



**CULTURE
INDUSTRY**

FRANKFURT SCHOOL

- The Institute for Social Research, part of the University of Frankfurt am Main, Germany
- founded in 1924 and was devoted to the study of scientific Marxism
 - Theodor W. Adorno (philosopher, sociologist and musicologist)
 - Walter Benjamin (essayist and literary critic)
 - Herbert Marcuse (philosopher)
 - Max Horkheimer (philosopher, sociologist)
 - Erich Fromm (Freudian analyst)
 - Jürgen Habermas (philosopher and social theorist)

FRANKFURT SCHOOL

- Main historical influences:
 - The failure of proletarian revolutions in Western Europe, and the successful 1917 revolution in Russia
 - The rise of European Fascism
 - Dominance of Monopoly Capitalism

“Critical theory” Critical of what?

- Current social conditions to bring hidden structures to light
- From political-economy determinism to mutual shaping among politics-economy-culture

CULTURE INDUSTRY

○ Adorno & Horkheimer

- Movies and radio need no longer pretend to be art, The truth that they are just business is made into an ideology
- Interested parties explain the culture industry in technological terms...No mention is made of the fact that the basis on which technology acquires power over society is greatest.
- Use value -> Exchange Value
- 'Genuine' or 'autonomous' art VS the products of the culture industry (Standardization)

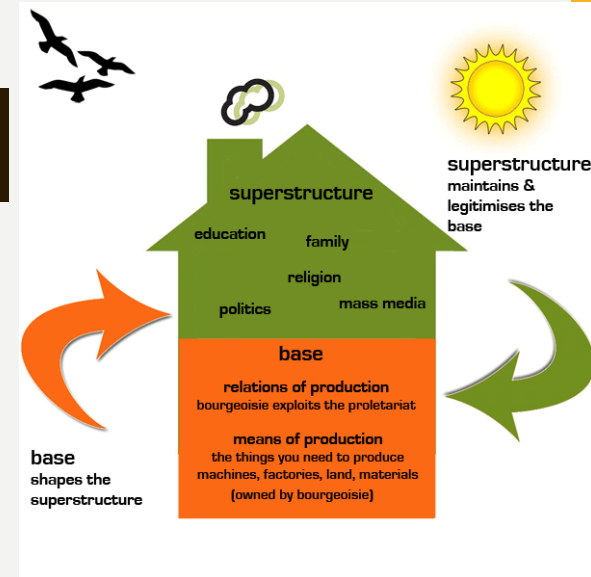
ADORNO & HORKHEIMER

- Culture Industry
 - Art can provide an alternate vision of reality
 - The radical character of autonomous art stems not from its content but from its form
 - Culture Industry - The triumph of instrumental reason over the role of culture
 - Standardized art does nothing to stimulate critical social reflection. Rather, it creates standardized responses.
 - Extinguishing the revolutionary potential of the masses, by providing relief from the stresses of life under capitalism through brief and surface level distractions
 - Culture Industry cements its audience to the status quo, and transforms culture itself into an ideological medium of domination

WALTER BENJAMIN

- *“The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction”* examined the connection between art and technology.
- **Aura** is a “strange web of space and time” or “a distance as close as it can be.” Aura is associated with the traditional, nostalgic notions of artwork and is lost with the onset of **photography**.
- Technical reproduction can put the copy of the original into situations which would be out of reach for the original itself.
- The contemporary masses desire to bring things **closer** spatially and humanly, while uniqueness is rejected by accepting its reproduction.

ANTONIO GRAMSCI



- Bourgeoisie Civil Society
- Hegemony and False Consciousness
- The success of dominant classes in presenting their definition of reality, their view of the world, in such a way that it's accepted by other classes as 'common sense'.
- The dominant ideology is designed to help those in power maintain their control over society
- Coercive Control + Consensual Control
- Hegemony is mobilised through civil society or cultural institutions such as: Education; church; family; and Media
- COUNTER-Hegemony
- Media as Tools for spreading and reinforcing the dominant hegemony => Sites of struggle, i.e., a place of competition between competing social forces.

<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/cool/view/>