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The Need for Cultural Studies: Resisting Intellectuals and Oppositional Public Spheres

Introduction

In North American Universities the study of culture¹ is so fragmented through specialization that concerted cultural critique is almost impossible. The historical development of insulated disciplines housed in segregated departments has produced a legitimating ideology that in effect suppresses critical thought. Rationalized as the protection of the integrity of specific disciplines, the departmentalization of inquiry has contributed to the reproduction of the dominant culture by isolating its critics from each other.² Under the banner of the academic freedom of experts to direct their own activity, specialists now bind themselves in discursive formations that generally circumscribe the nature of their inquiries.

The practitioners of disciplines investigating cultural phenomena—e.g., anthropology, sociology, history, literary studies—are limited in their ability to communicate with each other about their common concerns. Traditional literary study, for instance, has developed within formalistic parameters that set an almost impassable boundary between the study of a society and the study of a novel; similarly, sociologists make use of literature in ways that alienate traditional literary critics. And so on. The conventional wisdom for academics is to let members of other departments do whatever they say is their work in whatever way they choose—as long as this right is granted to them. As a consequence of these developments, the study of culture is conducted in fragments. And, in so far as experts must define themselves over and against a public comprised of amateurs, specialization removes intellectuals from other public spheres.³ Critique is thus disabled and the mechanisms of both social and cultural reproduction enabled.

The role of the specialist is not altogether compatible with the role of the intellectual. As Paul Piccone remarks,

unless one fudges the definition of intellectuals in terms of purely formal and statistical educational criteria, it is fairly clear that what modern society produces is an army of alienated, privatized, and uncultured experts who are knowledgeable only within very narrowly defined areas. This technical intelligentsia, rather than intellectuals in the traditional sense of thinkers concerned with the totality, is growing by leaps and bounds to run the increasingly complex bureaucratic and industrial apparatus. Its rationality, however, is only *instrumental* in character, and thus suitable mainly to perform partial tasks rather than tackling *substantial* questions of social organization and political direction.⁴

The argument of our essay is that there is a need for cultural studies to engage critically exactly those social and political issues to which Piccone alludes, and to promote an understanding of both the enabling and constraining dimensions of culture. This suggests both the development of a critique and the production of cultural forms consonant with emancipatory interests. One important task for such a transformative critique is to identify the fissures in the ideologies of the dominant culture. In the absence of intellectuals who can critically analyze a society's contradictions, the dominant culture continues to reproduce its worst effects all the more efficaciously. And, without a sphere for cultural critique, the resisting intellectual has no voice in public affairs.

This essay begins by showing how definitions of disciplines are historically arbitrary. It then goes on to argue that attempts to cut across the arbitrary boundaries set by disciplines and to develop interdisciplinary programs—American or Canadian Studies, Womens Studies, Black Studies, etc.—have failed. Next, the essay argues that the traditional humanist rationale for the disciplinary study of culture is inappropriate in that it masks the role that members of a culture can play as agents in its formation. This leads us to argue for the necessity of a counter-disciplinary praxis. At this point, we introduce the notion of the resisting intellectual as an educational formation necessary to restore to academics their roles as intellectuals. The sections that follow sketch out some of the implications of our argument: a return of intellectuals from ivory-towered departments to the public sphere; and a movement away from individualist, esoteric research towards collective inquiries into social ills. The essay concludes by outlining conditions for the development of Cultural Studies.

I. The Arbitrariness of Disciplines and the Failure of Interdisciplines

Most of us think of academic disciplines as the reflection of more or less “natural” categories of things which we call subjects. English is

different from history because literature and history are two distinct sorts of thing. But if we consider the matter further we soon recognize that the identification of a discipline with natural objects doesn't explain very much. In the first place, a particular group of objects is the subject of any number of disciplines. The same text, *Uncle Tom's Cabin* for example, can be studied by both literary scholars and historians. Secondly, the particular objects which a discipline studies do not remain the same throughout its history. "Literature" has had its current reference—fiction, poetry, and drama—only since the early 19th century. Furthermore, the way in which categories are defined regularly changes. English has been recognized as a legitimate area of study only since the late nineteenth century, and new subdisciplines in physics or chemistry have been emerging at an ever increasing pace.

What is studied under the aegis of an academic discipline at any given time is not a natural subject matter, but a field which is itself constituted by the practice of the discipline. Such a field is not arbitrary in the sense that it develops randomly or on whim; rather, a field can be called arbitrary because it is contingent on historical circumstance. Hence it reflects cultural, social, and institutional demands. This is true of all academic fields, but especially so in fields outside the natural sciences. To understand why this is the case, it is necessary to look more closely at the formation of academic disciplines.

Michel Foucault has shown that discipline⁵ as a particular strategy of social control and organization began at the end of the Classical age and came into dominance in the modern period. Though Foucault is not directly concerned with academic disciplines, much of his analysis applies to these enterprises. What is characteristic of disciplinary technologies is their capacity simultaneously to normalize and hierarchize, to homogenize and differentiate. This paradox is explained by the control which discipline asserts over difference. Because norms are carefully established and maintained, deviation can be measured on a scale. The goal of the professional in a discipline is to move up this scale by differing only in the appropriate ways.

It does not require Foucauldian analysis to understand that a discipline limits discourse. To be part of a discipline means to ask certain questions, to use a particular set of terms, and to study a relatively narrow set of things. But Foucault's work does help us to see how these limitations, this discipline, are enforced by institutions through various rewards and punishments most of which pertain to hierarchical ranking. The ultimate punishment is exclusion. If one ceases to speak within the discourse of the discipline, one will no longer be considered part of it. This does not usually mean that heretics will be prohibited from teaching or even from publishing; rather, they are simply margi-

nalized. The situation is similarly severe for the new Ph.D. for whom the price of admission into the academy is the same conformity with dominant academic discourses.

Even though the development of normal science in Kuhn's sense distinguishes the natural sciences from other disciplines, "The human sciences constantly try to copy the natural sciences' exclusion from their theories of any references to the [social and historical] background."⁶ In the social sciences and humanities there has been an increasing normalization consistent with the professionalization of the various disciplines, but it is clear that no discipline has succeeded in completely excluding "background" from its theories. Formalizing techniques can make normal science possible in the social sciences and the humanities only by excluding the social skills, institutions, and power arrangements that make the isolation of attributes possible. This practice ignores the social practice and cultural interaction of social scientists and humanists.

Because social practice is not one of the objects constituted by the natural sciences, "it is always possible and generally desirable that an unchallenged normal science which defines and resolves problems concerning the structure of the physical universe establish itself, [but] in the social sciences such an unchallenged normal science would only indicate that an orthodoxy had established itself, not through scientific achievement, but by ignoring the background and eliminating all competitors."⁷ Although humanistic disciplines allow a wider variety of activities than do the disciplines of the natural sciences, these activities themselves are hierarchically valued. In English, for instance, normal study under the New Critical "paradigm" was the acontextual interpretation of individual texts of the literary canon. Other kinds of scholarship were permitted and sometimes rewarded, but were never allowed to overshadow normal New Critical practice. Historical scholarship, in this instance, had its place, but it was regarded as subsidiary to New Criticism.⁸

Although work in the humanities does not pose as normal science, its disciplinary structure aims at producing specialists. The disciplinary structure of study in literature, history, sociology, and other divisions that often focus on culture, tends to prohibit these specialists from relating their knowledge to public spheres. Disciplinary study requires constant attention to those few questions that constitute its current specialized concern. These questions are inevitably far removed from the genuine controversies in a given culture.

Interdisciplinary movements such as American Studies and Women's Studies have often developed out of the sense that the most important issues were being lost in the cracks between the rigid boundaries of the

disciplines. As a consequence, American Studies began with the agenda of retrieving such issues. It should be remembered that the nationalism which spawned American Studies and Canadian Studies was openly political, and that American Studies books were critical of the ideological interests embedded in canonical documents of American culture. Nevertheless, American Studies should be regarded as a cautionary example to those who would try to establish Cultural Studies as an interdisciplinary enterprise within the academy. The problem is that no solid alternatives to disciplinary structure have evolved within the academy and, as a result, movements such as American Studies paradoxically must strive to become disciplines. Thus, while these movements often begin with a critical perspective, they retreat from radical critique as they become more successful. To the extent that such movements resist disciplines, their seriousness is questioned. Practitioners are regarded as dilettantes rather than real scholars, and their enterprises are written off as mere fads. In American Studies, the idea of interdisciplinarity became a means for practitioners to challenge a particular hierarchy, but it did not offer an alternative to hierarchical order. And as American Studies became more entrenched, interdisciplinarity receded in importance in the rhetoric of the movement.⁹

It would be a mistake to regard the failure of interdisciplinary movements to remain critical enterprises as the result of the suppression of political ideas. Because an intellectual's political views are posited as irrelevant to the work of disciplines themselves, speaking and thinking about political and social questions is construed as merely eccentric to the disciplinary study of culture. This failure to engage historical contexts and social particularities can be seen most clearly in the type of pedagogy that traditional disciplines institute.

Difficulties with the Traditional Rationale of the Study of Culture

Broadly speaking, the rationale of traditional humanistic education is that it offers students assured access to a storehouse of cultural materials which is constituted as a canon. Such a canon is, of course, relatively flexible in its definition insofar as it can incorporate and take cognizance of both marginal and recondite materials; as a thesaurus of sorts it cannot pass up anything of value. The values that are operational here do fluctuate according to specific ideological needs—witness the now quite secure incorporation of a women's studies canon or even a literary theory canon into some university curricula. But, at the same time, there is an always implicit 'gold standard' by which

these provisional incrementations and fluctuations are regulated. Just recently, the head of NEH, William Bennett, conducted an *ad hoc* survey to discover what books every high school student "might reasonably be expected to have studied" before graduation. The list of such books, thirty in all, ranged from Plato's *Republic*, through some Virgil, Chaucer, Dickens and Tolstoy, to *Catcher in the Rye*.¹⁰ These books and authors represent the regulatory standard of a certain cultural currency by which the humanities and their productions are measured. A familiarity with the stable central core of the canon is said to enable students to absorb the values enshrined there, to the point that they could apply those values to its more marginal or provisional components. Most importantly, students would have access to a wealth which is "humanizing" in its effect; but that effect is a complicity with the economy which has produced that wealth for humanity.

Leaving aside the not unimportant questions of how this project for the humanities is effected ideologically, and of how it relates in practice to students' lived lives (their individual socio-economic histories), it is important to ask whether or not it would be desirable or even necessary for Cultural Studies to appropriate or exploit in any way the same kind of educational rationale. After all, and as the new right is quick to point out, that rationale has always taken seriously the ideological effect and function *for* students of what is taught. By learning the dominant culture, or imbibing its representative values, students are theoretically *enabled* in that they are given the wherewithal for particular manners of action and behaviour within that culture. The argument can easily be made (as it is often made in Women's Studies, for example) that the teaching of an alternative substance, of a new canon, can effectively produce new ideological positions and thence political actions.

However, it must be remembered that the humanist rationale for the canon is based upon an hierarchical economy where cultural objects are ranked. Certain of those objects (Shakespeare's writing, for example) are assumed to be 'the best' of western culture; they thus represent, synecdochally, the *essence* of the culture. It is exactly this symbolic view of culture against which Cultural Studies should fight. The installation of a new canon, constructed on assumptions about what is most important and valuable for students to know or be familiar with, merely replicates the traditional hierarchical view of culture, albeit in a novel and perhaps minimally subversive form. Cultural Studies, on the other hand, should be built upon a different economy, one which sees that cultural objects are, in fact, disposed *relationally*.

This is to say that Cultural Studies should look with suspicion upon any hierarchizing project through which culture is synecdochally

delimited to certain of its parts, whether such parts represent the culture's essential 'best' or even if they represent what has been predetermined as politically or ethically important and valuable. Cultural Studies should, in short, abandon the goal of giving students access to that which represents a culture. Instead, Cultural Studies has the possibility of investigating culture as a set of activities which is lived and developed within asymmetrical relations of power, or as irreducibly a process which cannot be immobilized in the image of a storehouse.

By investigating and teaching the claim that culture is in a real sense *unfinished*, Cultural Studies can secure its own political effectiveness. Students—particularly those marginalised by the values of the dominant culture—can be disabused of the notion that the culture they actually inhabit is somehow not theirs or available to them only through proper initiation into the values enshrined in representative texts. Cultural Studies, taking new (i.e. necessarily non-canonical) objects and implicating them in a relational rather than hierarchical view, encourages a questioning of the premises of dominant educational and political practices. Most importantly, Cultural Studies can refuse to agree that "literature [and any other cultural object] . . . is distinct from politics"¹¹ and can thus re-consider the ideological and political appurtenance of a text or any set of texts.

Clearly, what is at stake here is the possibility that Cultural Studies could promote in students, not a striving after a predetermined or a once-and-for-all complacent accession to a given set of cultural values, but rather a continual analysis of their own conditions of existence. Such a praxis, founded in an overthrowing of the preassumptions of traditional disciplinary approaches to culture, is a pre-requisite for self-conscious and effective resistance to dominant structures.

II. The Need for a Counter-Disciplinary Praxis

In the first section of the essay we pointed out that disciplines concerned with the analysis of culture, including those called humanistic, have attempted to model themselves on the pattern of "normal science." Their aim is to describe culture, to accumulate knowledge about a culture. In the preceding section we argued that such an aim leaves the impression on students that a culture has a permanent character and that specific structures can be described in an essentialist manner. Such procedures are especially pernicious in those disciplines associated with the humanities since they suggest that the culture has already been formed rather than that it is in the process of transformation.

Cultural Studies should resist such tendencies. This requires a movement away from our de-contextualized *conception of disciplinary practices* toward a "*conception of human Praxis*, emphasising that human beings are neither to be treated as passive objects, nor as wholly free subjects," since the study of human life is properly "the study of definite social practices, geared to human needs."¹²

Given the disciplinary mechanisms at work in the structure of Western universities, such a praxis is necessarily counter-disciplinary in the sense that it resists the notion that the study of culture is the accumulation of knowledge about it. In our view, the proper study of culture is "intrinsically involved with *that which has to be done*"¹³ in societies rife with oppression. The precondition of such action is critical resistance to prevailing practices. However, resistance will not be effective if it is random and isolated; intellectuals must play the crucial role of mobilizing such resistance into a praxis that has political impact.

Resisting Intellectuals

Central to the emancipatory project that informs our notion of Cultural Studies is a reformulation of the role of the intellectual both within and outside the university. We concur with Gramsci that it is important to view intellectuals in political terms.¹⁴ The intellectual is more than a person of letters, or a producer and transmitter of ideas. Intellectuals are also mediators, legitimators, and producers of ideas and social practices; they perform a function eminently political in nature. Gramsci distinguishes between conservative and radical organic intellectuals. Conservative organic intellectuals provide the dominant classes with forms of moral and intellectual leadership. As agents of the status quo, such intellectuals identify with the dominant relations of power and become, consciously or unconsciously, the propagators of its ideologies and values. They provide the ruling classes with rationales for economic, political and ethical formations.

According to Gramsci, conservative organic intellectuals can be found in all strata of advanced industrial society—in industrial organizations, in universities, in the culture industry, in various forms of management, and so on. He claims that radical organic intellectuals also attempt to provide the moral and intellectual leadership for the working class. More specifically, radical organic intellectuals provide the pedagogical and political skills that are necessary to raise political awareness in the working class, and to help it develop leadership and engage in collective struggle.

Gramsci's analysis is helpful in formulating one of the central goals of Cultural Studies: the creation of what we want to call *resisting intellectuals*. This differs from Gramsci's notion of radical organic intellectuals; we believe that such intellectuals can emerge from and work with any number of groups which resist the suffocating knowledge and practices that constitute their social formation. Resisting intellectuals can provide the moral, political and pedagogical leadership for those groups which take as their starting point the transformative critique of the conditions of oppression. The epithet 'organic' in our case cannot be reserved for those intellectuals who take the working class as the only revolutionary agent.

The notion of the resisting intellectual is important in the most immediate sense because it makes visible the paradoxical position in which radical intellectuals in higher education find themselves in the 1980's. On the one hand, such intellectuals earn a living within institutions that play a fundamental role in producing the dominant culture. On the other hand, radical intellectuals define their political terrain by offering to students forms of oppositional discourse and critical social practices at odds with the hegemonic role of the university and the society which it supports. In many cases, this paradox works in favor of the university:

More often than not, [the] goal has been to elaborate disciplines rather than develop projects, to meld the bloodless tenets of semiology, systems theory, pragmatism and positivism with the archaicisms of historical materialism. The unflagging appetite of these leftist intellectuals to gain credibility within their respective disciplines, to be *au courant* and appreciated as its "left wing" and its most "forward looking tendency," is appalling evidence that what we lack is . . . a revolutionary intellectual movement.¹⁵

Bookchin's remarks remind us that critical scholarship is generally removed from any relation to concrete political movements; radical social theory becomes a mere commodity for academic journals and conferences; and radical intellectuals get safely ensconced within a tenure system that offers them as proof of the university's commitment to liberal pluralism.

Rather than surrender to this form of academic and political incorporation, Cultural Studies needs to define the role of the resisting intellectual as a counter-hegemonic practice that can both avoid and challenge it. In general terms, we can point to the following pedagogical and strategic activities. *First*, Cultural Studies needs to develop a curriculum and a pedagogy that stress the mediating and political role of intellectuals. This means providing students with the critical tools they will need to both understand and dismantle the chronic rationali-

zation of harmful social practices, while simultaneously appropriating the knowledge and skills they need to rethink the project of human emancipation. *Secondly*, resisting intellectuals must actively engage in projects which encourage them to address their own critical role in the production and legitimation of social relations. Such projects are necessary not only to fight against conservative intellectuals and the multiple contexts in which legitimation processes occur, but also to broaden the theoretical and political movements outside the university. Resisting intellectuals must develop and work with movements outside of the limiting contours of the disciplines, symposia, and reward systems that have become the sole referent for intellectual activity. More importantly, such a project broadens the notion of education and takes seriously Gramsci's notion of all society as a vast school.¹⁶ In addition, it encourages resisting intellectuals to play an active role in the many public spheres that are developing around various ideological conflicts.

Cultural Studies thus posits the need for resisting intellectuals who can establish new forms of political relations within and outside the university. In this theoretical context, Cultural Studies echoes Gramsci's call for radical intellectuals to forge alliances around new historical blocs. Intellectuals can play an important role in empowering individuals and groups within oppositional public domains.

Public Spheres, Popular Culture and Cultural Studies

The importance for Cultural Studies of participating in oppositional public spheres is an underlying premise of this essay. A counter-disciplinary praxis undertaken by resisting intellectuals would not be effective if it had as its only audience people in universities. Rather, it should take place more extensively in *public*. Although many universities are public institutions, we rarely consider them part of the public sphere.

If Cultural Studies is to be understood as an oppositional public sphere, it should not be conceived as a "department" or as part of the boundary separating professional activities from those of amateurs. Instead of thinking of Cultural Studies in terms which more properly characterize disciplines, we should reconceive traditional rationales in an effort to create counter practices. The classroom, to take one instance, is viewed traditionally as a place where information is transmitted to students. Experts in a discipline impart to apprentices the received knowledge about a particular subject matter; students are not agents in this process, but passive and overtly uncritical receptacles.

However, as we have argued, if we grant students an active role in the process of cultural formation, they can become agents in the production of social practices. To accomplish this we should become involved in fostering forms of resistance; a critical pedagogy is required which will promote the identification and analysis of the underlying ideological interests at stake in the text and its readings. We are then engaged together as resisting intellectuals in a social practice that allows both parties to construe themselves as agents in the process of their own cultural formation. An obvious concretization of this praxis might be a woman resisting the view of women proffered in a canonical novel. This instance is a reflection of resistance to large-scale social practices that oppress women. Such resistance needs to be produced.

Rather than abandon scholarship, resisting intellectuals need to repoliticize it. Scholarly *public*-ations, the disciplinary criterion used to establish the merit of professional opinions against those of a public made up of amateurs, do not reach the public. Though it is not appropriate to argue the point here, we contend that the disciplines presently concerned with the study of culture are unduly bound to the premise that their task is to do disciplinary research, that is, to accumulate and store in a retrievable way descriptions of cultural phenomenon. But, if we reconceive our activity as the production of (rather than the description of) social practices, then what we do in our classrooms is easily extended into public spheres. We cannot capitulate to the disciplinary notion that research has as its only audience other experts in the field. Resisting intellectuals must legitimate the notion of writing reviews and books for the general public, and they must create a language of critique balanced by a language of possibility that will enable social change.¹⁷

This means that we need to become involved in the political reading of popular culture. As Stanley Aronowitz remarks in "Colonized Leisure, Trivialized Work," "It remains for us to investigate in what way mass culture becomes constitutive of social reality."¹⁸ Training in disciplinary practices leads us away from the study of the relation between culture and society and toward the accumulation of descriptions of cultural material cut off from its connection to everyday life. As Aronowitz points out:

To fully understand the ideological impact and manipulative functions of current media presentations, it is necessary to appreciate the multi-layered character of contemporary mass culture. In addition to the *overt* ideological content of films and television—transmitting new role models, values life styles to be more or less consciously emulated by a mass audience—there is also a series of *covert* messages contained within them which appeal to the audience largely on the unconscious level. . . . Typically, [these] define the character of the spectator's

experience of the spectacle in terms of the . . . gratification of his or her unconscious desires By creating a system of pseudo-gratifications, mass culture functions as a sort of social regulator, attempting to absorb tensions arising out of everyday life and to deflect frustrations which might otherwise actualize themselves in opposition to the system into channels which serve the system.¹⁹

It is because the effects of culture are so often unconsciously absorbed, that the need for a Cultural Studies emphasising critique arises. As we pointed out earlier in this essay, the disciplines that claim selected aspects of culture as their subject restrict that subject arbitrarily—for instance, by constituting the field of literary study as a canon. Simultaneously, they have placed a wedge between professionals and the public in the service of the ruling classes as in the case of literary study where so-called, “low” culture is excluded from the research domain. Nor should we now continue to be fooled by the admission of films, popular novels, soap operas and the like into the curricula of literature departments. As long as such cultural artifacts are examined as merely the materials that make up a fixed culture, their disciplinary description will do no more than create storehouses of knowledge having almost nothing to do with lived culture, much less its transformation. Only a counter-disciplinary praxis developed by intellectuals who resist disciplinary formation is likely to produce emancipatory social practices.

The problem with suggesting that Cultural Studies be counter disciplinary is that it cannot be housed in universities as they are presently structured. Hence the need for counter-institutions. There would be various sorts of collectives, variously membered—study groups, counter-disciplinary research groups, even societies and institutes.

It is unlikely that the disciplinary structures and mechanisms of universities will disappear in the near future. However, it would be a mistake to locate Cultural Studies within them. Our alternative would be to treat disciplines as peripheral to our main concerns while nonetheless obtaining some important concessions from their administrators. This is a tactical matter which has to be negotiated situation by situation. However, we can go even further and develop models of collaborative inquiry that extend beyond the university in order to combat hegemonic public spheres and to form alliances with other oppositional public spheres. In the context of Cultural Studies it will not be appropriate simply to generate idiosyncratic interpretations of cultural artifacts. The most important aim of a counter-disciplinary praxis is radical social change.

We should not be resigned to the roles that universities assign us. The resisting intellectual can develop a collective, counter-disciplinary

praxis within the university that has a political impact outside it. The important tactical question at this moment in the history of North American universities is how to get Cultural Studies established as a form of cultural critique. Our suggestion has been the formation of institutes for cultural studies that can constitute an oppositional public sphere.

Conclusion

If Cultural Studies is to be informed by a political project that gives a central place to critique and social transformation, it will have to begin with a dual recognition. First, it is imperative to recognize that the university has a particular set of relations with the dominant society. These relations define the university as neither a locus of domination nor a locus of freedom. Instead, the university, with relative autonomy, functions largely to produce and legitimate the knowledge, skills and social relations that characterize the dominant power relations in society. Universities, like other public institutions, contain points of resistance and struggle, and it is within these spaces that the ideological and material conditions exist to produce oppositional discourses and practices. Such a recognition not only politicizes the university and its relation to the dominant society, it interrogates the political nature of Cultural Studies as both a sphere of critique and as a medium of social transformation. This leads to the second point.

If it is to be a radical social project, Cultural Studies must develop a *self-regulating discourse*; by this we mean a discourse that contains a language of critique and a concomitant language of possibility. In the first instance, it must lay bare the historically specific interests that structure the academic disciplines, the relations among them, and the manner in which the form and content of the disciplines reproduce and legitimate the dominant culture. This is a central task for Cultural Studies. For, if it is to promote an oppositional discourse and method of inquiry, it will have to embody interests that affirm rather than deny the political and normative importance of history, ethics and social interaction.

The discourse of Cultural Studies must resist the interests contained in the established academic disciplines and departments. It must interrogate the knowledge-claims and the modes of intelligibility central to the defense of the academic status quo in various departments and disciplines. Equally importantly, Cultural Studies must indict the interests embedded in the questions *not* asked within academic disciplines. That is, it must develop methods of inquiry into how the present absences and structured silences that govern teaching, scholarship,

and administration within academic departments deny the link between knowledge and power, reduce culture to an unquestioned object of mastery, and refuse to acknowledge the particular way of life that dominant academic discourse helps to produce and legitimate.

In order to retain its theoretical and political integrity, Cultural Studies must develop forms of critical knowledge as well as a critique of knowledge itself. Such a task demands resistance to the reification and fragmentation that characterizes the disciplines. Because of their constitution, disciplinary structures obstruct the overthrowing of technical and social divisions of labor of which they are part and which they help to produce. Cultural Studies needs to develop a theory of the way in which different social formations are both produced and reproduced within the asymmetrical relations of power characterizing the dominant society. Similarly, it needs to develop a language of possibility, one in which knowledge would be viewed as part of a collective learning process connected to the dynamics of struggle both within and outside the university. Cultural Studies, in this sense, must develop an oppositional discourse and a counter-disciplinary praxis to deal with struggles over different orders of representation, conflicting forms of cultural experience, and diverse visions of the future. Clearly, the interests that inform such a problematic cannot be developed within traditional departments. Currently, the structure of universities is inextricably tied to interests which suppress the critical concerns of intellectuals willing to fight for oppositional public spheres. Such interests can be dismantled in favor of more radical practices only through the collective efforts of resisting intellectuals.

NOTES

1. Our working definition of culture is taken from John Clarke, Stuart Hall, Tony Jefferson and Brian Roberts' "Subculture, Culture and Class" in *Resistance Through Rituals*, edited by Stuart Hall and Tony Jefferson (London: Hutchinson Publications, 1976): "By culture we understand the shared principles of life characteristic of particular classes, groups or social milieux. Cultures are produced as groups make sense of their social existence in the course of everyday experience. Culture is intimate, therefore, with the world of practical action. It suffices, for most of the time, for managing everyday life. Since, however, this everyday world is itself problematic, culture must perforce take complex and heterogenous forms. 'not at all free from contradictions,'" pages 10-17.
2. This remark is based on the work of several members of the Group for Research into the Institutionalization and Professionalization of Literary Study (GRIP) who have been examining the relationship between the historical development of disciplines and their departmentalization. See also Thomas S. Popkewitz, "Social Science and Social Amelioration: The Development of the American Academic Expert," in *Paradigm and Ideology in Educational Research* (Philadelphia: The Falmer Press, 1984), pp. 107-128.
3. See Burton Bledstein's *The Culture of Professionalism: The Middle Class and the Development of Higher Education in America* (New York: Norton, 1976).

4. Paul Piccone, "Symposium: Intellectuals in the 1980's," *Telos* 50 (Winter, 1981-82), p. 116.
5. Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish* (New York: Pantheon), Part Three, pp. 135ff.
6. Hubert L. Dreyfus and Paul Rabinow, *Michel Foucault: Beyond Structuralism and Hermeneutics* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982), p. 163.
7. Dreyfus and Rabinow, pp. 163-4.
8. See J. Sosnoski's "The *Magister Implicatus* as an Institutionalized Authority Figure: Rereading the History of New Criticism," *The GRIP Report*, Vol. I, (Oxford, Ohio: Research in Progress circulated by the Society for Critical Exchange).
9. See D. Shumway's "Interdisciplinarity and Authority in American Studies," *The GRIP Report*, Vol. I.
10. See *New York Times*, August 13, 1984, p. 7. One wonders at the inclusion in this canonical list of *The Communist Manifesto*: a symptom of paranoia or cautious liberalism, or both?
11. See *PN Review* 10:6, p. 4-5 -- a piece which is a quite typical expression of the new right's emergent views on the ideological relations of literature.
12. Cf. Anthony Giddens, *Central Problems in Social Theory* (Berkeley, University of California Press, 1983), pages 150-51.
13. Giddens, p. 4.
14. Gramsci, *The Prison Notebooks* (New York: International Publications, 1971), pp. 5-27.
15. Murray Bookchin, "Symposium: Intellectuals in the 1980's," *Telos* 50 (Winter, 1981-82), p. 13.
16. Gramsci, *The Prison Notebooks*, *passim*.
17. See Peter Hohendahl's *The Institution of Criticism* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1982), 44ff. and 242ff. for a discussion of this point.
18. Stanley Aronowitz, *False Promises* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1973), p. 97.
19. Aronowitz, p. 111.