

Critical Theory, Critical Ethnography, Critical Conditions: Considerations of Postcritical Ethnography

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Hegel remarks somewhere that all facts and personages of great importance in world history occur, as it were, twice. He forgot to add: the first as tragedy, the second as farce. . . .

Men make their own history, but they do not make it just as they please; they do not make it under circumstances chosen by themselves, but under circumstances directly encountered, given and transmitted from the past. The tradition of all the dead generations weighs like a nightmare on the brain of the living. And just when they seem engaged in revolutionizing themselves and things, in creating something that has never yet existed, precisely in such periods of revolutionary crisis they anxiously conjure up the spirits of the past to their service and borrow from them names, battle-cries and costumes in order to present the new scene of world history in this time-honored disguise and this borrowed language.

—Karl Marx (The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonapart)

PROLEGOMENON: CRITICAL CONDITIONS

During the past few years there have emerged a plethora of studies in which is borrowed the rhetoric, if not always the conceptual understandings, of postpositivism, poststructuralism and postmodernism in framing the object of study. In

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