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A CONCISE HISTORY OF
MEDIA AND CULTURAL
STUDIES IN THREE SCRIPTS*Advocacy, Autobiography, and the Chronicle*

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Cultural studies has offered an unequalled number of stories and theories about popular media texts and audiences. Cultural studies has also produced work in other areas, such as fashion and style or the body and sexuality. In this short history of the tradition of cultural studies, I focus on the research that has engaged especially with media and popular culture, as well as on a small number of authors whose names have come to be associated with the recent fame and popularity of this area. I sort their work (rather than they themselves) into a limited number of “scripts.” By using the logics of what I have called the advocacy, the autobiography, and the chronicler’s scripts, the theoretical development of the field can be organized and periodized. My overarching aim is to explicitly understand cultural studies as a “web” of connections between authors or even texts, which has progressed in a certain direction. I would like to avoid implicitly understanding researchers as working in splendid isolation or bounded by the disciplinary boundaries of other fields. (Even if, in the case of Janice Radway’s

[1984] *Reading the Romance*, this is actually true, as Radway explains in her introduction to the British edition of her book in 1987.) Also, although it is true that *grosso modo* cultural studies in the 1970s were mainly written in the advocacy script, whereas the 1980s saw the emergence of the autobiography and the mid-1990s the *chroniqueur*, my periodization is a means to an end. All the scripts can be found across the quarter century of cultural studies history I will discuss here.

This will be an ex-centric story of cultural studies, written from a vantage point outside of either Britain or the United States. As a non-native speaker and writer of English, it is in my own interest to break up any complacent accepted view of media and cultural studies. This is a field dominated by those who master the English language best. This is a field in which studying certain media texts will push publishers' doors wide open, which would remain closed if it were, for example, Vietnamese, Swedish, Polish, Greek, or Chilean locally produced television drama that formed the backdrop for an investigation of the meaning-producing practices of audiences. The international success of Ien Ang (whose 1985 *Dallas* study was originally written in Dutch) or of Jostein Gripsrud (1995), a Norwegian media and cultural studies scholar, depended as much on their undisputed qualities as their choice to write about *Dallas* and, in Gripsrud's case, *Dynasty*. Despite their radical politics, media and cultural studies have been institutionalized directly in relation to Hollywood culture and Anglo-American concepts, to that globally recognizable world of audience pleasure and the biggest international language of academic scholarship. If political correctness can at all be called upon in one's favor, as an outsider, I will invoke the above reasons to politely disagree on such matters as where and when exactly cultural studies "originated" (and whether *origins* is a term a Foucauldian critic even wants to use) and whether it is a field that had founding fathers (Raymond Williams or Richard Hoggart) or should be read as poststructuralist feminism's most successful enterprise in academia ever. Below, I discuss the scripts more fully and illustrate them with references to concrete studies. It is not my intention to retain any author under a certain heading. Some authors can be found under two headings, though fewer than probably should be mentioned in various places. The script is no more but also no less than a position of enunciation.

◆ *The Script as Speaking Position*

Charlotte Brunsdon is a British film and television critic and a key cultural studies scholar. She has suggested that feminist intellectuals in television studies come in three varieties (Brunsdon, 1997). There

are those feminist intellectuals who do not differentiate between themselves and "women"—there are no "others," the relationship is transparent, and "woman" is an unproblematic identity shared between the intellectual and those she talks about. Secondly, there are feminists who aim to recruit nonfeminist others: The relationship between feminists and

women is a hegemonic one. The formerly undifferentiated group of women now comes in at least two categories: feminist women (including the academics) and nonfeminist women (the ones feminist women talk about). Lastly, there are post-modernist feminists, for whom “feminism” would appear to be the more stable identity and “woman” a profoundly unstable one. Biological gender ceases to be a reliable indicator of the discursive positions that the academic herself and those she studies may occupy (Brunsdon, 1997, p. 117). When seen as a developmental logic, feminist intellectuals moved from not questioning their own authority and superior, more powerful position (which included their automatic right to speak on behalf of other women) to a questioning of that position to—lastly—exploding the category on whose behalf, presumably, they had been politically active.

Like feminist television criticism, cultural studies is both an intellectual and a politically charged domain. Cultural studies is not practiced for the sole benefit of academics. Rather, these academics, myself included, understand themselves to also take issue with social questions that involve nonacademic others. In this chapter, I follow Brunsdon’s logic to explore the success formula of media and cultural studies, as well as the direction in which the field is moving, by taking a closer look at how and on whose behalf its practitioners felt they were and are working. This is to question how cultural studies is an academic enterprise, in that it questions cultural processes of meaning production and is motivated by the need to make this questioning a socially and politically relevant practice to others inside and outside the academy. It is not that I hope to lay bare its ultimate appeal or to destroy its magic. As in the analysis of successful media texts, such as romances, magazines, or films, there is pleasure in the process of deconstructing the elements as well as the logic of the overall structure. Although I borrow the idea of a typology or

developmental logic from Brunsdon, I will recast it in terms of the “scripts” available in cultural studies to understand what cultural studies should be about and what the role and position of the researcher or intellectual should be. *Script* is a term I loosely borrow from the work of cultural historian Hayden White. It is similar to *plot*—the prescribed and mostly expected way in which the stories told by popular television or romance novels unfold. Positions for characters are a given, as are a number of elements in the overall story. All romance novels have feisty heroines who experience a struggle between head (this is an insufferable man) and heart (so why am I so attracted to him?). The heroes in romance novels should always be both manly and motherly. Likewise, a good cultural studies scholar has obligations to her head and her heart: to theory and methodology but also to the pleasures of the popular or the struggle on behalf of women’s formula fiction. The scripts reconstructed below (*advocacy*, *autobiography*, and the *chronicle*) address the narrative inscription of cultural studies’ academic audiences in cultural studies texts in relation to the researcher’s or author’s position, as well as how the relation between the author and the media public is structured.

The use of these labels allows me to write cultural studies’ history and also trace back the current interest in and enthusiasm for the term *citizenship*, one of the areas cultural studies has come to be highly interested in. Arguably, cultural studies did not have much of an interest in the worthy and public causes that are part and parcel of being a citizen. This particular lack of interest has caused some of the fiercest criticism of cultural studies, especially from political economists and mainstream media scholars, who have acted as if stung by the success of this upstart interdisciplinary newcomer in the academy (cf. Ferguson & Golding, 1997; Morley, 1998). They charged cultural studies with having no method, no sustained ideological critique, and no backbone when it comes to being seduced by the

naive pleasure audiences and academics themselves take in the products of global capitalism. To link such pleasures to democracy, as bravely suggested by John Fiske (1987) and John Hartley (1999), is to severely upset established notions of the relation between the public and the private and their relative importance. *Citizenship*, as used by Hartley (1999), Gripsrud (1999), or Miller (1998, 2001) but also by myself (Hermes, 2000), hardly had any connection to these criticisms. In light of the earlier scripts of the advocate and the autobiographer, however, to use the term *citizenship* makes absolute sense.

Citizenship or, to be more precise, *cultural citizenship* is a good term to use in the “chronicle” mode or script of cultural studies. It allows the researcher to take a certain distance and unfold the relation between larger social structures and practices and particular media texts and identity construction. The reader needs to take for granted the political engagement of the author. The agency of audience members (or members of subcultural groups) is a given, as is the importance of understanding how agency, identity, and politics are related to questions of pleasure and meaning production. Cultural studies has, from its earliest days, been post-Althusserian. This is to say that although a notion of how relations of power structure society has always been of the highest importance, cultural studies was never unreconstructedly Marxist and solely interested in class relations. There has always been a defining interest in how different social power structures (class, gender, race, and ethnicity) work together to produce located meanings and identities. Stuart Hall’s directorship of the Birmingham Centre of Contemporary Cultural Studies (CCCS) in the 1970s is a useful if not undisputed starting point to tell this story, even if not everybody agrees (McNeil, 1998; Wright, 1998). Others have started similar tales of the history of cultural studies by referencing older British work, such as Hoggart (1958) or Williams (1963). There are also Australian (Morris,

1988a, 1988b), North American (Carey, 1989), and Latin American founding texts (García Canclini, 1995; Martín-Barbero, 1993) in addition to critiques of Anglo-American cultural studies as well as Asian ones (Chen, 1998).

I turn to Hall and the CCCS in more detail below. For now, it needs to be said that throughout these different traditions, there is a sense of the importance of recognizing how power relations shape meaning and identity. Althusser taught British cultural studies in the 1970s; in addition to this, he stressed that the meaning of power relations is not given but constructed historically and ritually. Although class difference shapes the local production of meaning and culture, these can only be understood through ideology or, more generally, through language and not directly in and of themselves. Another piece of Marxist heritage—namely, Gramsci’s concept of hegemony—provided the other major building block. It states that power is all the more successfully imposed if the powers that be manage to seduce the underlings and have them participate in their own subordination. Both philosophers, though Marxists, understood that power is never total or all encompassing. They did not, however, take leave entirely of the modernist, avant-garde position inherent in classic Marxism. This is very clear in the “advocacy” script. It is defined by the speaking position of the advocate: one who speaks on behalf of others. Although the poststructuralist insights of Michel Foucault were referenced in this early cultural studies work (cf. Bennett, 1998b, pp. 62–63), they would become important a decade later, as part of the autobiography script.

Advocacy refers to cultural studies’ concern for the working classes, women, and non-White people. Using Charlotte Brunsdon’s (1997) typology, you could say that the political engagement that characterizes cultural studies in general in this particular script suggests a homology between the intellectual and his or her subjects. The

intellectual does not understand those he or she writes about to be different from himself or herself. Rather, there is a shared identity. This identity can be grounded in class, gender, or ethnicity. Thus, as a woman, the intellectual can speak on behalf of as well as about other women. As working-class scholarship boys, Raymond Williams and Stuart Hall were in a position of knowledge and therefore authority to speak about culture and the working class in Britain. South American cultural studies scholars such as Nestor García Canclini (cf. Lull, 1998) have taken up this same rhetorical position that denies “otherness” and speaks from shared experience. The *advocacy* script also informs the enunciatory politics of many Black North American scholars such as bell hooks (1992, 2000) or Jacqueline Bobo (1995).

The *autobiography* script refers to the complications that arise when the Marxist project (whether in its class, feminist, or race and ethnicity variety) is felt to be a severely limiting theoretical framework, even if the political agenda it belongs to is still seen as valid. A famous cartoon depicted this problem as the endless stacking of dichotomous identities (man-woman, middle class-working class, White-Black, straight-gay). The more one found oneself on the “wrong” side, the more one was oppressed. As the authors (Littlewood & Pickering, 1998) of a chapter on television comedy put it ironically in the title of their chapter, “Heard the one about the White, heterosexual, middle-class father-in-law?” Overviews such as Davies, Dickey, and Stratford’s (1987) *Out of Focus* absolutely seriously included every single classlike basis of oppression: race, religion, age, sexuality, handicaps, and so on. As with any kind of overstacking, the pile collapsed under its own weight. It could have done with more grounding. Categories such as class (or gender) introduced via the “advocacy” script in cultural studies are based on the idea that experience is a form of knowledge that does not need or, indeed, allow for mediation. Experience connects intellectuals and those they write about. In

Gramscian terms, experience is the founding entity of “the popular” (as opposed to the “populism” that serves the interest of the dominant classes). The autobiography script, Foucauldian rather than Marxist in orientation, suggested that things were slightly more complex. Identities are never singular and always contextual. Identities can be traced via different routes that do not necessarily include shared experience or hardship and oppression. Pleasure—especially in media texts—might be anything *but* naive. Given cultural studies’ growing investment in self-reflexivity as a form of rebellion against mainstream scholarship, the critical autobiography was a natural form and starting point for understanding the power and meaning of popular media texts.

The *autobiography* script suggests a somewhat different relation of the author to the audience she or he studies (and the academic audience that she or he writes for) than the *advocacy* script. The unquestioned symbiotic relation between author and subculture, as in the early work of Paul Willis (1977/1980) but also in Grossberg’s (1983–1984, 1986b) work on rock music, is questioned by authors such as Elspeth Probyn. There is no transparency to the system, and identity is complex and constructed locally and contextually. The author chooses to share theorized insights with her or his readers rather than offer a certified Truth to educate them. This means that there is a greater need for case study research than for the building of grand theory or the quantitative testing of hypotheses that covered attitudes or behaviors of entire populations. Grand theory was part of cultural studies via its “modern,” strongly Marxist leanings in the advocacy script, even if ethnography and semiotic deconstruction of texts and practices were always the methods of choice. The two later scripts are decidedly “post-modern” and have little sympathy for classical Marxism, even though they do go on to work from a strongly felt political obligation to fight against multiple oppressions.

In the *autobiography* script, differences may be more important than the identities shared by researcher and researched. The researcher does not recruit; she or he offers media critique as a miniature. Her or his political engagement hardly takes the form of being the people's representative or advocate. "The people" have ceased to exist. Temporary, local alliances and coalitions are what remain. The personal experience of the writer encapsulates the kind of theoretical work she (or he) likes to do. An obvious example here could come from Ien Ang's work (Ang, 1985), ranging from her early 1980s *Dallas* study to her recent work on ethnic identity, or from Elspeth Probyn's (1993, 1996) work on gendered and sexual identity.

Read against this background, the *chronicle* script can be seen to have enormous theoretical baggage that it hardly explicates. The seeming emptiness of such terms as *citizenship* is strategic in that it allows the author to refocus on agency and subjectivity, to understand what used to be called "oppression" as a productive relationship of power that involves mediated pleasures as well as boredom versus excitement and social criticism versus unthinking acceptance of the status quo. In this script, the researcher can again speak about others. This researcher may posit that there is a difference between her or him and those she or he researches without immediately showing disrespect or breaking the political bond of advocacy. The researcher may suggest that cultural studies is itself embedded in governmental structures and trains students to take up positions within the system as cultural workers rather than to be anti-state rebels (cf. Bennett, 1998b; Hartley, 2003). Another intriguing effect of the *chronicle* script is to allow for the possibility that the researcher, as an intellectual and possibly as a fan of the genre she or he studies, is not more knowledgeable than the researched. The agency and respect that do form the core of the advocacy script have come into their own here. Occasionally, intellectuality may have all the earmarks of a rearguard action.

Audiences, fans, and informants are the ones "in the know." The researcher tags on to reconstruct responsibilities, hopes, and criticisms (Baym, 2000; Shein, 2002). She or he tries to chronicle, to reconstruct underlying logics. Such logics relate to a level of debate we do not always (or even often) engage with in everyday talk. When we do, it is usually in a piecemeal fashion. These reconstructions, or the substance of the chronicle, should not be read as "what was really meant or felt" by audience members. Rather, they are a reflective meta-discourse that may help understand how local practices are never fully autonomous microcosms but part of the fabric of culture and society, as well as, usually, of the global economy. The difference between intellectuals and "the people" in the *chronicle* script has become one of professionalism rather than (shared) experience.

◆ *Advocacy and Early Cultural Studies*

In the late 1970s, Stuart Hall was involved in several coedited collections. They dealt with youth culture (Hall & Jefferson, 1976); with constructions of deviancy, delinquency, and youth in the media under right-wing government (Hall, Critcher, Jefferson, Clarke, & Roberts, 1978); and, more generally, with theorizing meaning production and everyday culture (Hall, Hobson, Lowe, & Willis, 1980). These three collections of what were originally Working Papers in Cultural Studies (written at the Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies at the University of Birmingham) together offer what would be hailed internationally as the program for a new type of interdisciplinary, politically engaged study of culture. The political engagement was Marxist (or its socialist-feminist counterpart), and Stuart Hall was its key intellectual force. The mode in which this work was written, or the script that can be discerned in it, is typically "advocatist."

In a 1986 special issue of the *Journal of Communication Inquiry* dedicated to Stuart Hall, Grossberg describes Hall's position as defined by his own social and intellectual history and situated within both Marxist and semiotic discourses (Grossberg, 1986a, p. 62). He goes on to say that

there can be no radical separation between theory, at whatever level of abstraction, and the concrete historical context which provides both its object of study and its conditions of existence. This is not merely a political position (though it is that); it is also an epistemological one. (Grossberg, 1986a, p. 62)

Although some of Stuart Hall's work rightly belongs under the headings of the autobiography and chronicle scripts, his groundbreaking work in cultural studies can be typified as Marxist, structuralist, and typically "advocativist." There is little room within this framework for agency: We all live and experience reality in practices and histories that are not of our own making. This is as true of the intellectual as of the woman or man in the street.

In early cultural studies work, there is a strong tendency to use the language of the academy: theoretical, neutral, and distancing, whereas the positions taken and the subjects chosen bespeak anger and political outrage. With the benefit of hindsight, it seems obvious that early cultural studies had to "prove" itself in an academic context. Its combination of political engagement, social theory (Marxism) within a humanities framework (semiotics), and goal (to deconstruct practices of articulation and meaning production) was clearly felt to be challenging enough. There were counterexamples that did not bother with academic tradition: Best-selling academic feminists had written cynical but also personal defamations of traditional rules and roles for women and their cultural depictions that bespoke the same set of convictions and background, as well as epistemology, but were aimed at a general public and not at an academic audience.

Germaine Greer's (1971) *Female Eunuch* is an obvious example. It would take more time for cultural studies to radicalize also in the arena of writing style. It would also take stronger theoretical backup, in the form of the work of Foucault, which would initiate a poststructuralist and more self-reflexive turn. It is important to note, however, that a number of feminist authors were way ahead of the men.

Resistance Through Rituals (Hall & Jefferson, 1976), *Policing the Crisis* (Hall et al., 1978), and *Culture, Media, Language* (Hall et al., 1980) share a sense of vibrancy, of new ground tilled. They foretell one of the most strongly debated points of contention about cultural studies work on media and communication: the issue of pleasure. *Women Take Issue* (Women's Studies Group, 1978), a counter-collection by women at the CCCS, and a later, non-CCCS-related collection, *Out of Focus* (Davies et al., 1987), fail to share this enthusiasm and bespeak a much grimmer socialist-feminist outlook on women's position. Perhaps the most telling example is Paul Willis's (1977/1980) *Learning to Labour*. In itself, this is a disturbing and confronting study of 12 young working-class boys and how their relation to school culture will predestine them to be locked into the harness of class relations in which their parents are also imprisoned. Willis's boys are a group who call themselves the "lads," to be distinguished from the "ear'oles." To be a lad is to occupy a position of considerable power and resistance against the school system. It also means that, as a lad, a boy will want to escape from the middle-class rules of school as quickly as he can. As a result, he will enter the workforce with nearly no education, to be a dispensable part of a system that hires and fires unschooled workers according to its own needs. The ear'oles, on the other hand, have a rough time at school. They take school seriously and are taken to task for this by the lads. They, however, have a much better chance of postsecondary education and a more satisfying work life.

Willis's (1977/1980) study is disturbing because of the iron, inescapable logic it describes. From a feminist point of view, it is also disturbing because Willis, without seeming to notice this, is so much taken with his lads that he, like them, appears to despise the ear'oles. The girls are a negligible factor altogether, objects of misogynist humor (if it can be called that) and attempted (or even successful) rape (Skeggs, 1992, p. 191). On the upside, Willis's enthusiasm and pleasure in his lads make him the epitome of the advocate. In terms of the script of the advocate, it is interesting to see how Willis moves effortlessly between imagining himself as "one of the boys" and his academic rendering of no less than the truth of their lives and being their spokesperson. There is a lack here of self-reflexivity that also pervades Hall's early work as well as early feminist work in cultural studies. The Marxist speaking position offers the author a magical solution for bridging the different worlds of the (oppressed) research subject and the more powerful academic. He or she may not be middle or upper class by birth but will have become so by virtue of education and acceptance into the academic world. This would be problematized by anthropologists in the early and mid-1980s as a result of ethnography's "linguistic turn." It was also famously analyzed by Angela McRobbie (1982) in one of the first pieces of self-reflexive feminist cultural studies, an article titled "Between Talk, Text and Action," in *Feminist Review*.

McRobbie's (1982) article and the fierce discussion in interpretive ethnography (provider of cultural studies' most favored research approach) signify a turn away from a structuralist Marxism to a poststructuralist cultural criticism (cf. Clifford, 1988; Clifford & Marcus, 1986; Marcus & Fischer, 1986). The studies cited were foreshadowed in turn by the work of Clifford Geertz (1973, 1983/1988). This body of work has been identified as initiating the so-called "linguistic turn" to self-reflexive academic authorship. It questions the position of the speaker. It wonders what her or his

right to speak is on behalf of others. How far is the speaker or author aware of the power difference between herself or himself and his or her research subjects, and how is it accounted for? For all its rhetoric and sometimes theoretical bombast on behalf of the oppressed, it now seems there was precious little room for the underdogs themselves in early cultural studies. After all, the kind of anthropology practiced in early cultural studies can, from the vantage point of its poststructuralist critics, be seen as yet another way of using the powerless for goals that have nothing to do with their own lives and everything with that of the researchers (academic prestige, jobs, publications, or idealistic high-flown politics). Marxism lent a theoretical and left-wing veneer to a criticism that did not require left-wing critics themselves to change all that much in their own lives, offer public space of sorts to others in their work, or be present in their own texts. Although ethnography is the method of choice, there is much description and interpretation by the observer/author, as well as fairly little interview transcript or comments by the observed.

A position of advocacy is more difficult to maintain in media criticism than in the kind of youth culture study undertaken by Willis (1977/1980). But in *Policing the Crisis*, Hall et al. (1978) manage to do so nonetheless. Their study focuses on demythologizing mugging, especially the myth of the dangerous young non-White man. Accounts of muggers themselves are eschewed on purpose. The authors claim that their aim "has been to examine 'mugging' from the perspective of the society in which it occurs" (p. 327). What does "mugging" (consistently put in quotation marks) mean? Or, how do we "trace out the terrain on which an answer to the question might be sought, and . . . identify the elements which such an explanation must include" (p. 327)? In a remarkable move, the book shows how an older myth (the dangerous Black male) is revived within a context of right-wing policy that chooses to ignore conditions of poverty or to attend

to the economic crisis. Instead, it deflects attention by “policing” rather than helping the poor. Mrs. Thatcher (then party leader of the Conservatives) liked to speak of welfare scroungers, single mothers, and Black muggers as a collective of undesirables to indicate that the inner cities needed to be controlled (or policed). It was therefore both a matter of playing the media in the move towards policy decisions and, later, actual police deployments that could then be cast as appropriate measures against young Black men running amok: Together, these produced a right-wing consensus in Britain and a new “Black proletariat.” The book traces this process both via the press (such as *The Sun* or *The Daily Telegraph*) and “letters to the editor.” It is especially in the popular press that *mugging* became synonymous with *Black crime*. The book’s project is also to reconstruct how news is constructed and profitably uses Cohen’s (1973) notion of the “moral panic.” Towards the end of the book, some quotations are given from ethnographic accounts collected by others to introduce the youth in question. These are grim, probably the more so for being offered in abstraction from a fieldwork account or of much other material. Here is one about school culture:

When you go to school, you realize the difference. You’re made to realize it. They (the white kids) pick on you. First you try to bribe them—sweets, ices, the lot. But then, one day, you can’t stand it any more. You get vicious, real vicious and you lick them. (quoted in Hall et al., 1978, p. 361)

All in all, it is an impressive and highly theoretical effort, drenched, from today’s perspective, in what now feels like old-fashioned jargon. *Proletariat* is a term hardly used any more today, nor do I any longer see my colleagues and fellow academics quote *resistance* directly from Marx and Engels. I have never greatly liked this particular type of distancing jargon, although I do concur with its political

criticism. Gender held no prominent place in this work, as the women at the then Centre protested (cf. Tomlinson, 2001; Women’s Studies Group, 1978). As a feminist, I have felt more comfortable with post-structuralist and postmodernist theory, which suggests that a more contextual theorizing can be stronger and more fruitful in capturing the moment of audiencehood, of how we construct our own identities while according meaning to the television programs we like or to the magazines or romances we love to read. This is to define the really important loci of meaning production as highly selective and fragmented and perhaps even to eschew the notion that overview is at all possible. The interesting question is whether cultural studies and media studies within cultural studies really needed the high Marxism of the late 1970s. Perhaps they did. Perhaps the feminist choice to start from the author’s own experiences or, later, from highly local accounts would not have been strong enough to be effective within the wider context that academic studies also address. This would certainly explain why far more recent Latin American media and cultural studies have tended to hang onto the Marxist terminology (cf. Lull, 1998). In a situation in which academics are also political actors, who feel they are pitted directly against the institutions of the state or government, a personalized style is obviously not a highly attractive choice, even if ultimately it is more fitting within the type of political project that cultural studies enhances—which is to attend to local practices of articulation and meaning making to understand how relations of power will produce certain subjectivities and reproduce embedded societal structures.

It is worth looking at the work of Nestor García Canclini and Jesús Martín-Barbero to get a better sense of the effectivity of the advocacy mode, as well as of how media studies developed from a cultural studies perspective elsewhere. Both authors share a strong interest in mass media and popular culture from a customized mix of approaches.

Their work offers the only recent example of a classic Gramscian-Marxist outlook, though influenced by the work of Bourdieu and international relations theory. As in the earliest cultural studies, it combines analysis of the economic and the material with a semiotic decoding of media content. Whereas early cultural studies was mostly interested in television and fictional mass media texts from a somewhat distanced perspective, saving its enthusiasm for youth cultures, García Canclini (1995) and Martín-Barbero (1993, 1997) tend to spell out the relations of resistance and subordination that define the effectivity of such texts as the highly successful Latin American soap opera (cf. Martín-Barbero, 2000, p. 40). In contrast to later media and cultural studies, which based their notion of resistance on small audience studies (Brown, 1994; Fiske, 1987), Latin American cultural studies has taken a more general perspective. Martín-Barbero (1988) wishes to deconstruct what he calls the hegemonic paradigm in communication:

The *hegemonic* paradigm is the one through which we “basically” think about the problems of communication today. This means that my critique is not one of a model from which I am detached, but rather of one inside which we critics to some extent live. This makes the task of outlining and deconstructing it so much more difficult. I believe that the first decisive step towards the construction of another way of thinking about the problem goes like this: we need to *re-cognize* that the hegemonic does not dominate us from without but rather penetrates us, and therefore it is not just against it but from within it that we are waging war. (pp. 447–448)

He then goes on to name two stages in the hegemonic construction of communication studies, which he calls “ideologistic” and “scientistic.” His goal is, recognizably, engaged criticism (cf. Hummel, 1995, p. 245) though couched in often uncomfortably strong politico-speak.

Intriguingly, the advocatist script in Latin American cultural studies appealed in the 1990s to academics who had voiced their criticism of the turn that cultural studies took from the mid-1980s onwards. This is a moment marked by the new audience studies (Corner, 1996), which consolidated a trend in media-oriented cultural studies to research small groups and devote energy to strong theorization of the material gathered, rather than engage in much methodological accounting. Those with a more sociological outlook tended to object. The earlier Marxism in cultural studies was, after all, firmly lodged in a social science perspective, which lost out against the interpretive “poetics” of the new postlinguistic turn that ethnography initiated by the work of, among others, Geertz, Clifford, and Marcus. Whereas before it had been legitimate to describe and interpret cultural phenomena and present this as objective results, after the linguistic turn, the constructedness of such accounts and the perspective from which they had been written were foregrounded. Objectivity had to make room for reflexivity and awareness of the power, authorship, and thus “authority” of cultural critics. The essence of cultural studies work relocated to writing and identifying forms of resistance rather than perceiving “the popular [as an emphasis of] the thick texture of hegemony/subalternity, [as] the interlacing of resistance and submission, and opposition and complicity,” as Martín-Barbero (1988, p. 462) put it in a translated article that appeared in the journal *Media, Culture, and Society*. Philip Schlesinger, one of its editors, also provided an introduction to an English translation of Martín-Barbero’s (1993) *Communication, Culture and Hegemony*. James Lull (1998), reluctant scholar of media and cultural studies and strong critic of its lack of rigorous methodology and over-the-top politics, offered an enthusiastic review of Mexican communication and cultural studies as a counterpoint to overly smug European and North American work. Quite rightly, he suggests that cultural studies today is a global phenomenon and that this is addressed by Latin American cultural studies.

Cultural studies is a global phenomenon these days. The reader, however, most certainly should not confuse British, North American, or Australian cultural studies with the cultural studies of Mexico and the rest of Latin America. Northern/Western cultural studies are luxuriant, often reflecting “problems” of abundance and boredom. Dominant discourses gravitate toward the navel-gazing, psychocultural stresses of repressed middle-class Western intellectuals, expressed in the most politically correct of arguments that are frequently supported with only the flimsiest empirical evidence (Lull, 1988, 1997), in self-congratulating competitions for “most exotic” status, or in endless claims and speculations about what cultural studies itself “really” is, where it originated, and who it represents (Lull, 1998, p. 404).

Clearly, then, advocacy is an effective script when combined with a strong and direct political agenda and an ambition to understand cultural studies as a sociology of mass communication. Without such a political agenda or its related constituency, the relation of the author to those she or he reports on, or whose media practices she or he interprets, becomes paternalist and emblematic of the conservative rather than the critical dimension of hegemony, part of the instruments of submission and subalternity. I happen to think that the advocacy script is inherently paternalist and too unaware of the academic’s position of power and authority. But perhaps political enthusiasm and a good cause should be counted as redeeming factors.

◆ ***Autobiography:
The Self-Reflexive
Turn in Cultural Studies***

Although much maligned as exercises in navel gazing (and not just by James Lull), the autobiographical script produced utterly fascinating studies. Whereas there had been an inclination in the advocacy script to break with the privileges of class

and masculinity as they had been part of the academic establishment, by at least taking seriously the experiences and ideas of nonprivileged groups. The autobiographical script truly radicalized the revaluing of experience and knowledges of those not in positions of power as well as academic practice. By turning the distant and impersonal academic voice couched in the social science mode of doing research into one that had a body—that needed to be dressed, entertained, and fed and that was affected by what it saw and felt—while simultaneously turning to sophisticated theory to make sense of all that seemed so “natural” and “normal,” a huge change was wrought in what could count as “science.” The authors I will turn to here would probably not claim “science” as a label for their work, aware as they are that their project is cultural criticism rather than a renewed reification of cultural studies and its distancing beyond lay critique.

Ien Ang’s (1985) *Watching Dallas* is a famous and much-quoted example. It is an account of her study of audience members’ letters about the reactions they got from others in relation to viewing *Dallas*. Ang acquired these letters by inviting audience members to write to her in a personal ad in a (young) women’s magazine. The ad states that Ang herself likes to watch *Dallas* but that she often gets strange reactions. Although *Watching Dallas* does not record Ang’s personal experience beyond the text in the advertisement and goes on to theorize the “strange” reactions (which the letter writers immediately recognized) as part of two opposed ideologies, the study set a new landmark and, in a way, made Ang more vulnerable to predictable criticism and even derision. Her *Desperately Seeking the Audience* was certainly a more formal study of audience research practices (Ang, 1991). It is also highly critical of how research method and practice are used by networks and public broadcasting corporations alike as a regulatory technique to control the audience. Although Ang foregoes the classic Marxism of earlier cultural studies and casts her conclusion in terms of radical ethnography, her voice is political rather than personal.

Throughout her work, which she continued from Australia, Ang has stuck with an inspiring mixture of personal experience, observation, media research, and poststructuralist theorizing. As she puts it in her introduction to *On Not Speaking Chinese* (Ang, 2001),

Imagining my Taiwanese audience [she has been invited to give a lecture] I felt I couldn't open my mouth in front of them without explaining why I, a person with stereotypically Chinese physical characteristics, could not speak to them in Chinese. (p. vii)

The title essay thus echoes Ang's theoretical and personal conviction that any identity, in a sense, is always mistaken (Ang, 2001, p. viii). Hybridity does not only make up Ang's personal history; it also informs her theoretical perspective, which she has also referenced to García Canclini's (1995) work. From the older advocacy perspective, Ang would seem to lose political persuasiveness here. If all identities are hybrids, there is no "natural" constituency for her work or group on whose behalf she may speak. Ang does have a political agenda, however, cast against elitist dismissal of popular entertainment and in favor of a feminist understanding of, for example, the soap opera. Rather than simply suggest that the soap opera is a crypto-feminist form that addresses an essential or unique feminine point of view, Ang suggests that viewers of soap opera may use this popular art form to come to (re)interpret their position in life and relationship to others. Politics in *Watching Dallas* are thus intimately bound up with a move towards self-reflexivity. This is both a more modest and a more ambitious form of politics than the politics of the advocacy script. It shifts discussion away from oppression, policy and economics, and a recognizable dominant class or group towards consideration of how identity is constructed. Who we (critics and other media users alike) are is understood to be

deeply and complexly implicated within the structure and practices of our societies. Power is diffuse and follows multiple logics. Its workings can only be understood contextually and as a practice in which all take part, even if relations of power are always unequal.

The radical quality of the autobiographical script is mostly theoretical. The theoretical framework favored is poststructuralist discourse analysis based on the work of Michel Foucault. In his *Discipline and Punish* (1979, English edition) and his *History of Sexuality, Part I* (1980, English edition), Foucault sketched a singularly persuasive account of how subjectivity can be accounted for both in terms of subjectivation and discipline, as well as in terms of seduction, of individuals as subjects of the discourses they speak and the practices they live. Contrary to the earlier structuralist framework, which held little room for human agency and subjectivity (all were determined by and in ideology), post-structuralism shows how we are seduced into feeling ourselves to be autonomous individuals. When we are invited to talk endlessly about ourselves, confessing to the deepest truth of our being, we are in a relationship in which power is with the listener, who determines whether truth has been spoken, and not with the confessor who speaks.

The media, then, can be understood to help us find or even speak deeper truths about ourselves. The melodramatic imagination that Ang understood to be crucial to enjoying *Dallas*, which functions as a counterpart to the tragic structure of feeling that the soap opera genre offers, is based on a sense of emotional realism. Those *Dallas* viewers who are not under the sway of the ideology of mass culture, which condemns mass-produced American television fare, hold that *Dallas* offers valuable insights into human relations and emotions from which they may learn. All the talk about themselves that the soap opera characters are engaged in consists, in a way, of exemplary confessions. A decade onwards, television

was to take emotional realism that much further with the talk show, in which guests would confess to affairs they had not even told their partners about. I remember Oprah asking a Black businessman who was having an affair with his secretary, "So does your wife know about this?" Upon which he answered in deep shock, "I guess she must now." The harder a confession is to make, the truer it becomes, Foucault stated. Television took up this challenge with a vengeance.

Yet, the power of the Foucauldian framework perhaps does not lie in applying it literally to the media. It is in the work of Probyn, who offers a discourse analysis of cultural studies itself, that the political strength of the autobiography script is clearest. Like Ang, Probyn does not suggest she talks on anyone's behalf but her own. Like Ang, she does not generalize from a small set of data (cf. Emanuel, 1992, p. 22) or write from a position of superiority versus her audience or her respondents (Emanuel, 1992, p. 28). Her aim is to produce strong or stronger theory about popular media, the pleasures they offer, and the way such pleasures are also a means of disciplining oneself in terms of, for example, dominant definitions of gender or sexuality. In both *Sexing the Self* (1993) and *Outside Belongings* (1996), Probyn herself is very much present. Identity formation and subjectivity are the topics she wishes to explore via what she terms a "sociology of the skin" (Probyn, 1996, p. 5). Writing as a feminist and as a lesbian, Probyn offers perhaps the most thoroughly theorized autobiographical moment in cultural studies. This is not just "navel gazing": The subjects broached range from Québécois television production to childhood and nostalgia to interrogation of recent Western culture criticism and philosophy. They underwrite Probyn's interest in popular media, to which she is careful never to grant all-encompassing effectivity but understands, in their specific textuality, to be part of larger processes of disciplining, for instance, or seduction. Thus, she was one of the first to use the term *postfeminism* in a

careful way in relation to then recent American television series that appeared to celebrate newfound freedoms and enlightened traditionalism for women—comedies such as *Who's the Boss?* and *Roseanne*, as well as dramas such as *thirtysomething*. Here are women who apparently have a choice; indeed, they have chosen to have families, to be caregivers rather than have careers or to have families in combination with careers. This "choiceoisie" is of course, no choice (Probyn, 1988/1997, p. 133). Television appears to offer feminism, but it gives seductive traditionalism. Probyn's work stands out in that she grounds her reading in a combination of her own viewer experience as well as in precise, well-chosen philosophical quotations. In this case, from Louis Althusser: "I want to recall Althusser's description of the backwardness, forwardness, survivals and unevenness of development which co-exist in the structure of the real historical present" (Probyn, 1988/1997, pp. 128–129). This is a more subtle use of the Marxist philosopher than had become *usance* in earlier cultural studies work.

The autobiography script has especially been used to address issues of gender and ethnicity in relation to identity construction. The script has extended into newer forms of ethnographic research as well, in which the researcher is often present as a fan or as a gendered or colored person (non-White or White). This section opened with the example of Ien Ang's (1985) work as *Dallas* fan and as a woman of Chinese descent. Other examples would be Jacqueline Bobo's (1995) *Black Women as Cultural Readers*, Paul Gilroy's (1987) *There Ain't No Black in the Union Jack*, and Kobena Mercer's *Welcome to the Jungle* (1994). Stuart Hall's (1987) essays on multiculturalism, which relate his Caribbean descent, are perhaps the best known and, in the truest sense, autobiographical. It is also tempting to describe the composite cultural studies autobiographer "as a person of a certain sexual ambition and orientation." Probyn's (1988/1997)

work is exceptional, however. Sexuality has mostly been slightly outside cultural and media studies and part of the neighboring interdisciplinary of queer studies. Texts that move between the two, as it were, include Richard Dyer's work on film, sexuality, and ethnicity (in his collections *Only Entertainment* [[1992], *The Matter of Images* [1993], *White* [1997], and *Queers in Film* [2002]); they also can be found in collections such as *Inside/Out* (Fuss, 1991), which includes, amongst other interesting articles, an analysis of the star persona of Rock Hudson, who, until he was dying from AIDS, managed to hide his homosexual orientation from the public eye.

The fan ethnography, or audience research written within the autobiographical script, has—quite rightly, although often much too harshly—been criticized. Christine Geraghty's (1998) overview article of audience research in television studies is, by any standard, exceptionally good. Although there is audience research on other media as well, television-related work also offers a good example for other media and cultural studies work. Without disrespect, Geraghty manages to show how—in my terms—the autobiographer's script can be a severely limiting one. First of all, she points out that cultural studies should be criticized for using the term *ethnography* too lightly to describe a whole array of qualitative audience research. With the exception of Marie Gillespie's (1995) *Television, Ethnicity and Social Change*, there have been no truly long-duration projects in which the researcher has spent considerable time with her or his informants. Ang (1985) used 42 letters for her *Dallas* project; others have used time-use diaries or single long interviews, as I did in research on women's magazine reading (Hermes, 1995). In fairness, most of these researchers did not themselves call their projects "ethnographic," but a grey area was instituted between general qualitative audience research and ethnography. Any study that showed itself aware of the need to be self-reflexive as author/researcher—and that took into account the differential power

positions of interviewee and author—was more or less allowed to sport this label. After all, such collections as *Writing Culture: The Poetics and Politics of Ethnography* (Clifford & Marcus, 1986) had so thoroughly deconstructed the project of ethnography and, in effect, divorced it from its long anthropological tradition as based in fieldwork that the term was up for grabs. It came to stand, at least from the mid-1980s to the mid-1990s, for a particular type of writing practice.

Geraghty (1998) is also critical of the fact that the researcher's own fandom excluded critical television viewers or powerful respondents from all but a few audience studies. Gray (1992) mentions how much more difficult it was to keep control of her interviews with middle-class women than with her working-class respondents. Others have had the same experience. Given the strong feminist accent in the work on popular television, not many men were interviewed either. As will become clear below, this is changing. From the autobiography script, in which the researcher takes on a project that is firmly based within her or his own lifestyle and that will allow easier *rapport* with her or his informants or interviewees, the balance has recently been shifting to another script, which I have called the *chronicle*. Its main advantage is that it allows for a more distanced—if no less involved—position for the researcher. Although I can offer as proof only the body of feminist work produced and referenced in part above, I am convinced that the feminist efforts of over a decade and a half in media and cultural studies research have generated a lasting interest both in qualitative audience research as a method and in a self-reflexive mode of doing it—even if they have focused more on popular fiction rather than on news or nonfiction (as did early cultural studies in *Policing the Crisis* [Hall et al., 1978] or the work of the Glasgow Media Group). Although the small fan-meets-with-other-audience-members research started as a low-cost type of research conducted by newcomers to the academy who could not

command large research budgets (Drotner, 1994, p. 342) and had to be based on the authority of personal experience to theoretically legitimate the break with the then current quantitative methods, it has become a method in good standing on its own.

◆ *The Chronicle: The Late Theorization of Early Politics*

The chronicle as a rule system or regime of writing has the obvious advantage that the author is allowed much more room to be critical of what she or he writes about. Rather than write as a fan or as one who is personally implicated in the research project, there is room for qualifying what interviewees have to say and for actually allowing the critical dialogue that anthropologists such as Clifford, Marcus, and Fischer so favored. Although power relations are taken into account, it is much less a codification of the media user or consumer as—implicitly—a victim. The victim was, after all, the natural counterpart of the advocate. Or rather, the advocate needed someone on whose behalf he or she could speak. In the autobiography script, this painful systematic positioning is undermined by suggesting that, in insofar as there are victims, the researcher also is one of them. As a fan amongst fans, moreover, the autobiographer can show a counterculture—forms of pleasure as forms of resistance against the system. John Fiske's (1987) work introduced this convention in his *Television Culture*, although his work in fact bridges all three moments. Starting from Marxist bearings, Fiske always allowed media texts, with considerable enthusiasm, to seduce him. This can be seen in his early work on television with John Hartley, in which they suggested that television is the bard of our times (Fiske & Hartley, 1978) but stuck with an overall Marxist frame of reference; in his autobiographical article on ethno-semiotics in *Cultural Studies* in 1990; and in his later work, which took a (slightly) more distanced view (Fiske, 1991).

The script of the chronicle can be found in the work of researchers whose interest is with culture, governmentality, and cultural policy (such as Tony Bennett) and in the current work on cultural citizenship that I mentioned earlier. Tony Bennett's work, like Brunsdon's, spans the entire (inter)discipline of cultural studies. Amongst his earlier work is a book on James Bond not only as a popular hero (Bennett & Woollacott, 1987), which is primarily a semiotic reading, but also as a complex phenomenon. It includes the novels, films, publicity, and critical commentaries. There is also a coedited volume, *Popular Culture: Past and Present* (Waites, Bennett, & Martin, 1982), on the history of popular culture for the British Open University. Bennett earned much of his international reputation subsequently while working in Australia on cultural policy and museology (Bennett, 1998c) and on cultural consumption. Quite extraordinarily, Bennett was one of three main researchers in an Australian government-funded research project on everyday consumption that was mainly based on quantitative data (Bennett, Emmison, & Frow, 1999), which in my definition places it almost entirely outside of cultural studies. All in all, Bennett, currently at the Open University as Stuart Hall's successor, has shown himself to be one of the most well-rounded cultural studies scholars. He is of interest here because of his style of writing, which has always been involved but distanced and never as overtly Marxist as the work of Hall. Bennett is in fact a true *chroniqueur* in cultural studies, and he was one long before most. He is also of interest because, in the course of his work on culture and policy, he addressed the issue of cultural citizenship. His primary interlocutor here, as Toby Miller (2001, p. 183) puts it, is government. Basically, governments should guarantee a set of cultural competences (i.e., cultural citizenship). Bennett's project, according to Miller, is to take cultural studies beyond "affect." Whereas the autobiography script allowed for the redefinition of politics or resistance as starting at a very low

threshold—namely, the pleasure we take in popular forms—the chronicler wishes more dispassionately for stronger evidence of both cultural competence and (the possibilities for) cultural change. Bennett's aims for cultural policy studies, not surprisingly, include broadening the concept of culture used in the sphere of policy by introducing to cultural studies a wide anthropological definition. This should lead to a recontextualization of

the somewhat narrow concerns of arts policy and administration as part of a much broader field in which a concern with culture as industry intersects with a concern with the ways in which cultural resources are deployed as parts of programmes of social management. (Bennett, 1998a, pp. 541–542)

Although Toby Miller sees Bennett's work as the first of three key sites of work on cultural citizenship, I personally favor a broader and less state-related understanding of cultural citizenship. I shall therefore bypass Renato Rosaldo and colleagues, whose work on cultural citizenship relates to Latina/Latino social movements and minority rights (Miller, 2001, p. 183; Torres et al., 1999), as well as Kymlicka and fellow liberal political philosophers who “seek rapprochement between collective minority cultures and individual majority culture” (Miller, 2001, p. 183). This is to argue (*pace* Miller) that there is the possibility of media and cultural criticism that includes political and social theory as part of the ongoing investigation and critique of processes and practices of meaning production. Because, indeed, there is more than “rat-chasing, undergraduate-investigating psychology on the one hand, and armchair-therapizing, text-reading humanism on the other” (Miller, 2001, p. 185). I happen to like John Hartley's (1999) take on cultural citizenship and television in this regard, which he renamed do-it-yourself citizenship.

In his *Uses of Television*, Hartley (1999) interrogates how, via television, we may feel connected with others across the globe.

“If television is teaching, then it is a part of and ‘witness to’ the transmodern, transnational democratization of culture” (p. 47). But later on he states,

Looking at the rest of the world through television, it is inevitable that differences can be both celebrated and erased, recognized and removed, insisted upon and ignored. So there's a curious “toggle” switching between television as a teacher of “identity” among its audiences, and as a teacher of “difference” among the same population. It seems to me that this “toggle” switch is itself historical—it was set to “identity” first, promoting what I've called “cultural citizenship” [i.e., as in citizens' rights] and identity politics (during the era of “golden-age” broadcast television) and to “difference” more recently, promoting “DIY” citizenship and semiotic self-determination. (p. 159)

One has to be a fan of Hartley's work to like his neologisms and sometimes quaint phrasing, but if you are, his work is not only a chronicle of how we have studied the processes of (everyday) culture and media and the articulation of meaning, identity, subjectivity, and power but also a commentary on how we have done that. Hartley, then, is a meta-chronicler. The only thing baffling about his work is why he has never engaged with audience studies at all. There is perhaps more of the early semiotic Marxism here than meets the eye. The point is that any media or cultural critique that wishes to present itself in public debate should be connected with both the everyday levels of media talk and its abstractions. From my perspective, small audience studies or “ethnographic intent” may keep us honest in our self-chosen profession of mediation and translation. It is the only direct way in which we may be held answerable for our views and interpretations. Apparently, in me too, there is more of the early political fighting spirit than I would normally realize.

◆ Conclusion

Cultural studies has many histories, and most of these include important work on media. These histories have developed in particular places and refer to particular, local circumstance. There is, however, also a strong sense of an ongoing process of dovetailing. The work of James Carey (1989), for instance, and his notion of a “ritual model” of communication (versus a “transmission model”) provided many media and communication scholars with a useful point of departure. Carey argued against the dominant sender-message-receiver model of communication scientists. Like Stuart Hall’s encoding-decoding model, this was as much an intellectual as a political intervention. Hall’s model, developed originally in 1973, has, like Carey’s notion, been overly used and is seldom seen for the critical observation it was. In a 1994 interview (quoted in Gray, 1999, p. 26), Hall explained that the original paper was a lecture for the Centre of Mass Communication Research at the University of Leicester, which was a thoroughly traditional communication science outfit. Hall wanted to present something they would both recognize and that could be offered as a critical comment. The model since then has had a life of its own. This is both positive—in that it pushed interest in both the production and the reception of media texts—and negative. The downside to the popularity of the model is that, as models tend to do, it has flattened understanding of how media texts have wholly separate lives among different audiences and during their production.

Dave Morley used the encoding-decoding model in a comprehensive study with Charlotte Brunson of the production, the text (or ideological meanings), and the reception of a BBC current affairs program called *Nationwide* (Brunson & Morley, 1978; Morley, 1980). If anything, this early audience study showed that the three reader positions Hall mentioned in the original paper (the dominant, the negotiated, and the oppositional reading positions) do not even come near to describing the complexity of readings invited by the televisual

text. Morley himself has perhaps been the most incisive and important critic of the model in his postscript to *The “Nationwide” Audience* (Morley, 1981/1992). Morley suggests that the model misses a number of dimensions, such as whether audiences actually comprehend the text as encoded, which makes its usage problematical to say the least. Unfortunately, media and cultural studies find themselves in the bizarre position of being understood as collectively bound to a persistently popular model. Although critical of mainstream mass communication research, the encoding-decoding model echoes mainstream mass communication’s central idea that communication and culture have to do with “getting the message across” (from a sender to a receiver). This hardly covers the wealth of insight that has been produced under the umbrella term of *cultural studies*, which is unique for its combination of qualitative empirical research and theorization of that material from engaged, politicized perspectives—whether these are in relation to media and media cultures or pertain to gender and feminism, postcolonialism, and issues of class, race, and ethnicity. Perhaps the chronicle script can give way to a new radicalization and a new set of terms if it turns out that *cultural citizenship* is not the magical term that will combine political engagement, sophisticated theory and cultural critique, and understanding, as we are now hoping it will be. Ultimately, the goal is simply to do a better job of our own global marketing and franchising. Or is that too much of an outdated postmodernist or, even worse, neo-imperialist curse in terms of our equally outdated but nonetheless deeply lodged Marxist roots?

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