

thomas frank the conquest of cool

****Thomas Frank The Conquest of Cool: Unpacking the Cultural Critique****

thomas frank the conquest of cool is a phrase that draws attention to the influential work of Thomas Frank, a prominent American historian, political analyst, and cultural critic. Frank's exploration into the intertwining of marketing, culture, and politics, particularly in his book **The Conquest of Cool**, offers readers a profound understanding of how counterculture was absorbed and commodified by mainstream America. But who is Thomas Frank, and why does **The Conquest of Cool** remain a pivotal work in cultural studies? This article delves into the nuances of Frank's analysis, the historical context behind the book, and its ongoing relevance in today's cultural landscape.

Who Is Thomas Frank?

Thomas Frank is best known for his sharp critiques of American politics and culture, often focusing on the intersection of capitalism, media, and ideology. With a background in history and political science, Frank has authored several influential books, including **What's the Matter with Kansas?**, which examines the paradoxes of American conservatism. His work combines rigorous academic research with a style that is accessible and engaging for a broad audience.

The Conquest of Cool stands out among his works because it traces the origins of cultural marketing and how the advertising world co-opted the rebellious spirit of the 1960s counterculture. By doing so, Frank reveals how “cool” became a commodity, a tool for selling products, and shaping consumer behavior.

Understanding The Conquest of Cool

At its core, **The Conquest of Cool** is a historical narrative about the relationship between advertising agencies and the burgeoning youth culture of the post-World War II era. Frank meticulously examines how advertisers sought to tap into the growing influence of young people who rejected traditional norms and embraced new forms of expression.

The Birth of “Cool” as a Marketing Strategy

Before the 1950s and 60s, advertising largely promoted products through straightforward, earnest appeals to family values, utility, and reliability. However, as the Baby Boomer generation came of age, a shift occurred. This demographic was more interested in rebellion, nonconformity, and authenticity—qualities that advertisers initially found hard to market.

Thomas Frank’s **The Conquest of Cool** highlights how advertising executives eventually realized that to sell products to young consumers, they had to adopt the language, aesthetics, and attitudes of the counterculture. This meant embracing irony, skepticism, and a laid-back style that seemed to reject mainstream corporate values, even as it was being used to sell everything from cigarettes to soft drinks.

From Counterculture to Commodity

One of the key insights Frank offers is that what began as a genuine cultural movement was gradually absorbed and neutralized by the commercial system. The rebellious spirit of the 1960s was turned into a set of marketing tools—cool became something to be bought and sold rather than an authentic form of resistance.

This transformation is what Frank calls the “conquest” of cool: the process by which the advertising

industry appropriated countercultural values to maintain consumer demand and expand capitalist markets. It's a story of how cultural resistance can be co-opted and depoliticized, leaving behind a sanitized version of rebellion that serves commercial interests.

The Impact of Thomas Frank's Analysis on Cultural Studies

Frank's detailed research into the advertising world and youth culture has had a lasting influence on how scholars and critics understand the relationship between culture and capitalism. By showing that even subversive cultural movements can be commodified, Frank challenges simplistic notions of resistance and authenticity.

Relevance to Contemporary Marketing

The themes explored in **The Conquest of Cool** remain highly relevant in today's marketing landscape. Modern brands continue to seek "cool" by aligning themselves with cultural trends and social movements. From streetwear fashion to social media influencers, the commodification of subculture is alive and well.

Understanding this process helps consumers become more critical of the messages they receive and the ways in which cultural expression is often intertwined with commercial interests. Thomas Frank's work encourages a skeptical perspective on advertising and the cultural narratives it promotes.

Connections to Youth Culture and Media

Frank's exploration also sheds light on the ongoing tension between youth culture as a site of innovation and as a target for commercial exploitation. Media portrayals of what is "cool" often reflect the interests of corporations rather than genuine grassroots movements.

This dynamic plays out in various forms, from music festivals sponsored by major brands to viral internet trends that quickly become monetized. Recognizing these patterns is key to understanding how culture evolves within capitalist societies.

Key Takeaways from Thomas Frank *The Conquest of Cool*

If you're interested in cultural history, marketing, or political economy, *The Conquest of Cool* offers several important lessons:

- **The commercial system is adept at absorbing dissent:** Even movements that start as critiques of mainstream values can be turned into marketable commodities.
- **“Cool” is not just an attitude but a product:** What seems like authentic rebellion can be carefully crafted and sold by advertisers.
- **Cultural expression is deeply intertwined with capitalism:** This relationship complicates ideas about authenticity and resistance.
- **Critical awareness is essential:** Consumers should be mindful of how cultural trends are shaped by economic forces.

How Thomas Frank's Work Inspires Critical Thinking

One of the strengths of Frank's writing is its ability to provoke reflection about our own participation in cultural consumption. By uncovering the origins of “cool” as a marketing strategy, he invites readers to question the authenticity of the cultural symbols they embrace.

This kind of critical awareness is particularly important in an age dominated by digital media, where trends can emerge and dissipate rapidly, often driven by commercial algorithms and influencer marketing. Frank's historical perspective helps ground contemporary analysis in a deeper understanding of how culture and capitalism have always been interlinked.

Applying Insights to Personal and Professional Life

Whether you're a marketer, artist, student, or simply a curious observer of culture, the ideas in **The Conquest of Cool** can inform your approach:

- **For marketers:** Recognize the ethical dimensions of commodifying culture and think critically about how to engage audiences authentically.
- **For creatives:** Stay aware of the fine line between cultural innovation and commercial co-optation.
- **For students and researchers:** Use Frank's work as a springboard to explore the intersections of culture, politics, and economy.
- **For everyday consumers:** Develop a more discerning eye toward advertising and media messages.

Thomas Frank's **The Conquest of Cool** remains a vital text that challenges us to rethink the dynamics of culture and commerce. By understanding how "cool" was conquered and commodified, we gain insight into the broader processes that shape cultural meaning in a capitalist society. This awareness opens the door to more conscious participation in culture—whether that means resisting commodification, creating new forms of expression, or simply appreciating the complex history behind the things we find "cool."

Frequently Asked Questions

Who is Thomas Frank, the author of 'The Conquest of Cool'?

Thomas Frank is an American political analyst, historian, and writer known for his critiques of consumer culture and capitalism, particularly in his book 'The Conquest of Cool.'

What is the main theme of 'The Conquest of Cool' by Thomas Frank?

'The Conquest of Cool' explores how the advertising industry co-opted the counterculture of the 1960s to sell products, turning rebellion into a marketing tool.

When was 'The Conquest of Cool' published?

'The Conquest of Cool' was published in 1997.

How does Thomas Frank define 'cool' in his book 'The Conquest of Cool'?

Frank defines 'cool' as a cultural attitude that combines detached irony and rebellion, which was commodified by advertisers to appeal to youth markets.

What role did advertising agencies play according to 'The Conquest of Cool'?

According to Frank, advertising agencies played a key role in absorbing and neutralizing the countercultural ethos by turning it into a selling strategy, effectively 'conquering' cool.

Why is 'The Conquest of Cool' considered important in cultural studies?

'The Conquest of Cool' is important because it critically examines the relationship between culture,

commerce, and politics during a transformative era, highlighting how commercial interests shape cultural movements.

Does Thomas Frank criticize or praise the advertising industry's use of counterculture in 'The Conquest of Cool'?

Thomas Frank critically analyzes the advertising industry's use of counterculture, arguing that it diluted genuine social and political dissent by commodifying rebellious imagery for profit.

How has 'The Conquest of Cool' influenced contemporary views on marketing and culture?

The book has influenced contemporary critiques of marketing by showing how corporate culture can co-opt and neutralize social movements, encouraging skepticism about the authenticity of commercialized 'countercultural' products.

Additional Resources

Thomas Frank The Conquest of Cool: An Analytical Review

thomas frank the conquest of cool emerges as a compelling intersection of cultural critique and marketing history, offering profound insights into the evolution of advertising and its symbiotic relationship with youth culture. Thomas Frank, a noted cultural critic and author, delves into the intricate dynamics that shaped modern consumerism through his exploration of "The Conquest of Cool," a concept originally popularized by Thomas Frank himself in his 1997 book of the same name. This article undertakes an in-depth examination of Frank's perspectives, unpacking the nuanced ways in which advertising appropriated countercultural ideals to foster brand loyalty and reshape societal norms.

Understanding Thomas Frank's The Conquest of Cool

At its core, Thomas Frank's "The Conquest of Cool" investigates the paradoxical alliance between the advertising industry and the 1960s counterculture movement. The book, often regarded as a seminal work in cultural studies and marketing history, charts how Madison Avenue harnessed the rebellious spirit of the era to cultivate a new kind of consumerism—one that traded in authenticity, irony, and anti-establishment rhetoric.

Frank's analysis reveals that what seemed like genuine cultural dissent was, in many ways, co-opted by corporate interests. This "conquest" was not merely a commercial strategy but a cultural shift where coolness itself became a commodity, carefully engineered and sold back to youth demographics. The book exemplifies how advertising evolved from straightforward product promotion to psychological and cultural manipulation, embedding itself deeply within the societal fabric.

The Historical Context Behind The Conquest of Cool

To fully grasp Thomas Frank's thesis, it is essential to understand the socio-political landscape of the 1960s and 1970s. This era was marked by significant upheaval: civil rights movements, anti-war protests, and a burgeoning counterculture that rejected mainstream values. Advertisers initially struggled to appeal to this demographic, which was skeptical of traditional authority and corporate messaging.

Frank illustrates how advertising agencies began to adopt the language and aesthetics of the counterculture to regain influence. Campaigns started to feature elements such as irreverence, irony, and a casual coolness, aimed at resonating with young consumers who valued authenticity and social consciousness. This strategy, while innovative, blurred the lines between genuine cultural expression and commercial exploitation.

Key Themes in Thomas Frank's Analysis

One of the central themes in "The Conquest of Cool" is the concept of **cool** as a cultural commodity. Frank argues that cool was transformed from an organic, community-driven identity marker into a carefully crafted marketing tool. This transformation had profound implications for both advertising and youth culture.

Another significant theme is the **commodification of dissent**. Frank highlights how the advertising industry turned anti-establishment sentiments into marketable assets. This not only diluted the original political messages but also created a feedback loop where commercial interests shaped cultural movements, rather than merely responding to them.

The Role of Advertising Agencies

Thomas Frank meticulously documents the pivotal role played by advertising agencies such as Doyle Dane Bernbach (DDB) in this cultural shift. DDB's innovative campaigns for Volkswagen in the 1960s are often cited as archetypes of this new advertising approach. These campaigns employed humor, self-awareness, and simplicity—qualities that resonated strongly with a generation disillusioned with conventional advertising tropes.

By embracing countercultural aesthetics and ideologies, agencies like DDB pioneered a new era in marketing that prioritized cultural relevance over direct product promotion. Frank's exploration underscores how these agencies were not merely passive observers but active architects of cultural trends.

Implications for Contemporary Marketing

The insights offered by Thomas Frank in "The Conquest of Cool" continue to resonate in today's

marketing landscape. Modern brands frequently adopt similar strategies, leveraging social movements, irony, and subcultural signals to build brand identity and customer loyalty. Frank's work serves as a cautionary tale about the risks and ethical dilemmas of this practice.

For example, the rise of influencer marketing and brand activism can be seen as contemporary manifestations of the conquest of cool. While these strategies can foster genuine engagement, they also raise questions about authenticity and the potential for cultural appropriation. Marketers today must navigate these complexities carefully to maintain credibility and avoid consumer backlash.

Comparative Perspectives: The Conquest of Cool Versus Other Cultural Critiques

When compared to other cultural critiques of advertising and consumerism, Thomas Frank's approach is notable for its historical depth and focus on the co-optation of youth culture. Unlike critiques that solely emphasize the manipulative nature of advertising, Frank contextualizes the phenomenon within broader cultural and political developments.

For instance, Jean Baudrillard's theory of simulacra and simulation offers a more abstract and philosophical take on consumer culture, emphasizing the blurring of reality and representation. In contrast, Frank provides a concrete historical narrative that traces specific campaigns and practices, making his analysis particularly accessible and grounded.

Similarly, Naomi Klein's "No Logo" critiques corporate branding and globalization but places less emphasis on the cultural synthesis that Frank foregrounds. By focusing on the 1960s and 1970s, Frank fills a vital gap in understanding how advertising evolved from mere messaging into a cultural force capable of shaping identities.

Pros and Cons of Frank's Argument

- Pros:

- Provides a detailed historical account of a pivotal moment in advertising history.
- Illuminates the complex interplay between culture, politics, and commerce.
- Offers a critical lens on the commodification of cultural rebellion.

- Cons:

- Focuses primarily on Western, particularly American, advertising contexts.
- Some critics argue that Frank underestimates the agency of youth culture in resisting co-optation.
- The framework may seem less applicable to digital-age marketing dynamics without further adaptation.

The Legacy of Thomas Frank The Conquest of Cool in

Academic and Popular Discourse

Since its publication, "The Conquest of Cool" has influenced a wide range of disciplines including cultural studies, marketing, sociology, and media studies. Its interdisciplinary appeal stems from the way it bridges marketing tactics with cultural theory, offering a unique lens through which to understand the evolution of consumer society.

In academic circles, Frank's work is frequently cited as a foundational text for understanding the rise of postmodern marketing and the cultural economy. Meanwhile, in popular discourse, the phrase "the conquest of cool" has entered the lexicon as shorthand for the commercialization of rebellion and counterculture.

This legacy underscores the enduring relevance of Frank's analysis in a world where brand identity and cultural authenticity remain hotly contested terrains.

The exploration of Thomas Frank the conquest of cool thus serves as a critical reminder of how cultural movements can be simultaneously revolutionary and vulnerable to commercial exploitation, a duality that continues to shape the contours of contemporary consumer culture.

[Thomas Frank The Conquest Of Cool](#)

thomas frank the conquest of cool: *The Conquest of Cool* Thomas Frank, 1997 Looks at advertising during the 1960s, focusing on the relationship between the counterculture movement and commerce.

thomas frank the conquest of cool: The Conquest of Cool Thomas Frank, 1998-10-21 While the youth counterculture remains the most evocative and best-remembered symbol of the cultural ferment of the 1960s, the revolution that shook American business during those boom years has gone largely unremarked. In this fascinating and revealing study, Thomas Frank shows how the youthful revolutionaries were joined—and even anticipated —by such unlikely allies as the advertising industry and the men's clothing business. [Thomas Frank is] perhaps the most provocative young cultural critic of the moment.—Gerald Marzorati, New York Times Book Review An indispensable survival guide for any modern consumer.—Publishers Weekly, starred review Frank makes an ironclad case not only that the advertising industry cunningly turned the countercultural rhetoric of revolution into a rallying cry to buy more stuff, but that the process itself actually predated any actual counterculture to exploit.—Geoff Pevere, Toronto Globe and Mail The

Conquest of Cool helps us understand why, throughout the last third of the twentieth century, Americans have increasingly confused gentility with conformity, irony with protest, and an extended middle finger with a populist manifesto. . . . His voice is an exciting addition to the soporific public discourse of the late twentieth century.—T. J. Jackson Lears, *In These Times* An invaluable argument for anyone who has ever scoffed at hand-me-down counterculture from the '60s. A spirited and exhaustive analysis of the era's advertising.—Brad Wieners, *Wired Magazine* Tom Frank is . . . not only old-fashioned, he's anti-fashion, with a place in his heart for that ultimate social faux pas, leftist politics.—Roger Trilling, *Details*

thomas frank the conquest of cool: The Cult of Creativity Samuel W. Franklin, 2023-04-18 A history of how, in the mid-twentieth century, we came to believe in the concept of creativity. Creativity is one of American society's signature values. Schools claim to foster it, businesses say they thrive on it, and countless cities say it's what makes them unique. But the idea that there is such a thing as "creativity"—and that it can be cultivated—is surprisingly recent, entering our everyday speech in the 1950s. As Samuel W. Franklin reveals, postwar Americans created creativity, through campaigns to define and harness the power of the individual to meet the demands of American capitalism and life under the Cold War. Creativity was championed by a cluster of professionals—psychologists, engineers, and advertising people—as a cure for the conformity and alienation they feared was stifling American ingenuity. It was touted as a force of individualism and the human spirit, a new middle-class aspiration that suited the needs of corporate America and the spirit of anticommunism. Amid increasingly rigid systems, creativity took on an air of romance; it was a more democratic quality than genius, but more rarified than mere intelligence. The term eluded clear definition, allowing all sorts of people and institutions to claim it as a solution to their problems, from corporate dullness to urban decline. Today, when creativity is constantly sought after, quantified, and maximized, Franklin's eye-opening history of the concept helps us to see what it really is, and whom it really serves.

thomas frank the conquest of cool: Adman's Dilemma Paul Rutherford, 2018-01-01 The Adman's Dilemma is a cultural biography that explores the rise and fall of the advertising man as a figure who became effectively a licensed deceiver in the process of governing the lives of American consumers. Apparently this personage was caught up in a contradiction, both compelled to deceive yet supposed to tell the truth. It was this moral condition and its consequences that made the adman so interesting to critics, novelists, and eventually filmmakers. The biography tracks his saga from its origins in the exaggerated doings of P.T. Barnum, the emergence of a new profession in the 1920s, the heyday of the adman's influence during the post-WW2 era, the later rebranding of the adman as artist, until the apparent demise of the figure, symbolized by the triumph of that consummate huckster, Donald Trump. In *The Adman's Dilemma*, author Paul Rutherford explores how people inside and outside the advertising industry have understood the conflict between artifice and authenticity. The book employs a range of fictional and nonfictional sources, including memoirs, novels, movies, TV shows, websites, and museum exhibits to suggest how the adman embodied some of the strange realities of modernity.

thomas frank the conquest of cool: Jacques Lacan and the Other Side of Psychoanalysis Justin Clemens, Russell Grigg, 2006-05-23 Articles by noted Lacanian psychoanalysts and scholars discussing issues that emerge in Lacan's Seminar XVII (newly translated) that import fields of psychoanalysis, philosophy, political theory, cultural studies and literary studies.

thomas frank the conquest of cool: Beyond Exoticism Timothy D. Taylor, 2007-03-05 Study of how systems of power and domination have shaped representations of otherness in music.

thomas frank the conquest of cool: The Good Life Cheryl Mendelson, 2012-06-05 *The Good Life* is a deeply reasoned but entertaining polemic about how the notion of morality has been co-opted by the political right, as the culture increasingly embraces the shallow charms of celebrity, gives a pass when it comes to failings in the realm of marital fidelity, and lives comfortably with the notion that we are all driven, more or less, by greed and the desire for power over others. Mendelson, who is for gay rights, sexual equality, labor unions, and the strong regulation of business

and finance, is decidedly conservative when it comes to personal morality. She believes that while the right manages to effectively portray its opponents as socialist slackers, it claims a moral superiority it doesn't at all exhibit, lacking, as she says, moral compassion, one of the essential moral virtues. Provocative, inspiring, and deeply grounded, *The Good Life* shows that while the moral life is a hard road, the more of us who recognize that it is out there to be attempted, the better our culture will be.

thomas frank the conquest of cool: With Amusement for All LeRoy Ashby, 2006-05-12 *With Amusement for All* is a sweeping interpretative history of American popular culture. Providing deep insights into various individuals, events, and movements, LeRoy Ashby explores the development and influence of popular culture -- from minstrel shows to hip-hop, from the penny press to pulp magazines, from the NBA to NASCAR, and much in between. By placing the evolution of popular amusement in historical context, Ashby illuminates the complex ways in which popular culture both reflects and transforms American society. He demonstrates a recurring pattern in democratic culture by showing how groups and individuals on the cultural and social periphery have profoundly altered the nature of mainstream entertainment. The mainstream has repeatedly co-opted and sanitized marginal trends in a process that continues to shift the limits of acceptability. Ashby describes how social control and notions of public morality often vie with the bold, erotic, and sensational as entrepreneurs finesse the vagaries of the market and shape public appetites. Ashby argues that popular culture is indeed a democratic art, as it entertains the masses, provides opportunities for powerless and disadvantaged individuals to succeed, and responds to changing public hopes, fears, and desires. However, it has also served to reinforce prejudices, leading to discrimination and violence. Accordingly, the study of popular culture reveals the often dubious contours of the American dream. *With Amusement for All* never loses sight of pop culture's primary goal: the buying and selling of fun. Ironically, although popular culture has drawn an enormous variety of amusements from grassroots origins, the biggest winners are most often sprawling corporations with little connection to a movement's original innovators.

thomas frank the conquest of cool: The Church in Pluralist Society Cornelius J. Casey, Fáinche Ryan, 2019-11-30 Vatican II opened new pathways to engagement with societies shaped by modernity. Its project could be read as an attempt to interpret the stance of the church in relation to the whole project of modernity. The fundamental presumption of this collection of essays is that it is timely, indeed imperative, to keep alive the question of the church's self-understanding in its journey alongside the complex, often rebellious, always restless mind of the modern world. Cornelius J. Casey and Fáinche Ryan have assembled some of the most prominent commentators on ecclesiastical and social-political engagements from the fields of theology, political philosophy, social theory, and cultural criticism. The contributors present differing perspectives on the role of the church. Some argue that pluralism is here to stay. Others point out that the liberal pluralism of contemporary society is aggressively powered by global corporate consumerism. This book, with its variety of voices, explores these issues largely from within the Catholic tradition. The role of the church in a pluralist society is a narrative that is being written by many people at many different levels of the church. Contributors: J. Bryan Hehir, Terry Eagleton, Patrick J. Deneen, Hans Joas, William T. Cavanaugh, Massimo Faggioli, Fáinche Ryan, Patrick Riordan, and Cornelius J. Casey

thomas frank the conquest of cool: Repeating Ourselves Robert Fink, 2005-09-13 Where did musical minimalism come from—and what does it mean? In this significant revisionist account of minimalist music, Robert Fink connects repetitive music to the postwar evolution of an American mass consumer society. Abandoning the ingrained formalism of minimalist aesthetics, *Repeating Ourselves* considers the cultural significance of American repetitive music exemplified by composers such as Terry Riley, Steve Reich, and Philip Glass. Fink juxtaposes repetitive minimal music with 1970s disco; assesses it in relation to the selling structure of mass-media advertising campaigns; traces it back to the innovations in hi-fi technology that turned baroque concertos into ambient easy listening; and appraises its meditative kinship to the spiritual path of musical mastery offered by Japan's Suzuki Method of Talent Education.

thomas frank the conquest of cool: Better Than Well: American Medicine Meets the American Dream Carl Elliott, 2004-06-17 Elliott's absorbing account will make readers think again about the ways that science shapes our personal identities.—American Scientist Americans have always been the world's most anxiously enthusiastic consumers of enhancement technologies. Prozac, Viagra, and Botox injections are only the latest manifestations of a familiar pattern: enthusiastic adoption, public hand-wringing, an occasional congressional hearing, and calls for self-reliance. In a brilliant diagnosis of our reactions to self-improvement technologies, Carl Elliott asks questions that illuminate deep currents in the American character: Why do we feel uneasy about these drugs, procedures, and therapies even while we embrace them? Where do we draw the line between self and society? Why do we seek self-realization in ways so heavily influenced by cultural conformity?

thomas frank the conquest of cool: The Palgrave Handbook of Critical Music Industry Studies David Arditi, Ryan Nolan, 2024-09-28 The Handbook of Critical Music Industry Studies provides students and researchers with the means to think about how the performance, recording, and publishing of music could be if we do things differently. People are hungry for a more equitable music performance and recording system. The industry exudes patriarchy, white supremacy, cultural imperialism, ableism, and worker exploitation. In the context of gendered (e.g., #MeToo and #TimesUp) and racialized (e.g., Black Lives Matter) inequity, rampant precarity and casualization, and modes of musical dissemination that are changing faster than policymakers and regulatory bodies can keep up with, the timing for assembling such an interdisciplinary collection could not be more appropriate. Essays in this handbook will tackle power structures at root in the music industry and the academic study of the field. Topics covered include the politics of representation and power in the global music industries, the labor of music, music as media (including data and algorithmic culture), and copyright/intellectual property, among others. Chapter 35 is available open access under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License via link.springer.com.

thomas frank the conquest of cool: Hell on Wheels David Blanke, 2007 A fascinating look at the rise and growing popularity of the automobile during the first half of twentieth-century America, which brought with it a dark undercurrent. On the one hand, Americans embraced the newfound sense of freedom and mobility embodied by the automobile; on the other, they grew increasingly anxious about and fearful of the enormous threat that cars--and car accidents--posed to public safety.

thomas frank the conquest of cool: The Information Game in Democracy Dipankar Sinha, 2018-03-07 This book examines democracy and governance from the unconventional and largely under researched vantage point of information. It looks at the exclusionary informational dynamics in democracy and analyses the role of information capitalism, new technology, virtual networks, cyberspace and media. While emphasizing the foundational value of information as the 'source code' of modern societies the book explains how it is strategically maneuvered in technologies of governance in so-called established and credible democracies. It studies the neutralization and subversion as well as the complex, nuanced and multidimensional act of othering of people, who are supposed to be the repository of power in democracy and in whose interest the business of governance is expected to be conducted. The work highlights the challenges of technocratic interpretations, stunted public policy communication, hyped information society, cooption through the state-of-the-art capitalism, rhetoric of virtual networks and the often-unilateral agenda of mainstream media. A major intervention in understanding the nature of contemporary democracy and polity, this volume will be of great interest to scholars and researchers of politics, media, political communication and technology studies.

thomas frank the conquest of cool: American Fun John Beckman, 2014-11-04 Here is an animated and wonderfully engaging work of cultural history that lays out America's unruly past by describing the ways in which cutting loose has always been, and still is, an essential part of what it means to be an American. From the time the Pilgrims landed at Plymouth Rock, Americans have defied their stodgy rules and hierarchies with pranks, dances, stunts, and wild parties, shaping the

national character in profound and lasting ways. In the nation's earlier eras, revelers flouted Puritans, Patriots pranked Redcoats, slaves lampooned masters, and forty-niners bucked the saddles of an increasingly uptight middle class. In the twentieth century, fun-loving Americans celebrated this heritage and pushed it even further: flappers "barney-mugged" in "petting pantries," Yuppies showered the New York Stock Exchange with dollar bills, and B-boys invented hip-hop in a war zone in the Bronx. This is the surprising and revelatory history that John Beckman recounts in *American Fun*. Tying together captivating stories of Americans' "pursuit of happiness"—and distinguishing between real, risky fun and the bland amusements that paved the way for Hollywood, Disneyland, and Xbox—Beckman redefines American culture with a delightful and provocative thesis. (With black-and-white illustrations throughout.)

thomas frank the conquest of cool: In the Red Geremie Barmé, 1999 A leading observer of Chinese literature, society, and politics lifts the veil on the culture wars that have raged between officials and dissidents in the period before and after the June 4, 1989 Tiananmen Square massacre.

thomas frank the conquest of cool: In the Red Geremie R. Barmé, 2000-01-11 China, Geremie R. Barmé notes, has become one of the greatest writing and publishing nations on the planet, and both cultural activists and the state are embroiled in debates about the production and distribution of its cultural products. But what happens when global culture and Chinese capitalist-socialism meet in the marketplace? In *the Red* investigates what goes on behind the rhetoric of the official Chinese government and the dissident community and provides a unique perspective on mainstream Western perceptions of cultural developments, artistic freedom, and popular lifestyles in China today. Illustrated with fascinating cartoons and photographs and rich with facts, anecdotes, and events, *In the Red* exposes the complex relationship between official culture (produced, supported, or sanctioned by the government) and nonofficial or countercultures (especially among urban youths and dissidents). Two key and contrasting events loom large in this narrative: the 1989 protests that ended with the June 4 massacre and a nationwide purge, and Deng Xiaoping's 1992 tour of the south, in which he emphasized the need for radical economic reform. Although a level of political tolerance has evolved since the 1970s, Barmé sheds light on the significance of the intermittent denunciations of artists, ideas, and works.

thomas frank the conquest of cool: Confronting Consumption Thomas Princen, Michael Maniates, Ken Conca, 2002 Essays that offer ecological, social, and political perspectives on the problem of overconsumption.

thomas frank the conquest of cool: The Cultural Career of Coolness Ulla Haselstein, Irmela Hijiya-Kirschner, Catrin Gersdorf, Elena Giannoulis, 2013-10-10 Cool is a word of American English that has been integrated into the vocabulary of numerous languages around the globe. Today it is a term most often used in advertising trendy commodities, or, more generally, in promoting urban lifestyles in our postmodern age. But what is the history of the term "cool? When has coolness come to be associated with certain modes of contemporary self-fashioning? On what grounds do certain nations claim a privilege to be recognized as "cool? These are some of the questions that served as a starting-point for a comparative cultural inquiry which brought together specialists from American Studies and Japanese Studies, but also from Classics, Philosophy and Sociology. The conceptual grid of the volume can be described as follows: (1) Coolness is a metaphorical term for affect-control. It is tied in with cultural discourses on the emotions and the norms of their public display, and with gendered cultural practices of subjectivity. (2) In the course of the cultural transformations of modernity, the term acquired new importance as a concept referring to practices of individual, ethnic, and national difference. (3) Depending on cultural context, coolness is defined in terms of aesthetic detachment and self-irony, of withdrawal, dissidence and even latent rebellion. (4) Coolness often carries undertones of ambivalence. The situational adequacy of cool behavior becomes an issue for contending ethical and aesthetic discourses since an ethical ideal of self-control and a strategy of performing self-control are inextricably intertwined. (5) In literature and film, coolness as a character trait is portrayed as a personal strength, as a lack of emotion, as an effect of trauma, as a mask for suffering or rage, as

precious behavior, or as savvy. This wide spectrum is significant: artistic productions offer valid insights into contradictions of cultural discourses on affect-control. (6) American and Japanese cultural productions show that twentieth-century notions of coolness hybridize different cultural traditions of affect-control.

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