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The Politics of Cultural Studies

The New Left and the Cultural Turn in the Social Sciences and Humanities

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The issue I am addressing is the significance of 1968 to Cultural Studies, which arose from the New Left and which contributed decisively to the cultural turn in social sciences in recent decades. Its successful institutionalization as a transdisciplinary research centre in Birmingham in the 1970s came about in the context of 1968 and its aftermath. This centre critically investigated social and political problems in order to show the possibility of social critique, of empowerment, of social transformation and of the processes of radical democratization. Therefore I will also deal with the (after-)effects of 1968 in the social science debate over culture.

Before I turn to the development of Cultural Studies in the context of the New Left, I firstly show that the spirit of 1968 still continues today. Then I examine how Cultural Studies has intensively dealt with the ideals of 1968 and has brought them into academic debate. The worldwide success of Cultural Studies since the 1980s shows how ideas of the New Left and of 1968 continue and have been further developed. Finally I discuss the central motive of Cultural Studies which I call the art of *Eigensinn*,[1] which is doubtless due to 1968.

'68 as an Event

In recent debates on social movements, the 1999 protests in Seattle against the World Trade Organization have been accorded significance comparable to 1968. This is because worldwide resistance symbolically took place against neoliberal globalization and because, to some extent, a partly anti-capitalist movement took

shape. 'If Paris in May stands in for a larger politics across space and over time, Seattle plays an analogous role in more recent politics of global resistance, one that is constituted by the kind of "formal and informal networks of communication and collaboration"[2] that were emergent from the movements of 1968'.[3] In Seattle, protest groups from different countries met, and people and groups from across the world showed their solidarity by means of the internet.[4] This event, whose significance should not be underestimated, takes up from 1968, which was a national and international, even global, phenomenon of greater relevance because, worldwide, people and political processes were set into action.[5] It arose from a combination of cultural practices, artistic events and theoretical actions. Daniel Bensaïd and Alain Krivine for example think that this combination shows a political challenge,[6] which has never been repeated since. Rosi Braidotti agrees when she says, 'I consider 1968 as the fundamental political myth of my generation, namely as the event that defined the political ontology of the times and regulated social interaction in a variety of realms, ranging from sexuality and kinship systems to religious and discursive practices'.[7] She celebrates the 'politics of radical immanence' which leads to processes of becoming political and to an activism that expresses utopian hope.

All three authors show that 1968 has various (media) legacies. Braidotti in the end defines it as a 'complex multiplicity' – an event which, as a consequence of its internal paradoxes and contradictory methods of reception, is not finished.[8] Thus '68 has also become a key term for the categorization of political activism and utopian militancy. Up to the present, Cultural Studies is a form of critical thinking and analysis which is closely connected to the ideal of radical democracy, to social movements and political activism. Before I discuss the importance of 1968 for Cultural Studies, I shall consider its formation in the context of the New Left.

The New Left and Cultural Studies

The founders of Cultural Studies – Raymond Williams, Richard Hoggart, Edward P. Thompson and Stuart Hall – were all connected, albeit to different degrees, with the British New Left. This group was formed as a political organization because of the crisis and the disintegration of historical-political Marxist projects in the mid-1950s. Above all, two political events and trouble spots were a trigger for this. The first was the Anglo-French invasion of Egypt and the associated debates in Great Britain known as the Suez Crisis. The second was the Hungarian Uprising in 1956, followed by the Soviet invasion, which revealed the political as well as moral bankruptcy of Stalinism which caused a crisis in the international communist movement. Both were events, as Stuart Hall wrote with hindsight,[9] which could not be tolerated by socially minded intellectuals and which led to the constitution of a New Left, which decisively rejected Stalinism and Western imperialism. Its supporters felt that Marxism,

as it was known in Great Britain at that time, in no way presented a satisfying answer for the analysis of power relationships, the relationships between classes, and of capitalism in general. As Hall argues,[10] this form of Marxism, which uncritically accepted a deterministic conception of the historical process and belief in the communist party, was a problem and even a danger because of its simplistic models of explanation. This led to the following way of dealing with it: 'Working within shouting distance of Marxism, working on Marxism, working against Marxism, working with it, working to try to develop Marxism'.[11] For this reason the protests over the Soviet invasion of Hungary did not diminish belief in the radical traditions of Marxism, but led to a deeper examination of the role and function of ideas, culture and human agency in history. The Hungarian uprising began as a student demonstration and culminated in a nationwide revolt. It made obvious that critical thinking had to understand the cultural conditions of a revolution and to criticize the authoritarian regime of the communist party.

Considered institutionally, the New Left was a relatively loosely organized form of intellectual opposition, based around a few publishers and research institutions in which different trends of Marxist thinking converged. The radical and refreshingly vital criticism of social relationships, which put trust in the working class as a counter-power to capitalist domination for most representatives of the New Left, created intellectual solidarity and was the basis for the development of progressive social thinking. This version of the Left was developed in the 1950s in the further context of the Cold War and American consumer culture. The novelty of this Left lay not only in decisively distancing itself from Stalinism and the varieties of Eastern Marxism, but even more so in the intensive study of the cultural dimension of politics and social change, as well as in the social relevance of criticism. As Lin Chun rightly observes,[12] Cultural Studies placed cultural discourse at the centre of political discussion for the first time. The decisive rejection of economic determinism, which Cultural Studies shared with the Frankfurt School, led to the development of a cultural Marxism whose aim was a socialist understanding of postwar England.[13]

The New Left did not see culture and politics as separate realms. Quite the contrary, they placed cultural analysis and cultural politics at the centre of their activities. They supported the view that changes to socialism would only be possible if they came from the everyday culture of people and their actual experiences, their concerns, their needs but also their pleasures. By rejecting the idea that culture is only a pale reflection subordinate to economic relationships and politics, they laid the foundations for Cultural Studies as a theoretical movement and an academic 'discipline' or engagement. In the political context of the New Left, culture was defined as a central process and an arena for the social and political struggle[14] into which one should intervene. The debate about culture became an essential component of the political discussions of the New Left. Soon, the increased significance of the power of mass media also became a central concern. As Chun points out,[15] the value of the New Left lies in it having

been the first to realize 'the power of communication systems as a political institution' in Britain.[16]

Within the intellectual field of Great Britain, Cultural Studies, as it emerged from the New Left, filled the gap left by the absence of a strong institutionalized sociology such as existed in France and Germany. 'The culture of British bourgeois society is organized about an absent centre – a total theory of itself that should have been either a classical sociology or a national Marxism'.[17] The particular intellectual situation on the island was that sociological thinking and criticism of industrial capitalism had been elements of English art and literary criticism since the nineteenth century, from Wordsworth, Coleridge and Ruskin to Matthew Arnold as well as F.R. Leavis and his *Scrutiny* circle.[18] However, they were not part of an independent discipline called sociology. Literature and literary criticism were closely connected with a cultural critique of a civilization; axiomatics have a long tradition and high prestige in English intellectual history. In this tradition the criticism of economic-reductionist versions of Marxism alongside the emphasis on the tense relationship between culture and civilization leads into Cultural Studies, which, according to Wolf Lepenies, is 'a mix of sociology and literary criticism'.[19] This hybrid position between literary criticism and sociology connected to the movement of the New Left and made Cultural Studies an influential way of thinking in Britain and later elsewhere. This began mainly with the writings of Richard Hoggart, Edward P. Thompson and Raymond Williams. Cultural Studies was different to English sociology, which remained colourless for so long and concentrated on empirical and statistical research, and did not dare to give totalizing interpretations as in Germany or France.[20] It had a great effect on intellectual debates in Britain and abroad. The sociology of culture in Great Britain did not develop from the work of social theorists but from scholars who were trained in the analysis of literary or historical texts as well as simultaneously having an interest in political questions and the analysis of society as a whole.

In the view of Perry Anderson, with the New Left, the socially critical tradition of English literary criticism could also be embedded in society for the first time.[21] In contrast to the elitist ideas of the *Scrutiny* circle, it was committed to adult education, which meant an extension of the texts they examined and the experiences these dealt with.[22] Culture was examined and analysed in all its facets. Williams writes here in hindsight: 'This was the social and cultural form in which they saw the possibility of reuniting what had been in their personal histories disrupting: the value of higher education and the persistent educational deprivation of the majority of their own original or affiliated class'.[23] Not only personal reasons, but also deep political convictions defined this view. They did not believe in the revolutionary power of an avant-garde party. On the contrary, they thought that socialist transformation must be asserted 'from below'. For this, it was necessary to alter the workers' awareness. Members of the New Left took up the function of an 'organic intellectual' in the Gramscian sense, wanting to make the unions and workers understand their theoretical analysis and ideas so they could be put into practice.

In its first phase, Cultural Studies was associated with a political movement and theoretically represented a position which can be described as Culturalism. It was shaped by the attempt to develop a culturally consolidated socialism on the basis of the moral tradition of English social critique. This socialism became an independent intellectual tradition.

The Institutionalization of Cultural Studies and the Meaning of '68

The 'structure of feeling' of the New Left corresponded to the events of '68[24] and was strengthened by them, even if New Leftists had not predicted this. For example, the *May Day Manifesto*,[25] first published in 1967, discussed the condition of the British Left but did not at all foresee the protests against the Vietnam War or the utopian militancy of 1968. It criticized the Labour government and called for a socialist transformation, but it did not have an important effect on the student demonstrations. The events of 1968, especially the idea of a cultural revolution, exceeded the imagination of the *May Day Manifesto*. A new world seemed to be possible and came into existence through the performances and life-experiments of the students.

After the worldwide and intensive period of activism from 1968 to 1972,[26] however, the New Left in Britain still failed to affect public policy. They were not embedded in elections, state institutions, parties, unions or the media. Thus Katsiaficas concludes: 'The New Left proved itself incapable of consolidating a popular base'.[27] Their hopes could not be fulfilled; rather, facing a new peak in the consumerist boom, the conservative restoration began.

In the work of the Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies (CCCS), which was founded in 1964 in Birmingham, numerous influences of 1968 can be seen, for example the anti-authoritarian and counter-cultural attitude, as well as the victory of the Right in politics. In the 1970s under the leadership of Stuart Hall, Cultural Studies was successfully established and developed into a new, exciting, interdisciplinary, transdisciplinary and above all interventionist research tradition, which criticized the dominant ideological structures of society and tried to change them. They had not given up the struggle for meaning but rather turned to academic reasoning which was, however, also understood as political. Parallels to the Soviet invasion of Hungary and to the situation of Marxism in the 1930s were drawn, as the failure of the left-wing movement and the success of fascism had to be explained. Jeremy Gilbert's view in his topical study does not seem to be an exaggeration: '. . . it was the defeat of the radical promise of the 1960s which was motivating some of the most creative minds of the British Left to reactivate this tradition in the 1970s'.[28] For this reason the work of the CCCS can be interpreted as a successful attempt of the New Left to create its own radical counter-culture and gain a wider public audience.

While Hoggart made the implicit sociological relevance of literary criticism explicit by highlighting the relationship and the affinity between these two disciplines, Hall grounded his work from the very beginning on sociology and cultural theory. Through him, the work at the centre underwent a critical sociological change; it became in addition more theoretical and more political. Thus, Andrew Milner states: 'Hall can claim credit for the successful institutionalization of academic Cultural Studies in Britain'.[29] Hall was interested in developing a new conceptualization of the relationship between structure and agency because he wanted to understand the emergence of radical practices and social transformations. For this reason, he tirelessly adapted radical approaches from the Continent, which shed new light on the role of culture and agency in history and society, introduced these in the British context, stimulated discussions and arranged a theoretical basis for research. Such research concentrated on marginalized, socially underprivileged and ethnically constituted groups as well as on social conflicts. The centre tried hard to bridge the gap between theoretical and empirical research, and the 'experience' of everyday life and everyday culture.

In his summary of the intellectual and theoretical development in Birmingham,[30] Hall shows that the institutionalization of Cultural Studies, the development of its discursive form, cannot be seen as an absolute beginning but rather as the filling of a break by coming to a new organization of knowledge amongst other questions and ultimately to the development of a new research paradigm. Further development is also marked by breaks, which not only result from the development of intellectual work but are also dependent on the reaction to, and the analysis of, historical and social developments and transformations. 'What is important are the significant *breaks* – where old lines of thought are disrupted, older constellations displaced, and elements, old and new, are regrouped around a different set of premises and themes'.[31] 1968 and its consequences showed such significant breaks.

Subsequently, under the leadership of Stuart Hall in Birmingham, the critical analysis of cultural and social change in Britain and in other developed, industrial societies became the declared aim. What were its causes, its development and its significance? Hall illuminates this in the introduction to the first edition of the centre's journal *Working Papers in Cultural Studies*:[32] 'The intention was not to establish one more compartment in the already fragmented "map of knowledge", but rather to attempt to view the whole complex process of change from the vantage point of "culture"; and thus to make intelligible the real movement of culture as it registered in social life, in group and class relationships, in politics and institutions, in values and ideas'.[33] The relationship of cultural and social theory became the central theme of the centre, which concentrated empirically most notably on subcultures (in particular the subculture of young workers) and media.

These definitions were deepened by taking up Antonio Gramsci's ideas of the dominant or ruling culture. It is the aim of the power block in any society to integrate the cultures, thoughts and experiences of subordinate groups and

classes so that these construct and see their world and their experiences in a way predefined by the dominant culture. Gramsci emphasizes the never-ending struggle for cultural power. This struggle is one between social classes, which are the fundamental groups in modern societies and thus also the most important cultural configurations (according to the premises in the work of the centre at that time). Gramsci's approach influenced work at the centre, for example in its empirical studies on young subcultures and their resistance to the dominant culture through rituals and symbolically expressed behaviour.[34] Paul Willis examined in thick descriptions both the school and the social situation of young working-class people.[35] In the field of media studies, Stuart Hall developed his encoding-decoding model, which has since become so well known.[36]

At the same time that Gramsci and structuralist authors like the early Louis Althusser, Roland Barthes, Claude Lévi-Straus and Jacques Lacan were read and appropriated, members of the centre significantly adapted post-structuralism (the so-called 'French Theory'), which was described by many as the thinking of 1968.[37] Culture was defined by Stuart Hall as a relatively autonomous field of signifying practices. Thus, the practices are the meaningful means by which individuals and groups construct their world. While human agency does not play an important role in structuralism (because deep social and cultural structures determine human behaviour), 1968 led to the formulation of the slogan 'Structures don't march in the street!' Therefore seriously debating post-structuralist texts became important for Cultural Studies. The primary example of this is *Anti-Oedipus* by Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari,[38] which was very strongly inspired by 1968. It showed a fundamental criticism of the authoritarian structures of Marxism and psychoanalysis, and of structuralist thoughts in general. These criticisms have been taken up in particular by the leading American scholar Lawrence Grossberg.[39]

For John Fiske's analytics of popular culture,[40] Jacques Derrida's deconstruction and *The Pleasure of the Text* from late Barthes[41] became important in order to show the subversive potential of media texts. In his analytics of popular culture, he links the microphysics of power by Michel Foucault and Michel de Certeau's *The Practice of Everyday Life*[42] in order to analyse popular practices of resistance. *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy* by Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe also gained central significance for Cultural Studies,[43] which above all in debate with Althusser, Derrida and Foucault renewed radical democracy – an important theme within Cultural Studies as early as the days of Raymond Williams. Furthermore, the anti-essentialism of post-structuralist theory became central to Cultural Studies. Social and political identities have no fixed or stable meaning, but rather are the result of struggles and debates.

At first sight it is very surprising that the Critical Theory of the Frankfurt School, which was very popular around 1968 on the Continent, did not have a remarkable influence on the formation of Cultural Studies. But many works were not yet translated, and the popular and popular agency were not important topics in this tradition. However, the reception of thought from '68 in the form

of post-structuralist texts led to a new version of Cultural Studies which has succeeded since the 1980s in becoming a transnational academic project, whose central motive can be described as an 'art of *Eigensinn*'.[44] By taking up Greil Marcus's study of punk,[45] I will briefly explain what I understand by this. In doing so it should also become apparent how this form of research was a crucial part of what has been termed 'the cultural turn'.

The Art of *Eigensinn* in Everyday Practice

What does punk, a contradictory revolt incensed by passionate rage, have in common with Dada, the anarchist nonsense activities that happened at *Cabaret Voltaire*? And why do Guy Debord and the Situationists, this secret association of French avant-garde artists and intellectuals, serve as an important link between punk and Dada? Questions like these are dealt with in Greil Marcus's fascinating book *Lipstick Traces*.[46] Marcus has written the history of a twentieth-century cultural underground movement whose rhizomatic shape was hidden beneath the surface, growing in secrecy. This movement aimed at a reorganization of everyday life, a transformation of the ordinary and, above all, a change of life. The changes aimed at were neither revolutionary nor were they meant to realize the potential of communicative reason; rather, they consisted of short acts of self-empowerment confined in space or time – alignments with a capacity to change people and their lives. Marcus is interested in the shifts of meaning within popular culture, shifts of self-interpretation or shifts of identity as much as shifts in social relations, in desires or perceptions of the world. In establishing new contexts, Marcus is exploring the productive and creative potentials of a social life which, starting with epiphanies, critical events and transformations of fundamental meaning structures in personal lives, lead to sub- and counter-cultural practices directed against a dominant culture, and finally to an art of living – to the more or less systematic creation of an existence of one's own.

The point I want to make is that this is also the basic idea of the Cultural Studies project and movement. Cultural Studies can be defined in much the same terms. It is a discipline dealing with trivial everyday changes of meanings, attitudes and value orientations; with the development of productive and creative lifeworld potentials; with a critique of power structures; and with moments of self-empowerment which may be short and fleeting, but are formative and influential nonetheless. Popular culture is a central subject of Cultural Studies, which is neither condemned after the manner of *Kulturkritik* (cultural criticism) nor celebrated uncritically. Rather, it is understood as an obvious aspect of modern or postmodern life, as a familiar *Erfahrungshorizont* (horizon of experience) and as a medium for the creation of a personal life. It is through popular media resources (which is to say, through images, symbols, discourses, stories, etc.) that many people shape their identities, form their political opinions and collectively create different cultures. Also, a new pervasive and global culture is

based upon such resources. However, popular culture is not only a medium to be used for symbolic integration into prevailing conditions; it is also a form of counter-power – an area in which the interests of marginalized and subordinate people can find adequate expression. For Cultural Studies, culture is an embattled field in which several competing social groups fight for the implementation of their claims, interests and ideologies. In doing so, these groups are interested in a cultural transformation rather than the reproduction of prevailing conditions.

From a Cultural Studies perspective, culture is not to be equated with objects, nor is it reduced to the creations produced and distributed by specialized institutions. Instead, the focus is on the creative process of culture, on the circulation of meanings and energies, on the mobility and opportunities of everyday life, on the development of the creative aspects of culture as well as on the creation of a common culture. It is not the finished cultural object which determines the research interest of Cultural Studies, but the product of a reception process and of the potential creativity of ensuing moments. This emphasis on agency – against the foil of social efforts to establish a fixed order – is the dominant theme of Cultural Studies.

The main interest of Cultural Studies is not in the lonely, creative and solipsistic experience of producing or enjoying a work of art. Rather, since Raymond Williams, Cultural Studies as a discipline explores the embeddedness of productivity in mundane practices and everyday usage – it has developed a strategy of reading symbolic forms, cultural objects and technologies against the grain and of using objects against the operating instructions, both in the manner of deconstructivism. Creativity in its profane form serves as a challenge to dominant social ideas and values. As described in Marcus's book and broadly explored in Cultural Studies, individuals, groups and cultures are creatively and collectively working for cultural change. Such processes are neither conditioned by a given programme nor are they consciously initiated by groups like the Situationists or the Surrealists. The development of this creativity and productivity in social practices is the goal of the Cultural Studies project. According to Paul Willis,[47] life itself is a research laboratory in which experiments are being conducted with uncertain and open results. Meanings are fluid, they circulate and are constituted by social practices; they create realities. Culture is a contingent process which includes, as Raymond Williams has shown,[48] both dominant and oppositional, residual or subaltern meanings. The focus is on cultural change, on conflicts, struggles and shifts in power structure. Special attention is paid to subordinate, marginalized and excluded people who reject the integration offered by those in power, or subvert things in various ways. That is why Cultural Studies as a discipline is concerned with subcultures, counter-cultures, minorities and alternative movements, and with their forms of resistance and stubbornness; it is concerned with symbolic objections and small changes in everyday practices that often go unnoticed. The subject of Cultural Studies is, to borrow a phrase from Oskar Negt and Alexander Kluge,[49] the 'block of real life' as expressed in various cultural forms. It is not the history of domination that is of interest, but all sorts

of oppositional processes emerging in multiple forms – processes which tend to disturb, question and transform the context of power and dominance.

The discipline of Cultural Studies tries, in the words of Michel de Certeau,[50] to understand the 'murmur of societies'; its subject is 'common people', especially in situations and practices in which they are acting as anonymous heroes. Such situations involve processes of a cultural shadow economy in which, through the handling of preformed and prefabricated items, something new and individual is created – something which (at least initially) escapes the logic of subsumption. This creative way of dealing with the dynamics of everyday conflicts relies on a culturally legitimized stubbornness – it is insisting on and negotiating a position of one's own. In other words, it is insisting on the art of *Eigensinn* – an art which does not primarily manifest itself in contentions and arguments, nor in a rationality of universals, but often in corporeal dimensions and mundane practices. According to Maurice Merleau-Ponty,[51] this is an emergent, socially embodied rationality producing unique meanings and expressions. This kind of generalized creativity is aiming at a critique of power and a transformation of prevailing conditions. Such progress, however, is often achieved in small steps that can easily be overlooked in structuralist or intentionalist explanations of social action. In this context, Michel de Certeau speaks of specific tactics in the jungle of functionalist rationality, of poaching and bricolage, of the art of 'sitting between two chairs'.[52] Henri Lefebvre too, in his reflections on the transformation of everyday life,[53] anticipated much of what is central to Cultural Studies, for instance the possibilities of an art of living. For both de Certeau and Lefebvre, culture is a creative process that is constantly changing and developing. In sociological definitions of culture, traditions (the traditional patterns of meaning and values) are more important than the processes transforming and reshaping these traditions and patterns; but it is precisely these processes that are central to Cultural Studies, to its thinking and research.

From the perspective of cultural sociology, a perspective first developed by Raymond Williams, the project of Cultural Studies can be defined as the elaboration and development of an art of *Eigensinn* whose aim is the analysis, critique and transformation of power. Cultural Studies is guided by the insight that culture (like agency) is productive and must not be subordinated to social structures. This central motive, which defines Cultural Studies to the present, is doubtless due to 1968.

The aim of Cultural Studies is to demonstrate that culture neither simply mirrors the social structure nor determines the behaviour of subjects. Its research is not concerned with integration into a traditional culture, but with interaction; the focus is on interaction with cultural forms, on processes of 'making' and 'staging', of negotiation and fabrication – in short, a focus on the cultural processes of postmodernity. Ever more subtle strategies of power are countervailed by ever more refined tactics of resistance. As has been shown in many studies, for example in the work of Lawrence Grossberg, through the inclusion of post-structuralist approaches and through an ethnographic view of cultural

contexts, popular culture in particular is redefined as a field of struggle and contention. In view of the 'Gramscian turn' in Cultural Studies initiated by Stuart Hall, the discussion of such (micro-) struggles is combined with analyses of the struggle for hegemony in society, politics and social life, as well as in language, cultural texts and systems of representation. It is a never-ending fight between unequal powers – powers and counter-powers. Foucault, in the final pages of *Discipline and Punish*, metaphorically speaks of the 'thunder of battle', of the noise of everlasting power struggles.[54] This metaphor reminds us that, in an analysis of historical facts and social phenomena, the cultural and social conflicts which have found expression in those facts and phenomena must be clarified and pointed out. Since its beginnings in the context of the New Left, the field of Cultural Studies has endeavoured, through micrological investigation of the specifics of particular everyday life contexts, to indicate points of resistance. Cultural Studies proceeds from the particulars and specifics, usually taking an example from common everyday culture which is being contextualized in its social and historical contexts. Analysis then proceeds to the conflicts, struggles and power structures determining this particular social context. Cultural Studies is not primarily interested in television or pop music as such, but in their role and function in the production and circulation of social meanings, relationships and subjectivities. Cultural Studies does not seek comprehensive knowledge of the respective subject matter; rather, it takes extracts from social events and shows how cultural texts and processes are embedded in power structures and social conflicts. Thus, following Raymond Williams, Cultural Studies creates contexts and connections across different 'fields of experience' and discloses contexts which are at work in a society. Here, culture is understood radically as a process, as a series and sequence of practices, rituals, conversations and so on, located in space and time, in the course of which meanings and affective energies are being circulated and produced.

Like the classical discipline of cultural sociology, Cultural Studies is devoted to the interpretation of the contemporary; however, in view of its roots in the context of the New Left, its interpretation is thoroughly political with a practical moral purpose. This aspect of social commitment, which stresses the role and significance of culture in the maintenance and challenge of social inequality (in fields such as class, gender or ethnicity), must be preserved – especially in view of current attempts to colonize Cultural Studies. Since Raymond Williams, one of the most important aims of Cultural Studies has been to help individuals and groups with their efforts to articulate their everyday experiences, especially those experiences which have not yet found expression and space in the existing culture. Culture is understood as communication and hence as a process which, through the interaction of historically given, shared meanings on the one hand and individually or collectively created meanings on the other, leads to new common frameworks of meaning. This process, which is characterized by change, creativity and transformation and which is grounded in the common quality of everyday life, was called 'the long revolution' by Raymond Williams.[55]

My analysis of the art of *Eigensinn* as a critique of power was meant to show that, to the present day, Cultural Studies is obliged and committed to this idea.

Radical democracy, empowerment, agency and *Eigensinn* – these central ideas of Cultural Studies – are reminiscent of the radical imagery of 1968. The institutionalization of Cultural Studies in Birmingham and in other places has led to a further development of these concepts and a continuation of the political battle. To this extent, 1968 is not yet at an end.

Translated by Andrew Terrington

Notes

1. The German word *Eigensinn* ('unique forms of meaning and expression') is difficult to translate because possible English equivalents such as 'stubbornness' and 'obstinacy' have a less nuanced and more negative meaning.
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3. F. Tonkiss. 2008. 'New Manifestations: Paris, Seattle and After', *New Formations* 65, 70.
4. Cf. R. Winter. 2010. *Widerstand im Netz: Zur Herausbildung einer transnationalen Öffentlichkeit durch netzbasierte Kommunikation*, Bielefeld: Transcript.
5. I. Gilcher-Holtey. 2001a. *'Die Phantasie an die Macht'. Mai 68 in Frankreich*, 2nd edn, Frankfurt a. M.: Suhrkamp.
6. D. Bensaïd and A. Krivine. 2008. *1968: Fins et Suites*, Paris: Nouvelles Éditions Lignes.
7. R. Braidotti. 2008. 'The Politics of Radical Immanence: May 1968 as an Event', *New Formations* 65, 19.
8. Ibid., 21.
9. S. Hall. 1987. 'Gramsci and Us', *Marxism Today* [June 1987], 16–21.
10. S. Hall. 1992. 'Cultural Studies and its Theoretical Legacies', in L. Grossberg, C. Nelson and P. Treichler (eds), *Cultural Studies*, New York and London: Routledge, 277–86, 279.
11. Ibid.
12. L. Chun. 1993. *The British New Left*, Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.
13. D. Dworkin. 1997. *Cultural Marxism in Postwar Britain: History, the New Left, and the Origins of Cultural Studies*, Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 3.
14. R. Williams. 1980. 'Beyond Actually Existing Socialism,' in R. Williams, *Problems in Materialism*, London: New Left Books, 255.
15. Chun, *The British New Left*.
16. Cf. R. Williams (ed.). 1962. *Communications*, Harmondsworth: Penguin.
17. P. Anderson. 1965. 'The Left in the Fifties', *New Left Review* 29, 3–18 according to M. Green. 1974. 'Raymond Williams and Cultural Studies', *Working Papers in Cultural Studies* 6, 37.
18. W. Lepenies. 1985. *Die drei Kulturen: Soziologie zwischen Literatur und Wissenschaft*, Munich: Hanser, 185–236.
19. Ibid., 236.

20. Cf. P. Anderson. 1992. *English Questions*, London and New York: Verso.
21. Anderson, 'The Left in the Fifties'.
22. Cf. T. Steele. 1997. *The Emergence of Cultural Studies 1945–65: Cultural Politics, Adult Education and the English Question*, London: Lawrence & Wishart Limited.
23. R. Williams. 1989. 'The Uses of Cultural Theory,' in R. Williams, *The Politics of Modernism: Against the New Conformists*, London: Verso, 163–76, 170.
24. Gilcher-Holtey, 'Die Phantasie an die Macht'.
25. R. Williams (ed.). 1968. *The May Day Manifesto 1968*, London: Penguin.
26. G. Katsiaficas. 1987. *The Imagination of the New Left: A Global Analysis of 1968*, Boston, MA: South End Press.
27. Ibid.
28. J. Gilbert. 2008. *Anticapitalism and Culture: Radical Theory and Cultural Politics*, Oxford: Berg, 26.
29. A. Milner. 1993. *Cultural Materialism*, Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 77.
30. S. Hall. 1980. 'Cultural Studies: Two Paradigms', *Media, Culture and Society* 2, 57–72.
31. Ibid., 57.
32. S. Hall. 1971. 'Introduction', *Working Papers in Cultural Studies* 1, 5–7.
33. Ibid., 5.
34. S. Hall and T. Jefferson. 1975. *Resistance through Rituals: Youth Subcultures in Post-War Britain*, New York and London: Routledge.
35. P. Willis. 1977. *Learning to Labour: How Working Class Kids Get Working Class Jobs*, Farnborough: Saxon House.
36. S. Hall. 1973. 'Encoding and Decoding in the Television Discourse', *CCCS Stencilled Occasional Paper* 11.
37. Braidotti, 'The Politics of Radical Immanence', 19–33.
38. G. Deleuze and F. Guattari. 1972. *Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia 1*, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
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