Chapter 1

# Introduction

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**THIS BOOK COLLECTS REPRESENTATIVE** essays in cultural studies as an introduction to this increasingly popular field of study. Yet, as will become clearer after the essays have been read, cultural studies is not an academic discipline quite like others. It possesses neither a well-defined methodology nor clearly demarcated fields for investigation. Cultural studies is, of course, the study of culture, or, more particularly, the study of *contemporary culture*. But this does not take us very far. Even assuming that we know precisely what "contemporary culture" is, it can be analyzed in many ways – sociologically, for instance, by "objectively" describing its institutions and functions as if they belong to a large, regulated system; or economically, by describing the effects of investment and marketing on cultural production. More traditionally, it can be studied "critically" by celebrating either large forms (like literature) or specific texts or images (like *Waiting for Godot* or an episode of *Cheers*). The question remains: does cultural studies bring its own orientation to these established forms of analysis?

There is no easy answer, but to introduce the forms of analysis developed by the discipline we can point to two features that characterized it when it first appeared in Great Britain in the 1950s. It concentrated on "subjectivity" which means that it studied culture in relation to individual lives, breaking with social scientific positivism or "objectivism." The book that is often said to inaugurate the subject, Richard Hoggart's *The Uses of Literacy* (1957), is a very personal work: it describes changes in working-class life in postwar Britain through Hoggart's own experiences. Hoggart wanted to show how those changes affected an individual's "whole way of life." For him culture was an important category because it helps us recognize that one life-practice (like reading) cannot be torn out of a large network constituted by many other life-practices – working, sexual orientation, family life, say.

The second distinguishing characteristic of early cultural studies was that it was an engaged form of analysis. Early cultural studies did not flinch from the fact that societies are structured unequally, that individuals are not all born with the same access to education, money, health care etc., and it worked in the interests of those who have least resources. In this it differed not only from the (apparently) objective social sciences but from the older forms of cultural criticism, especially literary criticism, which considered political questions as being of peripheral relevance to the appreciation of culture. For cultural studies, "culture" was not an abbreviation of a "high culture" assumed to have constant value across time and space. Another founding text of cultural studies, Raymond Williams's *Culture and Society, 1780–1950* (1958), criticized the consequences of uncoupling "culture" from "society," and "high culture" from "culture as a whole way of life," although Williams also conceded that it was through this uncoupling that modern culture acquires its particular energy, charm and capacity to inform.

These two defining features of early cultural studies were closely connected because it is at the level of the individual life that the cultural effects of social inequality are most apparent. Most individuals aspire and struggle the greater part of their lives and it is easier to forget this if one is just interpreting texts rather than thinking about reading as a life-practice, for instance. Cultural studies insists that one cannot just ignore – or accept – division and struggle. We can ask, how did an engaged discipline of this kind emerge within higher education? This is the question that lets us approach cultural studies most effectively, so let us turn to the historical conditions which made the discipline possible.

## A brief history of cultural studies

Cultural studies appeared as a field of study in Great Britain in the 1950s out of Leavisism, a form of literary studies named after F. R. Leavis, its most prominent member. Leavisism was an attempt to re-disseminate what is now commonly called, after Pierre Bourdieu, "cultural capital" – though this is not how it saw itself. Leavis wanted to use the educational system to distribute literary knowledge and appreciation more widely. To achieve this, the Leavisites argued for a very restricted canon, discarding modern experimental works like those of James Joyce or Virginia Woolf, for instance. Instead they primarily celebrated works directed towards developing the moral sensibility of readers such as the works of Jane Austen, Alexander Pope or George Eliot – the "great tradition." Leavisites fiercely insisted that culture was not simply a leisure activity; reading "the great tradition" was, rather, a means of forming mature individuals with a concrete and balanced sense of "life." And the main threat to this sense of life came from the pleasure offered by so-called "mass culture." In this, Leavisism was very much in tune with what cultural studies has come to call the "social-democratic power bloc" which dominated postwar Britain. After the war, Britain was administered by a sequence of governments that intervened in the private sector both socially (in areas like health and housing) and culturally (in education and the arts). When the

education system expanded radically through the 1950s and 1960s, it turned to Leavisism to form citizens' sensibilities.

Cultural studies developed out of Leavisism through Hoggart and Williams, whose writings were taken up in secondary schools and tertiary colleges soon after they were written. Both came from working-class families; both had worked as teachers in post-compulsory education though, importantly, in workers' education. Thus they experienced Leavisism ambivalently. On the one hand, they accepted that its canonical texts were richer than contemporary so-called "mass culture" and that culture ought to be measured in terms of its capacity to deepen and widen experiences; on the other, they recognized that Leavisism at worst erased, and at the very least did not fully come into contact with, the communal forms of life into which they had been born. So Hoggart's *The Uses of Literacy* in particular is a schizophrenic book. Its first half contains a heartfelt evocation of traditional industrial working-class communities, relatively untouched by commercial culture and educational institutions, while its second half mounts a practical-critical attack on modern mass culture. When Hoggart went on to found the Birmingham Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies (henceforth CCCS), a postgraduate and research institute designed to further his work, it began by having to deal with this tension.

Hoggart was able to believe that the celebration of old high culture could fit alongside an evocation of the culture of his youth because both stood apart from contemporary commercial popular culture and, so, were under threat. The threat to, and final disappearance of, traditional British working-class life needs to be considered at a little length because it was crucial for the early development of cultural studies. (See Laing 1986 for a good account of this history.) Before the war, since the early 1920s, the British economy had been dominated by unemployment – there were never fewer than a million people unemployed over the period. This was the background of Hoggart's "traditional" working class. By the end of the 1940s, however, Britain had a full employment economy, and by the end of the 1950s further shifts in the British economy were well under way. Jobs were moving into the state sector (in 1955 government expenditure had been 36.6 per cent of GDP as against 52.2 per cent in 1967 [K. Robbins 1983: 369]); small plants were being replaced by larger ones using "Fordist" production techniques – that is, simplifying workers' tasks on assembly lines – which meant that labor became increasingly deskilled (between 1951 and 1973 the percentage of the workforce working in plants which employed over 1500 people increased by 50 per cent [Wright 1979: 40]). Simultaneously, the differential between lower-paid white-collar and blue-collar workers was decreasing, and large-scale immigration from the colonies during the 1950s meant that many indigenous workers were no longer called upon to take the least desirable jobs. Workers, then, were becoming increasingly "affluent" (to use a media term of the time) at least in so far as they were increasingly able to buy consumer goods like cars (numbers of which increased fivefold between 1950 and 1975), clothing, washing machines, refrigerators, record players, telephone services (they increased fourfold between 1945 and 1970) and, most important of all, television sets (commercial television did not become widely available in Britain until 1957, the year Hoggart's

book was published). Finally the large state rehousing program, compulsory national service in the army (which ended in 1958) and, to a lesser extent, educational reform making higher education available to a fraction of the working class also helped to break up the culture that Hoggart described.

As the old working-class communal life fragmented, the cultural studies which followed Hoggart's *The Uses of Literacy* developed in two main ways. The old notion of culture as a whole way of life became increasingly difficult to sustain: attention moved from locally produced and often long-standing cultural forms (pub life, group-singing, pigeon-fancying, attitudes to "our mum," dances, holidays at camps, and close-by seaside resorts etc.) to culture as organized from afar – both by the state through its educational system, and by what Theodor Adorno and Max Horkheimer (in the essay included here) called the "culture industry," that is, highly developed music, film, and broadcasting businesses. This shift of focus could lead to a revision of older paradigms, as when Stuart Hall and Paddy Whannel in *The Popular Arts* (1964) gave the kind of status and attention reserved by the Leavisites for canonical literature to new forms (such as jazz and film) while devaluing others (especially television and rock music). Much more importantly, however, the logic by which culture was set apart from politics, already examined by Raymond Williams, was overturned. The historian E. P. Thompson, in his seminal book *The Making of the English Working Class* (1968) and elsewhere, had pointed out that the identity of the working class as working class had always had a strongly political and conflictual component – that identity was not just a matter of particular cultural interests and values. But the fragmentation of the old proletarian culture meant that a politics based on a strong working-class identity was less and less significant: people decreasingly identified themselves as workers (see Roberts *et al.* 1977). It was in this context that cultural studies theorists began seriously to explore culture's own political function and to offer a critique of the social democratic power bloc which was drawing power into the state. From the early 1970s, culture came to be regarded as a form of "hegemony" – a word associated with Antonio Gramsci, an Italian Marxist of the 1920s and 1930s. "Hegemony" is a term to describe relations of domination which are not visible as such. It involves not coercion but consent on the part of the dominated (or "subaltern"). Gramsci himself elaborated the concept to explain why Mussolini's fascism was so popular even though fascism curtailed the liberty of most Italians. For him, hegemonic forces constantly alter their content as social and cultural conditions change: they are improvised and negotiable, so that counter-hegemonic strategies must also be constantly revised. In the same spirit, if somewhat less subtly, culture could also be seen as what Michel Foucault was beginning to think of as a form of "governmentality," that is, a means to produce conforming or "docile" citizens, most of all through the education system.

As culture was thought about less as an expression of local communal lives and more as an apparatus within a large system of domination, cultural studies offered critiques of culture's hegemonic effects. At first such critique leant heavily on forms of semiotic analysis (represented in this collection in a sophisticated

form by Stuart Hall's and James Clifford's essays). This meant in effect that culture was broken down into discrete messages, "signifying practices" or "discourses" which were distributed by particular institutions and media. To take a rather simplified example: a semiotic analysis of cigarette-smoking among workers would analyze smoking not as a life-practice, that is, in terms of its importance as a rite of passage, its use in structuring the flow of time and so on, but in terms of its being a signifier produced by images like the "Marlboro Man," which connote masculinity, freedom and transcendence of work-a-day life. Semiotics' capacity to extend its analysis beyond particular texts or signs is limited: it remained an analysis of "codings" and "recodings" not of uses, practices or feelings (though Stuart Hall's essay included here, which emphasized the concept "decoding," has been influential because it articulates relations between uses and meanings).

It would be wrong to insist too strongly on the purity of, and opposition between, what were called the "culturalist" (emphasizing forms of life) and "structuralist" (or semiotic) strands within the cultural studies of the period. But in the 1970s, a hard form of structuralism did emerge, one that called upon the work of Louis Althusser, backed up by psychoanalytic notions developed by Jacques Lacan. For this theory, individuals were constructs of ideology, where ideology means not beliefs we disapprove of (as in "racist ideology") but the set of discourses and images which constitute the most widespread knowledge and values – "common sense." Ideology, so the argument went, is required so that the state and capitalism can reproduce themselves without the threat of revolution. Here, as for Hoggart and Williams, the state's claim to neutrality is false, but this time for more classically Marxist reasons – because it protects the exploitative "relations of production" (i.e., class differences) necessary to capitalism. For Althusser, dominant ideology turned what was in fact political, partial and open to change into something seemingly "natural," universal and eternal. However, dominant ideology is not limited to politics or economics so, though it may present a particular view of economic relations (as in the common idea that trade unionism is a brake on economic competitiveness), its primary role is to construct an imaginary picture of civil life, especially the nuclear family as natural and, most of all, each individual as "unique" and "free." Ideology fragments real connections and inter-dependencies, producing a picture of social relations which overemphasizes individual freedom and autonomy. For Althusser, individuals can be sucked into ideology so easily because it helps them make sense of the world, to enter the "symbolic order" and ascribe power to themselves. They identify with ideology because they see themselves pictured as independent and strong in it – as an adolescent boy (or, indeed, adult) might picture himself, in a fantasy, as the Marlboro Man. Dominant social values are internalized through this kind of identification. At this point, psychoanalysis was called upon to gird the theory. Once again to state the argument very simply: individuals see themselves mirrored in dominant ideology and identify with it as a way of "taking the father's place" in a process which is fuelled by the "fear of castration," that is, anxieties that true autonomy or unique individuality can never be reached. So ideology provides a false resolution to private, familial tensions, a resolution that is, for Lacan if not

for Althusser, finally made possible by the fact that no symbolic structure can offer final meaning or security. Its lure is always imaginary: the promise of a full "I-ness" which can exist only where "I am not."

But politico-psychoanalytical structuralism of this kind never made as much headway in cultural studies as it did in film studies, say. It did not concede enough space to the capacity of the individual or community to act on the world on their own terms, to generate their own meanings and effects. It was too theoretical in the sense that it offered truths which took little or no account of local differences; indeed, its claims to be scientifically true lacked support from scientific method. And it did not pay enough heed to the actual techniques and practices by which individuals form themselves and their lives. But another strand of semiotic thought was able to enter the culturalist tradition with more vigor. This emphasized the concept of polysemy. "Polysemy" is a technical word for the way in which a particular signifier always has more than one meaning, because "meaning" is an effect of differences within a larger system. This time the argument went: it is because meanings are produced not referentially (by pointing to specific objects in the world) but by one sign's difference from another, that signs are polysemous. One sign can always both be replaced by another (in what is called the "paradigmatic" relation), and enter a sequence of other signs (the "syntagmatic" relation). More loosely, a sign can "connote" any number of others: the Marlboro Man, for instance, connoting "toughness" in one context and "cancer" in another.

The notion of polysemy remains limited in that it still works at the level of individual signs as discrete signifying units. It did, however, lead to more dynamic and complex theoretical concepts which help us to describe how cultural products may be combined with new elements to produce different effects in different situations. In this way, cultural production is conceived of as a process of "hybridization," "re-production," and "negotiation." For instance, the Marlboro Man might be made into a shiny, hard-edged polythene sculpture a la Jeff Koons to achieve a postmodern effect in an expensive Manhattan apartment; an ad using the image might be cut out of the magazine and used to furnish a poor dwelling in Lagos as an image of Western affluence and liberty, or parodied on a CD or album cover. Concepts like hybridization, as they developed out of the notion of "polysemy," return us to a renewed culturalism because they enable us to see how particular individuals and communities can actively create new meanings from signs and cultural products which come from afar. Yet a concept like "hybridization" still does not account for the way that the meanings of particular signifiers or texts in a particular situation are, in part, ordered by material interests and power relations. The tobacco industry, the medical profession and a certain stream within the women's movement might *struggle* over the meaning of "Marlboro Man" for political and commercial reasons: the first in order to sell more product; the second to promote health, as well as their own status and earning power; the last to reject an insensitive mode of masculinity. Cultural studies has been, as we might expect, most interested in how groups with least power practically develop their own readings of, and uses for, cultural products – in fun, in resistance, or to articulate their own identity.

This brief historical account of cultural studies' key concepts has not focused on particular works at particular dates. The richness of the research promoted by the CCCS during the 1970s makes that research impossible adequately to represent here. But three particularly influential texts – Paul Willis's *Learning to Labour* (1977), David Morley's *The "Nationwide" Audience* (1980) and Stuart Hall and Tony Jefferson's *Resistance through Rituals: Youth Subcultures in Postwar Britain* (1976), each of which was written from a different space in the spectrum thrown open by the history I have just sketched – can rewardingly be described. First, Paul Willis's *Learning to Labour.* Willis used participant observer techniques to describe a group of disaffected boys in a working-class school (the "lads"). He showed how they create a "counter-school culture" in which they reject the official logic which legitimizes their education, that is, "you obey the teachers because they teach you knowledge which will help you get a better job." They reject this exchange for several reasons: partly because "better jobs" (i.e., low-paid white-collar or apprentice jobs as against unskilled laboring jobs) involve moving out of the traditions of mateship, hard drinking, excitement and strong male-bonding passed down in their families; partly because those jobs were not necessarily "better" financially at least in the short and medium term, and didn't require the kind of knowledge on offer at school anyway; and partly because the lads had a strong sense that the economic system ultimately required the exploitation of some people's labor power so that the "shit jobs" they would take were in fact necessary rather than worthless. Willis's work remains close to Hoggart's in that it involves a certain celebration of traditional working-class culture and it shows how that culture contains a quite accurate political understanding of the conditions of life, even though the lads have little conventional class-consciousness and absolutely no interest in formal political institutions. What is striking about the study, though, is how important both sexism and racism remain to this segment of British working-class culture. Unfortunately, Willis does not address this head-on.

Whereas Willis's *Learning to Labour* is a culturalist book in the traditional sense, David Morley's *The "Nationwide" Audience* is one of the first ethnographic studies not of a community (defined in terms of locale and class) but of an audience (defined as a group of viewers or readers), in this case the audience of *Nationwide,* a BBC news-magazine program widely watched through the late 1960s and 1970s, and which broadcasted mainly local, rather than national or international, stories, somewhat like a US breakfast show. Morley's study was ethnographic in that he did not simply analyze the program, he organized open-ended group discussions between viewers, with each group from a homogeneous class or gender or work background (trade unionists, managers, students etc.). Indeed his book begins by contesting that image of a large audience as a "mass" which had often been assumed by earlier sociological theorists of the media. His ethnographic approach was all the more a break within cultural studies work on media because, along with Charlotte Brunsdon, he had offered a conventional semiotic "ideology-critique" of the program in an earlier study, *Everyday Television: "Nationwide."* There, he and Brunsdon had argued that the program presented an image of the world in which gender, class and ethnic differences were massively downgraded, and which assumed that "we"

(the program's implied audience) possess a shared "common sense" based on a practical view of the world, as against "intellectual," political or culturally adventurous views. The program's style or "mode of address" was anchored in authoritarian but chatty presenters who embodied its values.

For Morley the textualist approach began to seem limited because it could not fully deal with polysemy. He had to go out into the field to discover what people actually thought about *Nationwide.* But this does not mean that, for him, the program can be interpreted anyhow, precisely because its ideological orientation – that "everyday life" view of the world – is the code which the program itself presents as "preferred." To use Stuart Hall's phrase, the program is "structured in dominance" because it skews and restricts its audience's possibilities for interpreting the material it claims to present without bias. Though viewers need not accept the preferred code, they must respond to it in some way. Morley divides the possibilities of decoding *Nationwide* into three categories: first, an acceptance of the preferred reading, second, flat opposition to it (mainly, as it turned out, by being extremely bored by it); and third, negotiation with it. His fieldwork findings were somewhat unexpected, though: there was no clear correlation between the socio-cultural position of the groups and their response to the program although those, like a group of Caribbean young women, furthest away from the common sense "we" embodied in the white (and mainly male) presenters, were least able to respond to it. Also some groups (especially students and trainee managers) understood that the program was biased (or "structured in dominance") but still accepted its dominant code. Knowing how it worked, not being "cultural dupes," did not mean refusal of its values. And last, those groups with least social and cultural capital – like the Caribbean women – found the program too distant from their own lives, preferring less newsy programs with more "human" stories – like those transmitted by the more market-orientated ITV companies. Though Morley makes little of it, for these groups it was the market rather than the state (through the state-funded BBC) that provided them with what they wanted. In a paradox that helps us understand certain problems at work at the heart of the social-democratic power bloc, those who are most vulnerable to market forces respond most positively to its cultural products.

The third, and earliest, book, *Resistance through Rituals: Youth Subcultures in Postwar Britain,* is a collection of essays, each by different authors, each of which comes to grips with the fragmentation of traditional working-class culture in a different way. In general, the authors accepted that the working class was being split: one section being drawn into skilled jobs that would enable them to live like certain elements of the middle classes, another into deskilled, low-status and often service jobs. However, they argued that jobs of this latter kind were especially taken by disadvantaged youth, who, inheriting neither a strong sense of communal identity nor values transmitted across generations in families, develop subcultures. These subcultures negotiate with, and hybridize certain hegemonic cultural forms as modes of expression and opposition. Dick Hebdige (in an earlier essay than the one included here), for instance, shows how the Mods fetishized style itself as an element of life, borrowing elements from fashions, old and new, turning cultural consumption (the crucial element in the life-practices of

the "affluent" worker) to their own ends. These subcultures are much more creative than Willis's lads or Morley's audience, and, at least in some cases, they use commodities, the primary products of the system that disadvantages them, as forms of resistance and grounds on which to construct a communal identity. Yet while *Learning to Labour* allowed the "lads'" voices a great deal of space in the text, and Morley too transcribed actual voices, *Resistance through Rituals* is primarily concerned to develop a *theory* of hegemony under the conditions it encounters. This more theoretical approach, characteristic of an earlier phase of cultural studies, has its limits. It means that the writers find resistance to "hegemony" in subcultural styles rather too easily. The book does not emphasize the way in which newly developed "youth markets" influenced and promoted subcultural systems – especially in the music and fashion businesses. It also underestimates the impact of the education system which streamed children after eleven and kept them at school until they were fifteen (sixteen after 1972), generating intense inter-generational bondings unknown before the war. Neither are the Mods, Teds, Hippies and so on seen as trying to have fun or to construct a mode of life for themselves; they are primarily viewed as being engaged in symbolic struggle with the larger social system. But, as we are about to see, categories like "struggle" and resistance against the "dominant" become increasingly difficult for cultural studies to sustain.

Despite their use of semiotic and Gramscian concepts, *Learning to Labour, The "Nationwide" Audience and Resistance through Rituals* remain within the tradition established by Hoggart's *The Uses of Literacy.* In the late 1970s things changed. Cultural studies came increasingly under the influence of forms of thought associated with French theorists, in particular Pierre Bourdieu, Michel de Certeau and Michel Foucault. I will present their work in a general model – though it is important to remember that this model is an abstraction and presents no specific individual's work.

For French theory, individuals live in a setting constituted by various institutions, or what we can call, following Bourdieu, "fields" – families, work, peer groups, educational apparatuses, political parties, and so on. Each field takes a particular material form, most having a characteristic space and time attached to them (the private home for family life and most media reception, weekdays for work etc.). The relation of space to social fields is the theme of the essays by Foucault and Edward Soja collected here. Each field is future-directed and contains its own "imaginary," its own promise and image of satisfaction and success, its own possibilities for pleasure. Family life, for instance, depends upon images of the perfect family (mum, dad and a newborn baby, say) and members may feel pleasure when they reproduce that image, even if only for a moment. This "imaginary" *is* imaginary because of the limits and scarcities which organize fields – family life is constrained by finances, aging and intergenerational conflict, for example. Because of these limits too, fields are suffused by power relations and tend to be structured hierarchically. After all, not everyone can have equal experience, knowledge, money or authority. Very hierarchical fields (like schools

and offices) are most disciplined and rationalized: in them all activities are directed to a fixed purpose – education in a school, profit in a business. Further, each field has characteristic signifying practices more or less tightly attached to it: the same person may well talk, walk and dress differently at school (or work) to the way they do in the family, and differently again when socializing with their peers. These signifying practices are structured through scarcity as well. Dick Hebdige has pointed out that punks worked on their body rather than consumption as a means of expression because it was one of the few materials that they could afford.

Each field also contains a variety of styles of belonging: one can be this kind of student or that kind, for instance, a casual filmgoer or a film buff. These fields, then, contain choices of "self-formation" or what Foucault called "self-government," though in highly disciplined and rationalized fields like schools or businesses these choices are more directed from above than in others. Likewise individuals can work out strategies by which to advance in a field or to reconcile themselves to their current position: Bourdieu famously showed how members of the working class, unable to afford certain goods or tastes, made a virtue of necessity by saying that they didn't like them anyway. On the other hand, possibilities exist for "transgressive" undermining or "festive" overturning of routines and hierarchies through passive resistance, ironical mimicry, symbolic inversion, orgiastic letting-go, even daydreaming – as the essays by Richard Dyer, Allon White and Peter Stallybrass, and Michel de Certeau here show. Especially in societies where hierarchies in many fields are rigid, these forms of transgression may themselves become institutionalized – as in Brazil today with its carnival samba schools, or early capitalist Europe with its pantomimes. Finally, each field, to some degree, both defines itself against and is suffused by others: for instance, relations in the workplace may be modeled on the family ("paternalism") though the family is simultaneously a "haven" from work. However, highly rationalized fields (like schools and factories) interact least directly with other fields – they form their own "world." None the less it is where fields are most rationalized and disciplined that positions held in one internal hierarchy may be converted into a position held in another. Reaching the "top" of the education system helps you start "higher" in the world of work.

What about subjectivity in this schema? The important point is that actual individuals are not "subjects" wholly positioned by the system these fields constitute or the strategies the fields provide. There are several reasons for this: in theory at least individuals can always make choices which take into account, and thus avoid, the forces they know to be positioning them. Also, because human beings exist as "embodied social subjects" (as Teresa de Lauretis puts it in her essay in this volume), an individual's relation to the fields continually incorporates and shifts under the impact of contingent givens (skin color, physical appearance and so on) and material events (weather, illness, technological breakdowns and so on) which are not simply determinants of social or cultural forces. Third, language itself intervenes between the individual and the socio-cultural fields that construct his or her positions. Our sense of uniqueness is grounded on our sense

that we can say what we like – at least to ourselves – and we have that sense because language is both a resource that costs nothing (a basic but often ignored point) and complex enough to make possible an infinite number of individual speech acts. As deconstructive theorists have pointed out, this is true because of, rather than despite, the fact that private discourse always comes from somewhere else and its meanings cannot be wholly mastered by those who use it. Last, given that individuals live first, in symbolic structures which let them (within limits) speak for themselves; second, in bodies that are their own but not wholly under control; third, in a temporality which flows towards the unknowable and uncontainable, they may find in themselves "deep" selves which cannot be reduced either to the managerial self that chooses styles, strategies, and techniques of self-formation or to the subject positioned by external fields and discourses. Modern Western culture in particular has given a great deal of value to this form of subjectivity, and cultural studies' insistence that subjectivity primarily consists of practices and strategies has been targeted against it.

The French model breaks from earlier forms of cultural studies. To begin with, it downgrades the way that economic scarcities operate systematically across *many* fields. Because it conceives of social fields as "partially autonomous," the French model cannot affirm a central agency that might direct a number of fields to provide a more equitable distribution of resources. In this, it is remote from traditional social-democratic politics. Instead there is a drift to affirm both culture's utopian force and those forms of resistance (such as de Certeau's "walking in the city" in this collection) possible only in the cracks and gaps of the larger, apparently impregnable, system. Somewhat paradoxically, that system is impregnable just because it is less centered on an isolatable and "dominant" set of institutions or ideology. Why did cultural studies accept relatively depoliticized analyses of this kind? The reasons are to be found in the decline of the social-democratic power bloc from the mid-1970s onwards which made possible the so-called "new right's" emergence – in the US under Ronald Reagan (1981) and in the UK under Margaret Thatcher (1979). Furthermore, it was in the context of the new right's emergence that (as we shall see), after absorbing French theory, the discipline orientated itself towards what Cornel West in his essay here calls the "culture of difference" and became a genuinely global movement.

The new right (or "Thatcherism" as I shall often call it, following Stuart Hall) countered the social democrats by arguing, first, that the state should intervene in citizens' lives to the minimum possible extent so that market forces can structure as many social relations and exchanges as possible, and, next, that internal differences (especially between classes, ethnic groups, and genders) were threats to national unity. The nation was defined in terms of traditional and popular national-cultural images of "Englishness" in Thatcher's case and "Americanness" in Reagan's. This was a politics that appealed at least as much to the "affluent worker" as to traditional Conservative (in the US, Republican) voters. As long ago as 1957 Richard Hoggart had noted how, with increased spending power, the working class were increasingly evaluating the world in economic, rather than

class, terms. Thatcherism was also the product of the social-democratic interventionist state's failure to manage the economy without playing inflation off against unemployment, a failure which itself followed increasing economic globalization (especially of the financial sector) and the appearance of economic powers outside the West. (The most prominent events in the process of economic globalization were the 1971 end of the old Bretton Woods agreement by which all major currencies had been pegged against the US dollar; the 1973–4 OPEC cartel; the radical increase of Japanese competitiveness in key consumer-durable markets; the increased movement of Western manufacturing "off-shore" through the 1970s and 1980s, and the immense increase of capacity for information about commodity and money markets to be disseminated quickly and globally.) In these terms, Thatcherism is the political reflex of an affluent but threatened first-world society in a postcolonial world order. As Stuart Hall pointed out (Hall 1988), it was able to counter a widespread sense of fragility by taking advantage of a mass of "popular knowledge" which put the family, respectability, hard work, "practicality," and order first – a "popular knowledge" which, as Morley demonstrated, had been, for years, transmitted in shows like *Nationwide* and its US equivalents. At this level at least, Thatcherism does not draw on the values of traditional high culture; instead it appeals to the social imaginary produced by the market-orientated media.

Thatcherism contains an internal contradiction – between its economic rationalism and its consensual cultural nationalism. The more the market is freed from state intervention and trade and finance cross national boundaries, the more the nation will be exposed to foreign influences and the greater the gap between rich and poor. Thatcherite appeals to popular values can be seen as an attempt to overcome this tension. In particular, the new right gives the family extraordinary value and aura just because a society organized by market forces is one in which economic life expectations are particularly insecure (as well as one in which, for some, rewards are large and life exciting). In the same way, a homogeneous image of national culture is celebrated and enforced to counter the dangers posed by the increasingly global nature of economic exchanges and widening national, economic divisions. The new right image of a monoculture and hard-working family life, organized through traditional gender roles, requires a devaluation not just of other nations and their cultural identities but of "enemies within": those who are "other" racially, sexually, intellectually. It was in this situation that the Birmingham school focused more intensely, on the one hand, on feminist work (as by Charlotte Brunsdon, Angela McRobbie, and Dorothy Hobson) as well as on the analysis of racism and a counter-celebration of black cultures (most painstakingly in Paul Gilroy's *There Ain't No Black in the Union Jack,* 1987); and, on the other hand, to a more straightforward critique of Thatcherism itself, as in the essays collected in Stuart Hall's *The Hard Road to Renewal* (1988) as well as the earlier collectively written *Policing the Crisis* (1979). This last book latches on to the mechanisms by which law-and-order issues and racism were gaining ground in the last days of the social-democratic power bloc, convincingly demonstrating that law-and-order panics in Britain in the 1970s were produced by tacit alliances between the media and the police – being, in that sense, organized.

As cultural studies responded to the conditions surrounding the new right's emergence, the discipline became internationalized. The main reasons for this are simple: analyses of racism, sexism, and the culture industry possessed a wider appeal than analysis of the British working-class culture, particularly in the US or Australia ("new world" states which fancied themselves relatively "classless" societies). But, when cultural studies gave up its Marxian and classist approach, it began to approach, if in a different spirit and register, certain Thatcherite themes. After all, both movements were strongly anti-statist; both affirmed, within limits, a decentered view of social organization. What were the analogies between Thatcherism and cultural studies, politically so opposed to one another? Perhaps most importantly, where new-right discourse argued that no state institution could transcend particular interests and legitimately control individual choices best represented in the market, cultural studies criticized the notion that any theory could stand outside the field it claimed to tell the truth about as if it were a "metadiscourse." For French theory, "theory" itself was a discursive practice produced in a particular field with particular power effects: it offers, for instance, the ability rhetorically to master other people's values and "common sense." That there could be no transcendental "meta-discourse" was a crucial thesis in what is sometimes also called theoretical "postmodernism" – the end of any appeal to those "grand narratives" by which institutions and discourses bearing the modernizing values of universal liberty, equality, and progress were affirmed in the name of a transhistorical, meta-discursive subject. (See the essay by Lyotard below for a description of postmodernism.)

The new mode of cultural studies no longer concentrated on reading culture as primarily directed against the state. Mainly under the impact of new feminist work at first, it began to affirm "other" ways of life on their own terms. Emphasis shifted from communities positioned against large power blocs and bound together as classes or subcultures to ethnic and women's groups committed to maintaining and elaborating autonomous values, identities, and ethics. This moment in cultural studies pictured society as much more decentered than either the CCCS had in its earliest work or than the French theorists had, as they focused on discipline, rationalization, and institutional fields. However, an immediate problem confronted this new model as it broke society down into fractions united by sexuality, gender, or ethnicity: how to conceive of relations between these dispersed communities? Two solutions were offered, both rather utopian and future-directed: first, new "rainbow" alliances and cross-identifications could be worked out for particular and provisional social or "micro-political" ends; second, relations between these groups would be "dialogic" – a concept borrowed from Mikhail Bakhtin and in which the otherness of each interacting participant remains intact. Whatever the effectiveness of these solutions, celebrations of the "other" sounded a powerful oppositional note where governments attempted to encourage or enforce monoculturalism and traditional gender models on the nation. None the less the affirmation of "otherness" and "difference" in what is sometimes called a "politics of survival" belongs to a looser, more pluralistic and postmodern, conceptual model than those which insist that capitalism and the

free market produce interests that are *structurally* unequal and in conflict with each other. Unlike social-democratic thought, the new cultural studies no longer aimed at a radical transfiguration of the whole system of social fields.

Cultural studies' affirmation of otherness and negation of meta-discourse must be understood also in terms of the accelerated globalizing of cultural production and distribution from the 1970s on. This is the theme of the essay by Arjun Appadurai (as well as, less explicitly, those by Gayatri Spivak and Hamid Naficy) in this volume, and, at the very least, they show how multidirectional the process of "globalization" has been. In some areas, it has involved a breakdown of distinctions between "first" and "third" world nations: new technologies (such as satellite broadcasting) produced international audiences as for Bob Geldof's "LiveAid" 1985 concert in the emergence of what might be called the "global popular" while, to similar ends, and on the back of the global popular, non-governmental organizations like Greenpeace established new transnational networks and interfaces. The globalization of the media had one especially important consequence: it accelerated the concentration of the cultural industry largely because the global market requires increased investment in marketing and distribution. By the early 1990s, for instance, the international recording industry was an oligopoly consisting of six majors: three European, one American and two Japanese. But in other ways globalization has produced new local "vertical" differences – as where, for instance, first-world encouragement to modernize and develop led not just to massive third-world indebtedness and an increase in poverty but to urbanization, severe ecological degradation, and deculturalization, as in rainforest areas around the world. In other ways still, however, globalization has generated diversity and autonomy – as when sophisticated cultural and media industries began to develop outside the West in places as different as Brazil and Hong Kong (increasing the amount of local news worldwide, for instance) or when, as James Clifford points out in his essay in this collection, non-Western communities were able creatively to commodify or museumify their cultures. One effect of the large and very various process of globalization has been especially important to cultural studies: Eurocentric concepts of "primitive," "underdeveloped" or superstitious peoples (that is, so-called "fourth-world" people) became difficult to sustain on a variety of registers. In his influential essay "On ethnographic authority" (Clifford 1988b), Clifford again showed that anthropologists' "native informants" could now speak for themselves to "us" without the mediation of the anthropologists and their "science." To somewhat similar ends, Edward Said drew attention to "Orientalism" – the history of those images of the "Orient" produced to help the West dominate the East, and in which what non-Westerners said about themselves was systematically discounted. As cultural studies became the voice of the other, the "marginal" in the academy, it absorbed a radical wing of anthropology, just as it had earlier absorbed a wing of sociology in Britain. The literary world threw up another case in which the processes of globalization were shown to trouble any simplistic or conventional analysis: protests against Salman Rushdie's *The Satanic Verses* (started by migrant communities in Britain) undercut assumptions about the

naturalness (or dominance) of Western notions of how particular cultural formations relate to one another, in particular the Western sense of literature's transcendence of religion and politics. In sum, globalization meant that the role that subcultures and the working class played in earlier cultural studies began to be replaced and transformed by communities outside the West or migrant (or "diasporic") communities within the West – in a move which involved new theoretical and political problems and intensities.

Conceiving of cultural studies as the academic site for marginal or minority discourses had another, very different but no less visible and globalizing consequence, one which took it further from its original attack on mass culture. The discipline began to celebrate commercial culture, in a move we can call, following Jim McGuigan, "cultural populism" (McGuigan 1992). Cultural populism became possible within the cultural studies anti-hegemonic tradition because, despite the new right's reliance on values disseminated through the cultural market, the right also buttressed its monoculturalism by traditionalist appeals to the canon. (This play between popular knowledge and celebration of the canon marks another tension within contemporary conservative thought.) In its turn, cultural populism helped cultural studies to become global just because, as we have seen, commercial culture has an increasingly transnational reach. What form has cultural populism taken in cultural studies? It too turned away from the highly theoretical attacks on hegemony so important in the 1970s, this time by arguing that at least some popular cultural products themselves have positive quasi-political effects independently of education and critical discourse. For instance, in his 1987 essay, "British cultural studies and television," John Fiske, after reading the television show *Magnum P.I.* through the classic distinction between "preferred," "negotiated" and "oppositional" readings developed by Hall and Morley, goes on to claim that Madonna (circa 1986) offered fans her own form of feminist ideology-critique. Madonna "calls into question" "binary oppositions as a way of conceptualizing women" (Fiske 1987a: 275). Elsewhere Fiske emphasized that popular culture provided "pleasure in the processes of making meanings" (Fiske 1987b: 239) in a move that relied on Roland Barthes's later view that markedly polysemous texts generate particularly intense and liberating pleasures. Such work is refreshing because it rejects the hierarchies that support monocultures, as well as because, unlike the "hegemony" theorists, it does not condescend to actual popular-cultural practices. But it leaves many questions open. The theorist is still telling the "popular" audience how their pleasure works in terms which owe much more to the history of theory than they do to what people actually say or think. It also passes over the question of co-option too rapidly. For instance, Madonna's later work shows us that "needs of capital" (i.e., the requirement for investments to make profits) have not been exactly irrelevant to her career. By calling herself a "material girl," by daring to screen us some familial truths in *Truth or Darel In Bed with Madonna* she once again goes to show that what is daring and transgressive in the context of media oligopolies makes money. But as Madonna keeps the industry working, her transgression becomes blander. That is what co-option is. In this light a comparison between Madonna

and even a star as musically mainstream as Sinead O'Connor, who has sinned more openly against American patriotism, might be revealing. It would help to show how a "cultural populism" which can celebrate Madonna (whom the industry loves) as transgressive is subtly, if unconsciously, connected to the new right with its promotion of market forces. This is not to say that we can equate entry into cultural markets with co-option in any rigid or formal manner. But cultural populism requires a very nuanced account of the relations between cultural markets and cultural products in order convincingly to celebrate (some) popular culture as "progressive" – perhaps along the lines taken by Will Straw and Janice Radway in their essays in this collection.

Finally, another kind of cultural studies, which has recently emerged under the title "cultural policy studies," responds to the decline of the social-democratic power bloc in yet other ways (see Tony Bennett's essay in this volume which mounts the case for this mode of cultural studies). Cultural policy studies itself takes two distinguishable forms, one economically orientated and pragmatic, the other more theoretical. The first, economic cultural policy analysis, starts from the recognition that much cultural production and distribution requires allocation of scarce resources – the limits to the number of stations that can operate in the radio spectrum for instance. It also takes account of the fact that cultural labor and consumption are increasingly important to national economies, especially those of highly "advanced" post-industrial countries. For reasons like this, governments are called upon to set parameters for cultural production and distribution – to provide public broadcasting for instance, or to protect local workers against imported labor or products. (See Collins, Garnham and Locksley 1988 for an excellent example of a policy document in this spirit aimed at the debate over UK public television.) At the micro-level, local communities too may need policy advice, in order, for instance, to establish a museum that best provides for both local and tourist needs. Cultural policy studies helps us think about the frameworks and methods of articulating policy in such situations.

The other branch of cultural policy theory derives from Michel Foucault's later work, though Foucault himself, despite advising a number of French governments, was ambivalent about this development of his thought. He encouraged intellectuals to be more critical than is possible when offering policy advice, (Ian Hunter's *Culture and Government* [1988] is the book which theorizes this form of neo-Foucauldianism in most detail; see Foucault's essay "Practicing criticism" in Foucault 1988 for a rejection, in advance, of the position.) In its most radical guise, the neo-Foucauldian thesis argues that culture is neither an end in itself nor the product of autonomous agents – whether individuals or communities – but a mechanism for transmitting forms of "governmentality," for ordering how we act, think, live. Indeed, so the argument goes, cultural work and effects exist only in relation to other governmental structures. Thus Tony Bennett has argued that "policy and governmental conditions and processes should be thought of as constitutive of different forms and fields of culture" (Bennett 1992a: 25). The implication is that the least mystified task of the cultural studies analyst is to enter into alliances with, and attempt to influence, the processes of governmentality.

A number of strong arguments can be urged against neo-Foucauldian cultural policy theory. In particular, such theory possesses a rudimentary account of subjectivity. For it, the individual tends to be just a product of "governmental" protocols or of "techniques of self-formation." This matters because questions of pleasure, corporeality, fantasy, identification, affect, desire, critique, transgression, and so on disappear – which is crippling to rich analysis of cultural work and reception. The theory also relies on a reductive sense of politics. "Policy" becomes a word which, almost magically, neutralizes the more stubborn, conflictual, and critical relations between the various individuals and groups which constitute the social fields in which culture is produced, disseminated, and received.

Leaving these important theoretical difficulties aside for a minute, we can say that both forms of cultural policy studies mark an acceptance of the state hitherto unknown in cultural studies. It traditionally resisted the state's hegemony. There is, indeed, a sense in which cultural policy studies resists new right thinking by returning to statism. Cultural policy studies also breaks with the history of cultural studies in that the discipline has not traditionally produced neutral expertise. Here the difficulties just noted return. It is all the harder to see how cultural studies might provide (apparently) neutral expertise when one considers the kinds of case that cultural policy characteristically addresses. How much "local content" should a particular television industry have? What kind of museum should be constructed in this locality? From the bureaucratic point of view, questions like these require information to be gathered, costs and benefits to be projected, various economic models to be debated. In this, individuals trained in cultural studies (and in other disciplines) might, of course, have a productive role to play. But apart from that, such questions are best argued over not by experts but by (representatives of) interested parties – that is, democratically and politically. As a transnational academic discipline, cultural studies itself does not represent such an interest. And, in fact, policy advice does not uncover truths which can be immediately used and applied. On the contrary, outside the academy it tends to become a pawn in wider political engagements between such interests.

## Cultural studies now: some directions and problems

So cultural studies is a discipline continuously shifting its interests and methods both because it is in constant and engaged interaction with its larger historical context and because it cannot be complacent about its authority. After all, it has taken the force of arguments against "meta-discourses" and does not want the voice of the academic theorist to drown out other less often heard voices. As we have begun to see, the discipline's turn to ethnography in particular was motivated by the desire to move beyond theoretical discourses which, however insightful, have been restricted to higher education institutions. Ethnography of the kind developed by Willis and Morley was important to cultural studies because it provided a method by which the discipline could escape such restrictions, and it remains crucial to an understanding of the current and future directions of the

discipline. It is crucial just because the turn to ethnography highlights the difficulty of *either* claiming *or* disclaiming academic and, more especially, ethnographic authority. For if we accept that the academic humanities are a field in which power and cultural capital are generated and transmitted and so do not simply articulate "true" meta-discourses, we must also accept that non-academic or "popular" cultural institutions require critique from a distance because they have their limits and power effects as well. To put it another way, cultural studies today is situated between its pressing need to question its own institutional and discursive legitimation and its fear that cultural practices outside the institution are becoming too organized and too dispersed to appeal to in the spirit it has hitherto appealed to subcultures, the women's movement, and other "others" in its (always somewhat compromised) repudiation of statism and the new right.

In this situation, we need to consider the question of ethnographic or academic authority a little more carefully. Of course ethnography has a long history in the positive social sciences. Social scientists and market researchers have traditionally employed three modes of ethnographic investigation: first, large-scale "surveys" (or "quantitative research") using formal questionnaires on a sample large enough to provide "correlation coefficients" or measures to the degree one variable (like a taste for reading Charles Dickens) relates to another (like one's parents' jobs); second, "qualitative research" or in-depth or "focus" interviews which claim no statistical validity (though they are often used alongside large-scale surveys) and do not rely on formal questionnaires but on (usually group) discussion; third, "participant observation" in which researchers live alongside their subjects – this having been most common in anthropology. Cultural studies ethnography, particularly of media audiences, has mainly used qualitative research in order to avoid the pitfalls of sociological objectivity and functionalism and to give room to voices other than the theorist's own. The problem of representative-ness has been discounted. For cultural studies, knowledge based on statistical techniques belongs to the processes which "normalize" society and stand in opposition to cultural studies' respect for the marginal subject.

In early cultural-studies ethnographic work like Morley's *The "Nationwide" Audience,* the researcher played the role of a neutral narrator – using research subjects as the basis upon which to elaborate theory. Later researchers, like Paul Willis, tried to articulate their subjects' perceptions into a more abstract and rigorous lexicon: for Willis good theory was continuous with the "practical consciousness" of those he studied. The bonding between ethnographer and subject became even more crucial when women began working with women – of which Dorothy Hobson's work on the soap opera *Crossroads* is a well-known early instance (Hobson 1982). To think about the importance of the ethnographer's gender, consider how difficult it would have been for a woman to have had Willis's relation to the "lads"! A sense of shared values, identities and purposes between the researcher and the researched often elicits richer responses and transactions in the field. When, in a well-known ethnographic study, Ien Ang invited letters from Dutch *Dallas* viewers, she positioned herself as a fan (as she was) so as to encourage engaged replies (Ang 1985). But – and here

we strike a crucial problem – the ethnographer is not simply a fan; there is an irreducible rift between the position of being-a-researcher and that of being-a-fan, though of course a single individual can be both. There are two ways of dealing with this: one is to accept it and the ambivalence or contradiction it generates as productive – as Meaghan Morris does in her essay collected here; the other is for the researcher simultaneously to ethnographize herself in relation to her subjects and to allow her subjects as much exposure as possible to her own, more academic discourses. At this point ethnography can involve two-way transmission of information and maybe even passion.

With the category "being a fan," the question of populism reappears. But now we need to draw a distinction between cultural populism and that form of academic populism which (like Paul Willis) argues that, in cultural studies, academic knowledge ought to formalize what is already popularly known. A difficulty for both these populisms is that, when we think of either a "culture of differences" engaged in a "politics of survival" or a society as structured by various, interacting fields through which various discursive or cultural practices are transmitted, then the *binary* opposition "popular" versus "elite" begins to fall way. The assault on this form of binary thinking has been all the stronger because recent historical research has shown that the separation between popular and elite culture has historically been more fluid than cultural historians have believed. (See Levine 1988 and Collins 1989.) Nevertheless the "popular" as a category is unlikely to fall out of sight in cultural studies. To begin with, as we have seen, the distribution networks of concentrated cultural markets are increasingly gaining access to communities from different localities, ethnicities, and cultural backgrounds to produce ever-larger popular audiences: now some stars and brands (Coke, Michael Jackson, Nike, McDonald's . . .) belong to the global popular, at least for a while. At a more local level, notions of popular wants and desires are powerfully appealed to both by national politicians (nowhere more so than in Thatcherism) and by managers of large-scale cultural industries as they attempt to organize consumers' tastes, desires, and pleasures. As Meaghan Morris in her essay in this collection notes, politicians construct an imaginary through figures such as "the silent majority," or the "man (less often "woman") in the street." These figures are sometimes literally fake: in the 1930s and 1940s, Hollywood habitually produced "documentaries" using actors as supposedly "real" interviewees. Fake or not, these figures become *embodied* in our national social imaginary. For the politicians, it is as if a certain kind of individual possesses the opinions, tastes, and values which polls, charts, ratings, and elections reveal to be popular. In the culture industries, the figure of the "popular" mediates between producers and audiences. Using its own sophisticated ethnographic techniques, the industry attempts to produce what the public (or at any rate the more affluent sections of it) wants. But at the same time it generates public desire by marketing its products (both hardware and software) as if they were always already popular. That "nothing sells like a hit" is more than a tautology, it is the most successful formula for cultural marketing. People will buy what other people love and desire. Through these political and commercial tactics and logics, the popular is constantly pushed towards the normal, even the universal.

Yet, as a concept like the global popular makes apparent, no single kind of person embodies the popular. Cultural studies can provide space for, and knowledge of, the multiple audiences and communities who, in various combinations, vote, buy records, watch television and films, etc, without ever fitting the "popular," "ordinary," or "normal." This is another reason to examine the techniques by which social values, attitudes, and desires are measured, as well as to demystify the political uses of representations like the "silent majority" and "ordinary American." In this way, cultural studies can begin to intervene on the cultural market's failure to admit full cultural multiplicity – particularly if (going with cultural populism) it accepts that, in principle, cultural markets can provide a variety of products, pleasures, and uses, including transgressive and avant-garde ones. Although cultural multiplicity is appealed to by many theoretical articles in this anthology, especially bell hooks's and Cornel West's, it is useful to cite a well-known recent example of how audience measurement affects cultural production and images of the "popular" within a particular nation state. When, in the US, *Billboard* stopped producing its music charts by measuring radio play and sales in an unrepresentative sample of shops and began using information based directly on bar-coded sales, it immediately became apparent that "genre" music – country, rap, heavy metal – was selling much better than anyone had suspected. These music forms began to enter a redefined mainstream. The sense of what was "popular" shifted. This is not to say that these new techniques perfectly represent public preferences: *Billboard*'s measurement of purchase doesn't measure real consumption, let alone tastes. For example, not all social groups have the same capacity to turn their taste into purchases, not all sold products are listened to as often as others, and some music genres are more often taped than others. Images of "popular listening" based on *Billboard*'s information would still be awry – though this information will also allow the music-business oligopolies to restructure their production and hence (within limits) popular tastes and desires.

The deeper question that quantitative market research and ratings fail to answer is how cultural products are valued and used – this is especially important because this failure, too, has important effects on our construction of the popular. Take television, for instance. Ratings are still mainly produced by measuring how many televisions are turned on each channel at any particular moment, though techniques to measure actual audience attention are also employed, including videoing viewers! But (leaving the question of VCR recorders aside) we know that television is watched in many ways: for information, for comforting background noise and flicker, as a neutral flow which helps to reduce (or increase) family tensions, for relaxation after working hours, for fans to watch a favorite program intensely, to produce a sense of cultural superiority through a careful, but ironical and distanced, mode of viewing, as a medium for programs which are received as great art, and so on. At any one time any program is available for many of these viewing practices. However, at certain times of the week certain such practices dominate. "Prime time" is the period in which most people watch for relaxation, for instance. What the ratings measure then is not *one* kind of viewing: like is not being compared to like. Rather a good rating is a sign that a particular television

use-value dominates at a particular moment within the larger rhythms of the working or schooling week. It is not the simple index of popular will or taste. Again, by turning a good rating into an expression of the "popular," less widespread practices and preferences are marginalized as "unpopular."

Partly because the notion of the "popular" carries with it these problems, cultural studies is increasingly drawing attention to another, closely connected, category, one which does not compound divisiveness for the simple reason that (at least apparently) no one, anywhere, can avoid it. This category is "everyday life." Ironically, however, cultural studies (as in the essay by Michel de Certeau collected here) derives the notion from an avant-garde tradition which turned to everyday life not as a basis for reassuring consensus but as an arena capable of radical transformation just because it was being increasingly disciplined, commodified, and rationalized in so-called "modernity." In particular, Henri Lefebvre believed that intellectuals could drive the "organized passivity" and banality out of everyday life, drawing attention to its tragedies, sublimity, and magic (Lefebvre 1971 and 1991a). This was to be achieved by showing, first, that everyday life is *constructed* as the sphere in which, as the writer Maurice Blanchot put it, "nothing happens" (Blanchot 1987: 15), and, then, by writing about it carefully and affectionately, to defamiliarize it and reaffirm its true value. Lefebvre's desire to play everyday life against modernity was elaborated by Michel de Certeau, who found a dream-like logic or "grammar" in overlooked and habitual acts (like walking) which countered disciplining routines. Given de Certeau's and Morris's marvellous essays, there can be little doubt that everyday life does provide an area where imaginative intellectual analysis and description may produce liberating effects. Partly by bringing academic analysis closer to the aims and techniques of older, non-academic essay-writing, the textualizers of everyday life help us to accept academic authority at the same time as they loosen and disseminate it. None the less, theory which grounds itself on a sense of the everyday does not avoid the problems associated with populism. Most relevantly, within a discipline that has globalized itself through affirming otherness, it is important to remember the obvious point that everyday life is not everywhere the same, despite those modernizing effects of uniformity that Lefebvre was obsessed by. Think about walking in the city: doesn't it make a difference if one walks in Paris, downtown Detroit, Melbourne, Mexico City or Hong Kong just for starters? And, in each of these places, does a woman have the same experience as a man, a gay as a straight, a young person as an old one? The everyday, too, is produced and experienced at the intersection of many fields by embodied individuals; at times and in places it may also be a limit that cultural practices, especially those that attempt to move across cultures, aim to escape. And, as Meaghan Morris's essay reminds us, it does not possess a single history. It exists within multiple histories, many of which escape the way the past is remembered and stored officially – in universities, for instance. Here, perhaps more than elsewhere, cultural studies merges into cultural histories which reconnect us to the world in ways that cannot be taken for granted. So it is not as though appeal to everyday life can avoid the intractable questions as to relations between social differences, life-practices and cultural expression which cultural studies began by

addressing. But the fact that textualizing everyday life, with all its seduction, leads to these kinds of difficulties is another sign that the discipline has real vitality. There remains much work to do.

Bar minor modifications, the introduction above was written in 1992. Despite its now being over five years old, it continues to provide a useful preface for the eighteen new essays added to this edition, though they were mostly written since. This is not to say, however, that cultural studies in 1999 is what it was in 1992. Not at all. To begin with, the topics it deals with have changed, or, at least, emphases have shifted. For instance, highly theorized work, especially from a structuralist or semiotic perspective, has moved to the background. So have topics like subcultures and media reception. However, a few of the new areas, scattered across the field, are worth noticing in a little more detail.

First, science. Work on science has intensified in response to the increasing technologization of nature and the human body. As technology and nature merge, the upholding of a hard division between science and culture by insisting that science remains off-limits to non-scientists helps to disenfranchise those whose lives are most affected by scientific and technological innovations (or, otherwise put, by science's colonization of the lifeworld). On the other hand, leaving science to the experts may also allow too much scope amongst non-scientists for technophobes and those who fetishize a nature out of reach of human work and intervention. Hence the interest of cultural studies intellectuals in the topic (see the essays by Andrew Ross and Donna Haraway collected here).

Second, and of no less importance, sex. Sex has partly displaced gender as an area of debate and contestation (see the essay by Lauren Berlant and Michael Warner). This has happened within queer theory which, in insisting that the regime of compulsory heterosexuality (or heteronormativity) shapes gender difference, has effectively rejected the earlier feminist bracketing off of sexual desire from critique of gender "roles." Notwithstanding its avowed political program, and despite its capacity to help assemble a constituency ("queer nation"), queer theory tends to be more philosophical, and more distant from public culture as it happens in the media or official politics, than most previous work in cultural studies (see the essay by Judith Butler). At best the queer academic post-structuralist can be thought of as a vanguardist intellectual within queer nation (an "organic" intellectual in Gramsci's sense even as she dismantles organicist thinking); at worst, unremittingly academic work in the post-structuralist vein can seem insensitive or irrelevant to the twists, wonders, and shocks of lesbian, gay, queer life over the past decade – with its political wins and losses, the ongoing carnage of the AIDS epidemic; an increasing (popular-) cultural acceptance, confidence, and inventiveness . . .

Indeed the function of the cultural studies teacher in relation to "public culture" or the public sphere more generally has been much discussed. At least since Andrew Ross's pathbreaking book, *No Respect: Intellectuals and Popular Culture* (1989), such discourse has often taken the form of arguments over intellectuals. What's an intellectual these days? Are they just professionalized

voices within the academy or the media; are they spokespersons for specific interest groups or communities? Can the notion of the *critical* intellectual survive the fragmentation of culture into an assemblage of institutions, and the professionalization and specialization of academic knowledge? For instance, are Noam Chomsky and Stuart Hall both "intellectuals," or is Hall, who rarely appears on television, just an "academic" or "professor," with Chomsky, for all his fame, only a media intellectual because he's tied to old left causes, having failed to attend to contemporary academic media or cultural or social theory as expressed in cultural studies? How about Judith Butler and Camille Paglia? Cultural studies has increasingly concerned itself with such cases and questions (B. Robbins 1990 and 1993a).

But perhaps the most profound topical change in cultural studies has been its focusing on cultural *flow.* The field is much less focused on discrete, filiative national or ethnic cultures, or components of such cultures, than it was in its earlier history, in work by Raymond Williams and the early Birmingham school, say. Cultural studies' objects are decreasingly restricted or delimited by distance and locality at all. Rather, they move across national borders (as in the global "scapes" described by Arjun Appadurai in his essay included here); or they belong to scattered, diasporic groups (like the television shows watched by Hamid Naficy's Los Angeles Iranians in his piece); or they are products of fluid, transnational regions like Paul Gilroy's Black Atlantic, peopled by men and women without "pure" identities or traditions and all the more able to improvise within their situation for that reason; or they inhabit faultlines between global powers and processes like those who live in Ackbar Abbas's Hong Kong, as he describes it in his essay in this volume, caught at the interface between the communist People's Republic of China and global capitalism.

Cultural studies which addresses such cases is often called "transnational cultural studies." It's eroding so-called "postcolonialism," first nurtured in literary studies, which was so important a feature of the late 1980s and early 1990s intellectual landscape. Much critiqued on the grounds that it prematurely celebrated the end of colonialist relations of exploitation and dependency, postcolonialism increasingly has had to come to terms with "globalization" – a word often heard, rarely clearly understood. What's globalization, then? Not simply, as it often seems, Thatcherism writ large, globalization is best understood as the development of global markets and capital so as to skew highly capitalized national economies towards service, information, financial instruments, and other high value-added products away from traditional primary commodities and mass-production industries. Globalization also means more organized cross-national or "diasporic" labor-force movements, along with the amazing growth of export culture industries, including tourism. And, last, it means the accelerated development of communication technologies like the Internet which escape the tyranny of distance. Globalization has both undermined the autonomy of nation states and reduced state intervention in society and the economy – sometimes as a cause, other times as an excuse. It has also drastically transformed and punctured the old metropolitan/colony, center/periphery, north/south divisions, enabling new regions to invent themselves (notably "Asia Pacific") alongside new

cosmopolitanisms, elite and popular (see Cheah and Robbins 1998). Because it unifies the world *and* divides it, the problem of how to evaluate the consequences of globalization or transnationalism has become a central cultural studies issue (see the essays by Gayatri Spivak and Homi Bhabha).

This problem is not to be posed in the traditional fashion, i.e. "is globalization reducing global cultural differences?" – the answer to that being increasingly clearly "no, at least not in any simple way" since globalization is articulating all cultures and communities to one another in a process which also makes for new fragmentations and mixes, new niche and local markets; new opportunities for self-expression and alliance. Nor is the question "is globalization the same as Westernization?" – to which again it is generally agreed that the answer is "no, not in any simple way" – less because the technologies and capital driving globalization are not wholly owned in the West than because globalization brings benefits and power as well as costs to most localities around the world. Rather, the crucial questions are "is globalization creating new inequalities and depleting resources too unevenly and rapidly?" and, more complexly, "is globalization depriving individuals and communities of the capacity to control and know their own interests as they are increasingly called upon to produce and consume for markets driven from afar?" These questions have especial force for those – whether they live in rich or poor nations or regions – who have least capacity to direct or produce for global or national markets and flows, and hence are most likely to miss out on remunerative employment, becoming subject to demoralization and physical hardship, and objects of media stories, ethnographical research, touristic gazes, state, military or aid-organization attention . . . Transnational cultural studies attempts to produce academic knowledge and testimony across political and cultural borders which are not complicit with these gazes, stories, and attentions.

For all that, it is not cultural studies' *topics,* but its status in the education system which has changed most radically. And in this process cultural studies has become a soft target in the Western media. Risking academic self-absorption, I want to end this introduction by examining this crucial development a little more closely.

Since the early 1990s, there has been a cultural studies boom, especially in anglophone universities. Or there seems to have been. In fact we need to distinguish between, on the one hand, a general "turn to culture" (or "cultural turn") in the social sciences and humanities, and, on the other, the expansion of cultural studies conceived of as a discrete mode of analysis – as it is in this collection, for instance – and which, for convenience's sake, I'll call "engaged cultural studies."

As to the cultural turn: most, maybe all, humanities and social science disciplines have increasingly emphasized culture over the past decade or so. Cultural history has become the hot area in history; the cultural construction of space, in geography. Within criminology, representation of crime (i.e., crime's cultural face) has flourished. Cultural anthropologists are almost as likely to do fieldwork in urban, metropolitan communities (on shopping, say) as in the world's outposts, leaving little space to distinguish them from cultural studies ethnographers. Books with titles like *From Sociology to Cultural Studies* raise few

eyebrows. In many of the most exciting research areas of the last few years – the study of museums is a good example – historians, literary critics, anthropologists, and geographers collaborate and compete with minimal disciplinary or methodological differences apparent – more often than not they are all doing "cultural studies" as far as publishers and bookshops are concerned. Foreign-language departments now routinely (if not uncontroversially) think of themselves as introducing students to cultures rather than languages and literatures. English departments around the world have developed courses in non-literary cultural forms. When, in 1997, the Modern Languages Association published a number of short opinion pieces on the relation between literary studies and cultural studies, most respondents were of the opinion that cultural studies was another wave within literary studies, and that the distinction between the two, being artificial, was to be downplayed.

This general turn to culture has helped to disseminate cultural studies as a form of knowledge with its own histories, methods, and programs ("engaged cultural studies") but it also threatens to overwhelm and dilute it. In this situation, for those of us with a commitment to engaged cultural studies, it would seem that three tasks become particularly urgent: first, clearly to articulate engaged cultural studies' specific project; second, to analyze the conditions which underpin the general turn to culture just described; third, to develop strategies to maintain engaged cultural studies as a discrete formation inside the larger cultural turn. These tasks are all the more compelling because, as I say, cultural studies, in becoming established in the academy, has been the object of public attacks – a player (and pawn) in the "culture wars" – on the grounds that it fails both to disseminate cultural value (for cultural studies, so it's alleged, Mickey Mouse is as good as Shakespeare), and that it disrupts cultural unity (conservatives complain that cultural studies is on a mission for a multiculturalism which will undermine national pride, heritage, and consensus). Such attacks ring especially hollow when they fail to enquire into the reasons why cultural studies is expanding in the academy, both in its radical and in its more traditional forms.

This is not the place to begin working through these matters in any detail – that belongs to the ongoing work I wrote of at the end of my 1992 introduction. However a very brief (and partial) indication of directions to be taken is useful.

The first of these three tasks – addressing the issue of what is specific to engaged cultural studies – is probably the easiest to deal with. As this book hopes to persuade its readers, engaged cultural studies is academic work (teaching, research, dissemination, etc.) on contemporary culture from non-elite or counter-hegemonic perspectives ("from below") with an openness to the culture's reception and production in everyday life, or, more generally, its impact on life trajectories. Engaged cultural studies encourages and takes notice of culture's capacity to express and invoke less restricted (more "other," counter-normative) ways of living. So it does not simply "teach the conflicts" (Graff 1992) – that is, it does not neutrally present the debates over canons, cultural value, multiculturalism, identity-thinking, and so on for students, rather it aims to produce knowledge from perspectives lost to and in dominant public culture, and to listen to far-off or marginalized voices. Yet, importantly, engaged cultural studies also

examines its own constitutive borders and divisions – or, more simply, the relation between what it includes and what it excludes. It examines its temporal border: the separation of past from present (asking, what the role of history is in contemporary cultural studies). It examines the power barriers it assumes and contests: the division between hegemonic ("above") and counter-hegemonic ("below") – or, to swap terms, the borders between margins and centers. And it examines structural divisions: the boundaries between "culture" on the one hand, and "society" or the "economy" on the other (asking, for instance, to what degree is culture shaped by economic structures – see Nicholas Garnham's essay for a discussion of this). We might add to these problems concerning boundaries, though it's been much less discussed, that cultural studies also addresses the basic distinction between the political (or the engaged) and the non-political (or the disengaged) where it touches culture – a topic to which I will return in a moment.

The second of my three tasks faces a more difficult challenge. Why has the study of culture recently become so popular across the whole range of the humanities, and even the social sciences? To sum up a very complicated situation: the turn to culture would seem to be best understood as an effect of three entangled events, each on a very different scale. First, the increasing importance of cultural industries to post-industrial national economies such as the US and the UK; second, the rise in the use of cultural heritages and cultural consumption to maintain or stabilize identities by nations, ethnic groups, and individuals (partly because socialism has been delegitimized, and people cease to identify with a class); and, finally, at the micro-level of the education system, the downsizing of the academic humanities and the social sciences relative to other faculties inside a still expanding post-compulsory education sector.

To put the case in a nutshell: even in highly developed, post-industrial countries, more and more students are entering post-compulsory institutions without having, or wishing for, traditional European elite taste preferences and without the desire to form themselves ethically through their consumption or knowledge of canons. Their own everyday-life culture is increasingly that of popular culture or niches within it – this is their starting point for exploring the past, for instance. Many students from so-called "minority" communities, often the first members of their family ever to attend university, wish to affirm and learn about their own neglected or repressed cultural heritages. At the same time, many students take humanities and social sciences courses in preparation for professional graduate training or (in the case of the humanities) to enter the broader cultural industries – in both cases, courses on culture, especially contemporary culture, provide especially efficient and pertinent use-value or training. All this within an education system decreasingly supported by state funding and increasingly managed in business-sector terms of "efficiencies" and "performance" so that areas of study without high student demand are gradually likely to be diminished or let go. These pressures finally have an impact even on rich institutions, especially at graduate school level, because such graduate schools train teachers, and, despite inertia, ultimately have to be responsive to projected student demand in the rest of the system. To move from the general to

the particular, this is the larger logic within which books, articles, and courses on, say, the politics of seventeenth-century France or monographs on canonical literary authors tend to decrease, while books, articles, and courses on global media systems, or even, say, magical thinking in the construction of modernity, tend to increase.

The last of the three proposed tasks – the need to develop strategies to maintain engaged cultural studies as a specific field, as against the turn to culture in general – is perhaps the most contentious. A main reason for this is that it exposes anxieties over avowedly political knowledge and teaching within the supposedly "objective" academy. In practice engaged cultural studies is rapidly becoming another area of speciality – a discipline, a field – able to be housed in any one of a number of departments, though most frequently in literature or communications departments. The tactic of adding speciality after speciality to departments, faculties, or disciplines, and thereby avoiding dealing with controversial intellectual-pedagogical issues, has been well discussed by Gerald Graff in his *Professing Literature* (1987). But because engaged cultural studies is expressly political, it does not settle easily into a pattern of accretion and liberal tolerance. So we need to spell out that there are compelling reasons why students, not least those from elite backgrounds, might be exposed to it. As a field, it accepts that studying culture is rarely value-free, and so, embracing clearly articulated, left-wing values, it seeks to extend and critique the relatively narrow range of norms, methods, and practices embedded in the traditional, past-fixated, canon-forming humanities. It does so in order to provide students (in this case, especially elite students) with a point of entry into the contemporary world they are unlikely to have learned from their families, their secondary schooling or from the media, and it helps make a less blinkered and hierarchical, a fairer and more open culture for that very reason. Of course, it also often provides non-elite students and scholars with an approach they can recognize and own.

None the less, I'd suggest that, for both practical and theoretical reasons, in the current situation, we need to think of cultural studies not as a traditional field or discipline, nor as a mode of interdisciplinarity, but as what I will call a field within multidisciplinarity. This means that cultural studies should aim to monopolize its students or, indeed, its teachers and intellectuals, as little as is possible within the academic-bureaucratic structures we have. Within the academy it is best regarded as an area to work in alongside others, usually more highly institutionalized disciplines – Spanish, geography, politics, economics, literature . . . whatever. The point is not so much to dismantle disciplinary boundaries as to be able to move across them; the aim is to transport methods and attitudes from cultural studies to other disciplines where they are appropriate, but also to be able to forgo them where they are not.

Pragmatically, thinking of cultural studies as a field within multidisciplinarity increases its reach inside institutions committed, however problematically, to objectivity – institutions, I suspect, which are coming under mounting pressure to close down on cultural dissidence from community and media interests. We need also to recognize that a great deal of the material studied in the humanities does

not invite political engagement, let alone political engagement which can be easily translated into the current situation. To give just one cultural-historical example: amongst Elizabethan playwrights, if we have an interest in them at all, we may prefer Christopher Marlowe to Ben Jonson on political grounds because of the way that Marlowe rebels against the sexual and religious codes of his time. But what about debates between the Stoics and the Epicureans, so important for early modern Western political and philosophical thought? What's the current political valency there? And if these debates have little or no political valency now, is that a reason not to study them alongside engaged cultural studies?

That kind of question is gaining force because the downsizing of the humanities is transforming the political force and meaning of the academic humanities. Let's put it like this: in a situation where globalized market forces and government policy are demanding that universities should provide economically relevant practical training so as to increase productivity and efficiency, where calls for academics to make themselves over as "public intellectuals" within the restricted parameters of the mainstream media are commonplace, is studying the Stoics and Epicureans, or, for that matter, technical aspects of the seventeenth-century English lyric, simply obscurantist or (in the case of the lyric) elitist? Such studies have a political charge, however faint, in their very incapacity to contribute to the market or media culture. (This is a version of the political charge that Theodor Adorno assigned to modernist art under industrial capitalism in his *Aesthetic Theory* and elsewhere.) Multidisciplinarity, which thinks of engaged cultural studies less as an academic specialism than as a critical moment within a larger, dispersed, not wholly politicized field, is, then, a way of shoring up differences and counter-hegemony inside the humanities in an epoch of global managerialism. So I'm arguing that global managerialism underpins the academic turn to culture in ways which mean that engaged cultural studies best situates itself into the humanities and social sciences as a fluid and critical moment, neither weighted down by disciplinarity nor blanded out into the interdisciplinarity of the wider cultural turn. Whether or not engaged cultural studies accommodates to globalization and managerialism in quite the way I am proposing is up to readers of this book as much as anyone to decide.