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The New American Cultural Sociology presents a serious challenge to British Cultural Studies and European grand theory alike. This exciting new volume brings together sixteen seminal papers by leading figures in what is emerging as a new and important intellectual tradition. It places them in the context of related work in sociology and other disciplines, exploring the connections between cultural sociology and different approaches, such as comparative and historical research, postmodernism, and symbolic interactionism. The book is divided into three parts: Culture as Text and Code, The Production and Reception of Culture, and Culture in Action. Each part contains edited contributions, both theoretical and empirical, to address the key debates in cultural sociology, including the autonomy of culture, power and culture, structure and agency, and how to conceptualize meaning.

PHILIP SMITH is Senior Lecturer in Sociology in the Department of Anthropology and Sociology at the University of Queensland. He has researched and taught widely in cultural sociology, social theory, crime and deviance, and comparative and historical research, in North America, Britain and continental Europe, as well as in Australia. He is co-author of *Sociology: Themes and Perspectives* and of *Analyzing Visual Data*, and author of *Cultural Theory*.

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PUBLISHED BY THE PRESS SYNDICATE OF THE UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE
The Pitt Building, Trumpington Street, Cambridge CB2 1RP, United Kingdom

CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS
The Edinburgh Building, Cambridge, CB2 2RU, United Kingdom
<http://www.cup.cam.ac.uk>
40 West 20th Street, New York, NY 10011-4211, USA <http://www.cup.org>
10 Stamford Road, Oakleigh, Melbourne 3166, Australia

© Cambridge University Press 1998
(in the volume and editorial matter)

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First published 1998

Printed in the United Kingdom at the University Press, Cambridge

Typeset in Monotype Times New Roman in QuarkXPress™ [SE]

A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

ISBN 0 521 58415 9 hardback
ISBN 0 521 58634 8 paperback

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Preface

This book owes much to the intellectual and moral generosity of colleagues on three continents. Cambridge Cultural Social Studies series editors Jeffrey Alexander and Steven Seidman supported the project from its inception. Thanks also to Catherine Max, Chris Doubleday, and Jo Barker at Cambridge University Press. Given the sheer volume of candidate work and the need to produce an affordable and helpful volume, difficult decisions had to be made about what should be included and what excluded. Comments from a number of people helped ease this burden. Advice-givers included: Jeffrey Alexander, Mike Emmison, Ronald Jacobs, Michèle Lamont, Tim Phillips, Steven Seidman, Lyn Spillman, Eleanor Townsley, Mark Western, and the three referees of the book proposal who remain anonymous. The introductory essay has had the generous benefit of ideas, discussion, and/or feedback from Jeffrey Alexander, Mike Emmison, Stuart Hall, Steve Sherwood, Laurent Thevenot, Ken Thompson, and Loic Wacquant. My thanks to the University of Queensland, the Pavis Centre at the Open University, and the EHESS, Paris for providing supportive environments for preparing the book.

With the exception of the introductory essay, this book contains previously published research. In an effort to include a greater variety of work and to provide thematic continuity, the material has been edited for length, with proposed cuts vetted by the authors. Titles have been slightly amended to flag the fact that the contributions here differ from the originals. Readers are asked to remember that the process of editing has inevitably entailed a loss of information. In my opinion this has been most notably the case for the contributions by Wagner-Pacifici and Schwartz, Morrill, and Sewell. In the case of the first two, rather substantial sections of ethnographic detail have had to be excised. In Sewell's essay an important and sophisticated theoretical critique of Giddens and Bourdieu was removed on the grounds

that it dealt with complex issues and literatures that were outside the immediate scope of this book. In these and all other cases I am very grateful to the authors for their forbearance and helpful suggestions on where cuts could be sensibly made. On account of these considerations, readers are urged to consult the full text of any contribution (see details below) before judging it in a negative way. Another set of changes that it is important to note here is to be found in Anne Kane's article. In her original paper Kane drew upon and quoted from an unpublished manuscript by Michael Mann. Because this work has now been published, quotations and references have been adjusted accordingly.

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"The computer as sacred and profane" by Jeffrey C. Alexander was first published in 1992 as "The promise of a cultural sociology: technological discourse and the sacred and profane information machine" in N. Smelser and R. Munch (eds.), *Theory of Culture* (Berkeley: University of California Press), pp. 293–323. It is reproduced here by kind permission of the University of California Press.

"AIDS and the discursive construction of homosexuality" by Steven Seidman was first published in 1988 as "Transfiguring sexual identity: AIDS and the contemporary construction of homosexuality" in *Social Text* 9(20): 187–206. It is reproduced here by kind permission of Duke University Press.

"Fundamentalism and liberalism in public religious discourse" by Robert Wuthnow was first published in 1988 as "Religious discourse as public rhetoric" in *Communication Research* 15(3): 318–338. It is reproduced here by kind permission of Sage Publications Inc.

"Analytic and concrete forms of the autonomy of culture" by Anne Kane was first published in 1991 as "Cultural analysis in historical sociology: the analytic and concrete forms of the autonomy of culture" in *Sociological Theory* 9(1): 53–69. It is reproduced here by kind permission of the American Sociological Association.

“The reception of Derrida’s work in France and America” by Michèle Lamont was first published in 1987 as “How to become a dominant French philosopher: the case of Jacques Derrida” in the *American Journal of Sociology* 93(3): 584–622. It is reproduced here by kind permission of the University of Chicago Press.

“Censorship, audiences and the Victorian nude” by Nicola Beisel was first published in 1993 as “Morals versus art: censorship, the politics of interpretation, and the Victorian nude” in the *American Sociological Review* 58(1): 145–162. It is reproduced here by kind permission of the American Sociological Association.

“The Devil, social change, and Jacobean theatre” by Wendy Griswold was first published in 1983 as “The Devil’s techniques: cultural legitimation and social change” in the *American Sociological Review* 48(2): 668–680. It is reproduced here by kind permission of the American Sociological Association.

“Victorian women writers and the prestige of the novel” by Gaye Tuchman and Nina Fortin was first published in 1980 as “Edging women out: some suggestions about the structure of opportunities and the Victorian novel” in *Signs* 6(2): 308–325. It is reproduced here by kind permission of the University of Chicago Press.

“The ambiguous and contested meanings of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial” by Robin Wagner-Pacifici and Barry Schwartz was first published in 1991 as “The Vietnam Veterans Memorial: commemorating a difficult past” in the *American Journal of Sociology* 97(2): 376–420. It is reproduced here by kind permission of the University of Chicago Press.

“Culture and social action” by Ann Swidler was first published in 1986 as “Culture in action: symbols and strategies” in the *American Sociological Review* 51(3): 273–286. It is reproduced here by kind permission of the American Sociological Association.

“Culture, structure, agency, and transformation” by William H. Sewell, Jr. was first published in 1992 as “A theory of structure: duality, agency, and transformation” in the *American Journal of Sociology* 98(1): 1–29. It is reproduced here by kind permission of the University of Chicago Press.

“Discourse, nuclear power, and collective action” by William A. Gamson was first published in 1988 as “Political discourse and collective action” in *International Social Movement Research* 1(2): 219–244. It is reproduced here by kind permission of JAI Press Inc.

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“Moral boundaries, leisure activities, and justifying fun” by Gary Alan Fine was first published in 1991 as “Justifying fun: why we do not teach exotic dance in high school” in *Play and Culture* 4(1): 87–99. It is reproduced here by kind permission of Human Kinetics Publishers Inc.

“Honor and conflict management in corporate life” by Calvin Morrill was first published in 1991 as “Conflict management, honor and organizational change” in the *American Journal of Sociology* 97(3): 585–621. It is reproduced here by kind permission of the University of Chicago Press.

“The role of cultural capital and school success” by Paul DiMaggio was first published in 1982 as “Cultural capital and school success: the impact of status culture participation on the grades of U.S. high school students” in the *American Sociological Review* 47(1): 189–201. It is reproduced here by kind permission of the American Sociological Association.