Cultural Studies

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Cultural Studies: An Introduction

CARY NELSON, PAULA A. TREICHLER, AND LAWRENCE GROSSBERG

The field of cultural studies is experiencing, as Meaghan Morris puts it, an unprecedented international boom. It remains to be seen how long this boom will last and what impact it will have on intellectual life. Certainly, within the fragmented institutional configuration of the academic left, cultural studies holds special intellectual promise because it explicitly attempts to cut across diverse social and political interests and address many of the struggles within the current scene. As Lata Mani notes in her essay in this volume, in its utopian moments cultural studies sometimes imagines "a location where the new politics of difference—racial, sexual, cultural, transnational—can combine and be articulated in all their dazzling plurality." At the same time, it is undoubtedly cultural studies' material and economic promise that contributes, as much as its intellectual achievement, to its current vogue. In the United States, where the boom is especially strong, many academic institutions—presses, journals, hiring committees, conferences, university curricula—have created significant investment opportunities in cultural studies, sometimes in ignorance of its history, its practitioners, its relation to traditional disciplines, and its life outside the academy.

The present book is partly occasioned by this explosion of interest in cultural studies. It seeks to identify the dimensions of cultural studies and its varied effects, to discuss cultural studies in relation to its intellectual history, its varying definitions, its current affiliations and affinities and diverse objects of study, and its possible futures. Here we introduce the field of cultural studies, describe the goals of the book, and offer a "user's guide" to the essays it includes. The section divisions in the user's guide themselves provide a rough map not only of the overlapping subject matter of the book but also of the major categories of current work in cultural studies: the history of cultural studies, gender and sexuality, nationhood and national identity, colonialism and post-colonialism, race and ethnicity, popular culture and its audiences, science and ecology, identity politics, pedagogy, the politics of aesthetics, cultural institutions, the politics of disciplinarity, discourse and textuality, history, and global culture in a postmodern age. But cultural studies can only partially and uneasily be identified by such domains of interest, since no list can constrain the topics cultural studies may address in the future.

One way to understand cultural studies is to employ the traditional strategies by which disciplines stake out their territories and theoretical paradigms mark their difference: by claiming a particular domain of objects, by developing a unique set of methodological practices, and by carrying forward a founding tradition and lexicon. In the following pages, we will suggest how domain, method, and intellectual legacy help us further understand cultural studies. Yet none of these elements makes cultural studies into a traditional discipline. Indeed, cultural studies is not merely interdisciplinary; it is

often, as others have written, actively and aggressively anti-disciplinary—a characteristic that more or less ensures a permanently uncomfortable relation to academic disciplines. As Graeme Turner writes in his essay, "motivated, at least in part, by a critique of the disciplines, cultural studies has been reluctant to become one."

Early in the history of cultural studies in Britain, Richard Hoggart (1969) stressed that cultural studies had no stable disciplinary base. "What was the bibliography of a cultural studies thesis?" Stuart Hall asks, looking back on his experience at the Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies at Birmingham, "Nobody knew" (Hall, 1990a, p. 17). Cultural studies draws from whatever fields are necessary to produce the knowledge required for a particular project. In the course of its cross-national borrowings, some figures play different roles at different times and places. Richard Johnson (1986/7) suggests that in response to pressures to define cultural studies it be seen as a kind of process, an alchemy for producing useful knowledge about the broad domain of human culture. If it is an alchemy, he warns, codification might halt its ability to bring about reactions. As readers will also learn from this book, it is now an alchemy that draws from many of the major bodies of theory of the last several decades, from Marxism and feminism to psychoanalysis, poststructuralism, and postmodernism.

The methodology of cultural studies provides an equally uneasy marker, for cultural studies in fact has no distinct methodology, no unique statistical, ethnomethodological, or textual analysis to call its own. Its methodology, ambiguous from the beginning, could best be seen as a bricolage. Its choice of practice, that is, is pragmatic, strategic, and self-reflective. At Birmingham, a central goal was "to enable people to understand what [was] going on, and especially to provide ways of thinking, strategies for survival, and resources for resistance" (Hall, 1990a, p. 22). The choice of research practices depends upon the questions that are asked, and the questions depend on their context. It is problematic for cultural studies simply to adopt, uncritically, any of the formalized disciplinary practices of the academy, for those practices, as much as the distinctions they inscribe, carry with them a heritage of disciplinary investments and exclusions and a history of social effects that cultural studies would often be inclined to repudiate. Thus, for example, although there is no prohibition against close textual readings in cultural studies, they are also not required. Moreover, textual analysis in literary studies carries a history of convictions that texts are properly understood as wholly self-determined and independent objects as well as a bias about which kinds of texts are worthy of analysis. That burden of associations cannot be ignored.

Rearticulating to cultural studies the methods privileged by existing disciplines requires considerable work and reflection, work that can neither be done permanently or in advance. For cultural studies has no guarantees about what questions are important to ask within given contexts or how to answer them; hence no methodology can be privileged or even temporarily employed with total security and confidence, yet none can be eliminated out of hand. Textual analysis, semiotics, deconstruction, ethnography, interviews, phonemic analysis, psychoanalysis, rhizomatics, content analysis, survey research—all can provide important insights and knowledge. Some, though not all, of these are employed in the essays that follow; more still have been employed by our contributors in the course of their careers. But methodologies always bear the traces of their history, including methodologies that now have a history within cultural studies itself. This point is made repeatedly and decisively throughout this book: see, for example, Rosalind Brunt's critique of cultural studies' "simplified account of engagement with the media text," a critique taken up in related ways by Jody Berland, Simon Frith, Constance Penley, Janice Radway, William Warner, and others. Here and elsewhere, in individual essays and in discussion sessions, many contributors are acutely aware of the difficulty

of providing accounts that draw on multiple methods simultaneously—meshing survey research with ethnography, for example, or information from modern marketing research with more utopian conceptions of empowered consumers. Much of this, for example in Berland's work, explicitly examines notions of what an audience is. As she suggests, the contemporary science of audience research, in which "the topography of consumption is increasingly identified as . . . the map of the social," can at least potentially be seen as a new form of colonialism; certainly its premises problematize the optimistic attribution of agency to consumers and also, perhaps, send a cautionary message about the tendency in cultural studies to celebrate fragmentation—for it is precisely fragmentation that audience research is increasingly able to capitalize. While the commitment of cultural studies is to take this sort of history and positioning into account, this rarely occurs without sustained interrogation or complicated effects. No intellectual practice, even the compelling images of collective effort and ongoing self-interrogation of the Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies at Birmingham in the 1960s and 1970s, guarantees the practice of cultural studies in every context.

These introductory observations suggest that it is probably impossible to agree on any essential definition or unique narrative of cultural studies. "Cultural studies is not one thing," Stuart Hall has written, "it has never been one thing" (1990a, p. 11). Even when cultural studies is identified with a specific national tradition like British cultural studies, it remains a diverse and often contentious enterprise, encompassing different positions and trajectories in specific contexts, addressing many questions, drawing nourishment from multiple roots, and shaping itself within different institutions and locations. The passage of time, encounters with new historical events, and the very extension of cultural studies into new disciplines and national contexts will inevitably change its meanings and uses. Cultural studies needs to remain open to unexpected, unimagined, even uninvited possibilities. No one can hope to control these developments.

Yet we believe it matters how cultural studies is defined and conceptualized. While the question of "what cultural studies *really* is" may have become impossible to specify for all times and places, we believe that in any given context, cultural studies cannot be just anything. Even the most open definition of cultural studies here—Tony Bennett's "a term of convenience for a fairly dispersed array of theoretical and political positions"—is immediately qualified in a way that marks boundaries: "which, however widely divergent they might be in other respects, share a commitment to examining cultural practices from the point of view of their intrication with, and within, relations of power." To work even within that rather broad configuration, of course, requires an analysis of those relations of power and one's place within them. Moreover, the word "relations" opens out into cultural studies' long history of efforts to theorize and grasp the mutual determinations and interrelations of cultural forms and historical forces.

As Stuart Hall suggests in the discussion following his contribution to this collection, to arrive at such a situated definition requires a whole range of work. That work includes a "moment of self-clarification," which, as Hall emphasizes, has yet to be undertaken by many of us attempting to do cultural studies, particularly in the United States. For while the cultural studies boom is certainly international, its economic value is largely conditioned by its academic expansion in North America; this very success demands that it be closely watched. Will its vitality be compromised by the institutional pluralism of contemporary academic life? Will its rough edges be smoothed out to ease its fit within established disciplinary boundaries? Will the institutional norms of the American academy dissolve its crucial political challenges? What range of work is required to bring about an adequate understanding of what we are doing? What is it that our collective self-clarification must entail? Constructing a vision of cultural studies that

can be fruitfully deployed in any particular set of circumstances requires a cultural studies analysis of those very circumstances. At the same time, to address or define the specificity of cultural studies is to ask why it matters. What is at stake in our efforts to practice cultural studies and to reflect on that practice?

As a first step, we can try to offer a very general, generic definition of cultural studies. Although it can be argued that cultural studies itself resists this kind of definition, we think it would be arrogant not to identify, as a starting point at least, some of the recurrent elements of the field. A number of efforts to define and delineate the cultural studies project help map the diversity of positions and traditions that may legitimately lay claim to the name.[1] Keeping those efforts in mind, one may begin by saying that cultural studies is an interdisciplinary, transdisciplinary, and sometimes counter-disciplinary field that operates in the tension between its tendencies to embrace both a broad, anthropological and a more narrowly humanistic conception of culture.[2] Unlike traditional anthropology, however, it has grown out of analyses of modern industrial societies. It is typically interpretive and evaluative in its methodologies, but unlike traditional humanism it rejects the exclusive equation of culture with high culture and argues that all forms of cultural production need to be studied in relation to other cultural practices and to social and historical structures. Cultural studies is thus committed to the study of the entire range of a society's arts, beliefs, institutions, and communicative practices.

Some of the tensions that constitute cultural studies in fact are built into the diverse history of meanings given the word culture itself. "Culture," Williams writes in *Keywords* (a book both Jan Zita Grover and Graeme Turner invoke in this volume rather differently), "is one of the two or three most complicated words in the English language." Its history includes not only static and elitist equations of culture with the achievements of civilization but also broader notions that encompass all symbolic activity, as well as references to culture as an active effort at nurturing and preservation. Moreover, as Williams was able to show through his researches on the "emergence of *culture* as an abstraction and an absolute," "the idea of culture is a general reaction to a general and major change in the condition of our common life. Its basic element is its effort at total qualitative assessment" (1958, pp. xvi, 295). The attempts to define culture thus each grew out of necessity, out of responses to historical change. Williams helps us locate the broad impetus that motivates not only the British tradition of cultural studies but all the traditions: to identify and articulate the relations between culture and society.

After his survey of the varied meanings associated with the word "culture," Williams concludes that it simultaneously invokes symbolic *and* material domains and that the study of culture involves not privileging one domain over the other but interrogating the relation between the two. Thus when Jody Berland discusses the paradoxical powers of technology—the "complex effects of emancipation and domination in the reformation of marginal political and cultural identities"—she focuses on how the music industry constructs potential audiences according to their spatial constitution—that is, the spaces through which music will circulate to them: cars, elevators, offices, malls, hotels, sidewalks, airplanes, buses, cities, small towns, northern settlements, satellite broadcasts, and so on. Fifteen years later, we can take her work as one of the many efforts to push further Williams's argument that culture in this context means "a whole way of life, material, intellectual, and spiritual" (1976, p. 16), including symbolic behavior in a community's everyday life. Writing shortly after Williams, Paul Willis declared that culture "is the very material of our daily lives, the bricks and mortar of our most commonplace understandings" (1977, p. 185). In his essay here John Fiske draws our attention to the most ordinary practices of daily life—how people select and arrange

objects in their apartments, how they shop, what they eat. Following in a long cultural studies tradition, he argues that "the social order constrains and oppresses the people, but at the same time offers them resources to fight against those constraints." In cultural studies traditions, then, culture is understood *both* as a way of life—encompassing ideas, attitudes, languages, practices, institutions, and structures of power—and a whole range of cultural practices: artistic forms, texts, canons, architecture, mass-produced commodities, and so forth. Or as Hall puts it, *culture* means "the actual, grounded terrain of practices, representations, languages and customs of any specific historical society" as well as "the contradictory forms of 'common sense' which have taken root in and helped to shape popular life" (Hall, 1986a, p. 26).

As Johnson (1986) writes, cultural studies is both an intellectual and a political tradition. There is a kind of double articulation of culture in cultural studies, where "culture" is simultaneously the ground on which analysis proceeds, the object of study, and the site of political critique and intervention. But cultural studies has not embraced all political positions. As James Carey points out, resistance to cultural studies often reflects an uneasy awareness that its traditions "lead one to commit oneself in advance to a moral evaluation of modern society . . . to a revolutionary line of political action or, at the least, a major project of social reconstruction" (1989, p. 101). Of course the evaluations that cultural studies writers have offered differ considerably. In one of the founding texts of cultural studies, *The Uses of Literacy* (1958), Hoggart decries boti contemporary popular culture and the very youth subcultures that subsequent cultura studies scholars have come to value. But it is nonetheless true that from the outset cultura studies' efforts to recover working-class culture and history and to synthesize progressiv traditions in Western intellectual history have had both overt and implicit political aims

These aims and necessities have always been situated historically. Different tra ditions of cultural studies, including British and American versions, have grown out o efforts to understand the processes that have shaped modern and postwar society an culture: industrialization, modernization, urbanization, the rise of mass communicatio the disintegration of what Raymond Williams described as "knowable communities, the increasing commodification of cultural life, the collapse of the Western coloniali empires and the development of new forms of imperialism, the creation of a glob economy and the worldwide dissemination of mass culture, the emergence of new forn of economically or ideologically motivated migration, and the re-emergence of natio alism and of racial and religious hostilities. These very general historical conditio manifest themselves differently in different national contexts, contexts that have result in several distinctive cultural studies traditions. Moreover, in each context these diver forces have often produced significant social, political, and cultural disruption, disl cation, and struggle. Hence a continuing preoccupation within cultural studies is tl notion of radical social and cultural transformation and how to study it. Yet in virtual all traditions of cultural studies, its practitioners see cultural studies not simply as chronicle of cultural change but as an intervention in it, and see themselves not simp as scholars providing an account but as politically engaged participants.

Jan Zita Grover and Henry Giroux in their essays here both cite the classroom one place where cultural studies can make a difference, but the variety of interventio aimed for in these essays eventually ranges through the culture as a whole. Angie Ch bram-Dernersesian critiques the gender politics of traditional Chicano culture and off an analysis of recent Chicana cultural interventions. Kobena Mercer seeks to open new political alliances based on nonessentialist awareness of racial difference. Jenni Daryl Slack and Laurie Anne Whitt believe cultural studies can help us to theorize t normative assumptions behind the environmental movement. Douglas Crimp presses

to recognize the effects of how people with AIDS are represented. Elspeth Probyn, talking about the fall 1990 massacre of women engineering students at the University of Montreal (where she teaches) and its impact on the feminist community, calls for greater generosity in our representations of identity and difference as well as in our everyday conduct toward each other. Meaghan Morris calls upon cultural analysts to engage more concretely with the details of contemporary world economic formations, specifically new configurations centering around the Pacific Rim. Tony Bennett argues that cultural studies needs to have an impact on public policy. Paul Gilroy urges us to loosen the hold of national identity on our cultural life and begin to think of the Atlantic community as both a fact of history and a potential field for future political activity. Cornel West gives a general talk on the political function of the intellectual at the present time. Finally, Donna Haraway attempts to lay out global principles for local politics in the postmodern age. She urges us to abandon a traditional politics of representation—which distances, objectifies, decontextualizes, and disempowers whatever it represents—and instead adopt local struggles for strategic collective articulations, articulations that are always contingent, contestable, and impermanent. As Michele Wallace demonstrates, the process of articulating alliances is never self-evident or guaranteed.

Cultural studies thus believes that its practice does matter, that its own intellectual work is supposed to—can—make a difference. But its interventions are not guaranteed; they are not meant to stand forever. The difference it seeks to make is necessarily relevant only for particular circumstances; when cultural studies work continues to be useful over time, it is often because it has been rearticulated to new conditions. Cultural studies is never merely a theoretical practice, even when that practice incorporates notions of politics, power, and context into its analysis. Indeed, the sense that cultural studies offers a bridge between theory and material culture—and has done so throughout its tradition—is an important reason for its appeal to contemporary scholars. In a period of waning enthusiasm for "pure" and implacably ahistorical theory, cultural studies demonstrates the social difference theory can make. In cultural studies, the politics of the analysis and the politics of intellectual work are inseparable. Analysis depends on intellectual work; for cultural studies, theory is a crucial part of that work. Yet intellectual work is, by itself, incomplete unless it enters back into the world of cultural and political power and struggle, unless it responds to the challenges of history. Cultural studies, then, is always partly driven by the political demands of its context and the exigencies of its institutional situation; critical practice is not only determined by, it is responsible to, its situation. Through the last two decades, when theory has sometimes seemed a decontextualized scene of philosophical speculation, cultural studies has regularly theorized in response to particular social, historical, and material conditions. Its theories have attempted to connect to real social and political problems. Now that "theory" is more broadly returning to material concerns and interrogating the social effects of its own discourses, it finds its enterprise clarified and facilitated by the cultural studies challenge.

Thus many of the contributors to this volume are concerned with the role of the intellectual in affecting social change, including Rosalind Brunt, John Fiske, Henry Giroux, Stuart Hall, bell hooks, Meaghan Morris, Andrew Ross, and Cornel West. In Ross's case, this was the primary subject of his 1989 book, *No Respect: Intellectuals and Popular Culture.* For many, this involves considerable self-interrogation. West, for example, calls for intellectuals to examine the academy's own self-sustaining practices and its role in the massive shift to an information and service economy. Hall points to the AIDS epidemic as "one of the questions which urgently brings before us our marginality as critical intellectuals in making real effects in the world . . . Against the urgency of people dying in the streets, what in God's name is the point of cultural studies . . . If you don't feel that as one tension in the work that you are doing, theory has let you off the hook." Yet, he continues, the question of AIDS is also "an extremely important terrain of struggle and contestation" in which the realities, now and in the future, of sexual politics, desire, and pleasure, who lives and dies, are bound up in metaphor and representation. What cultural studies must do, and has the capacity to do, is to articulate insights about "the constitutive and political nature of representation itself, about its complexities, about the effects of language, about textuality as a site of life and death." At the same time, AIDS "rivets us to the necessary modesty of theory, the necessary modesty of cultural studies as an intellectual project."

It is notable that even in a cultural studies collection as broad and international as this one, with a number of heavily theoretical essays, there is little attempt at the sort of grand theorizing that imagines it can define the politics and semiotics of representation, gender, race, or textuality for all time. You can draw much out of these essays for use in other contexts and to answer new challenges, but not, ideally, without asking how their theoretical work needs to be rethought. Douglas Crimp's essay on AIDS photographs can sensitize us to the effects of representation in other contexts. But since the power of his analysis grows partly out of its reflections on homophobia and its concern for the special cultural and psychic meanings of AIDS, we should properly rethink those contexts independently. Crimp argues that we should never analyze an object alone and out of context and then goes on to say that we should "formulate our activist demands, not in relation to the 'truth' of the image, but in relation to the conditions of its construction and to its social effects." Crimp's analysis is a strategic intervention; these same images could have different meanings and do diffrent cultural work in other contexts.

Similar strategies and contextual aims inform many of the other essays as well. Laura Kipnis's analysis of how class and gender are articulated together in the pages of *Hustler*—and her effort to grant it a certain oppositional force—is more a challenge to rethink the unconscious biases within the "tendency to locate resistance, agency, and micro-political struggle just about everywhere in mass cultural reception" than it is an effort simply to expand that tendency. And it would be risky to assume that Catherine Hall's reading of how nineteenth-century English national identity was grounded in race—"In 1833 the dominant definition of Englishness included the gratifying element of liberator of enslaved Africans"—could be easily applied to other national contexts, though her effort to understand how "English identity was constructed through the active silencing of the disruptive relations of ethnicity, of gender, and of class" gives us a model that deserves to be rethought for and articulated to other historical moments. Notably, it is partly the special character of the British experience—the alliances and tensions between different peoples of color in London, the historic specificity of the way immigration and racism have played themselves out in a British context—that have in part made possible the important advances among British cultural studies scholars in developing non-essentialist theories of race and ethnicity. The essays here by Kobena Mercer and Paul Gilroy take that work still further. These theories have been needed to account for social history in Britain and both to take advantage of and to open up new possibilities for political alliances. That work can be quite powerful in an American context, but this much larger, more dispersed, and historically distinctive country requires that we theorize different antagonisms and possibilities. Some of the difficulties and challenges involved in moving theory to new contexts are thought out in the essays on Australia by Meaghan Morris and Graeme Turner. Morris devotes part of her essay to an analysis of "the *social* conditions for inventing a critical practice" and Turner declares that his "paper has been about the cultural specificity of theory."

This kind of emphasis on contingencies is central to contemporary cultural studies, to a theory of articulation, and to models for carrying out conjunctural analysis—analysis, that is, which is embedded, descriptive, and historically and contextually specific. Only such an approach can hope to address the changing alliances within contemporary political movements and to sort out contingent intersections of social movements from longterm "organic" change. Hall (1986a, pp. 6–7), for example, writes that Gramsci's "most illuminating ideas and formulations are typically of this conjunctural kind. To make more general use of them, they have to be delicately disinterred from their concrete and specific historical embeddedness and transplanted to new soil with considerable care and patience." Some of the writers in this book, indeed, argue that theoretical transplants can be quite misleading. Thus Lata Mani warns us that poststructuralist readings of hegemony can be misleading when applied to a colonial state that achieved not hegemony but dominance.

This is not to say that every theoretical advance made within the cultural studies tradition requires the same level of disentanglement from prior uses before it is put to work in a markedly different cultural context. The concept of articulation—along with its companion terms, disarticulation and rearticulation—widely and successfully used in cultural studies in the 1980s—is an example of a concept sufficiently abstract and general that it can be moved to new contexts whenever it is helpful. It provides a way of describing the continual severing, realignment, and recombination of discourses, social groups, political interests, and structures of power in a society. It provides as well a way of describing the discursive processes by which objects and identities are formed or given meaning. In its application, therefore, it is anything but abstract. On the other hand, a concept like subcultures is much more historically entangled. It arose in cultural studies work in Britian as part of the effort to describe and understand youth cultures that—at a particular moment—had sufficient experiential and social depth and stylistic coherence to become a way of life. It has since sometimes been applied too casually, granting subcultural status to what are essentially American leisure activities. British subcultural work remains useful in other contexts, but it cannot simply be imitated unreflectively. Consider, for example, Graeme Turner's comments here on the effect of British theorizing about popular culture and its audiences when it is transported to the United States:

> The recovery of the audience, the new understandings of the strategies of resistance audiences employ, and the invocation of such strategies within definitions of popular culture, have all been important, corrective, developments within British cultural studies. Their export to the USA, however, to a context where the notion of the popular occupies a very different place within dominant cultural definitions, seems to have exacerbated an already significant expansion in the cultural optimism such explanations generate—an optimism that is ultimately about capitalism and its toleration of resistance.

On the other hand, to do research on working-class culture or youth subcultures, to examine the role of the media in producing consensus, to reflect on issues of class and gender in relation to popular culture, to deploy bodies of theory like Marxism, feminism, poststructuralism, or psychoanalysis in cultural studies projects *without* knowing the work done in Britain, Australia, and elsewhere is to willingly accept real incapacitation. There is, in short, a history of real achievements that is now part of the cultural studies tradition. The term *cultural studies* stands for, of course, the study of culture, but it is no more synonymous with that than the term *women's studies* is synonymous with the study of women. The broad rubric, involving the study of culture, has been loosely affixed to many kinds of enterprises, but it is the Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies at Birmingham that adopted, constructed, and formalized the term cultural studies as a name for its own unique project. Some United States academics are willing to generalize about cultural studies in complete or virtually complete ignorance of the work that runs from Williams to many of the contributors in this book. It is hard to think of another body of work where that level of ignorance could be sustained unchallenged.

Yet in accounts of British cultural studies this history of investments and accomplishments is sometimes reconstructed in far too linear a fashion. It is not, however, the figures and institutions that are in doubt. Thus accounts of British cultural studies appropriately begin with Williams's efforts in *Culture and Society* (1958) and *The Long Revolution* (1961) to theorize the relations between culture and society; with Hoggart's two-part project in *The Uses of Literacy* (1958)—first, to track the connections between British working-class language, beliefs, values, family life, gender relations, and rituals and such working-class institutions as sporting events and pubs, and, second, to record the loss of that culture as American popular culture spread through Britain; and with E. P. Thompson's effort in *The Making of the English Working Class* (1963) to rescue "the poor stockinger, the Luddite cropper" and the rest of the working class from "the enormous condescension of posterity." The key institutional moment is the founding of the Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies at Birmingham in 1964, with Hoggart as director. Hall succeeded him in 1969 and stayed on for a decade. The Centre's projects included the journal *Working Papers in Cultural Studies* and a series of important co-authored and co-edited books, among them the especially influential *Resistance Through Rituals: Youth Subcultures in Post-War Britain* (1976) and *Policing the Crisis: Mugging, the State, and Law and Order* (1978), the latter being a watershed example of a collaborative, contextural cultural analysis. Since then British cultural studies has also been associated with various Open University courses in ideology and popular culture, and with journals like *New Formations, Cultural Studies,* and *Screen.*

Through complex negotiations with Marxism and semiotics, and with various sociological and ethnographic traditions, the work of the Centre in fact culminates in several large bodies of work: subcultural theory (Hall and Jefferson, 1976; Willis, 1977; Clarke, Critcher, and Johnson, 1979; Hebdige, 1979) and media studies built upon a model of encoding and decoding (Morley, 1980; Hobson, 1982). Then, with a renewed interest in Gramsci, an interest that emphasized articulation and the struggle to make meanings, the Centre increasingly turned to questions of racism, hegemony, and Thatcherism (Hall, et al., 1978; CCCS, 1982; Hall, 1988; Gilroy 1987). This moved cultural studies away from both its earlier humanistic assumptions and the extreme deconstructive possibilities of some versions of poststructuralism. Meanwhile, feminism "interrrupted" this development, forcing cultural studies to rethink its notions of subjectivity, politics, gender, and desire (Women's Studies Group, 1978). And most recently, under the influence of studies of race, ethnicity, and postcolonialism, and in the face of the AIDS epidemic, cultural studies has become increasingly concerned with the complex ways in which identity itself is articulated, experienced, and deployed (ICA, 1987 and 1988; Rutherford, 1990; Parmar, 1989; Weeks, 1990; Watney, 1989). And all the time, cultural studies continues to produce important studies of the politics of popular culture (Chambers, 1986; Hebdige, 1988; Winship, 1987; Bennett and Woolacott, 1987; McRobbie, 1990; Fiske 1989). And the story continues.

But this narrative erases the complexity of the Centre's work, not only work in areas like education, leisure, welfare policy, and history (e.g., see Clarke and Critcher, 1985; CCCS Education Group, 1981; CCCS, 1982; Langan and Schwartz, 1985) but also the uncertainties, false starts, interruptions and detours, successes and failures, con-

flict. As Paul Gilroy points out in this collection, it is dangerous to fetishize an imaginary moment. British cultural theory is not, and never was, a homogenous body of work; it has always been characterized by disagreements, often contentious ones, by divergencies of direction and concern, by conflict among theoretical commitments and political agendas. As Carolyn Steedman points out in her essay here, the reification of its tradition obscures its real history and the complex relations of its institutional, historical, and intellectual development. No one paradigm can be taken, metonymically, as the exemplar of British cultural studies.

Nor is this, as we have suggested, a narrative into which we can now insert ourselves in any simple fashion, either at the beginning—as if we were required to relive the entire story—or at the end, as if, having mastered this imaginary narrative, we can comfortably claim its fruits. For in fact, cultural studies is continuously undermining canonical histories even as it reconstructs them for its own purposes. Constantly writing and rewriting its own history to make sense of itself, constructing and reconstructing itself in response to new challenges, rearticulating itself in new situations, discarding old assumptions and appropriating new positions, cultural studies is always contextual. As this collection demonstrates, even those who participated in this history regularly find the need to reevaluate it. Thus Hall rewrites the history of the Centre here as a series of ruptures and displacements, while Gilroy critiques cultural studies' early blindness toward issues of race and finds in its founding texts "an image of self-sustaining and absolute ethnicity lodged complacently between the concepts of people and nation." It is fair to say, then, that the *future* of cultural studies will include rereadings of its past that we cannot yet anticipate.

Of course, as Lidia Curti notes in her paper, we are theorizing about the status of cultural studies in the wake of poststructuralism and postmodernism, and the high degree of instability that we attribute to it is the result of two things: the state of theory at the moment, and our ability to look back on thirty years of cultural studies history and see it as "unstable"—more so than at many earlier points in its development. It is partly these historical and theoretical changes that enable Hall to revise his view of the history of cultural studies and see it as discontinuous and disrupted. More generally, James Clifford observes that we now work in the context of the "diverse, interconnected histories of travel and displacement in the late twentieth century"; as a result, we are inclined to question "the organic, naturalizing bias of the term culture—seen as a rooted body that grows, lives, dies, etc." No one could have foreseen where cultural studies would go; neither could anyone have anticipated the degree to which stability and fixity would be intellectually devalued. Further, several viable national cultural studies traditions now co-exist: in addition to spreading through academic disciplines and educational institutions, cultural studies will also proceed within these national traditions in partial autonomy.

It is the future of cultural studies in the United States that seems to us to present the greatest need for reflection and debate. The threat is not from institutionalization *per se*, for cultural studies has always had its institutionalized forms within and outside the academy. Nor is the issue where cultural studies should lead its disciplinary life, for practitioners of cultural studies have always carried on complex negotiations with the demands of different disciplines, and even in the United States no one discipline can now fully co-opt the cultural studies label. The issue for U.S. practitioners is what kind of work will be identified with cultural studies and what social effects it will have. If not every study of culture and politics is cultural studies, then people need to decide what difference it makes when they adopt the term "cultural studies" to describe their work. Too many people simply rename what they were already doing to take advantage of the cultural studies boom. Yet as this collection demonstrates, a number of people are doing inventive cultural studies work in the United States and elsewhere, including many countries not represented here.

One purpose of the book is to present cultural studies as a genuinely international phenomenon and to help people compare and contrast the work being done in different countries. Many of our contributors have long been associated with cultural studies; others, it is important to note, have not. Before we invited people to contribute to the book, we debated for some time about whose work, we believed, did or did not count as cultural studies. Sometimes we couldn't agree. In fact, some of the contributors were surprised when we invited them, because they were not sure they "belonged" in the field. In some instances, we felt their work represented a viable alternative tradition in cultural studies; in others, we felt their work had the potential for productive alliances with cultural studies. At the same time, we would argue that some of the scholarship now described or marketed as cultural studies does not actually fit within its traditions.

One common misconception about cultural studies is that it is primarily concerned with popular culture. Indeed, it is certainly to be expected that cultural studies will be used to legitimate the move of established disciplines like literary studies, history, and anthropology into the excluded domain of popular culture. But one may also note the presence here of such essays on high cultural topics as Peter Stallybrass on Shakespeare, Ian Hunter on aesthetics, and Janet Wolff on intellectual traditions in the study of art. Thus any familiarity with either the diverse history of cultural studies or the diverse contents of this book should persuade people that cultural studies' interests are much wider. Although popular culture has clearly been an important item on cultural studies' agenda for analysis, cultural studies is not simply "about" popular culture—though it is perhaps always, in part, about the rules of inclusion and exclusion that guide intellectual evaluations. Although cultural studies work is often occasioned by an examination of specific cultural practices, it should not be identified with any particular set of cultural practices. This is to say that a scholarly discipline, like literature, cannot begin to do cultural studies simply by expanding its dominion to encompass specific cultural forms (western novels, say, or TV sitcoms, or rock and roll), social groups (working class youth, for example, or communities "on the margins," or women's rugby teams), practices (wilding, quilting, hacking), or periods (contemporary culture, for example, as opposed to historical work). Cultural studies involves *how* and *why* such work is done, not just its content.

Cultural studies is, however, broadly concerned with the popular in other deeper and more challenging ways. First, because cultural studies is concerned with the interrelationships between supposedly separate cultural domains, it necessarily interrogates the mutual determination of popular belief and other discursive formations. As Emily Martin and Andrew Ross show here, the dividing line between, for example, popular belief and science is more permeable that we are inclined to think. Second, cultural studies has long been concerned with the everyday terrain of people, and with all the ways that cultural practices speak to, of, and for their lives. In this sense, the significance of "the popular" in cultural studies involves the observation that struggles over power must increasingly touch base with and work through the cultural practices, languages, and logics of the people—yet "the people" cannot be defined ahead of time. There is no simple hierarchical binary system that can be taken for granted, as if "the people" are always absolutely subordinated to an elite minority and subordination can be defined along some single dimension of social difference. Indeed, cultural studies at its best is properly careful about invocations of "the people" in its own work and elsewhere. As Meaghan Morris observes, " 'culture' is one medium of a power struggle in which most

participants, at some state or another, will passionately invoke on their own behalf the interests of 'Ordinary Australians.' "

Cultural studies does, to be sure, have a long history of commitment to disempowered populations. Some of its founding figures, like Williams and Hoggart, came from working-class families and indeed were among the first working-class students to gain access to the elite institutions of British higher education. Their need to make their own cultural heritage part of the culture universities study and remember helped motivate some of their early publications. Moreover, most of these people first taught not in universities but in adult education programs outside the university. Cultural studies was thus forged in the face of a sense of the margins versus the center. Hall writes that Hoggart, Thompson, Williams, and himself were all, in their different ways, distant from the center of British culture:

> We thus came from a tradition entirely marginal to the centers of English academic life, and our engagement in the questions of cultural change—how to understand them, how to describe them, and how to theorize them, what their impact and consequences were to be, socially—were first reckoned within the dirty outside world. The Centre for Cultural Studies was the locus to which we *retreated* when that conversation in the open world could no longer be continued: it was politics by other means. Some of us—me, especially—had always planned never to return to the university, indeed never to darken its doors again. But then, one always has to make pragmatic adjustments to where real work, important work, can be done. (Hall, 1990a, p. 12)

While it is important to honor that heritage, it is pointless for United States scholars either to assume they occupy the same marginalized positions or to struggle for that status, now that marginality has some currency in limited contexts. Nor can contemporary cultural studies across its varied institutional settings occupy any single position *vis à vis* the dominant culture. As Kobena Mercer argues in his paper, "no one has a monopoly on oppositional identity." Moreover, as we imply above, oppositional cultural analysis can have points of convergence with cultural studies without fulfilling the major imperatives of the cultural studies tradition. Indeed, it is incumbent on cultural studies scholars—as many of the contributors demonstrate here—to question both right and left scholarship from a cultural studies perspective.

It may, in fact, be useful to discuss in some detail an area of debate where neither cultural studies' contributions nor its positions will likely be those simplified ones the right has anticipated, especially since this is one area of left intellectual life now being given national publicity. We refer, of course, to the widespread efforts to redress the sexist, racist, and elitist biases of the traditional literary canon (the debate over which Glover and Kaplan's essay suggests may be peculiar to and perhaps even emblematic of American cultural studies). Given cultural studies' heritage of recovering or analyzing working-class culture and reconstructing left cultural traditions—and given as well the prominence of race and gender theory in cultural studies since the late 1970s—the shared commitments are clearly substantial. But these mutual interests do not in themselves make every "progressive" project of cultural recovery and transformation an integral part of cultural studies itself.

Current challenges to the traditional literary canon, for example, sometimes propose redrawing or eliminating the traditional line between elite and popular culture. Yet such proposals are not consistent with cultural studies unless they interrogate the cultural practices—within both academic and everyday life—that create, sustain, or suppress contestations over inclusion and exclusion. Certainly such contestations pervade many of our routine activities, often with limited theoretical reflection. At times such

challenges may be used just as unreflectively—though perhaps to an end with which cultural studies scholars would feel sympathy—to unseat traditional works of the already legitimated canon. This, too, bears watching and reflection.

At a conference in 1990 on radical pedagogical practices, one speaker described his practice of using Milton's poem "Lycidas" to teach deconstruction and other theoretical reading strategies; another described using the Bible to explore a range of contemporary preoccupations in the classroom, including sexuality, gender, race, violence against women, incest, homosexuality, and so on. Both were vigorously attacked by some members of the audience who claimed that they were, in so many words, bludgeoning their students with instruments of patriarchal oppression and that, in the case of "Lycidas" at any rate, women students were quite possibly being irreversibly damaged. Cultural studies, we need note, has addressed these kind of unreflective arguments before, and has shown that a text's effects need to be established contextually. On the politics of the Bible one might, for example, read Stuart Hall's (1985c) work on Jamaica. As Anna Szemere shows here in her analysis of the contest over the Hungarian "uprising" of 1958, the meaning of texts, discourses, and political events is a continuing site of struggle.

But there are other appropriate contextual questions as well: Who decides? Who has power to decide? Are the views of the students important? What is the evidence for "damage"? Is any particular cultural product so powerful that it must be suppressed? Ultimately, we would argue, it is not only the content of the selection that must be examined—who ends up in the canon—the syllabus—the conference—the book—history. It is also the constitution and consequences of selection, by progressive as well as by conservative forces. And it is also the determinants that put the ideological indeterminacy of texts to work in particular ways. Cultural studies does not require us to repudiate elite cultural forms—or simply to acknowledge, with Bourdieu (1984), that distinctions between elite and popular cultural forms are themselves the products of relations of power. Rather, cultural studies requires us to identify the operation of specific practices, of how they continuously reinscribe the line between legitimate and popular culture, and of what they accomplish in specific contexts. At the same time, cultural studies must constantly interrogate its own connection to contemporary relations of power, its own stakes.

Every act of cultural struggle is thus not necessarily consistent with the politics of cultural studies, though cultural studies would agree with feminists, people of color, and those on the left that the canon presents a selective tradition that is deeply implicated in existing relations of power. Moreover, such projects can enrich cultural studies, make alliances with cultural studies, and themselves become cultural studies projects. Again, it is not selection alone that must be examined but rather its effects and the practices that constitute the selection—practices which implicate us, too, as intellectuals. What are the cultural conditions under which "Lycidas" can be called "damaging" and removed from the syllabus? At the very least, surely diverse resources should be available to any generation as it moves through history. And after a decade in which thousands of young men have died prematurely in the course of the AIDS epidemic and thousands of others have mourned them, "Lycidas" is quite probably a resource as rich and useful as many that could be named. We wrote earlier that the future of cultural studies cannot be wholly constrained by its own heritage of cultural investments. As Donna Haraway's essay suggests, cultural studies may yet need to consider objects of study we have not imagined. We may now add that cultural studies cannot be used to denigrate a whole class of cultural objects, though it can certainly indict the uses to which those objects have been put.

Finally, it is not only our acts of selection and recovery but also the cultural positioning of the objects and practices recovered that need scrutiny. It may be useful in this context to recall another lesson from Williams's early formulations of the project of cultural studies: his refusal to define culture in isolation from the rest of social life, a refusal that further distinguishes cultural studies from other enterprises and animates its central theoretical concepts, including articulation, conjuncture, hegemony, ideology, identity, and representation. Continually engaging with the political, economic, erotic, social, and ideological, cultural studies entails the study of all the relations between all the elements in a whole way of life. This is at once an impossible project and the necessary context of any objects or traditions rescued, to echo Thompson, from the enormous condescension of posterity. A recovery project that imagines the objects it recovers to exist as fully self-contained and independent entities, knowable apart from their own time and the time of their recovery, is, properly speaking, not part of cultural studies (Nelson, 1989). Academic disciplines often decontextualize both their methods and their objects of study; cultural studies properly conceives both relationally.

Somewhat different issues inform another visible tradition allied with cultural studies in the U.S.—the new ethnography, rooted primarily in anthropological theory and practice. Although the new ethnography does not, by itself, necessarily define an alternative tradition of cultural studies, it joins another body of work by feminist, black, and postcolonial theorists concerned with identity, history, and social relations. The tension between these traditions opens up new possibilities, not merely for a reformed practice of ethnography and anthropology, but for a cultural studies practice which can no longer be comfortably located within the discipline of anthropology, though Clifford points out that anthropologists "are in a much better position, now, to contribute to a genuinely comparative, and non-teleological, cultural studies." For the new work in feminism, racism, and postcolonialism has, after all, critiqued the normalizing and exoticizing construction of culture and otherness constitutive of traditional anthropology. In the present volume, the essays by Bhabha, Clifford, Haraway, and Martin give some sense of what a postdisciplinary anthropology might look like. At the same time, these alliances and collective challenges generate their own tensions. Some feminist anthropologists (including Martin) have noted how ironic it is that "the new ethnography" calls traditional representation into question at precisely the historical moment that that representation is taking place by, of, and on behalf of women and other subordinated groups more than ever before. At the moment that women's voices enter the anthropological literature as agents, in other words, "voices" are labeled inauthentic, contaminated, and imperialist—and once again what comes to be most privileged in the scholarly literature are predominantly the voices of white male anthropologists speaking to each other.

This sensitivity to the politics of ethnography affects other cultural studies projects as well. Rosalind Brunt, taking issue with work in cultural studies that treats audiences as "imagined communities," suggests the time has come to bring research on constructed audiences and real audiences together. She observes that some of the most interesting work has been done by feminist researchers involved with communities of women who often form extraordinary audiences and who *want* to discuss and reflect on their particular cultural speciality (e.g., Constance Penley's work with Star Trek fanzine communities of women). They thus do not fit the conventional notion of "research subjects," and indeed, Brunt suggests, might better be described—together with the researchers, fans, fanatics, experts, critics, writers, and other interested participants—as part of "a community of heightened consciousness" (the term is from Jacqueline Bobo). One can step back and note more generally that "the linguistic turn" in the humanities that Catherine

Hall, among others, addresses in this volume, need not inevitably lead away from the observation of experience; yet it has raised the value of linguistically dense, self-reflexive, and speculative work—often at the expense of other kinds of scholarship. The effect may not always be to empower women and others in an academic community newly diverse in its identities and cultural commitments: where they are concerned the effect may rather be that, as Sanchez-Tranquilino and Tagg write in the context of the *pachuco*, "There ceases to be an occupiable space in which to celebrate their arrival."

The productive tension surrounding models of culture and modernity defines the specific practice of cultural studies, shapes the constantly transformed relations of history, experience, and culture, and provides a place which makes judgment and even intervention possible.[3] This tension informs all traditions of cultural studies: the British and its rearticulation in other national contexts; the American pragmatic and anthropological traditions; work in America and elsewhere in media criticism, education, history, feminism, African-American studies, Latino studies, studies of indigenous and aboriginal cultures. And the tension itself is constantly being interrogated and challenged. As cultural studies confronts a changing historical world, new intellectual positions and knowledge, emergent political struggles, and its own institutional conditions, it must always contest its own sedimented practices by finding new ways to articulate its role. It must continue to spell out the relations between the theoretical and the empirical, and to rearticulate history in terms of specific material contexts. Even notions of context must be constructed contextually: as Meaghan Morris points out in the discussion following Steedman's paper in this collection, even history must be defined within the specificity of the place from which one speaks. If a crucial goal of cultural studies is, as Angela McRobbie says here, to understand social transformation and cultural change, it is a goal we need to approach with care and humility. We believe that the essays in this book represent a significant contribution.

Notes

1. Work that documents the evolution of cultural studies at Birmingham includes Stuart Hall (e.g., 1980a and 1980c), Raymond Williams (1958, 1976, 1989b), Richard Hoggart (1969), Richard Johnson (1986, 1987), Rosalind Coward (1977), Chambers et al. (1977), Women's Studies Group (1978), Angela McRobbie (1981 and 1991), John Fiske (1987), and Lawrence Grossberg (1989b). Other efforts to chart the terrain of cultural studies include Janice Radway (1986), Lana Rakow (1986), Paula A. Treichler and Ellen Wartella (1986), Fiske et al. (1987), Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe (1985), Patrick Brantlinger (1990), James Carey (1989), Graeme Turner (1990), Larry Grossberg (1988a, 1989a), Anne Balsamo and Paula A. Treichler (1990), bell hooks (1990), Anne Balsamo (1991), and Cary Nelson (1991).

2. Of course interdisciplinarity is often neither total nor intellectually burdensome—it's not hard to cite theoretical works, problems, and positions from outside our own field. Nor to make brief intellectual excursions into other domains, to cull good quotes or encapsulate the requisite background on history, economics, gender, or whatever. Cultural studies, however, involves taking other projects and questions seriously enough to do the work—theoretical and analytical—required to understand and position specific cultural practices. True interdisciplinarity thus poses difficult questions: what and how much must be learned from other fields to enable us sufficiently to contextualize our object of study for a given project?

3. We might plausibly place the emergence of the "culture and society tradition" at the intersection of modernization, modernity (as a structure of experience and identity), and modernism, each taken in its broadest sense. Modernization, then, can be understood not only as changing modes and relations of production but as a broad range of additional interrelated historical forces as well, including economic relations of production, distribution, and consumption (e.g., development of new commodity markets, expansion of cultural consumption), technology, co-

lonialism and imperialism, migration (whether necessitated by force, economic conditions, or ideology, the diaspora is now a dominant figure of contemporary experience), urbanization, democratization, and the rearticulation of normative systems based on race, class, nationality, sex, and sexuality. Modernity refers to the changing structures and lived realities that modernization responded to and in turn reshaped: contested and ritualized structures of experience, subjectivity, and identity. And modernism, finally, refers to the cultural forms, practices, and relations—elite and popular, commercial and folk—through which people attempted to make sense of, represent, judge, rail against, surrender, intervene in, navigate, or escape the worlds of modernization and modernity. Modernism extends far beyond the domain of academically valorized culture which, like modernity itself, was shaped by new forms of leisure and emergent cultural practices disparagingly called *mass culture*. Modernism can rather be represented as the whole complex of responses to the changing historical landscape of the modern.

We can use this redefined terrain to understand how diverse traditions have laid claim to, or contributed to, the shape and work of cultural studies. And it may also help us understand the peculiar relationship that exists between cultural studies and communications: why for example it was largely in the field of communications that cultural studies initially found a home in the United States. For communication, too, has been marked by the ambivalences of the mass society debates of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries and the mass culture debates that took place in America, largely in defense of American society, after World War II—and marked, too, by the major communication research programs the two debates produced: the paranoid vision of the masses embodied in so-called propaganda research, and the more ambiguous and sympathetic perspectives of subsequent studies.

Different intellectual and political traditions can be seen as responding to a perceived crisis and coding it in terms of a vision of the modern or of the mass: as a structure and crisis of relations of production (Marx), or of social norms (Durkheim), or of subjective consciousness (Husserl), or of technological-bureaucratic rationalization (Weber, Frankfurt School), or of reification (Lukács) or of a technological mode of being (Heidegger), or of social relations (Dewey), or as a totalizing structure of domination and power which acts upon the masses as the new subject of history (totalitarianism in Arendt, fascism in Benjamin). In each case, the modern implied an alienation from some—imaginary—past (or future) which was, in fact, the projection of a position and measure of judgment. This temporal displacement, projected as a standard, is what Williams calls culture, and in the various meanings Williams identified, we can locate the values that were, in a variety of ways, held up against the modern: the tending of natural growth, organic community, a particular class vision of the proper social standards of behavior, the imaginative creativity of the romantic (individual or) artist, the body of intellectual and imaginative work privileged as the embodiment of "the best that has been thought and said," or, as Williams himself eventually argues, "the long revolution" (of democracy, literacy, and socialism) of a whole way of life.

But not all these visions of the modern have equally informed cultural studies, although all have at some point been taken up by and brought into its specific articulations. Some have provided an essential component for a particular tradition of cultural studies, while others provided key arguments that are more specifically relevant. Many have been taken up and bent to the specific strategic demands of cultural studies at a particular moment. Others have forced themselves upon cultural studies, interrupting its illusions of its own progress. Still others emerged in the context of postwar society, the context in which the project of cultural studies itself was formulated, as critics attempted to make sense of the increasingly rapid reconstruction of the modern. These considerations have continued into the debates around the various "posts": post-Marxism, postcolonialism, postfeminism, and, of course, postmodernism.

Cultural studies is formed at the intersection of these various visions of the modern. For example, Dewey's sense of the modern as a threat to community was triggered but also potentially remedied by the new forms of social communication. American cultural studies, often inflected toward sociology and anthropology, and readily visible in the work of people like James Carey, in many respects parallels Williams's image of the community of process in which forms of communications embody structures of social relationships and from which the modern can itself be judged.

Cultural Studies: A User's Guide to This Book

As we have worked through the essays in the book, it has become increasingly clear that no conventional table of contents could represent their multiple investments and interventions and the many alternative ways they could be grouped together. We solved that problem with an earlier collection (Nelson and Grossberg, 1988) by adopting fairly abstract division headings that would cut across some of the established categories of theoretical work. With cultural studies, however, that option proves rather unhelpful. The mix of theoretical and material investments needs to be registered in its specificity. Moreover, the necessarily relational character of cultural studies—its concern with how different discourses and social and cultural domains are articulated together, how they can both restrict and stimulate one another—inevitably means that cultural studies projects often contribute to more than one area of research and debate. Thus we decided to print the essays in alphabetical order (according to their author's last name) and provide a user's guide here that would allow us to place essays in multiple categories as appropriate. In combination with our commentary this should help people to see relationships between the essays more clearly and help them as well to use the book effectively to pursue their own interests. We are confident that the user's guide groups essays together in ways that make for productive comparisons and contrasts.

Beginning with one or two of the categories that match your current interests is one workable way to read the book. Some topics, however, are so pervasive that the only way to get at them is to read the book and make your own map of its contents. The two most obvious examples of this are the issue of representation—which is probably the theoretical category mentioned most often—and the concern with the current and future status of cultural studies, which recurs throughout the essays and the discussion sections. Merely tracking your own disciplinary and theoretical interests through the topics suggested in the user's guide will not take you to all the places where representation is analyzed and theorized nor to all the polemical interventions in the field as a whole. Thus someone who decides not to read, say, the David Glover and Cora Kaplan essay because they aren't interested in crime fiction will miss their long concluding section on cultural studies and its potential in English departments.

Our user's guide includes an essay in a category when we feel it is one of the essay's major points of focus, but the dividing line between major and minor is far from precise. Thus the series of essays listed under "gender," already relatively long, would be still longer if we noted every essay that explicitly or implicitly takes up gender issues. The section on nationhood and national identity will not tell you, for example, that the relation between race and national identity is also at issue in the essays by Kobena Mercer and Cornel West. The section on pedagogy will not alert you to West's brief but useful passage on teaching as cultural activism. Neither a table of contents nor anything less than a book-length introduction, moreover, could track all the important points of correspondence and difference in the book. In reading the book, you may note that Paul Gilroy calls for an analysis of how Britain's colonial role in Jamaica contributed to Britain's sense of national identity. Catherine Hall's analysis of the mutual articulation of race, class, and gender in Jamaica substantially answers Gilroy's call. Conversely, nothing short of a full reading of the book will allow a reader the chance to test all of the book's claims and counter-claims against one another. Lata Mani, for example, critiques the tendency to take the concept of the subaltern out of the specific context of Indian historiography and use it as a general figure for all oppressed peoples. John Fiske, Kobena Mercer, and others, however, deliberately use it in just that way. It is also worth noting that cultural studies titles often cannot really signal all the kinds of objects

and issues addressed in an essay. One would not know from their titles, therefore, that Lidia Curti's essay includes detailed analysis of several television series, that Constance Penley analyzes the slash fandom that has grown up around the *Star Trek* series, that Meaghan Morris uses two poems to ground her analysis of Australian culture, that Angie Chabram-Dernersisian analyzes several recent paintings, that not only William Warner but also Michele Wallace comments on the *Rambo* films, or that Angela McRobbie ends her essay with an analysis of a recent film. For all these reasons it is impossible to know in advance which essays will prove most relevant to your own work.

Finally, the user's guide can be a first step toward recognizing the theoretical and political commitments that underlie the important interrelations between these major areas of cultural studies research. If one takes, for example, the sections on gender, nationhood, postcolonialism, race, and identity politics, and then if one tracks the connections signaled by the essays that appear in more than one of these sections, certain shared interests become apparent. A conjunction of historical changes—the collapse of the colonial empires, the effects in Britain of the modern diaspora of peoples of color, the fragmentation of gender identities and the complexities of identity politics in the postmodern world—have led cultural studies writers to combine Gramscian politics with poststructuralist notions of subjectivity in a search at once for ways of explaining and intervening in the contemporary world. Across inquiries into gender, race, and national identity, then, cultural studies shows how the so-called "self" that underpins ideological formations is not a unified but a contradictory subject and a social construction.

Identities, too, then, are relational and contextual. An ongoing effect of cultural studies research has been to destabilize and de-essentialize standard categories of identity—race, class, nationality, gender, sexuality, ethnicity. But such a deconstructive effect is not an end in itself for cultural studies, for its goal is not to arrive at fractures, fragments, and differences which can themselves in turn be fetishized. Cultural studies undertakes the much more difficult project of holding identities in the foreground, acknowledging their necessity and potency, examining their articulation and rearticulation, and seeking a better understanding of their function. For some, identities would be seen as fundamentally harmonious and unitary, threatened only by large-scale social schisms; for others, identities entail continuous antagonism at every site of difference. For some, identities are the inevitable product of history; for others, the illusory product of history, or even individual psychic history; for still others, the site of real struggles, real attempts to forge historical unity out of pervasive fragmentation and difference. But none of these perspectives, if located within cultural studies, would take any given identity for granted. Cultural studies proposes neither a "mantra of subordination," in Kobena Mercer's phrase, nor a politics of an ever-expanding list of subordinate positions based on such identities as class, race, sex, etc. Instead it looks for the relations that exist among these positions in specific contexts, and the ways these positions are themselves produced by context.

1. **The History of Cultural Studies**
   Paul Gilroy, Cultural Studies and Ethnic Absolutism
   Stuart Hall, Cultural Studies and Its Theoretical Legacies
   Jennifer Daryl Slack and Laurie Anne Whitt, Ethics and Cultural Studies
   Carolyn Steedman, Culture, Cultural Studies, and the Historians
   Graeme Turner, "It Works for Me": British Cultural Studies, Australian Cultural Studies, Australian Film
2. **Gender and Sexuality**
   Angie Chabram-Dernersesian, I Throw Punches for My Race, but I Don't Want to be a Man: Writing Us—Chica-nos (Girl/Us)/ Chicanas—Into the Movement Script

   Douglas Crimp, Portraits of People with AIDS
   Lidia Curti, What Is Real and What Is Not: Female Fabulations in Cultural Analysis
   David Glover and Cora Kaplan, Guns in the House of Culture? Crime Fiction and the Politics of the Popular
   Catherine Hall, Missionary Stories: Gender and Ethnicity in England in the 1830s and 1840s
   Laura Kipnis, (Male) Desire and (Female) Disgust: Reading *Hustler*
   Lata Mani, Cultural Theory, Colonial Texts: Reading Eyewitness Accounts of Widow Burning
   Emily Martin, Body Narratives, Body Boundaries
   Constance Penley, Feminism, Psychoanalysis, and the Study of Popular Culture
   Elspeth Probyn, Technologizing the Self: A Future Anterior for Cultural Studies
   Michele Wallace, Negative Images: Towards a Black Feminist Cultural Criticism
   William Warner, Spectacular Images: Rambo and the Popular Pleasures of Pain
3. **Nationhood and National Identity**
   Tony Bennett, Putting Policy Into Cultural Studies
   Jody Berland, Angels Dancing: Cultural Technologies and the Production of Space
   Paul Gilroy, Cultural Studies and Ethnic Absolutism
   Catherine Hall, Missionary Stories: Gender and Ethnicity in England in the 1830s and 1840s
   Meaghan Morris, "On the Beach"
   Anna Szemere, Bandits, Heroes, the Honest, and the Misled: Exploring the Politics of Representation in the Hungarian Uprising of 1956
   Graeme Turner, "It Works for Me": British Cultural Studies, Australian Cultural Studies, Australian Film
4. **Colonialism and Postcolonialism**
   Homi Bhabha, Postcolonial Authority and Postmodern Guilt
   James Clifford, Traveling Cultures
   Catherine Hall, Missionary Stories: Gender and Ethnicity in England in the 1830s and 1840s
   Lata Mani, Cultural Theory, Colonial Texts: Reading Eyewitness Accounts of Widow Burning
   Graeme Turner, "It Works for Me": British Cultural Studies, Australian Cultural Studies, Australian Film
5. **Race and Ethnicity**
   Angie Chabram-Dernersesian, I Throw Punches for My Race, but I Don't Want to be a Man: Writing Us—Chica-nos (Girl/Us)/ Chicanas—Into the Movement Script
   Paul Gilroy, Cultural Studies and Ethnic Absolutism
   Catherine Hall, Missionary Stories: Gender and Ethnicity in England in the 1830s and 1840s
   bell hooks, Representing Whiteness in the Black Imagination
   Lata Mani, Cultural Theory, Colonial Texts: Reading Eyewitness Accounts of Widow Burning
   Kobena Mercer, "1968": Periodizing Postmodern Politics and Identity
   Marcos Sanchez-Tranquilino and John Tagg, The Pachuco's Flayed Hide: Mobility, Identity, and *Buenas Garras*