5

Ideological Criticism



CHAPTER 5 FOCUS QUESTIONS

- What does Mannheim say in the passage from his *Ideology and Utopia*?
- How is ideology defined by the authors quoted?
- What points does Roland Barthes make in his Mythologies about the media and about wrestling?
- What is "hegemony"? Why is it a problem for Marxist critics?
- Are Debord's ideas in his Society of the Spectacle still valid? What would he say about the Super Bowl and the 2018 Winter Olympics?
- What points were made in the Marxist interpretation of the Fidji "Snake" advertisement?
- What does John Berger say about glamour and the way advertising uses it?
- What are the basic issues raised by feminist critics of the media?
- What does Mannheim discuss in his analysis of the "social conception of knowledge"?
- What is grid-group theory? How does it get its four political cultures or lifestyles?
- How are our pop culture and media references tied to the four political cultures or lifestyles?

What is ideological criticism, and why is it important? The matter is complicated by the fact that **ideology** is a difficult and complex concept. By ideological criticism, I refer to any kind of criticism that bases its evaluation of texts or other phenomena on issues, generally political or socioeconomic, of consuming interest to a particular group. Traditionally, the term *ideology* refers to a systematic and all-inclusive sociopolitical explanation of what goes on in a society. In this chapter, I deal mostly with Marxist criticism, but I also consider feminist criticism and the work of political scientist Aaron Wildavsky (1982) on political cultures. His work suggests that all democratic societies have four **political cultures** that compete for **power**. One of these cultures, which he calls *egalitarians*, has values similar to **Marxism**.

* MANNHEIM'S IDEOLOGY AND UTOPIA

In one of the classic studies of ideological thinking, Karl Mannheim's *Ideology and Utopia* (1936), Mannheim writes,

The concept "ideology" reflects the one discovery which has emerged from political conflict, namely, that ruling groups can in their thinking become so intensively interest-bound to a situation that they are simply no longer able to see certain facts which would undermine their sense of domination. There is implicit in the word "ideology" the insight that in certain situations the collective unconscious of certain groups obscures the real condition of society both to itself and to others and thereby stabilizes it. (p. 40)

In opposition to the ideologists, Mannheim argues, are utopians, who come from repressed subcultures and other groups and see only the negative aspects of the societies in which they find themselves. Mannheim's ideologists see no evil in their societies, and his utopians see no good; both, of course, are deluded.

DEFINING IDEOLOGY

One of the most useful explanations of ideology is found in the introduction to Meenakshi Gigi Durham and Douglas M. Kellner's *Media* and Cultural Studies: Key Works (2001):

The concept of *ideology* forces readers to perceive that all cultural texts have the distinct biases, interests, and embedded values, reproducing the point of view of their producers and often the values of the

dominant social groups. Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels coined the term "ideology" in the 1840s to describe the dominant ideas and representations in a given social order. . . . During the capitalist era, values of individualism, profit, competition, and the market became dominant, articulating the ideology of the new bourgeois class which was consolidating its class power. Today, in our high-tech and global capitalism, ideas that promote globalization, new technologies, and an unrestrained market economy are becoming the prevailing ideas—conceptions that further the interests of the new governing elites in the global economy. . . . Ideologies appear natural, they seem to be common sense, and thus are often invisible and elude criticism. Marx and Engels began a critique of ideology, attempting to show how ruling ideas reproduce dominant social interests trying to naturalize, idealize, and legitimate the existing society and its institutions and values. (p. 6)

Ideological analysis argues that the media and other forms of communication are used in capitalist nations, dominated by a bourgeois ruling class, to generate false consciousness in the masses or, in Marxist terms, the proletariat. Just because people are not aware they hold ideological beliefs does not mean they don't hold them. They may not have brought their ideological beliefs to consciousness and may not be able to articulate them, but from a Marxist perspective, everyone has ideological beliefs.

A SHORT THEATRICAL PIECE ON IDEOLOGICAL CRITICISM

Grand Inquisitor: *Are you a Marxist?*

Arthur: I'm a double Marxist! The two philosophers who

have shaped my thinking most are Karl Marx

and Groucho Marx!

Grand Inquisitor: Karl Marx wrote about alienation and the

heartlessness of bourgeois (boo-jwah) capitalist consumer societies. He argued that we needed a revolution to liberate the proletarian from oppression. How was Groucho Marx political?

Arthur: Groucho was a poet of anarchy. With his brothers,

he waged war on WASPish snobbishness as

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personified by the long-suffering Margaret Dumont, who starred in many of his films. His famous line, "Either you're dead or my watch has stopped," is, when you think about it, as devastating an attack on the bourgeoisie (boo-jwah-zee) as

anything Karl Marx wrote.

Grand Inquisitor: I don't know why I pay any attention to you.

Sometimes I think I'm my own worst enemy.

Arthur: Not as long as I'm alive! (Stolen from Groucho

Marx)

❖ MARXIST CRITICISM

It is the task of Marxist critics (and all ideological critics, of whatever persuasion) to point out the hidden ideological messages in mediated and other forms of communication. These hidden messages, the argument goes, shape the consciousness of those who receive them. Even more insidious, Marxist critics argue, many people—in the media, for example—do not recognize the extent to which the texts they create (situation comedies, comic strips, video games, novels, films, and so on) contain ideological content.

Marx argued that society shapes our consciousness. As he wrote in *Selected Writings in Sociology and Social Philosophy* (1964),

In the social production which men carry on they enter into definite relations that are indispensable and independent of their will; these relations of production correspond to a definite state of development of their material powers of production. The totality of these relations of production constitutes the economic structure of society—the real foundation, on which legal and political superstructures arise and to which definite forms of social consciousness correspond. The mode of production of material life determines the general character of the social, political and spiritual processes of life. It is not the consciousness of men that determines their being, but, on the contrary, their social being determines their consciousness. (p. 51)

It is the mode of production in society that ultimately shapes our thinking, though the relationship between our thoughts and society is complicated. Marxist thought is materialistic, arguing that economic relations and our "social being" are fundamental in shaping consciousness.

Donald Lazere (1977), a Marxist critic, explains how Marxists interpret cultural messages of all kinds:

The Marxist method, recently in varying degrees of combination with structuralism and semiology, has provided an incisive analytic tool for studying the political signification in every facet of contemporary culture, including popular entertainment in TV and films, music, mass circulation books, newspaper and magazine features, comics, fashion, tourism, sports and games, as well as such acculturating institutions as education, religion, the family and child rearing, social and sexual relations between men and women, all the patterns of work, play, and other customs of everyday life.... The most frequent theme in Marxist cultural criticism is the way the prevalent mode of production and ideology of the ruling class in any society dominate every phase of culture, and at present, the way capitalist production and ideology dominate American culture, along with that of the rest of the world that American business and culture have colonized. (pp. 755–756)

If Lazere is correct, for Marxists there is political significance to everything in culture. And it is the job of Marxist critics to point out the ideological content "latent" or hidden in mass-mediated texts, artifacts, or forms of collective behavior such as fashion.



Roland Barthes, an influential French Marxist semiotician

ROLAND BARTHES ON MYTHOLOGIES

The French Marxist semiotician Roland Barthes was one of the most important critics of media, **popular culture**, and everyday life. His book *Mythologies*, published in France in 1957 and translated into English in 1972, is one of the most influential semiotically informed Marxist analyses of media and popular culture. In the preface to his book, Barthes wrote,

This book has a double theoretical framework: on the one hand, an ideological critique bearing on the language of so-called mass-culture; on the other, a first attempt to analyze semiologically the mechanics of this language. I had just read Saussure and as a result acquired the conviction that by treating "collective representations" as sign-systems, one might hope to go further than the pious show of unmasking them and account in detail for the mystification which transforms petit-bourgeois culture into a universal nature. (p. 9)

The book has two parts. The first part of the book consists of 28 short essays in which Barthes deals with topics such as "The World of Wrestling," "The Romans in Films," "Soap-Powders and Detergents," "Operation Margarine," "The Face of Garbo," "Striptease," "The New Citroën," "Photography and Electoral Appeal," and "Plastic." The second part of the book, "Myth Today," deals with Barthes's theories about myth and its relationship to bourgeois culture and society.

"The World of Wrestling," the first essay in the section on "Mythologies" and the longest one as well, is a good example of Barthes's writing. In it, he offered a number of insights about professional wrestling as "theater," such as the following:

The quality of light in wrestling generates extreme emotions.

Wrestling is not a sport but a spectacle.

Wrestling is "an excessive portrayal of suffering."

Wrestling is full of excessive gestures.

Each sign in wrestling is "endowed with absolute clarity."

The bodies of wrestlers are signs about the way they wrestle.

Wrestling provides the image of passion, not passion itself.

In America, "wrestling represents a sort of mythological fight between Good and Evil."

At only 158 pages, *Mythologies* is a slender volume. But it has had enormous impact and is commonly held as one of the seminal books for semioticians, Marxists, and cultural theorists interested in media and communication analysis.



Antonio Gramsci

THE PROBLEM OF HEGEMONY

The term *hegemony*, made popular by Italian Marxist thinker Antonio Gramsci (1891–1937), refers to the notion that ideological domination is invisible because it is all-pervasive. Since, according to Marxists, there is an ideological content to everything, it becomes impossible to see this domination because we have nothing to compare it to, no way of isolating it. The situation is made worse because, Marxists argue, the forces contending against this domination, if any exist at all, are relatively weak and powerless.

In essence, the media are used to manipulating the masses into accepting the status quo economically and in many other areas as well, although many Marxists argue that the term *manipulation* is too simplistic and even old-fashioned. Manipulation suggests that the people who do the manipulating, the petit bourgeois types who run the newspapers and television stations and make the films, actually recognize what they are doing. But this is not the case, say the Marxists, because the petite bourgeoisie believes the ideology it is peddling and therefore does not recognize it as ideology.

THE BASE AND THE SUPERSTRUCTURE, FALSE CONSCIOUSNESS, AND THE "SELF-MADE MAN AND WOMAN"

There have been many developments in Marxist thought since Marx, of course, but the essence of his argument is still generally accepted—namely, that the base, the economic relations in a society, shape (but do not determine) the cultural institutions in that society and in turn shape the consciousness of people brought up in that society. (The notion that the base determines the superstructure is known as "vulgar Marxism" and hasn't been in vogue for many years.) This process of ideological indoctrination is subtle and invisible; people do not recognize the extent to which their consciousness has been shaped by external forces. People are full of illusions about themselves and their possibilities.

As Marx (1964) explained in his discussion of false consciousness and the way the ruling class shapes our thinking,

The ideas of the ruling class are, in every age, the ruling ideas: i.e., the class which is the dominant material force in society is at the same time its dominant intellectual force. The class which has the means of material production at its disposal has control at the same time over the means of mental production, so that in consequence the ideas of those who lack the means of mental production are, in general, subject to it. The dominant ideas are nothing more than the ideal expression of the dominant material relationships, the dominant material relationships grasped as ideas, and thus of the relationships which make one class the ruling one; they are consequently the ideas of its dominance. The individuals composing the ruling class possess among other things consciousness, and therefore think. Insofar, therefore, as they rule as a class and determine the whole extent of an epoch, it is self-evident that they do this in their whole range and thus, among other things, rule also as thinkers, as producers of ideas, and regulate the production and distribution of the ideas of their age. Consequently their ideas are the ruling ideas of their age. (p. 78)

In the United States, for example, people embrace the notion of the "self-made man and woman." This means we downgrade the importance of social, economic, and political matters and place too much importance on individual psychology and personality, the will to succeed, personal resolution, and the ability to "market" oneself. We are, one could argue, "prisoners of psychology" in that we don't see society as important; only we, our willpower, and our personality are important. Like Margaret Thatcher, former prime minister of England,

we believe that only persons exist; society is just an abstraction. If only people count, psychology is the master science!

This notion of being self-made is of great use, Marxists argue, to the bourgeoisie, that element in society—or more to the point, that class that owns and controls the mode of production. Anyone who does not "make it" (whatever that means) has only himself or herself to blame and has failed, logic tells us, because of some deficiency in willpower, resolution, or character. Success is purely personal, and so is failure. The Marxist attacks this notion as an ideology that justifies the status quo, and the status quo is just what the ruling class desires. The concept of the self-made man or woman puts the blame for failure or poverty, or what Marxists would describe as a social ill, on those who suffer from it and turns everyone's attention away from the ruling classes and socioeconomic matters. In recent years, I should point out, Americans are beginning to recognize that classes are important and that the top 1% of the population here dominates the economy and plays an important role in politics, since the members of this 1% can contribute enormous amounts of money to political parties they like, to political campaigns they favor, and, in some cases, to certain politicians. Income inequality is now a topic of interest to both political parties and to the American public.

❖ POST-SOVIET MARXIST CRITICISM

The downfall of Soviet communism has led Marxist critics to pull in their horns, but many Marxist critics didn't approve (to put it mildly) of what was going on in Russia and didn't regret, by any means, seeing the totalitarian government there disappear. In countries such as the United States, Marxist critics focus their attention now on the following:

- Inequality in the United States and all problems that stem from it
- The way the wealthy are able to dominate the political agenda
- The extent to which the media are becoming more and more centralized and function as tools of the ruling classes

The wealthy own the media and thus, Marxist critics argue, are able to use them to maintain their dominance. "He who pays the piper calls the tune," as the saying goes. Further, Marxist critics suggest that the forces of globalization are now spreading bourgeois capitalist ideology all over the world. This is because the media are increasingly

controlled by gigantic multinational corporations in the United States (and other first-world nations) whose films and television programs and other kinds of media are now seen all over the world.

The media spread consumer lust, a desire for goods instilled in people by films, television programs, newspapers, and other forms of mass communication, especially advertising. Bourgeois societies are consumer cultures and need to be, Marxists argue, because bourgeois societies generate alienation, a sense of estrangement from oneself and others, and use consumer lust to assuage the pangs of alienation. Marxists argue that everyone in bourgeois societies is alienated—the wealthy as well as the poor. The capitalist classes use ideological persuasion when able and when necessary, force.

❖ SOCIETY OF THE SPECTACLE

Guy Debord's *Society of the Spectacle* was translated into English from the French and published in 1970 in an "unauthorized translation" by Black & Red in Detroit. The book, originally published in France in 1967, is a collection of 221 paragraphs, of varying lengths and on unnumbered pages, on the role that **spectacle** has in contemporary mass societies. Debord, a Marxist, writes about many different aspects of spectacle and argues that representations are now more important than the real things. He offers a quotation from Feuerbach's "Preface to the second edition of *The Essence of Christianity*," at the beginning of the book which makes Debord's central argument. Feuerbach writes:

And without doubt our epoch . . . prefers the image to the thing, the copy to the original, the representation to the reality, appearance to being. . . . What is sacred for it is only *illusion*, but what is profane is *truth*. More than that, the sacred grows in its eyes to the extent that truth diminishes and illusion increases, to such an extent that the *peak* of illusion is for it the peak of the sacred. (1970, p. 1)

Feuerbach's focus on the dominance of images, representations, and appearances in life could have been written by contemporary media theorists such as Baudrillard. But Feuerbach wrote his book in 1841, 200 years before contemporary scholars started thinking about the power of images and representations in our lives.

Peter Brooker's book, *Cultural Theory: A Glossary*, offers some details into Debord's background and ideas (1998, pp. 232–233):

Debord was a leading member of the Situationists group, a loose collective of radical political theorists and activists influenced by the Dadaist and Surrealist movements, which had a considerable influence upon the student and workers' revolt in France in May, 1968 as well as upon similar events in Europe and beyond.... His argument was that the mode of commodity production analyzed by Marx as characteristic of capitalism had been extended to the world of MASS communications and electronic media beyond commodities to include human relations.... As he writes in the book's first paragraph, "in societies where modern conditions of production prevail, all of life presents itself as an immense accumulation of spectacles. Debord's insights on the penetration of the commodity form, the ideological role of the new media, the absorption of "real life" by its REPRESENTATIONS, the way history was being "forgotten within culture" anticipate some of the key themes of POSTMODERNISM.

Let me quote some passages from *Society of the Spectacle*, which offer some of Debord's main ideas:

The entire life of societies in which modern conditions of production reign announces itself as an immense accumulation of *spectacles*. Everything that was directly lived has moved way into a representation.

The spectacle, understood in its totality, is simultaneously the result and the product of the existing mode of production. It is not a supplement to the real world, it added decoration. It is the heart of the unrealism or the real society. In all its specific forms, as information or propaganda, advertisement or direct consumption of entertainments, the spectacle is the present *model* of socially dominant life.

The spectacle is not a collection of images but a social relation among images.

In their *Dictionary of Cultural Theorists*, Ellis Cashmore and Chris Rojek (1999) offer an appraisal of Debord's ideas and impact. They write:

Debord's most widely known and influential thesis is that of the "Spectacle."

This term is used in Debord's writing to designate the hegemonic power of capitalism in and through the mechanism of representation (advertising, for example). Such a view maintains that mainstream culture (and indeed, culture in general) is the culture of the Spectacle, which, as a manifestation of capitalism, is ultimately repressive and alienating, as well as endlessly ingenious in its guises and mutations. . . . Debord's writings directly influenced many of the central tenets of postmodernism, particularly as they appear in the writings of Jean Baudrillard. (p. 112)

Debord's theories, then, use Marxist concepts in a creative and imaginative manner and have influenced many media theorists over the years.

When you think about the number of people, all over the world, who watch the Super Bowl every year and, in 2018, not long after the Super Bowl, watched many weeks of Olympics broadcasts, and the number of people in the United States who attend college or professional football games, baseball games, and basketball games—or watch them on television—the notion that we are a society of the spectacle seems quite plausible. The modern world is, as well, as sports plays an increasingly important role in our entertainments and lives.

❖ BASIC IDEAS IN MARXIST CRITICISM

Let me summarize the points I have made about Marxist ideological criticism:

- In all countries, the base, or mode of economic relations, shapes the superstructure—institutions such as art, religion, and education that shape people's consciousness.
- There are different classes in bourgeois societies. The bourgeoisie is the ruling class; the proletariat is the working class. The petite bourgeoisie runs the factories, makes the television shows, and does other tasks for the bourgeoisie. For Marxists, class conflict is a basic force in history.
- The bourgeoisie maintains its dominance over the proletarian class by generating in it a **false consciousness** manifest in the ideas that the relationships in society are natural, that success is a function of willpower (and those who are successful deserve their success), and that those who fail have only themselves to blame. When necessary, the ruling classes use force.
- Bourgeois societies generate alienation, which is assuaged by consumer lust or commodity fetishism but only partially and temporarily. All classes in bourgeois societies suffer from alienation, which means, literally, the absence of connections or ties with others.
- Consumer cultures reinforce privatism and the sense that community and social classes are not important. The focus is on personal expenditures instead of social expenditures (for things like schools, public health, the infrastructure, etc.).

• The globalization of the media and economic institutions allows the ruling classes to spread their bourgeois ideology and export problems to the third world. Marxists call this phenomenon "cultural imperialism."

This is a very brief, highly schematic picture of Marxist ideological thought, although "classical Marxist thought" may be more accurate. Just like any group, entity, or party, there are different kinds of Marxism, each of which emphasizes different things in Marxist thought.

Now that I've explained some of the basic elements of Marxist theory, let's apply some of its concepts to an advertisement for Fidji perfume, shown below.

❖ A MARXIST INTERPRETATION OF THE FIDJI "SNAKE" ADVERTISEMENT

One point a Marxist critic would make about this advertisement is that it reflects, in graphic manner, the exploitation of people of the third



Fidji Perfume "Snake" advertisement

Source: Fidji Perfume "Snake" Advertisement. Guy Laroche.

world, the world of people of color, by people in the first world. This exploitation is done by first-world bourgeois capitalist societies—the kind full of corporations such as Guy Laroche. According to Marxist theory, capitalism has survived by exporting its problems, and thus the Fidji advertisement is really not only for perfume but also a reflection of capitalist cultural imperialism.

The woman is alone, and we don't even see all of her face. She's one more anonymous figure in the third world, who has nothing but her first-world fantasy, as represented by the bottle of Fidji perfume she holds in her hands. We, in the first world, are invited to her world to have our fantasy of uninhibited sex with an innocent and "natural" woman like her. But is she a natural woman? In some respects, yes. But although the flower in her hair and the snake suggest some kind of Edenic, primitive innocence, that bottle of perfume she holds in such a curious way suggests that she has been captured by a fantasy manufactured by our bourgeois capitalist system of indoctrination. What city, after all, is more "civilized" and more bourgeois than Paris?

The Fidji advertisement is also a classic example, Marxist critics would argue, of the excesses of bourgeois consumer culture, which has come to dominate every aspect of our lives, especially our sexuality. Our sexuality can be used "against us" by the ruling classes to encourage us to ever greater wasteful expenditures in the name of a spurious value, glamour.

Advertising is, then, one of the central institutions of contemporary bourgeois cultures and is not to be thought of as merely a form of product entertainment. The price we pay for our so-called free media is much higher than we can possibly imagine. Advertising exists to sell products, but it also has a political mission—distracting us from the breakdown of our civic cultures and focusing our attention on private expenditures and personal fantasies. We revel in our personal luxuries, Marxists argue, as our society disintegrates around us into chaos, and we take refuge in gated and guarded communities to escape from the dangers of the social disorganization and pathology our **lifestyles** have generated.

What advertisements such as this one for Fidji perfume demonstrate is that alienation is very **functional**, by which I mean useful, for those who own the means of production. We attempt to assuage our alienation by creating consumer cultures and continually purchasing things, which creates greater and greater profits for those who own the instruments of production and distribution. That is, alienation generates consumption. And because bourgeois capitalist societies have

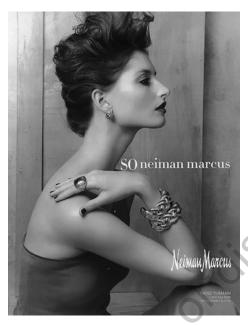
even "sexualized" the act of consumption, the inducements for people to participate in consumer cultures are even stronger.

The bottle of Fidji perfume the maiden holds so lovingly might be construed to represent, symbolically, the domination of bourgeois capitalist cultures over second- and third-world cultures. That is, this advertisement might be seen as a reflection of the **cultural imperialism** we find in contemporary society. Because the cost of making media texts is so high, third-world countries import most of their television programs and films. The "cultural imperialism" argument made by Marxists and others is that these first-world media are destroying the native cultures of the third world, leading to an eventual homogenization of culture. This culture will, of course, be dominated by capitalist bourgeois values hidden in the texts that third-world cultures import and will work so perniciously on people who watch first-world television programs and films, listen to first-world music, and play first-world video games.

One problem with a Marxist analysis of this advertisement—and other advertising and consumer cultures—is that it is so doctrinaire, so predetermined. The "party line" covers advertising and just about every other aspect of capitalist societies and knows what it is going to find before it looks at any text. In addition, Marxism, politically speaking, has imploded, and former Soviet-dominated societies are now feverishly obsessed with consuming, trying, it would seem, to make up for lost time. It has even been suggested that the consumer culture caused Marxist regimes in Eastern Europe and Russia to lose power.

And although the critique Marxists offer of bourgeois societies may be logical and even correct in some respects, we face many problems when looking at communist societies. Studies have shown that Communist Party members and members of the political elite in previously communist societies exploited people terribly and consumed enormous amounts of food and goods in proportion to their numbers. Communism has failed as a form of government, but Marxism is alive and well as a means of critiquing the failures in contemporary societies.

Thus, Marxist criticism faces many problems. Although it often reveals inequities and other troubling aspects of capitalist societies, it tends to turn a blind eye to similar problems in communist societies. Furthermore, there are few communist societies around anymore, as Marxism and communism have been discredited in some countries and abandoned in others. It has been suggested that a large percentage of the Marxist critics you find nowadays are teaching in American universities. There's a certain amount of truth to this notion.



Neiman Marcus advertisement

This advertisement is a good example of the way photography can glamorize people. Her pose, her facial expression, and the spatiality of the advertisement all suggest refinement and "class."

❖ JOHN BERGER ON GLAMOUR

British Marxist writer John Berger has offered some interesting insights into the nature of glamour. In his book *Ways of Seeing* (1972), he dealt with the role of advertising (he used the term *publicity* to stand for advertising) in creating a sense of glamour:

Publicity is usually explained and justified as a competitive medium which ultimately benefits the public (the consumer) and the most efficient manufacturers—and thus the national economy. It is closely related to certain ideas about freedom: freedom of choice for the purchaser: freedom of enterprise for the manufacturer. . . .

It is true that in publicity one brand of manufacture, one firm, competes with another; but it is also true that every publicity image confirms and enhances every other. Publicity is not merely an assembly of competing messages: it is a language itself which is always being used to make the same general proposal. . . .

It proposes to each of us that we transform ourselves, or our lives, by buying something more. . . .

Publicity persuades us of such a transformation by showing people who have apparently been transformed and are, as a result, enviable. The state of being envied is what constitutes glamour. And publicity is the process of manufacturing glamour. (pp. 130–131)

Advertising or publicity works, he added, because it feeds on our natural desire for pleasure. Advertising, in the final analysis, is about pleasure and not the products it tries to sell us.

John Berger (1972) wrote that advertising works by offering us an image of ourselves made glamorous by using the products it sells us, which means that advertising is really about social relations and the promise of happiness and not about the things we purchase. Advertising uses the power of envy to motivate us—the envy we have of ourselves and that others have of us after we've been transformed by purchasing this or that product. This envy by others justifies our loving ourselves. Publicity images work, he asserted, by stealing our love of ourselves as we are and offering it back to us for the price of whatever it is we purchase.

French literary scholar René Girard had a theory that is relevant here. In his book *A Theater of Envy: William Shakespeare* (1991) he argued that Shakespeare's characters and people in general are all motivated by what he called **mimetic desire**. *Mimesis* means imitation, and Girard believed that imitation plays a major role in social relationships. As he explained,

When we think of those phenomena in which mimicry is likely to play a role, we enumerate such things as dress, mannerisms, facial expressions, speech, stage acting, artistic creation, and so forth, but we never think of desire. Consequently, we see imitation in social life as a force for gregariousness and bland conformity through the mass reproduction of a few social models.

If imitation also plays a role in desire, it contaminates our urge to acquire and possess; this conventional view, while not entirely false, misses the main point. Imitation does not merely draw people together, it pulls them apart. Paradoxically, it can do these two things simultaneously. Individuals who desire the same thing are united by something so powerful that, as long as they can share in whatever they desire, they remain the best of friends; as soon as they cannot, they become the worst of enemies. (p. 3)

When we purchase goods and services, Girard explained, we imitate the desire of celebrities and others we see in advertisements using various products. In essence, our envy leads us to imitate the desire of those we see in advertisements and, in some cases, our everyday lives.

❖ IDENTITY POLITICS

Even though Marxist thought and political philosophy is not widespread in the United States, Marxists' coherent ideological critique of American culture and society has been influential. One consequence is the spread of so-called identity politics, the all-consuming passion groups have about their situations, problems, and needs. This kind of thinking is very close to what Mannheim called utopian thought.

Some groups focus mostly on their particular desires and their ideological critique of American culture and society, and others do the same thing but are also concerned with social justice. Thus, we have movements such as queer (now lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender) theory, as well as politics based on racial and ethnic groups, many of which are absorbed in their own particular concerns but others of which argue that the solution to their difficulties lies in creating a more just society.

There is a famous joke that points to this phenomenon:

Mordecai Goldberg, a little Jewish boy, comes running in one day to his grandfather and says, "Grandpa, Babe Ruth just hit his 60th home run!" "Very interesting," says the old man, who doesn't know who Babe Ruth is or perhaps even what a home run is. "But tell me, this home run . . . is it good for the Jews?"

To paint with a rather broad brush, in identity politics, different groups react to any news about social, economic, or political matters by asking a similar question: "Is it good for women?" "Is it good for



Judith Butler

lesbians, gays, bisexuals, and transgender people?" "Is it good for African Americans?" "Is it good for Italian Americans?" "For Polish Americans?" (You can substitute any racial, religious, or ethnic group here.) "Is it good for children or the elderly?" Some groups, however, argue these questions look outward as well. They argue that major changes are necessary in society for their goals to be met. This applies to feminist media and communication theory.

❖ FEMINIST CRITICISM OF MEDIA AND COMMUNICATION

One area of conflict in **feminist criticism** involves the social construction of gender, which explains the title of Judith Butler's book, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (1999). She began her book with a discussion of certain assumptions found in mainstream feminist theory:

In 1989 I was most concerned to criticize a pervasive heterosexual assumption of feminist literary theory. I sought to counter those views that made presumptions about the limits and propriety of gender and restricted the meaning of gender to received notions of masculinity and femininity. (p. vii)

Butler (1999) raised issues about the nature of gender and critiqued the way it has been dealt with by many feminist thinkers. We will see, shortly, that this issue and others have led to conflicts within feminist criticism about politics and the media. As Butler points out in her discussion of transsexuals, there is an important conflict between sexual pleasure and people's bodies (1999)

Transsexuals often claim a radical discontinuity between sexual pleasures and bodily parts. Very often what is wanted in terms of pleasure requires an imaginary participation in in body parts, either appendages or orifices, that one might not actually possess . . . This imaginary condition of desire always exceeds the physical body or on which it works. (90)

We are now aware that there are many more transsexual people than we had imagined and are learning, slowly, how to give them the respect they deserve and how to accommodate them into society. Gender we realize is not based on bipolar opposites but has many different locations between the male and female positions. Unfortunately, the rights of transgender people are being attacked by socially conservative forces in the United States and elsewhere.

In speaking of feminists, it is important to note that, as within any group, be it a family, a church, or a baseball team, not every group member thinks exactly the same way as every other member. In an article titled "Class and Gender in Prime-Time Television Entertainment: Observations From a Socialist Feminist Perspective," by H. Leslie Steeves and Marilyn Crafton Smith (1987), we find a distinction between liberal feminists and socialist or Marxist feminists:

In contrast to liberal feminists, socialist feminists, as Marxists, assume that the class system under capitalism is fundamentally responsible for women's oppression. At the same time they agree with radical feminists that "patriarchy" (gender oppression) is fundamental in its own right and certainly existed long before capitalism. Thus, most socialist feminists argue that patriarchy and capitalism must be simultaneously addressed, largely via the eradication of divided labor by both gender and class. . . . Also, in contrast to liberal feminists' focus on how media affects individual attitudes and behaviors, socialist feminists emphasize the centrality of media (and other communication processes, such as language, education and art) in actually constructing ideology, including the ideology of women's secondary status. (pp. 43–44)

The authors, writing as Marxists, argued that capitalism is the core of the problem and has to be dealt with along with the specific problems women face. And Marxist feminists are concerned with how the media portray or represent women and how the media and communication affect society as a whole rather than this or that woman.

I'm not sure this is a fair characterization of what the authors describe as "radical" feminism, because many radical feminists concern themselves with the way the media affect culture and society in the United States. For example, in the same issue of the journal in which the Steeves and Smith article appears, an issue devoted to feminism and communication, we find Kathryn Cirksena (1987) offering her understanding of feminist criticism:

Three facets of a radical feminist critique that I consider pertinent to communication processes include: the social construction of knowledge and information, especially those assumptions concerning gender; the role of language in supporting gender-based inequities; and conceptions of "difference" as they challenge masculinist philosophers' assertions about the universality of the human condition and related methodological and political positions. (p. 20)



Tanqueray advertisement

Notice how by using untanned portions of her body, this woman's body is turned into an advertisement for Tanqueray.



Cabana advertisement

What is it that makes this photograph of a woman's legs so erotic? Note the way the untanned portion of the woman's body leads our eyes toward her vulva.

There is a considerable difference, let me point out, between the socialist conception that capitalism is at the root of women's subordination (and every other group's problems, as well) and the social conception of knowledge.

❖ THE SOCIAL CONCEPTION OF KNOWLEDGE

The social conception of knowledge recognizes that education, the media, our families, and other parts of society play a major role in giving people the ideas they hold. The idea, for example, that only individuals are important and that society is irrelevant is, ironically, socially transmitted—learned by people from reading, talking with others, exposure to the media, and so on. One of the classic statements about the social origin of knowledge is found in Karl Mannheim's book *Ideology and Utopia* (1936):

Strictly speaking it is incorrect to say that the single individual thinks. Rather it is more correct to insist that he participates in thinking further what other men have thought before him. He finds himself in an inherited situation with patterns of thought which are appropriate to this situation and attempts to elaborate further in inherited modes of response or to substitute others for them in order to deal more adequately with the new challenges which have arisen out of shifts and changes in his situation. Every individual is therefore in a two-fold sense predetermined by the fact of growing up in a society: on the one hand he finds a ready-made situation and on the other he finds in that situation preformed patterns of thought and conduct. (p. 3)

There is a problem with this analysis; namely, it becomes difficult to see how new ideas come into being. One solution to this is to suggest that new ideas (and even the possibility of a critique of existing society) are the result of what might be described as the imperfect socialization of people and also arise from subcultures that reject many of the basic norms of the societies in which they find themselves. Mannheim's "utopians" reject much of what they find in their societies. Feminists, from this perspective, can be understood as utopians. We turn now to another aspect of feminist thought, the notion that male power is phallocentric.



Washington Monument

❖ PHALLOCENTRIC THEORY: THE PHYSICAL BASIS OF MALE DOMINATION

Some feminists locate the source of male domination not in the class system and capitalism but in the bodies of men, specifically in their genitals, and talk about patriarchal "phallocentric" domination. According to **phallocentric theory**, men assume that the power relationships they find in society (in which men are dominant) are natural and are unable to recognize the fact that women are subordinated, treated unfairly, and so on. The institutions found in societies, the roles played by men in these societies, and the representations of women in the arts and media are all shaped, ultimately, by male sexuality and, in particular, the symbolic power of the phallus. Men, of course, do not recognize this and react with shock and often laughter and ridicule (reflecting their sense of power and dominance) when feminists make this argument.

Feminists also talk about phenomena such as the "male gaze," in which men look at women as sexual objects and this perspective is normalized. Women, of course, are frequently portrayed in mass-mediated texts as sexual objects or objects of desire, and what is worse, many women in real life, taking their cues from the media, present themselves as sexual objects. The reason we have such varied critical approaches to mediated texts is that these texts are so complicated and contain so much information that they are susceptible to many kinds of

analysis. Some would argue they require a multidisciplinary form of analysis, one that considers, for example, political, economic, social, psychological, and other matters.

I have taken feminism, one of the more important ideological approaches to media and communication, as a case study representing other oppressed groups. And, of course, it is possible to have combinations of oppressed groups such as Islamic feminists or gay and lesbian African Americans. Let me suggest another approach to understanding the political aspects of media and communication that offers valuable insights and puts things in perspective, an approach that deals with political cultures in American society.

❖ POLITICAL CULTURES, THE MEDIA, AND COMMUNICATION

This analysis draws on the work of Mary Douglas, an English social anthropologist, and Aaron Wildavsky, an American political scientist. Douglas developed what she called **grid-group theory**. Her theory is described in Michael Thompson, Richard Ellis, and Aaron Wildavsky's *Cultural Theory* (1990):

[Douglas] argues that the variability of an individual's involvement in social life can be adequately captured by two dimensions of sociality: group and grid. Group refers to the extent to which an individual is incorporated into bounded units. The greater the incorporation, the more individual choice is subject to group determination. Grid denotes the degree to which an individual's life is circumscribed by externally imposed prescriptions. The more binding and extensive the scope of prescriptions, the less of life is open to individual negotiation. (p. 5)

Wildavsky argued that focusing on interest groups in politics was not useful because these groups can't determine where their interests lie. He suggested that the best way to understand politics is to recognize the importance of political cultures, which are tied to people's values and shape a great deal of the decision making and voting by people who often know little about the issues they vote on.

As Wildavsky wrote in *Conditions for a Pluralist Democracy, or Cultural Pluralism Means More Than One Political Culture in a Country* (1982):

What matters to people is how they should live with other people. The great questions of social life are "Who am I?" (To what kind of a group do I belong?) and "What should I do?" (Are there many or few

prescriptions I am expected to obey?). Groups are strong or weak according to whether they have boundaries separating them from others. Decisions are taken either for the group as a whole (strong boundaries) or for individuals or families (weak boundaries). Prescriptions are few or many, indicating the individual internalizes a large or a small number of behavioral norms to which he or she is bound. By combining boundaries with prescriptions . . . the most general answers to the questions of social life can be combined to form four different political cultures. (p. 7)

The following figure shows how these four political cultures are related to one another.

Weak Strong Fatalists Elitists

Egalitarians

Group Boundaries

Rules & Prescriptions

Numerous Few

Wildavsky's Four Political Cultures

Individualists

Wildavsky slightly changed the names he used for these four political cultures over the years. I will use the terms that offer the easiest understanding. The four political cultures form on the basis of group boundaries (weak or strong) and prescriptions (few or numerous):

1. Fatalists: Group boundaries weak, prescriptions numerous

2. Individualists: Group boundaries weak, prescriptions few

3. Elitists: Group boundaries strong, prescriptions numerous

4. Egalitarians: Group boundaries strong, prescriptions few

Wildavsky described these four political cultures as follows:

Strong groups with numerous prescriptions that vary with social roles combine to form hierarchical collectivism. Strong groups whose members follow few prescriptions form an egalitarian culture, a shared life of voluntary consent, without coercion or inequality. Competitive individualism joins few prescriptions with weak boundaries, thereby encouraging ever new combinations. When groups are weak and prescriptions strong, so that decisions are made for them by people on the outside, the controlled culture is fatalistic. (cited in A. A. Berger, 1990, p. 6)

These four cultures, found in all democratic societies, can be described in terms of some basic beliefs.

Individualists believe in free competition and as little government involvement as possible; government should maintain a level playing field and protect private property. Elitists believe that stratification and hierarchy are necessary and correct, but they have a sense of obligation toward those beneath them. Egalitarians focus their attention on the fact that everyone has certain needs to be looked after (thus, they try to raise up the fatalists) and criticize elitists and individualists. Egalitarians tend to be in opposition to mainstream American political thought. Fatalists believe they are victims of bad luck and tend to be apolitical. The combination of elitists and individualists represents the dominant belief system in America and in democratic societies, but you need all four for democracy to flourish. All the groups need one another, and none is viable without the others.

One of the values of Wildavsky's analysis of political cultures is that it shows how each of them responds to certain problems, such as how to deal with envy and leadership, who to blame when things go wrong, what to do about risk, and related matters. The responses of each culture to these and other matters are dealt with in Table 5.1, which shows the attributes of the four political cultures. In later years, Wildavsky changed some of his terms, and thus we find him writing about hierarchical elitists instead of hierarchical collectivists, for example. We see from Table 5.1 that the four political cultures deal with matters such as equality, ostentation, scarcity, and control in different ways. (Wildavsky spelled out these matters in considerable detail in his writings.)

I should add that people (except for fatalists, that is) can move from one political culture to another if they are not getting what they consider to be "payoff" from the political culture they identify with. Let me offer an example. A neighbor of mine who was a pilot for a major airline was what Wildavsky would describe as a competitive individualist. But in the late 1980s, when the airline started doing things that my neighbor considered to be unfair, such as cutting his salary and assigning him tasks that he considered beneath him, he switched his allegiances and became very pro-union (and thus much more of an egalitarian).

❖ POP CULTURAL AND MEDIA PREFERENCES OF THE FOUR POLITICAL CULTURES

These four political cultures relate to popular culture and the mass media. Let us assume two things:

| | Individualist | Elitist | Egalitarian | Fatalist |
|-------------|------------------------------------|----------------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------|
| Leadership | Each own leader | Authority valid | Rejects | Led by others |
| Envy | Differences okay | Not a problem | Big problem | No envy |
| Blame | Personal | Deviants | System blame | Fate |
| Fairness | Chance to compete | Treat all according to station | Treat all equally | Life not fair |
| Wealth | Create more, keep more | Collective sacrifice | Equality of condition basic | Luck |
| Risk | Opportunity to create new wealth | Short-run dangers | System inequality basic | Luck |
| Control | By results | Process basic | Consensual decisions | Avoidance |
| Ostentation | Okay due to need to build networks | Public events only | Little display of | Hide |
| Equality | Equal chance to compete | Before law | Equality of result basic | Inequality inevitable |
| Scarcity | Use resources while valuable | Bureaucratic control to allocate | System exploits nature | Natural |

 Table 5.1
 Attributes of Wildavsky's Four Political Cultures

- 1. People wish to reinforce their beliefs and thus tend to choose films, television programs, songs, books, and other similar materials that are congruent with their beliefs and support their values.
- 2. People wish to avoid cognitive dissonance and thus tend to avoid films, television shows, and other forms of mass-mediated culture that challenge their belief systems.

If people desire reinforcement of their beliefs and to avoid challenges to their beliefs and values (**cognitive dissonance**), it suggests that there are, in reality, four audiences—or taste and value publics—in the United States (and any other democracy), each one of the four

political cultures Wildavsky discussed. What this means, then, is that we can look at specific television programs, songs, films, books, sports, and so on in terms of which of these four political cultures or taste publics it would most likely appeal to. Most of the decisions people make about which television shows to watch, books to read, and films to see are not consciously made on the basis of the political culture one belongs to. In part, that's because most people do not recognize that they are, in fact, members of one of Wildavsky's political cultures. But they are.

Being a member of a political culture enables people to make decisions about politics (who to vote for, what party to join, and so on) with relatively little information. All one has to know is "he's one of us" or "this issue is one we believe in." As Wildavsky put it, "Culture is the India rubber man of politics, for it permits preferences to be formed from the slimmest clue" (cited in A. A. Berger, 1989, p. 40). It is conceivable, then, that the fundamental values and beliefs connected to one's political culture may be at work, secretly, in our decision making about what television shows to watch.

If you ask people why they watch television, they say they want to be entertained. But why is it that one person watches televised wrestling and another watches a situation comedy and a third watches a nature documentary? In Table 5.2, I offer a number of examples of specific songs, films, television programs, and other forms of popular culture according to the degree to which they reflect a given political culture. This table stems from classroom discussions in my media criticism courses many years ago and reflects the consensus of my students. Many new films, books, television programs, and so on could be substituted for the ones mentioned in the table.

If people were consistent, their choices would all (or mostly) fall under one of the four political cultures; of course, we know that they aren't. In the same light, one could simply list all of the films and television shows, books, magazines, and other media or texts found in the table and ask people which of them they like. If they formed a pattern, one could argue that these people, whether they recognized it or not, belonged to one of the four political cultures. If they were strongly ideological, there would be a distinctive pattern found of texts that were egalitarian, elitist, individualist, or fatalist.

One thing that Wildavsky's work on the four political cultures offers us, as researchers, is a means of gaining information about people's politics indirectly, by studying their taste in media and popular culture. We can use survey research about people's preferences for particular texts in media and popular culture to find out which political

| Topic Analyzed | Elitist | Individualist | Egalitarian | Fatalist |
|-------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------------|--------------------------|------------------------|
| Songs | "God Save the Queen" | "I Did It My Way" | "We Are the World" | "Anarchy in the UK" |
| TV Shows | PBS News Hour | Dynasty | The Equalizer | A-Team |
| Films | Top Gun | Color of Money | Woodstock | Rambo |
| Magazines | Architectural Digest | Money | Mother Jones | Soldier of Fortune |
| Books | The Prince | Looking Out for Number One | I'm Okay, You're Okay | 1984 |
| Heroes | Reagan | Iacocca | Gandhi | Jim Jones |
| Heroines | Queen Elizabeth | Ayn Rand | Mother Teresa | Madonna |
| Games | Chess | Monopoly | New games | Russian roulette |
| Sports | Polo | Tennis | Frisbee | Roller derby |
| Fashion | Uniforms | Three-piece suit | Jeans | Thrift store |

Table 5.2 Political Cultures and Popular Culture

culture they belong to, and this may lead to insights into their past or future behavior. This chart was the result of my classroom discussions many years ago. In 2018, the songs, TV shows, films, and so on would be much different.

It is risky, but we may also be able to generalize from individuals to societies as a whole by looking at bestsellers, successful television programs, and films that attract huge audiences. We can study the basic values found in such texts to see which of the four political cultures they belong to, and if we find that the same values and beliefs of one particular political culture seem to be growing stronger or weakening, we can infer that there may be significant changes going on in that society. What we discover should be used in conjunction with other ways of studying society to see whether our research about mediated texts and political cultures agrees with findings in other studies.

❖ MARXIST PERSPECTIVES ON SOCIAL MEDIA

Marxists have interesting things to say about social media. While some communication scholars are very positive about social media, emphasizing their role in our so-called "participatory culture," Marxist scholars focus on the exploitative aspects of social media and their role in helping maintain capitalism. For example, Christian Fuchs wrote in *Social Media: A Critical Introduction* (2014) that the social media should be seen as a means of exploiting people:

I have stressed throughout this book the double logic of commodification and ideology that shapes corporate social media. Capital accumulation on corporate social media is based on Internet prosumer [a term combining producer and consumer] commodification, the unpaid labour of Internet users, targeted advertising and economic surveillance. Google is the dominant player in Internet prosumer commodification. It has developed a sophisticated targeted advertising system that collects a multitude of data about users' interests and activities (demographic, technological, economic, political, cultural, ecological information), communications, networks, and collaborations. Facebook is the dominant social networking site. It has developed a prosumer commodification system that is especially based on commodifying networks, contacts, user profiles and user-generated content that are created by unpaid user labour. (p. 255)

Fuchs argued that we should see Facebook and other social media as helping maintain the unequal power relationships and class divisions that exist in capitalist societies; in essence, social media are tools of the ruling classes who make huge amounts of money exploiting user-generated content on various sites and information about users which is of use to marketers and advertisers. The people who post messages on social media are, according to Marxist critics, unaware of the degree to which they are being exploited, since they have what Marx described as "false consciousness."

❖ A PREVIEW OF CRITICAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS

In Chapter 7, I deal with various kinds of discourse analysis. We will find that one branch of discourse analysis, critical discourse analysis (CDA), has been influenced by Marxist thought and focuses attention on the hidden ideological content of discourse. In a textbook on *How to Do Critical Discourse Analysis* (2012), the authors David Machin and Andrea Mayr explained,

CDA assumes that power relations are discursive. In other words, power is transmitted and practiced through discourse. Therefore we can study "how power relations are exercised and negotiated in discourse" (Fairclough and Wodak, 1997: 242). . . . Fairclough (1989: 5) sums up the idea of "critical" language study as the processes of analyzing linguistic elements in order to reveal connections between language, power and ideology that are hidden from people. (pp. 4–5)

Generally speaking, when you see the term "critical" attached to studies of communication, it indicates a concern with power and ideology and is Marxist in nature—though often Marxism combined with feminism or other social, political and cultural matters. So we will return to the study of ideology and power in the chapter I've written on discourse analysis.

❖ IDEOLOGICAL CRITICISM: APPLICATIONS AND EXERCISES

- 1. You are appointed media critic for the Marxist journal *Arts/ Comrade.* Using the most important concepts from Marxist theory, write a 1,000-word Marxist interpretation of the film *The Hunger Games* or one that your instructor assigns. Use the applications chart format described earlier. Which of the four political cultures does *The Hunger Games* or the film you review appeal to most? Explain your answer.
- 2. Using Marxist concepts, write a 1,000-word analysis for *Arts/Comrade* of "The General" episode of *The Prisoner*. You can find this episode on the Internet and see it at no cost. Use the applications chart format for the first page of your paper. Is a psychoanalytic or semiotic analysis of this episode a better approach?
- 3. Write a Marxist analysis of the role social media are playing in American culture and society. How have social media affected
 - (1) relations between parents and their children, (2) politics,
 - (3) sexual relationships?

CONCLUSIONS

One of the things we look at when we examine media and popular culture is the ideological content of particular films, television shows, songs, and advertisements. People with different ideological positions see different things in a given text, which is why qualitative media research is often so complicated. That is because works of art are enormously complex and rich and often are susceptible to many modes of analysis and interpretation. As Russian critic Jurij Lotman explained in his book *The Structure of the Artistic Text* (1977),

Since it can concentrate a tremendous amount of information into the "area" of a very small text (cf. the length of a short story by Chekhov or a psychology textbook) an artistic text manifests yet another feature: it transmits different information to different readers in proportion to each one's comprehension: it provides the reader with a language in which each successive portion of information may be assimilated with repeated readings. It behaves as a kind of living organism which has a feedback channel to the reader and thereby instructs him [or her]. (p. 23)

Lotman also argued that everything in an artistic text is meaningful, which makes interpreting them even more complicated. The works carried by the media may not be great works of art, from an aesthetic point of view, but their influence and significance is, if Marxist and other ideological critics are correct, of great importance.

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It was a triumph for the interpretive art of psychoanalysis when it succeeded in demonstrating that certain common mental acts of normal people, for which no one had hitherto attempted to put forward a psychological explanation, were to be regarded in the same light as the symptoms of neurotics: that is to say, they had a meaning, which was unknown to the subject but which could easily be discovered by analytic means. The phenomena in question were such events as the temporary forgetting of familiar words and names, forgetting to carry out prescribed tasks, everyday slips of the tongue or pen, misreadings, losses and mislaying of objects, certain mistakes, instances of apparently accidental self-injury, and finally habitual movements carried out seemingly without intention or in play, tunes hummed "thoughtlessly," and so on. All of these were shorn of their physiological explanation, if any such had ever been attempted, and were shown to be strictly determined and were revealed as an expression of the subject's suppressed intentions or as a result of a clash between two intentions one of which was permanently or temporarily unconscious....

Finally, a class of material was brought to light which is calculated better than any others to stimulate a belief in the existence of unconscious mental acts even in people to whom the hypothesis of something at once mental and unconscious seems strange and even absurd.

—Sigmund Freud, *Character and Culture* (1910/1963b, pp. 235–236)