

## INTRODUCTION

Readers might wonder why Cultural Studies textbooks such as **Cultural Studies: Theory and Practice** by Chris Barker (2000) could not supply the gap or **The Cultural Studies Reader** ed. Simon During (1993) provide seminal texts. Apart from the obvious point about cost, there is a methodological constraint to these works written from a very much contemporary perspective and very much in the post-Marxist tradition advanced by the Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies (CCCS 1964 to 1988) at Birmingham University which, aside from the literary origins of its three principal directors and its particular ideological bases, neglect the origins of cultural studies in other disciplines such as those secondary school subjects I have mentioned. Moreover, some of the assumptions of early explorations of human culture, such as the theory of social evolutionism are still very much present in what Antonio Gramsci would have described as „common sense“ when students talk about culture and the notion of human progress. One of the secondary goals of this textbook is enable students to gain insight into the assumptions they may have acquired. This textbook attempts to explore the origins of various theoretical assumptions in Cultural Studies and how they have come to provide a set of core notions and procedures for Cultural Studies. Finally, I wished to have a book which would fit with the patterns of education to which students have become accustomed.

In Part One we look at definitions of culture in terms of humanistic values advanced first by Matthew Arnold and then reinforced by the insights of Max Weber. We then examine the contribution of Anthropology to the scientific bases of Cultural Studies particularly from the enormous American contribution which still makes American approaches to Cultural Studies distinct from British and Australian approaches. Part One concludes with an examination of the contribution of the philosophical tradition including the work of Friedrich Nietzsche and Ludwig Wittgenstein as foundational thinkers and then the contributions of Jean Baudrillard, Jacques Derrida, Michel Foucault, Jean-François Lyotard and Richard Rorty are introduced. In Part Two we explore the origins of Anglophone history, geography, social studies and politics and finish with a look at the British tradition of Cultural studies specifically at the work done by CCCS.

Each chapter is divided into an exposition of ideas and processes, a summary of the ideas of the most important thinkers, a reprise of the main ideas, then some seminar exercises to be prepared and explored in the seminars by students and then a reading list relevant to that chapter. I have preferred to put the reading list at the end of each chapter rather than at the end of the text as this makes the textbook more usable for teaching student presentation purposes.

At the outset I assumed that it would be a relatively simple task to write a short textbook on the foundations of cultural studies, but the more I read the more complex the discipline revealed itself to be, a many-branching tree with many roots.