



## Critical Theory: A Very Short Introduction

By Stephen Eric Bronner

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Critical Theory emerged in the 1920s from the work of the Frankfurt School, the circle of German-Jewish academics who sought to diagnose-and, if at all possible, cure-the ills of society, particularly fascism and capitalism. In this book, Stephen Eric Bronner provides sketches of leading representatives of the critical tradition (such as George Lukács and Ernst Bloch, Theodor Adorno and Walter Benjamin, Herbert Marcuse and Jurgen Habermas) as well as many of its seminal texts and empirical investigations. This *Very Short Introduction* sheds light on the cluster of concepts and themes that set critical theory apart from its more traditional philosophical competitors. Bronner explains and discusses concepts such as method and agency, alienation and reification, the culture industry and repressive tolerance, non-identity and utopia. He argues for the introduction of new categories and perspectives for illuminating the obstacles to progressive change and focusing upon hidden transformative possibilities. Only a critique of critical theory can render it salient for a new age. That is precisely what this very short introduction provides.

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#### Review

"This is the only book of its kind: it's a readable, yet expertly crafted, tour through the Frankfurt School, along with a forceful account of why the Frankfurt School of Critical Theory still matters a decade into the new millennium. I can't recommend it highly enough." --Jeffrey T. Nealon, professor of English, Penn State University; co-editor of *Rethinking the Frankfurt School*

"The book's forthright critique and call to transformation are a breath of fresh air."-- Joan Braune, *Philosophy in Review*

#### About the Author

**Stephen Eric Bronner** is Distinguished Professor of Political Science and Director for Global Relations at the Center for the Study of Genocide and Human Rights, Rutgers University.

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