material that could be incorporated in it — should address both the allocative and the administrative questions implied by such a nationalistic approach.

This book could be recommended to someone wanting a very readable introduction to the concern being expressed over the Japanese involvement in 'fifth generation' computers. But expressions of anxiety over the ability of the developed economies to respond to the challenge of advanced technology and the perceived better management of their international rivals abound. Unfortunately, few authors can proceed step-by-step from a clear analysis of national economic goals to persuasive accounts of the policies needed to allow these goals to be attained.

Colin Aislabie
University of Newcastle

A Dictionary of Communication and Media Studies by *James Watson and Anne Hill.*
(Edward Arnold, London, 1984), p.186, ISBN 0-7131-6411-5.

I once started to write a dictionary for Media Studies students — with two very much more dedicated and learned colleagues. Our inspiration was Raymond Williams' *Keywords*:[1] the driving force was desperation. All three of us were Media Studies teachers in tertiary education and all of us suffered daily the unthought-through eclectism of students who pushed the most incompatible of authors into the same bed because they used the same words, e.g., mass or class or ideology. The contradictory premises — indeed belief systems — on which these different authors argued were totally ignored. Our idea was to identify a number of key words used in the literature by both Marxists and liberal pluralists — the two dominant approaches — and show the different meanings those same terms had for them.

From our argument it is obvious why Williams was the inspiration. He puts the central limitation of most dictionaries clearly in *Keywords*:

> Some people, when they see a word, think the first thing to do is define it. Dictionaries are produced and, with a show of authority no less confident because it is usually so limited in place and time, what is called a proper meaning is attached. I once began collecting, from correspondence in newspapers, and from other public arguments, variations on the phrases 'I see from my Webster' and 'I find from my Oxford Dictionary'. Usually what was at issue was a difficult term in an argument. But the effective tone of these phrases. . .was to appropriate a meaning which fitted the argument and to exclude those meanings which were inconvenient to it but which some benighted person had been so foolish as to use.

Obviously, as Williams points out, for some kinds of words dictionaries are useful, e.g., 'basilica' or 'kangaroo' or 'cricket', but for other kinds 'especially for those which involve ideas and values', dictionary definitions are totally inappropriate. These other kinds of words have 'meanings' not 'meaning' and to pretend otherwise is a gross disservice to any kind of education.

In Watson and Hill's dictionary we have, therefore, a curate's egg — the good parts are those that fit into the categories of 'concrete' words such as *'documentary'* and *'gramaphone'*, each of which takes up a whole page of 120 plus lines; the bad parts are those concerned with 'abstract' words which 'involve ideas and values' such as *'ideology'* and *'hegemony'*, each of which takes up only 22 lines resulting in caricatures of key concepts in, at least, one dominant mode of media studies.

Indeed the dictionary is a curious and rather arbitary collection of terms reflecting presumably in part the interests of the authors, both originally historians, as well as the 'needs' of communication students. They include *'posters'*, *'pirate radio'* and *'pop ups'*, the latter a one-minute TV film in commercial format used for helping reading skills; and exclude any mention of such terms such as *'positivism'* and *'power'* — indeed the nearest we got to a mention of the latter is *'power value'* which turns out to be 'the rating given by US children to the kind of jobs and professions portrayed on TV'. The authors when they do venture into the theoretical fields of sociology and *'communicology'* (one of the words defined) tend to stray into a liberal pluralist coloured world. Perhaps there is a need for such an eccentric collection of terms for those studying A-level Communication. Personally I found Media Studies was a wide enough area. Communication studies is so wide as to defy any honest attempt to delineate a genuine academic field. There are 1,000 entries in the dictionary which attempts to cover a whole spectrum of human activities ranging from the intra-personal with its normal academic home in psychology, through to media institutions and the ultimate context of consciousness, culture, where philosophers and sociologists engage in imperial battles.

Apologists for communication studies as a subject, and for the use of studying it as this level, make constant claims to interdisciplinarity — a word I noticed that the authors do not include in the dictionary although they call communication studies 'perhaps the most interdisciplinary of subjects'. But I wonder if this claimed interdisciplinarity is not the core of the problem. Each discipline creates its own concepts and methodologies, its own discourses and theories which together create its own 'reality'. So that the 'reality' of any discipline is not a proper object of inquiry for another discipline. At the very least while disciplines are not eternal they have a coherence which is totally lacking in most approaches I have found in interdisciplinary communication studies. Indeed in Watson and Hill's dictionary we have a simple example of the confusion resident in the 'subject', a veritable academic Los Angeles, a strange collection of foggy suburbs in search of a city.

REFERENCE

1.   Raymond Williams, *Keywords: A Vocabulary of Culture and Society,* Fontana, London, 1976.

John Short
United Kingdom