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- 12 Michel Foucault, "Society Must Be Defended, 17 March 1976" (1976)
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In addition to the study of culture, we consolidated into general frameworks and organizing principles the future of the study of culture, or concepts of the body of ideas and concepts which have helped, in the best instances, to identify an appropriate object of study (that is, with a sense of which sorts of activities and practices are properly considered to be "culture" (e.g., skateboarding, watching films and listening to music, notions of national culture, social movements, etc.) and those which might not be (e.g., parliamentary politics, economic law, engineering designs, design schemes for microprocessors). Cultural theory provides us with tools for analyzing these activities, processes, and artifacts, for understanding the ways in which they are connected to the broader forces and developments which comprise human societies, and for providing an assessment of the relationships they may bear to the societies to which they belong, e.g., why they exist and what purposes they serve within the overall framework of social life.

The inevitable problem with such a definition of cultural theory is its immense scope. Many (if not all) of the academic fields of study grouped into the humanities and social sciences address culture, each doing so in its own unique way. Linguistics has developed important theories about the operation of language; the field of Classics has created classification schemes for Roman and Greek architecture and theories about the causes of the decline of the Roman Empire; and Art Historians have developed their own important and influential theories about various aspects of visual culture, including what sorts of objects qualify as art. When these fields (and their particular cultural objects (i.e., language, architecture and civilization, art)) are added to the ones already listed above (anthropology, literary studies, sociology, media studies, etc.), it is legitimate to wonder whether this anthology has attempted an impossibly large task. But while there are many theories about various aspects of culture, what has come to be known as cultural theory (in the singular) has a much more defined range of reference. The aim of *Cultural Theory: An Anthology* is to bring together the most significant readings which have helped to shape and define the contemporary study of culture, to make them available