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**Television as Theory**

The theories framing the lively discussions of early cultural studies had many sources – I want to argue, however, that these discussions got a certain unity only by their application to television and television related popular culture. This medium and the cultural discourses already surrounding it established seemingly natural topics that became the touchstone for opposing theories and the centre of the political and theoretical debates characterizing cultural studies. It is no coincidence that cultural studies' theoretical framework became less focused at the same time when television ceased to be the main object of interest. Thus, the political impact of new media and of media change more generally, while being analyzed in many ways, is not framed anymore by a common set of theories and key terms.

In my paper I want to show how in the 1970s and 1980s the discussion of theories of power (Gramsci, Foucault and others) was structured by their application on television. This structuring effect of television at the same time limited the scope of the theoretical concepts in a way that precluded their use for other media. In my view, cultural studies' reorientation from the concept of 'negotiation' to the one of 'circulation' is especially characteristic for the simultaneous disentanglement from television and from a common theoretical frame. Focusing on this reorientation I will discuss two questions: (1) To what extent were the dominant theoretical tools of cultural studies appropriate to television – and inappropriate to new media? (2) To what extent do new media – and especially the accelerated pace of media change – undermine the power concepts developed in cultural studies? I will argue that only a renewed theoretical debate will allow cultural studies to counter the established presuppositions about television and new media that mainly contribute to their power effects. This theoretical debate might deal less with representations and more with the continuing (technical, institutional, practical) transformation of media.