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Introducing Cultural Studies

A Brief Contextual History

Learning goals

- To understand the difficulty of defining the term 'culture' and appreciate the multi-disciplinary and complex character of cultural studies.
- To get a sense of the way cultural studies (using the British context) has been developed and consolidated in relation to the themes established by what have become a number of key writers and approaches.
- To see the way the different theories introduced and illustrated in this book reflect developing interests within cultural studies.

Concepts

The key concepts introduced in this chapter are: cultural studies, culture, the culture and civilization tradition, minority culture, mass culture, popular culture, the Frankfurt School, the culture industry, 'culturalism', the uses of literacy, the making of the English working class, culture as a whole way of life, youth subcultures, hegemony and organic intellectuals.

Introduction

These opening sections reflect on how the book fits into the (mainly British) cultural studies tradition, providing a brief 'refresher course' for readers who are familiar with cultural studies and some vital contextualization (or a 'kick start') for those who are relatively new to the area. In very general

terms I shall show how contemporary cultural analysis has grown out of (and beyond) approaches which tended to privilege 'high' culture over 'popular' or mass forms and indicate how the writers and theories relate to the general structure of the present book.

Cultural studies?

I want to begin this chapter with a number of questions. One, having sat down to write a book about theory and practice in cultural studies, can I say, beyond all doubt, that I know what culture is? Two, am I so sure about what cultural studies is that I can just start using it, without needing to reflect on it in any way? The answer to these questions is 'yes and no'. The term 'culture' can be made to have specific, intelligible meanings and there are departments of cultural studies with common ways of understanding and analysing 'culture', so where are the problems?

The problems reside in the fact that the practitioners who think of themselves as working in cultural studies are not necessarily in agreement about the precise definition of culture or about exactly what constitutes the area in which they are working. I have just referred to cultural studies as 'an area'; however (as I have suggested elsewhere, Walton, 2008: 291), it might be more effective to see it as a contested *space* in which a very diverse set of analytical practices take place. Cultural studies exists within educational institutions in many parts of the world and this means that what it 'is' is a product of a constant negotiation that takes place in the lecture room, in conference halls and publications. This means that books recommended for cultural studies will often be aimed at other areas like English Studies, Geography, Sociology, Social Studies, Communication, Film and Media Studies (and vice versa). This is because these areas share both thematic and theoretical legacies and these are all areas in which the meanings of culture are negotiated and deployed.

As Grossberg, Nelson and Treichler have observed, cultural studies has no particular methodology and 'draws from whatever fields are necessary to produce the knowledge required for a particular project' and is sometimes 'agressively anti-disciplinary'. Furthermore, it is 'pragmatic, strategic and self-reflexive' (1992: 2). These factors complicate the identity of cultural studies, even while they create certain dominant ways of thinking about and understanding culture and producing knowledge about it. This is why John Frow has argued that even though cultural studies exists 'in a state of productive uncertainty about its status as a discipline' there has been sufficient institutional consolidation of the area for practitioners to identify themselves with one another (1995: 7). To sum this up we might say that cultural studies did not pre-exist theory and practice – it is a product of them (and one of the intentions of this book is to offer an idea of what some of the key theories entail).

Despite the consolidation that Frow mentions, no book can place itself outside national borders and this volume cannot escape its geographical

location or its social and intellectual allegiances (written by someone brought up in Britain, but who lives and works in Spain, and has been influenced by North American and other English-speaking cultures, but also by theories developed in other parts of the world). This means that this book comes from a broadly British cultural studies' perspective, and this needs to be kept in mind. As Graeme Turner (a key figure in Australian cultural studies) has observed, alternative traditions of cultural studies tend to have to announce themselves as such, something which suggests a certain Anglo-centric tendency in English/British cultural studies (Turner, 1992: 642).

However, while accepting Turner's point I would argue that there is a certain dialectical tension between the local and the general. For example, when John Frow and Meagan Morris wrote their introduction to *Australian Cultural Studies* (1993) they carefully defined culture within the context of the country in which they were writing. They claimed, for example, that 'culture' can be thought of as not only intimately connected to work and its organization but 'with relations of power and gender in the workplace and the home; with the pleasures and the pressures of consumption; with the complex relations of class and kith and kin through which a sense of self is formed; and with the fantasies and desires through which social relations are carried and actively shaped'. Drawing on the work of Raymond Williams (see below), Frow and Morris suggest that 'culture' is a term that can define the 'whole way of life' of a social group as it is structured by forms of representation and power. Thus, it is not associated with efforts to claim for oneself social distinction and 'good' taste (see the section 'The Culture and Civilization Tradition' below). Within cultural studies it is 'a network of representations – texts, images, talk, codes of behaviour, and the narrative structures organizing these – which shapes every aspect of social life' (viii).

However, within this carefully localized definition something very interesting happens because this may be seen as a very good starting point for understanding cultural studies in a more general way. Thus, while we have to attend to the particularities of local cultures and recognize that what counts as cultural studies may differ from one geographical location to the next (and even be the object of differences within the same country or institution), there are (as Frow suggested) common (even dominant) approaches which enable some meaningful dialogue to take place between practitioners operating in different parts of the world.

It is important, then, to stress that the contextualizing material in this chapter is drawn (mainly) from the narrow, if highly influential, British cultural studies tradition. This narrative strategy has been adopted as a kind of shorthand to give *an idea* of how different theories have developed in relation to one another. But (to practise the self-reflexivity mentioned above) this shorthand has to be treated in a self-conscious and critical way. As Andrew Tudor has written, just like tribal societies, emergent disciplines are drawn to myths of origin, where stories 'stabilize otherwise recalcitrant histories by identifying founding figures' (1999: 19). Thus, the thumbnail sketch I offer below (with its founding and 'semi-founding' figures) must not be mistaken for some kind

of seamless, trouble-free history of cultural studies: it is a convenience to give a *sense* of the area. It is partial and self-consciously metonymic: it is a part that stands for the whole but it is offered with the proviso that we should not confuse England with Britain, or British cultural studies with cultural studies as it is practised in the rest of the world (see Morley, 1992: 2–3; Turner, 1992: 640f.; Jordan, 2002: 147f.).

Having said this, the theories discussed in this and the following chapters have been drawn from different critics from many parts of the world and no one tradition of cultural studies can lay special claim to them. The theories I introduce and demonstrate make up the components of a kind of all-purpose toolbox, to be used, questioned, refined or discarded according to the work they are being required to perform. Furthermore, all the approaches I discuss have had a particularly important influence in cultural studies as a whole and I would argue that familiarity with them is to make oneself a member of a cultural studies 'interpretive community' (Fish, 1980). The hope is that this book will help toward realizing that goal.

Of course, like any writer, I have had to take decisions about what aspects of an approach to include or exclude, what to emphasize or leave in the margins, and make choices about how to structure and interpret the concepts and approaches. Even my thumbnail sketch of founding figures in the British cultural studies tradition may be questioned. Chris Jenks has pointed out that there are many neglected antecedents to British cultural studies in the shape of writers like Charles Dickens, George Orwell and Jack London (to name only a few) (Jenks, 1993: 156–157). Many more names might be added, particularly women writers who could be said to be 'founding mothers' like Mary Wollstonecraft, George Eliot and, as I have argued elsewhere (Walton, 2008), Virginia Woolf (to choose only three women from three centuries of possibilities).

Culture?

If this book cannot hope to encompass the full extent of cultural studies, then neither can it exhaust the possibilities for the definition of **culture**, which are enormous – many books having been written about the institutional fortunes of the concept (see particularly Jenks, 1993; Tudor; 1999; Barker, 2000; Hartley, 2003; Turner, 2003). Approaches associated with fully institutionalized cultural studies do not start with a *particular* or narrow definition of culture but are generally interested in an exceptionally broad range of cultural products and practices. If, as will be seen below, this has not always been the case, there is now wide agreement with Raymond Williams's observation that culture 'is one of the two or three most complicated words in the English language'. Despite this complexity, Williams helped his readers get some kind of grip on the word by tracing its etymology back to the idea of cultivating crops or rearing animals. This provided the basis for its metaphorical use from around the sixteenth century to signify 'a process of human development',

including the cultivation of refined behaviour, the mind and society in general (1983a: 87f.). This is often the starting point for modern definitions.

The basic notion of culture that commonly informs dictionary definitions reflects this etymology and often draws on Edward Burnett Tylor's anthropological view of culture as 'that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, custom, and any other capabilities and habits' acquired by members of a given society (Tylor, 1871/1958: 1). This complex whole (so important to Williams's approach) also includes ideas, values and the shared traditions that comprise the common bases of social (inter)action which are transmitted, reinforced, refined or replaced by members of a group. However, while these lists of possibilities are very useful at a more general and abstract level, any attempt to limit the definition at the level of particular objects of analysis is futile because as the world changes new possibilities (or domains of interest) for the understanding of cultures are constantly appearing.

For example, when Grossberg, Nelson and Treichler compiled a cultural studies' reader in 1992 they mapped the area by listing some of its major categories, which included: gender, sexuality, nationhood and national identity, colonialism and post-colonialism, race and ethnicity, popular culture, identity politics, cultural institutions and global culture. They concluded by saying that 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' (Grossberg et al., 1992: 1). Of course, since 1992 much has changed and the domains of interest have expanded greatly and new areas of interest present a challenge to contemporary ways of defining and thinking about culture. Not only this, but new theories are constantly being developed and tested to try to do justice to these new phenomena.

This means that cultural analysis has to keep itself open to new possibilities and approaches. In order to show one of the ways in which cultural studies has worked towards this position I shall now review a series of writers who comprise some of the key figures of Tudor's founding myth of cultural studies. I shall begin with the idea of culture wedded to the notion of civilization in order to understand how cultural studies (at least in the British context) could be said to have been born out of an antagonistic struggle against certain narrow ways of conceiving the cultural terrain. The first approach I will discuss is what is known as the 'culture and civilization tradition'.

The culture and civilization tradition: Matthew Arnold and the Leavises

The **culture and civilization tradition** can be seen to be reflected by the Victorian writer Matthew Arnold, and later by F. R. and Queenie Leavis (who began to have an influence on English Studies in the years between the First and Second World Wars). What tends to unite them (despite the historical

distance that separated them) is their writing against what they believed were the worst excesses of the Industrial Revolution and their belief that great cultural traditions could, at least to some degree, counterbalance these effects and provide a way forward for society. The title of one of Arnold's most important books, *Culture and Anarchy* (1869/1970), is illustrative of this approach. In this book Arnold pitted his idea of culture against those anarchistic forces that threatened what he believed were the very bases of civilized life.

Arnold coined the term 'sweetness and light' to describe the essence of culture, which he associated with the 'moral and social passion for doing good' (1869/1970: 205) and the 'endless growth in wisdom and beauty'. This was dependent on making 'the best that has been thought and known in the world current everywhere' (226) and included the idea of the disinterested pursuit of knowledge and the broadening of judgement through reading, observing and thinking (226). What makes this so important is linked to Arnold's belief that the pursuit of perfection was about the cultivation of the inner self, which involved the disavowal of 'external' forms of culture that satisfied base desires associated with material possessions, unhindered competition and the amassing of huge industrial fortunes.

However, while believing in the necessity of educating all members of society, if the ideals of his version of culture were to prevail it was necessary to rely on a few enlightened minds. The idea of culture being defined in this way has been of great interest to cultural critics because it restricts the notion to what is associated with 'high' or exclusive forms of culture chosen by a self-appointed social elite. But this model has attracted much criticism because of Arnold's conception, and the social basis, of 'anarchy'. This is because, while criticizing the shortcomings of all classes, Arnold was particularly hard on those he named the 'populace', complaining that by the 1860s the common people had lost their 'strong feudal habits of subordination and deference' and had come out of their poverty and squalor to assert themselves by demanding social and political rights, 'marching', 'meeting' and 'bawling' where they liked (231 and 254).

Thus, Arnold was against working-class demands for rights and equalities, which he saw as creating social unrest and thereby threatening anarchy. Consequently, Arnold embraced the power of the state that was to guarantee 'right reason' over personal liberty, and which would effectively smother popular political movements and disturbances through 'the principle of authority' (236). For this reason Arnold's notion of culture is not only linked to elitist attempts to confine it to the narrow tastes and interests of a self-elected minority but to reactionary anti-democratic thinking that actively resists political reforms.

The inheritance of Arnold's ideas about culture can be detected in the work of F. R. and Queenie Leavis who were instrumental in helping to establish the importance of English Studies at Cambridge University in the years following the First World War (see Inglis, 1993; Strinati, 1995; Storey, 2009a). Their emphasis on the cultural importance of establishing canons of great

literature, the need for developing the critical tools necessary for an adequate analysis of it, and the belief in the positive transformative role of high literary culture place them firmly in the Arnoldian culture and civilization tradition. The affinity between their work and Arnold's is also brought out by F. R. Leavis and Denys Thompson's insistence on the importance of the minority to preserve 'the finest human experience of the past' in order to maintain the 'implicit standards that order the finer living of an age' (Leavis and Thompson, 1933/1977: 5). Again, this maintenance of cultural standards was something of a gladiatorial task carried out against what they saw as the debilitating effects of modernity.

For these writers part of the task of teaching English Literature involved the training of 'critical awareness' that would teach students to develop informed judgements and discriminate between great literary works (**minority culture**) and the trivial, debased and dehumanizing products of **mass culture**. The problem for the Leavises was that mass culture (or **popular culture** like popular fiction, music and films imported from North America) constantly appealed to the lowest common denominator and stunted the development and possibilities of consumers. Furthermore, the training of critical awareness was also necessary because the effects of popular forms of culture, including the popular press and advertising, were debasing not only the language but the emotions of those who consumed them (1933/1977: 5f.).

This explained and justified the importance of literary education, which was to train students to recognize these tendencies and consequences while broadening their minds and refine their sensibilities through the appreciation of great literary works. Again, cultural critics have questioned this reductive view of culture with its simplistic understanding of the habits of consumers while challenging the legitimacy of these self-elected arbiters of taste and morality, even if they have sometimes shared some of the Leavis circle's concerns about the effects of industrial capitalism (Mulhern, 1979).

However, while this narrow definition of culture can be challenged as reactionary and elitist (Turner, 2003: 35), the Leavisite approach also encouraged close (detailed) readings not only of literary texts but of advertisements and popular cultural forms. This adaptation was important for cultural analysis not only in terms of method but because it assumed that it was important to be able to read and understand the cultures of everyday life (even if it was only to assume their vast inferiority). The Leavises' role in establishing the journal *Scrutiny* (F. R. Leavis founded it in 1932) helped to create a forum for debate concerning not only literary-intellectual culture but what many felt were the evils of industrial capitalism and mass culture.

However biased this criticism may have been it has been seen as an important 'moment' (Inglis, 1993: 32) for literary-cultural analysis and this has led Terry Eagleton to assert (perhaps with some overstatement) that *Scrutiny* actually founded a certain kind of 'cultural studies' in England, 'as one of its most enduring achievements' (Eagleton, 1983: 34). But, as Eagleton has also asserted, the Leavisite project was absurd insofar as it seemed to be predicated

on the idea that social decline could be averted by sensitive readings of *King Lear* (34). If Arnold could be seen as a reactionary elitist because of his resistance to any kind of working-class radicalism the Leavises can be seen as narrow-minded conformists insofar as they, according to Mulhern (1979: 331), systematically repressed politics from their particular bourgeois-inflected brand of literary-cum-cultural criticism. However, this criticism cannot be levelled at the next thinker I shall discuss: Theodor Adorno.

The Frankfurt School and the culture industry

Adorno was affiliated to the Institute for Social Research at the University of Frankfurt which, owing to the rise of Nazism in Germany (many of those affiliated were from the Jewish community), eventually relocated to Columbia University in New York (before moving back to Frankfurt in 1951). While many other important thinkers were affiliated to the Institute, I shall limit myself (mainly) to discussing Adorno's critique of mass culture (an idea he developed with Max Horkheimer) in relation to what he called the **culture industry**, because this has had a particularly important influence on how popular culture has been theorized and understood.

The Institute of Social Research is otherwise known as the **Frankfurt School of Critical Theory** because a number of the writers affiliated to it were influenced by Horkheimer's essay 'Traditional and Critical Theory' (1939/1982). What I want to argue here is that some of the general approaches of **critical theory** have filtered, directly or indirectly, into cultural studies. Horkheimer argued that the social sciences cannot be treated like the natural sciences because they cannot extrapolate general 'universal' laws from particular instances (as in the pure sciences). This was because knowledge produced in the social sciences is subject to the theories (or ideologies) that produce them; thus, it is necessary to be aware of the historical context in which research takes place. Also, critical theory should not be tied to fixed premises and, while being informed by Marxism, be open, flexible, self-critical and interdisciplinary.

The goal of critical theory (like much cultural studies) is akin to Horkheimer's Marxist-inflected idea that the aim of critical theory is 'the emancipation of human beings from the circumstances that enslave them' (1939/1982: 244). This is the ultimate end of Adorno's critique of the culture industry, which helped to establish the terms in which popular culture could be discussed and often condemned or dismissed by critics on the Left. Fundamental to Adorno's notion of the culture industry is that the rise of mass entertainment and mass communications within industrial capitalism led to the factory-like production of formulaic and predictable popular forms of culture motivated by profit and the dictates of consumer capitalism. What concerned Adorno were the effects of mass culture, which he argued functioned to pacify the exploited masses, accustoming them to the 'humiliating conditions' of their

lives and perpetuating their economic inferiority, while impoverishing them materially, emotionally and intellectually. In short, it rendered consumers politically impotent (Adorno, 1991: 143f.).

A convenient way of illustrating Adorno's ideas is to refer to his early 1960s essay 'Perennial Fashion – Jazz' because it not only provides a concrete example of the culture industry but can help to elucidate Adorno's methodology. In this essay Adorno argued that in its initial stages jazz possessed some originality and merit. However, it was soon commercialized by the culture industry and was reduced to a set of standardized and predictable forms, which, while satisfying desire temporarily, ultimately frustrated it. At the same time its ephemeral worth was compounded by the constant pressure to appear new.

In terms of method, Adorno combined Marxist concepts with a number adapted from Freudian psychoanalysis (a common strategy in cultural studies). He argued that getting lost in jazz (or any kind of mass culture) was akin to ignoring the difficulties of the present by regressing back to a passive infantile stage. Adorno described this in terms of Freud's castration symbolism because all this disempowered the jazz aficionado (and musician). In this way jazz, in its hypnotic sameness, becomes like an addictive drug (Adorno, 1990: 126) where the jazz enthusiast, far from being a rebel, is a victim, a conformist compulsively consuming sameness camouflaged as variety (122).

Adorno's critique of mass culture was made possible by his notion of authentic art or culture where 'serious' forms of music offered genuine aesthetic and intellectual fulfilment (rather than offer the sensationalist and sentimental pleasures of mass culture), revealing an organic form where the detail expressed the complex whole. It provoked imaginative responses and challenged the audience or reader, instead of inciting escapism. It was also able to express utopian ideals for a better world rather than provoke the unreal dreams of wealth, power, ardent love and adventure of popular genres. Whereas Arnold feared that the 'populace' would bring about anarchy, Adorno saw the opposite: the consumers of mass culture are victims, and the passive resignation brought about by working under capitalism is intensified through the mindless entertainment provided by the culture industry (see Adorno and Horkheimer, 1947/1972: 142). The sinister image that Adorno conjured up of jazz lovers was one where their syncopated dance-steps actually resembled the goose steps of the Nazi shock troops – both were subject to dangerous manipulative techniques that moved and dominated the masses.

However, there are some resemblances between Adorno and the writers in the culture and civilization tradition. Adorno defended 'serious' (radical avant garde) culture against the threats of modern mass culture. For Adorno, Arnold and the Leavisite tradition authentic art possesses transformative power: it has the power to awaken critical awareness and offer genuine intellectual and aesthetic pleasures. What distinguishes Adorno's approach is his theoretical complexity and explicit Marxist convictions expressed in the idea that great art, through offering utopian alternatives for a better future, can serve to awaken the masses to rebel against servitude, exploitation and inequality.

Another difference is that Adorno, along with many Marxist colleagues, shared the concern that capitalism, through the culture industry, constantly threatened to drain authentic culture of its revolutionary, utopian potential by incorporating it into itself – this is one of the reasons he insisted on writing in a highly complex style, so it could not be appropriated by the capitalist system of domination (Adorno, 1966/1973). This anxiety about the way the capitalist system and its values and ways of thinking dominate society will be explored in many chapters in this book (particularly those on Barthes, Althusser and Jameson); however, here I shall stress the point that Adorno's conception of the masses as passive dupes and his denigration of popular styles of culture have received considerable criticism by specialists in popular culture. It is also possible to question the extent to which ordinary people are manipulated by popular forms produced within capitalism and, as Gendron (1986: 32f.) has observed, given the variety of the transformations within popular styles, arguments about standardization may not be very convincing. Also, the assertion that consumers are largely passive is simply assumed rather than demonstrated (Murdock and Golding, 1977: 18f.) and then there is the question of up to what point capitalism is able to neutralize all rebellion and resistance.

My overview by no means exhausts Adorno's theses and these criticisms are only a fraction of those that might be levelled at Adorno's theories; nevertheless, Adorno continues to be an important reference point for anyone analysing popular cultural forms and their relations to capitalism, consumerism and the creative industries. However, other writers affiliated to the Frankfurt School, like Walter Benjamin, offered a more positive image of mass-produced culture. In his 'The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction' (1936) he argued that in industrial capitalism the intensely individualistic contemplation of art objects (with their sacred 'aura') could be replaced by the possibility of collective appreciation of the new mass produced forms of film and photography in such a way that ordinary people were no longer excluded from the appreciation of the new forms (Benjamin, 1973: 237).

This democratizing possibility challenged the idea that mass-produced popular cultural forms and mass consumption were, in themselves, debased, inferior and dehumanizing. This is not to say that Benjamin was naively optimistic about all cultural production. When writing his 'Theses on the Philosophy of History' (1940) he was also capable of producing trenchant and suggestive phrases like: 'There is no cultural document that is not at the same time a record of barbarism' (Benjamin, 1973: 248). This challenges the culture as civilization thesis because here civilization is envisaged as the product of exploitation and suffering (we may see a pyramid or a cathedral as wonders or art but not think about the social, political and economic conditions in which they were produced). Other approaches that helped to challenge the idea that worthwhile culture was restricted to selective traditions of what were regarded as highly sophisticated works (and which included a less submissive and more positive role for working people) was provided by

the writers I review in the next section. Each one helped to challenge the idea that being a member of the industrial classes was, per se, to be condemned to a trivial life of passivity and domination.

Culturalism(s)

The three writers I will discuss now (like those already mentioned) all began publishing before the institutionalization of a recognizable area of study known as cultural studies. However, they have all served as important precursors by helping to establish a sense of tradition and, especially in the case of Raymond Williams, serving to lay down some of the conceptual and methodological foundations of what is now cultural studies. It is customary to group these writers together under the label **culturalism** because they saw that ordinary people have been and can be active agents of change rather than passive dupes (the image that tends to be reinforced in the work of Arnold, the Leavises and Adorno). As Storey has emphasized, these writers were interested in the lived culture of ordinary people, which was assumed to be worth studying, while stressing 'human agency': that is ,'the active production of culture, rather than its passive consumption' (Storey, 2009a: 37f.).

Another reason why the 'culturalism' label is used is that it helps to distinguish these writers (who tended to put greater emphasis on history, individual experience and agency) from later cultural critics who embraced structuralism (see below), which tended to see people as shaped by cultural systems. However, while these writers *do* emphasize agency it is only a convenient label to describe work which, in many ways, has very different nuances, ends and themes. As Jenks (1993: 154) has stated, it is possible 'to overemphasize the communality of vision' between those defined as culturalists.

Richard Hoggart and *The Uses of Literacy*

The first of these 'culturalist' writers is Richard Hoggart, whose contribution to cultural studies is usually reduced to two principal events: the publication of his book *The Uses of Literacy* (1957) and his role as founding director of the Birmingham Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies (1964): one of the institutions which most helped to establish a distinctive cultural studies identity in Britain (and which had a considerable influence on the direction that cultural studies would take in other parts of the world – see below). However, the publication of *The Uses of Literacy* helped to establish Hoggart as an important voice in discussions of the media, popular culture and the meaning and value of working-class life. One of the tasks he set himself was to study how the 'appeals of the mass publications connect with commonly accepted attitudes, how they are altering those attitudes, and how they are meeting

resistance' (Hoggart, 1957/1958: 19). However, the book went beyond just the uses of literacy to consider what constituted being working class (in terms of education, work, clothes and accent, etc.) and many other aspects of working-class life and culture.

Hoggart's task was made easier because he was from a working-class family in Leeds and this enabled him to give an 'insider view' of working-class urban life, consciousness, culture and experience. In *The Uses of Literacy* he offered meticulous descriptions and considered the meanings of everyday events – this included everything from describing institutions like the working men's clubs to a day out at the seaside. For example, when portraying the seaside trip he showed detailed knowledge of the typical rituals that characterize the day out (147f.). As Graeme Turner has stated, Hoggart's drawing on personal experience tends to give an air of 'authenticity' to his depiction of working-class life in the pre-war period which is depicted as 'a complex whole, in which public values and private practices are tightly intertwined' (Turner, 2003: 39).

Significantly, the working-class rituals Hoggart described were not represented (as they might have been by the Leavises and some of the *Scrutiny* circle) as trivial and debased but as eloquent moments of 'a full rich life' made meaningful by a strong sense of community spirit. Far from passive, Hoggart saw the working classes of his youth as possessing 'a strong natural ability to survive change by adapting or assimilating what they want in the new and ignoring the rest' (32). In this Hoggart was helping to focus attention on cultures of everyday life that would become so important to what it meant to do cultural studies. However, if Hoggart went beyond the Leavises when describing the pre-1930s working-class culture, he still shared much in common with their views of mass urban culture when he gave his account of the mass entertainments of the decades following the 1930s.

When Hoggart was confronted by the influence of Hollywood films, rock 'n' roll music and popular forms of fiction (which, like the Leavises, he associated with Americanization) he feared that it was a corrupting influence on the more traditional values he associated with the working class of his youth. He was concerned, like so many of his contemporaries, about the creation of mass culture, which replaced older values with those of consumerism and mass consumption (24). Hence, when he described things like the popular romances, the milk bars and Teddy Boy culture of the 1950s he tended to give a less sympathetic, more distanced, one-sided and judgemental view (describing the Teddy Boys as 'shoulder waggling barbarians' or 'barbarians in wonderland' (1957/1958: 193). For some critics Hoggart's inability to apply his insights into the popular culture of the 1930s to the mass culture of the 1950s is the principal weakness of his book (Storey, 2009a: 40).

However, one of the main reasons why Hoggart was so concerned about these cultural changes is that he felt the older urban working class had developed a strong sense of resistance but, like the Leavises (and Adorno), thought of the average consumer of contemporary mass culture as 'hedonistic but passive' (250). This contrasted with his earlier belief that the traditional

working classes took an active role in making, choosing and adapting culture to their own ends. Hoggart's anxieties came from his deep sympathies with the working class whose strength and independence were increasingly threatened by what he called 'competitive commerce'. He believed that this was a greater threat to the working classes because it was a form of subjection that promised to be more powerful than older forms of economic subservience 'because the chains of cultural subordination are both easier to wear and harder to strike away' (243–4).

Later cultural theorists, like John Fiske (following Odina Leal), would apply Hoggart's insights of 1930s working-class culture in a more consistent and general fashion, arguing that the social order 'constrains and oppresses the people, but at the same time offers them resources to fight against those constraints' (Fiske, 1992: 157). This view tends to reflect Hall and Whannel's understanding of youth culture (see below). However, if Hoggart assisted in helping cultural critics to reconsider the meaning and value of the working class then E. P. Thompson helped cultural historians to appreciate quite how the working class forged itself in the first place and to become more aware of radical working-class politics, struggles, movements and traditions.

E. P. Thompson and *The Making of the English Working Class*

Like Adorno, Thompson's work was informed by his Marxist background; however, while he showed a strong interest in theory (see Chapter 4 where I will review his criticism of and resistance to structuralism), he defined himself as a historian. His historical work that has had the most important impact on cultural studies is his *The Making of the English Working Class* (1963), which traced the formation of the working class between the years 1780 and 1832. These dates are important because they coincide with the rise of the Industrial Revolution and the moment in the nineteenth century when a working class could be said to be a historical force and a reality. It was between these dates that 'most English working people came to feel an identity of interests as between themselves, and as against their rulers and employers' (11).

The year 1832 is also of special significance because it was the date of the Reform Act that gave the vote to large parts of the middle classes but excluded the working classes. However, working-class consciousness had developed to such a point that some contemporaries (like Arnold, see above) feared the growing powers that the working classes were claiming for themselves. For Thompson, by 1832 the working class was 'the most significant factor in British political life' (11). One of the reasons why Thompson's study has become so important cultural studies is because he set out to explore the common interests, experiences, preoccupations and struggles of working people at a key moment in history. Although this was not the first book of its

kind, it helped to refocus history in such a way that the working classes were central, rather than being considered passive observers drawn along by the external forces of historical change.

Thompson emphasized the idea of 'the making' of the working class because he saw his book as 'a study in an active process, which owes as much to agency as to conditioning'. Thus, the working class 'did not rise like the sun at an appointed time. It was present at its own making' (Thompson 1963/1968: 8). For this reason he is often referred to as a 'culturalist'. Thompson preferred to use the term 'working class' (instead of its plural) because it indicates the sense of solidarity and commonality of interests between different working groups, which were united by common experiences and struggles. Thus, the task Thompson set for himself was to rescue the working class (especially radicals) from 'the enormous condescension of history' (12), stressing the political radicalism and growing political consciousness necessary to the formation of a class. He did this by describing (among other things) the numbing work-discipline and rebarbative conditions that the workers suffered under industrial capitalism, relating how class consciousness grew out of demands for social and political rights, and narrating the heroic deeds, organization, popular revolts and other initiatives that would eventually lead to social and political change.

In this way Thompson was able to construct a theory of class. For him the working class is not a descriptive label invented by historians or sociologists but a 'historical phenomenon' that developed over time. Fundamentally, it is a relation dependent on difference and conflict. For Thompson, class 'happens' when people, as a consequence of common experiences, 'feel and articulate the identity of their interests as between themselves, and as against other men whose interests are different from (and usually opposed to) theirs' (8). From this point of view it does not make much sense to isolate one class without showing how its existence is dependent on, and in conflict with, other classes. In fact, Thompson argued that the ruling class was itself only properly consolidated as a response to 'an insurgent working class' (11), which was often violently punished for fighting for its rights and taking things into its own hands.

This way of thinking fits in with the Marxist idea of history as antagonistic; Thompson positing that class experience was 'largely determined by the productive relations into which men are born – or enter involuntarily'. For Thompson, class-consciousness was the way in which these experiences were filtered in cultural terms: 'embodied in traditions, value-systems, ideas, and institutional forms' (8). Whereas Adorno and Horkheimer (more often than not) wrote of the working classes in pessimistic terms, Thompson (albeit writing about the classes in earlier centuries) emphasized the heroism, bravery, resistance and capacity for struggle of women and men who put their lives at risk to promote the interests of working-class rights and equalities. In short, together with the work of Hoggart (and Williams), Thompson's account helped to emphasize the working classes as active agents of historical change.

Although (as stated above) Thompson thought of himself as a historian, his work comfortably fits into the cultural studies idiom because of the way

it explores how alternative, popular radical cultures were produced through struggle, political agitation and resistance. This suggests at least three important components of cultural studies: its (almost) constant (but troubled) engagement with Marxist theory, its interdisciplinary predisposition, and its profound interest in forms of resistance and political struggle as legitimate objects of analysis and knowledge. All these themes would be considerably extended in the work of Raymond Williams.

Raymond Williams

Raymond Williams has had a major influence on the development of cultural studies, with John Storey (2009a: 44) describing the range of his work as 'formidable' and Terry Eagleton claiming that, given breadth of his work, conventional labels like political theorist, sociologist, social philosopher or cultural commentator are incapable of describing his work 'exhaustively or exactly' (Eagleton, 1984: 108). Furthermore, this body of work (produced over nearly 40 years of academic life) was constantly evolving. While always a committed and active member of the British Left his closer association with Marxist discourses towards the end of his life further complicate definitions of his work. Thus, I can only give a brief idea of some of the facets of Williams's work that have been of interest to cultural studies practitioners.

One aspect of Williams's work that has made a particularly strong impact has been his efforts to contextualize and offer adequate definitions of culture. In *Culture and Society* (1958) he explained that the organizing principle of his study was to be found in the insight that 'the idea of culture, and the word itself in its general modern uses, came into English thinking in the period which we commonly describe as that of the Industrial Revolution' (Williams 1958/1987: iii). Thus, he provided a historical basis for understanding culture by locating it in the social and political changes brought about under industrial capitalism. His basic approach was to give an account of a range of writers from the eighteenth to the twentieth century (from Edmund Burke and William Cobbett to D. H. Lawrence and George Orwell) who helped to provide a 'map' through which it was possible to perceive the 'wider changes in life and thought' that these writers echoed in their works (xiii). This enabled Williams to focus on the social-political, intellectual tradition that has helped to define modern, democratic, industrial society.

At a methodological level, a significant achievement of the book was Williams's demonstration of how a number of key words (like industry, democracy, art and culture) acquired new and important meanings in the last decades of the eighteenth and in the first half of the nineteenth century. In this way he was able to 'map' language historically in terms of important cultural transformations. He further elaborated this technique in his 1976 book *Keywords: A Vocabulary of Culture and Society* (revised edition, Williams, 1983a) – an important labour that has been continued with the publication of *New Keywords* (Bennett et al., 2005).

One important conclusion that tends to come out of this 'keywords' approach is that culture is not understood as a fixed category but a process; it is not a conclusion (Williams, 1958/1987: 295). As mentioned earlier, this indicates it is subject to historical forces and change. This idea was developed in Williams's later work *Culture* when he distinguished between dominant, residual and emergent cultures, where dominant forms and practices, at any given moment, co-exist with older forms and nascent possibilities which may be absorbed by, or challenge or supersede, prevailing trends (1981: 204–5). This way of thinking introduces the idea of culture where dominant forms are constantly in potential conflict with historical residues and emergent potentialities. Again, culture is seen as complex and dynamic, rather than as a series of objects with fixed and universal value.

The forces of historical change would also be a major theme developed in Williams's 1961 publication *The Long Revolution*. In this study Williams, while recognizing that the Industrial Revolution could be condemned for creating and perpetuating forms of exploitation, subordination, hardships and injustices, saw it as a vital force that would, through the great personal struggles of subordinated groups, bring about the reforms that would result in modern democracy. This is because Williams wrote of the Industrial Revolution as unifying three interrelated revolutionary processes: the democratic, industrial and cultural (1961/1992: x–xi). However, Williams, as the committed socialist that he was, argued that modern democracy (while it contained the voting rights, and improvement in working conditions, education and health reforms that had been fought and won) was in no way complete: it could only be a stage in a long revolutionary process, informed by socialism. The important thing here for the definition of culture is that these aspects were every bit as much a part of developing cultural life as contributions in the sphere of the arts. Looking at Hoggart, Thompson and Williams's contributions it is possible to get an idea of another key component of much work in cultural studies: the importance of politically engaged readings of culture which recognize the value and importance of everyday culture and of working-class life and activism.

Another important aspect of *The Long Revolution* was Williams's division of approaches to culture as the ideal ('a state or process of human perfection'), documentary ('the body of intellectual work' in which human thought and experience is recorded) and the social ('in which culture is a description of a particular way of life, which expresses certain meanings and values not only in art and learning but also in institutions and ordinary behaviour' (41f.)). This last approach extended the definition of culture in ways the previous approaches (which are closer to the Arnoldian–Leavisite tradition) would not have contemplated. From the social point of view an interest in culture would include not only the definitions included in the other approaches but everything from the structure of the family and the organization of production to 'the structure of institutions which express or govern social relationships' and the 'characteristic forms through which members of the society communicate' (42).

One important consequence of Williams's approach is that the understanding of modern culture could not be confined to the study of 'high' culture: popular mass culture was equally important. This meant that if modern conceptions of culture were to be linked to the social and political changes brought about by industrial capitalism (and the gradual struggle for reform) then cultural historians would have to attend to *all* the historical circumstances that produced the forms of art and life of industrial civilization. As Williams emphasized: 'a good living culture is various and changing, [and] the need for sport and entertainment is as real as the need for art' (337). Cultural studies practitioners have taken this very seriously: the study of popular culture and its audiences being one of the staples of analysis.

This was all part of Williams's classic definition of culture 'as a theory of relationships between elements in a **whole way of life**' (46). For Williams it was a 'fatally wrong approach' to assume 'that political institutions and conventions are of a different and separate order from artistic institutions and conventions'. For him, absolutes like politics, art, science, religion and family life 'belong in a whole world of active and interacting relationships, which is our common associative life' (39). This 'whole way of life' approach to culture was illustrated by Williams when he described the rise of the popular press in the 1840s. He showed how an adequate understanding of it would need to take account of all kinds of things like changes in infrastructure (the expansion of roads and railways, shops, etc.); the social character of the period (ideas, beliefs and values); the lowering of taxes on printed matter; the rise of literacy; and technical advances and industrial organization, etc. (54f.). Significantly, Williams did not dismiss the popular press as impoverished and impoverishing but saw it as part of an expanding, creative and vital culture.

Williams's work, then, has been fundamental in terms of a establishing a tradition of analysis that takes mass popular cultural forms seriously and which is not clouded by prejudice and simple value judgements. If Williams wrote important studies on the novel and drama, he also wrote (as indicated earlier), in a non-dismissive way, on advertising, the popular press, film, television and communications, exploring how these contributed to social, economic, political and cultural change. All this demonstrated his interdisciplinary and boundary-breaking approach to the analysis of culture (a legacy that cultural studies, in general, has continued to nurture).

If this were Williams's only contribution he would still be a major figure in cultural studies but his influence is even more profound. Williams's insistence that cultural analysis should take account of the processes of production and the social relations these imply helped to establish what has become known as 'cultural materialism' (Williams, 1980: 243). You will see that I insist on the importance of materialist approaches, especially in the final chapters of this book. Williams's relevance to cultural studies has also been maintained by his willingness to engage with the ideas of important Marxist theorists like Louis Althusser (see Chapter 4) and Antonio Gramsci (see below and Chapter 14). This was in the 1970s when cultural studies was in its infancy in Britain and

when important debates were raging about the importance and relevance of different Marxist approaches (see below).

There are many other aspects of Williams's work that could be emphasized but this should give an idea of the extent and importance of his books which, in the words of Stuart Hall, 'have no comparison among contemporary writing for range and stubbornness of critical intelligence' – in a body of work with 'an astonishing variety of modes of writing' (Hall, 1988: 20–21). These words are praise indeed coming, as they did, from a man who has been a key figure in terms of the way cultural studies has developed (especially in Britain).

The consolidation of cultural studies in Britain: Stuart Hall and the Birmingham Centre

In this section I shall discuss the importance of Stuart Hall's contribution to cultural studies within the context of the institutional consolidation of the area. Trying to do justice to Stuart Hall's impact and role is difficult: as Roger Bromley has argued, apart from Williams, Stuart Hall 'has been the most influential figure in British cultural studies' and, even outside Britain, his work 'has probably been more responsible than any other for the spread of the field' (Bromley in Munns and Rajan, 1995: 194). Thus, I shall limit myself to giving an idea of some of the ways Hall and the Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies at Birmingham University have helped to shape some of the dominant questions and themes that have had a major influence on how the area has evolved.

Two reasons why Hall has been such a key figure is that, first, he was a prominent founding member of the New Left in Britain (a group of left-wing intellectuals influenced by Marxism but critical of Soviet Russia) and, second (in 1969), he became Director of the Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies at Birmingham University. This was a position he held right through the 1970s. This was a crucial period for the rise of cultural studies and, as Turner (2003: 59) has observed, Hall 'oversaw a tremendous expansion of the theoretical base and intellectual influence' of the Birmingham Centre (inside and outside Britain). This expansion helped to bring about the multi-disciplinary character of much of cultural studies (Hall and his colleagues at Birmingham tended to maintain a respectful, if critical, dialogue with the social sciences). As Turner (2003: 62–66) has indicated, while the Birmingham Centre has been of particular importance (and can 'justifiably claim to be the key institution in the field') it was by no means the only hotbed of cultural analysis (important research was also being done elsewhere in Britain, in the US and other parts of the world). However, I shall use Hall's influence as a loose (if limited) indicator of wider changes and developments in what was gradually becoming a recognizable area of academic study.

Hall insists that the Birmingham Centre was a collaborative effort and a large number of his publications confirm this, many being co-authored. He also

stresses that cultural studies has no clear origins, it being made up of 'multiple discourses', 'different histories', combining distinct methodologies and theoretical positions, 'all of them in contention'. The image Hall uses for cultural studies at the Birmingham Centre is 'theoretical noise': a cacophony of 'bad feeling, argument, unstable anxieties, and angry silences' (Hall, 1996a: 263). This helps to remind us that the Birmingham Centre (like any other) was a research forum and not a fully unified project. However, Hall, while insisting on this openness and plurality, stresses that cultural studies is not just anything: something is 'at stake' – it is related to pedagogies that try to make a difference in the world. It is linked to what Hall sees as the broad (and not too intensively policed) 'project' of cultural studies: 'intellectual practice as politics' (272) or, as Tony Bennett has emphasized, the area is committed to 'examining cultural practices from the point of view of their intrication with, and within, relations of power' (Bennett, 1992: 23) – something I will stress throughout this book and especially in the final chapters. The kind of cultural studies that Hall and his colleagues helped to engender is a set of practices which accept difference and conflict as a necessary part of what it means to practise cultural analysis. So, despite the 'noise', the Birmingham Centre provided an important institutional context in which scholars could be trained and in which something like a cultural studies group identity could develop. This is related to the production of 'organic intellectuals', which I shall comment on below.

Even before becoming director of the Birmingham Centre, Hall had already begun to help move the analysis of popular culture beyond the terms of the debate found in the work of the Leavises and Hoggart. In *The Popular Arts* (written with Paddy Whannel), rather than repeat the 'misleading generalizations' that reject mass culture per se, the authors argue that fine distinctions could be made *within* popular, mass culture (Hall and Whannel, 1964: 35f.). For Hall and Whannel it made no sense to compare pop music to Beethoven – different popular styles could be distinguished from each other. This could be done through informed choices to see if a popular cultural form was dependent on predictable, pre-digested formulas or was more innovative and able to challenge audiences and be emotionally rewarding.

Importantly, Hall and Whannel, when discussing popular styles of music, contextualized it in relation to things like the social, economic and political relations of those who listened to it (269). They also stressed the affective role that popular styles played in helping young people to channel their feelings and discussed how the music helped to distinguish **youth subcultures** from the adult world they were reacting against (through things like dance, fashion and slang) (214). In short, while recognizing that mass commercial culture was 'a lush grazing pasture for the commercial providers' it was within these commercially oriented cultures that they could express rebelliousness and non-conformity and establish a sense of identity. Mass culture could be seen as 'an expressive field' and a 'contradictory mixture of the authentic and manufactured' (276). They acknowledged that the rebellious teenager was a media construction but they also stressed that the pop phenomenon could not be reduced to its economic context.

In this way the authors were able to not only deal with questions of value and the commercial context but consider the social, emotional and psychological role of teenage culture. Despite their failure to oppose the mass culture critique by privileging and thus removing 'certain of the texts and practices of popular culture from the condemnation of the critics of mass culture' (Storey, 2009a: 54) their approach went considerably beyond those of the Leavises, Adorno and Hoggart. In this, along with Hall's collaboration with Tony Jefferson, *Resistance Through Rituals* (1976), and other publications that came out of the Birmingham Centre like Dick Hebdige's hugely influential *Subculture: The Meaning of Style* (1979), they helped to establish and consolidate the study of popular forms and youth subcultures (for the difficulties and deconstruction of the notion of popular culture see Chapter 6).

The work done under Hall at the Birmingham Centre also included studies on black Britain, politics, ideology, racism, the popular press, television broadcasting (including the news, current affairs, the power of the media), photography, deviancy, violence, crime, football hooliganism, poverty, law and order, class and education (for a fuller list see Hall, 1996a: 504f.). This does not exhaust all the themes and does not include the important theoretical legacies associated with the Birmingham Centre. As many of these will be the subject of subsequent chapters I shall limit myself here to listing some of the most important shifts and turns. These included a constant and uneasy engagement with Marxist concepts (see particularly Chapters 3, 4 and 13–15), the introduction of structuralist methods (see Chapters 2–4), which challenged the 'culturalist' model but, in turn, were challenged by deconstruction and poststructuralist theory (see Chapters 5–10). These approaches were often nuanced by the use of psychoanalytic theory (see Chapters 7, 8 and 10), and considerations of postmodernism (see Chapters 11–13). Within these broad theoretical approaches themes like cultural imperialism, post-colonialism (see Chapter 6) and questions of diaspora (which included questions of 'race' and ethnicity and identity) were developed. While this is only a rough approximation of the kind of work that was going on at the Birmingham Centre it should give an idea of the kinds of themes and theories that would help to consolidate the area and why they feature so prominently in this book.

Particularly important within debates about Marxism was the question of ideology and Antonio Gramsci's (related) notion of **hegemony**. Whereas more simplistic forms of classical Marxism tended to see the dominant capitalist class as exercising direct power over the proletariat (and related social classes), Gramsci's theory of hegemony (developed in the years leading up to and during the Second World War) contemplated the idea of power being exercised through negotiation and persuasion (Gramsci, 1971: 12). Part of the context for this was that a too rigid model of ideology was seen as incapable of explaining why members of the proletariat do not automatically side with social and political forces that seem to be more in tune with their economic and political needs and interests. Thus, in Gramsci's work, the winning of consent for a particular set of views took on particular importance. Gramsci

maintained that politics in democratic societies could be seen in terms of groups or power blocs forging alliances to struggle over and win moral and intellectual leadership (57). The loosely aligned bourgeoisie did this by representing their ideas as 'common sense', and in the interests of all (and therefore tending to persuade ordinary people – and themselves – of their competence and right to govern (66)). This theory helped to challenge the idea that ideology functioned in some kind of overly coercive and deterministic way and explained how counter-hegemonic groups and forces could be assembled (an idea particularly attractive to Raymond Williams (1980: 34)).

This 'enormously productive metaphor' (Hall, 1996a: 267), then, questioned simplistic notions of class because beliefs, values and identifications could not necessarily be traced back to cultural-economic origins – although there would be dominant emphases. This idea of hegemony has been applied in many contexts, including the analysis of popular culture to describe how popular cultural forms are (de)valued, excluded from, and in tension with, the dominant (elite) culture (Hall, 1981: 448–9). It was in this context of discussions of ideology and hegemony that Stuart Hall understood one of the intentions of the Birmingham Centre as the production of what Gramsci designated **organic intellectuals** (see Chapter 15), who could theorize culture and transmit counter-hegemonic ideas both inside and outside the confines of academe (Hall, 1996a: 267–8). What has been called the 'turn to Gramsci' (Bennett, 1986: xif.) included this idea (mentioned at the beginning of this chapter) that those working in cultural studies could be theoretically informed but, at the same time, politically engaged, seeing 'intellectual practice as a politics' (Hall, 1996a: 272). This has become an important preoccupation in much of cultural studies and one I shall return to frequently, and especially when I discuss and use Gramsci's notion of hegemony in Chapters 14 and 15.

Feminism and race/ethnicity and beyond

One thought that may have occurred to some readers is that there are a number of glaring omissions in this thumbnail sketch to do with the role of women and questions of race/ethnicity. This is largely because it was not until the late 1970s that feminists and black scholars began to have any significant influence on the thematic directions cultural studies would take. It was not that they were silent; both broad groups had contributed to books like *Resistance Through Rituals*. The problem was one of emphasis. For example, feminist discontent with the male bias of cultural studies was manifested when the Women's Study Group at the Birmingham Centre published *Women Take Issue* (McRobbie, 1978). This book helped to redress this very important disparity and helped to put feminist research on a more even footing. In the book you are reading I have tried to keep a constant eye on themes of interest to feminist scholars, rather than dedicate just one chapter to the theme.

If *Women Take Issue* represented a concerted feminist intervention, *The Empire Strikes Back* (1982) helped to address what black scholars felt were serious omissions within cultural studies with reference to 'racist ideologies and racist conflicts' in Britain (Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies, 1982: 7) – even if *Policing the Crisis* (Hall et al., 1979) and other publications had already touched on these themes. These are just some of the theoretical and thematic legacies that would be taken up and extended both in the Birmingham Centre, and beyond. Since the 1970s cultural studies has proliferated in many parts of the world and has opened itself to many other important questions concerning gender and its relations to sexuality (questions that will be discussed in greater detail in Chapters 7–10 of this book) and other themes like globalization, corporativism, the role of the 'new social movements' (see Chapters 13–15).

In fact, the sheer variety of topics and theories that are explored within the area can seem intimidating – as my references to Grossberg et al. (1992) tend to confirm. However, because my intention is to help you to grasp some of the most important theoretical currents in the field I cannot offer anything like a complete or convincing overview of the subject. For that it would be necessary to consult the impressive array of journals and books that have been and are being published in the area (for a selection of journals see the Further Reading section of this chapter). However, I hope the limited thumbnail sketch I have offered here will serve to show how the theories I shall discuss and demonstrate in the following chapters fit into the wider history (or 'founding mythology') of that loose miscellany of approaches known as cultural studies.

Summary of key points

This chapter has reflected on the notion of culture and emphasized the complex character of cultural studies by taking British cultural studies as a model for understanding how it has developed and been consolidated. Cultural studies has been seen to grow out of an antagonistic struggle against narrow ways of conceiving culture by looking at the culture and civilization tradition. This position has been contrasted with Adorno's and Horkeimer's conception of mass culture as dominated by the culture industry, Benjamin's idea that mass-produced images offered the possibility for new kinds of meaningful, collective aesthetic experience and the 'culturalist' approaches associated with Hoggart, Thompson and Williams. The consolidation of cultural studies in Britain has been illustrated through reference to the Birmingham Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies under the tutelage of Stuart Hall. This has emphasized cultural studies' interdisciplinary character, its eclectic approach to theory and its conception of 'intellectual practice as politics'.

Further reading

Culture and cultural studies: Raymond Williams's *Culture and Society* (1958/1987), *The Long Revolution* (1961/1992) and *Keywords* (1983a) are a good starting point for definitions of culture within cultural studies. Graeme Turner's *British Cultural Studies* (2003) gives a detailed history of all the different twists and turns in the development of British cultural studies. To get a fuller idea of cultural studies it is worth consulting publications like Frow and Morris's *Australian Cultural Studies: A Reader* (1993) and Hartley and Pearson's *American Cultural Studies: A Reader* (2000). Of course, many nations have and are developing distinctive styles of cultural studies and to get some sense of comparison you might look at Mookerjea et al.'s *Canadian Cultural Studies* (2009) and Sarto et al.'s *The Latin American Cultural Studies Reader* (2004). In order to get an idea of where cultural studies is heading it is worth exploring titles like Graeme Turner's *What's Become of Cultural Studies?* (2011) and Lawrence Grossberg's *Cultural Studies in the Future Tense* (2011).

Adorno and the Frankfurt School: To get a more profound idea of Adorno's critiques of mass culture a good place to start is with his *The Culture Industry: Selected Essays on Mass Culture* (1991) and then explore his collaborative work with Horkheimer in *The Dialectic of Enlightenment* (1947/1972). Phil Slater's *Origin and Significance of the Frankfurt School: A Marxist Perspective* (1977) offers a critical overview of Adorno's approach to the culture industry and Gillian Rose's *The Melancholy Silence* (1978) can be used to get an idea of the history of the Frankfurt School and, in particular, Adorno's contribution. For a wider-ranging and detailed account of Adorno and other Frankfurt writers see Susan Buck-Morss's *The Origin of Negative Dialectics* (1977).

The culturalist tradition: Graeme Turner (1996), Dominic Strinati (1995) and John Storey (2009a) (all mentioned above) give useful overviews of Hoggart, Thompson and Williams and relate their work to the idea of culturalism. Two excellent introductions to Richard Hoggart's work are Sue Owen's number in the *International Journal of Cultural Studies* (2007) and her edited collection *Richard Hoggart and Cultural Studies* (2008). Harvey Kaye and Keith McClelland's *E. P. Thompson: Critical Perspectives* (1990) offers a series of essays which evaluate E. P. Thompson's contribution as both historian and activist. Raymond Williams's *Writing in Society* (1983b) gives an idea of the broad range of Williams's thought and erudition and the volume edited by Terry Eagleton, *Raymond Williams: Critical Perspectives* (1989), offers a series of chapters that help to explain Williams's projects and assess his relevance and importance.

The consolidation of cultural studies in Britain, Stuart Hall and the Birmingham Centre: Hall et al.'s *Culture, Media, Language* (1973/1980) is one of the best books available to get an idea of the scope of the work being done in Birmingham because it is a compilation of essays published by key scholars at the Centre. A book which combines key essays written by Hall himself and

essays which assess his importance, influence and role at the Birmingham Centre is *Stuart Hall: Critical Dialogues in Cultural Studies* (Morley and Chen, 1996). This is particularly recommended because it also helps to get a sense of how cultural studies emerged in Britain and the kinds of themes, conflicts and directions which were taken at the Birmingham Centre. For the beginning of concerted feminist interventions see McRobbie's *Women Take Issue: Aspects of Women's Subordination* (1978, mentioned above) and for resolute challenges from black scholars see *The Empire Strikes Back: Race and Racism in 70s Britain* (1982, see above) and Paul Gilroy's *There Ain't No Black in the Union Jack* (1987).

Journals and websites dedicated to cultural studies: If you are new to cultural studies you might want to explore some of the major journals dedicated to the area. Most major journals offer the possibility of signing up for electronic tables of contents so you get notification when new issues appear. The choices are considerable, so I shall only list a few of the more general titles with a broad thematic base. To start you might choose one or more of the following:

Australian Journal of Cultural Studies
Continuum: Journal of Media and Cultural Studies
Cultural Studies
Cultural Studies: Critical Methodologies
European Journal of Cultural Studies
International Journal of Cultural Studies
Journal of Popular Culture
Journal of Cultural Research
Media, Culture and Society
Theory, Culture and Society

An alternative is to explore cultural studies websites that often have online publications and a host of resources and information. You might begin by the following, which are particularly well designed:

Cultural Studies-L Page: http://comm.umn.edu/~grodman/cultstud/
Cultural Studies Central: www.culturalstudies.net/
Voice of the Shuttle's Cultural Studies Page: http://vos.ucsb.edu/browse.
   asp?id=2709