

tives in order to expand its focus beyond twentieth-century American-style popular and consumer culture.

Today many departments allow cultural studies to enter their syllabi locally but prohibit general reconsideration of their curriculums. Cultural studies, however, should not be institutionalized as an autonomous, self-sufficient track that parallels those centered on literature. It will necessarily forfeit its intellectual demands and political itineraries if it becomes reduced to an individual area of specialization alongside others. For cultural studies aims not to add yet another approach to the reading of texts but to reconsider our entire notion of the role of texts in the symbolic inventory of a specific society. In fact, despite differences in context and methodological tools, cultural studies reinvents the role that Max Horkheimer, inaugurated as the director of the Institute of Social Research in 1931, attributed to twentieth-century social philosophy: to serve as a self-reflexive theoretical activity that guides interdisciplinary research to synthetic results.

Cultural studies offers foreign language and literature departments incentives to rethink what it means to teach a foreign culture in an age of global electronic communication, massive migrancy, and transcultural hybridization. Cultural studies reminds us that the study of foreign cultures, literatures, and languages will remain a viable force only if it learns to exploit its institutional dislocation and in-betweenness as a source of insight, inspiration, and self-reflection. By tracing the ways in which modern German culture departs from the notion of culture as a unified and homogeneous reservoir of meaning, cultural studies disengages scholars and students from the ever-more-preposterous search for authentic things German. Cultural studies strives not so much to analyze or teach artifacts made in the foreign culture or solely to facilitate intercultural understanding or to overcome stereotypes and misperceptions of the other; rather, it undertakes to investigate the diverse, composite character of cultural appropriations and contestations in the target culture. Cultural studies thus calls for a different approach to the teaching of literary materials, which in the past were seen as keys to the formulation and pedagogical conveyance of fixed, homogeneous national identities. Under cultural conditions in which the experience of in-betweenness has become the norm, the primary point of teaching a foreign language can no longer be to prod students into passing as natives, as linguistic simulacra, or to equip them with the tools for appreciating the linguistic intricacies of literary texts. Instead, cultural studies views a course like German 101 as a site at which students learn how to partake of the multitude of cultural expressions and practices characteristic of the hybrid German culture today. Indeed, German 101, taught at an

American college, is part of the diverse activities that constitute contemporary German culture. If it seems that cultural studies has not yet proved how its principles can be integrated productively into the foreign language classroom, the reason may in part be the reluctance to uncouple language studies from the literary, from visions of linguistic proficiency that are based on comprehension of the stylistic registers of literary masterworks. In shifting our attention away from the hermeneutic exegesis of symbolic materials and toward the cultural practices surrounding them, cultural studies calls on students to forsake the more easily navigated world of the book and return to the material archives of everyday life—to become keen observers and well-traveled collectors. At the same time, cultural studies should avoid the kind of academic populism that exalts the archive and the everyday into the sole repositories of wisdom while disparaging the necessary work of theory and demonizing literary culture as a reactionary bastion of the elite.

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When I read and reviewed the collection *Cultural Studies* a few years ago (ed. Lawrence Grossberg, Cary Nelson, and Paula A. Treichler [New York: Routledge, 1992]), I was at once delighted by the intelligence and energy of the contributors and puzzled by their theoretical style. Usually the builders of a new field are intellectual puritans who draw safe disciplinary boundaries and establish rigorous methods. Since skepticism and the relaxation of standards are the favorite games of latecomers, I thought that the antielitist and antidisciplinary anarchism professed by cultural studies might provide a memorable exception to the rule. Turning from the research potential of cultural studies to its pedagogical promise, however, I noticed that the field does have boundaries, which coincide with those of the former British Empire and the present English-speaking world. I also realized that the practitioners of cultural studies do behave like latecomers, being irresistibly drawn to the lands that once attracted Puritan exiles, colonial conquerors, and Victorian missionaries. Within this chronological and linguistic framework, the teaching and research strategies adopted by cultural studies make full pedagogical sense. In America, England, and the Commonwealth, it is possible to teach the idiosyncratic aspects of popular and subaltern cultures, since the instructors as well as the students are familiar with the fundamentals of mainstream and higher culture by virtue of their upbringings.

But do these monolingual strategies accommodate the pedagogical needs of departments of foreign languages?

I am not so sure. Typically, American undergraduates who intend to major in, say, Arabic, Chinese, French, German, or Japanese have little fluency in these languages and the corresponding cultures. In the two or three years devoted to their major, they must learn the language as well as part of the cultural legacy that goes with it. While cultural studies exalts humble objects that are often well known to students and teachers alike, foreign language training consists in assimilating a formidable amount of new information. Moreover, there is a compelling cultural reason for students acquiring a foreign language to study canonical literary works. In highly literate cultures such as the Arabic, Chinese, French, German, and Japanese, the native educational systems invariably include well-structured literary components, so nonnative students must become at least partly acquainted with the literary heritage of these cultures to achieve cultural fluency. The study of literary traditions thus forms an important part of learning the grammar of foreign cultures. Foreign language programs that aim to bring students to an adequate level of linguistic and cultural competence cannot afford to emulate the cultural studies bias against high culture.

Nevertheless, the impulse to open up literary studies to issues and texts beyond the literary canon can and should resonate with teachers of foreign languages and cultures. In French (my field), courses devoted to the major crises of twentieth-century French politics—the Dreyfus affair, the Vichy regime, and the Algerian war—have been remarkably successful. Similarly, teaching franco-phone literature, a popular area in recent years, involves a rich political and cultural component. An additional possibility consists in taking foreign cultural debates seriously and incorporating them into teaching. Familiarity with the theoretical discussions taking place outside the English-speaking world is an excellent way for American undergraduates to understand important features of other cultures as well as their own.

In the last decade, I have taught several versions of a course on contemporary French intellectual life. The course begins with the legacy of the poststructuralist generation, using Louis Althusser's memoirs and the late work of Michel Foucault and Louis Dumont. I then present some of the younger thinkers who both challenge and continue the previous generation's work on the links between individual and society: Vincent Descombes, Luc Ferry, Marcel Gauchet, and Alain Renaut. Further topics of discussion include individual rights and the democratic state, the unification of Europe, immigration, racism, and integration, illustrated by the recent work of Jacques Derrida, Alain Finkielkraut, Blandine Kriegel, Jean-François Lyotard, Pierre Manent, Jacques Rancière,

Dominique Schnapper, and Tzvetan Todorov. Readings from Gauchet and Gladys Swain introduce students to debates on mental health as part of the democratic ideal. Pierre Bourdieu and his disciple Luc Boltansky represent opposite sides in an ongoing conversation about the role of moral norms in shaping social behavior. A section on recent feminism and gender studies includes works by Geneviève Fraisse, Natalie Heinrich, and Mona Ozouf, as well as parts of the collective enterprise *A History of Women*. The course examines reflections on popular culture by Gilles Lipovetsky and ends with debates in aesthetics and literary criticism, including the critique of the Romantic philosophy and of the influence of this philosophy on contemporary avant-gardes (Jean-Marie Schaeffer and Rainer Rochlitz), the renewed interest in the notion of literary author, and the rise of genetic criticism.

In my experience, courses developed along these lines help students grasp the contentiousness of French intellectual life, its sensitivity to rapid changes in atmosphere, and the premium put on innovation. At the same time, majors become aware of the strong continuities that structure the world of French ideas at a deeper level. Since most of the topics discussed nowadays in France reverberate throughout contemporary American debates as well, students have an excellent opportunity to compare the approaches and solutions offered in these two cultures.

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The opposition between the literary and cultural studies merely rehearses the traditional antinomy between internal reading and external analysis. Since the emergence of cultural studies as an academic field is both evident and inevitable, the confrontational stage in this debate is useless: the real issue is how cultural studies is challenging and transforming literary studies. Far from being hostile to the literary, cultural studies can help invigorate literature and make it more relevant to a declining university audience by associating literature with cultural production and with an expanded context.

Cultural studies is not without flaws. Broadening study to include media other than the written text invites the objection that "anything goes," since no well-defined subject matter or field is proposed. Moreover, there is said to be a lack of theory in cultural studies, a vagueness that is a sign of dilettantism or amateurism, though this complaint may stem from the fetishism of theory in literary studies. I concede that cultural studies suffers from certain "sins of youth": a fixation on identity politics, overemphasis on Western and mass culture, presentism—faults mitigated by the rigor and professionalism of many prac-