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The Challenge of Cultural Studies

I. INTRODUCTION: WHAT IS CULTURAL STUDIES?

The task of this essay on "The Challenge of Cultural Studies" is to provide some intentionally provocative reflections upon what has become an increasingly visible reformist movement in the human sciences.¹ The term *human sciences* (*sciences humaines*) is used here in a self-conscious way given that a central theme of my discussion will be some of the pernicious effects of the institutionalization of a "humanities / social science" (or even worse: a "humanities / behavioural science") polarization which has worked to the detriment of many marginalized in both camps.

My primary objective will be to reconstruct aspects of what has been going on in the name of "cultural studies," and some of the broader implications for curriculum reform and innovation in arts faculties. First, that will require some introductory definitional comments. Second, I will advance some programmatic arguments about the methodological, theoretical and normative foundations of what I will call a "weak programme" for cultural studies. Third, I will consider some of the disciplinary re-positioning associated with the cultural studies movement, especially in terms of the existing distinctions between the humanities, social sciences, and interdisciplinary programmes.²

In the course of the past decade the term "cultural studies" was initially closely associated with an interdisciplinary body of British research which was often referred to as the "Birmingham School" because of a research centre whose "Working Papers" and often collectively organized research projects evoked international interest. Retrospectively, it is possible to identify three key, sometimes conflicting influences: a form of structuralist-influenced cultural

1 As a sociologist, I wish to thank Martin Lefebvre in Film Studies for having taken the initiative to organize this interdisciplinary lecture series.

2 The present discussion builds in part upon an introduction to a special issue of the *Canadian Review of Sociology and Anthropology* on "Cultural Studies" in Canada (Morrow, 1991b). Here the focus shifts away from an exclusive preoccupation with the challenge of cultural studies for anthropology and sociology to an arts faculty as a whole. More recently, I have developed the methodological assumptions underlying cultural studies as a form of "interpretative structuralism" (Morrow and Brown).

Marxism associated initially with the leadership of Stuart Hall and Richard Johnson (Brantlinger 34-67, Davies); the socialist humanist cultural writings of Raymond Williams (O'Connor), and the anti-structuralist cultural Marxist historiography of E.P. Thompson and others (Palmer; Kaye and McClelland). But these specifically British developments have North American parallels (e.g., Frederic Jameson) and are themselves the outcome of a much longer tradition of larger continental origin. Hence others would date the origins of cultural studies to the Frankfurt School of Critical Social Theory (as opposed to theories of criticism) in the 1930s (Held). At the time — more than a half century ago — a programme for an "interdisciplinary materialism" was elaborated which made the first decisive break with orthodox Marxism and opened the way for an analysis of cultural industries and texts that prefigured what now goes under the heading of cultural studies. Subsequently, cultural studies also has roots in the cycle of intellectual and cultural movements associated in the French context with the respective ascendance of existentialism, structuralism and post-structuralism in the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s (with a decade or so lag elsewhere). Students of cultural studies have learned from each of these developments, though there is still a lingering tendency to falsely link cultural studies with the structuralist Marxism of Louis Althusser's rather reductionist theory of state cultural apparatuses. Though this was an important influence for many (especially in Britain) in the 1970s, the epistemological, theoretical and political problems of this approach — especially its inability to link structure and the subject — led to its rapid decline in the 1980s. The more recent influence of poststructuralist and postmodernist tendencies has further reinforced the centrality of the structure-agency dialectic as a central concern of British cultural studies in the 1980s.

Today it is increasingly difficult to generalize about cultural studies as an approach because it has assumed various distinctive national forms (which may not even use this specific designation). As well, its intellectual content has become increasingly diverse in response to the rethinking — and critique — of Marxism provoked by feminist, poststructuralist, postmodernist, deconstructionist, and critical theory (Nelson and Grossberg, Morrow 1991a, Grossberg *et al.*). For example, though the "theory of hegemony" (a term used by the Italian cultural theorist Antonio Gramsci in the 1930s and popularized in the work of Louis Althusser in France in the late 1960s) was once almost exclusively associated with structuralist Marxism, most recently it has been redefined in explicitly poststructuralist and "post-Marxist" terms (Laclau and Mouffe). Symptomatic of conceptual inflation and the bandwagon effect, some now use the term with reference to forms of cultural sociology with no links to the original Marxist-influenced problematic; accordingly, the term risks losing any specificity when neofunctionalist sociologists come to refer to "Durkheimian cultural studies" (Alexander).

Many efforts have been made to define cultural studies as an academic approach ("What is cultural studies, anyway?") by referring, respectively, to specific intellectual and political traditions, relations among academic disciplines, competing theoretical paradigms, or appropriate objects of inquiry (Johnson 18). The difficulty of a precise definition is linked to the confluence of the intellectual and political traditions just alluded to: the culture industry theory of the Frankfurt School tradition; structuralist Marxism and Lacanian psychoanalysis; post-Althusserian Gramscian theory; the cultural Marxism of Williams and Thompson; the poststructuralist debates associated with Derrida and Foucault; the intertwining of feminist theories with these various tendencies. But the present task is not one of intellectual history, but rather a kind of stock-taking with respect to the cumulative effects of these debates. *Despite the seemingly endless differences is there — if loosely defined — a coherent body of theory and methods which could provide the consensual foundation for an interdisciplinary research programme?* In particular, I wish to address this question from the specific perspective of its implications for the intellectual division of labour and curriculum of an "arts faculty."

First, I will advance the claim that behind the cultural studies movement lies a broadly shared set of theories and issues which resist traditional "disciplinary" incorporation and yet constitute an intellectually defensible framework for interdisciplinary research that is neither merely eclectic nor simply ideologically tendentious. *Second*, I will attempt to explore aspects of the challenge of cultural studies with respect to the humanities broadly, and more specifically with respect to the social sciences and interdisciplinary programmes.

II. CULTURAL STUDIES AS A RESEARCH PROGRAMME: UNITY AND DIVERSITY

STRONG VERSUS WEAK RESEARCH PROGRAMMES

The notion of a *weak programme* in cultural studies has numerous advantages (despite the aversion of macho cultures to "weakness"). The term is obviously related to the notion of a research paradigm as used in the philosophy and history of science, but is somewhat less grandiose and less contaminated with other implications.

First, it is not a question of defining a "discipline" in the normal sense of a focused specialization, a narrowly defined object of inquiry. Second, it is not a question of a specific theory (though a strong programme approaches this), so much as a *family of theories* linked by shared concerns, methods, etc. For this reason some speak of cultural "studies" in the plural. The question then is defining the peculiar character of this family resemblance that allows us to grasp the decentred unity of cultural studies.

In this connection, I have chosen the terms "strong" and "weak" well aware of their limitations — *faute de mieux*. First of all, there is the problem that these terms have been used in a somewhat different way to contrast approaches to the sociology of science. The sense in which I am using this distinction is perhaps best conveyed by considering related alternative formulations: broad *versus* narrow, minimal *versus* maximal, pluralistic *versus* unified, and dialogical *versus* monological. A weak programme would thus be *broad, minimal, pluralistic, and dialogical*.

The concept of a weak programme for cultural studies allows the formulation of the loosely unifying features of cultural studies in such a manner that gives room for its practical diversity. The core theoretical principles and issues are what is essential, not the specific, auxiliary theories introduced in a specific context from more contentious theoretical and political perspectives.

The notion of a *strong programme*, on the other hand, provides a way of differentiating the diverse strategies that might be or have been developed *within* the open-ended framework of the more general, weak programme. Accordingly, it might be possible to speak of strong programmes as alternative, competing approaches within cultural studies, at least if paradigm is taken here to imply a necessary plurality as opposed to the victory of one over the other as in the natural sciences. For example, the writings of Fredric Jameson, Cornel West and Stuart Hall may be described as strong programmes in this sense.

Though I will not here attempt to trace the intellectual origins of my conception of this minimal, weak programme, it should be mentioned in passing that it is grounded above all in the work of Jürgen Habermas (1971, 1988), Mikhail Bakhtin and the writings encompassed by the "Bakhtin circle," Charles Sanders Peirce (Finlay), Paul Ricoeur, and Kenneth Burke (Simons and Melia). Though Habermas, Bakhtin, and Ricoeur in particular have concerns which could be the basis of a strong programme, their primary focus is a redefinition of the tasks of the human sciences along the more general lines of a weak programme in cultural studies which makes a place for ideology critique. To be sure, a weak programme does claim a loosely defined privileged viewpoint that challenges other approaches to cultural analysis and practice, but it does not in and of itself constitute a paradigm in the strong sense.

The epistemological point of departure would be Habermas's claim that three cognitive interests guide scientific inquiry: an empirical-analytical interest in social determination and technical control; a historical-hermeneutic interest in interpretation; and a critical-emancipatory interest in transformation (Habermas 1971). A rough application of this notion to the issues of cultural studies implies: — *That Texts or Actions have their genesis and reception within a context of social and cultural reproduction which can only be understood in terms of concepts employing some notion of social determination;*

— *That Texts and Actions cannot be simply reduced to those determinations, but need to be interpreted in diverse ways in relation to them as the basis for understanding their simultaneous dependence and autonomy in relation to the horizons of meaning available in particular historical contexts;*

— *That Texts and Actions must be judged ultimately in relation to a critical-emancipatory interest linked to the potential of knowledge to liberate individuals and groups from the "mind-forged manacles" bequeathed by the history of domination.*

METATHEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS

The metatheoretical origins of cultural studies can be traced to the problematic polarization between two explanatory models which go back to the German split between the *Naturwissenschaften* and the *Geisteswissenschaften* (Apel). Whereas the former was held to be oriented toward nomological explanation (*Erklären*), the latter was concerned exclusively with interpretation (*Verstehen*). This particular polarization, however, proved most problematic for the emerging social sciences at the turn of the century:

Whereas the natural and the cultural or hermeneutic sciences are capable of living in a mutually indifferent, albeit more hostile than peaceful, coexistence, the social sciences must bear the tension of divergent approaches under one roof, for in them the very practice of research compels reflection on the relationship between analytic and hermeneutic methodologies. (Habermas 1988, 3)

But neglect of this question is precisely what has pushed many in the humanities toward the cultural studies problematic: searching for ways of analytically describing the social contexts of textual production and reception. Increasingly, in short, the humanities are today also confronted with "the tension of divergent approaches under one roof."

THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS

This is not the place to develop an introduction to the major theoretical themes of contemporary cultural studies. The point is rather to argue that there is a coherent and widely discussed set of issues which unifies cultural studies debates, despite the wide-ranging positions taken with respect to the appropriate formulation of concepts and their application in research. Indeed, this diversity can be read as indicative of the internal *pluralism* of the cultural studies problematic, despite its apparent differences from existing dominant approaches

in the human sciences. The unifying theoretical foundations of cultural studies can thus be reduced to four main themes:³

— A *theory of society* oriented toward an analysis of cultural reproduction and power, i.e., a theory of hegemony sensitive to both the interplay between coercive and symbolic power and its manifestation in centred and diffuse forms;
 — A *theory of the subject* which, while recognizing the social sources of subject formation, is equally concerned with a theory of resistance and transformative social movements;

— A *theory of discourse and ideology* which incorporates the important methodological insights of structuralism and semiotics within a broader conception of historical hermeneutics;

— And a non-dogmatic and yet non-relativistic *normative grounding* of its concerns with aesthetic, cultural and social criticism in terms which go beyond the limitations of modernist formulations of Enlightenment reason.

This last theme is of crucial significance, though probably most controversial given the identification of many associated with cultural studies to the various poststructuralist and postmodernist critiques of the metanarratives of "truth" and "reason." Yet, no matter how much they are influenced by poststructuralist and postmodernist critiques of reason and representation, no coherent conception of cultural studies could avoid altogether its tasks as an evaluative — i.e., critical — activity (Wellmer, Honneth). But this would be a far cry from abstract moralizing or dogmatic ideology critique. The problem is that the very act of criticism needs to be redefined in terms of a theory of contemporary intellectuals and their relationship to the university and society.

III. DISCIPLINARY (RE)POSITIONINGS

Such a systematic sketch of the central theoretical issues of a minimal programme in cultural studies does little, however, to convey what has actually been happening in the wide variety of disciplinary contexts which have been influenced by such issues. The obvious question here thus becomes: how and why did cultural studies emerge as a kind of disciplinary "buzz word" in the first place? But it is possible to isolate some commonalities which transcend the substantive diversity in different national, institutional, and disciplinary contexts:
 — As a legitimation for calls for interdisciplinarity in order to pursue types of teaching and research which conflict with disciplinary definitions that otherwise fragment cultural inquiry;

- As a rationale for politicizing cultural analysis, not only by stressing its ideological implications, but also arguing that "culture matters" in senses that have been neglected or glossed over in existing scholarly traditions;
- As a justification for the reallocation of resources and restructuring of the curriculum in order to develop new forms of teaching and research on cultural themes.

WHOSE CULTURAL STUDIES?

Why and in what ways have scholars in Canada come to identify with this cultural studies problematic (or problematics)? It is instructive also to compare in more detail the different ways in which the concept of "cultural studies" has appealed to researchers in the humanities, social sciences, and related interdisciplinary programmes. This question is quite distinct from a mere concern with cultural topics. It could be argued, for example, that in the humanities and cultural anthropology, people have from the beginning been "doing" cultural studies anyway. Such a statement is misleading, however, because it risks falling back on a commonsense definition of cultural studies as just any kind of cultural analysis when in fact it has its origins in various *oppositional challenges* (specific to disciplines) to conventional forms of cultural theory and research.⁴ From a humanities perspective it has been suggested that:

cultural studies has emerged from the current crises and contradictions of the humanities and social science disciplines not as a tightly coherent, unified movement with a fixed agenda, but as a loosely coherent group of tendencies, issues, and questions. The outcome partly of the theory and canon wars of the 1960s and 1970s, cultural studies does not reflect a single "field," theory, or methodology, but makes use of several — Marxism, feminism, deconstruction, psychoanalysis, ethnography. Using these and other tools, cultural studies analyzes what the late Raymond Williams liked to call "our common life together" — which may also mean, our *lack* of a "common life together" and those social / cultural forces which create surplus difference, division, alienation. (Brantlinger ix)

4 This definitional split is evident in the decision to organize a recent anthology on *Culture and Society* (Alexander and Seidman) in terms of two sections with separate editors: Part I on "analytic debates" surveys general approaches to culture, whereas Part II on "substantive debates" addresses the themes of contemporary cultural crisis which are more directly associated with the notion of cultural studies. This problematic text, however, should not be read so much as a sociological introduction to cultural studies as an attempt to legitimate cultural theory within sociology. For an important study linking culture and social theory with significant implications for cultural studies, see Archer.

3 I know of no study which attempts to synthesize the problematic of cultural studies in this general way, but see Brantlinger, Turner, and Morrow and Brown.

THE SOCIOLOGY OF ACADEMIC KNOWLEDGE

The notion of "theory and canon wars" hints at the conflictual process by which the university curriculum has been historically shaped. As the modern history of academy has shown, the sciences and disciplines that constitute the university are in many respects *arbitrary* in that they reflect the outcome of the politics of knowledge rather than some intrinsic intellectual order. In the cryptically pointed words of Theodor Adorno: "The departmentalization of mind is a means of abolishing mind where it is not exercised *ex officio*, under contract" (21). Translated, this position has been characterized as follows:

According to Adorno the division of labour between disciplines such as sociology philosophy, history and psychology is not contained in or dictated by their material, but has been forced on them from the outside. There is no discrete or unique object, for example, the mind or psyche, whose objective characteristics entail or directly correspond to the concepts and categories of psychology or psychoanalysis; nor is there a discrete object whose objective characteristics entail or correspond to the concepts and categories of sociology, history or philosophy. Rather, the same forces of fragmentation and reification which have produced the great divide between high art and the culture industry produced the division of labour among the various disciplines. (Bernstein 2)

The politics of knowledge thus cannot be ignored even by those who wish to preserve its autonomy. With these issues of conflicts over institutional reform in mind, it is instructive to consider the social context within which cultural studies has emerged as a topic of concern. As with any new tendency within the disciplines that make up a university, external and internal factors can be distinguished. The external ones include demands arising from the state, the market, or new social movements. In the case of cultural studies, it is clear that the primary external stimulus has come from new social movements in that cultural studies offers forms of knowledge conducive to the self-understanding and organization of such movements.

Internally, the demand for and support of new innovative tendencies may come from the administration, faculty or students. In this context, the primary impetus for cultural studies has clearly been a small number of faculty which have had little trouble in arousing student enthusiasm, even if students have not often served as an initiator except where part of or allied with new social movements linked to outside public spaces.

Faculty members interested in cultural studies typically find themselves alienated in various ways from existing departmental structures and see cultural studies as a rubric which would allow new strategies of teaching and research drawing upon interdisciplinary contacts. It is significant that the nature of this alienation is quite different in the humanities and the social sciences, and affects professional faculties in quite variable ways. This humanities / social science difference is of considerable importance for the specific cognitive structure of

cultural studies as a research programme. At this point it is of interest that researchers oriented toward cultural studies have a rather different relation to the dominant modes of inquiry in their respective disciplines.

RESISTANCE TO CULTURAL STUDIES

Resistance to cultural studies may in part be overtly ideological, but this will likely decline with the disintegration of the Soviet power bloc and the resulting waning of the "cold war." Further, to the extent that its inherent content cautions against identification with orthodox Marxist class politics — and potentially appeals to a wide range of groups excluded from full participation in politics and culture, it has a broad and diverse audience. In this respect, cultural studies could in principle contribute to overcoming the fragmentation of marginalized groups and point the way to common issues and concerns.

Perhaps a more important obstacle to the social scientific legitimation of cultural studies is more closely related to methodological issues given that much writing associated with such work does not follow the conventional disciplinary formats. Positivist social scientists in search of an empirical research design format of presenting a hypothesis, data, results, and a concluding discussion will be largely disappointed. On the other hand, those schooled in the older conventions of the humanities will be put off by the jargon, disrespect for canonized texts, and the tendency to politicize culture. Indeed, one of the central themes of poststructuralist discussions is that the "ideology of representation" must be contested through more self-reflexive writing (Woolgar). This does not require the nihilistic affirmation that representation is altogether impossible, only that naive realism is an illusion. The point as well is that style is not mere adornment but part of a strategy of argumentation, of rhetoric, hence essential to the very idea of science (Morrow 1991c). In his most recent works, Ben Agger (1989, 1990) has linked the "decline of discourse" in general with positivist modes of writing in sociology and the advent of "fast capitalism."

At the risk of caricature, one can imagine the ideal type of the "positivist" social scientific or "traditionalist" humanistic reader responding to much of what is regarded as "good work" in cultural studies:

— *Social Sciences*: "Where's the hypothesis? Where's the empirical evidence? What's the method? This is just theory, ideology or polemic. The terms aren't even in the dictionary" (but see Abercrombie *et al.* or Jary and Jary)

— *Humanities*: "What about the intrinsic value of the text? Is this not an arbitrary imposition of ideological interpretation? This is just theory, ideology or polemic. The terms aren't even in the dictionary" (but see Angenot or Makaryk).

Within the social sciences such stylistic tendencies and mixing of disciplinary genres have been resisted in the name of methodological rigour, but in cultural studies such characteristics often form an essential part of the "method." Little wonder that it has taken half a century for the sociological significance of the

10 / Raymond A. Morrow

writings of people like Walter Benjamin and Theodor Adorno in the Frankfurt tradition to gain some recognition. Adorno's self defense — in arguing that "regard for the object" not "communication" as such should be the test of rigour — should be read then not as an excuse for obscurity as opposed to an awareness of the multiple forms of scientific writing and reading. Adorno's remarks are worthy of more extensive citation here:

A writer will find that the more precisely, conscientiously, appropriately expresses himself, the more obscure the literary result is thought, whereas a loose and irresponsible formulation is at once rewarded with a certain understanding. Regard for the object, rather than for communication, is suspect in any expression: anything specific, not taken from pre-existent patterns, appears inconsiderate, a symptom of eccentricity, almost of confusion. The logic of the day, which makes so much of its clarity, has naively adopted this perverted notion of everyday speech. Only what they do not need first to understand, they consider understandable. Few things contribute so much to the demoralization of intellectuals. Those who would escape it must recognize the advocates of communicability as traitors to what they communicate. (101)

DISCIPLINARY TRADITIONS AND CULTURAL STUDIES

Viewed as a whole, the cultural studies movement involves challenging the negative effects of the polarization between the humanities and social sciences. Yet it is important to stress the disciplinary-specific consequences of this challenge in order to understand the diverse effects and implications.

THE HUMANITIES⁵

The link between the humanities and cultural studies is above all associated with activities involving text interpretation, whether that be written, visual or even acoustic. The central issue involves a challenge to assumptions about whether, first, interpretations should take place without reference to the social contexts of

their production and reception and second, aesthetic evaluations be undertaken independently of the problematic of ideology (Brantlinger, Arac and Johnson).

Philosophy represents the anomalous case here, because its disciplinary interests are quite distinct given its historic status as the original source (along with theology) of the academic disciplines. To this extent, it proclaims an absolute autonomy to designate its own "philosophical" questions and even prescribe agendas for anyone concerned with epistemologically certified "knowledge." Post-Kuhnian and post-empiricist theories of knowledge have, however, put philosophy on the same footing as other disciplines — a theme, however, that has largely been bequeathed to interdisciplinary science studies programmes.

In different degrees, however, the issues of cultural studies have had a more profound impact on the literary humanities disciplines. The move toward cultural studies took the form of appropriating new theories outside literature and has been characterized by a concern with:

- analysis of extrinsic as well as intrinsic aspects of texts, hence stress upon the material and institutional foundations of cultural production and reception;
- a rethinking of the human subject in terms that transcend the difficulties of more restrictive "humanist" conceptions;
- a redefinition of the objects of inquiry as any form of cultural expression, including popular forms such as television drama, romance fiction, children's literature, rock music, spectator sports, etc. This has helped legitimate — despite strong resistance — such cultural forms as "worthy" of study along side of the "high" culture traditionally canonized as exclusively appropriate for academic study. As well, it has opened the way for more sociological analyses of the cultural expressions of marginalized groups and even oppressed groups (e.g., the study of post-colonial literatures), and the significance of such practices for the transformation of the consciousness of subjects within class and power structures;
- the valorization of structuralist methods and "ideology critique" as legitimate tasks of textual inquiry.

Clearly, each of these themes conflicts with the traditional understanding of the literary disciplines in particular. The challenge for the humanities disciplines here also lies in part in acknowledging the extensive borrowing involved in each of these domains from aspects of the "social sciences."

A typical problem here is that the social sciences are usually (and falsely) envisioned as unified, positivistically understood disciplines which are then contrasted to an equally monolithically understood "Marxist" alternative. To take the most strategic example of sociology, even self-proclaimed positivists acknowledge — with considerable regret to be sure — that it is now a multi-

⁵ I have made no attempt to treat the humanities in comparable detail with the social sciences, partly because of my own limited competence. Philosophy in particular presents difficulties, but clearly students of cultural studies have learned much from post-analytic and continental philosophy. Nor is the peculiar situation of the "fine arts" taken up, except in the concluding discussion of the problem of the relationship between creative practice and academic research. History is not explicitly treated, even though cultural studies could be viewed as expropriating a territory which could be viewed as social and cultural history (e.g., Corrigan and Sayer writing as *sociologists*). The constraints upon the growth of history as a discipline and the focus on the contemporary in much cultural research has led it to be a minor player (aside for a number of influential intellectual historians, e.g., Hayden White, Mark Poster) in the case of cultural studies, even though broadly speaking its intellectual traditions should make it a key contributor.

paradigmatic discipline.⁶ Equally important, however, is the diversity among the social sciences.

THE SOCIAL SCIENCES⁷

One of the most striking recent developments in several of the social science disciplines has been a recovery of its "humanist" side and the limits of emulating the natural sciences (at least the way they have been understood so far). Some of these need to be briefly discussed to understand what is involved here. Hence it should also be noted that the hermeneutic basis of cultural studies also confers upon the humanities a foundational role in the university.

ANTHROPOLOGY AND ARCHAEOLOGY

For cultural anthropologists cultural studies might appear to offer nothing new; not surprisingly, then, the crisis has been less visible than in the humanities, and was initially articulated in the 1980s as an appropriation of poststructuralist theory under the heading of what one of its critics has called "postmodern ethnography" (Sangren), a debate which pushed the question of method beyond techniques of participant observation or even the interpretation of cultural texts to the act of "writing culture" itself: "The fact that it has not until recently been portrayed or seriously discussed reflects the persistence of an ideology claiming transparency of representation and immediacy of experience. Writing reduced to method: keeping good field notes, making accurate maps, 'writing up' results" (Clifford 1986, 2). At the same time, however, it would also be misleading to identify the interplay between anthropology and cultural studies exclusively with a poststructuralist critique of ethnographic representation, as if it implied the impossibility of representation or the futility of ethnographic research. Those influenced by these concerns more often than not link the critique of ethnographic authority with those of a theory of domination which considers the relation of culture and power in the context of class, gender, colonialism, etc. What is distinctive about the cultural studies strategy, however, is that it results in a form of critical ethnography which moves beyond the reductionism associated with neo-Marxist political economy and economic anthropology.

6 To be sure, there is some truth to the public image of sociologists as statistically oriented behaviourists searching for predictive variables. Yet many programmes also have courses in historical and qualitative methods, and discourse analysis is introduced under various headings (e.g., the sociology of knowledge).

7 The following discussions of sociology and anthropology draw directly upon a summary version of Morrow 1991b, though the comments on archaeology did not appear in the earlier version.

Even though economic anthropologists have been most aware of the questions of power and domination, they have tended — like their political economy counterparts in sociology and political science tended — to regard cultural factors as epiphenomenal, partly in response to the "culturalism" that has dominated cultural anthropology. The exceptions have been influenced by cultural studies debates, as well as unresolved problems in anthropological theory. This process is linked with the emergence of feminist perspectives (Moore), but also associated with making sense of the symbolic manifestations of commodification (Taussig), peasant resistance (Scott, Smith), or reconceptualizing the relationships between micro phenomena and political economy (Marcus).

The case of archaeology, on the other hand, is considerably different because of its traditional self-understanding as a hard science as expressed in what is referred to as the "processual archaeology" represented by the so-called "New Archaeology" of Binford and others in the 1960s and 1970s. Though sometimes enjoying separate departmental status, archaeologists have generally been forced to accommodate themselves within anthropology departments as a "department within a department" with little in common with their "culturalist" cousins. Most recently, however, a movement known as "post-processual archaeology" has pointed the way for a reconciliation between the theoretical concerns of archeology and those of cultural anthropology, feminist theory (Gero and Conkey) and cultural studies generally (Hodder, Miller *et al.*, Tilley, Bapty and Yates).

SOCIOLOGY

Despite the convention of introductory chapters on culture, the cultural has hardly mattered in sociology except as a vague reference to the "norms" that define roles and the taken-for-granted "values" that define different cultural systems. Typically, functionalist sociologists stress the role of values in the socialization processes that produce cultural consensus, whereas conflict theorists point to the persistence of ideological differences within this process. But deeper analysis of these phenomena has been inhibited by the dominance of positivist methodologies ill-equipped to deal with cultural analysis.

In this respect, sociology stands somewhat between humanistic cultural anthropology and positivist archaeology. Sociology has been more or less schizophrenic in its attempt to sustain under one disciplinary roof a positivist search for universal laws and quantification and a humanist sense of the meaningful dimensions of social reality. But within sociology, the humanist tradition has remained marginal and generally misunderstood as simply "unscientific" or "qualitative" (Brown and Morrow, Morrow and Brown).

Nevertheless, cultural studies has over the past decade begun to fill the vacuum left by the failure of the sociology of knowledge (or culture) to develop

14 / Raymond A. Morrow

as an empirical subfield. The problem of legitimation here is thus not so much theoretical as practical, i.e., the marginal status of the sociology of culture within the curriculum and the limitations of quantitative approaches to cultural phenomena.

POLITICAL SCIENCE

The ghettoization of abstract normative theory as "political philosophy" or "political theory" has been complemented by the dominance of a "behavioural" approach with origins in sociology and psychology and epitomized in public opinion research. Aside from a few influenced by the debates between feminist, neo-Marxist, and Frankfurt critical theory (e.g., Ball, Schürmann, Luke), political scientists have not played a major role in defining cultural studies, despite its obvious importance for understanding the state and cultural hegemony, social movements and reconceptualizing the theory of ideology predominant in political science. The exceptions here have largely worked and published outside the confines of political science as a discipline (e.g., Luke).

(SOCIAL) PSYCHOLOGY

For all practical purposes, academic psychology has long ago largely abandoned an interest in the psychological issues (which are essentially social psychological) of primary concern to work in cultural studies. You would be hard put to find any reference in psychology departments to issues such as: alienation and reification; domination, repression, defense mechanisms; the problem of a theory of the subject; the methodological issues of discourse analysis (as opposed to psycholinguistics). A partial exception is the developmental tradition associated with the work of Jean Piaget whose cognitive and moral development theories have drawn attention from social theorists in various contexts. The primary exception here is the emergence — primarily in Britain — of a "critical psychology" perspective developed in a new Routledge series (e.g., Parker).

ECONOMICS

Perhaps even more so than psychology, economics departments have abandoned an interest in virtually all of the economic issues of concern to students of cultural studies. We hear nothing of issues such as: a theory of need and consumption; work alienation; economic relations as social and cultural relations; the cultural foundations of economics as anything more than the universal imperatives of utilization maximization. Ironically, however, the interdisciplinary structure of business has created spaces for work influenced by cultural studies in areas from marketing to organizational analysis.

INTERDISCIPLINARY ARTS PROGRAMMES⁸

In short, the problematic of cultural studies exposes some of the blind spots of the conventional disciplines and points towards forms of inquiry which have been almost completely ignored or marginalized. On the other hand, the cultural studies problematic opens the way for a more secure foundation for the multiplicity of interdisciplinary programmes which have emerged over the past decade or so. Ironically, however, these programmes have their origins and rational primarily in particularistic claims rather than the broader issues outlined here. Still I think these programmes can be instructively compared with respect to their degree of engagement with the issues of cultural studies, and how that has affected their academic credibility and coherence as a framework for innovative forms of research.⁹

THE AVANT-GARDE PROGRAMMES

Avant-garde programmes are distinctive because they (often in quite different ways) reflect the possibilities for intellectual hybridization between specific domains of interdisciplinary inquiry and the most advanced debates of contemporary social and cultural theory. The following remarks are intended to be general observations with respect to Canada. Such avant-garde interdisciplinary areas tend to share three qualities: self-definition as part of vigorous international intellectual movements; possession of strong theoretical, methodological and empirical foundations; and a relation to reasonably well-defined objects of inquiry of great cultural significance.

For example, the development of film and communications studies has been on the cutting edge of theories about information and postmodern societies, and largely avoided the disputes associated with the conventional humanities / social science polarizations (except sometimes where organized within English departments). Further, science studies have contributed to demolish the positivist self-understanding of the sciences and clarified the nature of science as a social and cultural activity. In the process, science studies necessarily bring to bear all the riches of the cultural studies debate, though this is not often acknowledged.

8 I have confined myself here to interdisciplinary programs frequently located in Arts faculties in Canada. As a consequence, I did not take up the question of programs in Black or Afro-American studies common in the USA. I have not tried to deal with other programmes usually located in other faculties, e.g., education, recreation and leisure studies, communications, home economics, etc.

9 Obviously this section has not been adequately documented, and the following remarks must stand rather uneasily as more or less well-informed "impressions." My apologies to all of those who might define themselves in terms that may contradict these somewhat glib generalizations.

Similarly, the reconceptualization of gender relations in feminist theory and gender studies in terms of questions of power and discourse have guaranteed a similar cross-fertilization along lines consistent with cultural studies, a strategy which has helped overcome charges of intellectual narrowness.

THE GHETTOIZED PROGRAMMES

The term "ghettoized" is used here (with reservations) to indicate interdisciplinary programmes with an ambiguous and often contested status related to their particularity. Whereas the media, science and even gender are related to issues generally held to be of universal scope, those of ethnic, national, and religious identity do not, at least in the same way.

First, it is often perceived that these programmes have their origins in specific circumstances and in response to particular interests, hence of parochial academic standing. Second, these programmes have often been isolated from wider university based theoretical debates, thus inhibiting the potential for cross-fertilization and their full intellectual development. Third, they have to a great extent been viewed by existing programmes with strong ambivalence, even where their inherent importance (e.g., Native studies) is not in question. Despite such broad similarities, however, the differences among these "ghettoized" programmes is even more striking.

Though the experiences of Native studies programmes reflect most profoundly the issues of cultural studies, the connection is rarely made between the two — to the loss of both. For example, in Canada the prospect of aboriginal legal autonomy creates the basis for fruitful collaboration with the tradition of critical legal studies, as well as related anthropological work.

Despite the fact that much Christian theological debate is at the forefront of social and cultural theory, in practice religious studies programmes — as opposed to the more lively divinity schools — tend to provide a pluralist smorgasbord of "religious traditions." Not unlike the situation which would prevail if there were a programme in "ideologies," there is an inherent tension between the identification with particular "faiths" and the essentially secular mandate of the university. Perhaps a department of "ecumenical studies" could overcome this, but even such a department already presupposes a particular theological orientation with respect to the traditions represented.

Finally, with the crisis of the Canadian federation emerging from the failure of the Meech Lake Accord, the pieties of those who have officially defined the discourse of national unity — whether in politics or more subtly through the formation of the academic disciplines which reproduce that culture — have increasingly lost their credibility. Ironically, whereas the project of cultural studies in Quebec has succeeded in many ways, that of English Canada has faltered: it has neither a strong popular base nor a theoretical rationale comparable to that of Quebec. Though Canadian studies is not at fault here, it

is no accident that it has largely developed in splendid isolation from the theoretical debates of those who have defined the issues of contemporary cultural studies.

IV. CONCLUSION: CULTURAL STUDIES AS A PROJECT

Let me conclude with some remarks with respect to cultural studies as something more than merely a scholarly activity — as a kind of project in the older existentialist sense. Cultural studies as a scholarly orientation — the central theme of this paper — most obviously relates to a system of book and journal publishing required for disseminating knowledge. At the same time, however, a distinctive aspect of this scholarly orientation is that it has a peculiar relation to its object of analysis and the potential audiences of its texts because it is closely tied to a *questioning* of the existing divisions between cultural analysis, cultural practice, and cultural consumption. This theme becomes most obvious with respect to disciplinary contexts where creative "practice" is often associated with scholarly teaching and research: film, music, the visual arts, creative writing, policy applications in any domain.

So, in part, this association of cultural studies with creative practice is *pedagogical*: in many situations theory and practice mutually inform and enrich each other. For various institutional, political and professional reasons, however, universities have tended to resist this linkage: the arts are often located in independent art institutes or reduced to training in basic skills in community colleges or technical institutes. It would appear that the logic of cultural studies as a scholarly orientation should in principle resist this partly ideologically motivated split between theory and practice.

Further, this imperative of cultural studies as a project is *methodological*: interpretive research requires one to be an "insider" because the object of inquiry must be to some extent phenomenologically and existentially grounded. In contrast, only an external, superficial knowledge of the object studied is normally necessary for using high-powered statistical techniques based on quantitative data (even if the construction of such data does have hermeneutic presuppositions).

But this relation to the object goes deeper than a pedagogical or methodological imperative: the ultimate goal of cultural studies is not exclusively the production of scholarly texts, but a *dialogical sense of the political*. As ethnography suggests, culture cannot be considered a terrain for "field research" which one enters like a value-neutral natural science: those who return completely the same, untouched by the experience of otherness and difference can be accused of bad faith and even false consciousness. Cultural immersion in this sense constitutes a form of dialogical experience in the deepest sense and relates to the primordial origins of all communicative interaction. This experience involves a form of "engagement" with the object of inquiry which is political in the broadest sense of the term. As well, it helps to understand why many cultural

analysts are often skilled creative practitioners, consider cultural consumption as both work and play, and depend for many of their insights upon personal associations with cultural creators and cultural activists. The enterprise of cultural studies, therefore, cannot be completely cut off from its engaged relation to cultural creation, and its long term implications for the reproduction and transformation of cultural subjects in particular national and international contexts. That is perhaps the ultimate challenge of cultural studies as an academic vocation.

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