



Capitalizing on Culture: Critical Theory for Cultural Studies (Cultural Spaces)

Shane Gunster

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Building on the work of Theodor Adorno and Walter Benjamin, *Capitalizing on Culture* presents an innovative, accessible, and timely exploration of critical theory in a cultural landscape dominated by capital. Despite the increasing prevalence of commodification as a dominant factor in the production, promotion, and consumption of most forms of mass culture, many in the cultural studies field have failed to engage systematically either with culture as commodity or with critical theory. Shane Gunster corrects that oversight, providing attentive readings of Adorno and Benjamin's work in order to generate a complex, non-reductive theory of human experience that attends to the opportunities and dangers arising from the confluence of culture and economics.

Gunster juxtaposes Benjamin's thoughts on memory, experience, and capitalism with Adorno's critique of mass culture and modern aesthetics to illuminate the key position that the commodity form plays in each thinker's work and to invigorate the dialectical complexity their writings acquire when considered together. This blending of perspectives is subsequently used to ground a theoretical interrogation of the comparative failure of cultural studies to engage substantively with the effect of commodification upon cultural practices. As a result, *Capitalizing on Culture* offers a fresh examination of critical theory that will be valuable to scholars studying the intersection of culture and capitalism.

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