

Tarmo Malmberg:

## Cultural Studies in Finnish Mass Communication Studies

Cultural studies, in Britain as well as elsewhere, can be understood as different reactions to Marxism. Hence, the development of cultural studies has characterised countries lacking culturally oriented Marxism. To this category belongs Finland where, from the late 1960s to the early 1980s, sociology was the colour of Marxism. The dissolution of Marxism into cultural studies gave rise to three main approaches: textual, sociological and historical. These are dwelled on by investigating the roads chosen by Veikko Pietilä, Tarmo Malmberg and Pertti Alasuutari in their journeys from Marxism to cultural studies. As conclusion, the three main trends of cultural studies in the age of hermeneutics (radical hermeneutics, hermeneutical empiricism and hermeneutical Marxism) are analysed and the actuality of hermeneutical Marxism demonstrated.

Mikko Lehtonen:

## Significance of signification

What are we talking about when we are talking about culture? What is the significance of signification? Elaborating the ideas of human beings as cultural beings by their nature the article stresses that what is at stake at culture is never only culture but the human existence as a whole. Discussing of narratives and metaphors as human survival kits the article suggests that in cultural studies one should leave behind pure textuality and always look at the relations between what is culture and what is not. By this approach cultural studies could also get a grid of cultural texts appearing in seemingly decontextualized forms. The program for cultural studies would from this point of view be that of deconstructing and

reconstructing contexts of and for cultural texts. In the end of the article several remarks on the state of Finnish cultural studies are made as well as few strategic suggestions for its future developments.

Norman Fairclough:

## Extract from *Media Discourse*

Norman Fairclough's latest book *Media Discourse* is soon to be published in Finnish. In the first chapter of the book, Fairclough argues that the recent social and cultural changes could be approached through textual analysis. The discourse of the media creates representations of the world, identities of social participants and relationships between the social agents that reflect the wider social changes and have various effects on them. New tendencies in media discourse, e.g. conversationalization or mixing of information and entertainment can be seen as democratization of media output or as ideological sustaining of the hegemony. Fairclough introduces an analytical framework for studying the media texts in a larger sociocultural context.

Jostein Gripsrud:

## Cultural Studies and Intervention in Television Policy

The article concerns the relationship between cultural studies and cultural politics, especially in the field of television studies. The early cultural studies works on television were a great extend commissioned and occasioned by policy making institutions. Consequently, the reflexive attention to policy making is very explicit, for example, in Stuart Hall's writings on television in the beginning of 1970s. These texts have a direct involvement with policy making institutions, holistic sociological perspective, keen interest in the norms and functions of television

production.

Contemporary cultural studies of television have lost most of these characters. This had led to an impoverished grasp on the social determinations of television communication, and a reduced attention to pressing issues in public debates on legislation, regulation and the norms of performance. To empower itself politically, contemporary cultural studies have to re-engage with some of these early concerns and rethink them in today's situation.

Pertti Alasuutari:

## The Battle over Cultural Studies

The article approaches cultural studies as a construction. It discusses how cultural studies has "spread" by the means of ever more researchers associated and identified themselves with it, partly due to its popularity that is hoped to "stick" to newcomers as well. The case of Finnish CS is described as an example of this. Because of its international popularity, there are all kinds of battles over the "true" meaning of cultural studies. For instance, John Storey gives it a purely Marxist definition in his entry on CS to the Routledge Social Science Encyclopedia. Similar attempts to win the battle over the true meaning of cultural studies are also discussed.

The writer makes the claim that a victory of a single authoritative definition of CS would be a Pyrrhic victory. Only those faithful to such a definition would stay within CS, while it would lose its status as a cross-disciplinary and paradigmatically loose crossroads.

As to the future of CS, the writer argues that the main challenge for cultural studies is methodological renewal. If cultural studies research is too much programmatic and political instead of trying to question and problematize everything, including its own premises, there is the danger that it loses its critical potential.