CENTRE FOR CONTEMPORARY CULTURAL STUDIES

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WORKING FOR THE BEST ETHNOGRAPHY

by

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I should first of all explain the use of the collective 'we' and 'our' as it refers to the authorship of this essay. It is not meant to refer to the overall perspective of the Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies, nor does it reflect the plethora of views found in its various sub-groups. My own position is that writing is simply one part of the process of collective discussion, debate and even disagreement and I prefer to use the collective 'we' to acknowledge this fact. More specifically, I would like to thank Richard Johnson, Michael Green, Paul Willis, Sue Harcourt, Lolke Van der Heide, Ann Pawling, Leslie Rothaus and various members of the Education/Youth Group at CCCS for making helpful suggestions and contributions to this paper.

ABSTRACT

This essay is concerned with exploring the methodological basis and sociological influence on the development of ethnographic research in cultural studies. It is asserted that while much of this research has gone substantially beyond previous critical reviews and applications of the participant observation method, they have done so without formally reflecting on some of the new problems and possibilities implicit in their reformulation of a more 'structural' ethnography. The first section of the paper addresses itself to some of the historical configurations, perspectives and key definitions necessary to recognise the main sociological 'bloodlines' of contemporary ethnography. In no way is it claimed that this exercise is either exhaustive or fully comprehensive. Rather, we want to abstract out some of the major concepts and developments within 'interpretive' forms of social theory, in contrast to examples drawn from 'positivistic' sociology, in order to provide at least a recognition of one aspect of the historical pedigree of ethnographic research. The second part of the paper, is concerned primarily with identifying the main elements and theoretical premises informing the development of a structural ethnography within the field of cultural studies. It will be argued that this specific type of analysis, emerged out of an active engagement with a complex Marxism and continues to reveal the imprint of feminist theory, practice and criticism. The final section of the paper attempts to pose a number of crucial and challenging questions about the problems and promises inherent in ethnographic studies.

> The rich, living, sensuous, concrete activity of self-objectification is therefore reduced to its mere abstraction ...
>
> - Karl Marx. (on Hegel)

Introduction

All writing contains within it historical motivations. The genesis of this paper is no exception. Initially, this essay was conceived of as a general reaction to what we felt was a methodological gap in ethnographic work in cultural studies. This is not to suggest that there is a lack of concrete ethnographic studies - on the contrary, it is the very success and proliferation of this work over the last decade which forces a discussion of method to the top of the agenda. In our view, while many of these recent studies have gone substantially beyond previous critical reviews of the participant observation method,(1) they have done so without formally reflecting on the new problems and possibilities implicit in their reformulation of a more 'structural ethnography'.(2)

This latter point reveals a number of other 'hidden' motivations for writing this paper. On the one hand, we are firmly committed to the richness and potential of a full fledged structural ethnography - not just on an intellectual level but right on down to its practical and political implications (two processes which we view as inseparable). On the other hand, the very fullness and sensibility of many of these highly-textured case studies, must be contrasted with a virtual silence on the major political and methodological issues. And when they have confronted the problem of method, cultural theorists have often assumed a readership who has fully explored the deep, dark caverns of sociological method and the philosophy of science. For instance, one of the relatively recent (and one might add, extremely rare) discussions on participant observation methods in cultural studies, begins:

> If the 'naturalist' revolt was directed against positivism's inability to understand and record human subjectivity, mainstream sociology has nevertheless found it possible to assign participant observation (PO) and case study work a legitimate place in the social sciences.(3)

We have ripped this passage from its fuller context not because we necessarily disagree with what it says, but rather to highlight our own approach to these complex methodological issues. The point is that even

within sociology, terminology like 'naturalism' and 'positivism' are by no means well understood. Surely their usage without adequate explanation, simply confuses the issue. It also obscures a long and disjointed history of the study of 'cultures from within'. The first section of this paper then, addresses itself to some of the historical configurations, perspectives and key definitions necessary to recognise the major bloodlines of contemporary ethnography. In no way do we claim to be either exhaustive (by providing a total history) or comprehensive (dealing with the full range of issues and concepts). Our aims are more modest than this. It will not be possible to deal here with a vast range of issues raised in the field of oral history, nor can we hope to dissect either the anthropological or literary influences on contemporary ethnography. Rather, we want to abstract out some of the major concepts and developments largely within 'interpretive sociology',(4) by contrasting them with some examples drawn from positivistic sociologists, in order to provide at least a recognition of the historical pedigree of ethnographic research.

The second part of the paper, is concerned primarily with identifying the main elements and theoretical premises informing the development of a structural ethnography within cultural studies. We want to argue that this specific type of analysis, emerged out of an active engagement with a complex Marxism and continues to reveal the imprint of feminist theory, practice and criticism. The final section of the paper attempts to pose a number of crucial and challenging questions about the 'promises' and 'problems' of conducting ethnographic studies. In concluding, we want to suggest that it is the active contradictions and 'double reflexivity' inherent in the best ethnography, which offers up the greatest potential for new social relations of research and ultimately, the fusion of theory and politics.

Historical Configurations and Concepts

Ethnography and participant observation research are methods pregnant with history.(5) As concepts they defy simple definition. What we mean by this, is that contemporary analyses of cultures 'from within' are deeply embedded in a rich and varied history of social, political, literary, anthropological and philosophical thought (and debate) which is rarely revealed in the terms themselves.

This section of the paper is designed to render some of the major conceptual and historical aspects pertaining to qualitative sociology comprehensible. Such a task implies a certain amount of 'typification'

and 'condensation' - in a word, an excuse for ignoring the historical complexity of situations, in order to provide a relative coherent and simplified version. We think this is justifiable on two counts. First, there is an urgent sense of marking out an appropriate starting point (however artificial), for developing an appreciation of a long history of ethnographic research. Secondly, we feel that there is still a great deal of confusion in sociology and cultural studies over distinguishing general philosophical categories from philosophy of science terminology, and perspectives/paradigms from historically established schools of thought. Part of the problem is due, no doubt, to some genuine overlap between these categories. Yet it is crucial, we think, to be as clear and precise as possible in differentiating between types of approaches, even within interpretive sociology.

An obvious starting point would be to give some substance to the term 'positivism'. The problematic nature of the concept is expressed in the following quotation:

> ... the effect of using positivist...when it has been practically dropped by those who actually defend the position being attacked, is often to distance the real conflict, or even prevent its clarification. It becomes a swear-word, by which nobody is swearing. (6)

Anthony Giddens, a contemporary sociologist, also stresses that positivism 'has today become more a term of abuse than a technical term of philosophy'.(7) In an attempt to clarify its indiscriminate use, Giddens prefers to reserve the term positivism proper to refer to the views of Auguste Comte (to be discussed subsequently) and to those leading figures of the 'Vienna Circle'.(8) Positivistic philosophy is used to designate a range of views clustered around certain compatible views of science and, positivistic sociology distinguishes the specific application of positivism to the discipline of sociology. We reiterate Giddens' distinctions here only because while our main discussion focuses on positivistic sociology, it is also necessary to highlight some of the major aspects of positivistic philosophy. As Giddens himself admits, the problem is somewhat compounded by the tendency of sociologists to continually collapse and recombine these divisions.

By 'positivistic philosophy' then, we infer a range of positions holding most or all of these major tenents:(9)

(a) The dominant scientific model of the physical sciences, including formal logic and experimentation, is applicable and/or adaptable to the social sciences (i.e. both are seen to share the same logical foundation for knowledge production).

(b) There is an attempt to construct or set out statements or theories of a general 'law-like' character which can be empirically tested by 'operationalising' concepts (making them measurable) and statistically manipulating the relationship between these concepts (now called 'variables').

(c) The objects of analyses must be directly observable and measurable.

(d) There is a clear distinction made between 'fact' (usually defined as empirical knowledge) and 'value' (the implications of moral aims).

The influence of positivism upon the discipline of sociology has been well documented and stretches back to the seminal writings of the philosopher, Auguste Comte (1798-1857). In fact, Comte, occupies a central position in the history of positivistic sociology. While he is perhaps best known for originating the term 'sociology', Comte also helped to introduce and develop the notion of 'positive' as a form of scientific understanding. He argued that human knowledge and history were passing through definite stages of development towards a more precise and scientific view of the world. Through this new science (which he called sociology), it would become possible to formulate general laws of society which could be utilised to shape human destiny. Comte also accepted the premise that there was one logic of science which could be applied to all disciplines and forms of knowledge.(10) Interestingly enough, he inverted the orthodox view which placed physics at the top of the scientific pyramid by arguing that sociology would become the new 'queen' of the sciences. If they could discover the laws of human society, sociologists, according to Comte, would become the harbingers of the new order.

Emile Durkheim (one of the most influential figures in the development of sociology in the 20th Century) took up some aspects of Comte's positivism, although as numerous writers have noted, this adoption was far from complete.(11) Despite this, it is quite clear from Durkheim's major works that he unwaveringly saw his task as one of perfecting the sociological method in accordance with 'the methods of

the positive sciences'.[12] In his The Rules of Sociological Method,[13] (1895) Durkheim's positivist leanings are clearly revealed in his discussion of the 'social fact'. For example, he argued that social facts: (a) are external to human agents and can be treated as 'objects' in their own right (a position we refer to as 'objectivism'), (b) can only be identified and explicated through empirical means, and (c) have a constraining and salient impact upon human agents independent of their will.[14]

This typification and admitted simplification of Durkheim's objectivist position is not intended to deny his contribution to sociology, or ignore the many insights contained in The Rules of Sociological Method. The essential point has been to establish some continuity between Comte's philosophy and Durkheim's methodological preferences. In turn, Durkheim's work must be viewed as perhaps the single most important influence upon the emergence of a particular varient of positivism in American sociology.

Before returning to the impact of Durkheim's objectivism upon 'structural functionalism' (a dominant model of sociological inquiry in the U.S. from the 1930's to the 1960's), it is equally crucial to come to terms with the concept of 'naturalism'. For if positivism has been partially described as a 'swear word by which no one is swearing', then naturalism must also qualify as a blasphemy. From our own readings, we have been able to distinguish various usages, both in literary/art history and in sociology and the philosophy of science. Naturalism, as a critical term used in art and literature, refers to a style or technique 'rendering artistic or literary subjects so as to reproduce natural appearances or actual events in detail'.[15] However, as Raymond Williams argues, this contemporary meaning has been virtually 'peeled out' of a broad range of arguments and inferences surrounding the term. An example of two conflicting historical definitions are: (a) the scientific usage of 'naturalist' as a 17th century scientist, and (b) a more humanistic or literary version of naturalism as a concern with describing accurately and in detail, the essential elements of a character's environment.[16]

It is interesting to note how these historical definitions, have lead to conflicting and even oppositional uses of naturalism in sociology and the philosophy of science. Hence, Keat and Urry in their book Social Theory as Science, use naturalism in the scientific sense to refer to the '...underlying claim that there is only one logic of

science'.[17] If we recall the first characteristic of positivism listed earlier, then the comment '...it has been difficult to conceive of a naturalist position which is not also positivist'[18] makes sense. On the other hand, naturalism has also been utilized to specify a position (or rather, a range of positions) in the social sciences directly opposed to positivism. Naturalism in this schema usually implies the study of the social world in its 'natural' state, undisturbed by either theory or artificial experimentation (both assumed to characterize positivism). It is clear that naturalism as it is used here is much more closely connected to the humanistic definition offered by Williams. The methods usually adopted to study this natural, social world are participant observation and ethnographic techniques.[19]

In our view, the difficulty with this latter definition of naturalism is that it collapses together a wide range and variety of perspectives concerned with the role and meaning of human action (or agency). Its very utilization is at cross purposes with the major thrust of this paper. Rather than collapse a series of important qualitative traditions as they have developed in social theory, we want to differentiate the specific characteristics of various attempts to come to terms with the relationship between social structure and human agency. Our rejection (or at least suspension) of the term has relevance for understanding more clearly and precisely, the specific contribution of previous sociologists dealing with the 'interpretive' mode of social existence.

It is within the context of these remarks, not to mention the relative dominance of positivism in social science, that the work of another 'classical' sociologist must be judged. A useful and frequently employed benchmark for understanding the origins of interpretive sociology, lies within the writings of Max Weber. Weber's work is central to this problematic because of his ambiguous position on 'objectivity' in the social sciences and the separation of 'fact' from 'value' on the one hand and, his stress on the importance of meaning in social life on the other. This ambiguity is lucidly reflected in Weber's definition of sociology as a:

> ...science which attempts the interpretive understanding of social action in order to arrive at a causal explanation of its course and effects... Action is social in so far as, by virtue of the subjective meaning attached to

> it by the acting individual (or individuals), it takes account of the behaviour of others, and is thereby oriented in its course. (20)

It is apparent from this passage and from Weber's other methodological writings,[21] that while he wished to hold onto sociology as an objective science (an aspect of positivism), he was also intimately concerned with 'interpretive understanding' and 'subjective meanings'.

Crucial to Weber's sociology is the notion that the meaning of individual action - what he called 'motivational understanding' or explanation - is essential for an adequate theory of society. He suggested that, with a proper grasp of subjective meanings and intentions, sociologists can link 'social action' to 'causal explanation'. Despite his contribution to sociology in general and ethnography in particular (his emphasis on 'empathatic understanding' prefigures understanding a culture from 'inside') there are a number of problems with Weber's methodology.

For example, let us look more closely at Weber's concept of motivational understanding. On the one hand, there is a strong tendency in this approach to **reduce** social motivations to the whims of individual actors. This position has been referred to as 'methodological individualism'[22] whereby all actions, motivations, intentions and even social structures themselves, become embedded in what Steven Lukes calls the 'abstract individual'.[23] On the other hand, numerous critics have found fault with Weber's simplistic distinction between 'direct understanding' (behaviour which is directly observable) and motivational understanding (the inner meaning of the act). The major criticism levelled against Weber here, is that meaning cannot and must not be inferred simply by observing a direct action. Whilst Weber's contribution to the debate about meaning and social structure lays out the major problems, he does not effectively solve them.

Alfred Schutz, a German-born scholar who came to America in the late 1930's, was one of the many thinkers who took up the challenge of Weber's concern with intersubjectivity. Schutz is an important figure in the development of an interpretive sociology for a number of other additional reasons. In the first instance, he was perhaps the first philosopher who attempted to apply various 'phenomenological'[24] principles to the methodology of the social sciences. Secondly, Schutz was tremendously influential in helping to lay the foundations for a 'social construction of reality' school of sociological theory.[25] Despite his importance in these other realms, we want to limit our

comments to Schutz's engagement with Weber's position and his contribution towards the study of 'everyday life'.

Like Weber, Schutz held firmly to the idea that the social sciences were not necessarily different from the natural sciences.(26) However, as Richard Bernstein points out, Schutz did feel as if Weber's conception of subjective meaning was both misunderstood and problematic. Schutz's contribution was to go even further than Weber's concern with interpretation, by suggesting that human beings are constantly interpreting (and reinterpreting) the actions of themselves and others. It was the principles underlying the construction and reconstruction of the social world which most interested Schutz. For him, a number of pivotal concerns flowed from this preoccupation: (a) the intersubjective meanings of human action in everyday life were central for an understanding of the social world (b) the sociologist constructed her/his theories and interpretations in a similar fashion and in the same context as other human beings, and (c) the sociologist must attempt to render her/his 'second-order' interpretation of lay actors first order constructs, into a language that is understandable in the realm of everyday common-sense.(27)

We have placed some importance on Schutz's work, for we think that he at least raises a range of important problems facing the interpretive method. In addition, his concern with meaning construction, the study of everyday life and his probing of the general problem surrounding the relationship between 'theory' and 'common-sense', reflects both the strengths and weakness of contemporary ethnography. Although less well known, Schutz also struggled to insert a historical dimension into his theory - in addition to developing an idea whereby 'stocks of knowledge' are limited through their unequal social distribution.(28) Schutz's influence upon later developments in American sociology, particularly ethnomethodology, is sufficiently strong [illegible] to evaluate these two positions together (while remaining aware of their major differences).

We have tried thus far, to give some real substance to the term positivism within the philosophy of science and through the sociological writings of Comte and Durkheim. We have also sought to differentiate between two major approaches concerned with theorising human subjectivity and the meaning of everyday life (despite their having positivistic elements). It is impossible to trace precisely the historical trajectory of positivism and variants of interpretive sociology through to developments in contemporary ethnography. However, some aspects of

these positions can be recognized in the dominant and subordinate models of American sociology in the 20th century. It is widely acknowledged for instance, that positivistic sociology (in its various guises) dominated North American social science for a period of about thirty years between the 1930's and 1960's. This of course does not mean that other paradigms did not either continue or emerge during this period. Paul Willis argues that the 'Chicago School' of the 1920's and 30's actually originated a tradition of research based on a qualitative methodology.(29) W. F. Whyte's Street Corner Society,(30) written in the 1940's and Howard Becker's ethnographic work on male subcultures in the 1950's and 60's continued and advanced this tradition.(31) The leading theoretical position in American sociology spanning these years however, was a particular brand of positivism called structural functionalism.

It has been argued that this form of positivism took much of its shape from the work of Durkheim.(32) Although many of Durkheim's theoretical formulations were introduced into the U.S. by other writers,(33) perhaps the most important figure in the restructuring of a new positivism was the American sociologist Talcott Parsons. Parsons' work is doubly important here. For not only did he introduce many North American sociologists to the work of the 'classical tradition' (particularly Weber and Durkheim, among others), he also struggled to create - out of this engagement - an adequate theory of human action.(34) The bulk of Parsons' work need not concern us here. However, in our view, two major points should be made about his theory. On the one hand, his paradigm of structural functionalism became the dominant model of American sociology(35) - despite the fact that many sociologists have subsequently argued that there was no 'action frame of reference' in Parsons' action theory.(36) Secondly, functionalism's striking inability to come to terms with meaning, conflict and human experience, actually provided an impetus for the renaissance and restatement of a range of older interpretivist traditions.(37)

In addition to a resilient tradition of social interaction theory and the resurgence of Schutz's phenomenology in the work of Peter Berger and Thomas Luckmann, there emerged other strands of interpretive sociology in the 1960's. The writings of Harold Garfinkel in particular and a loosely defined perspective known as ethnomethodology, have continued to have an important bearing on mainstream ethnography. Garfinkel's importance lies not only with the style of his key text Studies in Ethnomethodology,(38) but is also due to his curious dual

acknowledgement of Parsons' 'problem of social order' and Schutz's preoccupation with common-sense knowledge and the everyday world.(39)

Ethnomethodology as a term begs a definition. It has rarely been the case that its practitioners ever attempted or wanted to provide a rigorous explanation of the term. Rather, ethnomethodologists have often suggested that their method should be judged purely by its results in exemplary pieces of research. As Roy Turner argues, the 'labelling' of ethnomethodology as a theory has occurred largely in mainstream sociology rather than within the actual practice itself.(40) In spite of this, there are remnants of a definition - however vague - in Turner's own work. He writes:

> Ethnomethodologists, then, take as their aim (in their various ways) the description and analysis of the member's resources for finding what they find and doing what others will find them to have done.(41)

Now if this attempt to define ethnomethodology is largely a failure, the fact that Garfinkel (who coined the term) has described its usage to be a 'shibboleth'(42) is little consolation. The term originated, according to Garfinkel, out of some research he was conducting on jurors. In the course of that research and after flipping through an index file in the library beginning with 'ethno', Garfinkel decided to temporarily label the study of juror's common sense method of knowing and 'accounting' for that knowledge as ethnomethodology.(43) The closest Garfinkel gets to providing a definition appears to be: '...an organizational study of a member's knowledge of his ordinary affairs, of his own organized enterprises, where that knowledge is treated by us as part of the same setting that also makes it orderable.'(44)

Giddens has cogently summed up five major themes in ethnomethodology which he suggests are necessary (but not adequate) for a theory of human action or agency.(45) They are: (a) the pivotal role of human action and meaning for social theory (b) the theme of 'reflexivity' (that action is bound up with self reflection) (c) the importance of language as a 'medium of practical activity' (and not just a set of signs) (d) the theme of 'locating' and contextualising action in time and (e) the notion of tacit, 'taken for granted' assumptions. We think it will become clearer later on in this paper, to see how some of these themes have been picked up in structural ethnography and rigorously

reworked in the context of power, social relations and material conditions.

Notwithstanding some of the major differences between Schutz's work and Garfinkel's ethnomethodology,[46] there is sufficiently common ground for joint criticism. We want to launch two inter-related criticisms without wishing to trivialise either position. First, there is a strong sense in which ethnomethodology and phenomenology privilege (above all else), the subjectivist state, without adequately connecting it up to any notion of determinism. By determinism we do not wish to adopt Durkheim's 'objectivist' conception of social facts - which exist outside of and constrain human beings totally against their will. Such a position often acts to deflect the specific locus of power in a society. Rather, we want to use the term to imply the exertion of 'pressures' and the capacity of some social groupings and classes to utilise their resources to lead a society and define the contours of the dominant culture.[47] In a very fundamental way, ethnomethodology and phenomenology ask us to suspend any notion of the distribution of power and the differential access certain classes, genders, races and age groups have for defining social and cultural practices and making their accounts of the world 'count'.[48]

Secondly, there is a very real tendency in phenomenological approaches towards sanctifying the everyday or 'natural' social world. What we mean by this, is the subject or member's[49] construction of social reality and the way in which that reality is accounted for, is given absolute primacy and imbued with a natural form of 'authenticity'. In this scheme, the second order interpretation arrived at by the researcher must reflect back (like a mirror), as intimately as possible, the first order interpretation of the member. Taken to its logical conclusion, this belief ultimately places the researcher (if she/he is to exist at all) into a position aptly described as the 'disinterested observer'. Analysis, rather than being critical, often degenerates into mere description. In simpler terms, it is enough to know how others come to know what they know. John Rex, a contemporary sociologist, has in a short passage, pushed this phenomenological position to the edge of its own cliff - where it must either retreat or jump off.[50] Rex recalls a conversation he had with a prominent phenomenological sociologist about whether or not researchers should be able to deal with topics such as a slave plantation. The phenomenolgist said no, he was only interested in how the people use and understand the

concept of slavery. To paraphrase Rex, surely something is missing here?[51]

If phenomenology and ethnomethodology have left us tottering on the brink of a lonely cliff, then it should be said that ethnography in Britain has had alternative resources to build upon. Parsons' functionalism was no doubt a strong force in British sociology, albeit a lesser influence. Hebdige traces the study of subcultures in Britain to a tradition of 'urban ethnography' - reflected in the work of Henry Mayhew, Thomas Archer and the novels of Charles Dickens.[52] Of more lasting significance however was the work of U.S. sociologist Howard Becker, particularly in the sociology of deviance. Willis[53] has alluded to Becker's influence on the work of David Downes,[54] Stan Cohen[55] and a range of radical sociologists working through the forum of the National Deviancy Conference (NDC).[56] Yet, there were other historical 'conjunctures' occurring in political and academic circles which both accelerated and provided a basis for a more versatile type of ethnography. The rise of the new 'New Left' in Britain provided a credible springboard for the study of contemporary popular culture and everyday life. The development of cultural studies and its reappropriation of anthropological and sociological methods and terminology, led to the re-emergence of the term 'ethnography' and a rigorous rethinking of the participant observation method. Last, but certainly not least, was the growing voice of feminist theory and practice both inside and outside the traditional academic sphere. It is to some of these conjunctures and their impact on ethnographic research practice that we now turn.

Structural Ethnography in Cultural Studies

We want to begin here by highlighting some of the key texts and moments responsible for the 'transition' of ethnography in to cultural studies.[57] Rather than attempt to provide any sort of overview of cultural studies, which has already been adequately provided elsewhere,[58] this section will concentrate solely on developments as they relate to ethnographic research. Secondly, we want to abstract out some of the general principles and features of a position referred to as 'structural ethnography'.

One of the most significant moments in the development of cultural studies was the construction of the 'New Left' in Britain in the mid 1950's and early 1960's. Within the academic realm, there were a number

of seminal texts which proved to be central in the democratisation of the dominant English cultural tradition. Stuart Hall has cited the work of Raymond Williams, Richard Hoggart and E.P. Thompson as representative of important 'breaks' in academic orthodoxy - due in part to their 'foregrounding of the questions of culture, consciousness and experience...'(59) To varying degrees, all three of these writers have contributed to ethnographic research in cultural studies by continually emphasising the importance of human agency and the study of everyday life. For instance, Raymond Williams' life work must be viewed as a monumental attempt to detach culture from its aristocratic roots and render it as a 'whole way of life', or more recently as a 'material social process'.(60) E.P. Thompson's classic book, The Making of the English Working Class, legitimated the historical study of popular cultural forms and his subsequent writing has always emphasised the irreducibility of human agency.(61) Finally, Richard Hoggart provided a working model for ethnographic research in cultural studies, with his rich and highly textured account of post-war working class culture.(62) Unfortunately many of Hoggart's romantic observations remained highly untheorised, particularly from a feminist perspective.

However, Hoggart's influence on the transformation of ethnographic research practice is quite a significant contribution for two reasons. First, despite its mass cultural pessimism, The Uses of Literacy stands squarely in a tradition whereby shared, collective meanings and the 'lived experience' of class is constructed out of a relationship with a dominant culture. Rather than concerning himself with 'lived cultures' and human experience for their own sake (the latter being a tendency of ethnomethodology), Hoggart was more interested in how a subordinate group both maintains itself and becomes eroded through its social interaction with mass cultural publications. Whether we agree with Hoggart's analysis here is irrelevant. Secondly, Hoggart was officially responsible for providing a forum for the development of cultural studies with the opening of the Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies (henceforth the Centre or CCCS), at the University of Birmingham in 1964. Despite the fact that the Centre's early collective work was primarily focussed on media studies,(63) there has always been a strong interest in lived experience and cultural forms (particularly with respect to working class life and its variations in subcultural styles).

Yet, while much of this emphasis may have come from Hoggart's model in The Uses of Literacy, there were a number of other significant

encounters which worked to transform the very content of the category 'cultural experience'. Stuart Hall, in his discussion of 'Cultural Studies and the Centre', locates the maturation of this perspective in the context of an appropriation within sociology - in the study of sub-cultures, deviance and an engagement with interpretive sociology (some of these strands have been outlined in the first section of this paper). Of slightly more significance for the Centre was the work of G.H. Mead and the Chicago School, revived in the writings of Howard Becker. This was no simple appropriation. As Hall argues, these 'lived accounts' had to be situated in a broader framework of determination, social relations and material conditions. Hence, the Centre's engagement not only with a 'complex' Marxism, but also with some of the practical and theoretical issues raised by feminism. It should be noted here that the relation-ship between Marxism and Feminism at CCCS was by no means unproblematic. Rather, it must be seen as an ongoing struggle, complicated more recently by a concern over theorising race issues.(64) All of these debates must also be situated in the context of a plethora of competing theoretical perspectives developed at the Centre, ethnography being only one strand.

Notwithstanding a wide variety and large number of participant observation studies in sociology in the 1970's,(65) some of the most prolific ethnographic material has been produced within and around the Centre. Much of this work is internationally recognized and widely cited. While a complete list is unavailable, we are referring primarily to the ethno-graphy found in various CCCS publications - Resistance Through Rituals, Women Take Issue, Working Class Culture, Culture, Media, Language - as well as some of the work in Angela McRobbie and Trish McCabe (eds) Feminism for Girls, Dorothy Hobson (Crossroads), Christine Griffin, Roger Grimshaw, Dick Hebdige (Subculture) and Paul Willis (Learning to Labour and Profane Culture). Additional material by various Centre members is also hidden away in theses, research projects, working documents and stencilled occasional papers. Rather than attempt to provide any kind of overview of this diverse body of work, we want to abstract out a number of general principles which characterise and differentiate what has been termed a 'structural ethnography'.

In a manner similar to early proponents of an interpretive sociology, advocates of a structural ethnography recognize the central importance of human action and meaning in the construction of the social word. In a word, there is a strong emphasis on the 'irreducible' nature of cultural

experience. The 'best' ethnography attempts to capture this. The point has been put most emphatically by Willis;

> At its best ethnography does something which theory and commentary cannot: it presents human experience without making it a passive reflex of social structure and social conditions. It reproduces the profane creativity of living cultures. It breaks the spell of theoretical symmetry: dryly proposed contradictions and problems become uncertainty, activity, effort, failure and success. Ethnography shows subjectivity as an active moment in its own form of production - not as a whispered bourgeois apology for a belief in individual sensibility.(66)

This insistance upon the concreteness of human experience need not - as this passage so clearly indicates - imply that a concern with human subjectivity is simply 'a whispered bourgeois apology for a belief in human sensibility'. Nor does it necessarily follow that the analysis must merely remain on the terrain of the 'subjective'. On the contrary, a structural ethnographer is concerned with human action and meaning not for its own sake, but precisely because it is the active, creative, 'lived out' practice of social relations, material conditions and the exercise of power. There is a decidely more Marxist and dialectical concern with cultural experience - not as a free floating entity nor mechanically determined by external forces - but as an active site for social reproduction and transformation. Such a position can be counterposed to previous interpretive approaches by further outlining some of its basic theoretical strands.

It has been suggested earlier than aspects of Weber's interpretive approach, contains within it the seeds of a position called methodological individualism (whereby all meaning, action and social structure itself is collapsed into and can only be discovered through the 'individual').(67) It has also been argued that there is a strong tendency in both phenomenology and ethnomethodology, towards a denial of differential levels of power - or, in the most extreme cases, a denial of the material world itself. Structural ethnographers, rather than regurgitating these assertions in another guise or merely side-stepping the problem, have subjected both positions to a materialist critique. Dorothy Hobson,

in her early work on housewives makes this point when she suggests that 'women's subjective experience reveals a "sense of oppression", and this oppression I would see as having a material base'.(68) Similarly, Willis has argued that he sees '...cultural experience essentially as a shared, material experience'.(69) In other words the construction of meaning and action by very definition, is a socially derived and material act. Cultural experience far from originating in the abstract individual, is by its very 'meaningfulness', a collectively shared and lived out social relation (be it gender, race, class or some form of age dependency). In this scheme, ethnographers want to hold on to the irreducible nature of cultures as they are creatively and reflexibly constructed, without losing sight of either the broader conditions of that 'skilled' production or the social implications and outcomes of human agency (normally referred to as social reproduction/transformation).

The notion of 'social relations' is a key one here and is derived in part from the writings of various Marxists, including Marx himself. The grounding of social relations in the material conditions of production (in its widest sense) forms the underlying basis of this approach. Marx's general formulation is revealed in his assertion that '...definite individuals who are productively active in a definite way enter into these definite social and political relations'.(70) Subsequent Marxists have interpreted Marx's concept in such a way as to emphasize the 'determinacy' of the subjective side of social relations.(71) Structural ethnographers have utilised and expanded upon these notions in two fundamental ways. First, while they have remained cognizant of the material basis of cultural forms, these ethnographers have sought to combine (and reformulate) the broad 'structuralist' insight - whereby the subjective side of social relations has a 'hardness' or determinacy - with a general theory of 'reflexivity'. Secondly, there has been an expansion of the term social relations by divorcing it from a narrow (and largely patriarchal) conception of production. Angela McRobbie's article on 'Working class girls and the culture of femininity' clearly illustrates this latter point. McRobbie states that while her main concern is with the cultural experience of young girls, this configuration is linked to and partially determined by '...their social class, their future role in production, their present and future role in domestic production and their economic dependence on their parents'.(72)

It is, however, a concern with the reflexive character of human action which rescues the analysis from being determined in the 'last

instance'. Reflexivity is a key term here and refers to a member's skilled capacity for continual interpretation and reinterpretation of their own and other's actions. Rather than viewing this process in an unproblematic or mechanical way (like 'black box' theories of personalities), interpretation is seen to share precisely all the complexity, contradiction, and 'layering' inherent in the formulation of a social relation. That is, within the context of determination (defined as pressures of an enabling or constraining nature) via social relations and material circumstances, there are still a wide range of cultural possibilities, tastes, reactions and responses. This is what we think ethnographers mean when they talk about the irreducibility of cultural experience.(73) Social relations and structures are taken in, rendered meaningful and provide the basis for action (as the medium of human activity), at the same time as they are reproduced through that action as outcomes (social reproduction).(74) Structural ethnography then not only attempts to understand cultural experience in its face-to-face production and location in time, it also wants to situate that interaction in the social reproduction of relations and society as a whole. For example, Christine Griffin's work on cultures of femininity is not only concerned with romance as a key feature of young girls' experience, but how that links up to the broader processes of domesticity and low paid work in a segmented, capitalist labour market.(75)

There are other theoretical perspectives and strategies by which structural ethnographers have tried to link up lived experience with social structures and social relations. For instance, much of the ethnographic work undertaken at CCCS has, in varying degress, utilised aspects of semiology to read cultures 'textually'. In Richard Johnson's terms this has involved making connections between 'lived cultural ensembles and public forms' - specifically revolving around the 'appropriation of elements of mass culture and their transformation according to the needs and cultural logics of social groups'.(76) Dick Hebdige's book, Subculture(77) is perhaps the most representative example of this approach, in addition to being the most semiological treatment of cultural forms coming out of the Centre. Hebdige provides a vast number of important examples illustrating the subcultural appropriation of commercial clothing, black music and leisure styles. Similarly, Angela McRobbie's exploration of young girls and the construction of femininity through their interaction with the magazine Jackie(78) and Willis' treatment of the symbolic use of drugs by hippies,(79) provide

two other examples of how a particular social group interacts with a 'public' cultural product. Such an approach has been fruitful on two accounts. First, this perspective has probed at a neglected aspect of cultural studies - the intersection of public and private cultural forms. Secondly, much of this work has been a definite advancement upon past 'mass cultural theories' (which often prioritize cultural objects themselves as the source of oppression and domination rather than the social relations behind those objects - i.e. T.V = domination), without erring in the equally opposite direction of cultural 'idealism' and the promotion of individualist theories of subjectivity. Again it should be stated that the distinction between public and private is made in terms of the level of abstraction and not as a real separation.

The adoption of a dialectical position on social relations and cultural experience, also has implications for the role of theory. As Grimshaw, et.al. state: '...formulations conducted within theory still run the risk of inclining towards a purely formalist account of cultural forms'.(80) However, in contrast to the atheoretical content of mainstream participant observation studies, structural ethnographers have at times indulged in a reasonably high level of theorising - particularly of a cultural Marxist(81) or feminist variety.(82) The utilization of theory and abstraction to highlight the main elements in a lived cultural ensemble and the provision of a basic theoretical framework of the object under study (i.e. a sketch of education under capitalism) also differentiates this approach from mainstream ethnography. Theory is not shunned, as ethnomethodologists might have it, because it influences the authenticity of the situation, for there is no 'untheoretical' way to view social phenomenon. Yet at the same time, theory (in this perspective) does not by itself magically demonstrate the working through of social possibilities so vital to an ethnographic account. Indeed, it is the capacity to be 'surprised', the act of coming to terms with the complex and contradictory process of human beings acting through the world, that can move one's 'a priori' theorising along to new and different questions.(83) This position should not be confused with a 'passive' empiricism. It is the 'double reflexivity' of both the researcher and the human beings under study which ultimately informs this 'praxis'. This is a key point which we will return to at the end of the paper.

Perhaps the most important intervention into structural ethnography, which in our view clearly separates it from previous strands of

interpretivism, has been feminism. Feminist research at the Centre has utilised, critiqued and indeed shaped aspects of the ethnographic method and its underlying theoretical justification. Such an engagement, however limited it may seem to the feminist 'project' as a whole, is in our view highly significant in the context of a long history of patriarchal domination in both the social sciences and everyday life.(84) Initially conceived of in the wake of male youth subculture literature as a 'striking absence',(85) feminist analyses of romance and girl cultures(86) - not to mention studies of the household with reference to leisure (or lack of it)/domestic labour(87) and the cultural medium of television(88) - have come to influence the very scope and focus of cultural analysis. Again, this is not to gloss over the very real struggles feminists have had to conduct in this field of study.

The contribution of feminist ethnography has been both highly variable and generally significant for the entire field of cultural studies. As we have already mentioned, feminists have begun to point out the absence of not only young, white, working class girls from the sub-culture literature, but have also emphasized the racial dimension. Rather than viewing this preoccupation with white male youths as just a problem of representation (i.e. all we need are more studies of young girls to even the 'count'), feminists have opted to seriously theorise about these 'silences'.(89) In a central way they have also been involved in bridging the theoretical gap between 'experience' (for them, their own feelings as women as well as the women they study) and the broader structuring of gender relations within patriarchy/capitalism. This is why, as Johnson has put it, '...feminist work in the Centre has been as much preoccupied with theorising the position of women as with "talking to girls"'.(90) Feminism in general has also been a driving force behind the tendency to break down the facade behind theorising (in traditional academic modes) and publishing (who has access to what books?) and have instead, chosen to question the traditional 'scientific' relationship between the researcher and the researched.(91) Dorothy Hobson's work on housewives for instance, breaks the dominant code of silence on methodology, when she openly confesses her fears about the method she is using and her developing friendships with her 'subjects'.(92) While much more remains to be said about these alternative directions and tendencies - especially with respect to new forms of cultural politics and critiques of the scientific method in social theory - the major point here is to acknowledge the very real contribution feminism

has made towards transforming ethnographic research practices.

We have now come to an appropriate point in the text to be able to give some real substance to the term, structural ethnography. We take it to mean a specific research practice which:

(a) recognizes the central importance and irreducibility of reflexive cultural experience in the social reproduction and transformation of societies.

(b) attempts to situate that experience in the context of the active, lived-out structuration[93] of social relations and material conditions.

(c) utilises abstraction, formal description, ethnographic techniques and varients of social and cultural theory (feminism, Marxism, semiology) to highlight and 'read' the major elements of a lived cultural ensemble.

(d) recognizes that it is the social relationship between the researcher and researched which forms the basis for both the transformation and fusion of theory and action (in the widest, political sense of the term).

It is an examination of this particular social relationship - that is, the political dimensions of structural ethnography - which forms the bulk of the next section.

Making the 'Best' Ethnography Better

The first part of this paper, has attempted to provide some insight into the key concepts and historical configurations surrounding a sociological concern with meaning and human action. In part two, we have sought to abstract out the major elements differentiating a structural ethnography from past interpretive schools of thought. While both of these aims are worthy in their own right, they do demand a third question. That is, if this is the 'best' ethnography, then is it good enough? This depends of course on what is meant by 'good enough'. If we mean - is ethnography adequate as the sole method of social and cultural analysis - we would have to say no. Yet, at the same time, we feel compelled not to fall into the orthodox position whereby structural ethnography becomes only one type of sweet in the sociological (or cultural studies) candy store of methods. The problem of theory/method and power/knowledge is much deeper than this and, we feel that the type of ethnography

developed at the Centre has the capacity to begin to question the existing relations between researchers and researched.

Despite this crucial point (which we shall return to), the very origins and subsequent development of cultural studies in Britain has militated against the adoption of any one theoretical perspective or methodological approach. To raise structural ethnography to the level of 'grand theory' would be to ignore a wide variety of developments and perspectives. As Johnson clearly points out, not only has cultural studies emerged out of a number of disparate traditions, it has also developed different methods and theoretical formulations for dealing with particular aspects and forms of culture. It is no coincidence then that media studies and the analyses of institutional forms have been overwhelmed by a more 'structuralist' format, while the study of lived cultures have adopted, almost exclusively, an ethnographic blueprint. Despite the impact of these divisions, Johnson goes on to argue that any fully adequate knowledge of a cultural product must be obtained by tracing '...a social form right through the circuits of its transformations...within the whole context of relations of hegemony within the society'.(94) Within this scheme, the study of lived cultures is a starting point but does not necessarily imply the full tracing through of a social form.

There is much to this argument and we think any serious analyst of culture would agree that coming to terms with a cultural product in all of its facets is of primary importance. We would also argue that some of the best examples of structural ethnography have struggled (although not always succeeded) to trace the social forms of a living culture through their 'textual', 'interpretive' (or 'reading') and 'productivist' moments. Willis' Learning to Labour, despite its self-imposted limitations, is not only sensitive to the symbolic nature of male, working class school culture, but also situates that experience in the context of the preparation of male labour power under capitalism (its productivist moment). Dorothy Hobson, in her book Crossroads, also attempts to provide an analysis of a soap opera through its productivist, textual and lived out moments by women 'readers' in working class households. It should be stated however that any further advancement of these approaches will depend not only upon developments within ethnography itself, but must involve the transformation and interpenetration of theory and method in cultural studies as a whole.

We also want to advance the notion that structural ethnography can only become better by dealing more rigorously with the issue of 'technicism'. This is not to say that technique should become a 'fetish' for ethnographers, as it has for proponents of qualitative research methods. However, not only is there a curious absence of discussion on ethnographic methodology at the Centre, there is also far less material written on the actual mechanics and dynamics of the practice itself. If structural ethnography is a different 'animal' from mainstream participant observation studies, how would its methods and practices differ? To realize that the choice of technique is tied up with one's theoretical premises, political perspective and social relationship as a researcher is one thing, to insist that any suggestion of 'how to do it' is 'hegemonising' is another.(95) It is interesting to note that while there is a wide range of fieldwork manuals and methodological discussions dealing with mainstream participant observation techniques,(96) there is, to our knowledge, virtually no sustained body of work concerned with the particular techniques and issues raised by structural ethnography. Have these researchers been reluctant to make public what they really know privately about the politics of research?

The feminist impact on cultural studies also has numerous implications for the further transformation of ethnographic practice. In fact, its influence could very well form an entire paper in its own right. Rather than try and deal with all of its varied contributions and possibilities we want to utilise the feminist intervention to explore the specific issue of research as a social relation and advance a general notion of 'cultural politics'.

Some variants of feminism, unlike much of the intellectual knowledge production industry, have clearly developed aims about 'why' and 'form whom' they are conducting their research. The main principle is that the 'personal is the political' and "even" if you are a researcher and they are the researched, you are all women first.(97) One of the problems for feminist researchers comes, as McRobbie puts it:

> ...when a politics, its theory and aspects of its practice, (in our case feminism) meet up with an already existing academic discipline, the convergence of the two is by no means unproblematic. (98)

McRobbie goes on to argue that although feminists may have in some cases transcended some of the problems of naturalistic sociology, they have

at the same time constructed their own particular obstacles. For instance, she warns that while feminists may be able to (more easily) break down the barrier between themselves and a female 'lived culture', this does not automatically imply that all research can (or should) be predicated on a notion of 'shared femininity'.

We want to take this series of issues one step further into what could be called, the cultural politics of ethnographic research. For it is often the case that if the first objection to ethnography is its 'lack of objectivity', the second (and more serious) criticism concerns the relationship between the researcher and the lived culture under study. There are two interrelated elements embedded in this critique - one, centring on the general power/knowledge relationship and the other related, in a more 'personal' manner, to who benefits from such knowledge. Taken together, this is a substantial and weighty argument and we do not wish to trivialise its contribution to the debate. However, we would want to assert that all forms of research practice and all theoretical and methodological principles and approaches to date, place the researcher and the researched in a particularly unequal relationship. What structural ethnography does (specifically in its feminist form) is to make this living contradiction apparent rather than cloaking it in a shroud of scientific or metaphysical justification. In contrast to attempts in mainstream sociology to discredit this approach or movements within participant observation to 'perfect' the method, we would argue that the simple realisation of the 'problem' could work to open up the possibility of a new social relationship of knowledge production. The most obvious weakness of the ethnographic method needs to be (in Marx's terms) 'stood on its head', in order to expose its greatest strength.

This 'inversion' might be thought through in two related ways. First, ethnographic researchers must ultimately come to terms with the full implication and awkwardness of their position, without losing sight of the role theory and analysis can play in social and cultural transformation. This means balancing one's confidence in the importance of formal analyses and abstraction, with a capacity for a 'reflexive' rethinking as a lived culture actually takes a hand in the conditions of its own 'making'. Secondly and a related point, is the realisation inherent in the best ethnography, of the reflexive character of the members under analysis. Taken together, this double reflexivity or what some social scientists have called the 'double hermeneutic',(99) forms an integral component of knowledge production. What we mean by

this, is that researchers cannot ignore or fail to take into account the interpretations and concepts employed by lived cultures as they continuously make sense of their life world. On the other hand, the concepts, theories and language of cultural analyses itself can be, and has been incorporated back into the cultural practices under investigation. The realization that all theory stands in a normative relation to the actors we are studying, does not necessarily imply that one's analysis immediately degenerates from having a critical edge to political dogma. On the contrary, it is the acceptance of this dialectical relationship and the double reflexivity of knowledge production which forms the conditions for their joint transformation.

The adoption of this position does not easily solve all the problems still facing a cultural politics. It does however, have further implications for dealing with criticisms revolving around the second element of the power/knowledge relationship - which can be summed up as: who benefits from the research? It is obvious for example, that published ethnographic accounts do raise private cultural forms to the level of the public sphere - where such material can be misrepresented and even used against a particular culture to increase their subordination. This criticism must not be taken lightly. However, we think it can and indeed should be deflected in a number of ways. On the one hand, we would argue that in the modern world, the dominant social groupings and networks already possess and disseminate public representations of private cultural forms. It is precisely for this reason, that these dominant representations go unchallenged (at the level of the public) and work to convince the whole society of the 'natural' inferiority of particular sub-groups. Secondly, such a critique assumes that published ethnographies are always producted to 'expose' the inner workings of a culture, rather than investigate the relationship between the researcher and researched. Such a position also does not appear to recognize that ethnographic projects can be 'interventionist' in scope or indeed be partly constructed by the participants themselves.

This critique also suffers a number of other deficiences. The assertion that the publication of the inner workings of a lived culture will ultimately lead to their increased subordination, tends towards a 'manipulative' thesis. Our reply must be that no absolute manipulation of a cultural form is possible, for the very reason we stated at the outset - the reflexive and active character of the lived

culture in question. Cultural forms and experience are always multi-faceted and contradictory. These critics of ethnography have often said far less about how this type of work could help form the basis for social transformation. Perhaps this is the 'real' site of the failure of older political movements (i.e. the Labour movement in Britain) - they have not adopted an adequate theory of cultural politics. It has been the contention of numerous cultural analysts and certainly of new social movements (particularly feminism), that we should begin with human experience and cultural possibilities.(100) This is not to deny the value of institutionalised forms of political action - they are crucial. However, it is only when one begins to know for example, what youth, women and the unemployed are experiencing culturally, that there is even a possibility of forming the basis for organising and linking together effective social and political movements. In a word, politics must become more cultural and the cultural more political.

This then, is the present contradictory and frustrating state of affairs in the study of lived cultures. We want to re-emphasise that such a position does not preclude theory and analysis. On the contrary, it restores theory to its rightful place - applied to and developing out of the inherent possibilities within existing cultural forms. We see structural ethnography as an important political practice - not as the faint echo of the 'party' line or a form of theoretical self-indulgence - but developing through, not hanging above, the culture it seeks to comprehend. This is not to deny that the fundamental social relations of knowledge production have remained largely unchanged, only that the possibility of change exists in the dual reflexivity of cultural analyses and practice and the breaking down of heirarchies. Roland Barthes in his well known book Mythologies, has written:

> For if we penetrate the object we liberate it but we destroy it; and if we acknowledge its full weight, we respect it, but we restore it to a state which is still mystified. It would seem that we are condemned for some time yet always to speak excessively about reality.(101)

We would argue that this is a false and one-sided dichotomy, for it concerns the plight of the analyst only. In our view, it is the dual reflexivity of lived cultures, cultural analyses and the relationship between them, which can help to provide the basis for effective social

transformation. It is within the interstices of this relationship that we can perhaps stop talking 'excessively' about reality and struggle to make it.

Notes and References

1. See Geoffrey Pearson and John Twohig, 'Ethnography through the looking glass', Brian Roberts 'Naturalistic research into subcultures and deviance', and Steve Butters, 'The logic of enquiry of participant observation', in Stuart Hall and Tony Jefferson (eds.), Resistance Through Rituals (Hutchinson 1976). We do not mean to imply that these or other critical reviews of method are no longer applicable, but simply to suggest that recent ethnographic work has undergone a significant transformation.

2. The term structural ethnography comes from Richard Johnson, 'What is Cultural Studies Anyway?', (CCCS Stencilled Occasional Paper No. 74, 1983), p.47. Its various elements and characteristics will be discussed in a detailed manner in the second section of the paper. Briefly, it combines theoretical abstractions, semiology, formal description, participant observation techniques and varients of a (radical) structural sociology (centring around social positioning through gender, race, class and age) to identify and 'read' key elements of a 'lived culture'.

3. Paul Willis, 'Notes on method', in Stuart Hall et.al. Culture, Media, Language (Hutchinson 1980), p.88.

4. We want to emphasise that although this paper makes reference to some of the general arguments in the philosophy of science literature, for the most part we want to confine our discussion to developments within 'interpretive' and 'positivistic' schools of sociological theory.

5. Already there is a problem with terminology here. Ethnography as a term came from anthropology and usually referred to the study of 'alien cultures', while participant observation (PO) as a method of research is generally associated with developments within sociology although it too is used in anthropology. Ethnography has since been taken up into the vocabulary of 20th century sociologists and is often used interchangeably with PO. For the sake of simplicity we will also use the two terms to mean basically the same thing, while remaining aware of their different histories. Structural ethnography is a term reserved for a qualitatively different type of research practice.

6. Raymond Williams, Keywords (Fontana 1976), p.201.

7. Anthony Giddens, Studies in Social and Political Theory (Basic Book 1977), p.29. Also see Anthony Giddens (ed.), Positivism and Sociology (Heinemann 1974).

8. The Vienna Circle was a group of academics formed in 1907 in Vienna, which included physicists, economists and mathematicians. These men sought to develop a view of science which was cognizant of the importance of logic and mathematics. Also called the 'logical positivists', this group is known more for its influence on later theorists in the philosophy of science, namely Carl Hempel, Ernest Nagel and Karl Popper. See Giddens, Studies in Social and Political Theory, pp.44-57.

9. Authors differ greatly on what aspects of positivistic philosophy they choose to highlight. Our definition has benefited from a variety of sources. See Russell Keat and John Urry, Social Theory as Science (Routledge & Kegan Paul 1975), Richard Bernstein, The Restructuring of Social and Political Theory (University of Pennsylvania Press 1978), and Giddens (ed.), Positivism and Sociology.

10. Both of these points are made about Comte in Anthony Giddens, Sociology: A Brief but Critical Introduction (Harcourt Brace Jovanovich 1982), pp.12-15.

11. See Keat and Urry, Social Theory as Science, p.80, and Giddens, Studies in Social and Political Theory, p.273.

12. Emile Durkheim, The Division of Labour in Society (Glencoe 1964), p.1.

13. Emile Durkheim, The Rules of Sociological Method (Glencoe 1950).

14. We have relied on Giddens cogent discussion of Durkheim's work in his Studies in Social and Political Theory, pp.280-283. Also see Steven Lukes' excellent book, Emile Durkheim: His Life and Work (Allan Lane 1973).

15. The Random House Dictionary (Random House Inc. 1978), p.596.

16. Williams, Keywords, p.183.

17. Keat and Urry, Social Theory as Science, p.25.

18. Ibid, p.1. This however is not Keat and Urry's position on this matter. They argue that this has occurred precisely because the debate over the methodological unity between the natural and social

sciences, has been conducted primarily in terms of one particular conception of science (positivism). The major thrust of their book is to show that there are different conceptions of science (within the natural sciences) and how these conceptions alter the very terms of the debate with regard to sociology.

19. Martyn Hammersley and Paul Atkinson, Ethnography: Principles in Practice (Tavistock 1983), G.J. McCall and J.L. Simmons (eds.), Issues in Participant Observation (Addison-Wesley 1969), W.J. Filstead (ed.), Qualitative Methodology (Markham 1979).

20. Max Weber, The Theory of Social and Economic Organizations, trans. A. Henderson and T. Parsons (Free Press 1947), p.88.

21. Max Weber, The Methodology of the Social Sciences, trans. E. Shils (Free Press 1949).

22. John O'Neill (ed.), Modes of Individualism and Collectivism (Heinemann 1973).

23. Steven Lukes, Individualism (Harper and Row 1973).

24. Phenomenology is yet another difficult term to pin down. As Giddens has suggested, there have been three broad stages in its development: (a) Husserl's 'transcendental phenomenology' (which influenced Schutz), (b) 'existential phenomenology' - including the work of Schutz and others, notably Sarte, and (c) a 'hermeneutic phenomenology' developed in the writings of Heidegger, Ricoeur and Gadamer. See Giddens, Studies in Social and Political Theory, p.136. With reference to Schutz's phenomenology, we mean a theory of society which gives priority to the principles underlying the social construction of meaning and intersubjectivity.

25. See Peter Berger and Thomas Luckmann, The Social Construction of Reality (Anchor Books 1967), and Maurice Natanson (ed.), Phenomenology and the Social Sciences 2 vols., (Northwestern University Press 1973).

26. We have relied heavily on Richard Bernstein's discussion of Schutz in this entire paragraph. See his The Restructuring of Social and Political Theory, pp.137-138.

27. Alfred Schutz, Collected Papers vol. I, Ed. with an introduction by Maurice Natanson (Martinus Nijhoff 1962), pp.44,59; Keat and Urry, Social Theory as Science, p.164.

28. Overall, these points remained undeveloped in Schutz's writings. See Bernstein, Restructuring Social and Political Theory, p.148

29. Willis, 'Notes on method', p.88. Hammersley and Atkinson, Ethnography: Principles in Practice, p.9, suggest that the Chicago School used both 'case-study' and 'statistical methods'. Also see R.E.L. Faris, Chicago School (University of Chicago Press 1967), and the work of G.H. Mead, Mind Self and Society (University of Chicago Press 1934).

30. William Foote Whyte, Street Corner Society (University of Chicago Press (1969).

31. Becker's most well-known book is Outsiders: Studies in the Sociology of Deviance (The Free Press 1961).

32. Giddens, Studies in Social and Political Theory, p.97. Giddens also mentions the impact of anthropological functionalism, primarily through the work of Radcliffe-Brown and Malinowski, in the development of structural functionalist theory.

33. Keat and Urry, Social Theory as Science, pp.90-91, specivically mention the work of H. Alpert, Emile Durkheim and his Sociology (Russell and Russell 1961), and Robert Merton, Social Theory and Social Structure (Free Press, 1957).

34. See Parsons' classic book, The Structure of Social Action (Glencoe 1949).

35. Talcott Parsons, The Social System (Free Press 1951).

36. Anthony Giddens, New Rules of Sociological Method (Hutchinson 1976).

37. This 'inability' was helped along greatly by the gnawing criticism of both functionalism as grand theory and the danger of applied empiricism, by the radical sociologist C. Wright Mills. See his classic work The Sociological Imagination (Penguin 1970). Functionalism's inability to deal with conflict, particularly as it related to the rise of the 60's protest movement, also helped to lead to its demise.

38. Garfinkel's 'style' was to produce a series of studies as opposed to talking excessively about either his theory or method. See his Studies in Ethnomethodology (Prentice Hall 1967).

39. This point is made by Peter Lassman, 'Phenomenological perspectives in sociology', in John Rex (ed.), Approaches to Sociology (Routledge & Kegan Paul 1974), p.125.

40. Roy Turner (ed.), Ethnomethodology: Selected Readings (Penguin 1974), p.7.

41. Ibid, p.11.

42. Shibboleth - meaning the pet phrase (or catchword) distinguishing a party, sect or group.

43. This story is revealed in an interview with Garfinkel in Turner (ed.), Ethnomethodology: Selected Readings, p.16.

44. Ibid, p.18.

45. Giddens, Studies in Social and Political Theory, pp.166-168.

46. One of the most obvious differences between Schutz and Garfinkel is the level of analysis they adopt. Schutz's work is much more theoretical and philosophical in content (despite his concern for the 'everyday') while Garfinkel adopts a more specific, localised and indeed, empirical focus.

47. This definition of determination comes from our conflation of a variety of sources including Raymond Williams, Marxism and Literature (Oxford University Press 1977), Giddens, New Rules of Sociological Method, and Antonio Gramsci, Selections from the Prison Notebooks, ed. and translated by Quintin Hoare and Geoffrey Nowell Smith (International Publishers 1978).

48. This last phrase comes from Giddens, New Rules in Sociological Method.

49. We prefer to use the term member here because it implies that all human agents (whether they be theorists or lay actors) take an active role (however unequal) in the production of a society. It is also less derogatory than the scientific version of 'objects of analysis' or the idealist notion of 'subject'.

50. John Rex, 'Threatening theories', Society, vol.15, no.3. (1978).

51. Ibid., p.49.

52. Dick Hebdige, Subculture: The Meaning of Style (Methuen 1979), p.75.

53. Willis, 'Notes on method', p.88.

54. David Downes, The Delinquent Solution (Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1969).

55. Stan Cohen (ed.). Images of Deviancy (Penguin 1971) and Folk Devils and Moral Panics (Paladin 1973).

56. Two other important works written in this period were Ian Taylor et.al., The New Criminology (Routledge & Kegan Paul 1973) and Jock Young, The Drug Takers (Paladin 1972). A wealth of material which came out of the NDC has never been formally acknowledged as an important resource in cultural studies. For an exception see the acknowledgements in Stuart Hall et.al., Policing the Crisis, (Macmillan 1978).

57. This is not to deny the valuable impact of developments within sociology, specifically as they relate to the study of subcultures. In fact, one might argue that much of the good work conducted in sociology is virtually indistinguishable from the 'best' ethnography of cultural studies. Despite this, we want to limit our discussion to transitions within cultural studies.

58. See Stuart Hall, 'Cultural studies and the Centre: some problematics and problems' in Stuart Hall et.al, (eds.), Culture, Media, Language.

59. Stuart Hall, 'Cultural Studies: two paradigms', Media, Culture and Society, vol. 2, no. 1 (1980), p.58.

60. See Raymond Williams, Culture and Society (Penguin 1961), The Long Revolution (Penguin 1965), Marxism and Literature and Culture, (Fontana 1981).

61. E.P. Thompson, The Making of the English Working Class (Penguin 1979). Also see his The Poverty of Theory and other essays (Merlin 1978).

62. Richard Hoggart, The Uses of Literacy (Penguin 1968).

63. Hall, 'Cultural Studies and the Centre', p.22.

64. Ibid. We have relied heavily on Stuart Hall's interpretation of these transitions. The engagement with Marxism is mentioned first, ahead of feminism, only because of its chronological relationship to the Centre's development. Race, as a social relation, was only seriously taken up (in a published form) in later Centre work. See Hall et.al., Policing the Crisis, Hebdige, Subculture: The Meaning of Style and Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies, The Empire Strikes Back. Race and Racism in 70's Britain (Hutchinson 1982).

65. This literature is simply too expansive to mention. Two interesting and recent examples of this work in sociology and in leisure studies are (respectively), Richard Jenkins, Lads, Citizens

and Ordinary Kids: Working Class Youth Life-styles in Belfast (Routledge & Kegan Paul 1983), and some of the papers in Alan Tomlinson (ed.), Leisure and Popular Cultural Forms (Chelsea School of Human Movement, Brighton Polytechnic 1983).

66. Paul Willis, Profane Culture (Routledge & Kegan Paul 1978), p.170.

67. It is highly contentious and debatable whether or not this comment can be extended beyond Weber's methodological writings to his comparative and socio-historical work. See H.H. Gerth and C. Wright Mills (eds.), From Max Weber (Routledge & Kegan Paul 1970).

68. Dorothy Hobson, 'Housewives: isolation as oppression', in Women's Studies Group, Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies (eds.), Women Take Issue (Hutchinson 1978), p.99.

69. Willis, Profane Culture, p.2.

70. Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, The German Ideology ed. with an introduction by C.J. Arthur (Lawrence and Wishart 1970), p.46. For a 'wider' formulation see Gramsci, Prison Notebooks, pp.352-353.

71. Louis Althusser and E. Balibar, Reading Capital (New Left Books 1970), p.174.

72. Angela McRobbie, 'Working class girls and the culture of femininity' in Women's Study Group, Women Take Issue, p.97.

73. This comment is not meant to extol the bourgeois cry of 'free to choose', but rather to argue that it is precisely capitalism's ability to offer a wide range of choice within very narrow limits, which works to cement its hegemony over all social groups.

74. Paul Willis, Learning to Labour: How Working Class Kids Get Working Class Jobs (SaxonHouse 1977), pp.173-174. For a more 'abstract' discussion of this process see Giddens, Studies in Social and Political Theory, pp.129-134. The distinction between social structures (i.e. rules and resources) and human action is purely analytical here.

75. Christine Griffin, 'Cultures of femininity: romance revisited', (CCCS Stencilled Occasional Paper no. 69, 1982).

76. Johnson, 'What is cultural studies anyway?' p.48.

77. Hebdige, Subculture.

78. Angela McRobbie, 'Jackie: an ideology of adolescent femininity', (CCCS Stencilled Occasional Paper no.53 1978).

79. Paul Willis, 'The cultural meaning of drug use' in Hall and Jefferson, Resistance Through Rituals.

80. Roger Grimshaw, Dorothy Hobson and Paul Willis, 'Introduction to ethnography at the Centre', in Hall et. al., Culture, Media, Language, p.74.

81. See chapter eight, 'Notes towards a theory of cultural forms and social reproduction' in Willis, Learning to Labour.

82. Angela McRobbie, 'Settling accounts with subcultures: a feminist critique', Screen Education, 34 (1980).

83. This point is made by Willis, 'Notes on method', p.92.

84. See Margrit Eichler, The Double Standard: A Feminist Critique of the Social Sciences (St. Martin's Press 1979) and Dale Spender, Man Made Language (Routledge & Kegan Paul 1980).

85. Angela McRobbie and Jenny Garber, 'Girls and subcultures', in Hall and Jefferson (eds.), Resistance Through Rituals.

86. Angela McRobbie and Trish McCabe (eds.), Feminism for Girls (Routledge & Kegan Paul 1981); Christine Griffin et.al., 'Women and leisure', in Jennifer Hargreaves (ed.), Sport, Culture and Ideology (Routledge & Kegan Paul 1983); Griffin, 'Cultures of femininity: romance revisited'.

87. Dorothy Hobson, 'Now that I'm married',in McRobbie and McCabe (eds.) Feminism for Girls. Also see the work of Ann Oakely, Housewife (Penguin 1980) and Meg Luxton, More than a Labour of Love (Women's Press 1980).

88. Dorothy Hobson, 'Housewives and the mass media', in Hall et.al., Culture, Media, Language. Also see her recent book, Crossroads: The Drama of a Soap Opera (Methuen 1982).

89. McRobbie, 'Settling accounts with subcultures', pp.37-39.

90. Johnson, 'What is cultural studies anyway?', p.47.

91. This for example appears to be the emphasis of McRobbie and McCabe (eds.), Feminism for Girls. For a more specific critique of traditional interviewing techniques see Ann Oakely, 'Interviewing women: a contradiction in terms', in Helen Robers (ed.), Doing Feminist Research (Routledge & Kegan Paul 1981).

92. Hobson, 'Housewives: isolation as oppression', pp.80-81.

93. The term 'structuration' comes from Giddens and refers to a theory of social organization in which human action (agency) works through rules and resources (i.e. structure) in the self-production of society (see Giddens, New Rules in Sociological Method.

94. Johnson, 'What is cultural studies anyway ', p.48.

95. Willis, 'Notes on method', p.94. Willis' suggestion about going partly down the positivist road only to turn off before it grinds to a halt, is also a debatable point here (pp.91-92).

96. See Robert Burgess (ed.), Field Research: Sourcebook and Field Manual (George Allan and Unwin 1982) and McCall and Simmons (eds.), Issues in Participant Observation, for starters. Butters, 'The Logic of enquiry of participant observation', in Hall and Jefferson (eds.), Resistance Through Rituals and Hammersley and Atkinson Ethnography: Principles in Practice, at least raise some of the 'critical'issues facing ethnography.

97. There are of course extreme problems with this position both inside and outside of ethnography having to do with the differential experience of class, race and age within genders.

98. Angela McRobbie, 'The politics of feminist research: between talk, text and action', Feminist Review, 12 (1980).

99. This term comes from Giddens Studies in Social and Political Theory, pp.12, 28.

100. Paul Willis and Philip Corrigan, 'Orders of experience: the differences of working class cultural forms', Social Text, 7 (1982); Phil Cohen, 'Losing the generation game', New Socialist, 14, (Nov./Dec.1983); Liz Stanley and Sue Wise, Breaking Out (Routledge & Kegan Paul 1983).

101. Roland Barthes, Mythologies (Paladin 1973), p.159.