

บทแนะนำวัฒนธรรมศึกษา: การครอบงำทางอุดมการณ์
An Introduction to Cultural Studies: Ideology Domination

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ภาควิชาภาษาอังกฤษ คณะมนุษยศาสตร์ มหาวิทยาลัยนเรศวร

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บทคัดย่อ

นักวิชาการจากหลากหลายสาขาได้สนใจที่จะศึกษาวัฒนธรรมตามแนวทางวัฒนธรรมศึกษา วัฒนธรรมศึกษามีความเป็นสหวิชาชีพ ดังนั้นนักวิชาการที่สนใจที่จะเข้าใจความคิด ทศนคติ และพฤติกรรมของกลุ่มคนชายขอบ จึงสามารถหยิบยืมวิธีการศึกษาตามแนวทางวัฒนธรรมศึกษาใช้ได้ ถึงแม้ว่า สาขาวิชานี้ถือว่าการวิพากษ์ตาม แนวคิดมาร์กซิสต์ใหม่ ซึ่งให้ความสำคัญกับเรื่องความเท่าเทียมกันในสังคม บทความวิชาการนี้ กล่าวถึงแนวคิดที่ได้รับการยอมรับว่าสำคัญที่สุดเรื่องหนึ่งคือ การครอบงำทางอุดมการณ์ เนื่องจากว่า สังคมมักจะประกอบด้วยอุดมการณ์ที่หลากหลายและขัดแย้งกัน และผู้คนก็มักที่จะได้รับอิทธิพลจากอุดมการณ์ของคนที่เป็นใหญ่

คำสำคัญ: วัฒนธรรมศึกษา; การครอบงำทางอุดมการณ์; ทฤษฎีวิพากษ์

Abstract

Cultural Studies has piqued the interest of academics from several fields. It's interdisciplinary in nature. Cultural Studies is frequently endorsed as a model by those who are interested in understanding the thoughts, attitudes, and behaviors of marginalized communities. Cultural Studies is a neo-Marxist critique based on the concept of equity. This article emphasizes on the most important concept of Cultural Studies; Ideology Domination. Owing to the fact that there are multiple and competing ideologies in a society, people are, thus, influenced by dominant ideology of privileged groups.

Keywords: Cultural Studies; Ideology Domination; Critical Theory

Introduction

Critical Theory serves as a stepping stone for Cultural Studies. It exposes unjust practices that create or maintain a power imbalance. The ultimate goal is to change the world. In like manner, Cultural Studies is a theoretical perspective on equality, seeking to challenge the techniques by which privileged groups maintain their power in society. The primary goal is to bring a critical perspective to bear on a society's dominant structures and how those structures affect the political and material lives of members of a culture, particularly those who are marginalized. In short, Barker & Jane (2016) defined Cultural Studies as an interdisciplinary or post-disciplinary field of enquiry that explores the production and inculcation of maps of meaning. They went on to say that it is a discursive formation, or regulated way of speaking, concerning with issues of power in the signifying practices of human formations.

Ideology

“Culture” in Cultural Studies is defined politically as the texts and practices of everyday life (Storey, 2015). It indicates that culture is both language and practice in use (Schwandt, 2015). Cultural Studies aim to unmask the techniques by which privileged groups maintain their positions of power and control ideologies. The concept of ideology is central to cultural studies. Graeme Turner (2003, as cited in Storey, 2015) called it the most important conceptual category in Cultural Studies. James Carey (1996, as cited in Storey, 2015) has even suggested that Cultural Studies could be described just as easily and perhaps more accurately as ideological studies. To be specific, Hall defines ideology as a set of ideas that organize a group's or society's understandings of reality. He also refers to ideology as a code of meanings that shapes how a group of people sees and acts in the world (Hall, 2001). In short, ideology is the ideas, values, beliefs, and understandings that are common to member of a social group and guide the practices and customs of the society.

In Cultural Studies, **Ideological domination** is the set of meanings, values, and concrete practices that has the greatest power and the adherence of the greatest number of people at a given moment in the life of the culture (Wood, 2004). Moreover, Wood (2004) discussed that the dominant ideology of a culture is the one with the most power in the culture's life. The dominant

ideology maintains its power through the support of social institutions such as the media. These institutions work individually and in concert to legitimize the dominant ideology while suppressing, marginalizing, or silencing competing ideologies. Culture, in general, and dominant ideologies in particular, are not fixed but are in constant flux.

Hall (2001) refers to the ongoing battle for ideological control as a “theatre of struggle” or “theatre of conflict.” An especially noteworthy facet of Cultural Studies is the assumption that no single cause determines ideological domination. Hall and others in this intellectual tradition believe that there are numerous and interlinked causes of any cultural ideology or practice. They use the term “over-determination” to indicate that aspects of social life, including ideological domination, are determined by multiple causes rather than any single cause. To respond to dominant ideologies, Cultural Studies has identified three different ways individuals may respond to communication that reflects and attempts to perpetuate the dominant ideology (Hall, 2001). First, we may consume communications and their ideological underpinnings without question. This response is one in which we embrace a perspective of reality that favors the privileged and is conveyed through cultural tools. Our endorsement of prevailing ideology is a second response. Opposing the dominant ideology is a third option. Cultural Studies believes that humans have significant control over efforts to convince them to accept dominant beliefs. They also believe that if individuals are knowledgeable about how media and other cultural institutions strive to preserve and normalize particular world views that serve the interests of only a few groups, they will be more likely to exercise critical control over them. We should improve people's ability to recognize and respond critically to dominant beliefs and the mechanisms that keep them in power.

In sum, we may accept practices and their ideologies. This attitude supports the privileged. Unconditional acceptance of prevailing ideology in cultural institutions and behaviors is another approach. Third, we oppose the prevalent ideology.

Hall (as cited in Griffin, Ledbetter & Sparks, 2015) observed that the mass media maintain the dominance of those already in positions of power. Most of us are unaware of our ideologies and the tremendous impact they can have on our lives. He thought that it was a mistake to treat

communication as a separate academic discipline. Academic isolation tends to separate messages from the culture they inhabit. Therefore, he referred to his work as Cultural Studies rather than Media Studies. Since one of Hall's stated aims was to unmask the power imbalances within society, he said that Cultural Studies is valid if it deconstructs the current structure of a media research establishment that fails to deal with ideology. Hall wanted to liberate people from an unknowing acquiescence to the dominant ideology. Obviously, Critical theory and Cultural Studies are close. However, Hall places less emphasis on rationality and more emphasis on resistance. As far as he was concerned, Cultural Studies is established by its ability to raise our consciousness of the media's role in preserving the status quo. He was suspicious of any cultural analysis that ignores power relations. That's because he believed that the purpose of theory and research is to empower people who live on the margins of society or who have little say in the direction of their lives. To put it another way, he was wary of any cultural analysis that didn't pay attention to power relationships. That's because he thought that theory and research are meant to help people who live on the fringes of society.

Criticisms

West & Turner (2021) postulated that despite some glowing endorsements, the logical consistency of the theory has been challenged. This criticism relates to the audiences. That is to say,, to what extent can audiences be counter-hegemonic? Mike Budd, Robert Entman, & Clay Steinman (1990, as cited in West & Turner, 2021) warned that some cultural theorists overestimate the ability of oppressed and marginalized population to escape the culture.

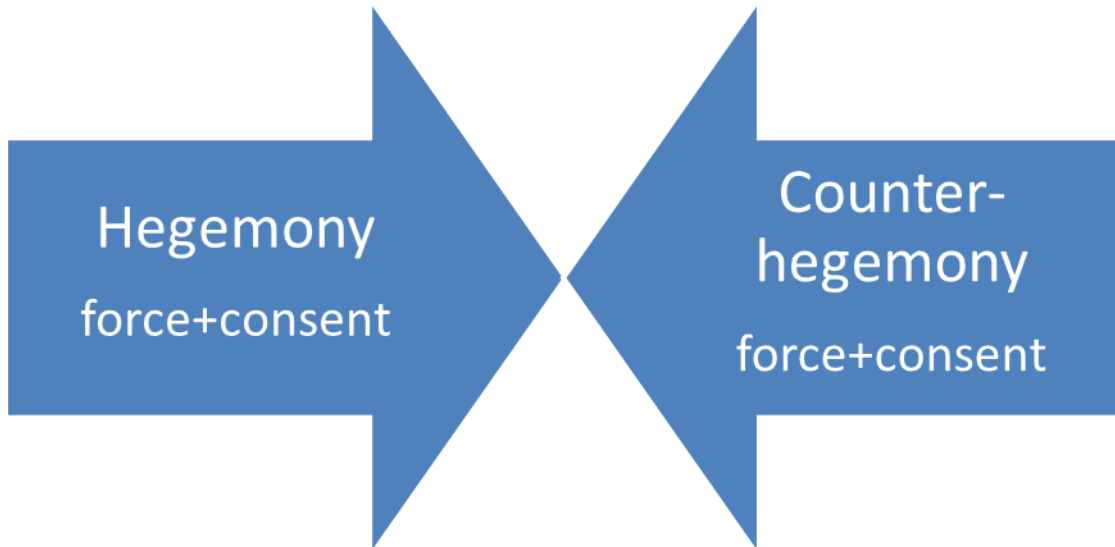
Wood (2004) noted that academics in Cultural Studies are often ridiculed for using obscure language that makes it difficult for most people to understand ideas. What is more, Cultural Studies is excessively broad in scope. Elin Diamond (1996 as cited in Wood, 2004) claimed that Cultural Studies ranges from early study of working-class culture and popular traditions through work on subcultures and media studies to work on racism, hegemony and feminism. Most importantly, Cultural Studies is too ideological. That is, the value-laden nature of cultural studies charges critics to compromises the search for truth.

Even though there are some criticisms, Cultural Studies is one of the critical theories that provide new understanding of people and produce reform of society. It seeks to produce change in oppressive or otherwise undesirable practices and structures in society (Wood, 2004).

Conclusion

West and Turner (2021) highlighted that Cultural Studies is a theoretical perspective that focuses on how culture is influenced by powerful and dominant groups. Cultural Studies is essentially concerned with how elite groups such as the media exercise their power over subordinate groups. The theory is rooted in fundamental claims about culture and power; culture pervades and invades all facets of human behavior and people are part of a hierarchical structure of power. The concept of Ideological domination is central to Cultural Studies. Hall believes that in any culture, there are competing ideologies, or ways of understanding reality. The dominant ideology maintains its domination by virtue of the support of social institutions. These institutions function both individually and in interaction with one another to legitimize the prevailing ideology and to suppress, marginalize, or silence competing ideologies (Wood, 2004). Gramsci defines the influence, power, or dominance of one social group over another as “**Hegemony**” (West and Turner, 2021). For Gramsci, hegemony implies a situation where a historical bloc of ruling-class factions exercises social authority and leadership over the subordinate classes through a combination of **force** and, more importantly, **consent** (Barker, 2004). In short, Hegemony is the subtle sway of society’s haves over its have-nots (Griffin, Ledbetter & Sparks, 2015). In other words, hegemony is the domination of one group over another, usually weaker group, whereas, counter-hegemony is when people use hegemonic behaviors to challenge the domination in their lives. At times, they will use the same resources and practices of hegemonic domination. As illustrated in the figure below:

Figure 1: Ideological Domination



All in all, in Cultural Studies, emphasis has been placed on looking at how powerful groups in society maintain their own interests and try to spread their beliefs to less powerful groups. As a result, theorists in Cultural Studies are interested in how a culture is made, reproduced, and changed through conflicts between different ideologies. Without the doubt, the concept of hegemony is an impactful feature of Cultural Studies. Finally, it has become clear that we should increase our ability to identify and respond critically to prevailing ideologies and the means by which their domination is sustained.

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