The GDAT Debate: No. 8

CULTURAL STUDIES WILL BE THE DEATH OF ANTHROPOLOGY

Mark Hobart
and
Paul Willis

vs

Nigel Rapport
and
John Gledhill

Edited by

Peter Wade

Group for Debates in Anthropological Theory

CULTURAL STUDIES WILL BE THE DEATH OF ANTHROPOLOGY

The eighth annual GDAT debate, held in the University of Manchester on 30th November 1996

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INTRODUCTION

Peter Wade

The context for this debate was set, for me, by three small incidents. The first was that, while I was fishing around for speakers to address the motion, one person said that, although the subject was close to his heart, he did not want to be seen publicly siding with cultural studies. In his efforts to get a job in an anthropology department, he found his current reputation as a cultural studies person was counting against him with the selection committees. The second was that an anthropologist in New Zealand contacted me by email, having seen a notice for the debate in *Anthropology Today*, asking for the text of the speeches. His department was being lined up for a merger with other departments into a Department of Cultural Studies and he and his colleagues were debating the issues at stake with more than just theoretical intensity. Finally, at the San Francisco meetings of the American Anthropological Association which just preceded this debate, there were two plenary speakers. One was Homi Bhabha, that doyen of cultural studies, invited by the Association for Political and Legal Anthropology. His talk was a typical mixture of obscurity and tantalising insight, but the fact that he was deemed a suitable and attractive guest was telling in itself. The other speaker was Sidney Mintz who launched a sustained attack on what might be described as the postmodernist, cultural studies turn in anthropology. Sure, he said, people travel and thus the image of the bounded community was obsolete. But, he also said, not everyone travels all the time, therefore anthropologists should retain faith in their ethnographic descriptions of local places. Perhaps this, in itself, was not so controversial. According to a colleague of mine, however, Mintz was afterwards grasped warmly by the hand by a woman who gushed, 'Thank God, postmodernism is dead!'. It is clear that he was seen to occupy a position diametrically opposed to that represented by Bhabha (for all Mintz's own credentials in studying the currents of global capitalism in that least 'local' of places, the Caribbean).

It seems, then, that the knives are out: the difference between cultural studies and social anthropology matters to people's jobs, to the public images of mainstream anthropological institutions, to the

organisation of academic departments in social science faculties. Just as importantly, cultural studies seems to have taken the intellectual high ground. Its principle exponents are public figures—at least in the limited way intellectuals are ever public figures in the Anglo-Saxon world—while anthropologists apparently languish in their ivory tower. But are the knives really out? Is it not, perhaps, as Jeannette Edwards suggested in her contribution from the floor in the debate, that it is middle-aged white male academics who seem threatened by the 'cult. studs.' (as a friend of mine likes to call it)? Is it not the case that, as Alison Newby (telling, perhaps, a female postgraduate) said in her comment, it does not matter what you call it as long as you do a good job? I think not. I believe there are real differences and issues at stake here and they are to do with the institutional history and practice of anthropology and cultural studies. These are important because both the present and the future of both disciplines (although I hesitate—along with many cultural studies specialists—to call cultural studies a discipline) can only come out of their pasts.

First of all, I want to indicate some fairly basic similarities between social anthropology and cultural studies, reasons why one might doubt that any dispute about the death or vigour of one or the other had much relevance. After all, of the speakers in the debate Nigel Rapport, Paul Willis and John Gledhill explicitly recognised large areas of overlap between the two disciplines. Both subjects are centrally concerned with meaning, experience and culture. Fred Inglis, for example, states that 'Meaning is moving closer to the nucleus of our enterprise [of cultural studies]'; experience, he says, is 'at the centre of the vocabulary of Cultural Studies, and one of its key honorifics'. I think it goes without saying that, whatever the difficulties of either term (and herein, of course, there is ample room for divergence), meaning and experience are also central to anthropology. In defining culture, Stuart Hall follows Raymond Williams by describing it as 'those patterns of organization, those characteristic forms of human energy which can be discovered as revealing themselves ... within or underlying *all* social practices'—a definition which current anthropologists would hardly take issue with. Hall explicitly rejects, however, the concept of culture as 'the descriptive sum of the "mores and folkways" of societies' which, he says, it became in 'certain kinds' of anthropology.[1]

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[1] F. Inglis, *Cultural studies*, Oxford, Blackwell, 1993, pp. 98, 52; S. Hall, "Cultural studies: two paradigms", in *A cultural studies reader: history, theory, practice*, eds. J. Munns and G. Rajan, London, Longman, 1995, p. 197.

Both cultural studies and anthropology have been involved with a process of self-reflexive critique, spurred by poststructuralist and postmodernist insights. It is not as if the recent self-examination of anthropology is the same as the opening up of the discipline to cultural studies, although sometimes it seems that way. On the contrary, two recent books about the recent past and future of anthropology hardly mention cultural studies or cite its central figures.[2] Conversely, Aggers contends that 'a good deal of the momentum of cultural studies is provided by the poststructural turn in anthropology'.[3] In Grossberg et al.'s well-known reader, the editors also note how the same kind of reflection on the relation between observer and observed that became so important to anthropology in the 1980s has also concerned cultural studies. They observe more generally that cultural studies is constantly 'writing and rewriting its own history to make sense of itself, constructing and reconstructing itself in response to new challenges'—a trend that I think applies equally to recent anthropology.[4] Just as anthropology has had to wrestle with its ghosts of functionalism and structuralism, so cultural studies has had to critically review the theoretical legacies handed down by Leavis, Hoggart and Williams, by the Frankfurt school theorists and by European Marxists such as Gramsci. It is true that 'Cultural Studies is an emergent paradigm'—partly indicated by the lack of consensus on whether to capitalise it and to treat it as a singular noun—but, as Jameson goes on to say, 'anthropology itself, far from being a "traditional" one [paradigm], is also in full metamorphosis and convulsive methodological and textual transformation'.[5] The reason why such a transformation has seemed to ally anthropology more and more with cultural studies is, of course, due to a common interest in textuality, but I think it is mistaken to see the recent changes in anthropology as being simply a shift towards cultural studies. As Nigel Rapport saids in his speech, anthropology has its own long history of self-critique.

A further point of alliance and similarity is the important role anthropology has had to play in the emergence of cultural studies itself

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[2] R. Fox (ed.), *Recapturing anthropology: working in the present*, Santa Fe, School of American Research Press, 1991; A. Ahmed and C. Shore (eds), *The future of anthropology: its relevance to the contemporary world*, London, Athlone, 1995.

[3] B. Agger, *Cultural studies as critical theory*, London, Falmer Press, 1992, p. 3.

[4] C. Nelson, P. Treichler and L. Grossberg, "Cultural studies: an introduction", in *Cultural studies*, (eds) Grossberg, C. Nelson and P. Treichler, London, Routledge, 1992, pp. 14, 10.

[5] F. Jameson, "On 'cultural studies'", in *A cultural studies reader: history, theory, practice*, (eds) J. Munns and G. Rajan, London, Longman, 1995, p. 619.

as an increasingly consolidated field of interest—quite apart from the impact of James Clifford who is a standard reference in cultural studies textbooks. Geertz is the main influence here, with his emphasis on the interpretation of meaning and Inglis devotes several pages to Geertz's work which he sees as the best way of attaining 'local knowledge'. Indeed, for Inglis anthropology is by virtue of this the 'queen of the sciences' and the 'mistress' of cultural studies. Such local knowledge, however, has to be drawn into tension with grand theory which, by implication (and by Geertz's own avowal), anthropology does not provide.[6] Another anthropological precursor for cultural studies is Lévi-Strauss whom Stuart Hall sees as a major figure in the structuralist side of the two paradigms of cultural studies he identifies (the other being the 'culturalist' paradigm associated with Raymond Williams and E.P. Thompson), even though Althusser is commonly seen as the central influence.[7]

If there are so many points of commonality for cultural studies and anthropology, where do the differences lie and are they important? I have already indicated that in terms of academic boundary-drawing and job opportunities, there are some hard differences (or perhaps merely prejudices) to confront; Penny Harvey made the same point during the debate in her comment from the floor. Paul Willis in his speech and Pnina Werbner in her comment also made clear that cultural studies seems to be more popular—with publishing houses, funding bodies, and perhaps with students too. Where can anthropology find intellectual figures of the public stature of Williams, Hall, Bhabha, Spivak or Said? Leach and Gellner had this kind of public, interdisciplinary appeal, but it is hard to think of replacements.

These differences must be rooted in the theoretical baggage that each field of study carries with it and that somehow, despite continual restructurings from within, remains with it—perhaps more in its public image than in the practice of its adherents. Cultural studies is a very varied field which only became consolidated as such with the establishment of the Birmingham Centre for Contemporary Cultural

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[6] F. Inglis, *Cultural studies*, Oxford, Blackwell, 1993, pp. 163-169. Inglis's use of such monarchic and gendered metaphors elevates anthropology to a regal position which confers authority through its traditional access to local knowledge, while at the same time feminising it and turning it into an incomplete fragment which must be channelled to become whole (hence mistress as teacher, mistress as illicit lover).

[7] S. Hall, "Cultural studies: two paradigms", in *A cultural studies reader: history, theory, practice*, (eds) J. Munns and G. Rajan, London, Longman, 1995, p. 199.

Studies in 1964. In Britain, the roots go back to Leavis and the carving out of a field of English literature studies after the First World War; prior to this, English literature was rather a small subject at Oxford and did not exist as a degree course at Cambridge.[8] From this basis, Raymond Williams, E.P. Thompson, Richard Hoggart (founder of the CCCS), and Stuart Hall (head of the CCCS, 1970-79) consolidated cultural studies, although all of them worked for important periods in departments of extra-mural studies, as well as mainstream departments, and all were strongly influenced by the left.[9] The roots of cultural studies are also deeply embedded in the Frankfurt School of critical theory, whether based in pre-Nazi Germany or, thereafter, in Columbia University, New York. This heritage has been criticised for its alleged elitism and snooty attitudes towards popular, let alone mass, culture, although the insistence on judging popular culture did not entail its dismissal as a cultural form in critical theory. There is no doubt, however, that, as with the British culture-and-society critics, there was a formidable critique of modern capitalist society right at the heart of these intellectual precursors of cultural studies. As Stuart Hall says, 'there is something *at stake* in cultural studies, in a way that I think, and hope, is not exactly true of many other very important intellectual and critical practices'.[10]

Cultural studies in the USA had slightly different roots: it drew firstly on American studies and then, during the Second World War, on the Frankfurt School; media studies (McLuhan) and various writers on race and gender in the 1960s and 1970s were also influential. However, Stefan Collini sees US cultural studies as being, above all, 'the marriage between literary theory and what has been called "the politics of identity"', although, as I mentioned above, this should not obscure the importance of Geertzian anthropology, itself of course rather literary in its interpretive stance.[11] As Hall observes, the USA academy took up European theory not so much via Althusser, Gramsci (as Hall himself did), but more via Barthes, Derrida, Lacan and Foucault (although the latter was also a major influence in the

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[8] F. Inglis, *Cultural studies*, Oxford, Blackwell, 1993, p. 30.

[9] All the texts referred to above contain information on the CCCS; see also J. Lave, P. Duguid, N. Fernandez and E. Axel, "Coming of age in Birmingham: cultural studies and conceptions of subjecivity", *Annual Review of Anthropology* 21: 257-282, 1992.

[10] S. Hall, "Cultural studies and its theoretical legacies", in *Cultural studies*, (eds) L. Grossberg, C. Nelson and P. Treichler, London, Routledge, 1992, p. 278.

[11] S. Collini, cited by J. Munns and G. Rajan in *A cultural studies reader: history, theory, practice*, (eds) J. Munns and G. Rajan, London, Longman, 1995, p. 213.

CCCS). The impact of these theorists on cultural studies in Britain was as much via literary and cultural studies in the USA as it was directly, and this gave cultural studies a rather different image from that of its guise in the CCCS.[12] As John Gledhill notes in his speech, this trend in cultural studies seems a good deal less attractive to many anthropologists, whether in Britain or the USA. Gilroy observes that in the USA, 'commodification and institutionalization may have already led to the recuperation of cultural studies by the academic and disciplinary conventions against which it was once provocatively defined' and Agger's book is also concerned with differentiating between a truly critical cultural studies rooted in the insights of the Frankfurt School and the CCCS, and a commodified and conservative cultural studies wallowing in literary deconstruction alone. Lave et al. also find the 'class-cultural theoretic' of the CCCS powerful in the face of recent moves towards a 'less materialist, more discourse-based position'.[13] In this respect, the recent Sokal affair in the USA dealt a powerful blow to deconstructivist, postmodern trends cultural studies which, some feel, have lost all grip on reality and politics.[14]

What this adds up to is a tradition of critique of modern, capitalist society in cultural studies which, although many feel that this may have been betrayed in more recent developments in the field, is nevertheless right at its heart, in its very constitution. John Gledhill

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[12] R. Bromley, "Interview with Professor Stuart Hall", in *A cultural studies reader: history, theory, practice*, (eds) J. Munns and G. Rajan, London, Longman, 1995, p. 670.

[13] P. Gilroy, "Cultural studies and ethnic absolutism", in *Cultural studies*, (eds) L. Grossberg, C. Nelson and P. Treichler, London, Routledge, 1992, p. 187; B. Agger, *Cultural studies as critical theory*, London, Falmer Press, 1992; J. Lave, P. Duguid, N. Fernandez and E. Axel, "Coming of age in Birmingham: cultural studies and conceptions of subjecivity", *Annual Review of Anthropology* 21: 257-282, 1992.

[14] The Sokal affair concerned an article published by physicist Alan Sokal in a refereed cultural studies journal. At first sight, it was a postmodernist account of theory in physics. The author argued that reality was a linguistic convention and that quantum gravity theory had progressive political implications. Soon after, he revealed that the whole thing was a parody, lacking 'anything resembling a logical sequence of thought'; one could find 'only citations of authority, plays on words, strained analogies, and bald assertions'. Yet *Social Text* published it, thus discrediting, in his view, the excesses of the deconstructivist trend in cultural studies. See A. Sokal, "Transgressing the boundaries: toward a transformative hermeneutics of quantum gravity", *Social Text* 46/47: 217-252, 1996; the debunking is in A. Sokal, "A physicist experiments with cultural studies", *Lingua Franca*, May/June, 1996, pp. 62-64.

may chide current cultural studies for its 'meta-discourse which [finds] colonialism, racism and sexism everywhere' and for an inadequate view of the global structures of capitalism. Or again, Stuart Hall is frank about the unarticulated resistance to incorporating issues of gender and race in the work of the CCCS.[15] In that sense, I do not want to be over-optimistic about the potential for (adequate) critique in cultural studies. Nevertheless, I think it is hard to find the same constitutive current of critique of modern capitalist society in anthropology. Anthropology was formed in a less critical mode and in a colonial context. The idea of anthropology as a handmaiden to colonialism does not stand up to even brief examination and anthropologists were 'reluctant imperialists' and often 'rum' types or even 'maniacs'.[16] Still, there is no doubt that anthropology bore the marks of its colonial cradle, both in its functionalist concern with bounded units and its ahistorical tendencies.[17] Even an anthropologist such as Evans-Pritchard, who strongly denied the handmaiden role, argued that a better understanding of Azande beliefs would aid smooth administration.[18]

Of course, critical attitudes can be found in anthropology. Examples include condemnations of genocide in the Amazon and other forms of 'development', the Marxist anthropology of Eric Wolf and journals such as *Critique of Anthropology*. Just as cultural studies was coming into its own, anthropology was beginning to take on board the implications of a globalising capitalist economy and the place of the discipline and its 'objects' of study within it. But it is noticeable that this was part of anthropologists' tendency to spend a good deal of time critiquing themselves or their precursors (note that the journal is Critique *of*, rather than Critique *in*...). This is a valuable trait in its own right, but it is not the same as a *built-in* critical attitude towards the society which forms the context for the analyst. On the contrary, anthropology was formed around the attempt to vindicate, rather than

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[15] S. Hall, "Cultural studies and its theoretical legacies", in *Cultural studies*, (eds) L. Grossberg, C. Nelson and P. Treichler, London, Routledge, 1992, p. 282.

[16] See W. James, "The anthropologist as reluctant imperialist", in *Anthropology and the colonial encounter*, (ed.) T. Asad, London, Ithaca, 1973, p. 42. The epithets 'maniac' and 'rum person' were applied to the Eastern Nigeria government anthropologist, Northcote Thomas, by a Colonial Office official; see H. Lackner, "Social anthropology and indirect rule: the colonial administration and anthropology in Eastern Nigeria, 1920-1940", in *op. cit.,* p. 136.

[17] See A. Grimshaw and K. Hart, *Anthropology and the crisis of the intellectuals*, Cambridge, Prickly Pear Press, 1993, pp. 24-29.

[18] See W. James, *op. cit.*, pp. 44-45.

criticise, the societies that it studied. I am not arguing that anthropology must always engage in a critique of modern capitalist society; I do think that the presence of such a project at the heart of cultural studies helps explain its relative success.

Anthropology's self-appraisal has often involved calls for more critical attitudes to global capitalism, or at least a greater recognition of the implications of this for anthropology, but this process seems an uphill struggle. Nigel Rapport sees the discipline's critical reflexivity as one of its strongest points, but the critiques of anthropology that we find in Talal Asad's seminal text or that of Dell Hymes in the early 1970s, we see repeated in different forms in Eric Wolf's classic work and then, in a postmodernist climate, in the collections edited by Fox and by Ahmed and Shore.[19] There are important differences between the evaluations of anthropology made in each of these texts, but all of them in some form require a greater self-awareness by the anthropologist of the relationship between the between subject and object and between West and the Rest (or the dissolution of such a dichotomy in a globalised world). Paul Willis and Mark Hobart, in their respective speeches and concluding comments, suggest that despite all the self-reflexive critique anthropology is still, in its actual institutional practice, suffering from an underlying stance of imperialism or narcissism (Hobart) or continuing empiricism and humanism (Willis). Some might object that both speakers are caricaturing anthropology as it is today, but I have some sympathy for the feeling that anthropology is *still* doing battle with its heritage. If, as Nelson et al. contend, 'the normalizing and exoticizing construction of culture and otherness [was] *constitutive* of traditional anthropology' (emphasis added), then this is perhaps not surprising.[20] Paul Willis argues that the obduracy of the problem lies in anthropology's reification of the field itself as the constitutive moment of anthropology. I would add that the continuing tendency, now lessening every year, for the field to be 'non-Western' is a further problem. To

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[19] T. Asad (ed.), *Anthropology and the colonial encounter*, London, Ithaca, 1973; D. Hymes (ed.), *Reinventing anthropology*, New York, Pantheon, 1969; E. Wolf, Eric, *Europe and the people without history*, Berkeley, University of California Press, 1982; R. Fox (ed.), *Recapturing anthropology: working in the present*, Santa Fe, School of American Research Press, 1991; A. Ahmed and C. Shore (eds), *The future of anthropology: its relevance to the contemporary world*, London, Athlone, 1995.

[20] C. Nelson, P. Treichler and L. Grossberg, "Cultural studies: an introduction", in *Cultural studies*, (eds) L. Grossberg, C. Nelson and P. Treichler, London, Routledge, 1992, p. 14.

the extent that anthropologists do fieldwork in contexts in which the people they study are potential long-term interlocutors in the research process (e.g., by doing research 'at home', although this is also a slowly increasingly potential beyond western countries), I believe that the brush of exoticisation and reification of culture, with which anthropology is still so easily tarred, will lose its power.

The other central difference between cultural studies and anthropology—and one which drew a good deal of comment from the various speakers—is the role of ethnography. I do not have much to add here, because everyone in the debate and, I feel sure, the vast majority of anthropologists agree that ethnographic research is fundamental. To the extent that cultural studies specialists have diverged from insistence of even one of their mentors, Clifford Geertz, that 'behaviour must be attended to, and with some exactness, because it is through the flow of behaviour—or, more precisely, social action—that cultural forms find articulation'; to the extent that they assume, as Inglis says Leavis did, that 'there is no difference between life and thought'; to the extent that the 'experience' central to cultural studies becomes simply the analyst's own experience and no one else's—to that extent, anthropology diverges from cultural studies and, in my view, rightly so.[21] Of course anyone can do ethnographic research, but following the same logic of my argument above, it is only really in anthropology that such a technique is *constitutive* of the subject.

The role of ethnographic research is by no means simple here. Many cultural studies critics—Hall, Inglis, Aggers, in their works cited so far—want their subject to be a 'worldly' one, as Hall puts it; i.e., to be politically engaged; not to deal only with texts, but with real political activities. This is clearly possible in cultural studies, yet equally clearly it can be done without what anthropologists would recognise as 'ethnographic research'. The argument is not, therefore, that ethnography gets your feet dirty and encourages political engagement; the argument must be that ethnography adds to the understanding of the relationship between culture and power by rupturing the taken-for-granted understandings of the analyst and the audience s/he is addressing. This also forms the second plank of an argument for anthropology: its comparative project which permanently seeks to step outside apparently self-evident categories. Of course, such a project is important to cultural studies too, and feminist, black and diasporic

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[21] C. Geertz, *The interpretation of cultures*, 1973, cited in *A cultural studies reader: history, theory, practice*, (eds) J. Munns and G. Rajan, London, Longman, 1995, pp. 246-247; F. Inglis, *Cultural studies*, Oxford, Blackwell, 1993, p. 36.

critics forced issues of otherness, Eurocentrism and phallocentrism (as issues of power) onto cultural studies agendas. But, again, this comparative project is constitutive of anthropology in a way that, arguably, it is not in cultural studies.

With neither of these arguments do I mean to reinscribe a boundary around anthropology. There is no *theoretical* rationale for doing so, in my view. The current differences between anthropology and cultural studies lie in the legacies left to them by their histories which perforce form part of their presents and their futures. To compete effectively as an academic discipline, I think anthropology will have to take on board a more incisive critique of modern capitalist society—something that many of its practitioners are already doing. In addition, and relatedly, anthropology will have to become more 'worldly'. Cultural studies has, in some of its guises, forsaken this vocation, but many of its central practitioners have not. For anthropology, this is a pressing issue that is not easily resolved.[22] At the same time, its tradition of ethnographic enquiry and comparative research give anthropology a head-start in the deconstruction—from experience, rather than just text—of categories and concepts that seem unproblematic. It may be that many ideas or traditions of thought are 'coming to an end'—at the time of writing, Anthony Giddens, the new director of the LSE, will soon be giving a speech on 'Politics in an age of endings'—but I see no reason why anthropology should die, nor why cultural studies should be its assassin. They have fed off each other in the past and will continue to do so in the future. If anthropology can interact with cultural studies to give its practice a sharper critical and wordly edge, then this is a good reason not to see the two subject areas as contenders in a zero-sum competition.

[22] See P. Wade (ed.), *Advocacy in anthropology*, Manchester, Group for Debates in Anthropological Theory, 1996.

PART 1—THE PRESENTATIONS

For the motion (1)

MARK HOBART

Strictly, cultural studies cannot be the death of anthropology as we know it because it is already dead. Now, if you must have a hand into which to thrust the smoking gun, cultural studies is the prime suspect. Put simply, anthropology has run out of episteme. But it had its day. Anthropologists did an important job in persuading Europeans that premodern peoples were not primitive or pre-rational, but were as human and culturally complex as they. Ethnocentrism however is still with us and, despite itself, the way anthropology is constituted as a form of knowledge implicates it too.

The world has changed irrevocably since anthropology's heyday as a movement (as Meyer Fortes liked to remind us it was). So have our ideas about knowledge and understanding. Anthropology was part of an intellectual and political period of European history. While other disciplines may know no better, anthropologists have little excuse for perpetuating Eurocentrism. That is an epistemological imperialism which presumes that 'our' fashions of knowledge, interpretation, narrative and so forth may be splattered at will over the intellectual practices of our subjects of study. Anthropology is ill-suited to an increasingly post-disciplinary world, especially when cultural studies offers an alternative. Being predatory by nature, were anthropology not so deep in its dogmatic slumbers as to be moribund, it would have occupied the intellectual slot taken by cultural studies long ago.

Anthropologists are used to Jeremiahs proclaiming the end of the discipline. The institutional riposte runs: 'Rumours of the death of anthropology are exaggerated. There are more students, conferences, publications, essays to mark etc. than ever before. So it cannot be true'. Intellectual death however is often a condition of academic success. Neo-classical economics rests upon pre-Darwinian

assumptions;[23] and psychology upon a dichotomy of the individual-society, which is vacuous if not circular.[24] That anthropologists have been more self-critical than some is not an excuse for self-congratulation. The pragmatic, even heroic, criticism runs: 'Stop whingeing about the difficulties and get on with the job'. Doing precisely what? Since cultural studies specialists would argue that this includes reproducing the conditions of ideological domination of others, I am not sure I want to.

Anyway, what I call death, anthropological Panglosses interpret as the discipline's apotheosis. Anthropology's agenda has become part of the general grounds of the human sciences. Its key concept, culture, has been borrowed, elaborated and commoditised, even if anthropology cannot claim the exclusive franchise.

There are periodic stirrings in anthropology. But, like the British economic recovery, these are usually shadows of revolutions elsewhere. To judge from most major journals, seminars and course reading lists, you might wonder how far such changes really permeate academic practice. Is change not proof though of the discipline's vitality? Or is it part of a diaspora away from traditional concerns? Is anthropology then becoming comparative cultural studies? Or are anthropology and cultural studies really the same? Such definitional questions tend to be essentialist. Although the two appear to share their object of study—culture—as intellectual and historical practices they seem to belong to different worlds.

What do British tribal elders say? The last ASA Decennial conference was supposed to herald a resuscitated anthropology. Of the editors of the subsequent collections, Wendy James warned that 'anthropology should guard its own heritage', so hinting at the nostalgia which makes anthropology heritage studies.[25] Danny Miller less sanguinely appreciated the need to demonstrate 'the continued relevance of anthropology in the contemporary world', a preoccupation which makes no sense unless it had been seriously questioned. Henrietta Moore however let the cat out of the bag:

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[23] K. Smith, *The British economic crisis: its past and future*, Harmondsworth, Penguin, 1989, pp. 124-34.

[24] The distinction is itself both cultural and partly self-fulfilling, a point among others made by radical psychologists in Henriques et al., e.g. 'the individual is not a fixed or given entity, but rather a particular product of historically specific practices of social regulation'. J. Henriques et al., *Changing the subject: psychology, social regulation and subjectivity*, London, Methuen, 1984, p. 12.

[25] See also J. Baudrillard, *Simulations*, (trans. P. Foss, P. Patton and P. Beitchman), New York, Semiotext(e), 1983, p. 13-23.

'anthropology is no longer a singular discipline, but rather a blend of practices engaged in a wide variety of social contexts'.[26] There is no longer any discipline to guard or relevance to demonstrate. Let me include our hosts today. Tim Ingold argued that 'anthropology is philosophy with the people in'.[27] (And I am told Dick Werbner's *Postcolonial identities in Africa* sells under a cultural studies' label.) Meanwhile in the real world, that flagship department of anthropology, Chicago, has become the centre of 'Transnational Cultural Studies'. The sound of anthropologists protesting their professional purity is being drowned by other, or even the same, people voting with their feet.

Are these not little local difficulties? A brief review suggests otherwise. Practically, research visas and funding are increasingly difficult. Many countries dislike anthropologists as much as journalists. Funding bodies are increasingly reallocating money as new 'priorities' (such as management studies) and new kinds of organic intellectual emerge. Anthropology's main task in the human sciences was to deal with premodern peoples and, as they began to disappear, with 'the primitive' or irrational in all of us (together with psychoanalysis). At this point however, the original political and intellectual rationale for anthropology effectively vanished, leaving us as proctologists of economic development or traditional intellectuals pining *au recherche du temps perdu*. Even if the richness of other ways of thinking and living risks being neglected or unappreciated, we need to ask on what authority we assume the right to represent others even to themselves? Is doing so not part of a long-standing habit of infantilising them?

Ontologically, what is the distinctive object of anthropological study or its relationship to our overarching concepts? This forum agreed that 'the concept of society is theoretically obselete'.[28] Culture is long in the tooth and incoherently polymorphous, a problem for cultural studies too.[29] As Patterson put it, culture is 'something that's gone off a bit. It means mould. If you leave something in the fridge

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[26] The quotations are taken from the editor's blurb in the Routledge catalogue.

[27] T. Ingold, "Editorial", *Man* 27(4), 1992, p. 696.

[28] T. Ingold (ed.), *The concept of society is theoretically obselete*, Manchester, Group for Debates in Anthropological Theory, 1990.

[29] For a discussion, see M. Hobart, *After culture? Anthropology as radical metaphysical critique*, Denpasar, Universitas Udayana Press, in press. See also J. Fabian, "Culture, time and the object of anthropology", in his *Time and the work of anthropology*, New York, Harwood, 1991, where he argues that culture is a retrospective and nostalgic notion.

and you go off on a long holiday, it's a write-off. It develops a culture'.[30] Culture, like society, is a particular Euro-American holistic category which has gone off rather badly.[31] Without such transcendental objects, we are left simply with practices, including thinking about these practices. Society and culture, as massive suturing operations, were the necessary conditions of epistemological supremacy over our subjects of study. To the extent that cultural studies has taken culture as the conditions under which social divisions like class, gender and race are naturalised, represented and contested, it avoids the worst of transcendant totalising.

What surely is distinctive, indeed constitutive, of anthropology is ethnographic fieldwork by participant-observation. Anthropology's contribution to the human sciences has not been so much theory (we mostly test others' theories in practice) as a practice: ethnography. We tend to fetishise it though. By no means all anthropologists are good ethnographers; and many people do better ethnography than anthropologists (for example my co-speaker, Paul Willis).[32] Its origins as an investigative method are dubious. It depended upon a conjunction of a naturalist and appropriative epistemology—facts are given, there to be collected and subsequently owned[33]—and the peculiar conditions epitomised by colonial government under which the inquiring ethnographer had the right to poke her nose into other peoples' lives and write about them without let, hindrance or consideration of the consequences for those described. Participant-observation is a polite phrase for 'voyeurism'.

The dislocations of ethnographic practice however have occasioned some superb original thinking. At its best intensive, interactive ethnography permits a unique kind of critical inquiry.[34] In

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[30] P. Clark, "Off the wall with Sir Les: an interview with Sir Les Patterson", *Evening Standard*, 20 November 1996. Sir Les Patterson, apart of course from being chairman of the Australian Cheese Board, is Cultural Attaché at the Court of St. James. So he should know.

[31] M. Strathern, "Parts and wholes: refiguring relationships in a post-plural world", in *Conceptualizing society*, (ed.) A. Kuper, London, Routledge, 1992, pp. 76-77.

[32] P.E. Willis, *Learning to labour: how working class kids get working class jobs*, Aldershot, Gower, 1977.

[33] M. Hobart, "As I lay laughing: encountering global knowledge in Bali", in *Counterworks: managing the diversity of knowledge*, (ed.) R. Fardon, ASA Decennial Series, London, Routledge, 1995.

[34] I deliberately do not distinguish ethnography, the description of peoples, from fieldwork, because ethnography is a series of overlapping practices. I prefer therefore to think of ethnography-as-fieldwork, -as-writing, etc. See M. Hobart,

principle at least, the people being interrogated may interrogate their questioner, revise the questions and even challenge the presuppositions behind them. Unfortunately, our epistemological practices get in the way. Our ideas of understanding presuppose intersubjectivity on terms always established by the anthropologist. Understanding is all too often one-way - the anthropologist's over the native. To the extent that we ignore people's understandings of the anthropologist or of one another, we prevent inquiry being truly dialogic or metaphysically radical.

The motion then is partly a statement of emerging fact. Cultural studies already pervades the work of many innovative and thoughtful anthropologists. The motion also implies such a shift is desirable. The widespread interest in cultural studies suggests it addresses issues that anthropology has failed to.

By cultural studies, I mean in particular the legacy of the Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies in Birmingham. According to its doyen, Stuart Hall, it never set out to be a single school, but rather a series of overlapping debates around public, and mass, culture ruptured by issues of feminism and race.[35] Confronting the implication of power and knowledge required continually rethinking the object of cultural studies.[36] Anthropology by-passes awkward issues, such as those raised by race and feminism by hypostatising them into objects of study (ethnicity, gender), at once ghettoising them and defusing questions of who does the knowing, about whom and under what conditions.[37]

Addressing such questions head-on avoids the pretence of epistemological and political neutrality, a hypocrisy which besets most

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'Ethnography as a practice, or the unimportance of penguins', *Europaea*, 2(1): 3-36, 1996. Also, for my adaptation of Laclau on dislocation, see E. Laclau, "New reflections on the revolution of our time", in his *New reflections on the revolution of our time*, London, Verso, 1990.

[35] L. Grossberg, "On postmodernism and articulation: an interview with Stuart Hall", in *Stuart Hall: critical dialogues in cultural studies*, (eds) D. Morley and K-H. Chen, London, Routledge, 1996, p. 149.

[36] S. Hall, "Cultural studies and its theoretical legacies", in *Stuart Hall: critical dialogues in cultural studies*, *op. cit.* pp. 268-69.

[37] On whether this constitutes a form of inferential racism, see S. Hall, "The whites of their eyes: racist ideologies and the media", in *The media reader*, (eds) M. Alvarado and J.O. Thompson, London, British Film Institute, 1990. It certainly naturalises uncritical intellectual élitism and trivialises the more radical feminist critiques; see H.L. Moore, *Feminism and anthropology*, Cambridge, Polity Press, 1988; G. Lloyd, *The man of reason: 'male' and 'female' in western philosophy*, 2nd. edn., London, Routledge, 1993.

disciplines of anthropology's generation. In a manner eerily reminiscent of Britain's lingering Tory imperial fantasies, anthropologists have overwhelmingly refused seriously to address the existence of the continent, here theoretical thinking from Bakhtin/Volosinov or Gramsci, to the Frankfurt Critical School or post-Heideggerian hermeneutics, to post-structuralism, postmodernism, contemporary psychoanalysis and critical feminist thinking. By contrast, cultural studies seized the opportunity to contribute significantly to the main intellectual debates of the last decades. I am not advocating the loonier shores of postmodernism. But most anthropologists proudly parade their stigmata of theoretical abstension, or plain ignorance. Stuart Hall, admittedly a *parti pris*, reflected that cultural studies had attracted attention 'not just because of its sometimes dazzling internal theoretical development, but because it holds theoretical and political questions in an ever irresolvable but permanent tension ... without insisting upon some final theoretical closure'.[38]

Cultural studies threatens to broaden and reinvigorate anthropology. Unless it is window-dressing, the transformation will effectively toll the death of the old anthropology and the emergence of new kinds of intellectual practices which, a better expression not coming to mind, I shall call comparative cultural studies.[39]

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[38] S. Hall, "Cultural studies and its theoretical legacies", in *Stuart Hall: critical dialogues in cultural studies*, (eds) D. Morley and K-H. Chen, London, Routledge, 1996, p. 272.

[39] Scholars such as Johannes Fabian, the late Bob Scholte and, rather differently, Rodney Needham have elaborated the philosophical implications of anthropology which the former two have referred to as 'critical anthropology'. I am much indebted to their work, but prefer to avoid the expression critical anthropology here because 'critique' and 'critical' have come to be used very loosely and cover a multitude of sins. In Fabian's and Scholte's sense, I think critical anthropology would make an excellent interlocutor with cultural studies. See J. Fabian, *Time and the other: how anthropology makes its object*, New York, Columbia University Press, 1983; J. Fabian, "Dilemmas of critical anthropology", in *Constructing knowledge: authority and critique in social science*, (eds) L. Nencel and P. Pels, London, Sage, 1991; B. Scholte, "Towards a critical and reflexive anthropology", in *Reinventing anthropology*, (ed.) D. Hymes, New York, Vintage, 1974; B. Scholte, "Critical anthropology since its reinvention: on the convergence between the concept of paradigm, the rationality of debate and critical anthropology", *Anthropological and Humanism Quarterly* 3(1-2), 4-17, 1978; R. Needham, "Skulls and causality", *Man* 11(1), 71-88, 1976; R. Needham, "Inner states as universals: sceptical reflections on human nature", in *Indigenous psychologies*, (eds) P. Heelas and A. Lock, London, Academic Press, 1981.

This new improved cultural studies has to answer two charges among others. Attempts to avoid codification have given rise to the complaint: what is cultural studies actually about? It can become thought about thought without an object, where interpretation substitutes for intensive fieldwork and textuality for interlocutors.[40] Cultural studies has proven sensitive to intellectual elitism. However such cultural populism runs into a dilemma.[41] The possibility of the popular and the masses being objects of study presupposes distinguishing a class of intellectuals who do the studying. What theory claims to overcome, the consequences of practice may reinforce.

When we turn to anthropological concerns the difficulties become grave. Analyses of postcolonial writing narrowly reflect the concerns of Euro-American intellectuals and effective ignore those of their subjects of study. The problem for comparative cultural studies is that the more sophisticated their theoretical practices become, the greater their potential analytical disparity with, and distance from, their subjects' practices. English especially grows into an ever-stronger enunciative language of translation and interpretation.[42] The masses, whether conceived as energetic and creative, or silent, passive and alienated, or ironic and antagonistic, remain curiously elusive.[43] And a familiar displacement occurs onto products (collective representations, texts, consumption, popular culture) and away from others' intellectual and critical practices, as if these did not exist.

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[40] This tendency is epitomised in much American cultural studies; see L. Grossberg, "On postmodernism and articulation: an interview with Stuart Hall" and S. Hall, "Cultural studies and its theoretical legacies", both in *Stuart Hall: critical dialogues in cultural studies*, (eds) D. Morley and K-H. Chen, London, Routledge, 1996, pp. 149-50, 273-74.

[41] J. McGuigan, *Cultural populism*, London, Routledge, 1992; cf. A. Gramsci, "The study of philosophy", in *Selections from the prison notebooks of Antonio Gramsci*, (eds and trans) Q. Hoare and G. Nowell Smith, London, Lawrence & Wishart, 1971, p. 334.

[42] M. Foucault, *The archaeology of knowledge*, (trans.) A.M. Sheridan, London, Tavistock, 1972, pp. 88-105; T. Asad, "The concept of cultural translation in British social anthropology", in *Writing culture: the poetics and politics of ethnography*, (eds) J. Clifford and G. Marcus, London, California University Press, 1986.

[43] See J. Baudrillard, *In the shadow of the silent majorities ... or the end of the social and other essays*, (trans) P. Foss, P. Patton and J. Johnston, New York, Semiotext(e), 1983; J. Baudrillard, "The masses: the implosion of the social in the media", in *Jean Baudrillard: selected writings*, (ed.) M. Poster, (trans.) M. Maclean, Oxford, Polity, 1988.

Eurocentrism lurks. The assumption underpinning cultural studies of a shared culture (which was always rather cosy) no longer holds. How is the analyst to engage with presuppositions which may be radically different, let alone with others' critical thinking? While anthropologists are experienced in addressing the former, they still have difficulties with the latter.

There is not much point in asking you to vote for comparative cultural studies, if it is just a guise for a new form of epistemological domination. Between cultural studies and anthropology however there are elements of a way out. People are, of course, engaged in all sorts of intellectual practices. This I take to be Gramsci's point that 'all men are intellectuals ... but not all men in society necessarily have the function of intellectuals'.[44] Because the peoples with whom anthropologists classically work mostly live under unpleasant régimes bent on stifling original and critical thinking does not mean that people do engage in such thinking. We must rework our intellectual practices to appreciate and engage with those of others, but such that issues of power are continually addressed. The imbrication of power in knowledge is a dilemma we have to face.

The practices of such a study would presumably stress the dialogic, a term which urgently requires rethinking. A telling index of anthropologists' capacity for hierarchy is the way dialogue is recognised only for fieldwork,[45] rather than being the start of the scholar's long engagement with her subject, assuming whatever forms are appropriate under the circumstances.[46]

To conclude, the measure of our commitment to a truly post-colonial world is whether we are prepared to engage with different, and potentially antagonistic, intellectual practices. The results are certain to be unsettling, because it requires questioning our claims to epistemological superiority. The other side may well argue that critical anthropology has addressed these deficiencies. Critique since Kant however often has imperialising consequences. On this score, as the dominance of Europe, and even America, is challenged by other

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[44] A. Gramsci, "The intellectuals", in *Selections from the prison notebooks of Antonio Gramsci*, (eds and trans) Q. Hoare and G. Nowell Smith, London, Lawrence and Wishart, 1979, p. 9.

[45] See, for example, J. Clifford, and G. Marcus (eds), *Writing culture: the poetics and politics of ethnography*, Berkeley, University of California Press, 1986.

[46] For example, although censorship of Indonesia's New Order régime prevents many issues being broached openly, it has not entirely inhibited lively public discussion. I have recently been engaged in two newspaper debates about the relationship of culture and mass media in Indonesia.

centres of power such as Pacific Asia, reverse colonialism is setting in, together with a new paternalistic, authoritarian ideology. Self-interest alone should make a less imperialising comparative cultural studies congenial. Anyone heavily invested in anthropology as it is and who regards cultural studies as a distraction from business as usual may wish to oppose the motion. Conventionally turkeys don't vote for Christmas.

My appeal is to those of you who feel dissatisfied with anthropology as it has become. The alternative, I suggest, is not a solution, but a determination radically to question what we are doing and whether there are not other ways of trying to imagine, and engage ourselves in, the human predicaments of a changing post-colonial world. Whatever emerges would combine elements of the best of anthropological and cultural studies practice, with others yet to be dreamed of (I hope not only by Europeans and Americans). This study however would differ so fundamentally in its presuppositions and practices that to call it anthropology is to risk the familiar slither back into 'normal science'. If you are discontent with anthropology as it is, question the self-satisfaction of much contemporary academia or wish to take issue with our convenient Eurocentrism, I invite you to support the motion.

Against the motion (1)

NIGEL RAPPORT

Introduction

I begin with a notion of philosopher Richard Rorty's: culture studies clogs appreciation; you cannot be inspired by something while at the same time regarding it as an example of 'cultural production', as a specimen of a certain known type. But inspiration is vital: the realisation that there is more to human being than is conventionally conceived of.[47]

In what way might it be true to suggest that one academic discipline could spell the end of another? I suppose because its subject matter and its methods of researching and disseminating information on its subject matter had become untenable, had been shown by the birth or the arrival of a new discipline to be no longer 'pertinent' or 'correct' or 'worthwhile'. In Thomas Kuhn's nice terminology, one academic discipline kills off another when there is a paradigm shift away from one and towards another. A 'paradigm', Kuhn explains, is that 'entire constellation of beliefs, values, techniques and so on, shared by members of a given community' of academics; and so strong can this community become, and so pervasive in one's academic experience, that it can be as though 'proponents of different paradigms practice their trades in different worlds'.[48] Are we witnessing or leading up to a paradigm shift such that 'an entire constellation of anthropological beliefs, values and techniques' give way to cultural studies ones? I intend to argue not. In particular, the nature of the anthropological paradigm, as it has developed over the last century, is such that paradigm shifts are something that occur within the discipline itself, in such a way as to make it seem to become, in each manifestation, only more like itself. For, as a paradigm, anthropology teaches the nature of paradigms. It is thus uniquely placed reflexively to consider its own development and to retain its proponents even as it changes its system of 'beliefs, values, techniques'. Each paradigm shift, indeed, only serves to prove the anthropological message: through social interaction, people construct individual world-views concerning

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[47] R.Rorty, "The inspirational value of great works of literature", *Raritan* 15, 1996, p. 13.

[48] T. Kuhn, 1970, *The structure of scientific revolutions*, Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1970, pp. 175, 150.

the nature of reality by way of cultural forms and then proceed to inhabit these forms in contestation and negotiation and exchange and evolution with others.

I shall argue that anthropology is well placed to ward off a paradigm shift which would replace it by something called 'cultural studies' because such shifts are an essential part of the theoretical reflexivity concerning the construction of human knowledge which the paradigm of anthropology teaches.

Some everyday truths

I shall return to the theoretical argument below. But let me first mention a few more practical matters. It would be true to suggest that one academic discipline spelled the end of another if one were unable either to hold an audience or to keep a quorum of practitioners (neophytes, professionals, exponents, apologists) in relation to the other. Academic disciplines are social relationships after all. However, as a university subject, anthropology has never been as popular. It is taught in some 29 departments around the British Isles, and new departments or teaching units and courses are opening each year—and not only in the new universities.

To be more specific, 1979 can be taken as something of a watershed year; not least for the Thatcherite revolution which challenged the legitimacy of a 'science of society' such as sociology was still proclaiming itself to be. It is largely since then that we have witnessed the large scale expansion of a discipline of cultural studies where sociologists *manqués* have proclaimed the unreality, the 'hyperreality', of 'late-capitalist' society. But since 1979, too, the number of university departments where anthropology is taught has grown by a third.

When I first came to Manchester as a PhD student, in 1979, there was no specialist undergraduate degree in anthropology (the BSocSci), and I was one of two people starting a PhD; altogether, Manchester had some 15 postgraduates on its books. The BSocSci degree began in the early 1980s, with a handful of students. When I left Manchester in 1993, as Admissions Tutor I was admitting some 30 students per year. Now, I understand, Manchester has a total of 90 undergraduate specialists on its books at any one time, and some 60 postgraduates.[49]

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[49] A further example: anthropology began as a university discipline in St. Andrews in 1979, with one lecturer and a few students who combined its study with

As regards its professional practitioners, well, as I say, in Britain there are more people teaching anthropology in more departments than ever before. Beyond the university, Anthropology in Action (and its former incarnations, Group for Anthropology in Policy and Practice, and the British Association for Social Anthropology in Policy and Practice) maintains links between an increasing number of people who find professional employment as anthropologists in government (local and national), in non-governmental organisations, in industry, commerce and the media. Nor, judging by other professional organisations—their health and size—is this restricted to Britain. The Association of Social Anthropologists of the Commonwealth (ASA) has some 550 members and is this year celebrating its 50th anniversary; in 1946 it began with a membership of something like two dozen.[50] The European Association of Social Anthropologists began in 1989 and now boasts some 1300 members in almost every European country. Meanwhile, the American Anthropological Association has some 8000 members in North America alone and holds annual meetings at which over 5000 attend. If one also considers the number of smaller professional organisations, and those associations and departments where the term 'anthropology' is glossed by ethnology, folk life, and so on (while the enterprise is much the same), then, regarding its practitioners the discipline of anthropology appears to be blooming.[51]

Among fellow academics, anthropology has become one of the sexy subjects, its pronouncements (on science and cyborgs, ecology and New Reproductive Technologies, nationalism and multiculturalism, violence and community, markets, risk and royalty) welcomed in disciplines as varied as social history, literary criticism, international relations, economics, constitutional law and, yes, cultural studies itself. Nor is the sexiness confined to within the university. The success of Anthropology in Action as an organisation evidences the

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Geography. Now, there are eight members of staff, 200 students in a first-year class, an annual graduating class of 25, and some 35 postgraduate students at different stages of their research.

[50] The original 1946 membership roster of the ASA was: Elkin, Elwin, Evans-Pritchard, Firth, Forde, Fortes, Fortune, Gluckman, Hogbin, Hutton, Jenness, Kaberry, Kuper, Leach, Little, Mair, Meek, Nadel, Peristiany, Piddington, Radcliffe-Brown, Read, Richards, Schapera, Seligman, Smith, Stanner, Wedgwood and Wilson.

[51] National organisations include those in Australia and India, as well as special interest organisations such as Japanese Studies, South American Studies, The Society for the Anthropology of Consciousness, Anthropology and Humanism.

call for anthropological expertise in a wider society and an audience amongst other professionals, from social workers to medics. In that same period, since 1979, anthropology has come out of the academy and claimed for itself a competency not only in those areas of traditional provenance in the Third World and abroad, but in those very centres of Western power and population that cultural studies has also set out to colonise. I am not one for quantitative analysis, but this array of data seems to find anthropology in rude health over precisely that time-frame when cultural studies has become routinised; and there is no reason at this time to expect these trends to be reversed.

If cultural studies has taken up and popularised the technical term 'culture' which anthropology considered its own, then this is not cause for worry or worse—feelings of grievance over academic theft, or ritual dunging of the supposed disciplinary boundary, or dissociation and retrenchment into the historical depth of other terms, 'society', 'structure', 'function', 'organisation' or whatever. There is room for more than one academic usage of a technical term, and, as publishers' lists show, the trendiness of the cultural studies term 'culture' can have enabling repercussions on anthropological publications of 'culture'. Meanwhile, as the legitimacy of the term spreads—not just into business and organisation studies, but also onto the bestsellers' lists, with such titles as *The Culture of Excellence* (something of a self-help manual on enterpreneurism and the business of inculcating enterprise culture)—and as the term 'culture' recolonises the discourses of informed Western punditry and discussion, so anthropology has a new topic to explore: the history of 'culture' as a term, its shift (as *Chambers Dictionary* has it) from meaning: 'refinement as a result of particular cultivation', to meaning: 'a type of or particular civilisation', and back again.

Anthropology as an attitude

It seems to me, in short, that anthropology is much bigger, as a subject of study, than any particular technical term, much bigger than 'cultural studies'. Because anthropology is an attitude, an awareness. The subject-matter of anthropology is a process, not any one thing. Anthropology is a study of the human construction of the world, an awareness of the creativity, the individuality, the sociality and the historicity of that construction, and an attitude of ironism concerning the absoluteness and the finality of any one particular construction. This is what it means to say that anthropology is the study of

humankind—in its social, cultural, symbolical, psychological, cognitive, biological and evolutionary entirety. There is much that is attractive in cultural studies, but it does not have this breadth and it has a specificity, a focus on a thing, which anthropology avoids and which enables anthropology to remain itself despite its paradigm shifts.

To elaborate somewhat, I mean this: cultural studies is by and large the exploration of discourse, and of one type of discourse in particular—large-scale collective discourses that link a community, a class, an age set, a nation, a part of the world, even the entire globe into one 'cultural' grouping. Listen to this advertisement for a Cultural Studies course at the University of Wales, Cardiff (my home town):

> In semester one you will be introduced to postmodern culture. You will visit a heritage site and consider the relationship between history and Postmodernity. You will also study a post-modern film. [...] You will look at sexuality in Postmodernity, analyzing how the Women's Movement and Gay and Lesbian Rights Movements have questioned the idea that sexual identity is natural. You will examine social ideas of the 'normal' and the 'natural' and the role of sexuality in the marketplace, taking examples from fashion, advertising and pornography. You will also read a postmodern feminist novel. In the final part of the module you will look at Postmodernity and the postcolonial.

As I say, there is much here that I find attractive as an academic discipline. It focuses on the here and now of people's experience. It deals with the sites and mediums of contemporary life: heritage plots, films and novels, advertising and pornography; and it treats contemporary issues: gay sexuality, feminism, the marketplace, post-coloniality. It bridges experience within the academy and that outside it; it also combines a social study with literary and political awareness. As I say, there is much here that is attractive, that I would like myself to be concerned with, academically.

However, cultural studies also sells itself in a faddish and immediate way, it is 'in yer face', and in this I believe it sells its subject short. It is superficial and soulless, sometimes deliberately so. For cultural studies is the study of discourse as if discourse were all there was: a surface of collective systems of signs and behaviours which people learn and exchange—people without souls. Cultural studies treats the history and spread of discourses, deconstructing their supposed in-built characteristics of inequity, 'slant and spin', as if there

were nothing else: it denies all real ground. Foucault meets Derrida and Bhabha, Baudrillard and Lacan in cyberspace.

The extract from the Cardiff prospectus I quoted was actually reproduced in *Private Eye*'s 'Pseuds Corner' column—*Private Eye* being an organ that can claim to have entered into the fundamental spirit of deconstruction long before the trend became a fad. And perhaps what makes the advert for cultural studies most sound 'pseud' is its mantra-like reiteration of postmodern 'culture' as being a thing and a cognitive space by which all is homogenised and explained; in cultural studies, it appears, there is nothing beside or beyond the discourse of culture. '*Il n'y a pas d'hors texte*.'

Cultural studies proves, in a word, to be unsubtle: it declares and evinces no appreciation of nuance. And nuance remains the key to anthropological awareness of the human construction of the world. In short: there is more to the study of discourse than surface exchange, and more to anthropology, therefore, than discourse *per se*.

An anthropological appreciation of its own discourse

If anthropology is a discipline, then, as Keith Hart insists, it is also a 'virtual anti-discipline'.[52] In Kluckhohn's phrase, it is an 'intellectual poaching license'. In seeking as complex an appreciation of experience as possible, anthropology retains a non-specialist and interdisciplinary, even apparently dilettante, use of all manner of methodology, ontology and epistemology in order to do justice to the 'vast intricacies' of the worlds of social interaction, individual interpretation and cultural forms of life.[53] It is not and has never been bound by the notion of closure, myopia and xenophobia such as Kuhn drew attention to in his descriptions of the workings of disciplinary paradigms. That is, anthropology recognises the use of boundaries, the cultural habitations, memberships, exclusions and belongings of others, but it endeavours not to be restricted by such preconceptions itself; for it also recognises how individual agents create and maintain concepts such as 'cultural boundaries' and 'preconceptions' for their own strategic use. The foundational attitude of anthropology is to be ever reflexively aware of the multiplicity of cultural discourses, their situatedness, and the strategic, interested and superficial nature of their usage. As a paradigm, in short, anthropology

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[52] K. Hart, "Swimming into the human current", *Cambridge Anthropology* 14(3), 1990, p. 10.

[53] G. Bateson, "Anthropological theories", *Science* 129, 1959, p. 296.

is against paradigmatic singularity and as a discipline it is anti-disciplinary. In Geertz's words, anthropology was 'born omniform' and endeavours to remain so.[54]

For this reason, whether over time or at one time, anthropology is not one thing. It has its different branches (cultural, symbolical, visual, psychological, ecological, biological, evolutionary) as I have mentioned. It also has its different methodological approaches (interpretive, functional, structural, Marxian, Freudian, literary, etc.). Above all, anthropology has its different levels, areas, types, even sensibilities of study (from individual personalities to world-systems, from African witchcraft to English farmers, from poetics to development, from intuition to quantification, from advocation to critique). In setting itself up to study 'humankind', in short, pluralism has always been the name of the game. There is much to study beyond cultural discourse and many ways in which anthropology attempts this. The one thing that anthropology denies is that knowledge of the diversity of human constructions in and of the world is impossible.

James Boon once described the mission of anthropology as the bringing of hope to the world against the spectre of uniformitarianism. By offering a rich diet of plural societies, individuals, languages, histories and narrations, an 'orgy of defamiliarisation', we can provide a substitute vision to that of a world of standardised uniformity.[55] This tricksterish pursuit was ever to value and celebrate diversity in the world, to teach the inherent individuality and unlikeness of people, places and things, the mutual peculiarity of a world integrated only through discontinuity. But if this is true of its mission vis-à-vis the substantive reality of the human world, then it is no less true of the reality of anthropology as a discipline: it teaches diversity through its own nature. Anthropology is a manifestation of multiplicity and diversity as much as its disciplinary project is the teaching of diversity and multiplicity.

This also furnishes anthropology with what Boon describes as the 'oxymoronic' nature of its mission (Rorty prefers 'ironic'). Anthropology translates between people who maintain their otherness and teaches an appreciation of irreducible difference; it is a message in cultural terms of cultural and extra-cultural diversity. But this ambiguity in its nature is basic to its mission. For the oxymoronics of

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[54] C. Geertz, *Local knowledge*, New York, Basic Books, 1983, p. 21.

[55] J. Boon, *Other tribes, other scribes*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1982.

anthropological discourse echo those of the cultural discourse it describes. Discourses are never 'things' within which people are trapped or imprisoned; discourses are the imaginative creations of people, and discourses are always being transcended and recreated. Inasmuch as anthropology is more than a discourse, more than the surface exchange of symbols, words and behaviours, the world is too.

An anthropological appreciation of natural discourse

It is a truth by which Nietzsche was perhaps the first to put much store that words and concepts, the building blocks of discourse, are singularities which stand for actual multiplicities. Karl Mannheim put the case lucidly:

> The world of external objects and of psychic experiences appears to be in a continuous flux. [...] The fact that we give names to things which are in flux implies inevitably a certain stabilisation. [...] It excludes other configurational organisations of the data which tend in different directions.[56]

The world is inherently multiple—home to a diversity of inhabitants, interpretations and world-views—and any one language, discourse or cultural system of symbolic classification is only a pretence at overall orderly encompassment. In short, there is oxymoronic practice at the very heart of the classificatory process which underlies human being-in-the-world: the giving of names to multiplicities. Indeed, if cultural discourse and its verbal and behavioural categories and names, can be seen to be an attempt symbolically to define, make singular, limited and congruous what *at the same time* we know to be multiple, unlimited and incoherent, then oxymoronic practice is at the very heart of our humanity, of what makes us human. We name and we classify *because* we are conscious of the logical impossibility of so doing; we name and classify and so create an orderly world 'as a work of art', as Nietzsche put it, and as an aesthetic reality.[57]

But if Nietzsche first expounded this idea in his rarefied musings, then through participant-observation research it has become the bread-and-butter truth of anthropological fieldwork. Discourse is no single simple thing. Its nuanced use introduces all manner of

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[56] K. Mannheim, *Ideology and utopia*, London, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1952, p. 20.

[57] F. Nietzsche, *The will to power*, New York, Random House, 1968, no. 796.

complexities and pluralities onto the neat stage of cultural exchange; there is discourse in shared cultural symbols, words and concepts and there are diverse, individual and situational interpretations and usages which belie the seemingly singularity and integratedness of the surface. A dual phenomenology, at least, is to be described: a superficial commonality of exchange and a concurrent flow of articulate consciousness beneath.[58]

This seems to me an anthropological insight of incomparable worth. Yes, there may be standardised collective discourses, rules and routines of interaction, with their own histories and configurations, but when people use them, it is surely impoverishing appreciation to suggest that the bodying forth of a discourse is the only thing happening, or the only thing that can or need be considered. For sure, such discourses provide links between the individual and the collective, and afford an avenue of social belonging and synthesis, but it is unperceptive (at the least) to claim that their enactment is all or most that their individual users are or can be cognitively engaged with.

Moreover, engagement in a cultural discourse need in no way translate as that discourse achieving agency, determining meaning or eliminating the individual work of interpretation: discursive exchange is never unmediated. In interaction, rather, people can be seen both assisting in a continuing collective performance and, at the same time, creating, extending and fulfilling ongoing agendas, identities and world-views of their own. People personalise discourse within the context of their own discrete perspectives on life, and there can be worlds of difference between shared grammatic-cum-paradigmatic competency on the one hand and shared cognition, common meaning or mutual comprehension on the other. Without a fund of discourses, it is true, the individual would not have the means of making sense, but without this work of interpretation, this individual use, discourse would not achieve significant animation in public life, and simply remain inert cultural matter.[59]

In fine, the phenomenological duality of public expression imbued, by individual agency, with personal purpose and intent can be neither sundered nor compounded, and it is a key anthropological datum. Moreover, the thick and subtle study of discourses-in-individual-use differentiates anthropology from a cultural studies which

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[58] See G. Steiner, *After Babel*, London, Oxford University Press, 1975.

[59] See N.J. Rapport, *Diverse world-views in an English village*, Edinburgh, Edinburgh University Press, 1993.

(after Foucault *et al.*) would privilege the historical play of discourse to the exclusion of most else.

Conclusion

Let me sum up my case. Does anthropology have to fear that now or in the foreseeable future cultural studies will make it redundant? After all, cultural studies has helped propel one of anthropology's key terms to star status, its publications and university courses have grown exponentially, and it deals accessibly with the here and now of many people's lives. Maybe anthropology is tired, anachronistic, moribund—even impossible (already dead). Well, I don't think so. In practical terms, since the birth of cultural studies, anthropology has kept its audience, if not increased it, and definitely increased its practitioners both inside the academy and out. In theoretical terms, there is much that differentiates anthropology and cultural studies and keeps their academic niches distinct. Cultural studies appears far narrower than anthropology and superficial and faddish in its interests in and awareness of cultural exchange. It truly believes that pop slogan of Marshall McLuhan's that: 'The medium is the message'. Anthropology, largely through its methodology, knows that, if you will, 'no-thing is any one thing, however it formally appears'. There are surfaces and depths, multiplicities of situations and interests and individuals, diversities of interpretations and usages and truths. The world of human interaction is oxymoronic, and subtlety is needed to appreciate its nuances. And this applies as much to the discipline of anthropology as to its objects of study; anthropology has never been one thing, but has operated at different times (if not the same time) a number of competing discourses and approaches.

Finally, its appreciation of multiplicity and diversity, in itself and in the world, provides anthropology with a potential moral engagement with it. For anthropology, unlike cultural studies, is in a position to advocate the appreciation of diversity within seeming sameness: its key insight into the nuances of discursive usage provides it with a moral message. That message tells of how radical multiplicity (of individuals and groups) may peacefully co-habit the same symbolic forms or medium.[60]

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[60] See N.J. Rapport, "'Criminals by instinct'. On the 'tragedy' of social structure and the 'violence' of individual creativity", paper presented at the conference, Cultures under Seige: Psychological Anthropology on Violence and Aggression in the Late-Twentieth Century, University of Utrecht, 29-30 August, 1996.

Hence, anthropology's future: to promote an awareness of the individuality, the sociality and the historicity of any one human construction of the world, to encourage an appreciation of the creative human work which inspires such construction, and to further an attitude of ironism concerning the absoluteness and the finality of any one construction in particular.

For the motion (2)

PAUL WILLIS

One of the problems we will have to deal with this afternoon is that of deciding what cultural studies is. The account we've just heard as an approach to complex living forms is really not far at all from how I would describe ethnographic cultural studies. When I was asked to speak to the motion, I wasn't quite sure on which side I would like to speak, and my first response was to reformulate the motion, because what I really believe is that cultural studies and anthropology need each other and are constituting an ongoing mutual critique. Instead of a simple motion, I'd ask you to try to think of a scenario—perhaps trying to fit in to the motion to some extent—where a dreadful struggle this afternoon results in the death of both of them. And that would be no bad thing—I'm not here to proclaim the everlasting life of cultural studies, and some of the arguments within cultural studies are more lethal and a lot ruder than the arguments I'm hearing this afternoon. And out of this mutual deathly struggle, I would like to see the phoenix arise of theoretically informed, critical, comparative ethnographic practice. Let's simply think of it as theoretically informed ethnographic study, which happens to make an acronym of 'TIES'. So, whether in death or birth throes, I would like to tie these disciplines together through a mutual critique.

Twenty minutes isn't long. A lot of my material has already been stolen. I'm going from notes, not reading, so excuse me if it's a bit rough, a bit crude. It is what I think.

So I'm going to use anthropology and cultural studies as forms of mutual critique. I think they do in some ways mirror each other's weaknesses. In terms of anthropology, please excuse my ignorance, but my ignorance will be no restraint on the broad picture I want to

paint nor on the broad critique I want to make. I think I'm the only cultural studies person here this afternoon, so perhaps you'll forgive me as an interloper, being rather crude and clodhopping around your subject.

What does cultural studies, or my version of cultural studies, teach us about anthropology? How is it that I'm still generally speaking, I suppose, within a cultural studies camp, rather than having jumped ship and joined an anthropology department? Well, in the anthropology I've seen and know, and in discussions, I think you are still troubled by some fundamental theoretical issues. I'd summarise them as continuing empiricism and continuing humanism. What do I mean by empiricism? Simply that the meaning of reality is indeed written on its surface. It is certainly refreshing that, for you, it might not be a matter of simple discourses which can be detached and studied in the ivory tower, the plague of cultural studies. But there seems to me a continuing sense in anthropology that you go to the field, preferably as far away as possible, in some sense to come to an unmediated, real, authentic reality, and that in some way, you can then make a report of that, based on the immediate senses of your own experience. All that you need to know to understand about the field is in some way *in* the field.

In the same way, the associated problem of a centred humanism still seems to me to be a problem in anthropology. That is, since you've travelled so far to the field, and you have a bounded notion of the field, despite protestations to the contrary, you see the agents involved in that field as in charge of their own destiny in some way or another. It might look traditional, irrational, old-fashioned, religious or whatever, but your job is to show the real truth, that ultimately their culture is human and rational, with centred human beings in some way controlling their own forms. In my view—and this is very fast I know—you're still in need, as it were, of political economy, of history, and of taking seriously what I think of as theoretical cross-cutters—if you like, those issues around discourse that we heard from Nigel's presentation, much of which I didn't disagree with. But it seems to me, even in that account, we got rather more agency and the specialness and definingness of human powers than historically given conditions and intractable discursive and symbolic material. We got rather more human control and centredness over the use of those things than we did respect for, and understanding of, the connected nature of those conditions which help to structure a particular field, and those conditions which decentre aspects of human agency. I mean

those things which you can't discover directly in the field: the history, political economy and context which determine a lot of behaviour in a particular site; and also the discursive forms, from the power of the state, through to types of gender, fetishism, commodity cultures, and the limits set by an overwhelming commodity relation, especially in the developed countries, but also elsewhere, actually everywhere. It seems to me that by not taking seriously these things, things which would have limited your empiricism and humanism, you have indeed sold the pass to cultural studies, which has charged in rather indecently and rather quickly, and for my own personal taste, in rather too continental a way, into the theoretical issues of the actual symbolic, discursive, material, commodity forms, and the specific political, economically-defined aspects of the field into which you are going to do your studies.

Associated with this empiricism and humanism is, for me—and forgive my crudity, I speak as an interloper—a continuing lack of discursive self-consciousness. I think this relates to empiricism and humanism again, that assumed sense of ethnographic authority. If the field is as far away from the metropolitan centre as possible, is bounded and separate, you can perhaps become the expert on it and, with few mediations, report on 'the truth' of the relations of the field. The continuing and obvious links with an imperialist past, despite the protestations, still make me uneasy, in terms of the whole notion of ethnographic authority—who are you, indeed, to poke your noses into others' business? I am also made uneasy by the way in which that ethnographic authority is often carried at the level of discourse. It's within rhetorical devices and within a reproduced authority within the written text, rather than in any scientific claim to really know about the field, that that ethnographic authority often resides.

Look, I know there's been an internal critique. I'm a fan of Marcus and Clifford, I like *Writing Culture*.[61] I know Rosaldo's *Culture and Truth*.[62] I know about the impact of postmodernism on anthropology. I know the attempts to take seriously political economy. I know Daniel Miller's stuff on consumption—which, mysteriously, he seems to claim as an anthropological domain, whereas in fact I would argue cultural studies has done most of the running in this area. I know these internal debates and critiques, but I come back to a simple

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[61] J. Clifford and G. Marcus (eds), *Writing culture: the poetics and politics of ethnography*, Berkeley, University of California Press, 1986.

[62] R. Rosaldo, *Culture and truth: the remaking of social analysis*, Boston, Beacon Press, 1989.

point, and it is 'the field'. James Ferguson—who may or may not just have been speaking at the AAA on this and whom I heard at the large Tampere [Finland] cultural studies conference—is producing a jointly edited critical book on 'the field' in anthropology.[63] It still seems to me, despite all of your protestations and despite all of those interesting internal critiques, from which cultural studies and certainly I have learnt, that there is still, as James Ferguson argues, something reified about 'the field'. In terms of institutional practice and the question of whether or not you're a real anthropologist and whether I, who am doing very similar things in many ways, could be considered as a real anthropologist, comes back to whether or not you've done fieldwork—and still, I fear, the further away the better. In some way I think it is still the case that you're trapped in empiricism and humanism and in an imperial past specifically by a too bounded notion of 'the field'. It's something you 'do' for virtually for itself. It's your institutional and professional rite of passage. If you haven't been through that rite of passage you're not really an anthropologist, and no matter what the sophistication we heard from Nigel about the baggage you take with you, your main orientation and set of definitions still revolve around 'the field'.

So, don't I believe in the field? Of course I do, but I think in my work that I have not reified the field. I haven't gone to the field because it's a field, the thing for itself. I've gone to different fields because of a puzzle or a problem that seemed directly relevant to me in political-economic, social and cultural terms. I've tried to indicate the theoretical kind of universe within which I was operating, why the puzzle turns into a puzzle, rather than the leftovers of the automatic obviousness of why you should go to a thing called the field, which still carries with it a whole imperial baggage and social relationship and the notion that you can describe a whole world.

In my work—I'm bending the stick of argument somewhat, but I think you'll see the point—I'm trying to make a 'theoretical confession', saying what kind of world it is, then going to the field to make some kind of intervention.[64] I have a problem in terms of why working class kids get jobs; I have a problem in terms of how commodities are used; I have a problem in terms of how unemployed kids accept their fate. I go to the field as the second phrase in the

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[63] A. Gupta and J. Ferguson (eds), *Anthropological locations: boundaries and grounds of a field science*, Berkeley, University of California Press, 1997. [Ed.]

[64] See P.E. Willis, "Notes on method", in *Culture, media, language*, (eds) S. Hall et al., London, Hutchinson, 1980.

construct, in order to try to get more knowledge about a specified issue, and to bring back that knowledge to give more adequate theoretical and thick description understanding. I'm not arguing that the field is in a purely theoretical relationship to developed theory. There is clearly a *theoretical* case, which I'll get onto in a moment, for kinds of thick description. Nevertheless the approach to the field, the reasons you go to the field, the chain of logic that leads you to the field, what you admit to knowing and being before you're in the field—all these things are far more contingent and related to, in my own version of cultural studies, some form of intervention, rather than to a continuing assumption that the field can stand by itself, which in my view is still open to primary charges of empiricism and humanism.

OK, what are the mirror-image charges against cultural studies? The arguments are in many ways rather simple and straightforward. To start with, it hasn't really had a genuinely ethnographic tradition. If you look at the Birmingham Cultural Studies Centre, although it's assumed to be the heart of cultural studies and assumed to have done a lot of ethnography, in fact a lot of such work boiled down to people reporting on their own lives, what they overheard in pubs, quite short conversations with people—fieldwork that didn't involve any disruption at all. I remember Jean Lave coming to Wolverhampton last year, and saying that if you didn't have eighteen months in the field, and she definitely meant a long way away from where you normally lived, then you had no chance of beginning to present an ethnographic case or argument. I don't think any cultural studies text has ever had a really serious long-term field presence. Perhaps my *Learning to Labour* is most unusual in that way.[65]

My general case, though, about cultural studies, is that it's lost some of its origins, which I would hope to hang on to and recycle, which were in open projects, engaged projects, empirically based in some way and to some extent in the early stages of the Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies. Stuart Hall, after all, in those early days, was looking at media and TV in specifically policy-oriented ways, funded by UNESCO and others, and aiming to produce work which was engaged in a public debate about the future of broadcasting. The early ethnographic work, if it was ethnographic, was nevertheless about recognising and responding to immediate change, the world around it, in an open and interventionist theoretical and political project. Much of that has now disappeared into a kind of theoreticism. I think there

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[65] P.E. Willis, *Learning to labour: how working class kids get working class jobs*, Aldershot, Gower, 1977.

is truth in the charges we heard against cultural studies—about the subjects of study being aspects of discourses and how subjects are spoken by language and symbolic forms, rather than subjects in some way acting for themselves. I think a lot of the continental theoretical imports have basically been around withdrawing from an engagement and a struggle with contemporary issues into a theoretical argument about the formation of subjectivity and, from a variety of angles, an understanding of subjectivity as a function of the relation of differences in symbols in discourses—if you like, removing the agent into discourse and therefore, to an extent, from history itself. After all, if the problem is to understand the discursive formation and limits of subjectivity, why bother with ethnographic study, since all of the answers will be in the internal discursive relationships, not in what people do?

I accept that criticism. Despite the original engagement of cultural studies with contemporary reality—started, of course, at the Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies by Richard Hoggart within the English Department [at Birmingham University], rather than Stuart Hall, who was the first research fellow [of the CCCS]—this engagement was, even in its heyday, not sufficiently empirical, not sufficiently ethnographic. It lacked a firm basis of extensive field work, a methodology, a commitment to leaving the Muirhead Tower—which really was a tower—to go out into a sensuous engagement with local cultural change and reality.[66] It was that lack of, if you like, an anthropological root. Cultural studies did not grow out of anthropology. It grew in large part out of English studies and out of the Culture and Society tradition critiqued through the work of Raymond Williams—another story. The lack of a really genuine ethnographic root in cultural studies, I think, has allowed it to drift into a theoreticism which has removed it from the engagement from which it originally grew.

I'll rush on to specific strands—I've touched upon them already—which worry me in cultural studies. There is within it, after all, a tradition that calls itself ethnographic or qualitative and that is media studies; it's what has happened to original cultural studies ethnography, if you like. But I think that audience studies do not actually produce, but more exactly fraudulently trade on an *assumed* hinterland of ethnography and apparent anthropological knowledge of the communities, the groups, the cultures that are taking in the media messages under study. There's very little throughout the media texts, from Morley to Ang and onwards, which gives you an anthropological

[66] The Muirhead Tower was the Centre's home at Birmingham University.

or detailed understanding of the receiving cultures as constellations of daily practices in the main sites of existence and exchange of those who are absorbing media messages.[67] At bottom there is, in my view, a kind of simple theory of reproduction going on which is that in the immediate decodings of messages, which you pick up through asking people what they think of TV or radio and sometimes observing them in the immediate context, it's possible to build theories about how ideologies are reproduced, how people accept or reject those messages. As an ethnographer, in my view there's another very important loop that is missing from all this, a loop that goes from those decodings, the sites of media consumption, back through into the practices and cultures and struggles of everyday life, especially around what continue to be the main sites—despite postmodernism—of work, school, family and the street. I think it is certainly very true that there are new resources being pumped by globalism and commoditisation into people's lives, and those resources are increasingly the means through which people make sense and come to an identity within the main sites of their lives. But in order to understand that use, we need to go back to what Raymond Williams called 'the relation of elements in a whole way of life', by which he precisely meant as 'elements' the main sites, main struggles, main interests, the main issues that confront people in their lives. Watching TV or listening to records may be one of them. What are the others? Where's the relation? So, that media tradition of ethnography has truncated ethnography whilst claiming its authenticity and power.

The other main strand of cultural studies I'd like to look at briefly and which we heard very well described, is around discourse and identity—from the state, through gender and different forms of symbolic systems and their differences—and around how these discourses produce meaning as well as 'subject-positions' for their users and participants. I do think this is a theoretical area vacated and still not taken seriously by anthropology, but in cultural studies it's become slightly insane, in my view. This is especially so with the postmodern gloss of absolute multiplicity, developing into an assumed impossibility of social agents coming to any kind of selfhood or lived subjectivity, and the apparent provision for all of us of multiple subject-positions which never meet—multiple parallel railtracks to infinity—and which can be discussed solely and severally in terms of

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[67] D. Morley, *Family television: cultural power and domestic leisure*, London, Comedia, 1986; I. Ang, *Desperately seeking the audience*, London, Routledge, 1991.

the respective discursive resources of a particular approach, but of which none makes any attempt to describe real people or their actual practices.

What I argue, amongst other things, in my forthcoming book is that part of the way forward for cultural studies must be to look at the ethnographically observable interaction and relationship of those 'subject-positions', the comparative uses and rubbings against each other, the articulations of different discourses within a compressed life space or situation, giving us some theoretical scope for the 'agency' that Nigel wants to rescue.[68] Being formed as a woman, for example, might bring some critical resources to bear around schooling or state formations. Masculinity, certainly in *Learning to Labour*, became a vehicle for resisting a certain kind of mental inculcation. It is precisely in trying to see how those discourses and subject-positions combine, that you can get a better view of reality, and also some way out of the banal humanism that I'm afraid anthropology still falls into. But we won't get to that theorised sense of agency and subjectivity by keeping these discourses entirely floating, separate from each other, and it is in the study of ethnographically observable and identifiable forms of relationship that we will make theoretical and human progress.

Well, what cultural studies needs is what I long ago in an article called the 'surprise' factor.[69] You can't get 'surprise' sitting in your study looking at discourses, you have to get into the world to see how discourses are used *in combination*. I would make a plea again for the contextual study of how the new resources of cultural meaning—commoditisation, globalisation and all the rest of it—are used, not in truncated audience studies, but in terms of understanding the relationships of the continuing main important sites of life. We won't come up with the old homogeneous groupings (working-class culture or whatever), but we will find observable new groupings that will help both our understanding and politics. We'll also, in my view, through what I hope will be a renewed ethnographic practice in cultural studies, come to the theoretical advantages of thick description, where relationships not yet theorised—as in our race, class and gender mantra—nevertheless still appear in, are still somehow represented in, the raw material of messy history, which is always beyond the namings of particular discourses. Like anthropologist, I do accept that in thick description are materials for the dialectical development and

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[68] P.E. Willis, *Life as art*, Cambridge, Polity Press.

[69] P.E. Willis, "Notes on method", in *Culture, media, language*, (eds) S. Hall et al., London, Hutchinson, 1980.

combination of new and existing theorisations, for the discovery and understanding of kinds of binary divisions and their relations other than those of our well-used mantra. I think humour is very important; creativity is very important; different kinds of languages and register use are very important; the relations of fetishism and authenticity are very important. There are many things yet to be clarified and theorised in fast-changing human cultures. Depending on your 'theoretical confession' and the type of intervention, a range of behaviours, a range of thick descriptions, are possible which are going to throw up relevantly messy data in order to develop your theory in specified ways—not in terms however, remember, of trying to discover, as it were, the whole world. There is a desperate need within theoreticised cultural studies for a theoretically informed fieldwork practice which allows for 'surprise', and which gives scope for thick description to produce data not prefigured in theoretical starting-positions.

So I finish very simply. Anthropology is dead. Long live 'TIES', theoretically informed ethnographic study.

Against the motion (2)

JOHN GLEDHILL

There are few, if any, academic disciplines whose death has been foretold as frequently as that of anthropology. Even Malinowski sat worrying about the demise of the primitive as he crafted himself into British Social Anthropology's myth of origin. But I take today's motion as a call for the discipline's liquidation and subsumption rather than a prediction about possible institutional shifts within academia. The sensible thing for me to do would be simply to defend the continuing value of the anthropological project and argue that we are getting on very nicely on our own, thank you. An even more sensible tack might be to point out that anthropology cannot be reduced simply to the sub-field of cultural anthropology. But I'll hold off from being sensible for a while, because I do, in fact, believe that anthropologists should maintain a critical distance from cultural studies.

Being a reflexive sort of field, cultural studies is strong on genealogy, but it has changed a lot and this is a potential problem for the debate. Most of us read and like some of it, but I think we do need to look at the big picture. Ten years ago, we might have debated whether cultural studies was actually a discipline, but institutionally speaking, that question has been resolved by the creation of the usual apparatus of departments and chairs, at least in the metropolitan countries. The budgets are big and the stars are even bigger, in rather marked contrast to anthropology's greyer public profile. The field has, however, changed almost out of recognition as the years have gone by, partly, though not exclusively, as a result of its take-off in the United States. As Paul Gilroy has pointed out, early cultural studies was terribly English, and one of the major shifts is in its apparent globalisation.[70] Another is the progressive decoupling of much of cultural studies from Marxism and Marxist kinds of concerns. A good thing too, you may be thinking. But I would ask you to think as well about how much of the current work being done in cultural studies has the kind of critical edge that the earlier work had and whether the field's institutionalisation isn't also a reflection of its domestication by the powers it once sought to confront.

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[70] P. Gilroy, *The black Atlantic: modernity and double consciousness*, London, Verso, 1993, p. 5.

If we go back to the late 1950s and 1960s in England, cultural studies emerges as a sometimes romantic but always politically engaged reflection on the massifying implications of the post-war Fordist-Keynesian mode of economic regulation. The reflection was increasingly one on the transformation of working class culture. It increasingly became a matter of recuperating a social and cultural world on the wane, to be replaced by a focus on the 'popular' as a potential site of resistance. The part of the early effort which was concerned with contesting the Leavisite notion of 'the canon' in literary criticism was obviously largely textualist, but by the early 70s, when I entered anthropology, the radical sociologists were the ones who went for qualitative ethnography and micro-studies rather than large-scale quantitative survey. We all agreed that this was A Good Thing. But the Little Englander approach was soon undermined. We began to read French authors who initially pulled us in all sorts of directions. But they eventually took some of us to the decentred world in which it was the politics which were micro, if not mouse-like, and the structures of Northern late capitalism acquired somewhat eternal qualities. Perhaps this was realism. Perhaps it was even a theoretical advance. But it was certainly the point at which the field of cultural studies both became more differentiated and took off internationally.

Faced with Thatcherite populism, the Birmingham School reorientated its efforts towards a critique of a cultural nationalism which became central to the management of economic decline in an era of accelerating economic globalisation. This emphasis on practices of 'othering' by race or sexuality enhanced the kinds of influences cultural studies in Britain could have on anthropology in Britain. The interpenetration became stronger as the Atlantic axis of cultural studies tied writers like Edward Said into the emerging debate on ethnographic authority and writing. Even a critique as powerful as Said's was trapped to some extent within the logic of Western discourses, but cultural studies did now become the field where the voice of the oppressed or marginalised seemed to find its fullest expression. Yet the diasporic intellectuals who played such an important part in this movement soon found themselves grappling with the increasingly uncomfortable issues of who should be speaking for whom, and with the need to deconstruct some of the homogenising categories that their own voices had created. The problem was built into the cultural studies project from the start: it lay in the need to make a transition from a problematic in which 'culture' had originally been a question of a literary canon and the mores of

classes, to a new kind of problematic in which it was vital to pose the question of what 'cultures' are and how they relate to socially differentiated human actors who both shape and are shaped by historical process. At this juncture, a meta-discourse which found colonialism, racism and sexism everywhere no longer seem equal to the task in hand. The culture concept is, to be sure, a problem for anthropology too, but we are not quite so stuck with defining ourselves around its reification.

This is where I think anthropologists should start running away from what are now largish areas of cultural studies. Madonna as transgressive icon separated from Madonna as self-realising media commodity might be a cheap shot. But unreflective cultural populism becomes a truly serious problem when the culture industry in question is American multiculturalism. The sanitised tokens which stand for essentialised ethnic difference have now become central instruments for both diffuse and concentrated powers which are far from innocent. Multiculturalism doesn't simply commodify 'ethnic culture'. It leaves real social and economic power where it is, and is perfectly compatible with racist definitions of identity (euphemised as ethnicity). Each person, each group, in its place. Each person embodies the characteristics ascribed to the group. Now I concede that these issues are discussed within cultural studies: but we need to ask how easy it is in practice to avoid 'fixing difference' and homogenising populations within the emerging *institutionalised* framework of cultural studies, particularly as it is developing in the United States today. And where cultural studies really does highlight diversity and non-homogeneity, does it not also tame such diversity by its increasing predisposition to feed global consumer and media industries with product-diversifying intelligence?

Some of these charges could certainly be levelled against at least some professional anthropologists. Anthropology became integral to the field of cultural studies in a much bigger way in the globalisation phase, and cultural studies became part of the critique of anthropological practice. But we do not have to accept all of that critique or ignore the way it has been institutionally located in the Northern academy. It's time to turn to the defence of the anthropological project.

Anthropology is not a study of how people relate to culture but of how they live it as practices within fields of relationships with other human beings. There are obviously different ways of conceptualising the processes of social life, but anthropology at its best does remain

the social science that conserves a vigorous commitment to holism and to understanding the full complexity of social *process*. This, in my view, is what gives it at least a potentially superior purchase on what is certainly a key issue in cultural studies: *how power works through people*. Anthropology is not merely about 'giving a voice to the marginalised', much less taking what the marginalised say as unproblematic. It is about seeing what tensions exist between what people do and what they say, asking what they mean when they say it, and questioning why they say it when they do, in other words, *in particular social situations*. Anthropology has proved itself capable of constant questioning of its own assumptions and procedures, not merely in the field of ethnographic representation, but in its capacity to address the problems of a changing world. We are still developing as an academic discipline because we are still capable of producing analyses which challenge established ways of looking at the world and the diversity of forms of social life and social experience within it. For us, diversity is a starting point of analysis in a quite different way from much of cultural studies: we are interested in it not simply for what it can tell us about human possibilities, or as a way of challenging 'normalising' tendencies, but as a methodological key for systematic comparison.

A lot of cultural studies today is concerned with how the local mediates the global, but it is not, in my view, posing the right sorts of questions about the global itself. Much of it rests on the kinds of assumptions which underpin Fukuyama's conception of the end of history.[71] Monsieur Le Capital struts his stuff on the global stage, along with a host of other abstractions, feebly contested by a multitude of decentred subjects lost in postmodern fragmentation. Anthropologists who have stuck to the guns of a more holistic perspective and kept a bit of an eye on the agents who exercise power have some chance of seeing that other parts of the world seem to be reshaping themselves in terms of distinctly totalising visions which will make our world quite different in the next millenium. Anthropology is the discipline most able to identify the alternatives to Northern histories of nation-building, state-building and institutionalisation of economic life which are already visible in the world around us if we care to look. Anthropology is the field where one can find nuanced models of the causes and meaning of small-scale and large-scale social violence and the complexities of attempts to build lives and communities. It is also

[71] F. Fukuyama, *The end of history and the last man*, Harmondsworth, Penguin, 1992.

the field which is now making serious attempts to get at the human beings behind the categories through which the North and emergent transnational agencies of global 'governability' normalise the sufferings of *people* and transfer responsibility for that suffering onto peripheral demons. I could go on at some length in this vein, but the point is probably already clear. Anthropology still has the capacity to conduct a unique kind of critique, one that is based on the proper historical contextualisation and holistic analysis of social process based on deployment of a systematic comparative method. And anthropology is more than critique: it still produces alternative positive accounts of lived social realities.

It is, of course, true that anthropology has needed to abandon many of its cherished assumptions to adapt itself to the study of a world in which people are increasingly mobile, and that it did not recognise the significance of earlier processes of mobility adequately. It is also true that anthropology has to some extent entered this area under the banner of possessing a privileged knowledge of 'culture'. The contributions of writers such as Paul Gilroy have had an important and positive influence within anthropology. Yet the impetus has not come entirely or even significantly from cultural studies, in the case of my own region [Latin America] and its relations with the US. Anthropologists such as Michael Kearney and Roger Rouse have kept their analyses of transmigrants firmly focused on the human implications of transnationalism for people, and kept the state and political economy firmly in view, not as abstract reifications but as historicised structures with content.[72] Their conclusions are not identical, but both in their own fashion have kept a window open on the processes which both disable and enable postmodern subjects within larger fields of social, political and economic power. I would argue, then, that there are still recognisable differences between the kind of work that anthropologists do and the kind of work which is increasingly dominant in cultural studies.

The differences do not arise from ethnography as such, since ethnography is not the sole preserve of anthropologists. They arise

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[72] M. Kearney, "Borders and boundaries of state and self at the end of empire", *Journal of Historical Sociology* 4(1): 52–74, 1991; R. Rouse, "Making sense of settlement: class transformation, cultural struggle and transnationalism among Mexican migrants in the United States", in *Towards a transnational perspective on migration: race, class, ethnicity, and nationalism reconsidered*, (eds) N.G. Schiller, L. Basch and C. Blanc-Szanton, *Annals of the New York Academy of Sciences*, vol. 645, pp. 25–52, New York, The New York Academy of Sciences, 1992.

from the way most anthropologists approach their ethnography, and the fact that much of our ethnographies are still conducted in places which force us to come to terms with the unexpected and the unknown. This is simply a different kind of exercise from much of the work which has been done with, say, ethnographies of the impacts of the global media industry. I would also argue that the closer anthropological work has got to the textualist side of cultural studies, the less satisfying it has seemed. The analysis of social action and social relations has proved a resilient part of the anthropological project, because it remains central to the kinds of things which anthropologists seek to describe and explain. Without it, we find ourselves unable to grasp the living meaning of the oppositions congealed in the static juxtaposition of words and concepts, myths and other readily textualisable products of the ethnographic process. Without it, we cannot use this material effectively to disrupt the categorisations and assumptions which are ingrained in the western historical tradition. Even this, the most 'traditional' of anthropological objectives, remains very much a problem to be worked at. But the fact that we do still work at it, with a continuing critical re-evaluation of our past results and present conceptualisations, suggests that the discipline will live on a while longer.

And perhaps quite a while longer. The variety of human experience and the puzzles of human behaviour do not appear to be diminishing. Cultural studies has demonstrated both the power of the global culture industry and the way its impacts are mediated and transformed by that variety, to potentially useful commercial effect, inter alia. But this particular focus on culture hardly begins to exhaust the scope of anthropology as a social science, let alone the social and political issues which anthropologists are currently trying to address around the world. By virtue of its continuing focus on the micro and the local, anthropology continues to discover situations and phenomena which cannot be imagined by the Northern consciousness, even by that of a diasporic post-colonial intellectual. 'Being there' does not, of course, grant absolute authority to the observer, but it sure as hell improves on not being there at all. Dialogic ethnography entails a rather sustained engagement with people, not just writing another monograph. And it's a lot easier to side-step the demands the subjects of ethnography might make on the contemporary student of culture by only interacting with other intellectuals and suburban neighbours. Yet anthropology is more than ethnography, of course. It offers alternative windows onto history—in a

way which often makes it difficult to sustain the traditional 'culture concept'. And it is, as I observed at the beginning, more than simply social and cultural anthropology. The latter has certainly succeeded in exposing the specificity of western constructions of 'nature' and 'biology', but that valuable cultural critique in no way enables us to ignore the positive ways in which archaeology and biological anthropology can contribute to social critical projects. Consider, for example, Michael Blakey's work at Howard, which is combining the historical archaeology of a unique Afro-American cemetery in New York City with the painstaking reconstruction of the medical and social history of the bones the anatomist and political activist W.M. Cobb collected from hospital morgues, along with the records of where the patients lived and who brought them in. Blakey's work is not gesture politics, but an imaginative attempt to put new evidence on the table.[73] I contend that a great deal of social anthropology is also still succeeding in doing that and that it is often not the kind of knowledge that is welcome in Northern societies. This is not, I suggest, a consequence of our growing irrelevance, and if it proves the death of us, we will at least die with our boots on.

[73] L.M. Rankin-Hill and M.L. Blakey, "W. Montague Cobb (1904-1990), physical anthropologist, anatomist, and activist", *American Anthropologist* 96(1): 74-96, 1994.

PART 2—THE DEBATE[74]

Peter Wade: Obviously there is, in some senses, quite a lot of common ground between the opposing camps, but in other ways I think there are some substantial differences. We could ask ourselves whether Nigel's faith in the reflexive, self-critical nature of anthropology is over-optimistic. We could also ask ourselves whether Paul's and Mark's description of anthropology is actually an old-fashioned, out-of-date and limited description of anthropology. Is anthropology really still enmeshed in neo-colonial structures and visions, or, as John seemed to be arguing, is it actually cultural studies which is propagating a new form of colonialism in its ideas about diversity and multi-culturalism? So there are still some real areas of difference and debate here.

Dick Werbner (University of Manchester): I think it's one of the delights of these debates that when the proposer proposes, he may be followed by a seconder who ends up opposing, when he's intended to support. This is the fate, I am afraid, of Mark Hobart, and he has given me the chance to mention a book I've just published, *Postcolonial identities in Africa*.[75] On the back of the book is a list of the relevant subject areas that the book addresses that includes primarily cultural studies, political studies and African studies, but not, interestingly enough, anthropology. So it would seem that anthropology is dead on the back of this book. The list is fixed by marketers, who think they know what the market is about and who are not chosen by oneself, just as one doesn't always choose who one's partner is going to be in one of these debates.

What I find most striking is that the one who does know what cultural studies is all about is the practitioner. As anthropologists used to, we can learn by listening to people who practice what it's all about. But what Paul Willis has said astonishes me by its weakness. Cultural

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[74] In editing oral contributions transcribed from tape, I have reduced the length somewhat by cutting superfluous statements and repetition. The overall meaning has not, I hope, been significantly affected [Ed.].

[75] R. Werbner and T. Ranger (eds), *Postcolonial identities in Africa*, London, Zed Books, 1996.

studies is not a killer, because it's not strong enough to kill anything. Cultural studies doesn't have any depth of ethnography, apart from Paul Willis himself. And that, I think, is where the problem for us lies. His portrait of anthropology is anachronistic and is not the anthropology of the present. Anthropologists in general and, for example some of us yesterday, have been deeply engaged in discussions of political violence, responsibility and terror, not out of any choice of our own, but because what Paul Willis calls the 'field' compells us to address these questions with great seriousness, encompassing the political and economic issues that affect the lives of people we know.[76]

So I find on the one hand that the proposer of this debate has had a seconder who shows there's no danger to anthropology, because anthropology is strong where cultural studies is desperately weak, and who shows that there's no understanding from the cultural studies side of how viable and forceful anthropology is at the present time. On the other hand, the opposing side of the debate starts with anthropologists speaking about what anthropology is like, and perhaps with some concern for the extent to which cultural studies has become excessively popularised in its move from Birmingham to America. It's this which leads me to the question which I'd like to put to both sides, and which owes something to Mudimbe's notion of *reprise*, or reappropriation.[77] I've had little sense so far of how anthropology contributed to the early emergence of cultural studies in terms of the influence of Lévi-Strauss on Willis's work and on that of Stuart Hall. This leads me to wonder to what extent there has been a re-processing of anthropology through cultural studies, a re-processing that we are now going to have to come to terms with and that may effect the mutual or non-mutual relations between anthropology and cultural studies. I'd like each side to comment on how and in what ways anthropology is being re-processed through cultural studies and in some sense having to face itself again, in its encounter with—I can't call it a discipline—but another party to the wider intellectual dialogue.

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[76] Dick Werbner was referring to a workshop held on Friday 29 November 1996 on Violence, Responsibility and Terror, organised by the International Centre for Contemporary Cultural Research at the University of Manchester. [Ed.]

[77] V.Y. Mudimbe, "*Reprendre*: enunciation and strategies in contemporary African arts" in *Africa explores: 20th-century African arts*, (ed.) S. Vogel, New York, Center for African Art, 1991, p. 276.

Carole Pegg (University of Cambridge): I think it's a pity that we've had to set up cultural studies and social anthropology as if they were opposites in this rather modernist way, because it's clear, from what all of the speakers were saying, that there is quite a lot of overlap between the two. Nigel Rapport has given us a very good account of how the single discipline of social anthropology has within it a multiplicity of paradigms and interests. Paul Willis was talking about ethnography within cultural studies. It's not just a case of Foucault and French theory versus the rest. Both the disciplines have used French theory—social anthropology has used Bourdieu a lot and of course takes its origins from Durkheim. There are overlapping areas, and I would prefer to think that the two disciplines, rather than being homogeneous, can stimulate each other by overlapping on certain areas.

The question that I have is that I'm not quite sure of the relationship between American cultural anthropology, cultural studies or cultural anthropology, and the Birmingham school of cultural studies. I see them as very different things that have their own histories. It seems to me that cultural studies in the States comes out of social anthropology, whereas cultural studies here is very rooted in the Stuart Hall, Dick Hebdige and all of that school, even though it's gone through different developments and has now come to a point where it's involved in practice in the same way that social anthropology is. So I'm not entirely sure whether they are actually mutations of the same thing or completely separate. Perhaps somebody could clarify that.

Peter Wade: Since that's an empirical issue, would somebody like to address it now?

Paul Willis: I can't judge it either. The American situation is highly complex. My sense is that the big expansion has been from English departments and textual studies and media studies, rather than from anthropology, and from my perspective I very much want to use whatever interventional power I have to divert it towards social and cultural anthropology. Behind the whole problem is the issue of definition. Cultural studies can mean all kinds of things at the moment.

Nigel Rapport: I just wanted to agree with Carol that we're talking about overlaps, rather than essential things which might be opposites. I want to get away from all forms of essentialism in terms of descriptions of disciplines as well as in terms of descriptions of things out there that this discipline is studying. As a discipline we're an anti-discipline, and our history is as contested as our present. I wouldn't necessarily be happy in seeing the anthropology that I practice as being derived from Durkheim. There are many beginnings and there are many presents. The beginning of cultural studies in literary theory, or the beginning of anthropological practice in literary commentary in the nineteenth century, might be ways of looking at overlaps in a historical sense as well as a contemporary sense. If we get away from notions of disciplines as singularities, then there's room for all sorts of complexities of relationships, rather than insisting, as the title of this debate does, that one thing will kill another thing. That doesn't, for my money, take us forward.

Pnina Werber (University of Keele): First of all I'd like to disagree with Nigel about essentialising, because I think to essentialise is fun and very politically incorrect and a great way to sharpen issues. One of the things that Jimmy Wiener, who used to be a colleague at Manchester, used to say in these kinds of debates is that bad money pushes out good money. I think that one of the problems of this kind of debate is that if we talk seriously and intellectually about the merits of cultural studies and anthropology and discover that they have good and bad things about them, we're not facing what I think is a very real problem that anthropology faces vis-a-vis cultural studies. Cultural studies is attractive, fascinating and interesting; it sells, it is a commodity that has big sales markets; it's about issues and themes that speak to young people, to undergraduates, about gender and sexuality; it's familiar to them. Whereas good anthropology, serious anthropology is a little bit dull, it's a little bit slow, it talks about issues on the other side of the world which they may not be that interested in. Cultural studies has big stars, but above all, cultural studies takes the moral high ground.

I'll give just one example to show how cultural studies, in a sense, wins in battles with anthropology. Anthropology has always had a very strong interest in ethnicity. When cultural studies at Birmingham was in its heyday, it made a very big attack on anthropological concepts of ethnicity as divisive, as anti-working class,

as not recognising the common struggle. It took the moral high-ground and anybody who said 'ethnicity' was a 'bad person'. But then there was a moment when Stuart Hall had his 'road to Damascus' revelation, in the face of the reality of what we would call the field, in the face of the reality that there were ethnic groups out there, making demands, making claims, having a voice, and he said that ethnicity did exist after all, that it was a good thing. Immediately a whole world of public opinion shifted to recognising the power of ethnicity and the power of ethnic groups. That kind of power that cultural studies has is something that I think we neglect. It would be foolish not to recognise it because, as anthropologists, I think that we remain relatively speaking a small subject, compared to the kind of public appeal of figures like Homi Bhabha , Paul Gilroy, Stuart Hall, and I think we need to seriously consider why that should be so, and face up to the reality of the times when books in sociology, anthropology or whatever are reclassified as cultural studies. There is something going on here which I think needs to be addressed—and not just in terms of the contents of each discipline and its strengths and weaknesses.

Jeanette Edwards (University of Keele): I have a great deal of sympathy with the proposers of this motion. But wait a minute, before you celebrate my sympathy! I have a great deal of sympathy because they're celebrating the demise of an anthropology which has gone to the field seen as a bounded and discrete unit, come back, and in a sense isolated its subject of study and written about it for a western audience. I'd be cheering from the sidelines if cultural studies was the assassin of this kind of anthropology. But it seems to me that the proposers can't have it both ways. They can't on the one hand argue, as Mark did, that ethnography is voyeurism and that fieldwork itself is a politically dodgy enterprise, and that, as Paul did, say that social anthropology is troubled by the idea of the field, of being able to go to the field and come back, and yet on the other hand argue that what's actually lacking in cultural studies is fieldwork. It seems to me that this idea of the field is problematic and there is within anthropology at the moment an internal critique of the notion of the field; there are people who are working with organisations that are multi-national or mobile and who are working with mobile populations. The problem is, therefore, that many of us are not going to recognise the anthropology that the proposers have set up as being the baddy, and for many anthropologists who are working in western industrial societies as well

as those who are not, that kind of anthropology doesn't actually fit; the field carries on with them, they carry the field with them and they maintain relationships after so-called 'fieldwork'.

Now, on the other side of this issue there is something very interesting going on in social anthropology's critique of cultural studies, because it seems to me—and this is just based on my observation, not on any theoretically informed ethnographic study—that it is certain anthropologists who are most threatened by cultural studies, who are most critical of it, and that there are generational, ethnic and gendered elements of this. It seems to me that they tend to be older, white men and that in itself is an interesting issue.

In the end, while I have a great deal of sympathy for the proposers, Paul's point, that anthropoogy and cultural studies need each other, is one I take to heart. But the only way that you could actually put that into practice is if you voted for the opposition.

Sarah Green (University of Manchester): My comment follows on from the previous point and, actually, I think this might be related to the fact that Jeanette and I have done fieldwork in this country.

I noticed in both statements on the proposers' side that they seemed to locate anthropology somewhere far away from here, while the opposers wouldn't locate anthropology anywhere in particular, geographically. That made me think, because of my having done fieldwork not 'there' but here, about a debate that's been going on for several years now within anthropology about the status of anthropology at home, and made me wonder whether in a sense—and this is informed by a debate I got into about cultural studies [at the American Anthropological Association meetings] in San Francisco last week—one of the roles of anthropology, as a discipline that is not quite yet dead, might be to study some of the practices of cultural studies, through doing ethnography at home. For example, one of the things that I was particularly looking at in my fieldwork was people who had taken on certain strong cultural studies ideas and were trying to put them into practice in a particular community.[78] I was trying to look at what the relationship is between the political, economic and historical conditions which make cultural studies so popular, big, and saleable now, and people in practice.

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[78] See S. Green, *Urban Amazons: lesbian feminism and beyond in the gender, sexuality and identity battles of London*, London, Macmillan, in press. [Ed.]

Michael Bravo (University of Manchester): I wanted to compliment Pete and the organising committee on the choice of the motion. I love motions which proclaim the possible end or the death of some subject. We can think of a number of cases where this has been suggested recently. One of them which comes to mind is that the Lucasian Professor of Mathematics at Cambridge, Stephen Hawking, recently proclaimed the end of physics, on the grounds of coming up with the unified theory of all things. It's interesting that this took place at precisely the moment at which physics is, perhaps, as strong as it has ever been. Similarly, one can see that this isn't a unique event, but has occurred historically in many instances. Geographers proclaimed the death of geography at the height of the Enlightenment when it was the quintessential Enlightenment science. So, taking the motion in more rhetorical terms, I think it's interesting to reflect on the notion, the rhetorical notion, that anthropology may be coming to an end, because I don't for a minute believe that this is actually the case. I think one of the people who has put the case rhetorically most persuasively recently is Francis Fukuyama, in his book *The End of History.*[79] It occurs to me that in many respects he's making precisely the case that we are seeing the end of anthropology as well as the end of history, and I'm intrigued whether any of the panelists or speakers would like to comment on that book and the relevance of that book to the motion.

Nadia Lovell (University of Kent): My question deals partly with the convergences that I find in the two sides. One of the things that struck me was that, on the one hand, we're talking about a kind of reformed anthropology which is aware of itself, which continues in its own tradition but is perhaps more pluralistic than it has ever been in the past and becomes ever more aware of the complexities of the modern world, of globalisation, of the local versus the global, etc. And, on the other hand, we have an argument which says that anthropologists, with the critique from cultural studies, could come closer to cultural studies, as long as the ethnography is preserved. In effect, what we are talking about here is labelling, because on the one hand, anthropology needs to reform itself, but on the other hand, we're saying it can do so by becoming, as Mark Hobart was saying, cultural studies with

[79] F. Fukuyama, *The end of history and the last man*, Harmondsworth, Penguin, 1992.

ethnography, or ethnographic cultural studies. I think that there is an issue here which touches upon the popularisation of anthropology as such—we now have more students than we've ever had before. But at the same time, we're also re-evaluating and re-appraising what we are doing, and I think that certainly is a good thing.

I think part of the problem is that we're essentialising the identity of the anthropologist. I don't think that today we can actually claim that all anthropologists are white, middle-class, middle-aged men or whatever. I think that anthropology has diversified and, if we acknowledge globalisation, then surely we must acknowledge that this diversification is very real. We are not talking in this debate about what other people are doing with anthropology in other parts of the world and I think that is a crucial issue. I was mentioning to Mark Hobart previously that on the Internet very recently, there was a very heated debate coming from South Africa where they're trying to establish a department of African studies. Part of the argument there was about why Africans should have a department of African studies. African studies is what Europeans set up in their countries in order to study Africa and that has been multi-disciplinary. The Africans were asking why they should have African studies rather than a department of anthropology, or sociology or history. So I think that that's certainly an issue that needs to be put into the plural context of the anthropology that we're debating here.

Furthermore, someone here raised the notion of 'here' and 'there' and where we do fieldwork. That's another issue that I think we need to address because there is a kind of political correctness that has gone into the question of where we do fieldwork. It's now more politically correct to do fieldwork in the Western world and certainly there is more financial help to be had there. Our students are increasingly interested in doing fieldwork in the Western or European world, however that is defined. There is also a reverse side to this, particularly in the context of African ethnography. None of my students at the moment wants to go to Africa. They go off to other parts of the world which are considered far more politically correct and also far more sexy. So that's another question that I'd like to see addressed at some stage in this debate.

Penny Harvey (University of Manchester): One of the things I always feel needs asking in these debates where both sides are in many ways arguing the same thing is: what does it matter, what difference does it

make which way we vote? One of the ways that I think this issue matters is that I've been involved in and seen people not getting interviews and not getting jobs because they're too associated with cultural studies, and that's completely infuriated me. It wasn't just because the people concerned were doing the kind of things that seem to be generally recognised as not good analytical work, but because they were studying the 'wrong' field. I've think this is an incredible narrowness on the part of anthropology. Going back to Tim Ingold's comment, cited by Mark, that anthropology is philosophy with the people brought in, I want to ask the panelists whether it matters to them *who* those people are.

When I was engaged in doing what I thought of as an anthropological study of a western culture industry, it seemed to me that, if you were going to do such a study, you had to let everything in. You had to study the journalists, you had to study not just the people who consume western culture industries, but the people that actually produce it. Of course, in order to produce it, these people are also drawing very widely on these kinds of discursive western cultural theories. I came to the conclusion that to do a good anthropology of the western culture industry, you have to do an anthropology of what is a very dominant western cultural practice, which is the practice that is being typified as cultural studies. Writing cultural theory is a very important western cultural practice and I think it is something that anthropology has to make space for in the things that we see as worthy of analysis. I did also see myself as doing this study as an anthropologist, but not an anthropologist on site, because one of the interesting things about a western culture industry site is that the site is everywhere. Because it's actually being produced discursively, you don't have to be there to be there, and the Expo '92 in Seville was a good example of that.[80] So maybe I did a really short spell of fieldwork, or maybe my field was beyond anything I could ever catch up with.

But the question I wanted to ask was whether the panel think that there can be an anthropology of anything?

Sue Fleming (University of Manchester): I have great sympathy with the Stuart Hall fans. It was certainly important in my own undergraduate time in the seventies, even though I was studying to be

[80] See P. Harvey, *Hybrids of modernity: anthropology, the nation state and the Universal Exhibition*, London, Routledge, 1996. [Ed.]

an anthropologist, that there were people like Stuart Hall talking about the things that he did, that it was in Britain, that it was relevant to what was happening in Britain at the time and that it brought in the whole political economy. But I think we have to look at the context now and what cultural studies means now, in this day and age. I'm coming at this as a practical, practising anthropologist who works in the field of development and that includes the practice of development, not just the ethnography of development. In this field there's a real danger of culture being marginalised and becoming what cultural studies is making it—separate from other socio-economic and political realities. If you look at the forms that are filled in for projects, which is how a lot of people get development money, and at the practice of development, culture is regarded is a constraint that would endanger the implementation of the project. A lot of my work as a practical anthropologist is actually in challenging that. As an anthropologist I can argue clearly that there are different social, economic and political realities that need to be considered, and these need to be considered throughout the understanding of the project and so on. I think that if we take the question of agency in relation to all of us here, the question would be, do we want the death of anthropology, and is it politically expedient, given the status of the concept of culture at this particular point in time?

In addition, in the practice of anthropology, there's now a lot more engagement with the Stuart Hall notions of interaction and dialogue in research or in the ethnographic process in the field, and this is generating a different type of analysis and thinking within anthropology, which would perhaps deal with some of the criticisms of anthropology that have been raised.

Alison Newby (University of Manchester): I'm not actually an anthropologist, nor a cultural studies student either. I come to this as a social historian and I've been looking at various anthropological and cultural studies approaches to help me with my work. So the things that I'm going to say are from an outsider, because I don't think the debate as it stands should be seen as something that affects only academics; anthropology and cultural studies affect what happens in the real world and how people view other people in the real world. What concerns me is that this question of whether people go to the field, what they think of it and how they approach it. There are a lot of woolly things that you can read about other parts of the world and

even your own, things that have no particular structure that could stand any sense of criticism or study. I think that it would be very sad if anthropology died, because the least of the things that it gives is a sense of not knowing, a sense of knowing that you have to get to know. I was troubled by the idea [from Paul Willis] that you approach a field with questions in mind, because surely if you go with questions in mind, you look for the answers you want to see, as opposed to questions forming themselves from an intimate knowledge of the field, which accrues over the period of time that anthropologists are in the field.

Another point that concerns me is that in America a lot of the people that are doing cultural studies are from literary background. Again there is a debate between literary persons and history persons, as it were, in that the history people think that the literary people have no sense of reality and are just using things from the top of their heads. That may sound a bit harsh, but I go back to my first point that academic practice affects people in the real world. You need real analysis, not just imagination.

My final point is that it doesn't really matter what you call a discipline. I don't particularly mind whether it's called anthropology or cultural studies—although I'm not employed in the business. What I want to see is a realistic discipline which combines ideas with ethnography and fieldwork, but in a way that is helpful for the world, as opposed to debating within itself. I usually find that academics don't recognise the impact they have on the real world. Anthropologists, because they do fieldwork whether in this country or other parts, do tend to recognise this because they are mixing with other people and not just people that are like themselves, such as the middle-class and western-educated people from different societies. They mix with so-called 'ordinary' people, if you can find any such thing.

So those are the points I would like to make. Firstly, the importance of the attitude to the field; secondly, structures; thirdly, the impact you make on the real world; and fourthly, I don't care what you call yourselves as long as you do a good job.

Tim Ingold (Manchester University): I want to draw on a comment that Nigel made and one that John made. Nigel pointed out, if I remember right, that although there's an obvious overlap between social anthropology and cultural studies, social anthropology overlaps with an awful lot of other things as well, some of which are rather remote from cultural studies as it is currently practised, but which are

very important as far as anthropology is concerned. From what John said, I would like to reinforce his plea by asking that we take at least some work in biology and archaeology seriously. To that, I would add some work in psychology as well. For me, the really important thing about anthropology is that it is perhaps the one discipline that is actually trying to dissolve the dichotomy between the humanities and the natural sciences which lies at the base of the academic division of labour in the western world, and which I think is a very damaging division of labour. The one thing that upsets me about cultural studies, I suppose because it comes from literary criticism and that general area, is that it tends to reinforce that dichotomy; cultural studies is simply not interested in things that are happening on the other side of the fence, except to treat them as part of a discourse. Now, I think that anthropology must start off with the sense, as Malinowski did, that we're talking about human beings as living, breathing creatures, who are interacting with an environment. That's what we are, and our job is to try and understand the life of these creatures in their relationships with one another and in their relationships with their environment, and that calls for some sort of way of bringing these two sides together. I don't like much of what biological anthropologists talk about—in fact I can't stand most of it and if anything puts one's back up it's the way they write—but the main problem is that they're not actually helping the project of integration. I have the same feeling about a lot, but not quite so much, of archaeology. I have the same feeling about cognitive psychology. But there must be ways of doing biology, psychology and archaeology that are conducive to the project of understanding ourselves as living, breathing beings in a world. I think that anthropology should be promoting that, and my worry about cultural studies is simply that it pulls us away from that, it pulls us into an almost safe haven in which we can say, 'don't worry, all we're doing is talking about the discourse, we're not talking about the people who are doing it'. I want to understand how it is that people can do such a thing, how they engage in discourse with one another, and I won't find the answers to that in cultural studies as it is currently constituted.

Katrin Lund (University of Manchester): I think we should look at where we are located now, thinking about positionality in Stuart Hall's sense of the term. We are in England, we are in Europe, and we are talking about cultural studies that happen primarily in Europe and America. But as Tim pointed out, anthropology overlaps with more

disciplines than just cultural studies, and that's one of the reasons why anthropology also currently exists in what some people call the rest of the world. When I refer to Europe, it is very much a culturally defined Europe, an academic Europe. And that is why I'm questioning where we are positioned. Maybe cultural studies will kill anthropology, but then it can't be just this European and American anthropology. There is an awful lot of anthropology in all other places all over the world. So is it possible to kill anthropology?

David Mills (SOAS): Firstly, I'm quite sympathetic to the proposers, partly because they have been more self-critical, and critical of the debate in the way it's been framed. That's not to say that voting for the motion is going to be any better than voting against, because both sides are just reproducing essentialisms about what a discipline is and reducing the categories. Interestingly, everyone is carrying on a conversation about subjectivity which started with continental theorists, including Marx. Perhaps there isn't so much difference between the different positions. Perhaps if we have to choose, a strategic essentialism would be to vote for the proposers, but only because they're more self-critical. But actually I suggest that abstaining could be a positive political move.

Ursula Sharma (University of Derby): I would like to put forward the idea that both anthropology and cultural studies are going to die the death—they're going to be killed by interdisciplinarity—but that cultural studies is probably better fitted to hold out for longer than anthropology. In a way, the self-criticism and the criticism that's taken place has very much been in terms of saying one thing needs more of something else, of saying that one discipline would be wonderful if only it had more ethnography or more political analysis or whatever it is. But the point about disciplines is that they leave things out and they do so deliberately. The point about a discipline is that you go on explaining a thing, in whatever field it is your discipline specialises, until you get to the edge [of its field of expertise], and then usually you say, 'well, hell, my discipline is right anyway'—and one can see what sort of things are happening there. But the point about a discipline is that it leaves some things out, and it goes on in those terms, self-consciously or otherwise, until it exhausts itself. But of course it never

does. So you're only showing that you're still thinking in terms of disciplines when you make such defences of your own discipline.

The thing about interdisciplinarity is that it's not really interdisciplinarity, it's a sort of breakdown of disciplinarity. That seems to me a very prominent feature of academic life and one to which cultural studies is probably better adapted—which isn't to say that I wish I were doing cultural studies and not anthropology. I work in a school with education, social sciences—which includes the odd anthropologist—cultural studies people and sociologists, religious studies and counselling, for God's sake. Nearly every postgraduate student in that institution has a supervisor from more than one of these so-called 'disciplines'. So I don't know whether that's for or against the motion—perhaps it's undermining the motion itself.

Peter Wade: I'm afraid contributions from the floor now have to end and I will ask the speakers to make any final comments they may have.

Mark Hobart: As the opponents of the motion were speaking, I was struck by the extent of their massive idealism, which also ran through a lot of the comments from the audience. Horton once wrote a lovely piece about traditional African medicine and Western science, comparing somebody else's practice with your own ideal.[81] We've just had a wonderful vision of a completely imaginary anthropology. There were moments when I wanted to hear a violin playing, it was so beautiful. We have cultural studies practice; Paul is honest about it and says what all the defects are. Then we get this glowing vision that bears no relation to anything except itself. How do we know that? Because there was no reference to the consequences of what happens in anthropological work. One of the most obvious things is the extent to which surveillance comes in. Johannes Fabian wrote a very nice piece, in which he pointed out the implications of what happens with one's writing.[82] We can tell that we're dealing with massive idealism here: nobody's bothered to think these implications through. There is

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[81] R. Horton, "African traditional thought and Western science", *Africa* 37(1): 50-71, 37(2): 155-87, 1967.

[82] J. Fabian, "Dilemmas of critical anthropology", in *Constructing knowledge: authority and critique in social science*, eds. L. Nencel and P. Pels, London, Sage, 1991.

a big gap between the implications of practicing anthropology and intentionality behind it, the latter being a Western obsession—we're back to admiring ourselves. In fact, my re-definition of anthropology now is 'nuanced narcissism', in which we admire our reflections in the rest of the world.

If anthropology were truly dialogic—and by the way I think John may have been on the wrong side, I agreed with much of what he said—then why is this not built into our practices properly, essentially, as fieldwork is. There should then be some kind of formal engagement afterwards. Otherwise, again, it's just pious talk. You should have a five- or ten-year or contract in which you undertake certain kinds of engagement, as the results of your own activity. Then you've got to deal with the mess you help to create.

Clearly, there are good practices and practitioners. But as we were going through today, I was thinking, how many departments of anthropology, in much of their seminar life and other life, would be completely alien to what has been said? Between the four speakers here I suspect there is very little difference as to what constitutes good practice. I'm actually trying to talk about situated practices, not about epistemological ideals.

Is anthropology reprocessed by going via cultural studies? I think part of the answer comes down to a question of definition. The word discipline has been used a great deal here, and it comes, I think, to a problem of two different senses of discipline. We have the old notion of institutionalised disciplines, which comes from a particular metaphor of knowledge: you train a mind. Discipline in this sense always reminds me of boots and leather and all sorts of exciting stuff. I'm thinking of disciplines in a quite different sense, a much more Foucauldian sense of practices in which people discipline themselves and discipline other people. Part of the problem of an African anthropology or African studies, is Foucault's nice point in 'Subject and Power', that in fact one of the things we do is train people to subjectify and objectify themselves.[83] The fact that anthropologists are going to sit here, turkeys voting energetically, shows this concern with the ideal rather than with actual practices. Paul made nicely the point about intervention. We *are* intervening. This pretence to neutrality is the most dangerous of all things because it re-fortifies

[83] M. Foucault, M. "The subject and power", Afterword to *Michel Foucault: beyond structuralism and hermeneutics*, (eds) H.L. Dreyfus and P. Rabinow, Brighton, Harvester, 1982.

a very complex epistemological and political agenda. Again, that has been singularly avoided.

I'm struck by the fact that what you're doing in effect, in rushing to defend anthropology in this way, is voting for a horrendous epistemological asymmetry. It is really metropolitan Europeans and Americans universalising themselves. This is what a university is about. There is no sense of a radical alternative, because if you had an alternative you'd have been coming up with it. This is what anthropology claims that it's doing. I haven't seen it today. In fact I saw, rather sadly, the defense of rather what I expected.

The point of this—I'm going to end with two French thinkers—is that there is a hierarchy here, a kind of verticality, 'us' over 'them'. We coopt brown and black peoples, they become notionally us and carry on the good work. I much prefer Deleuze's image of the rhizome which breaks out of this. You simply can't have Dick's question about how anthropology or cultural studies is going to come out of their encounter. Rhizomic thinking just doesn't work that way.

Another way is Latour's point that we've never been modern, that in fact there are complex networks going on. He got that image from Deleuze anyway. I would argue that if you want to break out of the hierarchical thinking that we have seen beautifully exemplified today, you vote for the motion.

Nigel Rapport: I'd like to start by drawing on some of the comments from the floor. I appreciated Alison [Newby]'s comment that anthropology gives a sense of getting to know what one isn't sure is there to be known. Paul himself spoke about the surprise that's necessary in cultural studies, and I'd relate this to Rorty's notion of the inspiration that one gets from getting to know something that one didn't recognise as being a thing. So, is an anthropology of anything legitimate, as Penny [Harvey] asked? Yes, it is very much, for me. Anthropology is attitudinal; anthropology, as Tim [Ingold] reiterated, is a diverse appreciation of human being in the world.

Do anthropologists want closure, Sue [Fleming] asked? Very much not, I think. As an anti-disciplinary discipline, it's never been about closure. There's diversity and reflexivity within it, I think—to go back to Nadia [Lovell]'s question. It's never been a one-track thing. I would argue that, most importantly, anthropology in contradistinction to cultural studies teaches what I described as subtlety, nuance with regard to discursive usage, and complexity and multiplicity with regard

to what lies beyond the discursive surface. It teaches this both with regard to its own practices, its own anti-disciplinary discipline or study, and what it studies.

I finished up by saying that, for me, this makes anthropology into a moral pursuit. Alison was also asking about relationships between the discipline and the real world.[84] Anthropological fieldwork, I'd argue, has always been a moral pursuit.[85] One's relationship with significant others has been significant precisely to the extent that one has cared for one's interlocutors and, increasingly since say 1979, writing-up in anthropology has become a moral pursuit. Now more than ever, we are aware and at ease with the adoption of a moral stance, personal and political, with regard to the futurity of the locality we've come to know well, and its relationship to the globally human.

Rorty has given a good account of this reflexive moral process as it pertains to anthropology. Ethnography, he claims, can today be appreciated as one of the principal vehicles of moral change.[86] What anthropology provides is a connoisseurship of diversity. What it effects is an expanding of the moral imagination, so that people can notice and conceive of having a conversation with more and more different types of people.[87]

Then anthropological 'specialists in particularity' can persuade of the humanity of otherness, to hand over a moral torch to guardians of universality, whose task is to ensure that once the alien has been admitted to the citizenry, it's treated properly and equally in a situation of procedural justice. Hence the civil polity, where a diversity of individuals and cultures meet under the aegis of universalistic

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[84] From here on, Nigel Rapport was reading selectively from a prepared text, which, in the written version, contained references and notes. Where possible, I have added these notes and references to the transcribed text in the appropriate place, with the abbreviation '[NR]' at the end to indicate their provenance. [Ed.]

[85] See N.J. Rapport, "Individual mind: the case for an anthropological morality", Royal Society of Edinburgh Prize Lecture, 20 January 1997. [NR]

[86] Erstwhile 'specialists in metaphysical universality'—writers of philosophical treatises and theological sermons—have come to be replaced in moral expertise and advocation by 'specialists in particularity' who write in narrational genres. See R. Rorty, *Contingency, irony, and solidarity*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1992. [NR]

[87] If in the detailed descriptions of a Dickens, then, we read about the suffering of people to whom we may not have previously properly attended, and in the detailed redescriptions of a Nabokov, we learn of the cruelty we ourselves are capable of, then in the thick descriptions of a Geertz, we discover the humiliations felt by people we did not rightly recognise as people. [NR]

procedural rules.[88] There must be an idealistic component, an ideal that anthropology brings to practice, otherwise it goes nowhere. Rorty's liberal portrayal builds on the key anthropological insight, it seems to me, of diversity within commonality, of communities as inherently, properly, voluntaristic enterprises of self-bestowal.[89] In painting it in an overtly moral-political light, Rorty points a moral way forward, shows anthropology the potentially politicised nature of its message all along.[90]

Which returns me, finally, to the question of cultural studies, which as Mark has just eloquently reiterated, has no moral stance or quest of this kind, and wants none. Precisely because cultural studies sees nothing beyond discourse as surface, the world contains nothing but surfaces, any sense of depth—to the individual person or ego, to the nature of the real, to a perspective on society—is a trick of the light, or rather a trick of discourse. Trapped within the prison-house of language, within our cultural form of life, it said that we only think that we're thinking, and think that we are we. In the shadow of the work of Heidegger or Bourdieu, or Foucault or Derrida, cultural studies can see nothing beyond discourse as agent. Anthropology recognises, however—because it engages, because it deals with real living, breathing people in situations, because, due to an inherent diversity and creativity of individual agency, there's always something new under the sun, and beneath the shadow of discourse, this newness is always there for anthropology to experience and to evoke.

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[88] Rorty calls the kind of society thus effected one of 'ironic liberalism', and the polity a 'postmodern democracy'. What is on offer is a wide public civility, a procedural umbrella, under which a bazaar of private diversity may flourish. Recognising that cultures and their discourses are inherently contrastive and oppositional, that the values, ideals, and true perspectives adopted and pursued by different people inexorably collide, the polity seeks to impose no single overarching standard of integration. All that is required is a mutual respect for the procedural institutions of the polity which seek to balance, in an *ad hoc* fashion, the competing demands of diverse perspectives while not serving the exclusive interests of any one. The practice of love (sharing the life and interests, thoughts and feelings of another) and the practice of justice (sharing the same universalistic procedures) are hard to reconcile, and liberal democracy accepts that in public life, justice is sufficient. [NR]

[89] See N.J. Rapport, *The prose and the passion: anthropology, literature and the writing of E.M. Forster*, Manchester, Manchester University Press, 1994.

[90] See R. Rorty, "On ethnocentrism: a reply to Clifford Geertz", *Michigan Quarterly Review* 25 (Winter), 1986; R. Rorty, *Contingency, irony, and solidarity*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1992.

Paul Willis: I'm seconding the motion, so I'll limit my comments compared with the previous speakers. I wanted to make two points basically. One, simply rhetorical: if we're playing the debating game, we've got to try to persuade you to vote for the motion. That's why I'm on this side of the table, I suppose, and I think you have spotted that I could equally well, like the others perhaps, have sat on the other side of the table.

But [the other point is that] I think you are in danger as a profession simply of not having noticed what cultural studies is doing to you; you are sitting on the deck chairs while the ship sinks. Whilst your [Dick Werbner's] comments about my having weakened Mark's case are certainly true, I thought the enormous hostage that you gave—that an anthropology book should be marketed as cultural studies—should be enough to say, hey, wake up folks, you're being slaughtered! Simply recognising what's happening to you might be the beginning of a realistic relationship to the realities of academic discourses. I was very taken by the point that cultural studies is shaping political consciousness and discourse in far more powerful ways than you, as anthropologists, are imagining. If you don't recognise those things, there's no hope. So as a first step towards a therapy, for Heaven's sake vote for this motion!

Quite apart from how you vote this afternoon, the crucial thing for me is fieldwork and what we think fieldwork is. I am in my current book arguing for, if you like, a cultural studies version of that which has a terrific overlap with anthropology. Just as a point of detail, in fact I don't think it's true that cultural studies can be seen as 'only' about discourses. I certainly don't regard my own work in that light, and the classic formation and the sum of the texts around the early Birmingham school work did at least talk about fieldwork. If I felt that fieldwork were simply impossible within a cultural studies paradigm, I would not be struggling to hang onto it and reintroduce it. I do believe that fieldwork is absolutely crucial, whatever we call it. Perhaps it's a comment about the respective strengths of the discipline that I want to argue for that within a cultural studies frame, not within an anthropology frame, and I want to keep some of the theoretical insights and theoretical informings that cultural studies, I think, provides more clearly and obviously than does anthropology.

In terms of the multitude of issues around fieldwork, how anthropology is being recycled—for that, read my book. I fear that we still are hearing empiricisms and humanisms everywhere. Of course I

want that human, sensuous involvement with reality, but it's not a Martian who's landed in the wrecked inner cities and the new globalised consumption sites. They're formed very clearly by politically, economic, discourses, histories, and formations around subjectivity, which you would be simply crazy not to try to take into account. That's what I mean by theoretically informed. And take into account [these things] in ways which are interventionist. No, you can't go and bring back a report of the whole world. You have to say where you are, what you are, and for what kinds of puzzles you're going into the field for, at the same time leaving space enough to be surprised. That's quite a hard trick, that's the real issue of this afternoon, and I would want to approach it within a cultural studies frame and to learn from anthropology.

In terms of the motion, this is a wake-up call. Vote for us!

John Gledhill: There are reasons why disciplines form, and there are reasons why disciplines prosper, and some of those reasons are political and should be looked at quite carefully. I obviously agree with Tim that anthropology's enormous strength, seeing the subject as a whole, is its dissolving of boundaries, its potential to do that and its achievement in doing that. That, I think, at any rate, is unquestionable. Empirically what will happen to anthropology in those terms is a quite different matter and whether interdisciplinary studies of various kinds will be favoured—and perhaps disciplines that are less rigorous in a disciplinary sense—is certainly an open and moot empirical point, but it doesn't seem to me it should affect the way you vote on this. I take this as a normative question, not a question of fishing into the future.

Penny [Harvey] asked if there can be an anthropology of everything. I think my answer is that anthropology is certainly the best placed discipline to become the master social historical science which also articulates to other areas of study which are placed by our academic structures outside the area of the humanities. Obviously, it has to do so with a critical spirit and another empirical difference between us is simply how much critical spirit there is in anthropology. I would argue that if you look around, and if you read anthropology as it's being written now, if you look around the people in this room, you don't see many Radcliffe-Browns sitting here. This, as a sample of the anthropological profession, doesn't strike me as corresponding to the kinds of stereotypes that have appeared in this debate.

I also think it is important to look at what cultural studies has achieved and the way it's changed. Dick [Werbner] posed some quite important questions. It doesn't seem to me that anthropology had much of an influence over the early development of cultural studies through the Lévi-Straussian, French structuralist thing, because that comes in, I think, as part of a much more popular interest in semiotics—Levi-Strauss ['s work] was [like] a coffee-table book in the early seventies. There are, however, earlier kinds of traditions, I mean mass-observation for example, which were influenced by an earlier kind of ethnography, so writing a history of that would be rather complicated.[91] But, as various people have pointed out, the role of literature in this is really quite crucial. I think it is true to say in the United States the development of cultural studies is fuelled by two things: the transformation of literature departments in which anthropology often appears as the perfect text to analyse in a piece of literary criticism. That's what the name of the game is and that has sometimes been taken by anthropologists as offering brilliant epistemological insights into their discipline, and I think that's probably a rather silly reaction.

Just to end on one point. I have very little patience, frankly, with some kinds of challenges to the role of ethnographers, whether here or anywhere else. If people think we're voyeurs or irritating, then in the part of the world I work in and the part of the world Dick works in, they can shoot us if they feel so inclined. I think that the development of a dialogic anthropology is no longer an option for many people. You can't just go in there and say, 'I want to study your customs'. People are going to put demands on you. People are living in situations that are nothing like the colonial situations that the early British social anthropologists worked in. The world has changed, and I think anthropologists I think in practice have had to change a lot with it. I personally remain rather sanguine about our future—the state permitting, at any rate.

After a vote, the motion was defeated with 19 votes in favour and 34 votes against. There were 12 abstentions and 2 spoiled ballot papers.

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[91] 'Mass-observation' started in Britain in the 1930s and sought to collect data on people's daily lives. See *Speak for yourself: a mass-observation anthology*, (eds) A. Calder and D. Sheridan, London, Cape, 1984. [Ed.]