



THEORIES OF CULTURE,
THEORIES OF CULTURAL
PRODUCTION

Week 4

Terms

- **(Critical) Political Economy**
- **Cultural Studies**
- **Neoliberalism**
- **Neoclassical Economics**
- **Content analysis**
- **Active audiences**
- **Discourse**
- **Polysemy**

Perspectives

- Sensitive to the potential power of the cultural industries
 - As makers of texts,
 - As systems for the management and marketing of symbolic creativity
 - As agents of change
 - ethical and normative questions

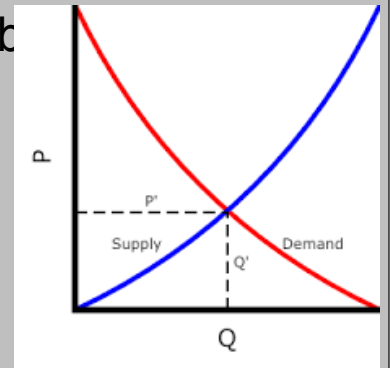


Neoclassical Economics

- A scientific study of economic affairs – how consumer preferences might be most efficiently satisfied
 - Cut off from moral philosophy, questions of human rights/needs, social justice
 - “ The equation of human well-being with the meeting of preferences, rather than in terms of fundamental human needs provides a limited basis on which to proceed in assessing the cultural industries”

Neoliberalism: the production of efficient markets should be the primary goal of public policy;
“TV = a toaster with pictures”

- Such a definition denigrates the way in which culture can potentially contribute symbolically to
people’s lives in powerful ways



Critical Political Economy

- Places emphasis on ethical and normative questions related to moral philosophy
 - Questionable role of large corporations and state agencies in cultural production
 - Explicitly aims to challenge the lack of adequate ethical perspective in the neoliberal paradigm
 - Different from Mainstream Economics
 - Holistic
 - Historical
 - Balance of capitalist enterprise with public intervention (policy)
 - Engage with the basic moral questions of justice, equity, and public good
 - Critique of Capitalism/capitalist logics/practices
 - How do the cultural industries serve the wealthy and the powerful
 - Ownership/control of the media?
 - Moral Economies of Culture

Critical Political Economy: Trajectories

- North-American
 - Reductionist/Determinations
- Cultural Industries
 - Cultural Industries Approach is better at examining:
 - Contradictions
 - The Specific Conditions of Cultural Production
 - Tensions between Consumption and Production
 - Symbol Creators
 - Information and Entertainment
 - Historical Variations in the social relations of Cultural Production

What are the systemic social consequences of cultural production?



Sociology of Culture/Business, Management/Organization Studies

- What actually happens in these organizations?
 - Company Data/Business relations + Discourse (how to achieve “success”)
- Data Analysis – how to maximize efficiency (achieve success)
- Macrosocial and Microsocial Analyses
 - Pressures, Forces, Dynamics, Mediations



Texts, Meanings, Representation

- Content Analysis – objective, verifiable measure of meaning
 - Polysemy
 - Aesthetic variation for interpretation

Cultural Studies

- Questions of ordinary cultural artefacts and experiences

Ordinary culture needs to be taken seriously; integrated analysis

The complexity of “culture” (anti-essentialism/politics of recognition)

The politics of authority in culture

Identity, subjectivity, discourse, and meaning

Who speaks and how are we heard? Active Audiences? Social Power?

- Fiske (uncritical populism)/digital optimism



Production Studies

- Creative Industries (Power (Foucault), postmodernism) – policy oriented)
- Cultural Work/Labour – lived experiences of cultural workers (creative industry/economy policy issues)
 - Precarity
- Production Studies – routines and rituals/grounded in-depth analyses to better understand dynamics of macrosocial forces
- Critical Media Industry Studies – strategies as they intersect workers experiences in all their complexity, ambiguity, and ambivalence.



Theoretical trajectories

- Neoclassical Economics
- Critical Political Economy
- Moral Economy of Culture
- Sociology of Culture
- Production of Culture/Cultures of Production
- Critical Sociological Approaches
- Cultural Studies
- Cultural Economy
- Creative Industries
- Cultural Work/Labour
- Production Studies
- Critical Media Industry Studies