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The third and most recent edition of *Contemporary Cultural Theory*, now a collaborative work of Andrew Milner and Jeffrey Browitt, sees also the revision of most of the text. It should surprise few that the third edition displays an even greater range of contemporary theoretical approaches to the analysis of culture. It goes without saying that such a smorgasbord will always come at the expense of considered digestion. But this is not the aim of the text. As Milner and Browitt state in the first chapter, "the greater promise [of defining cultural studies] lies . . . not in the discovery of a new subject matter, nor even in the 'deconstruction' of the disciplinary boundaries that demarcated literature from fiction, art from culture, elite from popular; but rather in the development of new methods of analysis for both" (9).

The first chapter opens with the debate concerning the status of cultural studies and cultural theory. Its standpoint is clear from the instant it raises the problem of 'defining culture' (2). Taking note of the polysemy of the concept, Milner and Browitt clearly enunciate their own "working 'non-definition'." Culture is "that entire range of institutions, artefacts and practices that make up our symbolic universe" (5). The overarching thesis of the text is also put forward, where Milner and Browitt's standpoint on the status of theory in cultural studies becomes apparent: "in truth, the various discourses about culture . . . have all been irretrievably 'theoretical' in nature, no matter how apparently 'empirical' their particular reference points" (11). An almost blanket wariness of positivistic approaches to cultural studies leads to what one might highlight as the slogan of *Contemporary Cultural Theory*: "not so much cultural studies as cultural theory in particular" (9).

Keeping in mind not only the polysemy of the concept 'culture' but also the plurality of theoretical approaches to the analysis of this concept, the remainder of the chapter turns to utilitarianism. For Milner and Browitt, utilitarianism figures "in what follows . . . not as an alternative solution to the cultural problems of capitalism, but rather as importantly constitutive of those very problems, as part of the socio-cultural context against which other cultural theories have been obliged to define themselves" (18). Utilitarianism serves as a sign of univocity or homogeneity. It is the theoretical approach which presents the possibility of negating that which Milner and Browitt see as the essential plurality of cultural theories.

The second chapter takes as its launching point an analysis of culturalism as explicitly anti-utilitarian. Unlike the previous editions, culturalism is not restricted to the British approaches of Raymond Williams, Matthew Arnold, T. S. Eliot and F. R. Leavis. Although the sections on hermeneutics and historicism in 'German culturalism' are very short, where they lack in analytic depth they make up in the clarity and textual annotation required of an introductory text. The penultimate section of the chapter returns to the particularly British phenomenon of Thatcherism and its analysis by Stuart Hall and Williams. In itself, this preoccupation with the old Right is immensely important. However, it is unclear why no reference is made to the impact the Blair government has had (whether positive or negative) on cultural policy, not to mention its implementation of tertiary education policy. The latter issue is of even greater importance given the closure of one of the 'key institutions' in cultural studies, known as the Birmingham school (a closure which only came to light while *Contemporary Cultural Theory* was in press).

Chapters Three and Four respectively consider critical theory and semiology. Again, it is worth noting the inclusion of material on Bourdieu, Zizek as well as Deleuze and Guattari. It is in the fifth chapter, though, that one can find the most original element of Milner and Browitt's text. The consideration of difference in the chapter 'The Cultural Politics of Difference' extends well beyond what might be called the 'traditional' proving ground of feminist theory. It includes discussions of the status of race, ethnicity and nationality. Milner and Browitt define difference theory as the "attempt to theorise the nexus between the operations of différence in language and culture and those of socio-historical difference"(128). The use of the Derridean concept 'différence' is noteworthy, not only for a (perhaps unjustified) attempt to relate Derrida's philosophy to all philosophies of difference - why not consider Deleuze, Foucault and even Adorno's contribution to the concept? But also because of an implicit insight, often left unnoticed in
explications of Derrida's work, that différence cannot be completely divorced from identity. Having opened up the problem of identity in this particular manner, Milner and Browitt work through, gender, queer theory, nationalism, multiculturalism and postcolonialism. They turn, finally, to the issue of black and Latino cultural studies.

Throughout the fifth chapter in particular, it becomes clear that the notion of culture must balance precariously between two equally dangerous outcomes: a highly formal and scientific determination on the one hand, and a concrete, direct experience on the other. Chapter Six turns away from an emphasis on the theoretical and enters into a discussion of 'postmodernism,' which is to say,"a whole set of artistic movements, in literature, painting and architecture for example, dating mainly from the second half of the twentieth century, which self-consciously defined themselves in opposition to earlier, equally self-conscious modernist movements" (164). Yet this does not mean that postmodernism is nothing more than a praxis. For Milner and Browitt, postmodernism is a "space" (169) on the basis of which one can make optimistic or pessimistic descriptions and prescriptions. Following from criticisms made by Williams and Terry Eagleton, it is concluded that postmodernity's rejection of historical determination can only be countered by an affirmation of "life"(201), a life, importantly, which is not reducible to the naive interactions of living individuals, nor, indeed, the utilitarianism latent in postmodernism. Life, rather, plays the same role and shares the same ambivalences as 'culture.'

The final chapter of Contemporary Cultural Theory counters the possible charge that the text is concerned solely with theoretical approaches and, as such, precludes itself from any essential insight into the everyday practices of humans in their respective cultures. It exemplifies the distinctly Australian importance of cultural theory from the perspective of policy formation. It does not, however, simply attempt to acquire the power necessary to impose legislation and ideas from on high. Rather, in the form of 'cultural policy studies,' it would simultaneously work towards the reconfiguration of particular regions of social and cultural life while also intending the form that this reconfiguration would take (210). Importantly for Milner and Browitt, this form would include an interminable critique of the mechanisms by which policies (whether friendly to the institution of cultural theory or not) become reified while recognising that the culture which results "must be understood as a human creation, a social complex, formed to serve some interests and not others, not as a technological inevitability, but as a site of contest"(223).

Unlike the previous editions of Contemporary Cultural Theory, and in place of the second edition's somewhat limited 'Further Reading,' Milner and Browitt include a helpful 'glossary,' noting the context of each term and a brief but lucid definition. A greatly expanded bibliography also provides crucial pointers for any new reader willing to explore the array of cultural theories on their own. Contemporary Cultural Theory is more an historically reflexive bag of tricks than an encyclopedia. Curiously, it serves as a documentary of cultural theory while also being a cultural document itself. This raises a final question: why all of these theories? It is certainly not in order to affirm a kind of 'intellectual self-indulgence' or to allow a kind of "retreat into an indefinite pluralism"(126), an accusation that Milner and Browitt find Bourdieu (unjustly) raising against Derrida. Is it simply to give an assortment of ideas by which to practice the analysis of culture? While one would answer the latter question in the affirmative, it remains the case that the emphasis on theory places Milner and Browitt's point of view at odds with some cultural studies, especially those approaches which would reduce objects of culture to mere entities or facts to be categorised, rationalised or obliterated.

At the same time, Milner and Browitt present each theory in a manner that is, to a certain extent, confluent with the very practice of cultural studies. Problematically, though, it might be argued that Milner and Browitt present in their own analysis the same methodological flaws that they indicate in cultural studies. To cite just one example, "it is all well and good to discover who writes what, how it is distributed and how read, but there is a certain pointlessness to the exercise if no attempt is made to analyse what it is that has actually been written, distributed and read. Which poses the question of what methods cultural studies should deploy in its study of "texts" (204). In this sense and with the paradox it entails, Contemporary Cultural Theory becomes a contemporary cultural study of cultural theory.