

Abstracts

Identity Politics

Ármin Tillmann: Identity Politics: A Key Term for the Intensifying or for Eliminating Critique?

Abstract: This article strives to reconstruct a potential critique of politics of recognition and identity politics, which proceeds with the disappearance of the adult language and social infantilization in the culture and politics as well. The structural critique of the politics of recognition and identity politics in our time still counts in the current discourses of social theory and philosophy as anathema. This thematic block is engaged for overwriting this lack of reference with thought-provoking writings.

Keywords: Redistribution, social antagonisms, identity politics, moral totalitarianism, political correctness

Ágnes Báthly: “Blacks” and “Whites”. Discursive Strategies in Eastern Europe on the Heritage of Colonialism and Race – A Case Study

Abstract The past few decades have witnessed the emergence of social taboos considering the public articulation of racism. Meanwhile, from a global perspective, the discourses on race and the stakes of these discourses became more complicated and ambivalent. This case study aims to provide a critical outline of the specific semi-peripheral context in which discourses express geopolitical stakes and racialized identity positions through the analysis of illustrative public statements written by East European intellectuals about the reemerging wave of riots and protests that took place in the USA after the May of 2020.

Keywords: East Europe, USA, eurowhitenedness, racism, eurocentrism, discursive strategies, identity

Abstract: In the history of post-WWII Western emancipation movements, a marked shift took place from a liberation to a recognition paradigm. This paradigm shift of social movements can be captured not so much as a move from an economic to a cultural focus as Nancy Fraser has famously argued, but rather as the conversion from a political to a post-political formulation of social problems: matters of social justice have been gradually divorced from conflicts of interests and transposed into a moral register. The post-political logic of recognition has become prevalent not as the result of inevitable consolidation or spontaneous convergence with wider changes in the economic, political or social landscape, but due to the hegemonic strategy of certain elite groups: as a tool devised to neutralise and absorb radical politics and thereby transform dissent into consent. However, the internal contradictions of recognition politics may lead to the self-elimination of hegemonic projects, as it not only gives way to the fragmentation of justice claims, but also weaponises them against each other, as for instance “sexual and gender minority” politics have expropriated crucial political arenas from feminist politics. Mechanisms deployed to manage its internal contradictions (like intersectionality) have not managed to arrest the crumbling of the current hegemony of liberalism, it is thus not surprising that serious blows to the hegemony were followed by re-invigorated internal (liberal) criticisms of recognition politics. However, recognition seems to have become such a crucial part of hegemonic struggles that liberal hegemony could not reinvent itself without it, nor could some leftist critiques or emerging counter-hegemonic projects free themselves from its logic.

Keywords: ideology, hegemony, post-politics, personal/political, feminism, intersectionality, rainbow coalition, subjectivation, sexuality, sex wars

Francis Fukuyama: Against Identity Politics. The New Tribalism and the Crisis of Democracy

Abstract: Francis Fukuyama correlates in his article, which made a great resonance, the political-economical changes, crises of the second part of the 20th century with the rise of identity politics that defined the politics and social movements of global capitalism. The quasi social democratic point of view by Fukuyama problematizes that political shift that could be observed on the anticapitalist left, which in the meantime was relocated from the striving after material justice understood as default to the symbolic demands of recognition of oppressed identity groups. According to his argumentation, political correctness, an extreme form of appearance of identity politics, means a threat to liberal democracies, insofar political correctness has a restrictive impact on the free speech, as well as makes difficulties to thematize social problems that are beyond the pale of mainstream mass media and high politics. In addition, Fukuyama claims that the right took over identity politics, which was becoming hegemonic on the left, which by this time prioritized issues about religion and na-

tion, as well as the demands of recognition of the white – and predominantly male – working class. The overly questionable conclusion of the author is one of the main characteristics of the modern man that s/he thinks always about her/himself and her/his encircling society within the conceptual horizon of identity.

Keywords: identity politics, demands of recognition, deliberation, liberal democracy, rights of freedom, populism, right-wing populism, globalization

Adrienne Rich: Compulsory Heterosexuality and Lesbian Existence

Abstract: Feminist scholarship loses immense explanatory power if it leaves frequently held assumptions about heterosexuality unquestioned: that heterosexuality is the natural “preference,” “choice,” or “inborn sexual orientation” of most women. Heterosexuality is a coercive and restrictive political institution, a major keystone in the unequal relationship between women and men, which turns women’s economic, creative, emotional and sexual resources into means of exchange between men. The cultural scripts of “normal” heterosexuality embody the logic of domination and control, while they also eroticize the subordination of women, therefore they cannot be easily separated from sexual violence and sexual exploitation, e.g. rape and the modern sex industry. In spite of the constraining and punitive forces of compulsory heterosexuality, there have been resisting women in all eras and cultures, who submitted themselves to the impulses drawing them to other women, choosing women as life companions, community or passionate comrades. Some of these women declined to marry, others lived a double life. These intra-women bonds put all women on a lesbian continuum, and provide the most important resources for women and feminism. Lesbian existence is thus an inherently *female* experience; to include lesbians under male homosexuality is therefore to strip lesbians of political existence and to erase women’s reality.

Keywords: feminism, sexuality, compulsory heterosexuality, lesbian existence, lesbian continuum, sexual violence, pornography, sex industry

Csaba Anrás: Book review: Angela Nagle: Kill all normies: Online culture wars from 4chan and Tumblr to Trump and the alt-right

Abstract: Angela Nagle’s book *Kill All Normies* is one of the first comprehensive works on the new right-wing trends referred to as alt-right, their online spaces and practices. The book presents the (initially) virtual conflicts of the so-called culture war between 2008 and 2016, and highlights the defining logic of the subcultural milieu behind the phenomena. Although the volume contains questionable passages and remains indebted to an anti-capitalist interpretation of the broader context of the processes analyzed, its great merit is that it also addresses criticisms of Tumblr-liberalism which underpins the strengthening of the alt-right and it provides an insight to many into a field accessible to a few.

Keywords: subculture, culture war, alt-right, identity politics, Tumblr-liberalism

Obedience

István Sümegi: A theory of obedience

Abstract: Why do people obey others? – this is the question to which I provide an a systematic answer through outlining my own theory of legitimacy. Six different types of obedience are discussed in detail. One may have different motives to obey: (1) out of fear of violence; (2) because it is in one's interest; (3) because one accepts the ruling power as legally (4) or morally justified; (5) because one identifies with the ruler on an emotional level; (6) or because one takes the state of affairs as inevitable.

Keywords: legitimacy, power, ideology, obedience, values and interests, violence

Unimproved Edition

Ali R. Chaudhary: Paint it White: Segregationist Logics in Advertising and the Electric Guitar

Abstract: Sociologists recognize that symbolic boundaries may be activated and reinforced through the production and consumption of cultural objects. Less attention, however, has been paid to the role of advertising as an ascriptive boundary-making mechanism in the life cycles of objects. Using the case of the electric guitar, this study examines how a cultural object-pioneered and popularized by Black celebrity guitarists became homologous with White masculinity through the production and circulation of visual images featured in advertising materials. Data come from product catalogs circulated by the two preeminent electric guitar brands during the instrument's large-scale production and consumption in the United States (1955–1982). I conduct a content analysis of annual product catalogs focusing on the proportional representation of visual images of Black and White celebrity guitarists. Findings indicate that Black celebrity guitarists were rarely featured in advertising materials despite their exclusive use of both brands' instruments. Consistent with segregationist logics embedded in modern advertising, Black celebrity guitarists were rendered non-existent and replaced with images of White celebrity guitarists and depictions of middle-class White masculinity. I interpret my findings as evidence of the prevalence of segregationist era logics in the advertising and construction of the electric guitar as a racialized and gendered cultural object. I conclude by discussing how this study advances recent scholarship concerning racial inequities in the consumer marketplace and the significance of ascriptive boundaries in the production and consumption of cultural objects.

Keywords: advertising, consumerism, cultural objects, electric guitar, race, segregation

Mobility and social circumstances

István Harcsa: The relationship between intergenerational mobility and life circumstances: doubts in light of the parallel approach

Abstract: The present study aims to reveal the relationship between intergenerational mobility and components of life circumstances. By doing so, it also reevaluates the content of social mobility. Our research finds that the relationship between social mobility and life circumstances differs according to social background: the empirical relationship between the two can be positive, negative and – in some cases – non-detectable. The study also outlines our findings about the different degrees of empirical connection between social mobility and lifestyle components.

Keywords: Intergenerational mobility, life circumstances, income, inequalities, subjective wellbeing status

Reviews

Ábel Csathó: The explanation lies out there... Book review on „The explanation lies out there...” Conversations with József Böröcz

Abstract: This review presents József Böröcz's latest book, published by Eszmélet Foundation in the summer of 2021. The book contains eight interviews on critical social theory, which partly summarize and partly supplement the author's oeuvre. The interviews were conducted, respectively, by Márk Áron Éber, Boróka Parászka, Zoltán Pogátsa, Ferhunde Dilara Demir, György Heimer, Muhammed Shabeer, Ángel Ferrero, Ágnes Gagyí and Gergő Pulay, who themselves work as social scientists or journalists. They are all more or less familiar with critical social theory, and bring an important and useful contribution to the interviews. The volume primarily fits into the tradition of historical sociology, world-systems theory and postcolonial studies. Accordingly, its main claim can be summarized as follows: society cannot be understood as a mere snapshot within the artificially generated framework of nation-states. Instead, we need to broaden our horizons and our analytical framework both in time and space. In addition to this, critical race theory is an important element of the book, which Böröcz applies to the critique of the „consciousness of whiteness” of Hungarian people. In the interviews, the author discusses not only theoretical problems, but also current political and public life issues, such as the *Black Lives Matter* movement, the 2020 US presidential election, the COVID crisis, Hungary's position in the EU, etc. In addition, well-known concepts and issues from his oeuvre are also addressed, such as informality (Böröcz 2019), (dual) dependency (Böröcz 1992), global redistribution (Böröcz 2005 [2004]), or the „EU-Empire” (Böröcz 2018 [2009]).

Keywords: world-system, dependency, whiteness, semi-periphery, EU

József Bayer: From Local Concerns to Global Perspectives. Book review on „The explanation lies out there...” Conversations with József Böröcz

Abstract: The book contains eight interviews, in which the author, renowned for his highly critical stance on social and political issues of our times, tries to explain the path of his intellectual development, and provides insights into his thoughts. The conversations embrace a wide range of issues: the European integration, the East-European system changes and their economic and social consequences, the roots of contemporary wars, racism, and the newest turn to populist and authoritarian politics. His views have been formed by the world-systems analysis and dependence-theories of development, buttressed by empirical research, and illustrated through many good examples taken from the past and present of Hungary and the global world. The author's radicalism does not root in a doctrinal utopianism, rather in his uncompromised pursuit of truth instead of indulging in self-serving complacencies.

Keywords: European Union, world-system theory, dependence theory, anti-racism, system change and peripheral authoritarian capitalism, globalization