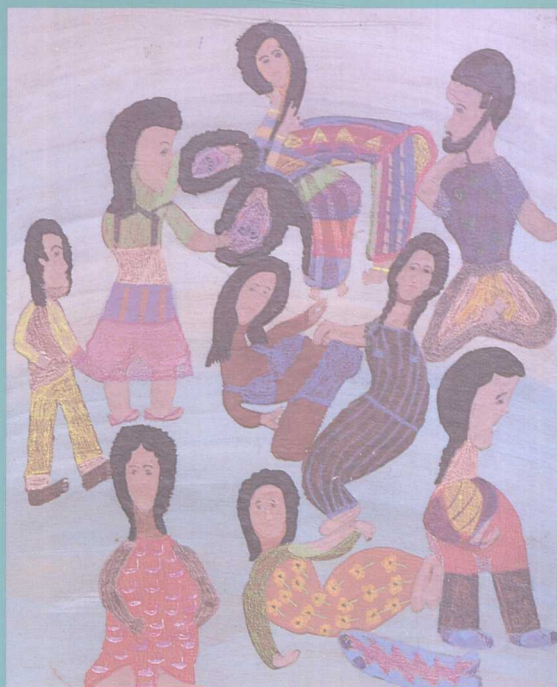


# *Cultural* POLITICS

*Class, Gender, Race and the Postmodern World*



GLENN JORDAN  
CHRIS WEEDON



# Cultural Politics

*Class, Gender, Race and the  
Postmodern World*

Glenn Jordan and Chris Weedon

  
**BLACKWELL**  
Oxford UK & Cambridge USA

Copyright © Glenn Jordan and Chris Weedon 1995

The right of Glenn Jordan and Chris Weedon to be identified as authors of this work has been asserted in accordance with the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988.

First published 1995

Blackwell Publishers, the publishing imprint of  
Basil Blackwell Ltd  
108 Cowley Road  
Oxford OX4 1JF  
UK

Basil Blackwell Inc.  
238 Main Street  
Cambridge, Massachusetts 02142  
USA

All rights reserved. Except for the quotation of short passages for the purposes of criticism and review, no part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted, in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise, without the prior permission of the publisher.

Except in the United States of America, this book is sold subject to the condition that it shall not, by way of trade or otherwise, be lent, resold, hired out, or otherwise circulated without the publisher's prior consent in any form of binding or cover other than that in which it is published and without a similar condition including this condition being imposed on the subsequent purchaser.

*British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data*

A CIP catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library.

*Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data*

Cultural politics: class, gender, race, and the postmodern world/Glenn Jordan and Chris Weedon.

p. cm.

Includes bibliographical references and index.

ISBN 0-631-16227-5 (alk. paper). — ISBN 0-631-16228-3 (pbk.: alk. paper)

1. Arts and society — History — 20th century. 2. Minorities in art. 3. Ethnic arts.  
4. Marginality, social — History — 20th century.

I. Jordan, Glenn II. Title.

NX 180.S6W43 1994

700'.1'03 — dc20

94-4311  
CIP

Printed in Great Britain by T.J. Press Ltd., Padstow  
This book is printed on acid-free paper

# Cultural Politics



*To our mothers  
and the memory of our fathers*

# Preface

---

What has culture to do with politics – that is, with struggles to acquire, maintain or resist power? Everything, or so this book argues. Focusing on the relationships between culture, power and subjectivity, *Cultural Politics* seeks to contribute to critical cultural enquiry and liberating political practice.

The book is a collective enterprise. It could not have been written by either of us alone. Each of us brought to it our particular areas of experience and expertise, but the chapters themselves are the product of our work together.

Most research in Cultural Studies has focused on those areas excluded by the 'high' cultural and academic traditions of Literature, Art and History. Early work in Britain, for example, looked at forms of working-class culture, at youth subcultures and at popular cultural forms. Our focus is different. We look precisely at those areas that constitute the dominant 'high' culture: Literature, Art and History. Many social groups do not find themselves or their interests reflected in these traditions. Working-class people, women and people of Colour find themselves marginalized or excluded. We focus on examples of how these groups have attempted to reclaim and transform the dominant in their own interests.

Many books on culture and politics have a tendency to academicize issues. In the process the bitter experiences of structural inequality, sexism and racism – their effects on people's sense of self and their opportunities in life – are diffused. Class, gender and race become academic issues freed of passion, anger and pain. We have written a book which we hope will not allow this to happen. We have included multiple voices and perspectives, including voices of the oppressed.

Where possible we have tried to let the marginalized groups whose work we look at speak for themselves. This is particularly important where works are little known or not easily accessible, for example,

writing by Australians of Aboriginal descent. Here the cost of permission to reproduce extracts means that we have had to limit extracts more than we would otherwise have wished.

In using multiple voices our text often speaks from within dominant discourses. We do not constantly alert the reader to this by marking our own distance from voices with which we would disagree. We hope the text itself deconstructs these voices. Nor do we follow the current vogue for putting terms like race in inverted commas. We know, of course, that race is a social construction, but it is also lived as a brute fact. We want to avoid evacuating terms like race of the lived oppression of racism.

Much of the book consists of detailed case studies in the cultural politics of class, gender and race. We believe that it is important to ground more general theoretical and political arguments and we ask what we can learn from our case studies for cultural politics today.

Our book is both a political and a theoretical intervention in the broad field of Cultural Studies. We hope that it will encourage questioning and reflexivity, particularly among those so eager to espouse a postmodern rhetoric of difference without due attention to power. Power is our central concern and we see *Cultural Politics* as an attempt to use theory in the interests of change, as a contribution to an emancipatory cultural politics. We hope that many different groups of reader – from students and teachers to arts and cultural workers – will find it accessible and above all useful.

We would like to thank all those people whose ideas, comments and practical help have fed into our work. Stuart Allan, Rasheed Araeen, Catherine Belsey, Gill Boden, Steve Connor and two anonymous readers approached by Blackwell, Marco Gil-Cervantes, David Jackson, Jane Moore, Bernd Rosner and John Taylor read parts of the manuscript. Our nephew Ernest Carlton Smith, who visited us for six months during the writing of this book, not only read sections of it but found himself left to his own devices while we sat glued to our computer screens. Ollie Harrington shared his life and work with us and allowed us to reproduce one of his cartoons. Eddie Chambers and the African and Asian Visual Artists' Archive in Bristol helped with pictures. Alison Jackson gave us photos of Greenham Common. Jutta Wrase in (East) Berlin and Hannah Justice-Mills and Simon Ford of Ffotoworks in Cardiff produced prints and negatives for us. Edward Bruner, Elaine Bruner, Kimberley Smith, Joyce Jordan Smith and Marguerite Weedon helped with various information. Mark O'Neill provided useful background on the People's Palace. Michael Trickey, Mike Sweet and Sally Medlyn gave helpful interviews on arts funding. Rob Middlehurst provided us with the *Guardian* article 'Mad Dogs and Englishmen'. Yvette Phillips helped with typing. The Butetown History and Arts Project allowed us to use their Macintosh computer system. Thanks to Marco Gil-Cervantes and Neil

Sinclair for coming to the rescue when computer systems failed us. We are grateful to Andrew McNeillie of Blackwell Publishers for his patient support, to Ginny Stroud-Lewis and Thelma Gilbert for their help with picture research and permissions, and to Audrey Bamber for her excellent copy-editing. Thanks also to those who helped check the proofs: Gill Boden, David Broughton, Peter Buse, David Jackson, Anne James, Caroline Joll, Molly Maher, Yvette Phillips, Carl Plasa, Neil Sinclair and Jeff Wallace. Thanks too to Valery Rose.

This book was written in Cardiff and (East) Berlin. Our time in Berlin was made possible by a grant from the Alexander von Humboldt-Stiftung in Bonn. We are grateful for their support.



# Acknowledgements

---

The authors and publisher wish to thank the following for permission to use material in copyright:

Allen & Unwin Pty Ltd, Australia, for material from Archie Weller, *Going Home* (1986);

Rasheed Araeen for material from 'The Other Story', Exhibition Catalogue, 'From Primitivism to Ethnic Art', *Third Text*, 1 (Autumn 1987), and 'The Other Immigrant', *Third Text*, 15 (Summer, 1991);

Longman Group UK for material from John Tosh, *The Pursuit of History* (1984);

Penguin Books Australia Ltd for material from Kevin Gilbert, *Living Black* (1978); Kevin Gilbert, 'The New True Anthem', Jack Davis, 'Aboriginal Australia' and Eva Johnson, 'A Letter to my Mother' in *Inside Black Australia*, ed. Kevin Gilbert (1988);

Patricia St Hilaire for 'A Poem for Black Women' in *Black Womantalk Poetry* (1987);

South End Press for material from bell hooks, *Black Looks* (1992);

the Charlotte Sheedy Agency on behalf of the author for material from Audre Lorde, 'Eye to Eye' in *Sister Outsider*, The Crossing Press, Freedom, California; copyright © 1984 by Audre Lorde;

Carmen Tunde for 'Bus Stop' in *Black Womantalk Poetry* (1987);

Virago Press Ltd, Henry Holt and Co., Inc. and Freemantle Arts Centre Press for material from Sally Morgan, *My Place* (1988); copyright © 1987 Sally Jane Morgan;

Jacaranda Wiley Ltd for material from Jack Davis, 'The First Born', 'Deso-

lation' and 'The Drifters' in *The First Born and Other Poems*; and from Oodgeroo of the tribe Noonuccal, Custodian of the land Minjerribah, *My People* (1970);

Every effort has been made to trace all the copyright holders, but if any have been inadvertently overlooked the publisher will be pleased to make the necessary arrangement at the first opportunity.

# Contents

---

List of Plates	ix
Preface	xi
Acknowledgements	xiv
<b>Part I Mapping the Terrain</b>	<b>1</b>
1 Introduction: What are Cultural Politics?	3
2 Liberals and Humanists, Cosmopolitans and Eurocentrics: on the Development of Cultural Policy in Britain	23
<b>Part II The Cultural Politics of Class</b>	<b>65</b>
3 Writing as a Weapon in Class Struggle: Radical Cultural Politics in Britain to the Second World War	67
4 Marxist Cultural Politics in Eastern Europe: the Case of the German Democratic Republic	91
5 Whose History Is It? Class, Cultural Democracy and Constructions of the Past	112
<b>Part III The Cultural Politics of Gender</b>	<b>175</b>
6 Feminism and the Cultural Politics of Gender	177
7 Alternative Subjectivities: White Feminist Fiction	217
8 Gender, Racism and Identity: Black Feminist Fiction	231
<b>Part IV The Cultural Politics of Race</b>	<b>249</b>
9 Marking Difference, Asserting Power: the Cultural Politics of Racism	251

10	Primitives, Politics and the Avant-garde: Modern Art and its Others	315
11	Dialogues: Race and the Cultural Politics of the Avant-garde	395
12	Encounters: Postcolonial Artists and the Art Establishment	432
13	From Primitivism to Ethnic Art: Neo-colonialism in the Metropolis?	473
14	Racism, Culture and Subjectivity: Australian Aboriginal Writing	489
	<b>Part V Concluding Reflections</b>	<b>541</b>
15	The Postmodernist Challenge/Challenging Postmodernism: a Cultural Politics for Today	543
	Notes	565
	Bibliography	583
	Index of Names and Voices	603
	Subject Index	614

# List of Plates

---

- |     |  |     |
|-----|--|-----|
| 1.1 | <i>Who are the Great Thinkers?</i> , Oliver Harrington, 1949. Reproduced by kind permission of the artist. Photograph: Jutta Wrase.    | 10  |
| 4.1 | <i>Landaufteilung</i> , Arno Mohr, oil on canvas, 1949. Photograph: Jutta Wrase.   | 93  |
| 4.2 | <i>Statue of Industrial Workers</i> , shopping precinct in Marzahn, East Berlin. Photograph: Glenn Jordan.                             | 101 |
| 5.1 | <i>Butetown History &amp; Arts Project at Work</i> , Cardiff, Wales. Photographs: Mark Woodyatt, Marco Gil-Cervantes and Glenn Jordan. | 143 |
| 6.1 | <i>Women's Peace Movement Protest at Greenham Common Air Base</i> , 1984. Photographs: Alison Jackson; banners: Thalia Campbell.       | 184 |
| 6.2 | <i>Go West, Young Man</i> , Keith Piper. Reproduced by kind permission of the artist.  | 192 |
| 6.3 | Cover of <i>Black Beauty and Hair</i> , Spring issue 1993. Courtesy of Hawker Consumer Publications. Photograph: Hannah Justice-Mills. | 194 |
| 6.4 | <i>What Are You Looking At?</i> , Lesley Sanderson. Reproduced by kind permission of the artist.                                       | 198 |
| 9.1 | <i>Statue of Black Waiter in Hamburg</i> . Photograph: Chris Weedon.   | 261 |
| 9.2 | <i>The Marriage Market, Babylon</i> , Sir Edwin Long. Reproduced by kind permission of the Bridgeman Art Library, London.              | 264 |
| 9.3 | Front page of the <i>Sun</i> , Friday, 20 March 1987. Courtesy of News International.  | 268 |
| 9.4 | <i>I Was Taught to Believe</i> , Eddie Chambers. Reproduced by kind permission of the artist. Photograph: Carolyn R. Reid.             | 274 |
| 9.5 | <i>Josephine Baker</i> , revue: <i>Folie du Jour</i> , Folies Bergère, 1926–7. Reproduced courtesy of Roger-Viollet, Paris.            | 278 |

- 10.1 *Fang Mask*, Gabon, West Africa. Reproduced by kind permission of the *Musée National d'Art Moderne, Centre Georges Pompidou*, Paris, Documentation Photographique. 322
- 10.2 Akan 'Fertility Doll', Ghana or Ivory Coast. From the authors' collection. Photograph: Hannah Justice-Mills. 324
- 10.3 *Les Demoiselles d'Avignon*, Pablo Picasso, 1907, oil on canvas, 96" x 92", Museum of Modern Art, New York. Acquired through the Lillie P. Bliss Bequest. Copyright DACS 1994. 332
- 10.4 *Sulka Mask*, New Britain, Papua New Guinea, painted pith, wood and feathers, 47" high. Übersee Museum, Bremen. 365
- 10.5 *The Jungle*, Wifredo Lam, 1943, gouache on paper mounted on canvas, 94" x 90". Museum of Modern Art, New York. Inter-American Fund. Copyright DACS 1984. 368
- 10.6 *Bathers in a Room*, Ernst Ludwig Kirchner, 1909, repainted 1920, oil on canvas, 60" x 78". Copyright Dr Wolfgang and Ingeborg Henze-Ketterer, Wichtracht, Bern. Photograph supplied by Saarland Museum, Germany. 388
- 10.7 *Sam and Milli in Kirchner's Dresden Studio*, 1910. Photograph by Ernst Ludwig Kirchner. Collection: Fotoarchiv Hans Bollinger and Roman Norbert Ketterer, Galleria Henze, Champione d'Italia. 391
- 11.1 *Objects from New Guinea about to be Taken Off to Europe*, photographed during the La Korrigane expedition, 1934–6, in New Guinea. Field photograph by van den Broeck. Collection photothèque du Musée de l'Homme, Paris. 414
- 11.2 *Sleeping Negress*, Erich Heckel, 1908. New Haven, Connecticut, Yale University Gallery. 423
- 12.1 *Hills of Gold*, Avinash Chandra, 1964, oil on board, 40" x 95". Reproduced by kind permission of the Tate Gallery, London. 437
- 12.2 *8bs*, Rasheed Araeen, painted wood, 183" x 394" x 38". Reproduced by kind permission of the artist. 441
- 12.3 *Maya Confrontation (II)*, Aubrey Williams, 1982, oil on canvas, 122" x 183". By kind permission of Eve Williams. 443
- 14.1 *We are the Drifters*, two elderly Aborigines around a campfire, Alice Springs, Northern Territory, Australia. Photograph: David Bowden Photographic Library. 492
- 14.2 *A Demonstration Against White Racism*, National Library of Australia. Photograph: Ken Middleton. 496
- 14.3 *Taken Away*, Sally Morgan, silkscreen on paper. Reproduced by kind permission of the artist. From the collection of the National Gallery of Australia, Canberra. Bicentennial Portfolio, commissioned 1988. 509

# Part I

## Mapping the Terrain

---





# 1

## Introduction: What are Cultural Politics?

---

As we were completing the draft of this book, the XXVth Olympic Games took place in Barcelona. The Olympic Games are officially opened with the utterance of a single sentence: 'I now declare the Games of the ... Olympiad open.' At the opening ceremony of the Barcelona Olympics, King Juan Carlos gave a bilingual rendition, beginning the official declaration in Catalan and completing it in Spanish.

Similarly, the opening festivities of the Games included both Catalan and Spanish music, dance and theatrical performance. Both Catalan and Spanish flags flew. Both languages were used in announcements over the loudspeakers. No agreement could be reached, however, as to which of the two languages should be used to determine the alphabetized order in which the 170 nations competing in the Games would parade their athletes in the opening ceremony. In the end, as a compromise, the programme committee decided on French!

Beneath the glitter of the extravaganza which opened the XXVth Olympics lay a longstanding conflict. Spain, like most modern countries, consists of a number of smaller nations united together in – or dominated under – a single central state. These 'nations' or ethnic groups have their own languages, their own histories, their own cultures. There is a continual struggle between forces seeking to assimilate these peoples and their cultures into the dominant order – Catalonia into Spain, Scotland into Britain, Tartarstan into Russia, Tibet into China, Québec into Canada – and those seeking to ensure their autonomous existence.

History and culture are fundamental aspects of the fabric of everyday life. They help to give us our sense of identity, telling us who we are, where we are from and where we are going. In any society the denial or marginalization of histories and cultures other than those of the dominant group has profound implications for subjectivity and identity. Markers of