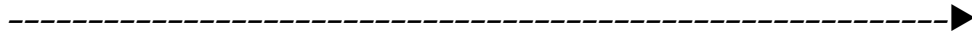


Advancing



Cultural Studies

Report from an international workshop
at Södergarn Conference Centre,
Lidingö near Stockholm, 4-5 February, 1999

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With contributions by

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Advancing Cultural Studies

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Advancing Cultural Studies

In modernity, culture is everywhere. So is cultural studies, it seems. But cultural studies needs to be advanced, in two senses: to be promoted but also to be ameliorated. Culture is focal in late modern societies, and should be so in research. New encounters and innovative modes of study are necessary to deal with the new kinds of problems posed by current cultural developments. The international and interdisciplinary field of cultural studies well deserves to be spread, but also longs for regenerative initiatives. There is now in Sweden an option to take a decisive step in this direction.

This is what this report argues for.

Introduction

Cultural studies, is now being 'glocalized'. It is a global current with an increasing number of local faces, and with a series of interconnected roots and routes. The 'Birmingham' tradition deserves its international hegemony, but is contested. Anglo-American journals of cultural studies tend only to acknowledge the English-language variants from Britain, the U.S, and possibly Australia, New Zealand, South Africa and Canada. Other kinds of cultural studies work have however developed elsewhere, partly in separation or parallel, but increasingly interconnected to transnational streams. They live in a painful but productive tension of being dominated by the Anglo-American hegemony, working both as an external pressure and as an internalized gatekeeper that forces everyone to prioritize the British and American while repressing connections to other 'peripheries' in the field. In such tensions, new insights are born, both by the intense experience of centre/margin-relations and by the creative confrontations and dialogues between lines of cultural research that are otherwise rarely tried out.

Sweden and its Nordic neighbours constitute one such arena that is part of the main streams of cultural studies, but to a certain extent is also displaced in relation to them and building bridges to other domestic or imported currents that are elsewhere mostly exiled from that field. A range of new initiatives have recently been taken to let Sweden take a

more active part in the process of institutionalizing interdisciplinary cultural studies, in programmes, centres and institutes, in order to revitalize both Swedish cultural research and international cultural studies.

One step in that direction was the two-days international *workshop* 'Advancing Cultural Studies' (ACS), held 4-5 February, 1999, near Stockholm. It gathered some 30 researchers from Sweden, Denmark, Finland, Norway, Britain and the U.S.A. to survey the main currents and prospects of cultural studies field today, discuss the contribution of each discipline/country to interdisciplinary cultural studies, and of international cultural studies to each disciplinary and/or national branch of research. On this basis, the workshop identified possible means to promote and develop this multifaceted research field, especially in Sweden.

A proposal to initiate the formation of a national *research institute* - an 'Advanced Cultural Studies Institute of Sweden' (AC SIS; cf. the end of this report) - received an overwhelmingly strong support by the workshop participants. This would be able to strengthen and improve interdisciplinary cultural research, in contact with cultural politics, practices and pedagogy, connect scholars from various disciplines and subfields, attract international competence and serve as an international interface for Swedish research.

The workshop initiated a planning process where Swedish scholars in dialogue with international colleagues will develop a feasible outline of such an institute, including its thematic profile, forms of activity, organizational structure and procedures of establishment. The goal is to present a well-anchored and optimized institute model and find ways to get it funded, so that it may hopefully be started in the year 2001.

This report contains a list of participants, a condensed workshop programme, the opening addresses and participants' statements, and a summary of the workshop discussions. The report ends with a revised but still preliminary version of the AC SIS proposal. Parts of the report are planned to be made available electronically by the digital journal *Culture Machine*, operated from the University of Teesside in Britain, with the Internet website address: <<http://Culturemachine.tees.ac.uk>>.

The ACS workshop was jointly funded by the two main state research councils: the Swedish Council for Research in the Humanities and Social Sciences (HSFR) and the Bank of Sweden Tercentenary Foundation (Riksbankens Jubileumsfond). I am deeply grateful to their material and mental support, to all the wise and friendly participants at the ACS workshop, to my assistant Åsa Bäckström and to all others who have encouraged me in pursuing these ideas.

The workshop had its organizational basis at the Stockholm University Department of Journalism, Media and Communication, and this report is

therefore published in its publication series. While it certainly contains many aspects of relevance to media studies, it should perhaps be clearly stated that neither the workshop nor the future institute have been intended to have any bias in relation to specific Swedish cities, universities or disciplines. The fact that one such department agreed to host such a wide-ranging interdisciplinary project is in itself a promising sign for the future. It shows that many do indeed today clearly see that through a combination of critique and innovative combination of disciplinary research traditions, cultural studies may serve as a regenerating resource for all who take an interest in understanding the transformations of culture.

Participants

The following scholars were invited to the ACS workshop, where M.A. Åsa Bäckström was the workshop assistant. The names on this list contain just a fraction of even the Swedish cultural studies researchers, and some of them would probably not describe themselves as involved in cultural studies as it is usually defined. But they are all actively interested in interdisciplinary cultural research, and found it important enough to take part in this joint discussion on cultural studies. The statements therefore add up to a fascinating mixture of voices from some cultural studies veterans and some cultural researchers with mainly other identifications, who regard this research field with increasing curiosity.

Those marked with an asterisk (*) were not able to participate, but expressed a strong interest in the theme and a wish to continue to take part in these discussions. Those with a circle (°) presented statements before or at the workshop, but preferred not to include them in this report. Birgit Arve-Parès and Mats Rolén presented opening addresses as representatives of the two funding research councils rather than individual statements. Johan Fornäs contributed with a different kind of statement plus several introductions to the discussions, which are summarized in revised form in this report, including the final ACSIS proposal.

Pertti Alasuutari is Professor at the Department of Sociology and Social Psychology, University of Tampere, Finland. Editor of the *European Journal of Cultural Studies*, he has published in the areas of cultural and media studies and qualitative methods, including *Desire and craving: A cultural theory of alcoholism* (1992), *Researching culture: Qualitative method and cultural studies* (1995), and *An invitation to social research* (1998).

Birgit Arve-Parès, Research Coordinator at the Swedish Council for Research in the Humanities and Social Sciences (HSFR), Stockholm.

Karin Becker is Professor of visual studies and pedagogy at the University College of Arts, Crafts and Design (Konstfackskolan), Stockholm. Her work is in the area of visual culture studies, with a primary emphasis on the meanings and uses of photographs in various social and cultural contexts, including studies of museum archives and of the press, as well as uses of photography within anthropology, within art and as a vernacular form.

Svante Beckman is Professor at Work and Culture (a division of The National Institute for Working Life, Arbetslivsinstitutet). He has a background as an economic historian, with research on technology and culture, social change theory and the philosophy of artifacts. Key publication: *Utvecklingens hjältar – den innovativa individen i samhällstänkandet* (Heroic theories of social change, 1990).

Peter Dahlgren Professor at the Department of Media and Communication Studies, Lund University, has been working from the perspectives of cultural and social theory, in the area of media, democracy and citizenship. His major publication is *Television and the public sphere* (1995).

Kirsten Drotner is Associate Professor at the Department of Film and Media Studies, University of Copenhagen, Denmark. Her publications include *English children and their magazines, 1751-1945* (1988) and a long series of articles and books on media history, youthful media cultures and qualitative methodology.

Olle Edström is Professor at the Department of Musicology, Göteborg University, who has, based on an interest in ethnomusicology and the sociology of knowledge, has published a series of books on popular music and musical life in Gothenburg and Sweden during the earlier 20th century.

Billy Ehn is Professor of Ethnology at the Department of Culture and Media, Umeå University, with a particular interest in reflexivity, ethnicity and the meeting of cultures.

***Ron Eyerman**, Professor at the Department of Sociology, Uppsala University, has among other things published *Social movements: A cognitive approach* (1991) and *Music and social movements* (1998).

Johan Fornäs is Professor at the Department of Journalism, Media & Communication, Stockholm University, and the Research Institute for Work and Culture in Norrköping. With a musicological background, his research is in popular music and youth culture, interactivity and digital communication, media use and consumption. Main publications in English are *In Garageland: Rock, youth and modernity* (1995), *Youth culture in late modernity* (ed., 1995) and *Cultural theory and late modernity* (1995).

Simon Frith is Professor at the John Logie Baird Centre, Strathclyde University, Glasgow, Scotland, U.K. His main area has been in popular music studies, including a long series of books från *The sociology of rock* (1978) to *Performing rites* (1996). He presently directs the British ESRC Research Programme on Media Economics and Media Culture

Marianne Gullestad, is social anthropologist and Professor at the Institute for Social Research, Oslo, Norway, with publications like *Kitchen-table society* (1984), *The art of social relations* (1992), *Everyday life philosophers* (1996) and *Imagined childhoods* (ed., 1996).

***Stuart Hall** is Professor at the Department of Sociology at the Open University and at the Department of Media and Communications at Goldsmiths College, University of London. He was the Director of the Birmingham Centre for Cultural Studies (1968-79) and then continued his work at the Department of Sociology at Open University (1979-1997). His main fields of interest are cultural theory, cultural studies and media studies, race, ethnicity and cultural identity.

°**Lena Hammergren**, Lecturer at the Department of Theatre Studies, Stockholm University.

Ulf Hannerz is Professor at the Department of Social Anthropology, Stockholm University, studying globalization, transnational social structures and cultural processes, and more recently the occupational culture of newsmedia foreign correspondents. His books include: *Cultural complexity* (1992) and *Transnational connections* (1996).

Jan Hjärpe is Professor at the Department of History of Religions, Lund University, with studies on islamology, political islam, the conceptualization of terms in islamic contexts and the societal role of religion, in books like *Politisk islam* (Political Islam, 1983) and *Araber och arabism* (Arabs and Arabism, 1994).

Arne Jarrick is Professor at the Department of History, Stockholm University, with research on the history of mentalities, mainly during the 18th century, including studies on revivalism, enlightenment, criminality, suicide, love and sexuality, and publications like *Psykologisk socialhistoria* (Psychological social history, 1985), *Den himmelske älskaren* (The heavenly lover, 1987), *Kärlekens makt och tårar* (The power and tears of love, 1997), and *Back to modern reason* (1999).

***Lena Johannesson**, Professor at the Department of History of Art, Göteborg University, has studied mass images and their uses, both historically and in the present.

Thomas Johansson, Associate Professor at the Centre for Cultural Research, Växjö University, is a cultural sociologist currently doing research on psycho-analytical cultural theory, youth culture, masculinity and family, body and identity. His latest books are *Den skulpterade kroppen* (The sculptured body, 1998) and *Samtidskulturer* (Contemporary cultures, ed., 1999).

***Barbro Klein** Professor at the Swedish Collegium for Advanced Study in the Social Sciences (SCASSS), Uppsala has a background as ethnologist/ folklorist, particularly interested in the study of narration and material culture in larger social and cultural perspectives. At present she directs a research project entitled 'Folklore, heritage politics and ethnic diversity in the Nordic countries'.

°***Martin Kylhammar** is Professor at the Department of Technology and Social Change, Linköping University. His main interests concern how modernization processes have been discussed and expressed in Swedish culture; cf. the books *Den okände Sten Selander* (The unknown Sten Selander, 1990) and *Frejdiga framstegsmän och visionära världsmedborgare* (Progressives and internationalists, 1994).

Lisbeth Larsson is Associate Professor at the Department of Comparative Literature, Lund University. Her research is in feminism, fiction, mass media and biographism, with publications like: *En annan historia. Om kvinnors läsning och svensk veckopress* (Women's reading and Swedish weeklies, 1989), *Svenska kvinnors självbiografier och dagböcker* (Swedish women's autobiographies and diaries, 1991), *Nordisk kvinnolitteraturhistoria* (Nordic history of women's literature, 1991-97), *Feminismer* (Feminist theories, ed., 1997).

°**Sven-Eric Liedman** is Professor at the Department of History of Science, Göteborg University. His work mainly dwells around the political history of science and the concept of modernity therein; cf. *I skuggan av framtiden. Modernitetens idéhistoria* (In the shadow of the future: Modernity's history of ideas, 1997).

Orvar Löfgren is Professor at the Department of European Ethnology, Lund University. He is currently working on transnational movements, tourism and consumption. His latest book is entitled *On holiday* (1999).

Britta Lundgren is Professor of Ethnology at the Department of Culture and Media, Umeå University. Her main interest is in issues of gender and culture in different fields, e.g. occupational culture, museums, disciplinary history, friendship and hostility.

Anders Öhman is Lecturer at the Department of Comparative Literature, Umeå University. His research is on popular literature and the process of canonization. He has published *Äventyrets tid. Den sociala äventyrsromanen i Sverige 1841-1859* (The time of adventure: The Swedish social adventure novel, 1990).

Janice Radway is Professor at the Literature Program, Duke University, Durham NC, U.S.A., with research on female reading and the Book-of-the-Month Club; the author of *Reading the Romance* (1984) and *A feeling for books* (1997).

Bo Reimer, Associate Professor at the Department of Journalism and Mass Communication, Göteborg University, interested in the sociology of culture, mass media, popular culture and political communication. He has written *The most common of practices: On mass media use in late modernity* (1994), *The politics of postmodernity* (with John R. Gibbins, in press).

Mats Rolén, Senior Lecturer and Research Coordinator at the Bank of Sweden Tercentenary Foundation (Riksbankens Jubileumsfond), Stockholm.

***Willmar Sauter** is Head of the Humanities Faculty and Professor at the Department of Theatre Studies, Stockholm University, with research on theatre performance and reception.

Ove Sernhede is Associate Professor and PhD Fellow at the Unit for Cultural Studies (Forum för Studier av SamtidsKulturen, FSSK), Department of Social Work, Göteborg University. His present research is on immigrant youth and their fascination with contemporary, Afro-American ghetto culture. His latest book is *Ungdomskulturen och de Andra* (Youth culture and Otherness).

***Tytti Soila**, Lecturer at the Department of Cinema Studies, Stockholm University, is interested in cultural studies on film, gender, subjectivity and modernity.

Britt-Marie Thurén is Professor of 'gender science' at the Centre for Women's Studies, Umeå University. Originally a social anthropologist, she is specializing in gender as to theory, and Spain as to area, with publications like *Left hand left behind: The changing gender system of a barrio in Valencia, Spain* (1988).

Mats Trondman, Associate Professor and Director of the Centre for Cultural Research, Växjö University. His main research areas are youth culture, social and cultural reproduction and change, everyday life and cultural policy, with publications like *Kultursociologi i praktiken* (Cultural sociology in practice, 1999).

Workshop programme

The workshop lasted two days, 4-5 February, 1999. The opening addresses were followed by a series of panels with introductions and discussions. The first panel consisted of the two Anglo-American participants, the second of the three from other Nordic countries.

The Swedish participants were then somewhat recklessly grouped under the three labels of 'anthropology', 'humanities' and 'sociology', roughly according to their disciplinary origin but well aware of the fact that all of these actually encompass highly divergent traditions. Ethnologists, folklorists and media researchers with primarily an ethnographic orientation were mixed with the social anthropologists. Various kinds of historians, theologians and people from the aesthetic disciplines were lumped together under the humanities heading. The sociology box contained those who have any kind of sociological inclination or background, though they may be actually positioned in quite differing academic places. All divisions have their disadvantages, and this rather arbitrary choice was made in order to highlight the potentials and problems with some of the present disciplinary boundaries running across the field.

After the last Swedish panel, a joint discussion of the ACSIS proposal (presented in a still highly provisional form at the end of this report)

suggested some steps to be taken in order to advance cultural studies.
The workshop was thus structured in a similar order as is this report.

Statements

Written statements were distributed before the workshop. Each individual participant was asked to reflect upon the relations between single disciplines/countries and the international/interdisciplinary cultural studies field, to identify key tensions, themes or tasks, or to exemplify problems and options with interconnecting research traditions. The aim was to highlight the special conditions and competences in each country or discipline, and, in the reverse direction, what cultural studies as a joint venture may have to offer to more traditional forms of cultural research.

These statements are reproduced here, slightly revised by the authors, grouped according to the workshop programme, and with alphabetical order inside each section:

1. *Opening addresses* by representatives of the funding research councils: Birgit Arve-Parès and Mats Rolén.
2. *Anglo-American statements*: Simon Frith and Janice Radway.
3. *Nordic statements*: Pertti Alasuutari, Kirsten Drotner and Marianne Gullestad.
4. *Swedish 'Anthropology' statements*: Karin Becker, Billy Ehn, Ulf Hannerz, Orvar Löfgren, Britta Lundgren and Britt-Marie Thurén.
5. *Swedish 'Humanities' statements*: Olle Edström, Jan Hjärpe, Arne Jarrick, Lisbeth Larsson and Anders Öhman.*
6. *Swedish 'Sociology' statements*: Svante Beckman, Peter Dahlgren, Thomas Johansson, Bo Reimer, Ove Sernhede and Mats Trondman.

The joint discussion of tensions and key themes in cultural studies, as well as of proposed new activities, including the ACSIS proposal, are here summarized after these statements. These discussions clarify some of the many lines of difference and of connection that more or less obviously run between the individual statements, showing this to be a dispersed but interlacing field.

* Lena Hammergren and Sven-Eric Liedman were in the 'humanities' section but have chosen not to include statements in this report.

1. Opening addresses by the funding research councils

Birgit Arve-Parès: Opening address

On behalf of the Swedish Council for Research in the Humanities and the Social Sciences, I have the pleasure to greet you all very welcome to this workshop on Advancing Cultural Studies. I am also bringing you all the good wishes from our Secretary General, Professor Anders Jeffner, who, much to his regret, is unable to participate here today.

The workshop on Advancing Cultural Studies, apart from proposing an interesting and challenging agenda, is a very timely event. The area of cultural studies has raised an increasing interest within the last five or ten years. The reasons for this are multiple. One is, of course, the development of new means of communication, allowing for cultural phenomena and representations to cross borders, and to travel in time and space at an increasingly rapid pace. Another reason, closely related to the first one, is the need for guidance in social contexts that are becoming more and more heterogeneous and culturally complex. Cultural studies, aiming to provide a better understanding of the impact of cultural phenomena, thus have an evident potential to meet current societal demands.

The workshop is however also a timely event in the context of the current Swedish debate on research priorities, where the value of the humanities and the social sciences, as compared to technology and natural science, has been questioned. I shall not enter into the discussions about how to define the area of cultural studies, nor about different conceptions of culture. I will leave this to you, in the discussions that you are to have here, today and tomorrow. In very general terms, however, I believe that one may conceive of culture, as being the expression of shared and transmitted human efforts to cope with the hazards of nature. From this point of view, it seems evident that cultural studies, unravelling myths and revealing the communicated meaning and social impact of cultural facts, hold a potential, not only for the empowerment of individuals, but also for the implementation of a sustainable social development and economic growth. These are aspects that need to be brought to the foreground in the present debate, and this is where a workshop, like the one you are to

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have here today, takes on all its significance, making the achievements and the need for cultural studies more visible.

Simultaneously, the recent interest in and expansion of the area of cultural studies has reached a point where it is important to gain more conceptual clarity. This is another good reason for launching a workshop on cultural studies right now. In the HSFR, cultural studies turn up at the interface of the humanities and the social sciences. This is to say, that they are at the very core of the concerns of the Council. They constitute, in fact, a dynamic element in the development of the disciplines both in the humanities and in the social sciences. An exchange of views from different disciplinary perspectives may therefore shed new light on the area and clarify common grounds and divides, regarding basic assumptions and methodological approaches. For all of these reasons, the proposal of Johan Fornäs to organize a workshop on Advancing Cultural Studies was very favourably met by the Council.

Now, when it comes to questions about how to organize future research, I think that it is wise to bear in mind that organizational changes, particularly in the academic world, usually do not come about very quickly, and, also, that we operate in a political framework, where, in order to propose new activities, you have to propose cuts elsewhere. I therefore believe, that in order to make the area flourish, you need to develop long term strategies and to discuss alternative approaches for making efficient use of seed money. This is to say that you should not at this stage spend too much time on details regarding new institutional arrangements or organizational issues. My advice would be to concentrate more on developing a common language and on refining the arguments for reinforcing the area as such, rather than trying to reach for an easy agreement concerning specific organizational solutions.

Since time is scarce, and you have important work to do, I shall not take up your time any longer. Before I stop, however, I just want to wish you, on behalf of the HSFR, the best of luck in the challenging and important work that you have before you. I am certain that this workshop will have an impact on the way in which cultural studies in Sweden will move ahead in the future.

Thank you!

Mats Rolén: Opening address

The Bank of Sweden Tercentenary Foundation has as a major task the support of research in the cultural field. Besides direct funding of research projects and research programs the Foundation regularly initiates seminars and conferences to stimulate research in little developed fields. One example of such initiatives was the follow up the ideas of the World Commission on Culture and Development Report *Our Creative Diversity* by arranging three international seminars in Stockholm from the 30 of March to 2 April 1998. The seminars are documented in a recently published report, edited by Carl-Johan Kleberg.

The transition of many societies to a post-industrial phase has changed, and in many cases expanded cultural interests, stimulated expressive behaviour, affected the scope and size of the cultural sector and created new demands on societies and their governments, and on cultural policy. The dimension of meaning and culture is more and more considered as an essential part of what could be included in a 'sustainable development'. This often quoted, but vague concept, became globally known through the Brundtland Commission 1987 and the United Nations Rio Conference for environment and development 1992. From my point of view, and I am sure that you share my view, research on the dimension of culture and meaning is essential for the analysis and understanding but also the practice of sustainable development which aims to improve quality of life without endangering the life and rights of future generations.

This workshop titled Advancing Cultural Studies aims at finding ways to push the frontiers of cultural research forward by sharing experiences by a number of qualified researchers. The organizer Dr. Johan Fornäs also proposes a new internationally oriented but Sweden-based centre for advanced research in the interdisciplinary field of cultural studies, ACSIS. On the whole, in Sweden we have by tradition very few research institutes outside or inside the university borders. That is especially true for the humanities and the social sciences. There are though a number of 'centers' for certain research areas at all universities. But maybe the demands of new knowledge today also requires new institutional forms? I guess many of you are familiar with the book *The new production of knowledge* (London: Sage, 1994) by Michel Gibbons et al., who argue that the research community is moving towards a 'Mode 2', where an increasing part of the production of new knowledge is produced outside the traditional disciplines.

Mats Rolén is Senior Lecturer and Research Coordinator at the Bank of Sweden Tercentenary Foundation (Riksbankens Jubileumsfond), Stockholm, Sweden.

If you want to harvest you normally have to seed. For the Bank of Sweden Tercentenary Foundation the providing of seed money is an often used form of financial support to the research community. The foundation provides grants for planning of projects or programs as well as seminars with different aims. The initiative from Dr. Fornäs to seek new ways for the improvement of interdisciplinary research in the cultural field was by our foundation considered to be important and therefore was given a planning grant or 'seed money'. And the interesting program for the seminar and the great number of highly qualified scholars present here obviously will be a test of the validity of Dr. Fornäs' ideas of finding ways to push the frontiers of cultural research forward.

On behalf of The Bank of Sweden Tercentenary Foundation I welcome you all to Södergarn and two days and one evening filled with interesting and stimulating discussions. And - of course - we are looking forward to see what kind of harvest we will get from our seed money!

2. Statements by the Anglo-American panelists

Simon Frith: Advancing cultural studies (Or keeping the fly in the ointment)

To begin with the paradox. By any objective measure, 'cultural studies' is one of the more striking academic achievements of the last 25 years. A subject which didn't really exist as such at the beginning of the 1970s is now well established: most universities have cultural studies courses and there are a variety of cultural studies departments and degrees; there are lecturers, readers and professors of cultural studies; academic publishers have extensive cultural studies lists and there is an ever increasing number of cultural studies journals. Even more significantly, perhaps, 'cultural studies', as the loose description of a particular kind of scholarly approach (cross-disciplinary, methodologically self-reflexive, concerned with the interplay of material and symbolic factors, taking the marginal and the popular seriously) can now be found in every humanities subject and across much of the social sciences.¹ It is an approach which has had

Simon Frith is a media and popular music researcher and Professor at the John Logie Baird Centre, Strathclyde University, Glasgow, Scotland, U.K.

¹ One of the more confusing examples is the British Council's promotion of something called 'British Cultural Studies'. The British Council is funded by the Foreign Office to

an obvious impact on journalism and the media (particularly on the television treatment of cultural issues).² Just in terms of the sociology of knowledge this is remarkable: the creation of a new scholarly field in a couple of academic generations.

And yet, and yet ... even as cultural studies academics have built their reputations, published their research, been awarded their chairs, they have remained embattled. On the one hand, the response to criticism verges on the paranoid; on the other hand, there is an almost obsessive border vigilance, as 'real cultural studies' is defended from interlopers. I haven't the space or inclination to document this here (though I know from personal experience how being identified as a critic of cultural studies is to be treated as an enemy); perhaps the best way to get at the flavour of what I'm talking about is to read a couple of responses to Peter Golding and Marjorie Ferguson's collection *Cultural studies in question* (London, 1997). Both David Morley (in *Cultural Studies* 12/4, 1998) and Graeme Turner (in *Media International Australia* 87, 1998) write with an anger, a sense of being wronged, unusual in public academic debate. Why?

For three overlapping reasons, I think, to do with academic disciplines (and the relationship of the arts and social sciences); with definitions of research (and the status of empiricism); and with politics (and academic and cultural populism). And if such arguments about discipline, research and politics have resonance for cultural studies everywhere, they have a particularly acrid flavour in Britain because of the significance of the Research Assessment Exercise in providing a measure of academic excellence which is public and has financial consequences. There's no doubt that following the last RAE exercise (in 1996) some cultural studies scholars felt that their approach was undervalued, that their inter-discip-

promote British cultural interests abroad. This used to mean promoting high culture – British orchestras, novelists, poets and painters were exhibited round the world. But in the last ten years (since the collapse of the Soviet Union and the intensifying international competition for cultural influence in Eastern Europe), British culture has been defined in more anthropological terms and the global influence of low cultural forms like pop music and TV comedy has been acknowledged. Even so, there remains much room for misunderstanding between participants in 'British Cultural Studies' courses (who arrive expecting to study the ideas of, say, Stuart Hall, with a view to applying them to their own countries) and their course leaders (who have prepared sessions on, say, British television or British local government).

² Outside the academy cultural studies seems to have had its most sustained impact on fine artists (perhaps through the compulsory 'general studies' strand of art school education). Cultural studies has clearly influenced the work of the so-called Young British Artists, and is now routinely employed in exhibition catalogues and artist monographs.

linarity, their suspicion of straight empirical research, and their concern for popular rather than high cultural issues were negative factors in peer review.

Whether or not these suspicions are justified (and the evidence is that cultural studies departments as such were treated quite fairly by the RAE Communications, Cultural and Media Studies panel) they do reflect a critique of cultural studies that has become quite common (and which marks a new kind of opposition between cultural and media studies).

The starting point for the argument here is that cultural studies is 'populist' (though what is meant by populism varies). From an old left/Marxist/political economy perspective (Nick Garnham, Todd Gitlin), cultural studies is seen to deny the material reality of the power structure (through the use of such vague concepts as 'empowerment' and 'resistance'), to underplay the significance of class (in its concern for other culturally determined identities), to echo market forces in its equation of popularity with consumption, and, too often, to adopt a postmodern relativism in its assessment of cultural goods and activities. Whatever its radical origins or claims, cultural studies as now practised in universities has become a celebration of everyday life. (The most measured version of this argument is Jim McGuigan's *Cultural populism*, London, 1992; the least measured Greg Philo and David Miller's Glasgow Media Group pamphlet, *Wrong turns in media/cultural studies and social science*, 1998.) Its students study contemporary commercial culture not as critics but as participants, with the vocational aim of becoming themselves part of the cultural apparatus.

This relates to a second sort of critique, developed by what one might call old discipline sceptics, who define populism in academic terms. From this perspective the success of cultural studies has little to do with its intrinsic scholarly or pedagogic value and a lot to do with the material situation of universities in the 1980s and 1990s: expansion, cost cutting, and the pursuit of the short term fix in Higher Education meant modularized and brightly packaged courses, quantitative measures of research productivity, and a new kind of collusion between publishers and academic authors in pursuit of 'the rapid production of projects based upon readily accessible material'. In Paul Giles's words, 'From this angle, cultural studies in Britain has become an academic commodity, manifestly embedded within systems of exchange and market value' (Paul Giles: 'Virtual Americas: The internationalization of American studies and the ideology of exchange', *American Quarterly* 50(3) 1998, pp. 531-2).

The accusation of 'populism', whether made from the standpoint of old lefties or old disciplines is necessarily an accusation of bad faith. 'Look',

critics seem to be saying, 'You claim to be radical but you are actually rejoicing in consumer capitalism and/or supporting the most philistine and market-driven aspects of university policy'. No wonder cultural studies practitioners begin to feel paranoid and rush to redefine their own practices, distancing themselves from cultural studies 'appropriations', referring back to cultural studies' pre-lapsarian principles.

And these practitioners are right, I think, to detect a certain bad faith among their critics too - cultural studies 'populism', whatever its problems, is at least an attempt to engage with everyday life (Marxist critics have their own history of condescension to and romanticization of the working class) and no discipline can be said to have resisted the New Management of British universities in the 1980s and 1990s (the *trahison des clercs* was a general academic condition). If there is substance to the populist critique of cultural studies, then, there is also considerable confusion about the issues involved: is cultural studies an institution, a pedagogy, a discipline, or a politics? What is clear is that 'cultural studies' is all too often constructed as the wrong sort of object. It is not, in fact, an institution, a pedagogy, a discipline or a politics; the term describes, rather, an *approach* to these things - multi-disciplinary, methodologically self-reflexive, theoretically promiscuous, not bound by conventions of the academic or politically appropriate (and as often as not therefore producing work that can indeed be criticized for a certain lack of rigour).

Another way of understanding the issues here is to treat cultural studies as a process of 'othering'. Because its dynamic is as a critique of disciplines, so its emphases change according to the disciplinary assumptions at issue. Within literary (and film and music) studies, then, cultural studies means focusing on context rather than text, sociologising problems; within sociology, by contrast, cultural studies means focusing on text (or discourse) rather than institutions. In more general academic terms, cultural studies could be said to focus on the contemporary (rather than the canonical), on the low rather than the high; it means paying attention to social groups and processes marginalized by mainstream social and cultural research (Blacks and ethnicity, women and gender, queers and queerness); it means encouraging the flow of ideas across national boundaries and around academic traditions (a flow involving systematic but not necessarily unproductive misreadings - as French philosophers are interpreted by American communications scholars with no knowledge of metaphysics or phenomenology, and American subcultural theory is reworked by British literary scholars with no knowledge of sociology or ethnomethodology).

From this perspective it seems clear to me that cultural studies, as a way of criticising disciplines, cannot in itself be a discipline - hence its

problems as institution and pedagogy. Cultural studies is not a suitable subject for undergraduates. It depends on the acquired disciplinary knowledge and practice which then become – at postgraduate level – the object for the reflexive critique that defines cultural studies in the first place. At the same time (and perhaps more problematically) there cannot be a cultural studies methodology either (there is, rather, a critique of methodologies), and this explains, I think, the uneasiness of policy oriented cultural analysts like Jim McGuigan. As a description – a celebration – of everyday life, cultural studies can seem to describe a way of opting out of policy debates altogether, a way of avoiding political or ethical or even aesthetic judgements. But before coming back to the implications of this, I want to go on a detour into media studies, a detour which will, provide another (and, I hope, more constructive) perspective of cultural studies.

For the last four years I have been director of an ESRC research programme on media economics and media culture. When I wrote the original proposal for this programme (with Colin MacCabe from the British Film Institute) I didn't think of myself as a media sociologist. The point of the programme was to bring new approaches to British media research (and we and it were regarded with considerable hostility by the then media research establishment). On the one hand, we wanted to encourage research into the media as an industry, in terms of economics, management studies, occupational sociology, etc; on the other hand, we wanted to bring to the usual research questions about audiences and effects a cultural studies interest in meaning and identity. In the event (for reasons to do with ESRC bureaucracy that I won't go into) the programme that was funded bore little relationship to the programme that was planned – the majority of the funded projects involve media sociology; no project could really be described as cultural studies. This reflects the cultural studies/media studies divide already mentioned, but in the ESRC context what is even more striking is the uneasy academic position of media studies themselves, a position which, I think, helps put the academic problem of cultural studies into some perspective.

There are two immediate issues here. First, the problem of disciplines: how does media research fit into the ESRC's committee structure? Who should referee media studies proposals? (This is a particular problem in that referees tend to focus on proposed methodologies, and different disciplines have their own rather rigid views as to what is valid/feasible in research funding terms.) Second, the problem of policy: how does media research relate to perceived social policy issues, that is to issues primarily defined/addressed by government departments. The ESRC question tends to be how to hook media research onto projects dealing

with education or health or crime. The ministry dealing directly with the media, the Department of Culture, Media and Sport, has so far been more concerned with cultural industries policy than media issues (for discussion of new Labour cultural policy see *Critical Quarterly* 41(1), 1999, a special issue on 'Creative Britain'). The government is, of course (like the media industry itself), interested in research on the implications of new communications technology, on the 'information society', on the future of consumption, etc., but this mostly means market research, and the problem of the academic pursuit of research funds in this context is that we have to follow an agenda being set elsewhere. Research becomes consultancy (and so the Glasgow Media Group moves from being a critic of BBC news ideology to being an advisor on BBC marketing).

In the current climate of social science research in Britain, then, media studies are seen, at best, as an 'add on'. Key research issues are defined - violence, youth, devolution, etc - and a place is left for a bit of work on violence and the media, youth and the media, devolution and the media. The effect is to deny media studies' own justification: the media should be studied because they are now at the centre (not the margins) of the social process. And the pressing task of media researchers is therefore to establish the academic/policy significance of their own agenda, to make clear that we live in a mediated society and that understanding the media means rethinking central social science concepts. For example,

citizenship

We live in a new kind of public sphere, not just indirectly mediated in the use of the press/broadcasting as the basis of democratic political communication but also constructed in the direct use of people's voices in tabloids, talk shows, docu-soaps, etc. The media role in the reshaping of the polity is as important as the state's role in the regulation of the media. As we originally argued, an understanding of media economics has to be integrated with an understanding of media culture.

socialization

People's sense of themselves, their sense of society itself (terms like sociability, identity, ethnicity), are today mediated in ways which cannot be derived easily from a map of the social and occupational structure, from empirical accounts of the work place, the family, the market, the community. The tension - or collusion - between lived and mediated reality is central to the social and psychological processes in which people become socially self-conscious.

authority

How should we characterize 'the elite' (or 'the intellectual') in a mediated society? How do issues get on political, ideological, and imaginative agenda? What, really, is the nature of Rupert Murdoch's 'power'? What, in turn, is the basis for media regulation and its legitimacy?

globalization

Many of the issues loosely linked by sociologists as 'postmodernism' concern the international circulation of commodities, meanings and values, but in this context circulation is mediation, whether in terms of the work of the global media themselves or in the use of media from below, as it were, in the making of new kinds of supra-national social relations.

In broad terms I think it is arguable that many of the assumptions that still underlie social policy debates, assumptions about lifestyles, social relations and subjectivities, are no longer valid. The liberal derived account of the pursuit of individual market interest and the Marxist derived account of the formation of material interest groups are both misleading, even in their sophisticated versions which take account of economic 'irrationality' and the deluding effects of ideology. Both approaches implicitly refer to a real (material, economically-determined) society that has been distorted, obscured, by the media and their effects. But the starting point of media studies is that societies - experiences - are by necessity and to begin with mediated societies, mediated experiences. In methodological terms there is nothing immediately graspable behind the media, no 'real' society or experience to be rescued.

Media sociologists must be responsible for putting their understanding of 'mediated life worlds' at the centre of public policy debates. And this has implications for media studies themselves, which needs to be able to relate changes in the media to changes in society without falling either into technophilia and feelgood futurology or technophobia and permanent nostalgia. If it is true that communication systems in the digital age are creating a new kind of information abundance, that the speed and range of communication are transforming what is and can be meant by 'society', then it is also true that this is happening according to the logic of capital - through competition (and the push towards oligopoly), the pursuit of profit (and the spread of market-oriented practices to areas previously exempt from them), and the development of new kinds of consumption. But the dynamics of capital don't explain its effects (or the obstacles and diversions to its progress), and the task of media studies is not simply to identify trends but to assess and critique them which is, in turn, to pose an academic challenge. What concepts need refreshing?

(‘Public service’? ‘The audience’? ‘Consumption’? ‘Regulation’?) What issues need addressing? What can/should be achieved by state media policies? How can media studies gain authority (an authority presently contested by the media themselves, for whom ‘media studies’, rather than cultural studies, is the interloper in the academy). Such questions must determine the development of media studies or, rather, media research: research strategy depends on a clear sense of academic purpose (and an agreed account of political responsibility). Media studies is no more a discipline than cultural studies but it does need to show off its own legacy, a shared framework of concepts and issues, an underlying agreement about the questions that matter (even if the answers are wildly different). And it does need to be methodologically convincing (especially if it is to take its proper place in ESRC debate).

When I started out on an academic career at the beginning of the 1970s I was a sociologist with an interest in media and culture issues. Over the next twenty years this interest meant crossing disciplinary boundaries (not least the boundary between the arts and social sciences) and gearing my work to questions being raised outside sociology, in cultural studies, of course, but also in film studies, literary theory, philosophy. In the late 1970s the work coming out of the Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies in Birmingham, on the one hand, and the Glasgow Media Group, on the other, transformed the way in which research in culture and media was conceived. For a time disciplinary labels lost their meaning – I was one of a generation of academics who could equally well be placed in sociology, media studies or cultural studies (in career terms I moved from being a Senior Lecturer in Sociology to being a Professor of English Studies) – and I still believe that social studies are by their nature cultural studies. But it is the relationship between British cultural and media studies, at once so close and so distinct, that now interests me. To study contemporary media is to study contemporary culture; to do cultural studies is to do media studies (I have external examined a range of cultural studies courses in Britain; their students almost exclusively study media texts and effects). This is to return to my starting paradox from a slightly different angle: if cultural and media studies are so closely connected (in terms of the RAE panel and academic organization, for example) why do they seem increasingly to be in opposition to each other (as in the development of separate journals)?

The answer, I think (and the reason why relations have become fraught) concerns not objects of study, nor even methods of study as such, but, rather, ideology and style. ‘Media studies’ describes a group of academics who see themselves as professional, responsible, in pursuit of research funds and policy influence; ‘cultural studies’ describes a group

of academics who still see themselves as academically eccentric, marginal, more interested in ideas than data, more interested in defining social patterns than determining social policy. The academic self-images here are strikingly different and I'm sure that a sociologist of knowledge (and/or a psycho-biographer) could have fun disentangling the institutional and personal reasons why particular academics have followed one path or the other. As for me, I now regard myself as a media sociologist and look on cultural studies as an irritant. Which is not to say that it is not a necessary irritant. The issue, to put this another way, is not how to advance cultural studies, but how to use cultural studies as the goad to advance everybody else.³

Janice Radway: American studies, ethnic studies, and cultural studies

For cultural studies, in the United States, at this particular historical moment, it is both the best of times and the worst of times. Of course, in saying this so assertively, I have no doubt led you to expect a confident statement about the current strengths and weaknesses of something called 'cultural studies' and a consequent plan of action for its revivification. I have to confess, however, that I do not feel confident enough to provide that kind of assured diagnosis or to prescribe a specific regimen that would root out the problems and advance cultural studies to a stable condition of health. More than anything else, I feel perplexed by the current condition of cultural studies in the United States and almost completely unsure what to say about it as a now highly elaborated discourse with a significant number of avowed enemies.

Part of the problem as I see it is that cultural studies as a mode of inquiry or as a critical process has been so successful on the U.S. academic scene that the signifier has been claimed by many who have been nurtured by different theoretical traditions, who work in different disciplinary domains, and who aim to accomplish quite different goals through their inquiry. Hence, the question Richard Johnson posed a while ago is even more pressing now. What is cultural studies, anyway? Please don't

³ For a similar argument (I think!) from a Scandinavian perspective, see Peter Dahlgren: 'Cultural Studies as a research perspective' in J. Corner, P. Schlesinger and R. Silverstone eds: *International media research*, London and New York 1997. Thanks to Philip Schlesinger for drawing this to my attention after I had written the above.

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mistake my point here. In gesturing to this proliferation and asking Johnson's question again, I am not advocating the policing of the boundaries of cultural studies nor am I calling for a return to some purer, cleaner state where we could answer that question easily by pointing to a definable set of theoretical origins, a clear set of practices and a confinable, specifiable set of goals. I don't think this is a good idea. More to the point, I don't think it is possible. I simply want to point the fact of cultural studies' success in the United States, to its appearance virtually everywhere on the U.S. academic scene, and note that this makes for a very complex discursive field that is virtually impossible to survey totally, as if from above. Thus, Johnson's question might more properly be formulated in this way - is the literary cultural studies on view at the Modern Language Association meetings the same thing as queer cultural studies or feminist cultural studies or black cultural studies? Is the cultural studies demonized by some historians the same cultural studies criticized by some anthropologists? Is the cultural studies attacked by Richard Rorty in *Achieving our country* the same cultural studies deplored by Todd Gitlin in *The twilight of common dreams*? Who are the so-called 'left conservatives' in the U.S. and why do they dislike cultural studies? Is American cultural studies the same thing as Latin American cultural studies? What about Chicano cultural studies? And what about the cultural studies in communication and media studies?

You see my point here. Cultural studies is everywhere in the U.S. university. It is employed both as a term of praise and a term of opprobrium. With this kind of intense proliferation and polysemy, with the consequent intensification of struggles to define the term and to specify its proper referent, it is impossible to summarize the condition of cultural studies as if it were one thing in the hope of clarifying its purpose, practice, and sense of direction. What is to be done then? Three possibilities occur to me. One can conduct business as usual in one small corner of the field and not worry about what others are doing under the same name. This seems unwise and politically irresponsible. One could inquire into the conditions that have produced this widespread adoption of at least the name, cultural studies, if not all the practices associated with its first practitioners. This is an interesting and very difficult question that would involve a history of the disciplines, a history of the post-World War Two university, a social history of the period, and sociology of the professoriat and student body, not to mention an inquiry into the state of the economy and the role of cultural production within it. Obviously, I can't attempt such an account in twenty minutes even if I felt that I had command of the way the term and the tradition have been taken up in all these different fields. Perhaps I can defer this question to our discussion. We

might ask, why the boom in cultural studies, as Meaghan Morris once called it, and what are its consequences and prospects? Are the conditions different in our different national and regional contexts? And what about the consequences? Since I can't answer these difficult questions nor take in the entire prospect of cultural studies even in the United States, I thought I would try to speak today from my own very particular location at a highly specific and overdetermined intersection in this huge domain.

If I understand the situation correctly in Sweden today, it seems to me that my own work has primarily been associated with the field of cultural studies and with the field of feminist studies. In the United States, however, I think that work has just as often been associated with the field of American studies. There is good reason for that. I was first employed by a prominent American studies department at the University of Pennsylvania. For a time there, I served as the editor of *American Quarterly*, the official journal of the American Studies Association. I have also served on two program committees for the Association's convention, been elected to the national council and recently served as president of the Association. In November, I delivered the presidential address which has proven to be quite controversial.

I point to this only to note that my experiences with the theoretical traditions and scholarly practices of cultural studies have always been filtered through and/or pursued adjacently to my prior training and interest in American studies. I cite all this institutional data as well because I would like to focus for the rest of my time here today on the recent controversies and debates that have animated American studies. I think they can be instructive for our purposes here because these controversies have been occasioned by what might be called a three-way confrontation between American studies, cultural studies and with what is referred to in the United States as ethnic studies. I think this confrontation is interesting because it highlights the differences in history, motive, and intellectual organization among three different efforts to question the traditional disciplines and to think the concept of culture in inter-disciplinary fashion. I also think a review of the controversy can point to a cluster of theoretical issues that cultural studies is well-positioned to take up.

A very brief historical sketch of the early years of American studies is in order here. Michael Denning, who was himself trained at Birmingham, has recently argued in his important book, *The Cultural Front*, that the intellectual origins of the American studies movement should be traced back to the decades of the 1920s and 30s. His is a powerful but controversial argument because it requires the recognition of certain intellectuals as Americanists who were also internationalists of a sort – that is, individuals on the political left who were interested in international

political and labor movements and who thus looked at the activities of the U.S. through a non-nationalist eye. This argument is controversial both because the origins of the American studies movement are usually located in the post-World War Two era, that is, during the early years of the Cold War, and because American studies has at least tacitly been constructed as a nationalist enterprise. In my view, in fact, it has functioned for the most part as a technology of nationalism.

The first American studies departments were created in the late 1940s and the association was itself founded in 1951. One of its founders suggested that it was created in order to help define American civilization and to counter the increasing academic emphasis on specialization. Many commentators have observed that this movement was the product of the Cold War context which produced a desire to delineate what was exceptional about U.S. culture at a time when public debate was structured by the perceived opposition between the evil empire of the Soviet Union and the supposedly, disinterested democratic republic of the United States. It was this conviction about the exceptionalism of the United States – that is, its difference from other Western European nations on the one hand, and the Soviet Union on the other, that led to the desire for an interdisciplinary method that would be equal to the notion of American culture conceived as a unified whole, a whole that manifested itself as a distinctive set of properties and themes in all things American, whether individuals, institutions, or cultural products.

You can see, I think, that the interdisciplinary ideal was connected to a certain understanding of a totality, that is, an organic, coherent, cultural whole. That whole was conceptualized by isomorphically mapping an essentially anthropological concept of culture onto a geography or territory, but a geography or territory organized politically as a nation-state. Hence, the notion of ‘American’ culture did not include Canada, Latin America, or the countries of the Caribbean. Culture, nation, identity, and territory were isomorphically mapped one upon the other. The American was imperially elided with the United States.

Despite the tacit presence of the anthropological model of culture as a way of life, I should point out that the traditional, Americanist literary and political canons continued to stand at the center or heart of American studies. As Gene Wise, a later commentator observed, the first substantive consensus in the field assumed that there was an American mind, it was more or less homogeneous, it could be found in any American, but it found its most coherent expression in the country’s leading thinkers, including Mather, Edwards, Franklin, Cooper, Emerson, Thoreau, Hawthorne, Melville, Whitman, Twain, Dewey Neibuhr, et al. Do keep in mind here that these were the very same years during which some of the

progenitors of British cultural studies were also troubling over the culture/culture relationship, that is, between culture as a whole way of life and culture as a received artistic tradition. The difference, of course, is that where the notion of totality in American studies was borrowed from the discourse of nationalism, totality in the developing discourse of cultural studies was drawn from the Marxist intellectual tradition and its internationalist conceptualization of capitalism. Interdisciplinarity was marshaled as a technique for understanding the complexity of the totality that is capitalism and of the way the process of determination works materially and socially. You can see here the beginning of a conceptual tension over the relationship between the nation and the international, between the national and the global.

The first substantive consensus in American studies was challenged in the 1970s by Americanist scholars who came of age in the 1950s, went to college and graduate school in the 1960s, and were formed by the political movements associated with 1968 and beyond. Mostly ignorant of what was going on in Britain, they focused on the question of difference and tentatively at first, but more vociferously later, began to question the coherence and the organicism of American culture. Eventually, they began to challenge the notion of exceptionalism as well. Much of the early work was done by feminists in the American Studies Association who gained a foothold early in the 1970s. They began to challenge not only the dominance of men within the association but the gender bias and exclusion of the historical narratives about U.S. history dominant at the time. This feminist work was complemented, extended, and complicated by work on race drawing its impetus from the American Civil Rights movement. There followed work on Native American culture, Chicano culture, Asian-American culture, etc. This work led to a constant focus on difference and dissensus in American history, to an examination of the relationship of so-called 'minorities' to 'American culture as a whole'. This was the moment of identity politics in the United States. For the most part, American studies as a field and an association addressed identity politics seriously and attempted to take account of the intellectual consequences of focusing on sub-national communities and identities.

Still, because these movements at this point still assumed the existence of the autonomous liberal subject, minority subjects and communities were thought of as fundamentally different or separate from 'Americans'. Their cultural identity was posited as a prior state that was transformed through the process of Americanization. America and American studies were conceived as an always more capacious umbrella capable of including more multitudes and minorities place on the periphery. At the center, was the dominant American tradition. This moved preserved, of

course, the primacy of the nationalist paradigm. It also preserved what I would call the liberal solution to difference.

The 1970s and 1980s were dominated in American studies by efforts to include minority discourse, identity politics, and the communities and intellectual discourses they produced. This was always done, however, by including them *within* American studies. Much changed but I think it is also fair to say that tensions increased. They have heightened through the course of the 90s. The question is why? Two issues are involve here, I think, and cultural studies figures in both.

As various minority-based discourses developed separately from American studies and began to challenge some of its most fundamental assumptions, another related form of intellectual inquiry was taken up within American studies and itself began to challenge other presuppositions of the field. I am thinking here of popular culture studies, later, mass culture studies. (Here, I am going to compress a rather complex story into a too-simple narrative for brevity's sake.) As feminist and ethnic studies scholars began to excavate the cultural traditions and achievements of the populations they were interested in, they found it necessary to work with a different archive: not the canonical literary and political works that had stood at the center of American studies, but rather popular culture traditions and the culture of everyday life. Here, their interests intersected with those of social historians, especially those on the left interested in the culture of the working classes. Much of this early work was openly celebratory in nature. That was necessary, to a certain extent, to make claims for the value of the work. Those claims were different, however. They were not aesthetic in nature nor premised on the notion of political centrality to the American tradition. Rather, claims were made about their evidentiary value as forms that expressed and/or testified to the nature of a minority population's oppression or domination.

At this point, American popular culture study intersected with the work done at Birmingham and, through early cultural studies, was forced to engage with the work of the Frankfurt school, which was relatively unknown in U.S. humanities circles. Thus the work of Stuart Hall, Fredric Jameson, Theodor Adorno, Max Horkheimer, and Walter Benjamin was engaged nearly simultaneously. A lot changed as a result of this engagement. To begin with, American studies scholars began to grapple with the concept of mass culture and its relationship to popular culture. Obviously, this was a question engaged very early in Britain. I am thinking of Richard Hoggart's work here and of the anthology Stuart Hall did with Paddy Whannel. More to the point, perhaps, this engagement helped to produce a rather new and more serious engagement with Marxist theory and its fundamentally internationalist point of view. What

I am referring to here is to its preoccupation with both the international march of capital and with the possibility of an international revolutionary opposition.

American studies scholars who were increasingly influenced by Birmingham, by Marx, later by Althusser and Gramsci, clearly challenged the notion of the exceptionalism of American culture. If events in U.S. history were as much a function of the operations of capital as events in other countries in the West, then what was different about American culture? Was its location in the New World or its supposedly democratic political tradition of any consequence? This led to political differences within the association along the traditional left-right axis but I would argue that the more important consequence was that this engagement with the Marxist tradition and its internationalism surreptitiously began to challenge the isomorphism between territory, culture, nation, and identity. This raised key questions about the nature of cultural determination. If Americans were not Americans by virtue of their location in the New World and in the U.S. nation-state, then what factors conspired to produce what is called 'American' culture? This posed a key question, then. What is the relation between national cultural identity and questions of class, of race, of gender, of sexuality? The growing interest in the nature of these local community identities and their relation to national and international developments was given further impetus by developments within ethnic studies, where there developed an engagement with post-colonial theory. People working on race and ethnicity began to investigate international labor migrations, the role of colonialism in the New World, the U.S. as a colonial power itself, and the role of racism in constituting various forms of Western nationalism.

The intellectual tensions that developed as a result were exacerbated by departmental conflicts on U.S. campuses. The tension arose as small American studies programs and departments (often composed of faculty from larger departments) competed for personnel and financial resources with small ethnic studies programs (composed in much the same way). Many campuses sought to subsume various ethnic studies programs under the umbrellas of American studies as a cost-cutting measure. As you can imagine, this produced both political and intellectual tension and opposition. It also intensified the significance of the question about the nature of the relation between American national identity and minority identifications, between American culture as a whole and the cultures of African-Americans, Asian-Americans, and Chicanos. What exactly is the relation between national identity and sub-national or supra-national identities? How do you think the relation now, not between economy and

culture, but economy and cultures, where those cultures are no longer conceived as isolated, self-contained, and discrete?

You can see, I suspect, how the post-colonial focus on migrations, movements, hybridity, and fluidity also then strengthened the challenge to the notion of an American culture, located exclusively in glorious isolation in the United States. Supra-national perspectives have gained ground within ethnic and minority studies. In addition to post-colonial studies, diaspora studies, Black Atlantic studies, transnational feminism and queer studies, the border discourse associated with Chicano studies – all have had an effect. As evidence, let me cite the last two presidential addresses given at the American Studies Association annual convention, Mary Helen Washington’s ‘What happens if you place African-American studies at the center?’ and my own, ‘What’s in a name’, which plays with the idea of renaming the American Studies Association precisely because the developments and discourse I have just reviewed have made the older, area studies model outmoded and indefensible.

I don’t have time to review fully the suggestions I made here or the arguments I developed both in favor of and against them. All I have time for now is to name them and to point to their evident drawbacks. This will be useful in conclusion because it points, I think, to that cluster of issues that I think must be addressed in the age of global capital, both within cultural studies and elsewhere, a process that is not wholly controlled by the United States nor coterminous with its interests but certainly bound up with it. My first suggestion in the address was to name the rename the American Studies Association the International Association for United States Studies. The name has the benefit of being more modest and it undoes the imperial erasure of Latin American, Mexico, Canada, and the Caribbean. However, it doesn’t fundamentally undo the area studies model and it might even be more conservative in that it perpetuates the political rather than the conceptual borders of the U.S. nation.

My second suggestion was to adopt the name, the Inter-American Studies Association. This would have the advantage of attending to migrations, border zones, colonial relations with Europe, and post-colonial and imperial relations with the rest of the world. At the same time, it could foster a focus on the specificity of local exchanges between different nations and communities in the Americas. However, it would perpetuate another version of the same problem. It raises the question of why stop here, at those particular boundaries? Why assume the self-containment and irreducibility of the Americas as a region? How do you think the relations between nations and both sub- and supra-national communities?

My final suggestion was the name, Intercultural Studies Association. The name is close to cultural studies and, as such, it might promote an understanding of cultural processes as fluid, flexible, hybrid, and complex. It might also lead to a focus on the fragmented, divided, fluid, post-structuralist subject. But it raises other questions. What happens to the local, to the specifics of embeddedness at a particular site with a particular history? Do those who study the U.S. at a time when it is playing a crucial role in processes of global integration have a special responsibility to trace ways in which process of global integration disproportionately work to benefit a relatively small number of U.S. citizens? How important is it to remember that people live everyday lives that are embodied and locally situated? How important is it to understand and preserve the ways in which knowledges are themselves particular and situated, that is, generated in, and relevant to, specific contexts and histories? Would lack of attention to the ways in which the effects of global processes are always felt locally simply aid and abet forces of global integration? If the answer to this last question is 'yes', as I think it should be, then how do we go about conceptualizing the local/global relation and nurturing the local without exacerbating divides, differences, and distinctions? This is the cluster of issues that the confrontation between American studies, ethnic studies, and cultural studies presses upon us at this particular historical moment.

3. Statements by the Nordic panelists

Pertti Alasuutari: Is there a Nordic cultural studies?

When I preparing for the public defence of my PhD dissertation in 1990, I had a telephone conversation with my opponent, professor Harry Levine who lives in New York. He had read my thesis and had some comments on it. He asked whether I knew of a wonderful book he had recently read, a book written by two Swedish authors, Frykman and Löfgren. Because of his American pronunciation it took me a while to figure out that he was speaking about Frykman and Löfgren and their book book *Culture Builders*. I was pleased and proud and maybe a bit arrogant to be able to

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say that of course I knew that book, had read it many years ago when it originally came out in Swedish by the name *Den kultiverade människan*.

That was one of the occasions when I was pleased to be part of the Nordic academic community, and able to keep track of what is going on in the social sciences elsewhere than just in the English-speaking world. For many once young, now middle-aged scholars the links to other Nordic countries have formed an important international arena or 'home ground' where to discuss developments in the field, and to assess the applicability of different theoretical trends to contemporary social change, as it was perceived from the viewpoint of Northern Europe. Oftentimes, discussions with Nordic colleagues have dealt with for instance German, French or British scholars' work, but Nordic connections have never been just a route of diffusion of international social science to the Northern corner of Europe. For one thing, what Nordic scholars have picked out from the international social science literature as important and relevant reading has always had its own profile. That profile has reflected the developments of Nordic societies which are not necessarily identical with those in, say, the United Kingdom or the United States. Nordic scholars have also been more keen on following developments in other European language areas than is the case in the Anglo-American world. Secondly, Nordic scholars have gained influence from each others' work both in terms of theory-building and empirical research. Only part of that work is available in English.

The history of the 'Nordic community'

The roots of the Nordic community date back a long time, and it is probably an overstatement to talk about a clearly-defined community at all. One should rather talk about a loose network or networks. Depending on what Nordic country and what discipline in the social sciences and humanities we are talking about, there are no doubt many, only partially overlapping histories that can be told about the development of a Nordic cultural studies.

However, as I see it, of particular importance for what came to be known as cultural studies was the group of young scholars that was formed within the Nordiska Sommaruniversitetet, NSU. It was a group of young Marxists that in the 1970s took distance from political Marxism. They tried to establish a Marxian sociology on a close reading and reconstruction of the method that Marx used in his critique of political economy. This group of theorists, including names such as Hans Jørgen Schanz and Hans Jørgen Thomsen, was known as the *Kapitallogiker* school. Now, Nordic cultural studies can be partly seen as an antidote to

the economic reductionism of which the Kapitallogiker school was criticized, both by outsiders and insiders. By the late 1970s, the group members had sort of located the limits of political economy, and started to look for alternative ways to conceptualize and study people's everyday life in its economic and historical context. At that stage several researchers adopted the notion of culture as a key concept, and also gained influence from the work done in the Birmingham school. Pierre Bourdieu became another important influence, but in addition to them there were many other international and local Nordic figures that affected the development.

I am sure that other Nordic members in this panel would have other stories to tell about the developments of cultural studies in their countries and from the viewpoint of their disciplines. Because of that, you might also perceive the characteristics of Nordic cultural studies differently. Anyway, in my view it can be characterized by three features.

Because of its background as a reaction to overt economism, it is often seen as an alternative to Marxism as a whole. In that sense its position in the paradigmatic field differs from for instance the American or Canadian scene, where cultural studies is linked with critical theory and conceived as part of Marxism, even as its 'last resort'. Although Nordic cultural studies does conceive of cultural processes of signification as a contested terrain, it is true that Nordic cultural studies people have taken distance from politics in the traditional sense. Traditional politics have given way to identity politics. Similarly, those interested in macro economic processes, social structures and in the welfare state have not identified themselves with cultural studies.

Although the division between cultural studies people and those interested in the social structure in a Marxian sense has implied that cultural studies represents microsociology, in my view Nordic cultural studies tends to conceive of meaning construction in a broad societal context. Although social structures are seen in ways that differ from, say, a Marxist class theory, for instance the enthusiasm in Nordic countries about Pierre Bourdieu's cultural sociology is proof of an attempt to approach cultural phenomena within a broad structural framework. The Marxist roots have left their mark.

A third feature in Nordic cultural studies is the methodological and theoretical rigor with which we approach social and cultural phenomena. Partly that can also be seen as a continuation to the very theoretical and philosophical manner in which 1970s Marxists approached the capitalist society, but on the other hand an interest in developing qualitative methodology and in applying for instance discourse analysis or narrative analysis can be seen as a counterreaction against too deductive, theory-

driven and politically motivated readings of contemporary phenomena. The *Kapitallogiker* school failed to establish an empirical sociology, and thus the more inductive take on social and cultural phenomena is a way to avoid that pitfall.

But is there really a Nordic community of cultural studies people, or is it pure fiction? Can we talk about Nordic cultural studies in singular, with its own characteristics? I'm not quite certain about it. It may well be that the days of a Nordic community in the social sciences are over. There are international scholars who come from Nordic countries, but are they just individuals who have more in common with colleagues from their own disciplines or trends within cultural studies than with other Nordic scholars?

I doubt that there ever really was a uniform Nordic community. I have attended several Nordic meetings in sociology, media studies and in alcohol and drug research, and previously we all pretended that everyone can understand each other in Scandinavian languages. It was considered politically correct to speak 'Skandinaviska', that is Swedish, Norwegian or Danish, but the truth is that at least for us who spoke Finnish as our mother tongue understanding other than Swedish was quite difficult, often impossible. Nowadays the situation is better: it is considered acceptable to speak English, and in some meetings English is the official language so that we are all on the same line so to speak

The function of the ACSIS

From the starting point outlined above, I think one important function of the institute for advanced cultural studies in Sweden would be to build and strengthen a Nordic cultural studies community. By drawing from work done in Nordic countries we can develop a cultural studies that has its own profile: that does not simply import influences from outside, but neither should we confine ourselves from the rest of the world. Another important function of such a community formed with the help of the Swedish institute would be to promote Nordic cultural studies. That entails supporting and encouraging Nordic scholars to publish internationally. It should also mean that we not only invite people from the United States or United Kingdom as visiting scholars or keynote speakers to our institutes. As I have found out when organizing the two Crossroads conferences in Finland, the most interesting speakers are not necessarily the ones who have made the longest trip.

In preparing the proposal about the Swedish institute I suggest there are two slightly different agendas involved. On the one hand, the Swe-

dish cultural studies community has to agree on what is cultural studies; as a conclusion of the discussion that was started at the ACS meeting.

The other agenda is to figure out how to justify state funding for the institute. As to the latter agenda, I suggest you should list separate aspects of cultural studies research in trying to show that the ACSIS would be needed for several functions:

- production and reception of cultural products (the role of art and mass culture in society; cultural policy and politics issues approached from a broad societal context)
- culture as a way of life or mentality (e.g. research dealing with working life, esp. the role of cultural processes and 'corporate cultures' within it)
- a globalization perspective to cultural processes (how the nation-state and national identities are problematized as an aspect of globalization)

The activities of the institute could include:

- email lists, both Swedish and English
- a web site linking existing cultural studies centres in the world
- courses offered by the institute, funding for instance from the Nordic council (Nordiska forskarkurser that is)
- planning and coordinating research program applications, whenever possible also with money from the EU, UNESCO, etc.

Kirsten Drotner: The future of cultural studies: Institutional niche or intellectual stronghold?

An old Chinese parable tells about a man who wakes up having dreamed that he was a bird. Now he ponders whether he is a man dreaming about being a bird, or a bird dreaming about being a man.

This parable is a cogent description of identity formation as a process of negotiating otherness. Many scholars engaged in cultural studies will recognize this process also in their definition of professional identity. Personally, I am a media historian with an interest in cultural studies, but perhaps I am also a closet cultural studies scholar decked out as a media historian? Many feminist colleagues label me a youth researcher, while in youth research I am defined as a feminist.

My personal doubts indicate the general point I want to make in this presentation: cultural studies is energized by existing at the boundaries of

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established disciplines. Whether or not we transgress these boundaries, cultural studies makes us aware of their existence. Intellectually and substantively this boundary status is the primary force of cultural studies, while in institutional terms it is equally its Achilles heel.

What is cultural studies?

Having noted my general point, I have also indicated a particular stance in defining cultural studies. As is well-known cultural studies has been defined in a number of ways – often depending on differences of discipline, gender, generation and geographical background. Is cultural studies a particular area of empirical study – often equalled with media studies, consumer studies or at least studies in recent cultural phenomena? Or is cultural studies better defined as a particular set of theoretical approaches – often linked to neo-Marxist and later constructivist theories of cultural production? Perhaps cultural studies could best be described through its methodological choices with the overall emphasis on qualitative investigation – from textual and discourse analysis to in-depth interviews and extensive ethnographies. Personally, I find it most fruitfully to define cultural studies in epistemological terms as an interdisciplinary field, a critical and a self-reflexive approach with an anti-reductionist view on culture. Cultural studies, as I see it, cannot and should not be limited to particular empirical or methodological issues and concerns.

In terms of origins and development, I find it important to stress that cultural studies is best understood as an international phenomenon originating about the same time in a number of countries, not as a particular Anglo-American invention, let alone an institution first found in the corridors of Birmingham University. The multiple beginnings may be a timely reminder if we are to apply past experiences as guidelines for the future developments of cultural studies.

Multiple traditions of cultural studies

When I first stayed at the Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies in Birmingham in 1980 I was an eager participant in the seminars. But when I mentioned the term reception, who many of you will know was coined by the German literary historian Hans Robert Jauss, my British colleagues thought I referred to activities performed when checking into a hotel. And when I mentioned Habermas, who had meant so much to my generation of young scholars in the 1970s, he had not yet been translated into English, and so people seemed genuinely uninterested in the concept of the public sphere.

What I learned was that I had to revise my own beliefs of coming to the source of cultural studies: what we did in Northern Europe was part of an international, intellectual endeavour that could not and should not be located to Birmingham, Britain at large or even the States. Later, when visiting Latin America, I realized that Barbero, Canclini and others had very similar experiences.

The diverse international roots of cultural studies are important to keep in mind, not only because they serve to widen the received history of the field, but also because they serve to address a central issue of relevance to the further development of the field: the persistent affiliation of cultural studies with Anglo-American perspectives is a result of an intellectual hegemony, not an empirical fact. Even when Scandinavians for example publish in English in monographs or international journals these publications are rarely quoted – while our colleagues in Britain and the States routinely quote their friends down the hallway or their own PhD-students' theses. Publishers reinforce this hegemony through their extreme hesitance to publish empirical work that is not based on British or North American data.

The hegemony serves to create an unproductive theoretical and empirical incongruence in the field. For example, when Habermas was finally translated into English, a Danish colleague of mine wrote knowingly in his review that all Scandinavian media scholars could now safely retrieve their old seminar notes on Habermas from the early 1970s and turn them into trendy critiques of the new guru.

Therefore, many scholars of cultural studies have to follow and qualify themselves both within the Anglo-American discourse in the field and within their own tradition – a situation that in many ways duplicate what feminist scholars have traditionally faced in the academy where male discourses have reigned supreme. This intellectual imperialism is a structural problem, not simply a language problem, and it therefore requires structural answers lying beyond going to international conferences and getting published in English.

Cultural studies in Denmark

Another example of the multiplicity of cultural studies: its emergence is often linked to the social sciences and described as a reaction to structural functionalism (the U.S.) and to the reductionism found in economic Marxism (Britain). But in Denmark, cultural studies when it first emerged in the mid-1970s, was just as much if not more readily developed within the arts (thus, the main tradition of Danish media studies is an arts tradition in which aesthetic analyses and history have formed cornerstones very

early on). What characterized my generation of 'first-generation' cultural scholars was that we developed our professional identities at a particular moment of historical flux facilitating cross-fertilizations between a variety of disciplines and development of new fields such as women's studies, youth studies and media studies. But this moment developed into a time of academic recession within the arts and social sciences, a time that enforced upon us a very material marginality in institutional terms. For a time, the Department of Cultural Sociology at the University of Copenhagen offered a temporary haven until it was closed down in 1990 by the Ministry of Education as part of a reorganization of Sociology. Today, cultural studies has found an institutional basis within media studies and in one or two interdisciplinary centres at regional universities.

Future challenges of cultural studies

The Danish fate of cultural studies speaks to issues of wider concern: if it is true that a defining feature (if not the defining feature) of cultural studies is its epistemology – its interdisciplinary and self-reflexive approach to the study of culture – then this makes cultural studies immensely useful in a range of disciplines. But it equally means that few disciplines define cultural studies as an integral part of their scientific identity that they want to defend and develop. The greatest intellectual strength of cultural studies is equally its primary institutional weakness. As the very term implies, cultural studies is defined through its particular emphasis on the dimension of culture (cultural) that is analysed systematically (studies). Drawing on my own partial experiences within the field, I see three future vistas for cultural studies: the first has to do with its substantive focus on culture; the second has to do with specific forms of organizing studies; while the third has to do with the wider scientific relevance of the field.

The substance of culture

In general, the interdisciplinary nature of cultural studies may facilitate focus upon themes and problematics that are too complex to be tackled by any one discipline. In a sense, this 'negative' definition may be the closest one may get to a substantive definition of the field. In empirical terms, cultural studies could do well to rethink its primary interest in cultural innovation – tracing the latest media fads, the most spectacular consumer trends. I would want to see more historical studies of the mundane, studies which I think would serve to nuance our understanding of modernity in terms of innovation and minimize the present risk in the field of reinventing the wheel. An example of this risk is the claim that we have moved from a culture of unification and consensus to one of

diversity, even fragmentation. My own and other people's empirical historical work have demonstrated that this is a very partial truth.

In theoretical terms, I think cultural studies should strengthen its links to central and later marginalized critical intellectuals of the past. Without selecting any one in particular, I would venture that these past figures may often harbour insights that may not only illuminate present problematics but may equally sensitize us to forgotten or faded intellectual legacies and links and thus help sharpen our critical self-reflexiveness. An added benefit, as I see it, is that these past critics will often, but not always, belong to a European intellectual history within which intellectual rigour and political awareness go together.

So, less trendiness and more nuanced continuities.

The organization of studies

How should an interdisciplinary field be organized? This is a central question that speaks with particular relevance to the theme of this workshop. Having worked both within specific disciplines and in interdisciplinary institutions, I find that the best approach to cultural studies is through particular disciplines. In my own experience, interdisciplinary work radicalizes the requirement to intellectual openness that is a sine qua non of all scientific work: it is a constant manoeuvring in uncharted areas and to do so successfully requires some sort of a map, a knowledge of one's point of departure if not one's final goal.

My personal vision for future university institutions of cultural studies in Sweden would be to have students come with a BA or B.Sc. and do graduate and postgraduate work in cultural studies. In Sweden, there are already several university departments doing cultural studies, and one could think of having two or three specific regional university departments whose teaching programmes would secure the necessary continuity which is sometimes lacking in the field, and whose students would also secure the continuous innovation of the field in the long term. These departments may also serve to strengthen the link to pedagogical practices that were central to much of early work in cultural studies, but have since sometimes disappeared in lofty theoretical debates.

Added to these departments, I think a central research centre could operate as a nodal point of national coordination and innovation, just as it would be visible to scholars from outside of Sweden, e.g. by initiating conferences and networking. This visibility seems a vital precondition to minimize the effects of the Anglo-American hegemony that I spoke of before. In its form of organization, the centre might learn from the positive results emanating from similar ventures abroad. Thus, one could think of operating the centre under rather broad, two-year theme umbrel-

las, themes to which junior and senior scholarships may be awarded – half to Swedes and half to foreigners, for example.

More specifically, institutions doing cultural studies should be organized so that they encourage scholars to ask stupid questions. As we all know the banal and the basic are often closely connected. Intellectual work in general and interdisciplinary work in particular requires surroundings that are safe enough to voice stupid questions and rigorous enough to secure that learned answers are found. My own direction of the Centre for Child and Youth Media Studies at the University of Copenhagen has convinced me the most important room in any centre or department is the coffee room: in order to stimulate intellectual innovation we must create a physical space that allows the development of what Giddens terms ‘basic trust’, that is a mutual acceptance and respect that in academic life is a precondition for overcoming the ingrained academic fear of losing face, seeming silly or unread – and hence be able to receive and give constructive criticism, to lay bare what is on one’s mind, what is difficult and unresolved. So, the socializing of the coffee room is a good investment, it is, indeed, a necessary, if often underrated, aspect of intellectual exchange – cp. the often crammed conference programmes that seem more of a legitimation to research councils and other sponsors and less of a space for intellectual dialogue.

The wider perspective

Last, but not least, this space for interdisciplinary intellectual dialogue that institutions of cultural studies may further, is more necessary than ever in the academy. In Danish, the term ‘academic’ is a term of abuse a la ‘shouldn’t we get away from purely academic talk’. The 1990s have witnessed a dramatic increase in intellectual overadministration from a range of bodies – from university deans to ministries of research and evaluation. Their management thinking materializes in catch phrases such as benchmarking, in research assessments, and in efforts to quantify intellectual output (publish and perish). Experiencing this barrage, the risk is that we individualize our intellectual work and forget what it is to be a critical academic with a responsibility to the social realities found outside of the academy. Cultural studies in that respect may serve as intellectual rain forests of academic life. Even if I still do not know whether I am an intellectual bird or person, I know that I would like to be part of that intellectual climate.

Marianne Gullestad: The politics of knowledge

In this statement I have chosen to sketch out a research area which can contribute to the advancement of cultural studies in the Nordic countries.¹ Even if they might not be easy to fund, I suggest these ideas because they might strengthen the field intellectually; because the proposed research might become an important societal contribution; and because the Nordic countries provides interesting contexts for this kind of research. I want to argue for a more systematic focus on the power aspects of the production and use of knowledge; in other words to develop both political theory and cultural analysis by integrating them in a sustained study of the politics of knowledge. The relevance of the politics of knowledge as a theme for cultural studies is revealed by the famous Sokal affair, as well as by the preoccupation of cultural studies from early on with power and politics, particularly in connection with the Gramscian (1971) notion of hegemony. In the Gramscian sense culture is the contested terrain of struggles for hegemony within civil society, while hegemony is ideology which has become self-evident and embedded in every day practice. Struggles for hegemony can be considered as struggles about what counts as knowledge.

In a reinforced examination of power and knowledge new theories will have to be included, and new questions added. Some central questions might be what counts as knowledge; for whom the knowledge is made; what it is about; whose interests it serves; whether the relations among producer of knowledge, 'object' of knowledge and receiver of knowledge are symmetrical or not; and how various kinds of knowledge are related to government and market power, as well as to citizenship, civil society, popular deliberations and empowerment.

For many reasons, the Nordic welfare states can provide particularly well suited contexts for the study of the politics of knowledge, not least in alliance with other marginal regions in the world.² The accelerated capitalist globalization implies new challenges for national 'knowledge regimes', identity politics and civil society. In the Nordic countries the

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¹ This paper is written as a part of my research for the IMER-program in The Research Council of Norway.

² The ANTROPOS program conducted by professor Lisbet Holtedahl at The University of Tromsø is an interesting collaboration between Tromsø in Norway and Ngaoundere in Cameroon.

relations between political and administrative power, on the one hand, and research, on the other, is close; and the size of the reading public is relatively large. There are interesting differences among these countries, most notably, these days, that Norway and Iceland remain outside the EU while Sweden, Denmark and Finland are in, as well as interesting commonalities. In the welfare states there are various sorts of demand for research based knowledge, and established channels to fund and present it. Researchers may have a strong impact, at the same time as there is considerable competition between different traditions of scholarly knowledge. As political regimes the welfare states largely favour the innovations of technology, the abstract models of economy and the tables and figures of sociology to the interpretations of the humanities. Economy, political science and survey sociology lend themselves to technocratic-bureaucratic management in ways that the humanities do not. But the humanities have also played – and play – important and changing roles in the ‘knowledge regimes’ legitimating and supporting government regimes. And the knowledge produced by fictional writing (especially the novel) enjoy a limited but highly appreciated and almost sacred public space. It is often held that the status of novelists is higher in Scandinavia than anywhere else in Europe. In these countries there are also interesting traditions in the theory of science which can be further developed and incorporated into cultural studies. Important ideas can be found in feminist epistemology, as well as in the political philosophy and in the philosophy of science attached to the name of the philosopher Hans Skjervheim.

However, it should be noted that one of the most important contributions of cultural studies to political theory is precisely the study of forms of knowledge and organization that transcend nation states. Cultural studies is not limited to work within the theoretical and empirical framework of the institutions of sovereign nation states, the way political theory traditionally is (for an exception, see Held, 1995). For many purposes the nation state is not the most relevant frame of reference.

Since I know more about everyday life than about political theory, and accordingly more about the complexities of the cultural preconditions for democracy than about formal democratic organizations, I here ground the kinds of research questions I am arguing for in everyday life. The current pluralization of identities is connected to the growing emphasis on ‘finding oneself’ by creating oneself, and implies a popular need for new kinds of knowledge to underpin identity management, self-fashioning and everyday interpretations of the politics of difference. Films, music and the mass media provide important resources for self-creation. Related to these processes, there is also a change from hierarchy and command to

team work and negotiation in families, schools and work places (Gullestad, 1996b). At the same time the number of scientists is overwhelming, scholarly knowledge has become specialized expertise, and scholars disagree among themselves. 'Ordinary people' - including scholars outside their own fields - are better educated, and therefore often both able and willing to judge for themselves. At the same time the complexities of modernity also forces them to make their own judgements and be in charge of their lives, whether they want to or not.

These social changes destabilize the social role of scholarly knowledge, and this is, I think, a fascinating topic for cultural studies. Through the systematic study of the politics of knowledge, the field of cultural studies can potentially expand the space it occupies between social statistics and the novel. With the theoretical developments of recent years, a new foundation has been made for renewing and further developing the critique of positivism in the social sciences and the humanities, and for expanding the popular understanding of the cultural aspects of technology and science, including revisions of the determinism involved in much thinking about technology. Cultural studies could take a leading role in a sustained critique of present knowledge regimes, including, not least, its own claims to knowledge.

The gap between cultural studies and common people

What I am arguing for is a large field of research. In what follows I will leave the broader field that I have just sketched out for a more limited discussion of how to advance reflexivity within cultural studies. Methodological reflexivity is well advanced in cultural studies, but still there are important areas that scholars are trained to overlook. The development in cultural analysis over the last years are often summarized as a shift from seeing cultures as essentialized entities to studying cultural relations and processes. Scholars have so to speak rediscovered the close affinity between received notions of culture and 19th century notions of the nation as a homogenized and bounded entity. The naturalized tight conceptual connections among people, culture and territory are being analytically destabilized. One important reason for these changes which is often made explicit by researchers themselves, is the fact that essentialized cultural understandings have been used to legitimize ethnic cleansing and neo-racism.

Even if it can be argued that analytical practices have always been more nuanced and subtle than just assuming that cultures are homogeneous, continuous and bounded entities, the emerging focus on cultural processes at the margins and in border zones no doubt imply a crucial

theoretical advance. Within academic life the new ideas have very quickly acquired some of the self-evidence formerly enjoyed by essentialism.

However, at the same time as this is happening in the academic world, people in the street are turning to essentialist notions such as 'cultural tradition' and 'cultural belonging' with new force, attempting to defend their interests against the negative effects of the globalization of capital and the waning power of nation states and organizations such as trade unions to protect their members. There is a widening gap between cosmopolitan elites and common people: While common people often defend local values, elite people honour very different transnational loyalties (Lash, 1995).

With special reference to Sweden, the anthropologist Jonathan Friedman (1997) has made the more general point that the shift from 'essentialism' to a focus on 'diversity' marks a shift in underlying and largely unacknowledged political ideologies: A 'cosmological shift' has taken place in the academic world, from the celebration of local autonomy to the celebration of 'hybridity' and 'diversity'. In his view the new ideas have become a largely unquestioned part of what he labels the 'political correctness' of present-day academic life. 'Political correctness' implies a logic in which argument is no longer important. What counts is how one talks. In other words, the symbolic value of linguistic utterances is more important than the content of what one says.

Friedman relates the 'cosmological shift' to the class positions of academic elites within a changing world order, maintaining that the participants in these discourses have 'identified with the cosmopolitan space of the global system and has vied for a hegemonic position within that space' (Friedman, 1997: 89). In other words, what Friedman is saying is that it is an unacknowledged aim within cultural studies to reinforce and strengthen the elite position of the researcher. In a similar vein as Friedman, the anthropologist Bruce Kapferer (1999), building on Arrighi (1996) and Jameson (1998) has recently argued that the anthropological turn to cultural studies can be seen as a reflection of the divorce between production and finance capital and the accelerating abstraction of the latter.

I think researchers such as Friedman and Kapferer are right in calling attention to the structural conditions for scholarly knowledge and to the existence of hegemonies within academic life. At the same time I disagree strongly with the simplistic and deterministic terms of the analysis, and with the view that connections between structural position and cultural theories necessarily discredit the theories. The parallels between economy and culture cannot be reduced to reflections; changing ideas have many

reasons and mediations which need to be carefully teased out; and no point of view is in itself privileged in relation to others.

Theoreticians such as Hans Georg Gadamer (1975), Donna Haraway (1991) and Hans Skjervheim (1976) can be invoked to advance reflexivity, through analyses of how the structured location of scholars influences the questions they ask, the kind of material they work with and the ways in which their material is analysed. According to Haraway (1991) a piece of research has to be reflexively 'situated' in order to be objective. Knowledge is situated when the researcher understands that it is partial, and that this partiality is connected to the various contexts in which it is produced.

Something is happening in the world today, which, mediated by their structured positionings, influences scholars to turn to notions such as 'movement', 'syncretism', 'hybridity' and 'diversity'. New theoretical perspectives not only mirror experiences, they are also attempts at grasping what goes on. The structural location of scholars, implying cultural preconceptions, identifications and experiences, function simultaneously as blind spots for some issues and as positions from which it is possible to see other issues particularly clearly.³

What I ask for is not good intentions and political moralism, but a systematic reflection on what gives the analyst the moral authority to speak in the first place, and for whom the research is made. Once ethical and political issues are brought into the foreground, they can be publicly argued, defended, defeated and ameliorated in explicit and critical deliberations. The aim of knowledge for knowledge's own sake often covers other unacknowledged aims and effects, while explicitly stated political aims (for example to serve oppressed people) may be contradicted by the form, content and direction of research practices and presented results.

Among other things, it is interesting to look more systematically at rhetoric devices and the 'imagined' or 'immanent readers' implied in a research process, its resultant texts and its media presentations. My own books, for example (see for example Gullestad, 1984, 1992, 1996), are doomed to exhibit multiple and partly contradictory 'imagined readers: The people I have worked with, others more or less like them, academic

³ Elsewhere (Gullestad 1998) I have argued that there seems to be some intriguing parallels between the cosmopolitan ways of life of some cultural analysts, on the one hand, and the ways of life of migrants and refugees, on the other. To put it bluntly: In contrast to quite a few people in the street who attempt to defend their communities by protecting them from what they see as strangers, quite a few cultural analysts are alienated from their local neighbourhoods, and identify with the person in exile. These parallels may partly explain the current theoretical interest in 'migration' and 'hybridity', as well as the moral force of these theoretical ideas.

peers, the general public, decision makers in state and municipal administration, politicians and so on. I now realize that my own reflexivity has so far been too much directed towards the personal, and too little towards the structural and the institutional.

Such analyses would make visible in new ways the inevitable political nature of cultural studies. It is by now trivial to note that every cultural interpretation is provisional, open to challenge, and can never transcend the historical contextuality of its own knowledge. But how do we deal with this fact? First of all we do of course need to develop continuous reflexive and critical distance to current political and scientific truths, as well as ways of discussing normative issues explicitly. My own normative aim can be defined as the advancement of knowledge to be used in the democratic deliberations of civil society, defined not only in terms of the nation state, but also transnationally. One of the most important political problems today is to develop shared commitment to democracy in terms of agreement on some fundamental rights and procedures, without enforcing cultural homogeneity and normalization. This is different from just serving bureaucratic management, on the one hand, or the development of jargonized esoteric knowledge aimed at ever smaller groups of colleagues, on the other.

As people feel insecure by having to 'find themselves' in a world of obligatory self-fashioning, they seek out and cultivate difference. This should not be fetishized by scholarship, but neither should it be disparaged. The aim cannot be to deny people identities and 'cultural belonging', but rather to contribute to make identities more reflected; to achieve a balance between romantic self-expression and enlightened critique; and to reconcile identity formation and the development of a political culture tolerating differences and favouring reflection.

The cultural analyst - employee and intellectual?

This last point leads to a discussion of the social role of the cultural analyst. Located between the hard core social scientist and the novelist, should she look at herself as a bureaucrat or an intellectual? And what is the role of the intellectual, as we are approaching the year 2000? Scholars are often well-fed employees; the historical record of the role of scholars and novelists in the twentieth century is disturbing (in Norway the novelist Knut Hamsun's support of nazism is a prime example); scholarly knowledge has become narrow expertise; enlightenment ideas and practices have become problematic; and scholars have lost the self-proclaimed moral authority to appeal to universal values. Bauman (1993: 90) suggest that the role of the free-floating intellectual in Mannheim's (1968)

sense, is no longer possible. Accordingly, Emile Zola's self-assured role in the Dreyfus case cannot be repeated. Bourdieu (1993: 29) is also sceptical about the traditional figure of the intellectual, and suggests a more modest role as a 'fonctionnaire de l'humanité'. Inspired by Levinas, Lyotard (1993: 29), for his part, locates the moral authority of writing in a duty or a debt to an unknown Other ('...d'un Autre, dont on ne sait pas ce qu'il demande, ni meme s'il demande quelque chose...').

I would rather attempt to reformulate the role of the intellectual building on Foucault's notion of 'the specific intellectual'. Foucault distinguished between the 'universal intellectual' and 'the specific intellectual'. The first belongs to history, while the second is somebody who makes her specific knowledge politically operative. To this idea I would add Bauman's (1987) suggestion that present-day society needs intellectuals who act as interpreters between people with different ideas and values, more than as legislators and judges of what is supposed to be universally right. Political struggles are very much struggles about which ideas and concepts best describe social life, and cultural analysts can contribute to public deliberations by translating between ways of life, and by providing other accounts of what goes on among individuals and groups than the polarized accounts offered by the mass media and the extreme right.

In addition, elements of Gramsci's (1971) idea about the organic intellectual could also be considered. According to Gramsci, each class has its own 'organic' intellectuals who play a role in social movements by transcending their class to build alliances. What interests me here is not the reified notion of social classes, but rather the stress on communication. In addition, a redefinition of the role of the intellectual will have to be based on the idea that all construction of knowledge is influenced not only by the people whose practices are examined, but also by its (implicitly or explicitly) intended recipient (Altern and Holtedahl, 1995; Holtedahl, 1998). If the results are potentially going to be put into use, the research process itself has to be dialogical in the sense that both the people whose ideas and practices are examined, and the people who are going to use the research have to be involved in the research process, implying, among other things, that all categories of people are seen as social actors with the potential of changing their thought habits and practices. Cultural criticism thus has to be grounded in dialogue, or to use Michael Walzer's (1988) terms, it has to be connected. From the dialogical connectedness the intellectual can draw the authority to speak. Figuratively speaking, the voice of the intellectual should no longer come from above, but simultaneously from within and without.

Nevertheless, the production and communication of cultural scholarship is affected by cultural changes undermining the traditional enlight-

enment project. The scholar can no longer expect to be listened to uncritically; the results of our work are not accepted as 'the truth', but are instead used as resources in the formation selves and in further deliberations. There is thus a change from finished product to resource in the popular reception of scholarship, and a visible reduction in the status of scholars. Instead of seeing the change in the reception of research as a sign of the maturity of the general public, many scholars deplore it, and the growing gap between cultural analysis and the everyday knowledge of common people can in my view also partly be interpreted as result of strategies on the part of scholars to keep up the traditional asymmetry in a new situation where this asymmetry is less necessary and less legitimate. In democratically organized activities it should be an ideal, and not just a sad fact, that scholarly knowledge is subordinated to public deliberations.

Reframing rather than demasking

One aspect of the gap between cultural analysis and the knowledge of common people is the scholarly stress on suspicion. Often cultural analysis is presented as a suspicious demasking of people and their ideas, for example when 'ordinary people' are reproached because something they think is 'natural' is culturally constituted. The practices of cultural demasking imply, as it were, simultaneously to catch people with their trousers down and to remove the carpet from under their feet. I think that this one-sided stress on suspicion is an unnecessary and unproductive positivist legacy in cultural studies, predicated upon unequal power relations between researcher and researched. Instead, it is possible to attempt to theorize and practise the research process as a way of building on the knowledge people already have, on reframing people's knowledge, and thus as an addition to their present knowledge, not necessarily a subtraction (Gullestad, 1996a: 33-47).

Advancing 'holism'

The contribution of cultural studies can also be defined by means of a re-configured 'holism'. The differentiation of modern society into specialized sub-systems (Luhmann, 1977) makes the ideal of 'holism' simultaneously unattainable and all the more necessary. Systems of classification are not only rigidified in bureaucratic institutions, but are often also reproduced in the social sciences, in hyphenated sub-disciplines. The complete study of bounded entities is not feasible, but it is possible more modestly to search for connections among phenomena normally treated as separate and distinct in common sense understandings as well as scholarship

(Gullestad, 1992). This aim necessitates procedures allowing for the making of discoveries, rather than just confirming the self-evident.

Closing note

The central challenge for cultural studies is now to develop forms of knowledge which can bridge the gap between the knowledge of cosmopolitan liberal elites, on the one hand, and the knowledge of more ethnically and/or nationally oriented groups, on the other. This, I would argue, is not only a question of staging a better transmission of results, in other words to package the knowledge differently (it is of course that too, not least to lighten the unreflected use of jargon). More radically it is a question of constructing cultural knowledge in new ways. This move necessitates both more freedom and more reflexivity. The risks involved can thus be balanced and legitimated by more systematic reflection. On the one hand, we need to reflect more on which aspects of scholarship function to maintain and develop our own power positions as academic elites. On the other hand we need to know more about the power structures which prevents cultural understanding and reflection among people in civil society contexts.

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4. Statements by the Swedish 'Anthropology' panelists

Karin Becker: Perspectives on the study of visual culture

Visual culture has become a buzzword of academic discourse in the 1990s. The term has generated an extensive literature, is canonized in textbook and journal titles and has started to appear in the names of academic programs. There is little consensus, however, on what the term refers to and whether it is useful as a definition of a potential field of academic study. Because it is often seen as an outgrowth or even a subfield of cultural studies, I wish to use my contribution to the workshop as an opportunity to explore some of the ways the concept of visual culture is being used, to identify some of the intellectual pitfalls I see in the term's use, and to suggest what contributions it can make to the theme and purpose of the workshop, that is the advancement of cultural studies.

The study of visual culture interrogates how seeing and visualization as social practices figure in strategies of knowing, of desiring, and in the exercise of power (Jencks, 1995). It is concerned with 'the centrality of vision and the visual world in producing meanings, establishing and maintaining aesthetic values, gender stereotypes and power relationships within culture' (Rogoff, 1998:14). The concept of visual culture opens the field of vision as an arena where cultural meanings become constituted, at the same time that it requires that that field be anchored to the world of intertextuality where images, sounds, etc. are read on to and through one another. This means that the study of visual culture should be seen as a tactic rather than as a distinct field.

The basis of the concept can be traced to a relativization of vision and to theories concerned with the very act of seeing as socially, culturally and politically constructed. In a particularly influential essay, Martin Jay identified a plurality of what he called 'scopic regimes', alternative ways of seeing and representing the world in both art and science (1988). In Jay's analysis, Cartesian perspectivalism and its empowering of the direct gaze becomes only one model of the observer, albeit the one which has

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dominated in modernity. This represents a critical shift from the image and its histories to vision or, more broadly, ways of seeing as the focus of visual culture studies. Vision in modernity is seen as historically distinctive, allied with new techniques of observation arising from 'a profound shift in the way in which an observer is described, figured, and posited in science, philosophy, and in new techniques and practices of vision' (Crary, 1988:31). It is the changed subjectivity of the observer, Crary argues, which provided the stimulus for the image technologies of the modern era, notably photography and the cinema. Knowledge became allied with the camera's eye as the model of objective truth.

According to these theorists, the rise of visual culture in modernity has been marked by struggles among various forms and techniques of knowledge and knowing. The historicization of vision and its relationship to the construction of knowledge has provided a foundation and stimulus for 'the pictorial turn' in cultural theory. Moving from Foucault's analysis of the 'visible and the articulable' as distinct knowledge systems with different formations (1972), cultural theory has been developing the means to examine the respective power of these knowledge systems. The pictorial turn thus addresses the disruptions and challenges which the visual inserts into any attempt to define culture in purely linguistic terms (Mitchell, 1994).

The most common pitfall in approaching visual culture occurs when the concept of culture is equated with its artefacts. The point of departure for the study of visual culture becomes the image as artefact and the technologies which are used in its production and circulation. Walker and Chaplin offer a typical example of this perspective in their attempt to encompass visual culture as 'those material artefacts, buildings and images, plus time-based media and performances, produced by human labour and imagination, which serve aesthetic, symbolic, ritualistic or ideological-political ends, and/or practical functions, and which address the sense of sight to a significant extent' (1997: 1-2). The result is that the study of visual culture then becomes confined to the fields or disciplines which have traditionally studied particular classes of visual artefacts. Instead of a perspective or tactic which can be used to interrogate the visual across a diverse range of phenomena, visual culture is defined by fields where specific sets or genres of cultural products/media which address the eye have traditionally been studied. Walker and Chaplin's designation (1997: 31) of 'arts, crafts, design and mass media' is a typical example.

What are the consequences of this 'mis-take' on visual culture in two fields where it is most commonly used - media studies and art theory? In media studies, we find visual culture frequently constituted by the visual

artefacts and technologies of the mass media. The expansion in the number of images and the means and modes of their distribution is described as an 'explosion' or 'flood' which – because of the lack of specificity of the relation between culture and its artefacts – is typically seen as identical with an 'expanding' visual culture, and leaves little space for a critical analysis of what that means, or to what extent it is accurate as a description of contemporary culture. Instead, the concept of visual culture, intertwined with and inseparable from the development of information technologies, becomes ideologized within discourses about globalization. The possibilities offered by a presumed 'free flow of images' are heralded as creating a new culture of visual display, often uncritically celebrated as promising a pluralistic and egalitarian future, unfettered by old linear competencies required by a text-based analogic culture (Lister, 1995).

Within the critical discourses of art, however, we find another story. When art history looks for the origins of the concept of visual culture it more frequently locates it in the critical discourses and revisions in art education during the 1960s and 1970s. As a challenge to the received canon, a 'new art history' was created, which expanded traditional conceptions of the fine arts to consider the aesthetics of non-western and vernacular art, including mass-produced images. An historicization of the image was carried out through critical examination of criteria of aesthetic value as products of specific social, cultural, and not least important, political conditions. The work of feminist art historians was important to this development (with Griselda Pollock at the forefront), and Bryson, Holly and Moxey's anthology (1994) provides an example of this perspective on visual culture studies.

Yet today art theory is in what could be described as a state of retrenchment, a return to a field constituted by its subject, that is by 'Art'. Particularly within those discourses which have pushed the concept of visual culture the farthest in their use of post-modern theory, hierarchies of excellence are being re-constructed, as seen, for example, in specific practices of criticism and curatorship. A more general critical examination of the hierarchies of aesthetic value has been replaced by a focus on artists whose work incorporates material from other spheres, including mass media and popular culture, without critically examining the institutional and discursive boundaries that are being used in the definition of the work itself as art and its practitioners as artists.

Rogoff traces this tendency to a resistance to the 'anthropological model' and 'a profound sense of loss over ... fixed notions of quality and excellence' among the leading authors of critical theory in the visual arts (Rogoff, 1998: 19-20). Seen from within the boundaries of their field and

the objects they study, they have come to equate visual culture with aesthetic relativism and an undifferentiated universalism. In doing so they have 'mis-taken' the object of visual culture study. A visual culture perspective places the focus not on the object and its history, nor on attempting to differentiate between objects/images of greater and lesser value. Instead, as Rogoff points out, the purpose of 'unframing' hierarchies of excellence is to open the possibilities for analysing and differentiating the politics that stand behind each particular relativist model. Histories are examined in order to reveal, not the object, but the viewer or performer in relation to an authorizing discourse.

One may ask what 'advances' a visual culture perspective can offer cultural studies. Doesn't cultural studies already include the conceptual tools and methods to support critical analyses of (to use my two examples here) the unreflected ideology globalization as a product of new media technologies, or the hierarchies of cultural value being enacted in contemporary art criticism? Isn't visual culture already encompassed by the theories of cultural representation and signifying practices which form the framework of contemporary cultural studies? Yes, to the extent that the signifying practices of visual representation are a self-evident aspect of cultural studies.

On the other hand, the relationship between knowledge and vision as a discursive formation and the centrality of the visual in re-formations of cultural value have received limited attention within cultural studies. Examples include the discourses of nationalism, remembrance, and otherness where visual structures and representational practices often can be seen to constitute the discourse. Little attention has been given to these structures of vision and the analysis of issues across a range of these representations. Further, much of the analysis of visual culture studies has focused on 'new' media, in particular digital media, without considering the ways these visual discourses are related to and draw meanings from earlier forms and practices. Self documentation and vernacular photography, including the family album, is one such example. Analysis of traditional media use (such as the daily press) seems to fall between the cracks of the growing body of theory on formations of visual culture.

In Sweden cultural studies has yet to turn its attention to the institutions which produce contemporary visual culture. Institutional analyses of visual media and their relationship to broader issues of cultural value, including debates where images play a critical role, have not received much attention in our research. As an important point of development for the field of cultural studies, this would mean, in general terms, a re-conceptualization of visual experience as a point of articulation of know-

ledge, power, and technological configurations within the social systems of modern society (cf. Heywood and Sandywell, 1999: 248-249). In more particular terms, it would focus on the role of visuality in different institutional settings, including how visual signs of authority and value arise and are articulated, as means of expression and in the assertion of power. It would mean, in short, a politics of vision.

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Billy Ehn: Cultural studies and disciplinary identity

For Swedish ethnologists the study of culture(s) is a central concern. Usually we define our discipline as the study of everyday life from a cultural perspective – a very wide and liberal definition, not to say the least. With the inspiration during the last decade from international cultural studies it has been yet wider, including now also questions of ideology, representation and power. Ethnology is nowadays a science of lived experience as a contradictory mixture of creativity and constraint, contributing to the general analysis of how every aspect of social life is permeated by media, public discourses and social structures.

The ethnological way of doing cultural studies is rather down-to-earth, based on fieldwork, interviews and other qualitative methods. Main fields of study are families, places of work, social groups and leisure activities.

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How are men and women actively coping with 'external' forces in their construction of meaning and identity?

At the university in Umeå, 700 kilometers north of Stockholm, cultural studies have a foothold especially in ethnology, literature and sociology, but mostly through occasional individual initiatives and some interdisciplinary cooperation. Since 1991 ethnology has however given doctoral courses/seminars in cultural studies and has just right now finished its first basic course (A, 20 points). Furthermore, with the quarterly journal *Kulturella Perspektiv* the ethnologists promote a broad discussion about cultural theories and methods.

Recently, the Faculty of Humanities in Umeå has been radically reorganized. About twenty mostly rather small departments have been reduced to six larger and disciplinary mixed departments. Among them is the Department of Culture and Media, which consists of ethnology, cultural administration, media and communication, and museology.

During the process of reorganization, I argued enthusiastically that this was a golden occasion for creating the first department of Culture Studies in Sweden. With the special competences that now were assembled, we should be able to create good interdisciplinary research especially when it comes to everyday life, cultural politics, the media use and impact, along with different forms of material and symbolic representation.

Sorry to say, but not everyone at the new department did share my enthusiasm for the name 'cultural studies'. Several of the teachers and researchers in media and communication felt that it was too narrow, too leftist, too theoretically loaded, too little media, too little communication, too much 'college studies' and too little academic science. It was a strong stomach reaction, which could not be ignored, if the primary goal was to create good working conditions. The name question concerned thus more than the choice of a convenient label. What really mattered was disciplinary identity, symbolic boundaries and feelings of belonging. One had to be a bad researcher of culture not to understand that much – and a bad boss not to respect it.

After all, 'Department of Culture and Media' is not such a bad name, depending of course on how it will be used. The important thing now is what kind of ideas, knowledge and research one may produce together in this new academic organization, labelled cultural studies or not. For the moment, I see at least two interesting fields for scientific and educational cooperation.

The first analytic field is *representation*: how the reality and different groups of people are symbolized for example in media, debates, politics, sciences and museums, and how these representations both direct and are

creatively used by men and women in their struggle for identity and influence.

The second field may be called *the public making and assimilation of experiences and emotions*, and that refers to the fast growth of 'culture industry' at the labour market and its more or less commercial production of culturally shaped impressions and feelings through, for example, film, art, literature, music, tourism, and ethnic/national/historical exhibitions and festivals – and how these popular messages are mediated and made meaningful in lived experience by 'ordinary people'.

Important and exciting tasks are thus waiting at us in the new Department of Culture and Media, both to prepare students for an expanding labour market and to critically study its actors and ways of functioning, including ourselves.

Ulf Hannerz: Three tasks for cultural studies today

1. Scrutinizing conceptions of culture

It is striking that during the years that the field of 'cultural studies' has grown, there has been an increasing use of culture concepts in general public discourses – and also an increasing concern among some intellectuals and academics that such concepts are being misused, even in politically dangerous ways, and that the term 'culture' should therefore be rejected, or abandoned. While I would share the concern of these commentators, I find the conclusion defeatist and unrealistic. But I do think 'cultural studies' should devote some of its energy to a continuous scrutiny of conceptions of culture as they are set forth and employed in the entire range of social contexts.

2. Culture, politics and economy – globalization and civilizations

Among the various scenarios produced in the period following the end of the Cold War, Samuel Huntington's conception of a 'clash between civilizations' was among those drawing most attention. It, and the debate which has surrounded it, shows that there is a need for macro-oriented interpretations of large-scale regional and global cultural structures and processes which draw on current understandings of culture and which have a good conceptual grasp of the interrelations between culture, politics and international relations, and economies.

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3. Decentering cultural studies

The field of cultural studies seems quickly to evolve largely the same pattern of international center-periphery relationships as is characteristic of Academia generally. To 'internationalize' the field more fully, and to allow for a wide range of forms of transnational and comparative (also collaborative) approaches, one would want to establish contacts in many more places, also away from the North Atlantic academic ecumene. Swedish (and, generally, Scandinavian) efforts to take new initiatives of this kind, in a great many organizational contexts, tend to draw attention and to be appreciated, and it is a tradition which could again come in useful.

Orvar Löfgren: Learning to overlook?

The evolution, diffusion and transformation of cultural studies over the last decades would make a fascinating topic for the study of the globalization and nationalization of research traditions. The question of where, when, why and how cultural studies emerges illustrates variations in local traditions as well as academic politics. It is quite clear that there is a changing history of national and local styles of doing cultural studies.

On the other hand there are also strong homogenizing forces. Any research tradition – even an open, cross-disciplinary one like cultural studies – will develop into routine, institutionalize certain approaches and perspectives: create fixed entries into a research field where we learn to follow fairly unconscious rules for how a project is to be packaged, organized and carried out. The scholarly gaze scanning the landscape for possible topics learns not only to look in some directions but to overlook. Leafing through cultural studies journals I often feel this routinization has – in some periods – gone both far and fast: the choices of themes and problems become too predictable.

The result has been an overcrowding in some fields, too many students flocking at the gates of Disneyworld, the local mall, prime time soaps, Internet chat groups, or Calvin Klein advertising campaigns. You start to long for research moratoriums. Looking at my own academic life history I can identify moments, when I thought I was entering a new and uncultivated field, only to realize a few terms later that I was part of a mass movement.

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Maybe we should spend some time reflecting on what we have learned to overlook by roaming the fields of cultural studies and how our selective gaze also is organized by the kind of national setting we operate in and from what disciplines we enter the common grounds.

Let me just give a few quick examples. If we look at the last decade of consumer studies there has been a focus on the delights of daydreaming and desiring, the art of window-shopping and sight-seeing. This research into the art of shopping and consumer fantasies has vitalized the general cultural analysis of consumption and the world of goods, but the focus on the spectacular and the symbolic has also tended to overshadow other, more mundane or seemingly trivial, aspects of consumption. In studies of teenagers, home-makers, and shoppers you sometimes feel that you are drifting, gliding through a symbolic forest or an exhibition of meanings and messages. There is often very little body work in these discussions of cultural creativity.

In this focus on the symbolic there is also a total dominance of one of our six senses: that of vision. It is an ocularcentric type of research, often over-emphasizing the dominance of sight as *the* medium through which we experience the world. In our relations with the material world we are often described as a breed of observers and onlookers. In the same manner the preoccupation with 'the tourist gaze' has made these travellers all eyes, no bodies (and often no brains) in much of tourist research.

We need more blood and sweat in the analysis of people's everyday. For example, what do people actually do with things? Not only do they look or gaze at them, read or contemplate them, but they may also touch, smell, and taste them; people drag objects around, use, wear, tear, fix, repair and maintain them, grow tired of them, put them away, discard them and rediscover them.

It is striking that the return of consumer studies in the shape of creative consumption during the 1980s did not always mean a return of the material: a focus on the materiality of objects, things, commodities. On the contrary, we have often returned to focus on them as symbols, icons, messages, texts. I am not arguing for 'a return to basics'. A longing for 'more materiality' in studies of everyday life and consumption can easily get trapped in the current longing for the 'authentic', 'tangible', 'real' or 'concrete' - a new kind of fetishization of the thingishness of things. Instead we need to think about overlooked or understudied aspects.

In the same way it seems like media studies often narrow down the concept to a few major media. What is a media and what makes a media a hot research topic? The current craze for Cyberworlds is not matched by any considerable interest in media which have turned into routine and thereby become (almost) invisible, like the telephone for example, which

might have had reorganized the world in much more drastic ways than the Net ever will.

Thirdly, there are a lot of studies on the rhetoric and identity politics of the national, but still far too little work on the ways in which the national or ethnic is materialized in everyday life. To understand the success of the national project during the last two hundred years we need to understand how the nation-state has been made visible and tangible in new situations and settings, how citizens have been touched by the state.

I think small remains beautiful as a way of finding back-door entrances to grand questions in cultural studies. I want more thick descriptions and detailed ethnographic micro-studies of certain situations, commodities or routines often, which may show us how a lot of cultural energy is condensed or crystallized.

Entering the field from the tradition of European ethnology, a branch of anthropology, which tends to concentrate on 'anthropology at home' and often with a historical perspective on the present, I often long for a stronger emphasis on the materialities of everyday life in cultural studies, but also for more systematic attempts to explore those parts of popular culture or everyday life which don't seem colourful enough. What about a new research enthusiasm for the seemingly grey, boring, un-creative, slow-moving, shapeless, outmoded or un-appetizing? Or is that asking too much?

Britta Lundgren: Swedish ethnology meets cultural studies

The Swedish discipline *ethnology* or *folk life studies* has gone through many transformations during the last decades. Not surprisingly feminism and postmodernism have had a great impact and have further widened the perspectives in the struggle of finding new research areas, a better methodology and more sophisticated theoretical analyses. Within ethnology the term eclecticism is almost always a word of honour, denoting a deliberate, conscious and continuous selection of valuable theories and concepts from a plurality of disciplines, e.g. social anthropology, sociology, social psychology, literature, history and medicine. Many ethnological scholars are also quite explicit in promoting strong interdisciplinary ambitions.

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However, interdisciplinarity is easier said than done and my impression is that, in spite of a broad eclecticism, ethnology has maintained many *ethnological* characteristics, although these are hard to define in an absolute manner. In my view these characteristics constitute the ethnological contribution to the development of cultural studies in Sweden today. Here I am going to outline three of these, but for the sake of clarity I would like to emphasize that I am aware of my own generalizations, with regard to the discipline of ethnology as well as to the complex field of cultural studies.

One common ethnological feature is the interest in detailed empirical work with a basis in *extensive fieldwork*, mainly participant observation and interviews in the area of everyday life (work, leisure, social relations, rituals, material culture, etc.). There exists also an important amount of 'fieldworking in archives' where the ethnologist approaches archival sources, both contemporary and from the past, with the culture-analyst's wide open eyes in the search for 'cultures' to be extracted from a material that has been preserved and collected for quite different purposes. Fieldwork is slow, sometimes dull, but I think cultural studies has something to gain from the art of slowness and the fascination of things somewhat boring.

The second is the interest in *narrative* and *life history*. Life history whether considered a series of events in one individual's life, the individual narrative of these events, or the researcher's story of that same life creates a basis for understanding how 'life' is constituted by 'outer' events as well as 'inner' interpretations and systems of meaning. The articulated lives of individuals and the theorizing of experience is an important task for ethnologists today working with interviews and participant observation.

The third is the *combination of the present and the past* that has influenced Swedish ethnologists, either those who take interest in chronology and causality or those inspired from a Foucault/Nietzschean style of genealogy. This combination could serve as an alternative to the so-called 'present-ness' of culture studies, while at the same time the field of cultural studies has something to give to ethnology, especially the capacity of examining the permeation of media in modern life. Although cultural studies is not supposed to be media studies only, it is impossible to analyse everyday life without approaching issues concerning media representations.

As a conclusion in my statement I would briefly like to mention a research project, starting 1999, funded from the Bank of Sweden Tercentenary Foundation. This project is titled *Reconsidering Trust* and is to be carried out by three ethnologists working together within the recently start-

ed new Department of Culture and Media. All three start with the same main question but deal with different empirical locations. What happens to women and men after being through dramatic events including some kind of fateful moment? The three part studies, all of them using interviews, observations and discourse analyses, concern individuals (1) having survived an accident where in the same accident some near kin was killed, (2) being subjected to violence from an unknown perpetrator, (3) being struck by severe illness. These events constitute turnings-points in life with following changes of life-styles, hopes, narratives and dreams. How to go on with life, whom to trust and how to trust? How to make sense of advice, therapy, memories and catastrophe-reports? Feelings of fear, exposure, anguish and a wish for revenge can be central for those subjected to crime; questions of health, coping and recovery occupy the sick and the survivors after a fatal accident are likely to suffer from feelings of shame, responsibility and guilt. In all the three part studies we are analysing the individuals from different but interacting angles: (a) their everyday life with work, friends and family, (b) their involvements and relations with various kinds of expert systems (police, law, medical care, catastrophe centers, churches, etc.) and finally (c) the identifications, stories and vocabularies from different kinds of media (TV, radio, periodicals, magazines, advertisements, etc.) containing stories of medical progress, alternative cures, miracles, rescues, heroes and heroines, scapegoats and villains.

Our ambition within this project is to take advantage of ethnological knowledge, especially those three features I have outlined above, but also to a large extent draw inspiration from the field of cultural studies. Hopefully this intertwining will result in research that can be of political use, for a more sophisticated understanding of the complexity of everyday life, in the changing and improving of expert systems and for a deepened knowledge about the use and abuse of media.

Britt-Marie Thurén: Cultural studies, anthropology, language and gender

Roland Barthes has said somewhere that interdisciplinarity is not a question of gathering two or three disciplines around some theme but rather creating something new. That is, I would add, out of knowledge that already exists around some theme, but not stopping there. Using

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what exists to create a new combination might be mere engineering, or bricolage, whereas creating something really new requires taking a leap away from what exists.

My personal contribution to the springboard of cultural studies could come from my experiences as an anthropologist, as a teacher of culture in a language department, and as a professor of gender studies. I will comment from each perspective, but dedicating most of the space to language, which I notice is otherwise not represented in this workshop, whereas there are other participants who can speak about anthropology and gender.

1. Anthropology

One important question today might be: do we need an interdisciplinary area called cultural studies? Would it not cover ground where anthropology is already working? Especially in view of the fact that anthropology is moving in a humanistic direction, lately, after the postmodernist impact.

Indeed culture is one of the core concepts of anthropology. Not the only one, to be sure, but inescapable. It is not possible to study any anthropological problem, be it expressly about culture or not, without analysing ideas.

At the department of social anthropology in Stockholm there was a course, a few years ago, called 'Kulturkunskap' which can be translated as culturology or culture studies. It no longer exists; it has been partially incorporated into other courses. Culture is too basic a concept to warrant a special course, it was felt; what was taught in this course were things every student of anthropology should ponder. But it was an interesting course, which I greatly enjoyed teaching. It tested some outlying regions of anthropological knowledge, using the core concept of culture as the basic tool.

'Culture' and 'cultural studies' are polysemic concepts, as the presentation of this workshop rightly states. But if that is so, can it be defined as an 'area' that should be 'advanced' as such? What would that be?

Anthropology is not the same thing as cultural studies. But how close are they? What exactly is the difference? Do we want to define the differences? Will we have to, if cultural studies are institutionalized?

One way of discussing this might be using an example from a third area, namely language studies.

2. Language

For a year and a half I taught something like anthropological ideas around culture at the Department of Spanish and Portuguese, Stockholm University. The experience is relevant for today's discussion.

From the perspective of linguists and teachers of languages, culture is an important and controversial concept. It has a traditional meaning, approximately fine arts, but also ideas carried in and through a language. In Stockholm, the Spanish language is taught to students who are mostly interested in using it in commercial or administrative contexts. They usually view language as a technical system and adopt an instrumental attitude towards it. The teachers, however, consider that the students should also learn about literary traditions, history, geography, politics, etc. and something about the ideas Spaniards, and other Spanish-speaking peoples, have about themselves, debates through the centuries on such things as 'Spanishness' or the eternal problems of Spain as a state. Such knowledge is in part taught through literature (novels especially) and in part through the kind of courses known as '*realia*' - facts about 'real life' in the Spanish-speaking countries, usually focused on history and geography.

Part of my job was to teach some such courses, complementing the traditional focus with anthropological insights. I have knowledge about Spain that permitted me to do that, but my anthropological knowledge was often more of a hindrance than a help, as it complicated things for the students and there was not enough time to clear up misunderstandings e.g. around the concept of culture.

But I also taught another type of course that came closer to what we are talking about in this workshop. Some linguists are aware that anthropological knowledge could be at least as relevant for the teaching of modern languages as history or literature. This is one area where perhaps cultural studies could help to delineate better the issues to study, the kind of texts that might be useful for teaching, etc.¹

¹ There are text books prepared in this line of thinking, for instance Helen Graham & Jo Labanyi (eds) (1995): *Spanish Cultural Studies: An Introduction. The Struggle for Modernity*, Oxford / New York: Oxford University Press. It mixes recent history, current political debate, introduction to recent developments in fine arts (not just literature, but drama, film, painting and sculpture, dance, music, etc.) and the world of mass media - in short it gives an inkling of what it means to be a reasonably educated person in Spain today. It gives the knowledge needed to participate in a normally cultured conversation or to avoid mistranslating jokes and the like. (Unfortunately, precisely this book could not be used at the department in Stockholm because it is in English. The

The professor of the department, Lars Fant, is very much interested in this issue, and has developed a course around it, called cultural studies and Intercultural Communication (*Estudios culturales y comunicación intercultural*). To learn a language well, a student needs to know how to communicate in the widest sense of that word. This is not just a question of 'realia' knowledge, and not just a question of extended linguistic or sociolinguistic knowledge (when and how to interrupt, when not to laugh, and so on). To some extent it is a combination of these two. But it is also something more, which has to do with the frames of reference in which the speakers of a language move, current debates and conscious values as well as less explicit cultural phenomena, such as social categorizations, and taken-for-granted ideas around good and evil, the human body, time and space, etc.

The course covered five main themes: 1. The concept of culture and dimensions of intercultural comparison. 2. Intercultural encounters. 3. Nordic culture, Mediterranean culture, Hispanic culture. 4. Cultural codes in communication. 5. Hispanic culture in a historical perspective. It was built on three main theoretical traditions: intercultural communication, ethnography of communication and cultural or social anthropology. The main purposes of the course were: 1. To teach Spanish language communication in a wider sense than grammar and vocabulary (e.g. body language, rhythms, interpretation and cultural construction of communication-related factors such as humor or time and space, how to order and present ideas). 2. To teach some basic relativization and anti-ethnocentrism. 3. To offer information on cultural frames of reference in Spain. 4. To present ethnographic examples of all the foregoing, in order to place the generalizations in context.

Perhaps cultural studies could be a resource for the teaching of culture and communication in language departments.

There is also a research aspect.

Lars Fant's own research compares Scandinavian and Spanish ways of communicating. He uses such tools as taping conversations and then analysing them in minute detail to describe exact amounts of overlapping speech, pauses etc. or filming conversations, measuring with equal exactitude who looks at whom, when and for how long, how signals are given for turn-taking, opposition, agreement, doubt, etc. In this way, he has arrived at conclusions that confirm hunches that I, in my anthropological work on Spain, had long considered important, but could not measure or even describe very well. Yet, from an anthropological per-

policy of the department is that English texts should be avoided for obvious pedagogical reasons.)

spective they were relevant not just for communication but for such issues as gender, cultural change and all forms of power.

If Lars and I had had the opportunity to compare our different kinds of data more carefully, we might have reached into an area of new knowledge, and this knowledge would be neither just linguistic nor just anthropological, but relevant for both. We seemed to be able to visualize an unexplored terrain, a grey zone in between the two disciplines, a no man's land neither can explore on its own.

Can cultural studies?

3. Gender

My comments from the perspective of gender are of two kinds.

The first is quite obvious, but it needs to be repeated as a reminder: Gender is a cultural construction! It is a ubiquitous aspect of human life and one of the eternal enigmas that human beings constantly ponder and reinterpret and organize in various ways. It is therefore a central theme for cultural studies, a basic study object. It is also an inescapable standpoint for all researchers (everyone is gendered), so methodological considerations must always include gender.

There is more to be said about this, but let me also take another point of view. I have recently been named professor of gender studies. This is an interdisciplinary area, so we can compare it with cultural studies, and draw some conclusions about the pros and cons of interdisciplinary studies in the context of Swedish academic life.

The advantages of interdisciplinary efforts are more or less obvious and perhaps not under discussions in this forum today. The expansion of knowledge is the foremost one. Cf. above on the meeting of anthropology and language. Compared to some other countries, the advantages may be rather greater in Sweden, where disciplines are usually organized in departments with limited contact among themselves, and with teachers and postgraduate students spending practically all their time at one only, and undergraduate students spending at least one semester, often two years or more at one only.

There are pedagogical advantages as well. My experience, admittedly short, of seminars at the Centre for Women's Studies of Umeå University, is that they are more fun and intellectually stimulating than intradisciplinary ones. The participants usually mention this as their main motive for participating. They need a 'breathing space' from their home departments. They feel that the fact that in this context they are not dependent on the colleagues for resources or career advancement means that ideas

can be tossed around more freely, thus fertilizing the ground for serendipity and creativity.

But the difficulties of interdisciplinary units must also be spelled out.

The very freedom just mentioned is not only positive. It can sometimes tempt participants to relax intellectual tension.

This is compounded by the fact that in interdisciplinary meetings, the common denominator, which brings the participants together to start with, is usually narrow in comparison to the knowledge base of each discipline. In such a situation one must be free to explore in loose ways, and one cannot avoid having recourse to loose terminology, in order to make oneself understood by persons from other disciplines. If the discussion is limited strictly to what everyone knows, it can become uninteresting.

As the interdisciplinary meeting ground evolves and expands, these difficulties are partially overcome. Gender studies have come quite far on this road. But a new difficulty is then born: the interdisciplinary area is no longer an open meeting ground. Newcomers cannot participate on the same conditions as oldtimers. Introductory courses must be organized to transmit the knowledge created. Newcomers must also orient themselves in the journals and personal networks that have grown up. Oldtimers have perhaps stopped learning from each others' home disciplines, or at least they do not find the effort as rewarding as in the early days.

Given this plus the strict departmentalization of Swedish universities in general, the interdisciplinary meeting ground has a tendency to become institutionalized in a form very similar to ordinary university departments. This has advantages for the development of the new area of knowledge, and for the careers of all involved, but it reduces the intellectual heat that got it all started.

Gender studies is an interdisciplinary area that is coming to look very much like a normal discipline in Sweden. It has a flagship journal, it has large and partially overlapping personal networks of scholars, who meet in regular and irregular contexts, both intellectual and organizational, it has undergraduate courses of A, B and C level, it has recently obtained its first full professor and three more are on the way, and next year a Ph.D. program is scheduled to start in Linköping.

Most of us think that these are positive developments. But the question before us now is: How can the advantages of interdisciplinarity be maintained?

The area of gender studies clearly profits from independent development, but it is also necessary to integrate the gender perspective in existing disciplines. There has been much discussion on the dilemma, and there is now a broad consensus that it must not be phrased as a choice. 'We must stand on both legs.'

The experience then points to multiple strategies. We must exercise both legs so that neither grows weak. We need to fashion strategies for balancing the needs of oldtimers and newcomers. We must find ways of continuing to learn from each others' home disciplines. We also need to consider such practical problems as whether to promote the possibility of doctorates in gender studies or not, how to cooperate with other departments around the doctoral students who work with a focus on gender, how to cooperate among centres to give the best possible quality to undergraduate courses (specialize? copy each others' successes? offer joint courses?), etc.

Personally, I have a vision of continued institutionalization of gender research, but also of a certain de-institutionalization. Or loose margins around a steady core. I am thinking of such things as very open meeting places for informal discussion, and of small dedicated groups, working out research projects on selected themes. That is, both great flexibility, and an increased concentration with strict requirements. The open meeting places could vary a lot in form and timing but be permanent in some approximate sense over the long term. The working groups would function intensely over a period of two-four years and then dissolve.

Departments for gender studies should probably not be organized in the same way as ordinary university department, even if they approximate them in actual activities. To maintain interdisciplinarity requires some specific measures and general caution in the face of the temptations of institutionalization.

I hope that these reflections on interdisciplinarity can be of some value for cultural studies, in spite of the differences between the two areas.

5. Statements by the Swedish 'Humanities' panelists

Olle Edström: Some musicological key questions – seen from the perspective of critical ethnomusicology – that connect to research within cultural studies

1. It is more and more obvious that something is going on. I refer to the changing of meaning of the term 'music'. As so often I return, as a point of departure, to a quote from Karl Mannheim: 'Each idea acquires a new meaning when it is applied to a new life situation. When new strata take over systems of ideas from other strata, it can always be shown that the same words mean something different to the new sponsors, because these latter think in terms of different aspirations and existential configurations. This social change of function, then, is... also a change of meaning' (1952/1968:188).

2. As I understand this, we have to focus on the ways music is used in everyday life. Traditionally music (socially constructed sound heard as music) could be (a) listened to as it was (b) composed, and (c) played. Apart from the fact that music today is also composed/improvised/played/performed, music is primarily out there more or less all the time: we wake up, eat, work, shop, socialize to music.

3. As music is almost always there, some even take it for granted that music is longer listened to. Paul Mathew, DMA student at Peabody Conservatory, recently stated in a discussion on the Society for Music Theory-talking list (Internet 022697): 'For my students – and also for my students at the University of Maryland – the idea of just listening to a piece of music is totally alien. When I tell them that concert goers in the Eighteenth century had an intuitive grasp of what happens in the sonata form, they are incredulous. Who could just listen to music and understand all that stuff about melodies and keys? Without lyrics, no less! And when I teach my pop-music class, I find that they know little more about the music they claim is near and dear to them. Sure, they know the gossip and they've memorized the rhyme, but they have no idea how the music is held together, and what's going on behind the singer/s. For most

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of my students, music happens in cars. Music comes out of headphones, facilitates dancing. It is not a thing to be contemplated solely. They are perplexed when they come back from "seeing" the Baltimore Orchestra and I ask them what they "heard".

4. At the same time music in different kinds of polls and investigations is always shown to be the most important leisure interest among young people. Their music, popular music, since the late 1950s often called Youth music, pop/rock/hip-hop/world music etc., has become a dominating form of music, and will in less than ten years time also be the musics of retired people in Sweden etc. If the above mentioned mode of socializing to music is the rule rather than the exception, it is of outmost importance as it affects most fields of research within musicology, as well as it is an important point of departure for musicological research within all forms of cultural studies. Music, thus, is not something listened to, but something that 'happens', that is to say, something that is heard in various everyday circumstances and used to various ends.

5. Art music, it has always been taken for granted, is listened to in appropriate social settings. Art music in its modern sense is a child of the Enlightenment. The social construction of Art is deeply connected to the concept of Aesthetics. That the Beautiful should be perceived by the mind through the senses, and that perception as such was an aesthetic act, can be seen as different sides of the same bourgeois coin. Art music came to belong to 'die Kennern' whereas 'die Liebhabern' above all enjoyed music, either it was labeled art music or everyday music. These ideas made up the foundation in developing models of explanation as to the role and function of art, how it should be listened to etc. Interwoven in the same process, as Terry Eagleton (1990) reminds us, art as other binding forces of the bourgeois social order: custom, piety and sentiments functioned as a contrast to an antagonistic economic and political life.

6. Theodor Wiesengrund Adorno has made the point, that music is a late-comer among the arts. What he considered to be great music might be an art form that was possible only during a short period of human history. Whether art will survive these developments is anybody's guess. Today, some 200 years later, we still have labels as 'art' and 'aesthetic' though it seems, that whatever semantic fields they covered in the past, their meanings are fragmented and that no real consensus exists any longer among different layers of the Swedish society. The idea that aesthetic function is some special thing, occurring in some other field outside everyday discourse, is of course wrong. It is and was as socially constructed as all other functions of music.

7. The competition within the modernist art music-field is of little concern to possibly 90-99% of the Swedish population. The fact that terms such as 'art' and 'aesthetics' are infrequently used in popular music studies by leading scholars like Simon Frith and Peter Wicke, has little relevance for the users/fans. They never use the term 'aesthetics', and it is far from clear that the traditional bourgeois meaning of the term connotes to the way pop/rock music is used today.

8. In traditional musicology, the analysis of art music has long since been a highly evolved craft. In the U.S.A., for instance, many departments of musicology are divided in two, one specializing in the history of music, and the other in music theory. The music theoretician's tool box is filled with methodological tools that have been used to explain how music as a sounding structure is constructed – a structure listened to and/or read from the scores.

9. The epistemological status of this analytical tradition has recently been discussed by, Nicholas Cook (1990), among others. He even goes as far as proclaiming that the music theorist doesn't study music scientifically at all, what s/he does it to study it musicologically. A crucial question has always been to what extent the structures analysed by the theoreticians, whether melodic, rhythmic, harmonic etc., have been understood/listened to/heard by the common man (listener). Moreover, the adjustment of the traditional tools to the demands for analysing contemporary popular music, and the development of new suitable ones has been slow, leaving the study of popular music as much in the hands of sociologists as musicologists.

10. In conclusion then, empirical studies centered on the use of music in everyday life are much in need to counteract traditional views within musicology as to the function/s, role/s and meaning/s of music. Just as scholars within ethnomusicology never put the carriage before the horse, i.e. music as structure before society, it is my hope that advancing cultural studies can be of benefit for ethno/musicology, as the questions adressed in this statement are of utmost importance to scholarly research in music in the next millenium.

Jan Hjärpe: Cultural studies: The perspective of a historian of religions

Invited to the workshop were persons of to two rather different categories. Firstly we had those already engaged in the specific perspective of 'cultural studies', using the categorizations and terminology developed in this now more or less established discourse. Secondly we had persons engaged within academical disciplines connected with the study of either 'cultural life' in one aspect or other (literature, art, music, religion, intellectual history, technology etc.) or 'culture' in the meaning of the word found in expressions like 'meeting of cultures', i.e. the study of civilizations.

I have a feeling that we did not entirely succeed in establishing a common ground or a really functioning communication between these two categories. This is a necessity, I think, for the future.

My own experience, as a historian of religions, is mainly in the field of Islamology, especially the analysis of contemporary developments in the Muslim world. My picture of the transdisciplinary field of cultural studies would be the following:

We can regard the *object*, the very phenomena of 'culture' roughly as consisting of the following elements:

- *Rituals* (secular and religious; the rituals of individuals, families and all kind of communities).
- *Narratives* (from the lore of the family, to myths, literature, drama, in all its aspects and forms of appearance).
- *Categorizations* (specific terminologies, jargons, discourses).
- *Observances* (from the simplest 'do not', habits and customs, law, to the question of global ethics).

Our first question is then: What do these mean and how do they function for the individual? This is the problematic where the perspective is that of *psychology*, the relation between the phenomenon of individual personal experience and the construction and function of our human brain and psyche, the relation between personality, the individual's selection from the cultural environment, the tradition, and the experience and interpretation of one's own existence. I have found that a fruitful approach to this problematic is by help of psychology of *perception*, the role-taking as an integral part of the construction of the individual's cognitive universe. How does 'culture' influence the individual's patterns of

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perception and interpretation? This includes a philosophical problematic: In what way (or in what respect) do the words and symbols of cultural tradition convey *meaning*?

Our second question is how the cultural environment with its different components, and the individual experience of it, relates to communities, the communion of individuals. This is the problematic of *sociology*. For my part I have found it of value in this respect to use theories of so called sociology of knowledge. (To this field belongs also the *phenomenology of religion* and its systematization of religious and ideological institutions. We can notice that the phenomenon of creeds and theologies rather belong to the sociological function of religious tradition, constituting the delimitation of the community, the definition of who belongs to the group and who does not. The creed/theology/formulated ideology has a very insignificant role in the actual religiosity of the individual: The formulated creed is a social phenomenon.)

Our third question is how the elements of cultural tradition and ambience, and the communities, are related to society in its entirety, to the function of the state, or even the function of the global community: *politology* – and social ethics. In this respect there might be of interest to use Wittgenstein's concept of 'language games'; the function of cultural elements, specific jargons, cultural tradition as a source for political language, defining belonging, legitimating power; or the opposite: expressing opposition, legitimating political change. A study of the semiotics of political language, but also of the conceptualization of words on the global arena of today. A study of *prognostic* value.

I see a way for advancing cultural studies, also as a common ground for the two categories mentioned above, in an interdisciplinary cooperation between these three levels in the analysis: 'Culture's' function as to the individual perception, from a neurological and psychological point of view, the function in communities from a sociological perspective, in defining belonging and identity, and the politological function, mainly from the perspective of its mobilizing effects.

Arne Jarrick: The state of cultural studies in Swedish historiography

In the 1920s and 1930s most cultural studies within Western historiography – such as the history of mentalities – was anchored in materialism (even if it was not always the Marxist one), and this continued to be the

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case in the post-war period, at least up to the late 1970s. Subsequently, however, cultural studies have turned more culturalist, so to speak, i.e. has increasingly been carried out as irreductionist research in its own right. However, today a growing number of students of cultural history has gone farther, since they do not any longer restrict themselves to irreductionism but has instead become more and more constructionist or idealist. This has led to the vaining of referentialism, and it threatens to lead to a breakdown of scientific communication altogether. It is easy to realize how problematic such a development is, even if one has to admit that the historical sciences have profited a great deal from the famous cultural turn of last one or two decades.

Within European historiography, a first step in this direction was taken when historians, such as those associated to the Annales-school, from a materialist point of departure started to investigate every-day life of ordinary people. This included research on long lasting attitudes as well as studies of habits. It was often reductionist, since habits and mental structures were still frequently derived from material and social structures and processes, and not seen as independent causes of change or lack of change.

However, in due course irreductionist tendencies appeared in cultural history, which could be seen as a second step towards post-modern historiography still waiting to evolve. Departing from Marxist and other kinds of materialism, but still influenced by it, historians and other students of the history of culture more and more often began to point to the richness of variation among human societies as a testimony to the independence of culture of nature or biological structures, sometimes even as a proof of the hegemony of culture. It was said that people make choices according to their conceptions and *mis-conceptions*, and that the order of things is rather the outcome of such choices than, inversely, causing them. However, many of these historians wanted to avoid ending up in old-fashioned idealism, why the concept of 'praxis' was introduced in order to establish a kind of analytical position in between. But it was a position that carried visible traces of the materialism it stemmed from. Surely, according to such a perspective, people's cultural codes are something more than a simple reflexion of the inanimate world, but at the same time they are conceived as incessantly changing according to people's experience. Reality modifies codes, since codes can never correspond perfectly to it.

However, during the last two decades or so, some cultural historians have taken further steps to distance themselves even more from the materialism of the early Annales-school, initially towards a position where culture serves as the supreme explanation of human behaviour and

subsequently by reaching a position where even the idea of different spheres – such as culture and economy – are rejected altogether. If all fields of experience are seen as culturally constructed, concomitantly it becomes meaningless to attempt to establish causal links between them. If words bring about what they name (as Judith Butler claims), then it is no longer meaningful to think of ‘real’ structures at all. This meaning that we do not share any extra-discursive reality with each other, it would no longer be legitimate to have scientific discussions with each other about the observations we make.

In order not to get there, we have to uphold referentialism and inter-subjectivism, yet without returning to the simple-minded scientism of yesterday.

Lisbeth Larsson: Advancing cultural studies within the humanities

Although cultural studies, with Richard Hoggart and Raymond Williams, has its roots in the field of literary studies – one could say that the perspective emanated out of a crisis in literary studies during the 50s – the Swedish discipline Comparative Literature has shown to be remarkably resistant to cultural analysis. At the same time as Comparative Literature in the U.S. went into cultural studies, and other disciplines in Sweden, such as ethnology and sociology became part of the ‘the cultural turn’, the Swedish discipline of Comparative Literature labeled it – to use one of Stanley Fish’s expressions – not ‘professionally correct’. The critique of cultural studies, that has been going on for quite a while in the U.S., has become used as an effective hindrance for developing the perspective within literary studies. This has unfortunate, for Comparative Literature, but also, as I see it, for the development of cultural studies in Sweden.

When Comparative Literature closed the door for the study of narratives as a fundamental part of human and social life, other disciplines lost a part of the dialogue with textual theory. In addition they lost the access to the special skill to read texts and signs which are cultivated in Comparative Literature.

The main interest in cultural studies today is representation; the concepts and narratives we think with, and are thought with. That, however, is a common interest, and an interest we share with anti-humanistic

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perspectives such as structuralism and deconstruction. What cultural studies offers is a theory for keeping a humanistic, critical perspective on this common interest of representations in the humanities. It gives the possibility of reading representations as part of a process of meaning, not as a loss of meaning and human degradation. A cultural studies perspective opens up for sympathetic readings of dynamical processes between human subjectivity and social power and restraint.

But there are a lot of dangers as the current debate shows. I will emphasize two of them – although I think it is important to keep in mind the difference between the situation of cultural studies in the U.S. and in Sweden.

First is the danger of losing one perspective or of using just one. After a period of power analysis in cultural studies, there is a new focus on subjectivity and that which some call real life. Cultural studies tends to oscillate between the Scylla of total subjectivity and the Charybdis of distant determination. And I see this tendency to give a new privilege the real-life-approach as a reaction to the immense output of meta-studies lately. In my opinion, however, it is important not to purify either of these perspectives but to keep both of them – the hermeneutic one and the power analytical and structural – in dialogue with each other. Never to abandon either of them.

Second is the danger connected to adapting the critical outsider position. As a feminist within cultural studies and literary studies, I initially found a position in the margin very productive. The outsider's very simple question: Why aren't there any women? proved to be a golden one. The studies of women's literature has also shown to be one of, or the most vital in Comparative Literature in Sweden during the last two decades. However as we have seen in the U.S. this simple question easily multiplies and continues to be used by new groups. This has been proliferating. But it has also meant – which is both obvious and devastating – that the field of cultural studies, as well as feminist theory, has moved further and further out into the margins when it comes to interest. The focus on and identification with the Other is one of the strongest implements of cultural studies but it also contains a danger of releasing a normative critique of established identities and/or a turn towards queer exoticism.

Anders Öhman: The need for cultural studies in literary studies

What attracted me with cultural studies when I first came in contact with it in the beginning of the eighties, was that it offered a more optimistic way of viewing contemporary culture. Earlier I had been influenced by the critical theory of the Frankfurt School, according to whom the culture industry shaped and controlled people's consciousness. The statement of Herbert Marcuse, 'Everyone is thinking the same thoughts; capitalism's thoughts', can be seen as typical of its pessimistic, and totalizing, view on mass culture and the role of popular culture in society. I had never felt comfortable with the perspective of the Frankfurt School, as I had been growing up with my most important experiences coming from pop culture: rock music, movies and popular literature.

Therefore cultural studies in many ways meant a liberating experience. Cultural studies could show that that people was capable to create their own meanings from the most commercial cultural artefacts. People were not cultural dupes, but meaning was produced in a constant social process. With the help of cultural studies one could at last take popular literature seriously and raise questions on how it had been treated in the institution of literature.

The influence from cultural studies inspired me to the subject for my Ph.D. thesis, which was an investigation on why and when the novel of plot became a low kind of literature. My point of departure was the marginalized position of the contemporary novel of plot in the literary institution in Sweden, but in order to answer the question when it came to be excluded from the literary and cultural canon I had to go back to the middle of the 19th century. But when it came to such a historical case-study I found that there were very few models to get from cultural studies. There was something by Raymond Williams and something by Richard Hoggart, but otherwise most of the research which had a cultural studies-perspective treated the contemporary culture in all its manifestations. So I had to turn to other theoretical works in order to carry out my investigation; Mikhail Bakhtin, New Historicism and so on. For some years, finishing my work, I didn't feel I was doing cultural studies. I was dealing with literary history and cultural studies was something else.

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The lack of a historical dimension in the analysis of contemporary culture is in my view the greatest disadvantage with this somewhat indefinable area of research which is called cultural studies. Whether the question is to analyse soap-operas, punk rockers or thrillers, it is of utmost importance not only to understand how these cultural forms are being used today, but also to realize that they are historically formed and have carried other meanings throughout history. Every form, every genre, remembers its earlier life as it were, and this memory is an important feature when a new time takes it into use. That the emphasis of cultural studies have tended to be on the analysis of contemporary culture may depend on the fact that it has been dominated by the social sciences, while the humanities, with a few important exceptions as, for example, ethnography and musicology, have been oddly uninterested, at least in Sweden.

The fact that the historical dimension hasn't been considered enough, is therefore not a thing that cultural studies alone can be made responsible for, or the Social Sciences for that matter, but the responsibility lies very much on the humanities themselves. As a matter of fact, many literary and art critics have taken it as their primary mission to, contrary to the thought of using cultural studies in order to investigate processes of canonization in literature and art, defend the Canon towards what they see as the disintegrating tendencies in the contemporary society, and of which cultural studies, according to them, is an important part. Such a conservative position becomes, of course, increasingly untenable as literature and art loses its privileged position in the contemporary culture. During the 1960s and 1970s it was in literature that many important debates were carried out, but today I think that other inscriptional medias have become more important: IT, movies, music.

For me as a literary scholar it is therefore of great importance to reflect my own media, literature, historically, and to realize that it is the history of human formations I am interested in, and that these can assume new and different shapes than the traditional text or the book. At the same time I consequently spot a number of defence mechanisms among my colleagues to face the threat that literature loses its privileged position as the preferred cultural media. Traditional methods and theories have a kind of a renaissance; biographical-psychological methods, stylistics and even new criticism, and among the subjects chosen by doctoral students, monographs on 20th century authors dominates, primarily focusing on aesthetic questions. Cultural studies I therefore regard as a necessity in order to counteract these conservative tendencies and bring literary criticism into the next millenium. That is, a strategy for survival. Because

there are things worth saving in literary criticism: historical, theoretical and analytical competence.

There are, nevertheless, some negative consequences arising from the fact that the historical dimension isn't that strong in cultural studies. When there are discussions of replacing literary history for cultural studies in elementary school and high school, this can at a first glance be viewed as a progressive pedagogic act. However, I am quite sure that the cultural studies which would be carried out at that level would be a rather superficial version, mainly concentrating on the description of contemporary cultural artefacts. Such a version of cultural studies, which there indeed exists a lot of today, does not only run the risk of repressing the historical dimension but, even worse, the critical and theoretical aspects characteristic of 'traditional British' cultural studies in favor of an empirical, descriptive, and shallow, so called cultural analysis. Put in that position I would feel the need to defend the place of literary history, even if it would contain a traditional perspective without a critique of the canon, just because it still would bring the students the vital historical dimension.

Much of what has been written about cultural studies is characterized by long introductions where the author discusses how he/she defines the area of research and the theoretical background for doing cultural studies. It might be typical for a young discipline - if one is supposed to call cultural studies a discipline, isn't it an anti-discipline? - that these introductions sometimes tends to be the whole. The investigation is dimmed by the shadow of a theoretical exegesis. My point is not that this is entirely bad, probably it is an expression of the development and growth of cultural studies, but to me these kinds of expositions and statements are not what I feel to be the most pressing issues to deal with.

My opinion is that the essential, and necessary, thing about cultural studies today is the perspective itself, which I mean consists of an inquiry into what cultural change means. With a perspective like that it isn't possible to limit investigations to only one discipline; in order to understand how culture changes and is changed in relation to a context it would demand the participation of several disciplines. That is, there is an interdisciplinary dimension inherent in the cultural studies perspective, even in those cases where there is only one scholar from one discipline who conducts the research.

This perspective is what I mean we have to enhance in Sweden, at least in my discipline, literary studies. And we have traditions to build upon, which is not always the case in those countries - particularly England and the United States - where cultural studies is much stronger than here. For example, it is sometimes pointed out that Raymond Williams got much of

his inspiration for the study of culture from the workers education in Britain in the 1930s and 40s. In Sweden, I think one can say that the movement of worker's education have been more vital than elsewhere, we also have a worker's literature which lacks parallel in the rest of the world, and we have had governments consisting of a worker's party during almost the whole of this century. These circumstances is the reason, I think, that we since the beginning of the 60s have a department for the sociology of literature, which has carried out much research on worker's literature and, on the whole, the literatures of marginalized, lower classes.

The problem, however, with the sociology of literature is that it has been too empirically and positivistically oriented. They have meticulously mapped different groups of readers, the social background of the writers, and the terms of distribution and production of literature, but they have not been able to, or interested in, accounting for the processes of cultural change: how different groups have emerged in society, become dominant, and which groups or cultures who have been marginalized; and the possibilities that have been lost in the historical process. This is often an inquiry into the problematics of canonization: how is the canon established, what readings, and what groups, are excluded from the canon, etc.

It is these kind of questions that literary studies with a cultural studies perspective must put on the agenda, and thereby add to and further the results that the more traditional sociology of literature have reached.

However, in spite of the critique I have against cultural studies, it is my opinion that there is a definite need for cultural studies as a methodological perspective and as a field of research in Sweden today, not the least in the humanities.

But such a cultural studies in Sweden must hopefully combine detailed empirical investigations with a development of theoretical issues; it must be interdisciplinary but take a both critical and respectful position towards the different disciplines that partakes, and above all it must adopt a historical perspective both towards investigations of contemporary cultural phenomena and of analysis of the media. And it must dare to challenge the traditional humanities by pursuing a 'cultural studies-perspective' on historical case studies.

Today there are several scholars of literature working with a cultural studies perspective. For the most part, however, they are fairly alone and here there is, as I see it, room for large research projects with an interdisciplinary direction. Such a direction does not only apply to historical studies, even investigations of contemporary culture must have a per-

spective on cultural change, to avoid being empirical descriptions of cultural phenomenon, and should always include a historical dimension.

Thus, with a cultural studies perspective there are possibilities for many productive, and necessary, encounters across the borders of different disciplines. For me that is what an institute like ACSIS should mean to Swedish cultural studies. And I would like to emphasize that in Sweden we have a lot in our own tradition that is worth improving.

6. Statements by the Swedish 'Sociology' panelists

Svante Beckman: Possible arguments for cultural studies

Why should cultural studies be supported? Two types of argument are possible, but both are in need of further clarification.

(a) It contributes something the traditional organization of studies of culture does not or cannot contribute. Sociology, ethnology and anthropology all seem to think that they are already (doing) cultural studies. This challenges the basic premise of this endeavour. It must show that it contributes something new and unique. Some say that it represents a field of uncharted empirical facts not chartered by others. That would make it a future discipline, which many here seem to object to. Others point at theoretical perspectives, but it is not quite clear which ones. Yet others stress aspects of methodology and organization in terms of interdisciplinarity or attitudes of reflexivity and interpretation.

(b) It aids the existing disciplines to improve and develop in fruitful directions. But what improvements in the university practices are cultural studies to provide? Do they need an increased stability of interdisciplinary cooperation to avoid their displacement and marginalization? Or an increased general quality of research? Or a restoration of the intellectual role of academics and the provision of a sphere for critical reflection on contemporary society?

I believe one must be clear what is the contribution of cultural studies in terms of fields of uncharted phenomena not covered by other fields.

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One should stress problems outside academia as a ground for the bid for support of cultural studies, arguing that increased efforts in empirical research in this field will make society better in handling certain specific problems. Let me end by mentioning two such possible examples. (1) Fast changes in the cultural sector in terms of its economic importance have made cultural production increasingly central in societal and economic life. (2) A scientific superstructure is needed by the training programmes in arts and crafts, in response to the difficulties in transgressing the borders between art/design and academia.

Peter Dahlgren: Imagining – and doing – democracy: Citizens, civic culture and the media

With its emphasis on the relationship between culture, meaning and power, cultural studies has addressed the field of the political in a variety of ways. Seeking to elucidate the political dimensions of texts, social relationships, spatial arrangements, and so on has been a driving force cultural studies' analysis of meaning. Such themes as the politics of difference have also figured prominently. Some strands of political philosophy – e.g., 'radical democracy', associated with Chantal Mouffe (1992) and others, together with theories of identity and subjectivity, often with a feminist angle, have been probing the linkages between citizenship, identity (sometimes called political subjectivity in this context) and democracy (cf. Voet, 1998; Dean, 1997; Preston, 1997; Clarke, 1996.). The media are of course central to politics and democracy, and we are seeing now the addition of this element to the broader concerns with citizens and democracy, incorporating perspectives from Habermas on the public sphere as well as from theories of civil society (e.g., Dahlgren, 1995). And certainly this trajectory is being amplified by studies about the Internet and its relationship to democracy (cf. Fisher et al., 1996; Holmes, 1997; Loader, 1997; Loader, 1998; Tsagarousianou et al., 1998).

My interest is to develop a program of studies about citizens, media use and democracy, from a cultural studies-inspired perspective, incorporating not only themes such as everyday practices and identity, but also elements from the Habermasian perspective on communicative action and deliberative democracy (cf. Benhabib, 1996). One can see this both as making use of cultural studies to enhance media research and reinjecting themes about media and democracy back into cultural studies (Dahlgren,

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1997a). My focus will be on citizenship as agency, practices and identity, on people in their everyday lives and in particular contexts. Mass media and interactive media figure prominently here: how they are strategically selected and used tells us a lot about people's sense of themselves as citizens. Yet I do not envision detailed reception studies as these are normally understood, since my intent is to get a larger picture of each respondent's engagement in the social world. Following them in their everyday lives would of course not be feasible, so my methodological approach will be depth interviews. I have already, with the help of assistants, conducted 12 interviews with women who are in some way engaged in the civic/political field and who take a critical gender perspective. The goal here is to ascertain, via their life histories, how they were able to choose these paths, and what role the media have had in these choices.

Democracy has many dimensions: legal, institutional, traditional/historical, but also cultural and subjective. These latter dimensions cannot be reduced to simple reflections of other socio-historical circumstances. And what democracy actually is, or rather, what it means, what are its definitive features, is not self-evident, nor static. There are different traditions within political philosophy and we see different versions of democracy around the world. The criteria for a good democracy are not universal; they are even politically contested within every society. The concept is of course an historical-cultural construction, it is contested, it evolves, in both theory and practice. And in most everyday circumstances, including political activity, the word is largely used as a mantra. I am not interested so much in people's formalized definitions, but rather in illuminating what it might mean to various people from an agent/actor point of view, based on what people say and what they say about what they do, particularly in regard to their identities as citizens in Sweden today. I envision a number of studies based on depth interviews with different groups of people, representing different societal sectors and apparent different degrees of political engagement. I won't go further into research design in this text, but will instead chart some of the conceptual terrain.

We can schematically make a distinction between a formal democratic system, with its institutional structures, laws, parties, elections, media processes, etc., and a complex, multi-dimensional civic culture, anchored in everyday life and horizons, which both reflects and makes possible this system. (If civic culture should be used in the singular or plural form remains to be seen; and my conception here should of course not be confused with the behaviorist and psychological reductionist use of the term in political science studies from the 1960's). Both the system and the civic

culture are mutually dependent; both evolve in relation to each other. The notion of civic culture points to those features of the socio-cultural world which constitute everyday pre-conditions for democracy. I am thinking here of those values, norms, practices and procedures that may promote or hinder democratic virtues (however understood), including forms of interaction among citizens (cf. Dahlgren, 1997b) and even 'civility' itself (cf. Hefner, 1998).

The civic culture, at this stage of analytic development, is both an empirical and normative referent, much like the Habermasian notion of the public sphere. (We can note that a public sphere, which builds on the media and on citizens interaction, must be enveloped by a civic culture if it is to function. A civic culture can be situated as part of the Habermasian life-world). A civic culture does not presuppose homogeneity among its citizens, but does suggest minimal shared commitments to democracy, a kind of civic loyalty to the democratic vision (Mouffe, 1993; Clarke, 1996). This civic commonality can be expressed in different ways and manifested by social and cultural groups who are very different from each other. Indeed, if citizenship as an identity suggests a belonging and potential participation within some collectivity or collectivities, then mapping out the various 'we-nesses' and their relationships to each other, becomes a central feature of the project. Senses of community can be structured by, for example, nationality, geographic/spatial factors, ethnicity, social class, in varying constellations with each other. It may well be the case that some practices that people engage in may be perceived by them to embody democratic ideals,, but they may not necessarily discursively frame such practices in terms of civic culture or even citizenship. We mustn't be too wedded to a given vocabulary.

One of the hallmarks of late modern society is the pluralization of our 'selves'. Without getting tangled up in too much theorizing, we can simply note that in our daily lives we operate in a multitude of different 'worlds' or realities; we carry within us different sets of knowledge, assumptions, rules and roles for different circumstances. Some of these elements reside more at the core of our identity, others more in the periphery. Yet, all of us are to varying degrees composite people. The idea of composite identities also pertains to citizenship. We are used to thinking of citizenship in relation to the formal, systemic view of democracy, citizen being a legal category, with rights and obligations. Yet, if the political system is to function, citizenship must also embody a dimension of individual identity. It may well be that for many people, even citizenship has become a form of plural identity, with different inflections at work in different contexts.

Today, historical change is altering the character of Western democratic systems. At the same time, from another perspective, people are altering democracy by what they do, by what they envision (or not). If we treat the civic culture as part of the Habermasian life-world, yes, it is threatened by colonization via strategic action from the 'system'. However, it also embodies the potential for communicative action and intersubjectivity that can inform practices and generate new politically relevant meanings and identities (though I would caution against excessive optimism!).

The actual conditions of democratic systems in Western democracies vary between countries, but some general trends are apparent. The arena of official politics does not command the degree of support and participation it has in the past. Voter turn-outs are declining, even in countries such as Sweden, which has had considerable stability in its electoral patterns over the earlier post war decades. Party loyalty is declining, especially among the young. The formal political system of most Western nations appears stagnant, reactive rather than proactive, eclipsed by developments in the realms of large-scale capitalism and technological innovations. A corrosive climate of cynicism is emerging in many places. This cannot be understood as merely a response to the media, though this is no doubt part of the story. Rather, this atmosphere of 'anti-politics' must also be seen as the consequence of the inability of the political system itself to meet social expectations. Economic insecurity, unemployment, low wages, declining social services, growing class cleavages are all part of the picture. And in this picture we must include the growing societal domain of market forces and the corporate colonization of more and more sectors of social life. This tends, among other things, to promote consumer identities at the expense of citizen identities, though we should be careful about always seeing them as simple, mutually exclusive polarities. While they are often in conflict, they also overlap and intertwine in some cases; there are newer 'gray' zones between them.

In Sweden today, we can say that the mainstream political arena contains a paradigmatic tension, implying two different notions of citizenship. On the one hand is the social democratic legacy, the corporatist tradition of the welfare state, which emphasizes people's citizenship in relation to the state, the party and other related organizational structures. On the other hand, is the newer version, which underscores the individual's relationship to the market. I won't go into a comparative analysis here, but can simply note that, for example, both versions encompass elements of agency that is entwined with a strong 'consumerist' dimension. We get no simple 'citizen' vs. consumer' dichotomy. The welfare state citizen is a prolific consumer of state-provided services (and in many cases, financial

supplements). And for the newer market-based citizen, agency of course also involves a large measure of consumerism; neo-liberal ideology aims at recasting much of the role of citizen into terms of market consumerism. Beyond this basic tension, we see at the margins and beyond the mainstream, other versions of civic culture and citizenship identities starting to take form. Among womens' groups, immigrant associations, movement activists in a variety of areas such as ecology and animal rights, newer understandings about belonging and participating, about inclusion and exclusion, about engagement and non-participation, are emerging.

If the causes are complex, it is nonetheless clear that what we are witnessing is an erosion of civic engagement, a 'great retreat' (Boggs, 1998) from the arena of common concerns and politics, and a withdrawal into 'enclave consciousness', away from larger collective identities and community sensibilities. (This disengagement may not be uniform across the political spectrum, however: in the U.S., for example, the right wing is more active on the Internet than the left-liberal wing; Hill & Hughes, 1998). The extensive demoralization with formal politics is a theme addressed by many today (cf. Putnam, 1993). In the West we have a crisis of civic culture and citizenship (cf. Blumler & Gurevitch, 1995; Mosco, 1997), which can be linked to a more pervasive cultural malaise (e.g. Bellah, et al., 1985). Many people in Western societies seem to have at best very rudimentary identities as citizens, as members and potential participants of political society. They do not feel themselves to be a part of a larger democratic project.

At the same, there is counter evidence that evokes a different train of thought. From her fieldwork, Nina Eliasoph (1997), for example, finds that in the microcosms of everyday life, people reveal that what may appear on the surface as apathy towards politics and contemporary issues disguises something else. In discursive situations she finds that they are actually working very hard to avoid the political, to refrain from contextualizing their life circumstances in terms of public issues. Thus, political disengagement may not necessarily be the 'easy way out', but rather something which, whatever the motivations, many times requires a concerted effort. Seemingly, the potential for political engagement stubbornly remains.

It is precisely this kind of ambivalence that holds the door open for some constructive thinking about a democratic future. The ostensible political apathy, disenchantment and disaffiliation from the established political system may not necessarily signal a disinterest in politics per se (cf. Beck, 1998). That is, if we look beyond formal electoral politics, we can see various signs that suggest that many people have not abandoned

engagement with politics, but have rather refocused their political attention outside the parliamentary systems. Or they are in the process of redefining just what constitutes the political (Mulgan, 1994), often within the context of social movements. Observers see a strong shift to what is called life-style politics (cf. Bennett, 1998), which is characterized by personalized rather than collective engagement, and a stronger emphasis on single issues than on overarching platforms or ideologies. And if this is a fruitful development or not for democracy is of course hotly debated.

Notions of democracy and citizenship are in transition, but at the most fundamental level, we need to be able to live together with our differences and settle our conflicts without killing each other. Thus, democracy, however we define it, is crucial. In complex societies, elaborate formal systems of political representation are unavoidable. If significant numbers of people are abandoning these systems, this is not necessarily bad for democracy: the systems may well 'deserve' it. And the emergence of extra-parliamentarian groups is no doubt good, but can also be bad – the political orientation of many such groups is fundamentally anti-democratic. Thus, it is very important to remain empirically open – to not enter in with many pre-defined notions of what democracy or civic culture are. It is especially important to be alert to sense-making regard to the political itself, how its boundaries are discursively constructed, maintained, and transformed. How and at what point do things become political (or not) in the convoluted, criss-crossing streams of communicative flows? We need to be aware of the processes whereby 'the political' communicatively emerges within civic culture. We need to study how people imagine – and do – democracy.

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Thomas Johansson: Tracing the untraceable: Looking for origins and the 'true' kernel of cultural studies

1. Teaching confusion?

What is cultural studies? This question has been dealt with in quite a few articles and even books in the 1990s. But, we still do not have any good answers to or clarifications on this particular issue, or? After reading several articles dealing with the 'origins' and whereabouts of cultural studies, in journals such as *Cultural Studies*, *International Cultural Studies* and *European Cultural Studies*, I feel more and more confused. Maybe I

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should just give up and define myself as a sociologist of culture instead, or simply a sociologist? I must confess that I am not all too happy about definitions or classifications at all, so, maybe we should just skip this discussion altogether and just keep on doing whatever we are doing, studying culture in all its different forms and shapes. But what is culture? And what is cultural studies? here we are again!

In Sweden, cultural studies is not a discipline: it is rather a perspective, or a methodological and theoretical framework. Although many researchers are quite influenced by the international discussion there are generally still a vague perception and conception of cultural studies in Sweden. The most elaborated attempt to develop this perspective within an academic setting took place in the beginning of the 1990s, in a youth culture research network called FUS, led by Johan Fornäs. This network generated a lot of spin-off effects and some attempts to develop courses and even centres of cultural studies.

I am teaching at one of these centres, started by Mats Trondman at the University of Växjö, with a cultural studies master programme. Autumn 1998, I gave a course in gender and cultural studies. The students come from different disciplines and have different experiences of academic studies. And this is both an access and a problem. According to Grossberg, the notion of interdisciplinary work is often used as a rhetorical weapon against the discipline, instead of as a productive challenge to build a new relation and to change one's own research practices - to create something fresh and novel. Some students have barely no knowledge of poststructuralism or postmarxism, and names as Kristeva, Barthes, Foucault does not mean anything for them. This varies, of course. Some of the students are quite knowledgeable of the central themes and names within cultural studies.

So, back to the question 'what is cultural studies?'. As long as I am not requested to teach in cultural studies there is no need to define or classify, but when teaching I have to develop some kind of idea of what I am actually doing in the classroom. No escape. It is actually not difficult to start a centre of cultural studies, even if it often is hard to get the financial support needed and all that, but it is really difficult to create the conditions for the growth of a potential space of ideas and creative work. In recent years, we have seen many attempts to localize cultural studies in different parts of the world. In the first issue of the *European Journal of Cultural Studies*, I read an article which opposed to the claim that cultural studies originated in the 1970s at the CCCS in Birmingham. This author claimed that we could just as well find the origin to cultural studies in Africa; many Americans want to locate the origins of cultural studies in the Chicago School, and so on. Where will this end? Maybe we will have

as many stories of the 'original' centre of cultural studies as we have active researchers within this field.

We always have to be prepared to rewrite our stories, to reconstruct our theoretical perspectives, but we also have to be prepared to construct a fairly reasonable and fair story of what we are doing in this world. For me, cultural studies is a perspective which I use in order to say something about contemporary culture and cultural change. I believe that the CCCS in Birmingham during the 1970s and 80s was the starting point of a quite creative and fruitful research environment. In order to develop a creative milieu in the different centres of cultural studies in Sweden, I think it is important to reconstruct some of the basic conditions, ideas and theoretical explorations which appeared in Birmingham, but we also have to add some flavours to this. I will return to this question after having reconstructed some of the cornerstones of the CCCS in Birmingham.

2. Cultural studies – a particular field of knowledge?

The idea of cultural studies as an open project appeals a lot to me. However, in order to create an 'open' space, a field of creative experiences, we need to develop some vague ideas about how we want to look upon methodological and theoretical issues. We have to give our students some ideas of where to begin looking; which books should they read, what experiences will be helpful, what areas of research is best suited for them, and so on. When meditating on these issues I tried to extract some of the key cornerstones of the British tradition. I have divided these into four different areas: methodological, political, theoretical and cultural issues. I will briefly comment upon these areas of interest and then return to the question of the relationship between these areas and the construction of a potential creative space of cultural studies.

1. Methodology

Whereas sociologists, for example, often stick to one research method, cultural studies encourages a methodological pluralism and a use of unconventional methods such as photographs, film and other forms of electronic media. Personal experiences are also incorporated as a part of the research. Methods are not primarily used to prove different hypotheses, but to explore and unveil new data and to provide the researcher with relevant and usable information.

2. Theoretical views

The British tradition was partly influenced by French theoreticians such as Julia Kristeva, Roland Barthes and Louis Althusser. These authors signalled a move from structuralism to poststructuralism. In that way

they were also a part of a more general theoretical discussion on changes in society, identity and the creation of meaning. However, this movement is certainly not regarded as unproblematic. Poststructuralism is intimately interwoven with postmodern theory, and as such it is also criticized and called into question.

3. Culture and society

Cultural studies has always focused on the relation between society and culture as well as the relation between agency and structure. There has also been a strong influence from Marxism and radical thinking about society and cultural change. During the 1980s, the crises within Marxism led to new ways of looking at key issues such as class, social change and power relations. Although the influence from Marxism is much less obvious in today's cultural studies, there are still great influences from Marxism in general and in particular postmarxism. However, the influence from authors such as Foucault and Bourdieu has partly come to replace Marxism.

4. Politics

Cultural studies is tightly related to radical political thinking, identity politics and to social movements. Many authors are to be regarded as organic intellectuals. The goal is not merely to conduct research and to invest in an academic career, but also or maybe even more importantly to change society, to influence politics.

A potential creative space

In order to start doing cultural studies and not merely perform any kind of studies of culture, it is necessary to have some kind of notion of the four different areas referred to above. Students within this field need to be informed of the discussion on structuralism/poststructuralism, they should have some knowledge about Marxism, be or become engaged in some political and social issues or at least have some interest in social change, and so on so forth. However, this is only a starting point, a kind of skeleton, but then we need to fill this structure with flesh and blood. The four issues raised above only define the very loose boundaries of a space which is dynamic and constantly in flux.

3. Dare we define cultural studies?

To define something is of course always problematic. We tend to exclude certain possible aspects of a phenomenon, and to irritate people who feel that they are excluded from the community called 'cultural studies'. But definitions may certainly have different characters. The kind of definition

I suggest above could be characterized as minimalistic and quite open. I believe that it is necessary to define and to elaborate some kind of description of the potential space referred to here as cultural studies. Our students need some guidelines in order to learn how to do cultural studies, and we have to formulate some thoughts regarding courses, research projects, etc.

The main challenge for Swedish researchers within this particular field is to modify and to explore the different theories, concepts and analyses of contemporary culture which we import from the Anglo-Saxon world. The original recipe of how to do cultural studies are in great need of innovative developments, of course. Georg Simmel used the concepts of form and life when talking about social and cultural change. According to Simmel, life always transcends form, but it needs a form to transcend. So, the answer to the question raised here is: Yes, we need a definition of cultural studies, but this definition must allow life to flow and to keep on transcending whatever needs to be overcome in order to create the conditions for creative work.

Bo Reimer: On cultural studies and interventions

For a workshop such as this one, a position statement on cultural studies may be an occasion to put down in writing the kind of things one expects to say about cultural studies; its multidisciplinary, its openness, its political perspective(s), etc.

We will no doubt be discussing these matters at length. But instead of addressing a number of such points in a manner that I feel would be one of going through the motions, I will focus upon only one aspect here, and that is the aspect of *intervention*.

As Cary Nelson, Paula Treichler and Larry Grossberg write in their introduction to cultural studies, the collection of papers from the 1990 conference at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign: 'in virtually all traditions of cultural studies, its practitioners see cultural studies not simply as a chronicle of cultural change but as an intervention in it, and see themselves not simply as scholars providing an account but as politically engaged participants'.

If this workshop partly is an attempt to get Swedish cultural studies off the ground (although obviously cultural studies is already taking off in many different ways at the moment as will be discussed) I believe that the

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aspect of intervention is one that we should take seriously; one that we should try to discuss both generally and more specifically (within a particular Swedish context).

As I see it, this is a question of relevance; of making one's work relevant for one's surrounding society. This I do not mean according to some industry criterium, or according to the wishes of local politicians. I rather mean work that is relevant in the sense of, to put it a bit naively, making one's local community, or for that matter, the nation as such, a better place to live in, both by participating in public debates and by becoming active in joint projects with other academics as well as with non-academics. (I also mean work of the kind of helping students become active, knowledgeable and critical citizens.)

This is something lacking in Sweden right now. Swedish academics from the humanities and the social sciences with, shall we say, broader cultural perspectives are on the whole marginalized. Their voices are seldom heard in public debates. They may devote some of their time to writing for the culture pages of the more prestigious morning papers, but they are hardly heard outside that context. Of course, this is not primarily a fault of the academics. The logic of the media is such that some types of voices – loud and one dimensional ones, for instance – are more attractive than other types. But it is *our* responsibility to change these matters; the media certainly won't do that. Similarly, I don't see that many academics joining non-academics dealing with concrete, everyday life matters.

How may this be carried out? That is something I think we should address. If intervention is a key characteristic of cultural studies, what are the ways forward? What can be learnt from the history of cultural studies in other contexts? What can we hope to accomplish? In other words, what would a cultural studies intervention into a quiet and inward looking Swedish cultural academic community mean?

Ove Sernhede: New patterns of poverty and social exclusion in contemporary Sweden – a challenge for cultural studies

Since the mid 1980s, there has raged an intense debate among sociologist and other social scientists about patterns of segregation, marginalization and poverty in Europe. The post-industrial society has implied a growing

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social polarization in many countries. The rise of new forms of social exclusion has pushed an increasing number of groups out of society. The forms and intensities of this process of mounting class differentiation do vary; but it is possible to discern certain common tendencies in the emerging new Europe. Luxury and poverty have always existed side by side. However, the present situation offers something new – neither millionaires nor the destitute have at any time been so many as now. According to official statistics there are today 52 million poor people, 17 million unemployed and 3 million homeless in the EU. At the same time, the EU economy have been in a strong phase of expansion during the 1990s.

A background of importance in this development is the intensified international division of labour. In addition, new (IT) as well as old sectors of the economy is putting greater demands on labour. One consequence is that there are no jobs for a rising army of redundant citizens. Immigrants and refugees are among the ones that are facing growing difficulties in entering the labour market. Before Sweden was plunged into the recent structural changes in economy (1990), the immigrant population had a larger proportion in employment than Swedes. Another source for contemporary poverty is the dismantling of the institutions of the welfare state. This, in combination with the permanency of unemployment and the new patterns of poverty, has created a 'modern misery'. Marginalized groups have during the last two decades been forming ghettos all over Europe. In Sweden this development is related to the rapid changes in economy and society during the last 5 to 10 years. The Swedish ghettoization is most visible in the modern multi-ethnic suburbs outside the highly segregated big cities. Along with Moss Side (Manchester), Bobigny (Paris), Gutleutviertel (Hamburg) we can today also list Angered (Gothenburg), Rinkeby (Stockholm) and Rosengard (Malmö). In Gothenburg, to give one example, there are many areas where 75-95 % of the population (neighbourhoods with of 5-10 000 people) are immigrants, the city is one of the most segregated in Europe. A young man (20 years) from Somalia told me in an interview 'Sweden does not need any apartheid laws, there are no laws needed forcing immigrant to live in certain locations. Its already a fact that all the blackheads are living separately, so the effect is just the same as the one that existed in South Africa. So, listen Man - Hammarkullen and Hjällbo are like the Soweto of Gothenburg ... with one difference - we have no Mandela'. The parliamentary committee on 'big city conditions' recently presented statistics about the 'exposed urban districts' - more than 50 % of the children between 0-6 years of age have unemployed parents, in Gothenburg social entitlements increased by 100 % between 1990 and 1993, the unemployment for certain 'exposed'

ethnic minorities are more than 90 % - etc., etc. These circumstances have put Sweden more or less into a state of shock.

What has cultural studies to do with all this? All these above mentioned areas are involved in a territorial stigmatization process. Discourses in media - and society more widely - are demonising the conditions of life in these areas in a way that is creating fright and insecurity both inside and outside them. Moral panics are created by stereotypes about criminality, race, culture and religious antagonisms. Traditional research on these areas in the European metropolitan districts suggests that, in contrast with the traditional working class quarters, where poverty was an integrated part of the culture, these new areas are suffering from a lack of solidarity and community spirit. The local, collective and territorial identity, which earlier provided security and a feeling of self-esteem, is now - we are told - replaced by instability in the very same districts. There is an uncertainty, and there is a severe alienation in relation to the rest of society. Within the neighbourhoods, living conditions are affected by competition and harsh hostility between different ethnic groups. These patterns can probably be discerned in Sweden as well, but the situation may not be that unitary, there are signs which points in other directions as well. Obviously many people tend to look upon their living in a particular district as a temporary solution, and thus the social space of the district represents a rather weak basis for any community spirit. Instead they turn to the family and the commonality of the ethnic group to which they belong. Again, this is true but other tendencies might be found. From statistics we know a lot about these new high-immigrant-density suburban districts in the three metropolitan areas. With no doubt, some of these districts are fragile communities characterized by extreme ethnic heterogeneity - but what do we actually know about every-day life, political potentials, cultural expressions, relations to media etc. in this new suburban life - not much. Neither do we know much about identity work, the clash between tradition and modernity, how life-worlds are constituted or how cultural cross-fertilizations or ethnic conflicts are lived out.

A lot of crucial political questions - related to the welfare state, solidarity, racism, inequality etc - has emerged out of these new social and cultural conditions. That is one reason why these aspects of the New Sweden are an important fields of research. There are today, in my opinion, hardly any issues more important than the ones that arose from the 'modern misery'. The way we manage to handle these issues during the years to come will be of great importance for the development of the Swedish society for decades. I believe that an interdisciplinary, cultural studies approach could be of great value in the effort to de-demonize and

develop (for the political discussion) important knowledge about the life conditions in those areas. There are a lot of crucial questions that circles around culture, identity and the preconditions for social mobilization that we need to know more about. Questions that obviously needs a cultural studies approach with many different methods; traditional ethnographic fieldwork, media reception, interpretation of textual forms, etc.

The currents of migration, processes of marginalization and patterns of segregation, which has profoundly transformed Sweden during the 1990s, tend to make immigration almost synonymous with social exclusion. Comparing the Swedish situation with developments in France, the French sociologist Etienne Balibar denotes these conditions as 'racism without race'. Cultures developed by the young, as we know from youth culture research, often make antagonisms and conflicts that exist below the surface of society visible. The immigrant youth from the suburbs of the metropolitan areas where I do my resent research are often very conscious, and strongly critical, of the enforced ethnic boundaries that are transforming social inequality into cultural differences. Segregation has sent them off to delimited reservations where they have very restricted contacts with the surrounding society. Under such circumstances music, dance and other cultural expressions become important – the youth cultures in those areas often supersede the ethnic boundaries drawn by parental culture. These expressive cultural forms may also provide an opportunity to express and influence one's situation by making it known to the rest of society. An important aspect of cultural research must then not just be to explain and show how these cultural expressions are related to distinct patterns of Us and Them. From a cultural studies point of view it is also important to make contributions that will widen the possibilities for all those groups to be more visible, as well as to supply the debate and the critique of the present situation with facts and reflections. A situation that we no longer can turn a blind eye.

There are within the broad field of cultural studies many important themes to debate, and since we – in one way or another – are about to establish this field in Sweden there are of course organizational matters that must be discussed and many different types of initiatives must be taken. A lot of challenging work has to be done. The aim of my statement is to give attention to a social reality (and a field of research) that more or less has been neglected by cultural studies in our country, but in my opinion needs to be emphasized. A national research project about culture and every-day life in 'exposed' areas in Stockholm, Gothenburg and Malmö could be of importance to our present efforts. It could bring people from different disciplines together (sociology, anthropology, psychology, musicology, media and communication, history, etc.), it

would help to structure the research field and give Swedish cultural studies a profile and an identity. A national project like this would in itself be a network of researchers – the project could then also be connected to similar research in other parts of Europe.

FSSK – the local, recently established cultural studies unit (almost without money) at the University of Gothenburg – has just started a discussion about maybe doing a joint research project on some of (or one of) the suburbs in Angered. Senior researchers as well as PhD students from sociology, anthropology, social work, musicology, literature, social linguistics and media are involved.

Mats Trondman: Some remarks on a theoretically informed ‘empirical re-turn’ in cultural studies

Some problems won't go away.
(James Conant)

*Well I guess everything dies baby that's a fact
But maybe everything that dies someday comes back...*
(Bruce Springsteen)

Aim, delimitations and disposition

From the very beginning the field of cultural studies has had its internal dynamics and conflicts. One of them is the theoretically ‘lived’ tension between the ‘two paradigms’ of ‘structuralism’ (rejecting experience and ‘lived culture’ in the name of theory and language) and ‘culturalism’ (rejecting over-theorization in the name of experience and ‘lived culture’) (Hall, 1996). As cultural studies moved further down the road the tension continued. At one pole structuralism became the relations of systems of signs in relation to other system of signs, that is, post-structuralism. At the opposite pole, the contracting party became ethnography and lived experience in relation to actors’ and meaning-makers’ conditions of existence and dominating ideologies. And what about the way we live and think now? Are we living in an age characterized by ‘the end of the social’? Or to put it differently, and in a more ‘populist’ rhetoric tone: how fluffy has or can cultural studies become? Has it not become increasingly drained of empirical ‘thick descriptions’ (if there ever were any apart from a few doctoral dissertations at the centre in Birmingham in the late 70s and early 80s), while at the same time being refilled with ‘thin

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theoretical air' in the rising balloon of stardom? Yes, I do agree with Raymond Williams when he said in his 1986 lecture 'The future of cultural studies':

I now come to my controversial point. At this moment, a body of theory came through which rationalized the situation of this formation on its way to becoming bureaucratized and the home of specialists intellectuals. (1986: 157)

Williams was of course thinking about the 'uncritical acceptance' of structuralism and post-structuralism. Yes, I do mourn the lack of 'the lived' in cultural studies. At the same time, of course, I know that there is no given, unproblematic 'lived' just waiting to tell how the lived forms really are. However, in my own cultural studies project I will not let the 'lived culture' implode into the 'pure' or the 'overly' theoretical. If 'the social' is still 'here', how 'free-floating' are 'the floating signifiers'? The American anthropologist Clifford Geertz is right when he argues that

...an approach (...) which can be called semiotic - that is, one concerned with how signs signify - what this means is that it cannot be a formal science like logic or mathematics but must be a social one like history or anthropology. (1983: 118)

Hence semiotics 'is thus at the same time a theory of culture, not an autonomous enterprise', and a theory of signs must therefore 'trace the life of signs in society' (Geertz, 1983: 109). To do that, I would like to argue, cultural studies can not survive without 'the empirical', that is, 'real' knowledge about social and historical circumstances, meaning-making and social actions among actors in lived cultures. Of course I know that empirical knowledge and issues of theory and methodology or philosophy of science are not in any sense easy to handle beyond 'objectivism and relativism' (Bernstein, 1983) or 'constructivism and realism' (Delanty, 1997). I hardly believe that the epistemological issue is ever going to be solved, at least not in any 'strong' sense. What we need for the future is a 'practical epistemology' (Becker, 1990) - a theoretically-informed methodology that recognizes the value of empirical data within cultural studies projects while at the same time orients its knowledge interest toward issues of social and political relevance. My contribution here will be a plea for the need of an empirical 're-turn' in cultural studies and for a cultural studies with social relevance.

My aim is to raise some arguments for a cultural studies that recognizes 'the empirical' as its intrinsic value (Eriksson, 1997). This is something that it should not exist without, for both theoretical and methodological reasons, as well as the need for social and political relevance. From my perspective, the 'crises' of cultural studies has three foundations: (a) the tendency to focus on theory as if it were its intrinsic value, (b) the

tendency to put too much energy into the academic field of cultural studies as a playground for visibility within the field instead of social relevance outside the field, and (c) the tendency to fail to recognize the role of 'lived experience' in the 'real' lives of cultural studies representatives. If Geertz is correct, cultural studies will only 'travel' if it traces both itself and the 'life of signs' in society. 'Meaning is use' and 'arises from use' (1983: 118). Like 'poetry' that 'constructs a voice out of the voices that surrounds it' (1983: 117). To me, cultural studies has become like poetry that constructs itself out of the texts that surround, or even drown, it. I would like to see an evocatory, empirical cultural studies reflectively embedded in the practice of everyday life. I therefore insist upon the importance of listening attentively to other voices than the voices of social and cultural theorists, and to do it 'in whatever ways it is possible to "recover" them',

... not because they themselves are more true than dominant subject-positions, but because they have the right to be heard, and heard where possible in their own words. More significantly, we need to listen to such voices because they sometimes speak against the grain of subject-positions assigned from 'outside', because they are then in some way resistant to the dominant definition of those subject positions, and strain against the power-lines that run through identity and experience. (Pickering, 1997: 211-212)

Hence, to listen to other voices, to study what Paul Willis in a forthcoming book calls 'Life as Art' and use 'cultural study as its record', is not the same thing as taken expressed experience and self-consciousness for granted. 'It is a starting point; it constitutes a problem, not an answer', and to listen to 'the voices of history's many others' is at the same time to 'cross-examining what they say and deconstructing the categories by which they have been mediated' (Pickering, 1997: 212). Of course, 'experience is inevitably contaminated by ideology', but that does not mean that it is 'equivalent to it' (1997: 227). To argue that women's or men's experiences is nothing but existing structures of power is 'a circular and closed system of understanding' (1997: 228). Theorists holding these views create theoretical understandings from subject-positions within the field of cultural studies that needs to be challenged by other subject-position in the field outside the world and language games of cultural studies. To paraphrase E.P. Thompson: no one can 'speak' until they have been 'heard' (1978: 222-223). It goes for social and cultural actors in common culture(s) as well as for cultural studies representatives as meaning-makers in their lived culture.

Theory and theoretical informed methodology

Books are not 'alive'. At best, they are reminders of what excellent thinking is like, but they certainly cannot think. Often, however, so great is their prestige that they actually lull pupils into forgetfulness of the activity of mind that is education's real goal, teaching them to be passively reliant on written words.

(Martha C. Nussbaum)

Let me draw a couple of quotations from two sociologists, Pierre Bourdieu and Gerard Delanty, and one cultural studies representative, Stuart Hall. In *The rules of art*, Bourdieu writes:

I have never had much taste for 'grand theory', and when I read works which might enter into that category, I cannot stop myself from feeling a certain irritation before a typically scholastic combination of false audacity and true carefulness. I could reproduce here dozens of those pompous and almost empty sentences, which often finish with a disparate enumeration of proper names followed by dates, a humble procession of the ethnologists, sociologists or historians who have furnished the 'grand theoretician' with the substance of his meditation, and who bring him, as a tribute, the proofs of 'positivity' indispensable to the new academic respectability. (1996: 177)

What then is Bourdieu's alternative?

... I delight in those books in which theory, because it is the air one breathes, is everywhere and nowhere – in the detour of a note, in the commentary of an old text, or in the very structure of interpretative discourse. I feel completely at home with those authors who know how to infuse the most decisive theoretical questions into a meticulously conducted empirical study, and who give concepts a usage that is both modest and more aristocratic, sometimes going as far as to conceal their own contribution within a creative reinterpretation of theories which are immanent in their object. (1996: 178)

To argue that the empirical has intrinsic value is of course not to argue that we as researchers and cultural analysts do not need theory. We cannot avoid theory because 'the empirical' is, and can not be anything other than, theory-laden. As researchers, we can not go out in the field and expect 'the truth' to simply blow into our minds because it is out there waiting for us. We need theory to open up certain perspectives, questions and 'hidden' dimensions, but this is not enough. To me, 'the empirical' means 'to identify, record and analyse 'ordinary' human creativity, its openness and unpredictability, in context' and to look for 'the potentials of the method to produce "surprise": new knowledge not pre-figured in, and a basis for refinement and reformulation of, starting out theoretical positions' (Willis & Trondman, 1998). I would like to argue

that 'theoretically informed' ethnographic writing has a crucial role to play in reshaping theory and in finding accommodations between, as well as forging new lines and directions from, the classic and the new social theorists. 'Experience, as we know', the American pragmatist William James writes, 'has ways of *boiling over*, and making us correct our present formulas' (1978: 106). Hence the empirical is dependent on, but not tied to theory (Eriksson, 1997; Trondman, 1997).

In doing cultural studies, we need 'the methodology of the double surprise' (Willis & Trondman, 1998). We need the work of theory to make explicit certain aspects of 'reality', 'lived cultures' and 'identities', and we need 'the empirical' and the experiential and its ways of 'boiling over' and counter-penetrating 'colonizing and self-satisfied theoretical discourses'. To me, 'the empirical' is the part of the double surprise that is most needed, the one that carries the intrinsic value. I am talking about, to quote Bourdieu, 'the active aspect' of 'practical knowledge', which is needed if one wants to challenge 'the mental structures of intellectuals', structures that prevent them from conceiving 'a practical knowledge or knowledgeable practice' (1996: 179).

There is not and can never be a 'theory for theory's sake' (like art for art's sake), because that kind of theory is nothing but a theory for a certain social group experiencing 'their' theory as theory for its own sake. If it was possible to create a theory just for its own sake it would be a theory without meaning, because meaning cannot exist in itself outside context and without interpreters. On the other hand, people in 'common cultures' do not need theory to create meanings that make sense of their everyday life. Cultural analysis, however, is in need of theory, at least if it wants to work according to 'the logic of the double surprise'. This ought to be the logic of empirical cultural studies, at the core of the development of an empirical re-turn within cultural studies. This means avoiding both 'pure' empiricism and discourses which risk colonizing the empirical (Cavicchi, 1998). A theoretically informed methodology can serve as a corrective and an antidote to both of these positions.

It is my opinion that the creativity and messiness of the nitty gritty of real life can never be fully covered by theory, but theory is nevertheless still needed to create the kind of 'analytic points' that can communicate 'new horizons' to the actors of lived cultures. To me, a cultural studies without an empirical interest is a project stricken with impairment.

Social relevance and theoretical informed methodology

Historians such as Herodotus gathered data about populations of many kinds in order to reflect about political values.

(Martha C. Nussbaum)

A theoretically informed methodology is also closely connected to the question of social relevance. In his book *Social science: Beyond constructivism and realism* (1998), the sociologist Gerard Delanty argues that the crisis of social sciences is no longer one of methodology. Rather, 'it is one of the very social relevance of social science':

The malaise of social science today is not the decline in high quality social research, (...), but derives from the failure of social science to mediate its professional culture with the public commitments of intellectual culture. (1998: 1)

To the role of 'intellectual culture' I would like to add the role of common culture(s), and at the same time raise the following question: Has the type of knowledge produced by disciplines like sociology and cultural studies become irrelevant to society? 'Never before have there been so many tenured university academics in the social sciences, yet their actual public influence has never been so weak' (1998: 2). There are questions that need to be answered: Where are the sociologists and the cultural studies people today? What is our self-understanding as professionals? Is the sociologist Peter Wagner right when he claims that many of us have found comfort in the social sciences' retreat from the public, and that a large number of us 'feel rather relieved under the present condition' (Wagner, 1994: 147).

It is my opinion that theoretically informed empirical studies offer better chances to make the task of social relevance possible. It has to go to the lived culture's of others; it has to listen to the heteroglossia of lived cultures, it needs to understand the lived from the point of view of those who live it; it has to involve its own self-understanding into the cultural analysis; it can not avoid existential questions; it will probably see new horizons; it will probably feel obliged to tell others outside the field about the discoveries, experiences and analytic points that it makes through its use of 'productive' and changeable theories; and it will at least have a chance to move into the political, since it knows something about the concrete practices and understandings in everyday life. By doing so it will know something of worth about the possibilities and constraints of life as it is lived outside the field of academia. In the end I would argue that it could even start believing, to quote the American philosopher Martha C. Nussbaum, that 'reason has a special dignity that lifts it above the play of forces' (1997: 38).

Life experiences and theoretical informed methodology

The knower is an actor, and coefficient of the truth on one side, while on the other he registers the truth which he helps to create.
(William James)

The tension between the theoretical and the lived is also often recognized when academics reflect their own life trajectories as individuals. Listen to Stuart Hall giving the following deeply personal and sincere, and at the same time theoretical, reflections of his own life experiences in an interview made by Kuan-Hsing Chen about Hall's early years in Jamaica:

I am telling you this story because it was very important for my personal development. It broke down forever, for me, the distinction between the public and the private self. I learned about culture, first, as something which is deeply subjective and personal, and at the same moment, as a structure you live. I could see that all these strange aspirations and identifications which my parents projected onto us, their children, destroyed my sister. She was the victim, the bearer of the contradictory ambitions of my parents in this colonial situation. From then on, I could never understand why people thought these structural questions were not connected with the psychic – with emotions and identifications and feelings because, for me, those structures are things you live. I don't just mean they are personal, they are, but they are also institutional, they have real structural properties, they break you, destroy you. (Hall 1996: 488)

In his answer, it is possible to see the dialectic between the 'theoretical', the cultural and structural analysis, and 'the lived'. Without the 'lived' the theoretical would be empty, and without theoretical understanding the 'lived' would have nevertheless been understood and dealt with. I guess, as in my life, that Hall would never accept the idea that 'structural properties', that which breaks you down, is considered to be 'pure' theory for theory's sake. The lived, 'obvious' as it is, has intrinsic value that can not be reduced to theory. And it is the same no matter if we are talking about the empirical, the social relevance of science or the deeply personal. We are in all three cases in need of a theoretically informed methodology, and we can all still surprise the field of cultural studies. The name of the game is 'the empirical re-turn' – an empirical but not empiricist cultural studies. We will only have a chance to solve our social issues and personal problems if we see them as practical and 'real', as empirical problems, and not solely as semiotic signs.

A Bakhtinian epilogue

'All attempts to force one's way from inside the theoretical world and into Being-as-event are quite hopeless' (Bakhtin, 1993: 12). Bakhtin understood that 'all accounts of acts fundamentally differ from those acts as they are actually performed' (Holquist, 1993: xii). But despite that insight, Bakhtin kept on trying to seek the act itself. He knew that it was impossible to escape theory, 'because any opposition to theory is itself ineluctably

theoretical' (Holquist, 1993: xii). Still, he accepted the chasm between 'lived act' and the 'same act as representation', which never could be the same as the act itself. The chasm between the 'lived' and its account was for Bachtin 'a lack in being, a hole in the fabric of the world' (Holquist, 1993: xiii). To me, cultural studies concerns the possibilities and responsibilities to bridge but never close that gap in being. It could never be seen as an a priori, but only as something which carries the possibility of boiling over while seeking 'a synthesis between sensibility (the "lived act") and reason (our discursive systems accounting for, or giving meaning to the act, a world always open to the danger of falling into mere "theoreticism")' (Holquist, 1993: xii).

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Workshop discussions

This is a personal account of the discussions at the Advancing Cultural Studies workshop, held at Södergarn Conference Centre, Lidingö near Stockholm, Sweden, 4-5 February, 1999. The summary is organized into a series of themes. I hope that my selection, formulation and ordering of the discussion has not left out or distorted too much of what was actually said. It ought perhaps to be added that the actual workshop talks also included reformulations of central parts of many of the written statements, which have not been repeated here. The discussion summary here therefore in itself gives no true picture of the workshop, but must be read in conjunction with these statements.

The debate may roughly be divided into two main sections. One is concerned the present state, problems and needs of the cultural studies field in general, including its relations to disciplines and those between its various national traditions. The other is more strategically focused on the idea of a new, advanced research institute (an Advanced Cultural Studies Institute of Sweden, ACSIS), how to motivate it and what it should do.

Cultural studies and disciplinarity

According to Simon Frith, *cultural studies* today is everywhere, with a strong presence that all cultural researchers need to be aware of. However, it is not in itself a discipline. It works mainly through 'othering', both by finding other cultures to contrast the dominant with and by functioning as a critique of other disciplines, so that it must itself change as they change. This has three problematic implications. (1) In terms of pedagogy, university work is tied up with teaching, but cultural studies does not make sense as an undergraduate discipline, since it presupposes disciplinary knowledge to criticize. (2) In terms of research methods, the best cultural studies is a critique of other people's research, but empirical research is necessary for getting research funds. (3) In terms of political responsibility and policy issues, there is mostly a national and state interest motivation behind research grants, and lately non-academic uses of research have been increasingly emphasized, while the importance of academics in the intellectual and cultural debate has diminished. Researchers should therefore become more active in the public debate, and make a greater impact on agenda setting in society.

Johan Fornäs, Mats Trondman and others also stressed that cultural studies is not a discipline of its own, but rather an analytical perspective that may be put into work in all disciplines. Interdisciplinary cultural studies needs a continuous interplay with *the disciplines*. In general, some hinted at cultural studies as a refuge from marginalized or alienated scholars, as there seems to be most enthusiasm for cultural studies at disciplinary boundaries, but Ulf Hannerz did not find it at all necessary that an involvement in cultural studies must imply any marginalization from disciplinary currents within the university departments. As Trondman noted, some researchers move out of their disciplines into cultural studies, others bring it into their disciplines, with implications for the development of careers and power positions in the field. Peter Dahlgren argued that it would be just wonderful if an advanced cultural studies institute could be launched, but was more doubtful whether one should strive for regular cultural studies departments. Cultural studies competes with other networks and anchorings, and demands that we develop dual identities. Sven-Eric Liedman asked if a field like cultural studies can remain interdisciplinary or will eventually be pushed into disciplinarity. Outsiders in Swedish academia provoke reactions. Some disciplines see cultural studies as a cuckoo in the nest, threatening to throw out the other birds. Others state that 'cultural studies belongs to us', claiming it as their territory. Billy Ehn's experience from interdisciplinary ventures indicates that many problems have to be solved, as people are often afraid of losing their academic identities. Orvar Löfgren agreed that interdisciplinary openness is a power game, so that we have to deal with some other disciplines that might feel threatened and guard their boundaries.

Janice Radway thought that disciplinarity is very powerful in the U.S., working for instance through the pressure to get tenure appointments, where journalistic or archival work is not counted as a merit. However, Ulf Hannerz and Karin Becker have both found the American academia much more open to interdisciplinary initiatives, compared to the Swedish academic world, which is extremely disciplined and impermeable. Arne Jarrick questioned this pessimism, seeing the 'Tema' departments at Linköping University and the current of mental history as examples of interdisciplinarity in Sweden. Simon Frith mentioned that in Britain also, interdisciplinary applications tend to fall between chairs in research councils.

Karin Becker argued that in the U.S., there are more combinations of academic cultural research and *aesthetic practice*. Such combinations are often problematic and conflictual, but may well create an atmosphere of fruitful exchange. Simon Frith mentioned that in Britain, cultural studies has had a particularly great impact in art schools, which may be a speci-

fically British phenomenon. One problem may be that when it comes to assessments, it is not clear whether practical aesthetic productions count as research or not.

Britt-Marie Thurén recognized sort of a cultural studies tradition within *social anthropology*, that often sees itself as precisely a study of cultures. Both the disciplines and special meeting-places with 'coffee-room' functions are needed: just like in women's or gender studies, we have to walk on two legs here. Ulf Hannerz thought that cultural studies could offer anthropological studies of 'other cultures' more consistent manners of comparing cultures. Marianne Gullestad saw anthropology's contribution to cultural studies as an emphasis on culture as always embodied. In the reverse direction, cultural studies may connect what is elsewhere separated, and also inspire researchers to go against the bias against (close readings of) texts that sometimes exists in anthropology. In Lena Hammergren's view, the disciplines may use cultural studies as a tool to clarify and rethink basic concepts. She also found the idea of embodied experience crucial, captured not least through ethnographic fieldwork. Kirsten Drotner made the observation that important convergences have recently appeared in many disciplines, for instance between ethnographic traditions, textual analysis and media studies, in efforts to develop new ways of theorizing globalization, local/global-relations and everyday life. Such convergences create a need for cultural studies as an cross-disciplinary arena. However, Frith warned that ethnography has often been taken up by media studies too naively, as a way to catch immediate 'reality'.

As for *history*, Sven-Eric Liedman argued that cultural studies' key problems are not localized to any specific period; it is not basically constituted by the historical perspective, even though it may sometimes bring it in. Pertti Alasuutari questioned this divide between history and cultural studies, with E.P. Thompson, Raymond Williams and Michel Foucault as key cultural studies figures clearly orientated towards a kind of social history. As Arne Jarrick stated, we can now choose how we institute cultural studies here in Sweden, and actually decide to include history as constitutive if we want.

Anders Öhman agreed with Lisbeth Larsson in deploring the present backlash against cultural studies within Swedish departments of *literature*, in the form of a more esoteric movement back to Harold Bloom, the high arts and pure aesthetics, and a strong resistance towards new feminist and postcolonialist ideas. This is the sign of a discipline in crisis.

Many asked for a discussion of the positive identity and attraction of cultural studies. What is the 'magic' of the word 'cultural studies', compared to 'cultural research' and the like? Ove Sernhede defined cultural

studies as a response to the post-war wave of cultural modernization. Its 'magic' lies in its focus on identity and culture in *transformation*. It is more an approach and a field of research than a discipline, and not just an internal academic enterprise, but also an ethos, a *critical* project related to the social world outside of academia. Peter Dahlgren also saw cultural studies as essentially a critical project, criticizing society as well as other academic traditions, even if it might be hard to go to a research funder with such a critical identity, keeping critical ideals while still hoping to receive support. Kirsten Drotner asked what cultural studies can feed back into the disciplines, and saw one crucial task in avoiding esotericism by confronting questions from the general public about urgent issues concerning popular culture and everyday life. This reminds of the 1970s, when feminists brought up precisely these issues of accountability to the civil society! Lisbeth Larsson and Karin Becker agreed that studies of representations are central to cultural studies, but debated their relations to otherness and power. To Becker, cultural studies must always emphasize how representations are authorized by power and scrutinize its own relations to the 'others' studied, in order to avoid these 'others' to become exoticized. Larsson argued for a combination of interpretations of representations and studies of their implied power structures, and believed that studying others may usefully move us out into the margins of our own contexts. She was supported by Marianne Gullestad, who urged us to be able to read without suspicion, and not always be outsiders in relation to what we study. Why is critique so important? There is no (or should not be any) definite epistemological break between everyday knowledge and academic knowledge. The continuities between people's reflections and our theories force us to build on the knowledge people already have, and reach them, not attack them.

Drotner suggested that the empirical field of cultural studies may possibly be defined as all those issues that cannot be studied by any single discipline in isolation, for instance the interplay between different media. Jarrick asked about the limits of cultural studies, concerning issues like postmodernism, intentionalism, referentialism, essentialism and reductionism. This triggered off a discussion with Trondman on constructivism and realism, asking whether meaning exists outside of discourse and whether there is any objective reality we all can agree on. Another debate, including Trondman, Fornäs, Larsson and others, concerned the relations between textual interpretations and studies of lived experience. Both are needed, but in dialogue with each other. Textual interpretations need to be contextualized, but ethnography needs textual analysis, too. The return to real lived experience from poststructuralist textualism has good reasons, but risks throwing the baby out with the bathwater.

Gullestad, Becker and Radway argued for new alliances with a wide range of countries, including the South or Third world, not only the West. Scholars from there should be invited to work with us. Nordic cultural studies communities are peripheral in relation to the U.S.-U.K. centre, but by uniting with other peripheries, they could make a strong international impact in the field, so that '*peripheries speak back*' to the centre. Orvar Löfgren also wanted more French and German contacts, to create a space for new encounters. However, Frith warned against too simple stereotypical dualisms of centre/periphery, since there are important differences within each region as well, between the positions of individual researchers in relation to the international field.

This relates to problems of *publishing* research. Radway pointed at the centralization of media and publishers, where a handful of firms today control the academic market, preventing the more interesting work to be published. Some problems are much greater for researchers outside the U.S./U.K. axis. The publishing business is certainly ethnocentric in terms of language. Many agreed that Nordic research has difficulties reaching out internationally. Fornäs thought the problems for Nordic researchers to get published and read internationally have to do with their choice of empirical subjects (Nordic issues are automatically defined as marginal by the international market), but also with their range of theoretical references, which often seem not to fit into British and American discussions, while they may well be met much more favourably in other Nordic or European contexts. According to Drotner, culture is always specific, so that we can never share everything in terms of interests or contextual competence in cultural studies. Most English books are about transnationalized phenomena, and have problems of tackling the concreteness of culture. She also mentioned the limitations in our own teaching, where we should make greater effort to use non-U.S./U.K. examples on cultural phenomena to analyse. Nordic researchers must become better at reading and making references to non-English books. As Trondman put it, all English publishers seem to follow slavishly the same intellectual trends all the time, but we also buy our books in the same trendy way, thus getting the picture back as authors that we as consumers sent out.

A constructive proposal from Radway was to produce an anthology to enable students globally to understand the various regional traditions within cultural studies, which might be interesting also to American audiences. Becker pointed at the need among publishers for books on methodology as a niche for us to enter. Gullestad argued that we should build on grounded knowledge, thus doing something radically different than in British cultural studies. Alasuutari also found writing and theory

based on close reading and empirical material crucial, and already discusses with Sage publishers starting an empirical cultural studies book series. This is a response to the problem mentioned by Frith, that publishers generally only publish textbooks, never monographs, which gives rise to a boringly endless reiteration of theories. Even though publishers prioritize textbooks, Alasuutari thought that it is monographs that actually make an impact and make people famous.

Orvar Löfgren proposed to discuss knowledge production first and marketing later. Better than sobbing over the lack of U.S. and U.K. interest in *Nordic cultural studies* is to discuss what we have to offer. We might have specific assets in the welfare state, more egalitarian gender relations, and other kinds of race relations than elsewhere. Cultural studies lends itself both to extreme globalization and to extreme national specificity, and Löfgren asked for studies on how theories travel and local traditions develop. Why have certain Nordic styles and themes of cultural studies developed, for instance around alcohol in Finland or youth culture in Sweden? What happens when cultural studies travels through such local networks?

Löfgren continued by asking where and when is cultural studies. It must be localized in space, but also in time. People enter and exit cultural studies at varying sociocultural moments, which gives it different meanings and functions for shifting generations of researchers. Drotner added that not fitting into disciplines and wanting to break out of rigid institutional frameworks may be a generational experience, specific to those that entered academia in the 1970s. Students today have other needs, changing the condition for cultural studies. As Thurén noted, the growing institutionalization of cultural studies can be compared to the experience of gender studies, where there is also this new second generation of students with other frames of reference.

The ACSIS proposal

A wide and strong support was afforded the ACSIS idea. Radway, Hannerz and Ehn agreed that the moment for cultural studies has definitely not passed. This very moment is instead a perfect time for Sweden to firmly 'enter' the cultural studies field and thereby contribute in important ways to its international development. Hannerz hoped that due to its historical records, Sweden can perhaps globally serve as a particularly 'friendly', non-threatening site for cultural studies. Becker, Dahlgren, Ehn, Jarrick, Johansson, Larsson, Reimer, Sernhede and Trondman belonged to those who expressed strong support for the ACSIS as a splen-

did idea that should really be launched at this historical moment; in fact, no voices at all were raised against it! Established ways of thinking in many humanities and social sciences disciplines in Sweden are now in a crisis, as these are either dissolving or retreating back into some traditional kernel, as Larsson put it. This is therefore definitely the moment to do it! Or, in Dahlgren's words: 'Why wait if you have a good idea?'

Beckman, Hannerz, Hjärpe, Jarrick and Löfgren all thought that the crucial argument for ACSIS is not that there are academics that won't fit into the ordinary disciplines, but rather that there are perspectives and issues neglected by the disciplines today, and people competent for addressing them. Fairly clear-cut *empirical research areas* must be defined, that are not yet researched or organized academically, but are relevant to society today and tomorrow. We must formulate good arguments why ACSIS would bring competence to Sweden and export Swedish work into the world, and exemplify with possible appetizing research programmes. Dahlgren believed that a good support for the ACSIS idea could perhaps be built up by forming links to the *policy arena*, where cultural policy might be both a strategic point and also useful for developing the content of the institute. It should aim to generate concrete knowledge about the cultural field, with results relevant to policy issues. Trondman's experiences from Växjö show that politicians and administrators look for something new, in response to the failures of traditional cultural policies and the cultural sector. They would prefer something more policy-related rather than prestigious elite institutes with top figures. We should pragmatically listen to them but keep the privilege to decide our own agenda. The argument that 'cultural studies is everywhere', its internationalization and globalization, may well be an effective argument for not letting Sweden lag behind, which hits a weak spot among politicians. One must also stress its interdisciplinary inclusion of both the humanities and the social sciences. As new generations in society and academia now move it into interesting new areas, they need competent teachers, and ACSIS could serve as a meeting place for such teachers in various areas, and thus as a resource for education, as well as for doctoral students in many disciplines. We must walk on two legs, since the pragmatic studies asked for by politicians need to be nourished by the intellectual free spaces researchers tend to wish for.

The new interdisciplinary convergences observed by Drotner create a need for *open meeting places* for people researching interesting new issues. An ACSIS is therefore welcome, and ought not have too strict frames, in order to enable unexpected encounters and innovative research. By concrete collaborative projects and discussions, it may also heighten the quality of interdisciplinary research, and counteract too sloppy borrow-

ings from other traditions, like between ethnography, media studies and textual analysis. We have to make strategic compromises, but Drotner wanted us to avoid getting caught in the trap created by the dilemma that funders want fixities, but research needs dynamics. The balance between basic research and policy issues has to be carefully rethought. There is a risk to become too strategic, and thereby losing the central driving force of ACSIS. If it cannot be established by its own force, it would have to fall rather than to be transformed into what politicians want it to be. One should avoid promising politicians to solve their problems.

Thomas Johansson also called for new encounters that make new ideas appear, in joint research projects, with shared questions. Liedman and Trondman also wanted to avoid fixing too narrow themes permanently, but leave them open to change over time, in response to changing needs in society and academia, and wide enough for the institute to function as an 'advanced coffee-room' for all positions in the field. Larsson also warned that the ACSIS must not be too much closed, and not waste too much time trying to be useful to everyone, to meet the needs of others. It must primarily be relevant to scholars! Radway warned against the tendency to see reflexivity as navel-gazing: it is at the heart of cultural studies. We should nourish what is produced in the spaces where our trajectories cross, and make continuous comparisons between methods and perspectives. Though acknowledging a tendency towards theoreticism, and a need for empirical grounding, Dahlgren stressed the need also for intellectual reflections - on the tensions between quantitative and qualitative studies, academia and society, etc. We must have some tolerance for such tensions, not close the field too soon, but create late modern theories that allow us to cope with ambivalence. In the present humanities backlash against interdisciplinary, critical and contemporary cultural studies, Öhman found an ACSIS necessary today for defending and legitimating these research interests and empowering those who have now hard times in their home disciplines. The network aspect of an institute is therefore important. It should not only deal with issues of popular culture and everyday life, but also with those art genres and practices the aesthetic disciplines have traditionally dealt with, only with other methods and perspectives.

A double strategy was suggested by Pertti Alasuutari, who distinguished between two agendas. Between ourselves, we have to discuss what is cultural studies, and what constitutes its importance for us. Legitimating cultural studies to non-academics demands a different language. Svante Beckman continued on this line by stating that the looser the profile of ACSIS, the easier to get support in academia, but the harder to get money. An institutional structure stronger and more

focused than the SCASSS (cf. below) is probably needed in order to get support. One should move relatively fast, and widen the range of possible allies and sources of support at an early stage. We should try to get the blessings of the Swedish Council for Research in the Humanities and Social Sciences but not expect them to finance anything as big as ACSIS from their too small budget. The Bank of Sweden Tercentenary Foundation would probably be willing to create something like ACSIS. We must also make sure of getting support directly from the state department of culture as well as that of education. The Swedish Council of Culture (Kulturrådet) has expressed an interest in establishing a cultural research centre, in order to support needs in public cultural institutions. The 'navel-gazing' reflexivity may also fit into a societal-political wish to defend traditional conceptions of academia as a reflective oasis, as argued in the state report Research 2000 (Forskning 2000), which is in favour of research institutes independent of the university structure. This spring, there is an earlier unexpected scope to argue for a space for intra-intellectual reflexivity.

Martin Kylhammar, who did not manage to participate in the workshop, wrote a statement in Swedish that is not included in this report. He strongly emphasized the obvious lack of innovative and well-funded research institutes in the cultural field. Such an institute could deliver knowledge and ideas of use to cultural politics. He saw an ideological delay in the prevalent view of cultural research as less important to long-term societal development than technical research. In spite of the wide acceptance of the fact that our Western society shifts its centre of gravity from material to cultural production, the term 'culture' still often signals old traditions or rather peripheral epiphenomena, rather than the urgent new issues of our time. This view is challenged by the recent U.N.-related initiatives on culture and development, but still, in Sweden, much remains to be done. The conclusions for research policy still needs to be drawn, and an ACSIS may be one important step in that direction. Kylhammar hoped that one day the concept of culture will in Swedish politics and debate be associated with modernity, progress and development.

Several key *themes* were suggested for ACSIS to explore. Some such themes could be selected for two-year periods, to be focused in research projects, seminars, conferences and doctoral courses. Changing generations not only transform students' and researchers' relations to cultural studies, but also their thematic interests motivated by new times in society. Ove Sernhede stressed theories of cultural *modernization* and transformation, in that peculiarly Nordic cross-fertilization of German, British and French critical traditions that was so fruitful in the Swedish network

for youth culture research from the early 1980s on. Just like Dahlgren, Drotner and Becker in the earlier discussion on the importance of *critical* perspectives, Thomas Johansson and Bo Reimer wanted the ACSIS to keep up a responsible critique of society, looking at relevant social problems, participating in cultural life and staying close to the creative processes in society. On this crucial issue of social relevance, intervention and commitment, Britt-Marie Thurén argued that much can be learned from feminism, and that just like gender studies is a larger research area than feminism, perhaps studies of culture or cultural research in general may be regarded as a wider area than cultural studies in the more critical sense of the ACSIS proposal. Marianne Gullestad added that if we want relevance, we must reflect on who we work for, building bridges to people's everyday knowledge. In a statement not included here, Sven-Eric Liedman discussed the history and present use of the concept of solidarity, in political thought and social theory. He found that while classical solidarity was an issue of mutual, material support, today, there is a tendency to see it as a one-sided question of often sentimental feelings of empathy. Studying such rather alarming changes is a worthy subject for cultural studies. In the discussion, he called for studies of 'new Swedes' immigrants. Jan Hjärpe observed that immigration has made Islam an increasingly non-exotic part of young people's experience in Sweden. Karin Becker also wanted more research on immigrant cultures, including young people's language uses.

Becker noted that a place where *art practice* could join academic research does not yet exist in Sweden. Could the ACSIS also be such a place, exploring the borders of aesthetic practices? It might then connect with the joint arts campus to be formed in Stockholm, and to research on museums, display and performance. Becker proposed as a key theme the sociology of work in the cultural sector, the lived experience of cultural work ('kulturarbete'), including the media. Liedman wanted interfaces between technology and art or design. Beckman and Edström saw a need for a scientific superstructure for the training programmes in arts and crafts, in response to the difficulties in transgressing the borders between academia and art/design. Interdisciplinary faculties with such profiles are now being constructed in Swedish universities like Malmö, Göteborg and Stockholm, and they need to be served intellectually. A strong argument for ACSIS are the fast changes in the cultural sector in terms of its economic importance that have made cultural production increasingly central in societal and economic life. Löfgren called for more studies of the sociology of work in *cultural production*, including the production of 'events' by the whole 'industry of experience' ('upplevelseindustrin'): popular culture, media and tourism. This would additionally offer a good

economic argument for cultural studies, since this industry is rapidly growing and too little studied. Radway liked the idea of focusing upon the production of culture(s) and the cultures of production. So did Edström, arguing for the changing experience of culture as its very core. Hammergren supported the cultural production theme and also proposed the theme of embodiment as well fit for transdisciplinary and cooperative projects on performance etc. Drotner pledged for a renewed analysis of the notion of the audience and people's cultural workings, including multimedia productivity and the new convergence between everyday cultural production and media forms. Alasuutari proposed three research areas that shed new light on cultural production: (1) The production and reception of cultural products in art and mass culture; (2) Culture as a way of life or a mentality; (3) Globalization, national identity and the role of culture in nation-state building. Thurén mentioned critically reflexive studies, for instance of the relations between cultural studies and feminism.

In Swedish universities, scholars drown in teaching and administration, and need to get time and space for theoretical reflection and empirical studies, which Jarrick hoped that a research institute could offer, as a kind of '*coffee-room*' haven. Dahlgren and others found the advanced research level particularly fit for the cultural studies perspective, for people with a strong disciplinary identity. The ACSIS could then support courses, centres and other initiatives on the undergraduate and graduate levels as well, where it might perhaps not be so wise to construct any new discipline. Based on his experiences from the new university college in Malmö, Reimer thought that cultural studies may actually function also on an undergraduate level, as a critical-reflexive starting-point for media and art studies, though not as a discipline of its own. ACSIS should supportively interact with a whole range of other cultural studies initiatives, on various levels. Liedman warned that a too strong stress on 'advanced' studies could be harmful by prioritizing middle-aged white men who are 'advanced' in their academic career, which would be far too limited. There should be ways to include younger and not so established scholars, too. Drotner referred to the historical precedence in feminism and women's studies, where there was also a double strategy of building separate centres and integrate in the disciplines. Continuity was effected through teaching. The ACSIS should also walk on both legs, and connect to other regional centres with students. It must not operate alone, but in conjunction with other kinds of activities. Larsson also pledged for learning from women's studies, that have in Sweden successfully taking necessary confrontations and formed separate organizations that made

themselves clearly visible, while continuing to work inside the disciplines as well.

Finally, the structure and *organization* of a new institute was also touched upon. Ulf Hannerz considered the ACSIS as an attractive follow-up of earlier support for interdisciplinary cultural research by the research councils, not least the comparative cultural research programme launched for some years around 1990 by the Swedish Council for Research in the Humanities and Social Sciences, (HSFR). The Swedish Collegium for Advanced Study in the Social Sciences (SCASSS) in Uppsala is another important model for ACSIS to study. It is built on two main layers: (a) a durable *staff* coordinating longer-term research *projects*; (b) a *coffee-room* function with *visiting fellows*. Its research is then funded in the ordinary way. Nobody decides in advance what people should do for the institute. However, it is important to combine an institute with dense and active *networking*. It could organize graduate *courses* or interdisciplinary 'research schools' ('forskarskolor'), but should not have its own full Ph.D. programme, since this would only raise the potentially dangerous objection that it would impoverish the ordinary departments. Becker agreed that ACSIS should not be a degree-awarding programme but an institute, outside of the university structure, working as a trans-discipline, with several ongoing *seminars* and researchers located there for a time. One seminar series could deal with current issues in the cultural studies field, another with issues of cultural studies pedagogy, in connection with educational programmes outside ACSIS. Drotner expressed the great responsibility of ACSIS, that would be the only institute of its kind in the Nordic countries. It should organize some Ph.D. courses of its own, and help generating money for Ph.D. programmes in cultural studies elsewhere. Alasuutari also approved of doctoral courses run in English, like those sponsored by the Nordic Council through NorFA, and saw applications for a research programme as a crucial step. Drotner proposed to also attract people from outside Sweden, working on two years *themes* rather than in regular research projects. Peter Dahlgren summed up that ACSIS should include *fellowships, research* (in programmes and projects financed the ordinary way through research councils), teaching (maybe one doctoral course every year), *networking* (web sites, e-mail lists and newsletters for researchers and teachers), '*outreach*' (public events, debates, lectures for invited groups of people, like politicians or artists), a *think-tank* (with commissioned studies as an interface with decision makers) and *publishing*.

In order to further develop and anchor the ACSIS proposal, a *planning* year is useful, with new meetings during the autumn, to discuss the

choice of themes, activities and organization, aiming at getting an optimized ACSIS model started.

Advancing cultural studies in Sweden: The ACSIS proposal

Statement for the international workshop 'Advancing Cultural Studies' at Södergarn Conference Centre, Lidingö near Stockholm, 4-5 February, 1999

By Johan Fornäs

This is a proposal for a new, national research unit with an international orientation – an 'Advanced Cultural Studies Institute of Sweden' (AC SIS). After being discussed at the international workshop Advancing Cultural Studies, it will have to be thoroughly worked through, in close communication with the relevant domestic and international scholars, before it is intended to end in an institute model that might have a good chance to be successfully realized. The following ideas ought therefore to be read as a most preliminary outline. Nevertheless, they may hopefully provide some useful general arguments and raise some interesting issues with relevance to the present situation and prospects of cultural studies as a global and interdisciplinary research field.¹

The proposal argues in a series of steps. It starts with *culture* as an increasingly central aspect and area in late modern societies. Next, it deals with *cultural studies* as a complex and dynamic response to these developments. Third, it discusses the actual and potential role of *Sweden* in relation to cultural studies. Finally, it outlines the possible structure and activities of a new research *institute*.

¹ An earlier version of this text was included in the workshop plan presented to the funding research councils in spring, 1998. It has later been reworked according to some of the ideas put forward at the workshop. Though I am the only responsible author of this proposal, it thus actually is kind of a collective product, emanating from a wider circuit of cultural researchers, to whom I am profoundly grateful for their inventiveness and generosity. It is my hope that this proposal will lead to concrete results that will to some extent pay these debts back to the research community, even though it is not practically possible in this context to give specific credits to every single individual whose ideas have been incorporated here.

Culture

Culture is today an inescapable keyword. Many have observed the increasing importance of culture to social and human life, and an intensified need for basic, advanced and interdisciplinary cultural research.

A series of late modern transformations have explicitly involved culture, making it less transparent and more central. Analysing cultural aspects of social and individual life has become an increasingly problematic and crucial task, as yet another wave of cultural modernization processes have highlighted both its centrality and its ambivalence. The recent UNESCO initiatives for global perspectives on culture and sustainable development belong to the many initiatives that have highlighted the centrality of culture to economics, politics, social relations, formations of identity and everyday life.²

The cultural sector, and cultural processes in general, have rapidly *expanded* in economic, political, social and subjective importance and sheer extent during the second half of this 20th century. In Swedish society, aesthetic production and the cultural industries today belong to the most rapidly growing economic sectors, and cultural processes are increasingly understood as crucial to people's sense of identity and community. This has made cultural research more important, here as elsewhere, in the form of studies of the high arts and classical cultural institutions, the media and popular culture, and the aesthetic practices of everyday life, as they all contribute to formations of values, meanings, ideologies, communities, identities and subjectivities.

A series of *new developments* in the cultural sphere have simultaneously imposed new demands on cultural research. They have given rise to a series of new and difficult crises and conflicts in society. Borders like those between national cultures, local/global, image/reality, fiction/fact, high/low or different art forms are all being crossed and problematized by accelerating late modern changes in the relations between state, market and civil society, by transformations in forms of socialization and identity work, by intensified global communication and migration, by emergent hybrid aesthetic genres and by new, digital multimedia.

² Cf. Knutsson (1998) and Kleberg (1998).

Cultural studies

All these transformations put *new demands on cultural research*. The social centrality and rapid transformations of culture call for analyses of new kinds. In order to promote innovative work of long-term relevance to the understanding of culture and cultural change, interdisciplinary cooperation and a dialogic interchange is needed. Recent developments in cultural research have opened up new frontiers, transgressing formerly rigid boundaries between disciplines and schools of thought. Such new currents have in their turn also fertilized and modernized the older traditions and disciplines.

During the last few decades, many scientific and scholarly disciplines have developed strong cultural branches, and cultural dimensions have gradually advanced into their general focus, in a 'cultural turn' that is parallel to a simultaneous 'culturalization' of economy, politics and everyday life. It has become increasingly crucial to the human sciences to map and interpret those complex symbolic forms that are anchored in texts and genres created and used by interacting human subjects in poly-dimensional contexts to produce meanings and identities.

The international current of *cultural studies* is a particularly important response to these challenges, with its aim of providing a better understanding of the impact of new cultural phenomena and thus of meeting current societal demands, while simultaneously offering invigorating new perspectives to both the humanities and the social sciences, by crossing the border between them. Its interdisciplinary practices facilitate analyses of cultural problematics that are too complex or dynamic to be tackled by any one single discipline, and are therefore today under-researched – such as those actualized by late modern globalization, migration, popular and everyday culture, digital communication, intermediality, aesthetic hybridization and power/identity-relations.

Cultural studies has grown as a response to the post-war wave of cultural modernization, renewing the impetus from interdisciplinary predecessors like the Frankfurt school of critical theory, while incorporating insights from other and more recent theories with which it is in vivid dialogue. It answers to several needs and contributes something new and unique:

(1) Cultural studies responds to emerging *new issues* raised in cultural life and cultural politics, concerning cultural policy, globalization, intermediality and the power/identity aspects of representations that relate to the changing cultural role of the state and the market as well as of class, gender, generation and ethnicity patterns. These urgent phenomena are

traditionally neglected in most ordinary disciplines, due to their specialization and tenacity.

(2) Cultural studies proves to be a fruitful way of *connecting disciplinary areas* in the human sciences into a strong, joint force of creative renewal, bridging tensions like those between humanities and social sciences, contemporary issues and historical perspectives, textual interpretation and ethnography of lived experience. It thus develops a multifarious range of critical theories, based on interpretive attitude, reflexivity and interdisciplinary cooperation.

Cultural studies is not the sum of all cultural and human sciences, nor their oppositional alternative. Instead of regarding it as a discipline of its own, it should preferably be understood as an analytical perspective that may be put into work in all disciplines, and thus as a specific interdisciplinary linkage between different traditions of cultural research. It connects academic disciplines and geographic areas in order to let the emergent cross-currents enrich old disciplines and develop new insights into multidimensional cultural processes. Cultural studies can feed back into the disciplines a will to avoid esotericism by confronting questions from the general public about urgent issues concerning popular culture and everyday life, connecting to feminist and other critical social and cultural research that strives to be accountable to civil society.

I will first discuss the development and differentiation of cultural studies as an international and interdisciplinary research field, and then – in spite of its polycentric openness – try to sum up some of its main constituting elements.

A polycentric and interdisciplinary field

The international field of interdisciplinary cultural studies is developing in a rapid pace.³ While expanding into new research areas, academic sites and world regions, it is itself being differentiated and transformed.⁴

³ Cf. Punter (1986), Brantlinger (1990), Turner (1990/1992), Mukerji & Schudson (1991), Grossberg et al. (1992), Jenks (1993), Storey (1993 and 1996), Adam & Allen (1995), Morley & Chen (1996), Cevalco (1997), du Gay et al. (1997), Redhead (1997), *Cultural Studies*, 10:2 (1996) and 14:2 (1998), *European Journal of Cultural Studies*, 1:1 (1998) or *International Journal of Cultural Studies*, 1:1 (1998) for U.K., U.S., Canadian, Australian and Brazilian perspectives and experiences.

⁴ Relevant examples of cultural studies perspectives partly inspired by the main British and American streams and partly critically alternative to them are found in Ehn & Löfgren (1982), Hannerz et al. (1982), Deichman-Sørensen & Frønes (1990), Alasuutari (1995), Fornäs (1995), Jacobsson & Lundgren (1997), Liedman (1997). Discussions of

Internal diversity and polydimensional connections rather than uniform closure characterize the field. Culture is studied critically, contextually and communicatively in multifarious ways, and cultural studies is a polysemic concept that serves multiple purposes in shifting contexts.

Nordic and Swedish versions of cultural studies have taken other shapes than their British and American counterparts, in processes of 'glocalization' that connect, widen, enrich and pluralize the field.⁵ The 'Birmingham' tradition remains inspiring, but is contested by alternative positions that emphasize other lines of thought. However, the very fact that a series of diverse cultural studies formations converge into one dialogic international field of cultural studies is an indication of its vital importance.

The chosen paths for cultural studies vary greatly between cultures and contexts, and the various intellectual and institutional formations of cultural studies worldwide therefore have encountered different problems and limitations, and have shifting needs. These shapes, needs and potentials of cultural studies in Sweden and globally have developed in close relation to other, neighbouring areas of research. The separate but converging and entwined roots of cultural studies continue to tinge the field differently in each specific geographic and disciplinary locality.

Some regional, national and local variants have reached international dominance, while others remain marginalized. The strong Anglo-American dominance, where 'international cultural studies' mostly includes only English-speaking nations, makes other geographical, linguistic or cultural world regions effectively invisible.⁶

These diverse but converging roots have created tensions and triggered off debates that are sometimes creative, sometimes paralyzing. Cultural studies' borders to other areas are often the sites of intense debate. Important developments have started with critical engagements with and/or inspiration from critical theory, modernity theory, symbolic inter-

Nordic and Swedish cultural studies can be found in *Cultural Studies*, 8:2(1994), *Kulturella perspektiv*, 3:3 (1994), Hannevik & Hastrup (1996), Hemmungs Wirtén & Peurell (1997), *Zenit*, 135-136 (1-2/1997) and Johansson et al. (1998).

⁵ On transnational cultural and intellectual flows, hybridity and glocalization as a combination of globalization and localization, cf. Hannerz (1992 and 1996), Gilroy (1993 and 1997), Featherstone et al. (1995) and Therborn (1995).

⁶ Almost all English texts in the field suffer from such Anglocentrism, including for instance the extremely biased list of resources in *Cultural Studies*, 12:4 (1998). However, those of us who write from a Nordic position also often tend to reproduce a similar blindness to our neighbour colleagues, in our efforts to connect to the hegemonic British and American discussions.

actionism, hermeneutics, deconstruction, psychoanalysis, feminist studies, postcolonial studies, social history, anthropology, cultural sociology, political economy and media studies, just to mention a handful of its edges.⁷

-Some tend to inscribe cultural studies in a postmodernist or poststructuralist agenda; others connect more to alternative sociological, aesthetical and philosophical views of late modernity or textual interpretation.

-Some researchers in the field focus upon contextual and intertextual interpretations of textual forms; others emphasize living ethnographic fieldwork.

-Some wish for more empirical studies to keep the links to urgent everyday and political issues alive; others call for more advanced theoretical work to avoid degenerating into a harmless playing ground in the academic margins.⁸

-Some stress political agency; others primarily value intellectual autonomy.

-Some believe that cultural studies may well be integrated into existing academic structures; others try to create new and unconventional institutional forms.

-Some want disciplinary institutionalization to warrant stability, resources and integration into academia; others warn against this and prefer independent 'anti-disciplinary' institutes.⁹

⁷ Examples of such border discussions are found in Donald (1991), Easthope (1991), Denzin (1992), Schwarz (1994), Miller (1994), Frow (1995), Jameson (1995), Kellner (1995), Curran et al. (1996), Larsson (1996), Lundgren (1997), McRobbie (1997), Pickering (1997), Ferguson & Golding (1997), Saukko (1998) and Radway (1998). A defence of cultural studies against attacks from political economy proponents is offered by David Morley in *Cultural Studies*, 12:4 (1998: 476ff).

⁸ Cf. Ted Striphas discussion of the relation between critical writing practices and institutional practices concerning policy, activism or pedagogy in *Cultural Studies*, 12:4 (1998: 455). Cf. also Jostein Gripsrud's appeal for more media policy interventionism in *European Journal of Cultural Studies*, 1:1 (1998: 83ff).

⁹ The issue of cultural studies' multi/trans/inter/anti-disciplinary institutionalization is a tricky one. Giroux et al. (1998) call for critical antidisciplinarity, but it can be questioned if cultural studies has not always been an academically institutionalized practice, and whether integration into the university system is really so much more devastating than other institutional forms. Tony Bennett in *Cultural Studies*, 12:4 (1998: 535) argues that cultural studies 'neither displaces disciplines nor integrates their partial findings into some higher-order, more complete knowledge. Rather, the role it has played [...] has been that of acting as an interdisciplinary clearing-house within the humanities, providing a useful interface at which the concerns of different disciplines, and of other interdisciplinary knowledges, can enter into fruitful forms of dialogue',

-Some are strongly anchored in local communities and policy making; others weave global networks.

-Some strive to resolve petrified parts of the cultural studies doxa and go for a critical renewal in hitherto untested domains; others defend certain of its basic foundational ideas and traditions against disarming dissolution.

These competing demands are mostly not as incompatible as they might first seem, but they need to be openly discussed, so that impro- ductive blockages and reductionisms can be counteracted. Continuous communication is therefore needed on problems that have arisen in different countries, disciplines and universities, needs still waiting to be fulfilled, and initiatives that have been or should be taken to spread, strengthen, coordinate or improve this research field.

Cultural studies is always localized in space, but also in time. People enter it at varying sociocultural moments, which gives it different meanings and functions for shifting generations of researchers. For some, it has been the experience of not fitting into traditional disciplines and wanting to break out of rigid institutional frameworks that made it an attractive refuge. Others look for theoretical renewal or societal responsibility. Its own growing institutionalization adds to societal transformations in creating new conditions for new generations of students and researchers with other frames of reference – just as has been the case in other research fields, such as gender studies.

The choice of the term ‘studies’ is therefore not arbitrary. It emphasizes the plurality and openness of research, a connectedness to everyday life forms of knowledge and interpretation, and an implicit scepticism towards building giant, unified thought castles. But it also connects to an internationally established academic current. Cultural studies has emerged as a specific set of distinct but interconnected and overlapping currents, interacting with other forms of cultural research or cultural analysis. It is not simply the sum of all cultural and human sciences, nor their competingly antithetical alternative. Cultural studies is not here seen as any closed discipline of its own, but can be thought of as a specific way to link such fields, or, more precisely, a dynamically and polycentrically evolving set of ways to link research that has been developed in many humanities and social science disciplines. In spite of its great variety, it is

thus performing the role ‘of both stimulating and managing certain kinds of intellectual traffic in the humanities’, and being ‘an interdisciplinary discipline’. In our context, it should be added that the social sciences must not be excluded from this model of what cultural studies has been and/or may become, even though (perspectives from) the humanities must play a defining role in its formation.

however not just any arbitrary interdisciplinary combination of humanities and social science research, but a set of linkages driven by certain strategic choices and preferences that emphasize those characteristics and aspects mentioned above.

In English language use, 'cultural studies' is usually treated as a term in singular. A more pluralistic perspective would favour the plural grammatical form that the words actually implies, were it not for the hegemonic dominance of a specific set of British and American traditions of cultural studies. I prefer to treat cultural studies as an interdisciplinary linkage or bridge between many different traditions of cultural research, none of which should possess monopolistic hegemony in the field.¹⁰

The fact that 'cultural studies' is already an internationally established concept is both an advantage and a problem. It offers a chance to connect to a global community of research, but it also demands a struggle to dissolve its closures and open ways to enter other viewpoints into the field and define it slightly different than in its established, hegemonic traditions. Anglo-American cultural studies comprises a globally acknowledged and most influential current, though itself increasingly multifaceted. Its focusing on the interconnections between texts or genres, societal contexts and issues of identity, between high and low, and between power and aesthetics, has had an invaluable worldwide impetus. It is not possible today to enter this field without dealing constructively with this dominant tradition and its series of theoretical components (Marxism, feminism, poststructuralism, semiotics, etc.). However, in many parts of the world, there has recently been a renewed questioning of the linear canon that was centred around the Birmingham tradition. This has opened spaces for alternative research perspectives and tradition lines to be claimed. Respecting and fetching inspiration from the 'classical' British cultural studies remains important, but it is no longer necessary to choose between either accepting all its specific theoretical heritage or denouncing the term altogether.

Other lines of cultural history, cultural sociology, sociology of taste as well as of literature, music, art etc., have also been extremely important, as ways to link aesthetics to society, texts to historical, social and institutional contexts, artefacts to practices. Key such theories have been developed in many different countries, including France and Germany. The Frankfurt tradition of critical theory is also of continued relevance – from its classical midwar period to the later work on public spheres, modernity and communicative action. Related currents of critical theorizing have

¹⁰ Cf. again Tony Bennett in *Cultural Studies* 12:4 (1998).

been developed elsewhere as well, inspired by various social movements, as well as of Marxism, feminism, postcolonialism, poststructuralism and postmodernism. A series of other important bodies of knowledge should also be included, as for instance aesthetic theories, models for close textual analysis or ethnographic fieldwork, theories of identity and of the subject, and many more.

This heterogenizing process is obvious in the two new journals, *International Journal of Cultural Studies* and *European Journal of Cultural Studies*, both of which have widened the scope in relation to the *Cultural Studies* journal which was started in 1987. It has also been obvious in the large international conferences 'Crossroads in Cultural Studies' held in Tampere in 1996 and 1998, which likewise included considerably more and partly other areas and perspectives than those instituted in Birmingham and already pluralized by later or parallel British, American, Canadian and Australian counterparts.

Cultural studies should not be polarized against any other discipline or paradigm, be it critical theory, cultural sociology, social anthropology, cultural or mentality history, sociology of literature, interart studies or aesthetics. Such demarcations all too easily bring forward blocking defence reactions. It is important never definitely to close the door to any of those studies of culture, and to avoid any of them to become so dominant in this field that it tends to be reduced or collapsed into one particular of its constituents.

Cultural studies research is not intrinsically different from what goes on in any academic discipline, but it wants to go against certain problematic tendencies of other research domains. In relation to many dominant social science approaches, it implies an intensified attention to textual structures and interpretations, corresponding to a general cultural turn. In relation to most aesthetic disciplines, it instead implies a greater care for social and institutional contexts. An attention to interactive relations between different symbolic genres, communication media, identities and forms of power cannot be escaped. The concept of cultural studies fills many different functions in different intellectual contexts, and this openness needs to be creatively maintained.

Internet discussion lists, newsletters, journals, anthologies and other publications forge new intellectual networks. Courses and educational programmes have been installed to introduce cross-disciplinary perspectives on culture and enhance cooperation between various subjects. Interdisciplinary research projects and programmes have been started to perform cultural studies. Certain moves towards installing departments or other disciplinary structures for cultural studies have been tried, with varying results. Research institutes have been formed in various parts of

the world. A new International Association of Cultural Studies (IACS) is presently being formed to organize researchers in this field.

Different universities and groups of researchers thus have chosen different solutions, which may create either a stifling mess or a dynamic pluralism. A series of choices needs then to be made. Which are today the focal points and the lacunae of cultural studies? Which key themes and activities need to be launched or emphasized? Are new and non-traditional forms needed, and, if so, on which levels: local/national/regional/international publications, courses, programmes, research projects, networks, departments and/or institutes? How to balance open interdisciplinarity and critical perspectives with organizational strength and academic rigour? The continual debate on these issues testifies to the vitality of cultural studies.

Four pillars

'Culture' is a notoriously polysemic word, and there is no consensus around any definition of a single core or set of boundaries of cultural studies. Widening the scope of the classical British and American tradition to include also some of those other perspectives that have been fostered by Swedish researchers does not make things easier.

Still, there are common traits and core threads that run through most of its local variants. Its empirical field may possibly be defined as all those issues that cannot be studied by any single discipline in isolation, for instance the interplay between different media or other complex phenomena emerging from cultural modernization that need to be scrutinized from several angles. One might perhaps formulate four central keywords, traits or pillars of this emergent, polyphonic cultural studies field. This polyphonic field is thus being held together by a focus on *culture* (both on the cultural sector as an object of study, and on interpretive perspectives on symbolic forms and practices), *communication* (connecting culture to its mediation and use, and researching in dialogic, interdisciplinary ways), *contextualization* (relating texts to their cultural, social and institutional contexts) and *critique* (uncovering power dimensions of representations and reflecting with responsibility on the interfaces between academia and society at large). Its focus is on critical analyses of representations, identity and power in transformation, and on contextualizing readings of complex symbolic expressions (texts, genres, media) and their uses in a range of discourses and practices. At least, the following four 'pillars' may offer a basis for formulating an operational definition of cultural studies as the scope and constituting ground for an ACSIS.

1. Culture

Culture is the first keyword, to be understood both as an area and as a perspective of research: studies of culture as well as studies of a cultural kind.

On one hand, cultural studies are *studies of culture*, understood in a very broad sense, making cultural phenomena – symbols, forms and meanings – an explicit object of study. This may include culture in all the complex senses of the word, including the traditional high arts, popular culture and entertainment, as well as the explicitly aesthetic practices in everyday life. It is particularly important to reconnect this whole aesthetic field, including both its high, low and middle-brow sectors. The high arts constitute one crucial focus, but so does popular culture and the aesthetics of everyday life, as well as interpretive aspects on in principle all human and societal interaction and communication. Cultural studies build bridges between the various genres, circuits, arts, media, discourses and forms of expression that are elsewhere often studied in isolation from each other. No communicative mode is by definition excluded. Likewise, all the stages in cultural processes are to be scrutinized: texts as well as their production, distribution and use. In fact, many strands of cultural studies problematize such linear sender-message-receiver chains, not least inspired by recent interactive Internet media that seem to demand a rethinking of many established categories.

On the other hand, cultural studies are also *studies of a cultural kind*, deliberately using meaning-constructions as a methodological tool of a culturally operating or interpretive research, that gives matters of understanding and reflexivity focal attention. Interpretational means and hermeneutic strategies are used to approach human and social life, not only to faithfully reproduce others' meanings but also to uncover otherwise hidden signifying dimensions in works and practices. Meaning is produced around symbolic forms that are embedded in all social spheres and sectors of human activity. Cultural studies focus the interrelations between the materialities, form-relations, meanings and uses of human practices, and reflexively regard themselves as inevitably embedded in similarly multidimensional and contextualized cultural circuits.

Culture is thus on one hand a possible object of study (a set of art and entertainment genres, a societal sphere and a field of practice) that may be studied from various perspectives (textual, social, institutional, psychological etc.). It is on the other hand a particular aspect (of form and meaning) that may be studied in every human or societal area. They are connected by the key processes of symbolic communication and interpretation.

It remains impossible to fix univocally one definite concept of culture, as each living concept is necessarily contested. One must resist reductionist temptations to define it too narrowly.

Culture is thus not only the area of the institutionalized high arts, but also includes the aesthetic practices, processes and artefacts of media, popular and everyday culture. All these put symbolic forms and meanings in the centre, but forms and meanings intervene in all human activity, so that cultural perspectives may be applied also to fields that are not primarily cultural, such as politics, economy or psychology.

Another example is that culture is about symbolic communication and intersubjective production of meaning, which implies relations between people, but not only communities in the narrow sense. Culture concerns differences and conflicts as much as it has to do with what is common to people: it is something that divides, just as much as it unites, even though cultural divisions presuppose some shared understandings over which to fight. This also means that culture as a general concept includes not only what is shared by all or even by a majority. Common sense and the basic presuppositions of a group or a society are certainly constituents of culture, but so is subcultural or avantgarde art and all kinds of marginalized, radical, oppositional or highly individual symbolic expressions that certainly cannot be thought as generally or even widely shared by a people.

Thirdly, culture is often associated with tenacious structure and historical heritage, but this is only one of its facets. Technology, economy, politics and the human psyche have their own stable structures too, which for that reason only should not automatically be defined as culture. And while the historical dimension is important in culture (as everywhere else), it is just as important to study contemporary processes of dynamic creativity. Cultural interpretations need to be anchored in historical knowledge, but cannot be reduced to the issue of inherited meanings. Understanding and future-oriented tendencies and transgressive innovations is a key issue for cultural studies. Culture rests on an ambivalent balance between creativity and regulation, novelty and tradition, change and reproduction.¹¹

¹¹ Bauman (1999: xivff and xx) argues for the essential ambiguity in culture, created by the fact that meaning and sense, as its core, starts from a human freedom to choose and act, but also implies a restriction of that freedom: making meanings implies to invent but also to make order and construct patterns that reduce chaos and thus delimit future meaning-making. He argues that artistic concepts of culture tend to stress the first side (unique works that change history), while anthropological ones tend to emphasize the latter (reproduction of heritages). However, it is also important to note that the

2. Communication

Communication is a second keyword, and it can likewise be understood both as an object (culture as communicative process) and as a method (research as dialogical practice built on conflicts of interpretation).

Culture is defined through symbolic communication, where human subjects use objects to create shared meanings. Culture is intersubjective, connecting people, even when it may join them in fierce conflicts. Culture as communication starts with processes involving the creative combination of three elements: subjects, texts, and contexts. Meaningful symbolic forms are texts shaped and used by interacting individual subjects in polydimensional spatial, temporal, societal and institutional contexts. *Subjects* are interacting agents that use texts to make meanings, and thereby develop polydimensional and dynamic identities along a series of interconnected difference orders like gender, generation, ethnicity and class. The issue of how culture relates to subjectivity and identity is a main theme in cultural studies, connecting it both to psychoanalytical and other subject theories and to discussions of gender, sexuality, race, ethnicity, age, generation, class and other more or less polarized discursive identity orders. *Texts* in the wide sense are artefacts or 'meaningful' symbolic webs that may be made of words, images, sounds or any other forms of expression, and that become symbolic structures by being drawn by subjects into processes of interpretation. *Contexts* are the immediate settings as well as the overarching spheres and institutions which frame the processes where subjects shape and use texts.

Cultural studies also work through communication. Interdisciplinary cooperation and dialogues are crucial. Like society and culture in general, research practices are basically communicative, building upon interactions between interpretive human beings. This acknowledgement implies an expressed antireductionist interest in mediations and interdisciplinary combinations. Cultural studies interrelate aesthetic, social or psychological aspects of culture. Similarly, micro, meso and macro perspectives ought not to exclude but rather inform each other. Synchronic studies of present or recent phenomena are to be connected to historical perspectives on past events, earlier periods or longer processes of development. Methodological pluralism is crucial for the explorative attitude needed to develop new insights and transcend outdated limitations. Ethnographic fieldwork, close textual analysis, readings of historical documents and statistical data analysis all are relevant ways to research culture, and one-sided biases, for instance towards the present, textuality

dialectics of transcendence and tradition is equally present in the arts as in the cultures of everyday life.

or any other particular dimension should be observed and counteracted by paying attention to otherwise neglected aspects.¹²

3. *Contextualization*

Contextualization is important to cultural studies, in contrast to much research in the humanities, in particular the aesthetic disciplines, that tends to focus on the formal structures of single bodies of texts. Instead, aesthetic texts and genres are interpreted in relation to various intersecting situational, social and historical frameworks, including intra-, inter- and extratextual relations, institutional settings and identity structures.

One aspect of this is the intertextual and intermedial contexts, situating single texts, genres and forms of expression in relation to other symbolic forms with which they are profoundly connected. This implies a lively traffic between the specialized aesthetic disciplines, so that the cross-currents between works and genres within literature, art, music, theatre, film and other art or media forms are understood.

Another aspect is the extratextual contextualization of symbolic forms as entwined with subjective and social orders and institutions. This necessitates a vivid exchange between the humanities and the social sciences. Culture has both textual and institutional aspects, and the combination of specialist knowledges that have historically developed in separation to analyse these aspects is essential. Interpretive and textual studies needs to be intimately connected to political and economic studies of institutions, and to historical perspectives on macro-processes of modernization and globalization.

4. *Critique*

Critique is a fourth basic trait. Both new and older variants of cultural studies tend to emphasize their critical perspectives on power and dominance forms in systemic institutions as well as in everyday life, through critical interventions that are grounded in interpretive acts of understanding the key contradictions and ambivalences of modern culture.

¹² In relation to historical and aesthetic disciplines, it is often useful to approach contemporary phenomena, and the latter may also need to be balanced by more contextual angles on texts. In relation to sociology, historical perspectives, textual analysis and micro-processes might be a more appropriate corrective. In this way, the problems and emphases differ across the various sectors and edges of the whole cultural studies field, and each discipline have unique competences to offer the others.

Cultural studies is not just an internal academic enterprise, but also an ethos, a critical project related to the social world outside of academia, criticizing society as well as other academic traditions. It may be said that cultural studies is to research on culture in general approximately like feminism is to studies of gender: a polyphonic stream of expressedly critical perspectives within the larger area that comprises most of the humanities and social sciences. In interpreting symbolic representations, it emphasizes how they are authorized by power. It reflects upon the specific role, conditions and rules of academic research as a particular social field of knowledge production, but sees no absolute or total epistemological break between everyday knowledge and academic theories. Its critique builds on the ambivalences, contradictions and critical elements in the knowledge people already have, in dialogue with them rather than above their heads.

The relation between culture, knowledge and power is a strong theme in cultural studies. One point of critique concerns how textual forms and practices are embedded in the commercial market system and the cultural industries, with their economic imperatives, inequalities and alienations. Various Marxist and political economy perspectives have been influential in cultural studies. A second direction of critique is towards the other main societal system, that of the state and its administrative power, with problematic tendencies towards centralization and bureaucratization. Each of these two systems that frame modern culture has both enabling and restraining functions, and they sometimes join forces, at other times contradict each other. But cultural power relations are also seated in the communicative life worlds of civil society and its various private and public institutions. Everyday life, the media and the public sphere may perhaps aim for free and equal communication, but are cut through by cultural hierarchies that need to be critically scrutinized. Feminism, queer studies, postcolonial studies, youth culture research all are important currents for cultural studies, to understand how such dimensions of domination intersect.

The critical perspective makes cultural studies deeply involved and engaged in social and political life. Instead of striving for academic isolation, it is mostly felt important for critical intellectuals to actively communicate and interact with other groups and spheres. A certain, relative autonomy for scholarly research may be used as the very basis for specific interventions in discussions of cultural policy, identity politics, social movements, globalization, state/market-relations and other related issues outside of academia.

All in all, a national institute for cultural studies would be able to work on elsewhere frozen boundaries: between the humanities and the social

sciences, between various disciplinary traditions, and between aesthetic spheres. Interaesthetic analyses are needed to understand the increasing intertextualities of late modern mediatized societies, not least in relation to recent developments in digital communication technology and multimedia. Increased communication between different humanities disciplines would be welcomed, as would better ways to socially contextualize texts and genres. Textual analyses also need to integrate the widespread and often mediated mass or popular cultural forms, which are essential to the shaping of meanings, relations and identities, but too often marginalized within the aesthetic disciplines. Media studies need to incorporate cultural perspectives and cultural phenomena. Social scientists need greater respect for and competence for the intricacies of textual interpretation, and they also need places to discuss issues of general importance for all social research, including relations between micro and macro levels, qualitative and quantitative methods, politics and economy, socialization and power, institutions and identities. An advanced institute for cultural studies can stimulate such productive border-crossings.

Cultural studies in Sweden

Cultural studies is today everywhere. It has spread through internationalization and globalization. Unfortunately, *Sweden lags behind* in this development. Sweden has a weaker infrastructure than all other Nordic countries regarding research programmes and institutes studying cultural issues and policy matters. There are promising local and regional initiatives to produce publications, give university courses or organize seminars and conferences in the cultural studies field, but most other comparable countries in the Nordic and Western sphere are far ahead when it comes to firm national initiatives in this arena. Academic communities in Denmark, Finland, Norway, Germany, Austria, the Netherlands, United Kingdom, Australia, Brazil, the United States, Canada and several other countries already have initiated strong institutional formations around cultural studies.

In spite of the wide acceptance of the fact that our Western society shifts its centre of gravity from material to cultural production, little has hitherto been done in Sweden to draw any conclusions from this for research policy. While the recent U.N.-related initiatives on culture and development stress the crucial role of culture in the present and future modernity, the term 'culture' here still tends to refer mainly to the old historical heritage or to rather peripheral epiphenomena in the margin of

late modern society, rather than to the urgent new issues of our time. Cultural aspects need to be more firmly integrated in perspectives on long-term societal development, associated with modernity and regeneration.

Sweden ought not lag further behind in this development, since there are also certain *promising potentialities*. First of all, there is in Sweden a widening support for finding new ways to strengthen cultural research, in contact with international trends. Established ways of thinking in some Swedish disciplines experience a crisis, as these are either dissolving or retreating back into some traditional kernel. This creates a need for cultural studies. Various efforts in that direction have also been undertaken, but much more needs to be done.

At several Swedish universities and university colleges, local or regional centres, courses and programmes for cultural studies have been launched. They often have grown out of a certain discipline, therefore emphasizing different aspects of the cultural studies spectrum, but with clear overlaps. New seminars and other meeting-places have been started, for shorter or longer periods, and sometimes expressly orientated towards some subfield of cultural studies (youth culture being a notable example). Old study programmes for the cultural sector have sometimes been given a more modern touch by importing inspiration (and sometimes even the English name) from international cultural studies. Disciplines like ethnology, sociology and literature have experimented with courses and other initiatives that tries to transgress disciplinary boundaries in the cultural studies direction. Certain research projects, dissertations, journals, books and other publications have explicitly thematized or even inscribed themselves in a cultural studies tradition. Yet, these initiatives have hitherto largely remained either dissociated from (or even ignorant of) each other, locally organized or on a rather introductory level.

Swedish cultural research is dynamic and expansive, but sometimes weakly anchored institutionally in the universities. A range of initiatives have recently been launched at some universities and university colleges in order to strengthen their profiles in the field of cultural studies. Some local university centres or perhaps even departments of cultural studies seem to be gradually evolving out of older predecessors like ethnology, cultural sociology, aesthetics, media studies or cultural policy studies, or through new initiatives. Older universities and disciplines have exhibited a certain tenacity in dealing with new and transgressive currents, and while some new departments at smaller university colleges have offered a refuge for dissident interdisciplinary cultural studies, it takes long time to

develop an advanced postgraduate environment, and the old academic divisions are not so easily avoided.

The older disciplinary areas from which the new field grows have also offered highly different (though potentially converging) roads into cultural studies. In Sweden, as elsewhere, anthropologists and ethnologists have brought other competences and interests into the field than have sociologists, historians or scholars from the aesthetic humanities. Each new programme, institute and network tends to focus a particular sub-sector within the whole field, and there is too little mutual communication between such initiatives.

Efforts have also been made to enhance interdisciplinary research cooperation. The Swedish Council of Culture (Kulturrådet) has expressed an interest in establishing a cultural research centre, in order to support needs in public cultural institutions. The new state report Research 2000 (Forskning 2000) has been widely criticized for not sufficiently understanding the importance of humanities and social science research, but clearly acknowledges the importance of autonomous, basic and innovative research, as well as of research institutes independent of the university structure.

One earlier example was the Swedish Research Council for the Humanities and Social Sciences (Humanistisk-Samhällsvetenskapliga forskningsrådet, HSFR) programme for comparative cultural research 1989-1995. This programme encompassed seven interdisciplinary projects developing a range of studies in the cultural field and models for cooperative research. An evaluation (Hannevik & Hastrup, 1996) found it successful but too unfocused and with a too small budget. These experiences are in fact an immediate inspiration to this ACSIS proposal, since I was first a member of the working committee that installed that programme and then the initiator and coordinator of one of its projects. The research programme 'Youth culture in Sweden' (Forskningsprogrammet Ungdomskultur i Sverige, FUS) organized some 70 Swedish researchers in a network, with annual seminars, publications, working groups and various forms of internal information exchange.¹³ Around Sweden, there are a number of similar experiences that may well be brought together to inspire the new node for cultural studies proposed here.

There is always a risk that programmes invited 'from above' are experienced by researchers as less attractive frameworks, almost comparable to the university faculties. Something more needs to be done, with a stronger intellectual coherence, presence and permanence, and with an

¹³ Cf. Fornäs & Bolin (1995) and Bäckström et al. (1998).

active core of motivated researchers who function as entrepreneurs or activists, while keeping it open also for others who just want to use its resources without totally identifying with it. An ACSIS would in a very fruitful manner be able to follow-up earlier initiatives on a more ambitious level.

Another reason for optimism is that there are some useful grounds for Swedish cultural studies to contribute new perspectives and competences internationally. We have for instance several strong traditions of empirically well-grounded research, good examples of interplay between academia and civil society, and some internationally famous experiences of building interdisciplinary cultural research within areas like women's studies, youth culture or the ethnography of everyday life. The Nordic types of welfare states and gender relations belong to the underlying conditions. Swedish cultural researchers have tended to emphasize a close connection between empirical research and theoretical development, and they have connected media and textual analysis to social and historical perspectives on cultural modernization, social movements and the public sphere. Through such experiences, a kind of peculiarly Swedish cultural studies tradition has emerged, which may well continue to enrich the humanities and social sciences, while also serving as a fruitful addition to the global field of cultural studies.

Nordic cultural studies communities are peripheral in relation to the U.S.-U.K. centre, but by uniting with other peripheries, they could make a strong international impact in the field, so that '*peripheries speak back* to the centre'. Sweden may play a key role in this emergent process. The cultural studies field is internationally already in a process of differentiation, and a Swedish institute would add to that process, if it is actively supported by those well developed traditions for cultural research that are since long already existing here, both within the humanities and in the social sciences. This would enable Sweden to become one of several important focal points in the expanding international field of cultural studies, critically reshaping models from other countries in a mutually creative dialogue with specifically Nordic and domestic traditions of cultural research. Sweden has now a great opportunity to place itself in the international frontline by creating such a communicative space for different perspectives within the field, promoting interdisciplinary research that joins different aesthetic phenomena in their social and cultural contexts.

In developing this field in Sweden, one must learn from global experiences. However, the inevitable limitations and problems encountered by earlier efforts to institutionalize cultural studies elsewhere should not lead to paralyzation. Lessons from history and from other countries are

needed to refine new efforts elsewhere, but they should not discourage anyone into passivity. All new ideas inevitably run into some problems, but this should not prevent from trying them out in better ways here and now. Sweden might be several years after some other countries where cultural studies has been more intensely tested and debated. It might be easy to give up in face of the obvious shortcomings of what has been done elsewhere – which is precisely what those who oppose change will try to persuade us to do. But this should not stop us from using others' experiences and our own strengths in order to make things even better here. It is important to critically scrutinize earlier mistakes and limitations within interdisciplinary cultural studies, but without losing the impulse and will to create something better, rather than surrender to the sometimes bitter experiences from before or from elsewhere. Everything should be done to avoid cementing certain mistakes, but this 'everything' must not include giving up the efforts to create new openings. All proposals have their shortcomings, but the present conditions for interdisciplinary cultural research – at least in Sweden – are definitely not satisfying, and *something* certainly needs to be done to improve them. If the international field of cultural studies can also gain something in that process, that would be a welcome bonus!

The Advanced Cultural Studies Institute of Sweden

There is thus in Sweden as elsewhere a widespread wish and growing support for finding new ways to consolidate and strengthen cultural studies, in a productive – respectful but not uncritical – dialectic with existing disciplines and other academic structures. Many initiatives are needed, on various universities and levels, including research programmes, courses, centres and networks, based on a range of different disciplinary alliances and thematic choices, in order to create the richness and density that allows for the field to flourish and contribute new perspectives, ideas and knowledge to cultural research in general.

Some stronger kind of institutional basis or gathering forum on an advanced academic level is today one particularly promising option with impressive support among leading scholars. Several Swedish reports point in the same direction, arguing for a strengthening of basic cultural research and of its interdisciplinarity and quality, and for the option to build research institutes separate from the universities, which has hitherto been rare in the Swedish humanities and social science sector.

This indicates that Sweden may now have a unique opportunity to step into the very frontier of international cultural studies.

There is today wide support for installing a new national *research institute* for advanced cultural studies, here provisionally called The Advanced Cultural Studies Institute of Sweden (ACSIS).¹⁴ This proposal integrates ideas formulated in the ACS workshop statements and discussions, as well as suggestions by leading cultural researchers in other contexts.

What can and should such a new institute actually do to best promote cultural research? How to define its range, boundaries and tasks? How to establish and organize it, which activities to pursue, and which main themes to prioritize? These and many other questions have to be further discussed by the research communities. In order to start these discussions, I will here provisionally outline the contours of a model that might get wide support and be actually workable.

The ACSIS must carefully learn from earlier experiences, including research institutes in other fields or countries, cultural studies initiatives on other levels, 'open universities' and networks like the Nordic Summer University (NSU) as well as cooperative international research groups and networks in adjacent areas. Local and regional efforts to create units and networks for cultural studies form a useful basis for a national initiative, which may in its turn connect and support them on the advanced national and international level, by networking, attracting resources and competences, qualitative development and working as a force that pushes forward the frontline of cultural studies.

Tasks and activities

The main objective of such an institute would be to *promote innovative basic research in the field of cultural studies*, in the form of empirical studies, theoretical and methodological development, and the organizing of international and multidisciplinary communication. It should thereby serve as an advanced resource for the national scholarly community in Sweden, initiating interdisciplinary interactions and building connections to global

¹⁴ The proposal and outline below is inspired by many existing institutes and networks, including the Swedish Collegium for Advanced Study in the Social Sciences in Uppsala (cf. SCASSS, 1996), the Danish Centre for Cultural Research in Aarhus, the Finnish Network Cultural Studies and the Research Unit for Contemporary Culture in Jyväskylä, the Norwegian research programme for cultural studies (cf. Hodne, 1998), several Swedish research council conferences and documents, and a series of local or regional initiatives like the Unit for Cultural Studies in Göteborg or the Cultural Studies course programme in Umeå.

currents in the field. The ACSIS will primarily be engaged in basic research and theoretical development, but may also choose to develop close contacts with other cultural actors.

Such an internationally oriented, nationally organized, advanced and interdisciplinary research institute in Sweden would organize research projects, visiting scholars, doctoral courses, conferences and extensive networking. It would aim to generate concrete knowledge about the cultural field, with results relevant to issues of cultural policy, by studying ongoing processes of transformation and scrutinizing factors behind the apparent failures of traditional politics and the cultural sector. It would also strive to achieve interdisciplinary communication and cooperation, through intense networking and efforts to create spaces for basic and advanced research and reflection among scholars. It should not operate in solitary isolation, but in constant dialogue with the surrounding society and public sphere, interacting with other actors in the cultural field, building bridges and offering qualified scholarly support for training programmes both in the humanities disciplines and in the arts and crafts area. Experiences from women's studies indicate the effectiveness of a double strategy of building separate centres to breed interdisciplinary perspectives while simultaneously also striving to integrate them in the disciplines. The ACSIS should walk on both legs, and connect to other regional centres with students.

Important convergences have recently appeared in many disciplines, for instance between ethnographic traditions, textual analysis and media studies, in efforts to develop new ways of theorizing globalization, local/global-relations or the interplay of the class/gender/age/ethnicity identity dimensions in everyday life. Such convergences between branches of cultural research create a need for cultural studies as a cross-disciplinary arena, with rather open meeting places for people researching interesting new issues, with a strong commitment to an agenda that emphasizes crucial social and cultural issues as well as a critical interdisciplinary reflexivity, feeding back into the disciplines an increased accountability to the civil society by taking seriously the task to respond to questions from the general public about new and urgent cultural processes and issues. An ACSIS ought not to have too strict frames, in order to enable unexpected encounters and innovative research. Reflexivity is at the heart of cultural studies, as a means for researchers to take responsibility for their work and enhance its scholarly and societal value by continuous comparative self-reflection on methods and perspectives. Spaces are needed for joint discussions on various tensions within academia and towards society at large. Reflexive cultural studies can be a stronghold to strengthen the interfaces between academia and other parts

of society, precisely by defending scholarly research as a space for free and critical questioning.

An ACSIS would let Sweden finally step forcefully into the international stream of cultural studies, with all its potentials for dealing with urgent research issues and stimulating interdisciplinary cooperation, based on critical and contextualizing interpretations of representations and their uses. It would thus become a useful resource, answering a number of converging societal and academic needs:

(1) *The general public* would benefit from more innovative research transcending outdated borders into urgent areas, not least concerning cultural policy, recent transformations in cultural life and complex phenomena that must be analysed from many different angles. This is a first main reason for starting ACSIS: the cultural studies approach will make possible fruitful insights into areas of cultural transformation that pose urgent problems in today's society and that are not sufficiently well studied elsewhere.

(2) An ACSIS would operate as a nodal driving force of coordination and innovation, to enhance the quality standards of *Swedish research* in cultural studies or cultural research in general, within and between the ordinary disciplines, by strengthening its transnational connections, attracting international competence, developing new knowledge on an advanced level, and building bridges for cooperation between traditions and disciplines. This second main motive for an ACSIS thus concerns the need for interdisciplinary and transnational cooperation in order to renew and strengthen cultural research in the university disciplines.

(3) Swedish (and Nordic) cultural research in all disciplines and universities would get a qualified channel or window to the world, improving its international visibility and letting domestic traditions feed more decidedly into the international cultural studies arena, so that the strengths of these traditions may form a vital corrective and push *international cultural studies* into new and fruitful directions. This third and more globally oriented motive points at Swedish and Nordic traditions as well worthy of a more intense international spread.

The proposed *name* 'Advanced Cultural Studies Institute of Sweden' is intended to enable the abbreviation 'AC SIS', which carries welcome associations to a driving 'axis' between the researchers and subfields involved, as well as to providing 'access' to vanguard competences and resources. More importantly, it conveys some important traits of the institute profile.

Though with an international outlook and with connections to local universities, it would be anchored in *Sweden* as a national institution. The institute will engage researchers from all parts of the world, but be lo-

cated in Sweden, run mainly by Swedish scholars and funded by national Swedish resources.

The ACSIS will focus on *cultural studies* with its four main pillars culture, communication, contextualization and critique, as outlined above. This polycentric international field is understood as kind of a middle term between cultural research in general, which comprises most of the humanities and social sciences, and the British-American traditions of cultural studies, that are influential but not the only ones to be included. The ACSIS will actively strive to connect Nordic cultural studies not only to the Anglo-American field, but also and most importantly to other regions of the world, including both East, Central and South Europe and the so-called South and Third worlds, in order to build new alliances that will strengthen alternative voices internationally and thus allow these joint 'peripheries' to speak back to the dominant global centres.

The term '*advanced*' is meant to denote the highest possible academic and scholarly level. On that level, it will be possible to build on researchers who have already acquired a strong sense of disciplinary identity, in combination with others who have accumulated a rich competence in the crossroads between disciplines. Initiating such an 'elite' institute is intended not as a competitive alternative to local university centres or departments with that same or overlapping profile, but as a central complement to and supporting resource for them. On this basis, the ACSIS could then support certain courses, centres and other initiatives on the undergraduate and graduate levels as well. Innovative developments in the field need to be discussed and synthesized on a top intellectual level, which may function as a vanguard to inspire undergraduate and doctoral education. Interactions between researchers with firm roots and competences within different established disciplines can create particularly creative interdisciplinary encounters and combinations. The singular cooperative research projects, scholarly associations and networks that have hitherto taken form are inspiring but not enough in terms of institutional permanence and/or thematic scope.

As for the precise type of institution, a term like 'collegium' might tend to signify a more closed and clearly delimited group of people. The ACSIS will certainly gather a core of researchers and research fellows who will be active each year, but also spin plural and flexible interactive networks around that core. Through digital, mediated and seminar communications, the ACSIS will strive to interact intensely with other centres, departments and nodes on the field. 'Centre' or 'forum' are other options, but they are both already in use mostly for intra-university bodies. An '*institute*' is simply something that is instituted or established, and it might fit well for the intended kind of relatively autonomous research

institution. New knowledge demands untraditional forms of study. A research institute outside of but closely interacting with the ordinary university system seems a most useful model.

The Swedish Collegium for Advanced Studies in the Social Sciences (SCASSS) in Uppsala is an inspiring model for ACSIS to learn from. SCASSS was founded in 1985 as a national institution located in Uppsala, built on two main layers: (a) a durably employed staff coordinating longer-term research projects which are then funded the ordinary way; (b) a coffee-room function with visiting fellows. However, the ACSIS will have a different thematic focus with greater space for perspectives from the humanities and more of a dense and active network basis. Such an institute/network would allow for a truly national/international scope, combine flexibility with permanence and maximize the flow between disciplines and universities.

The ACSIS would operate as an *anchored network*, with a wide connective activity from some physical located core. It must be organized as an independent national unit, formally outside and above the individual universities, but in close contact with them all and with its physical basis attached to some university or university college. It would start by being financed basically by the main relevant research councils, attract additional resources from other sources as well, and in the long term presumably with a permanent budget secured directly by the state departments of culture and/or education.

The institute would have a small durable *staff* of established Swedish researchers in the field, coordinating longer-term *research programmes* in cooperation with other Swedish and international scholars and departments, financed in the ordinary way. International and Swedish *fellows* will visit the institute for certain periods, to do their own research and take part in certain joint activities. In regular *seminars, workshops, conferences* and annual *doctoral courses*, they and other interested participants will contribute to a more fluid and open meeting-space, sometimes for scholars only, sometimes in dialogues with teachers, artists, journalists, politicians or other key actors in the cultural sphere. Digital *networking* is also crucial, in the form of well-linked web-sites, discussion groups and mailing lists. Diverse *publications* will also be a useful component.

The ACSIS should offer a combination of permanent, open meeting places for scholars from different countries, disciplines and traditions, and a series of small dedicated groups gathered around more specific themes for shorter or medium-range periods in seminars, working-groups and research projects. It will combine three main and interrelated *branches of activity*: (1) individual scholarly positions, (2) cooperative research projects and (3) communicative networking.

Each of these may be organized in different ways, possibly inspired by other models for constructing research institutes, centres or studios. It is crucial to strike the best balance between the high quality ('advanced') level and an accessibility and open communication within the institute as well as outwards. The ACSIS will connect to and support other local, regional or national units for cultural studies, on various levels. Other crucial balances to specify are those between academic and aesthetic practice, localized meetings and dispersed networking, Swedish and international elements, permanence and flexibility, established and young researchers, staff and fellows, as well as the precise way to organize the fellowships in time and space. The following is, again, only a first outline for further discussion.

Positions and fellowships

It is important that some researchers work in the ACSIS for longer periods, or even on permanent positions, in order to achieve a firm long-term stability and facilitate the pursuit of larger, 3-5 years research projects. A certain minimal durable staff of some 3-5 established Swedish *researchers* is therefore necessary, employed for 3-6 years or on permanent contracts. They would jointly coordinate all other activities and form the core in the research work of the institute.

As in other advanced collegium-like research institutes, scholarly *fellowships* may be a main concern. This offers a particularly good chance for strong but dynamic interdisciplinary and worldwide connections to develop. International and Swedish fellows visiting the institute for certain periods would participate in the joint activities but mostly pursue their own work, in communication with qualified colleagues from other disciplines and countries. Ways must be found not to cut them totally off from their ordinary departments, and also to maintain or develop their contacts with other Swedish universities.

These fellowships can be organized in many different ways, depending on the intended results and financial resources. Some 8-10 fellows could perhaps be chosen carefully each year, among applicants from all over the world. Most of the fellows should be well established, graduated scholars in their fields, and not more than half of them should be from Sweden. Promising younger scholars may also be chosen. It is important to include other regions than the Western and Nordic countries. The fellows would be selected by the ACSIS board, assisted by evaluations made for each candidate by specific referees selected among renowned scholars. Criteria for acceptance would be academic quality and experience, interdisciplinary interest in the cultural studies field and potential to fit

together with the other fellows of the same year as well as with the research profile and themes of ACSIS.

The fellows could then be employed either half time for one whole year or full time during a six months period, as kind of a scholarship grant. They would be able to pursue their own research, but also to some extent be expected to engage in joint research projects and interactions with the others involved in the ACSIS activities. In order to avoid the ACSIS to get isolated in relation to the academic community at large, an idea might be to let them perform part of their research and writing work at their ordinary department locations, but actively connected to the ACSIS networking. For at least some concentrated period of time, say c. 1-2 months every semester (possibly divided into two separate periods), they should however be physically located at the ACSIS site, take part in the various activities there. In particular the foreign visiting fellows would also be encouraged to offer lectures and seminars to academic departments elsewhere in Sweden. They may also be willing to offer certain assistant supervising services to advanced doctoral students. The precise balance between fellows and staff thus needs to be carefully considered, as well as the precise way to organize the fellowships in time and space.

Projects and themes

Due to the inescapable lack of time and resources, all facets of culture and cultural studies cannot be equally in focus all of the time, even though a curious openness towards them all is as essential as is the respectful cooperation with other institutes and departments. Some dimensions may be developed into separate thematic fields to be allocated onto a series of projects or seminars, so that they are successively explored and shifted through the years.

The ACSIS would try to cover the whole cultural studies field, connecting studies of historical, societal and institutional contexts of culture with mappings of its micro-processes and with close textual readings. It would be able to initiate productive border-crossings, making possible a richer understanding of multimedia intertextuality, contextual uses of texts and textual aspects of social interaction, relations between everyday aesthetics, popular culture and the arts, and the interplay of cultural production and reception.

One or several longer-term *research programmes* would be set up, involving international networks of scholars that meet at ACSIS for the workshops and conferences mentioned above. Collective research projects may be developed in direct collaboration with other institutions, both in Sweden and on a Nordic, European and global scale. They would be applied for and financed in the usual way by relevant research coun-

cils. Each research group would organize its own seminars and digital communication networks, assisted by the ACSIS. International comparisons and interdisciplinary cooperation are essential features in these projects. It may also be possible to serve as a 'think-tank' with certain commissioned studies as an interface with decision makers, though this must not become compete with the advanced scholarly activities that remain focal here.

Specific *themes* would be explored during 1-2 year periods, not (only) in the projects but (rather/also) in a series of conferences, seminars and courses. The themes should not be too few at a time, and not fixed permanently, so that they are left open to change over time, in response to changing needs in society and academia, and wide enough for the institute to function as a space for all positions in the field. Which themes that will actually be under scrutiny should not be prescribed from above in advance, but be decided regularly by the researchers tied to ACSIS themselves. However, it is important that the choices are not too narrow, so that no important dimensions (subjects, text and contexts, identity orders, genres etc.) are permanently excluded.

Possible options for both specific research projects and more general themes include the following, partly overlapping research areas, that are all not hitherto sufficiently researched within the ordinary university disciplines, and would benefit from a cultural studies perspective.

- *Concepts of culture*: meta-reflections of how cultural research conceptualizes culture, but also interpretations of its widespread use in other public discourses. Critically reflexive studies may also be done of the role and differentiated development of cultural studies, in relation to other fields (critical theory, feminism or postcolonialism).
- *Production of cultures and cultures of production*: organization and development of the cultural practices of work, especially in the cultural sector and its surrounding spheres, including the production of 'events' by the whole 'industry of experience': popular culture, media, museums and tourism. Fast changes in the cultural sector have made such cultural production increasingly large and central in societal and economic life. The ACSIS may thereby help exploring the borders of aesthetic practices, in cooperation with various newly formed university/art/design centres, faculties and campuses.
- *Cultural politics*: recent transformations in state policy, market trends, institutional practices and art discourses. Culture is an issue for state policy, public spheres, volunteer associations and social movements, and the interface between culture, power, justice and freedom is an important ethical and political issue for democratic societies, which deserves closer investigation.
- *Cultural freedoms and rights*: there are everywhere limits for freedom of expression in culture, some that need to be criticized and others that may be

inavoidable. Comparative research between countries and between aesthetic areas (literature, art, music, theatre, film, radio, television, Internet) would be useful.

- *Cultural identities*: how symbolic discourses underpin changing individual agency and social communities in modern societies, including the often conflictual interplay between class, age, generational, gender, sexual, racial and ethnic relations.
- *The genderization of culture*: all the mentioned identity dimensions should always be present, but the shifting articulations of gender and culture seem to be a particularly promising theme, and with a great impact in society. Other dichotomies, like high/low or domestic/foreign have often been formulated in gendered terms, and studies of gendered discourses and practices in cultural life may shed light on crucial transformations in modern cultural history, related to issues of power, representation and identity.
- *Taste and aesthetics*: juxtapositioning philosophy and cultural sociology in matters of taste and quality, for instance how the dichotomous hierarchies and cultural divides between high and low are constituted and revised.
- *Everyday culture in the new Europe*. Cultural modernization and mediatization imply new forms of differentiation and connection, individualization and community, identification and hybridity, power conflicts and marginalization. The problematic sides of late modern culture need to be scrutinized, including the biased and centralized mass media, the structural cruelty of the 'new poverty' that stigmatizes whole urban areas, or the shifting variants of anti-multicultural, purist, fundamentalist and racist movements.
- *Intermedia/intertexts*: basic comparative studies of forms and meanings in different cultural sectors and genres, of intertextual exchanges between cultural spheres, and of multi- and intermedial developments in cultural industries and everyday life. New digital technologies, forms of consumption and convergences in the cultural industries as well as between everyday cultural production and media forms have changed the conditions for media use and for the constitution of 'audiences'.
- *Learning processes*: culture is transmitted and developed by aesthetic learning processes within and outside of the educational school system, involving also central cultural institutions like libraries and museums.
- *Ethnography and textual analysis*: new methodological considerations and inventions are needed, not least in relation to the study of digital nets of cyberculture, but also in studies of embodiment and performance in the non-verbal arts.
- *Mediatization and globalization*: all themes may involve issues of modernity and its shifting faces, over periods in the modern era as well as between world regions, and a focus on the increasing media presence in social life and on the condensation of interregional communications would be a key topic. The ACSIS might offer a fruitful Nordic location for providing new perspectives

on globalization, national identity and the role of culture in nation-state building.

Networking and events

Networks will actively be spun among researchers, both through actual meetings and by digital communication. Conferences, seminars, working-groups and courses could be organized every semester, in connection with the gathering of both the present fellows and all others involved in the ongoing research programmes.

Each semester (or year), a certain limited period could be filled with a series of such intense activities: including a 4-5 days *doctoral course*; a 2-3 days larger open *conference* and perhaps another, more intimate 2 days *workshop*; regular series of *seminars* with ACSIS fellows and researchers together with others invited who are interested in the issues in question; and a range of smaller *meetings* with each separate thematic group and cooperative project in which institute members or fellows are involved.

There should be no full Ph.D. education programme, but rather single and separate advanced *courses* open to visiting Ph.D. students from all relevant departments and universities. The institute is intended for research rather than education, but some contacts with younger scholars would add crucial momentum and innovative force to the site. Offering regularly open doctoral courses related to ongoing projects and visiting fellows will provide some of the benefits of keeping together research and education, but this will also be done by inviting teachers and others to specific workshops and seminars on issues of cultural pedagogy and the like.

The *conferences* and *workshops* will be organized mainly on an international scale, related to ongoing research projects and the themes focused each period. They will be well marketed and publicized. Some such activities should aim to reach also a non-academic public, in the form of debates or lectures for invited groups of people, like politicians or artists.

During the rest of the year, the fellows in the vicinity and the staff members of the institute would have their own weekly *meetings*, regularly inviting other scholars visiting or working at their university for *seminars* that are open also to other interested researchers in the field. Some of these activities may be expanded through separate external funding. Some seminars may be primarily intra-academic, while others may turn outwards to teachers, artists, politicians or others involved in the cultural field. It might turn out to be preferable to divide activities on two periods each year, for instance shifting between a public conference and a doctoral course. Dependent on the theme and form of the seminars, other cate-

gories are also to be invited, such as teachers, artists and other cultural producers, media representatives or politicians. Active information to neighbouring universities and disciplines is essential to avoid isolation.

A series of organized *digital networks* will connect fellows and researchers around specific themes. There would be several types of on-line activities, including well-linked ACSIS web-site, discussion groups and mailing lists, both for the ACSIS as a whole and for various thematic subgroups and research programmes within its frames, as well as for anyone interested in cultural studies. They may be used for intellectual debates around empirical, theoretical and methodological issues of research policy, interactive research cooperation and information on ACSIS and other cultural studies activities, publications and projects, as well as for interfaces with other interested actors in the cultural, educational and political spheres. Electronically based doctoral courses may also be organized.

Publications of varying kinds should also be considered, in the form of newsletters, working papers and reports. Cooperations with professional publishers and/or distributors may be possible. Efforts to improve the conditions for Swedish and Nordic cultural studies to reach out internationally will be pursued.

Organization

These activities would be organized by a group of employed researchers at the institute, with administrative assistance, and supervised by some national governing board and an international advisory board. Several solutions are again possible here. The following is just a first outline that needs to be carefully optimized in terms of cost/benefit-relations.

The ACSIS could be run by a *Governing Board*, consisting of some 5-9 senior Swedish researchers in the cultural studies field, appointed by the main funding research councils of ACSIS. The Board would appoint the directors of the institute and the members of its International Advisory Board, and consider and approve the annual report and budget request of the directors.

The *International Advisory Board* would consist of c. 5-9 key cultural studies researchers from other countries in the world. They would be invited to the annual gatherings of the ACSIS, and discuss with the Board and the directors the profile and contents of all the range of activities run by the institute.

All activities would be managed by one main *director* (a durable head position) together with two *co-directors* (who might be chosen by the Board for periods of 3-5 years among the researchers employed at the

institute). All full-time durable institute positions should have more than half the time for research, so that the administrative tasks do not prevent them from actively taking part in research development in the cultural studies field.

They need to be assisted in the latter by an *administrative staff* consisting of one or two full-time permanent positions: perhaps one mainly responsible for general administration and economy, the other for publishing, information and communication. If resources permit, additional staff members may be added for temporary tasks in relation to certain projects or conferences.

8-10 *fellowships* will run each year, employed either full time for six months or half time for twelve months (or somewhere in between).

The organization may temporarily grow even more due to externally financed research projects, that would also increase the interaction with the surrounding academic world. The institute budget will also have to include extensive travels, computer and other communication costs, publishing and other expenses.

AC SIS would initially need to be financed jointly by the main relevant Swedish research councils. Additional funding may be offered by other state institutions, universities, local communities or other sources. The institute should however remain fundamentally a national resource rather than belonging to any particular university, since its formal and scholarly autonomy is essential to its possible success. After a 5-10 years test period and evaluation, the institute is meant to be permanently funded directly by the state departments of education and/or culture.

Local and regional efforts to create units and networks for cultural studies form a useful basis for a national initiative, which may in its turn connect and support them on the advanced national and international level. A nationally organized and internationally working research institute for cultural studies will hopefully be able to interact with all the various other cultural studies initiatives in a fruitful way, contributing to their interconnecting, offering resources and competences that can be used by them, and generally pushing forward the advanced frontline of cultural studies in Sweden. This should be an overarching interest of the whole research community, and must therefore in the long run be funded directly by the state rather than by any single university.

Before the details of organization and activity are decided upon, it is virtually impossible to even approximately calculate the total costs. However, a *very* tentative estimation of the level would land on somewhere between 7 and 15 millions SEK per year, depending on the chosen scale and ambitions.

It is yet too early to decide the geographic location of ACSIS. Preliminary contacts should be taken with several universities and university colleges, to investigate the interest there for such an institute and find the optimal solution to make it an attractive and creative site with a strong and secure budget.

Prospects

A period of intense planning is now necessary. A small but dedicated committee of researchers will need to investigate and prepare the issue in greater detail, using the results of the workshop, and working in close relation to the research councils and in continuous dialogue with others in the research field in question. New workshops and other contacts will be organized in the main Swedish regions with advanced cultural studies activities, so that the proposal will be optimally refined and well anchored in the research community. It will also be closely discussed with other groups and institutions potentially involved in this issue. International communication and meetings will be held at some foreign cultural studies institutes, in order to establish contacts, get information on how they function and get feedback on the ACSIS idea.

Provided the final proposal for the establishment of such an institute gets accepted by the appropriate authorities and councils, the ACSIS will then be started for a five or ten years trial period. If this is then successful and favourably evaluated, the institute should then be made permanent.

Yet a long way to go, but still, the first steps now taken, we have already gone far. With a bit of luck and lots of energy, the building of an ACSIS will be one important link in cultural studies. It would make a lot of difference!

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In modernity, culture is everywhere.

So is cultural studies, it seems.

But cultural studies needs to be advanced, in two senses: to be promoted but also to be ameliorated.

Culture is focal in late modern societies, and should be so in research.

New encounters and innovative modes of study are necessary to deal with the new kinds of problems posed by current cultural developments.

The international and interdisciplinary field of cultural studies well deserves to be spread, but also longs for regenerative initiatives.

There is now in Sweden a promising option to take a decisive step in this direction.

This is what this report argues for.

