been downplayed or is missing altogether. This is not surprising, because a neglect of class as a constitutive feature of culture and society is an endemic deficiency in the American academy in most disciplines.

There is also the reverse danger, however, of exaggerating the constitutive force of class and downplaying, or ignoring, other variables, such as gender or ethnicity. Staiger (1992) notes that Fiske, building on Hartley, lists seven "subjectivity positions" that are important in cultural reception, "self, gender, age-group, family, class, nation, ethnicity," and proposes adding sexual orientation. All of these factors, and no doubt more, interact in shaping how audiences receive and use texts and must be taken into account in studying cultural reception, for audiences decode and use texts according to the specific constituents of their class, race or ethnicity, gender, sexual preferences and so on.

Furthermore, I would warn against a tendency to romanticize the active audience, by claiming that all audiences produce their own meanings and denying that media culture may have powerful manipulative effects. The cultural studies tradition of reception research has distinguished between dominant and oppositional readings (Hall, 1980b, still evident in Fiske's work). "Dominant" readings are those in which audiences appropriate texts in line with the interests of the dominant culture and the ideological intentions of a text, as when audiences feel pleasure in the restoration of male power, law and order, and social stability at the end of a film such as *Die Hard*, after the hero and representatives of authority eliminate the terrorists who had taken over a high-rise corporate headquarters. An "oppositional" reading, by contrast, celebrates the resistance to this reading in audience appropriation of a text; for example, Fiske (1993) observes resistance to dominant readings when homeless individuals in a shelter cheered the destruction of police and authority figures, during repeated viewings of a videotape of *Die Hard*.

Although this is a useful distinction, there is a tendency in cultural studies to celebrate resistance per se without distinguishing between types and forms of resistance (a similar problem resides with indiscriminate celebration of audience pleasure in certain reception studies). For example, resistance to social authority by the homeless evidenced in their viewing of *Die Hard* could serve to strengthen brutal masculist behavior and encourage manifestations of physical violence to solve social problems. Sartre, Fanon and Marcuse, among others, have argued that violence can be either emancipatory, when directed at forces of oppression, or reactionary, when directed at popular forces struggling against oppression. Many feminists, by contrast, see all violence as forms of brute masculist behavior, and many

people see it as a problematical form of conflict resolution. Resistance and pleasure cannot therefore be valorized per se as progressive elements of the appropriation of cultural texts, but difficult discriminations must be made as to whether the resistance, oppositional reading or pleasure in a given experience is progressive or reactionary, emancipatory or destructive.

Thus, although emphasis on the audience and reception was an excellent correction to the one-sidedness of purely textual analysis, I believe that in recent years cultural studies has overemphasized reception and textual analysis while underemphasizing the production of culture and its political economy. Indeed, I have a sense that there is a growing trend in cultural studies toward audience reception studies that neglect both production and textual analysis, thus producing populist celebrations of the text and audience pleasure in its use of cultural artifacts. This approach, taken to an extreme, would lose its critical perspective and would lead to a positive gloss on audience experience of whatever is being studied. Such studies also might lose sight of the manipulative and conservative effects of certain types of media culture and thus serve the interests of the cultural industries as they are presently constituted.

A new way, in fact, to study media effects is to use the computer databases that collect references to media texts (such as Dialog or Nexis/ Lexis) and to trace the effects of media artifacts, such as Rambo, Madonna, and *Beavis and Butt-Head*, through analysis of references to them in the news media. Previous studies of audience reception research have privileged those ethnographic studies that selected small slices of the vast media audiences. Invariably, such studies are limited, whereas broader effects research can indicate how the most popular artifacts of media culture have a wide range of effects. In a forthcoming book on *Media Culture*, I have done precisely this in reference to a large number of cultural artifacts that clearly influenced behavior (Kellner, in press). Examples include groups of kids and adults who imitated Rambo in various forms of asocial behavior or fans of *Beavis and Butt-Head* who started fires or tortured animals in the modes practiced by the popular MTV cartoon characters. Media effects are complex and controversial, and it is the merit of cultural studies to make their study an important part of its agenda.

TOWARD A CULTURAL STUDIES APPROACH
THAT IS CRITICAL, MULTICULTURAL AND MULTIPERSPECTIVAL

I am proposing that cultural studies itself be multiperspectival, getting at culture from the perspectives of political economy, text analysis and audience reception, as outlined earlier. Textual analysis should use a multiplicity of perspectives and critical methods, and audience reception studies should delineate the multiplicity or subject positions, or perspectives, through which audiences appropriate culture. This requires a multicultural approach that sees the importance of analyzing the dimensions of class, race

and ethnicity, gender and sexual preference within the texts of media culture and seeing as well their impact on how audiences read and interpret media culture. I also advocate a critical cultural studies that attacks sexism, racism or bias against specific social groups (e.g., gays, intellectuals, and so on) and that criticizes texts that promote any kind of domination or oppression.

As an example of how considerations of production, textual analysis and audience readings can fruitfully intersect in the sort of cultural studies that I am advocating, let us reflect on the Madonna phenomenon. Madonna first appeared in the moment of Reaganism and embodied the materialistic and consumer-oriented ethos of the 1980s ("Material Girl"). She also appeared in a time of dramatic image proliferation, associated with MTV, fashion fever, and intense marketing of products. Madonna was one of the first MTV music video superstars who consciously crafted images to attract a mass audience. Her early music videos were aimed at teenage girls (the Madonna wanna-be's), but she soon incorporated Black, Hispanic, and other minority audiences with her images of interracial sex and multicultural "family" in her concerts. She also appealed to gay and lesbian audiences, as well as feminist and academic audiences, as her videos became more complex and political (e.g., "Like a Prayer," "Express Yourself," "Vogue," and so on).

Thus 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. The meanings and effects of her artifacts can best be discerned within the context of their production and reception, which involves discussion of MTV, the music industry, concerts, marketing and the production of images (see, for example, chapters in this volume by Pettegrew, Rose, and hooks). Understanding Madonna's popularity also requires focus on audiences, not just as individuals but as members of specific groups, such as teenage girls, who were empowered in their struggles for individual identity by Madonna, or gays, who were also empowered by her incorporation of alternative images of sexuality within popular mainstream cultural artifacts. Yet appraising the politics and effects of Madonna also requires analysis of how her work might merely reproduce a consumer culture that defines identity in terms of images and consumption.

Thus a cultural studies that is critical and multicultural provides comprehensive approaches to culture that can be applied to a wide variety of artifacts, from pornography to Madonna, from the Persian Gulf war to *Beavis and Butt-Head*. Its comprehensive perspectives encompass political economy, textual analysis and audience research and provide critical and political optics that enable individuals to dissect the meanings, messages and effects of dominant cultural forms. Cultural studies is 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 enable them 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. For all boldface terms in this chapter, see Glossary for fuller definitions.

2. For more information on British cultural studies, see Hall (1980a), Johnson (1986/1987), Fiske (1986), O'Connor (1989), Turner (1990), Grossberg (1989), Agger (1992), and the articles collected in Grossberg, Nelson, and Treichler (1992) and During (1992).

3. On the concept of ideology, see Kellner (1978, 1979), the Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies (1980), Kellner and Ryan (1988), and Thompson (1990).

4. This model was adumbrated in Hall (1980a) and Johnson (1986/1987) and guided much of the early Birmingham work. Around the mid-1980s, however, the Birmingham group began to increasingly neglect the production and political economy of culture (some believe that this was always a problem with their work), and much of their work became more academic, cut off from political struggle. I am thus trying to recapture the spirit of the early Birmingham project, reconstructed for our contemporary moment. For a fuller development of my conception of cultural studies, see Kellner (1992, 1994).

5. The term *political economy* calls attention to the fact that the production and distribution of culture takes place within a specific economic and political system, constituted by relations between the state and economy. For instance, in the United States a capitalist economy dictates that cultural production is governed by laws of the market, but the democratic imperatives of the system mean that there is some regulation of culture by the state. There are often tensions within a given society concerning how many activities should be governed by the imperatives of the market, or economics, alone and how much state regulation or intervention is desirable, to assure a wider diversity of programming and broadcasting, for instance, or the prohibition of phenomena agreed to be harmful, such as cigarette advertising or pornography (see Kellner, 1990.)

6. Susan Jeffords (1989), for instance, interprets the *Rambo* and other "return to Vietnam" films as an attempt at remasculinization, of reaffirmation of male values, after the shame of defeat in Vietnam and threats to male power by women and feminists. The *Rocky* films could also be read as assertions of White male power against Blacks and people of color.

7. Cultural studies that have focused on audience reception include Brunsdon and Morley (1978), Radway (1983), Ang (1985), Morley (1986), and Fiske (1989a, 1989b).

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