Part I

Cultural Studies and the Cultural Industry

Chapter 1

Cultural Studies from the Viewpoint of Cultural Policy

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As might be expected of any newish field, a growing array of questions has begun to be asked of cultural studies as it moves into a phase of consolidation and some respectability. I think there are three global positions from whence this questioning comes. In placing these on a left-to-right continuum, I am mindful that amongst other things at stake in the current climate is the viability of just such a political set. We might well remember Jean-Luc Godard and Anne-Marie Mieville's caveat in *Numéro Deux*: 'this is not a film of the left or right, but a film of before and behind'.

Feeding from the humanities is a position to the left of an increasingly academicised cultural studies that seeks to question its orthodoxies in the name of a more authentic critical and political practice, or in the name of a more thoroughgoing deconstruction or postmodernism. This position can invoke the powerful trope of recalling cultural studies to its origins as a brave intervention in established literary and social science orthodoxies.

Meaghan Morris 'Banality in Cultural Studies',[1] for example, attacks the installation of a profoundly banal set of protocols in cultural studies centring on the wilful calling-into-being of progressiveness in texts, resistance in audiences, and a cheerful populism in criticism that too often collapses into little more than a simulacrum of fandom. The critical stances of the traditional humanities disciplines have not been so clearly dispelled as might have been once imagined, she suggests.

There is a position on the right emerging from the social sciences that identifies the recent sea changes in Eastern Europe and the USSR, the longer-term global shifts toward internationalisation and the collapse of movement politics of various kinds as calling into question the continuing relevance of the neo-Marxist 'motor' of cultural studies. From this perspective, the reflex anti-capitalism, anti-consumerism and romanticisation of sub-cultural resistance embodied in the classical texts of cultural studies are no longer adequate responses to the big questions confronting the articulation of politics and culture in modern Western societies.

With these political re-assessments has come a concomitant revaluation of empirical detail, aligned with a piecemeal approach to the articulation of ideology and culture. There is a 'beyond ideology' flavour about much of this work. John Kelly's discussion[2] of Stuart Hall's key text on left renewal in Britain, *The Hard Road to Renewal: Thatcherism and the Crisis of the Left* is a frontal attack on a politics of grand theory that lacks credible empirics. Kelly poses with rhetorical naivete the ultimate empirical question: '*How* does Hall know any of these things [about the roots of the success of Thatcher]?' (emphasis added).

The swelling ranks of apostates from the charmed circle of neo-Marxist orthodoxies,

especially in Britain (in the United States cultural studies is still on a growth surge, and substantial questioning of the assumptions of the field from within will not come very soon or very readily), suggests that something more than a faddish search for The Next Thing is afoot.[3]

There is also a 'centrist' policy orientation. This approach seeks to position the perspectives of cultural studies within fields of public policy where academic critical protocols *don't have priority.* Like the 'left-humanities' position, it is aware of the limits of academic discourse. While seeking to respond to the same global concerns as the 'right-social science' position, it is not as concerned to discredit the foundational posture of cultural studies, if that posture is distilled down to the central Enlightenment values of Liberty, Equality and Solidarity.[4] Indeed, it seeks to revivify these core values as the central motor of reformism that can be appealed to in the public sphere of contemporary Western societies. This is the position that I wish to advance as a way forward for cultural studies.

What relations should exist between cultural studies and cultural policy? I employ the term cultural studies (or cultural criticism) as a convenient shorthand for work driven by the major strands of neo-Marxist, structuralist, poststructuralist and postmodernist thought, which treat film, the arts, media and communications, as well as lived, everyday culture. Cultural policy embraces that broad field of public processes involved in formulating, implementing, and contesting governmental intervention in, and support of, cultural activity.

The commonsense reaction to my question, one likely to be offered by the majority of those outside the academy who might be inclined to consider it, would be that the former serves as a kind of 'handmaiden', developing rationales for those at the coalface of public policy. Theory, analysis and commentary should undergird practice; practice implements theory. On closer inspection, however, the relations are far less harmonious than this model suggests. Indeed, in many ways, contemporary practices of theory and policy flatly contradict received wisdom.

Cultural studies, from the viewpoint of cultural policy, might be like the curate's egg – good in part, but even the good parts mightn't be that good! Liz Jacka wrote recently of the 'ever widening gap between cultural critique and cultural policy.'[5] Taking my cue from this, I want to canvass some recent issues in Australian cultural and communications policy where practical opportunities for cultural analysis have been foregone, or worse.

Australian Content on Television

An exhaustive inquiry into Australian Content on Commercial Television, conducted by the Australian Broadcasting Tribunal, concluded its main considerations in December 1989 with the introduction of a new Television Program Standard. The inquiry ran, with a break of three years in the mid-1980s, for about five years.[6]

One of the then members of the Tribunal, Julie James Bailey, commented that there was virtually no input during the several years of the inquiry from academic cultural critics and analysts.[7] However, there was one major contribution, from cultural critic John Docker, and it employed an array of contemporary theory to attack the legitimacy of regulation for Australian content on television.[8]

Such regulation, in Docker's view, actually means the imposition of (British) high cultural values onto popular cultural forms whose appeal is indifferent to national variations and registrations. What viewers actively embrace in television culture, according to Docker, is the carnivalesque overturning of statist official culture and the celebration of working class values and interests. These values and interests are transnational and are inherently subversive of state interventions to preserve national registrations of popular cultural forms.

It is not surprising that Docker's arguments had no effect on the outcomes of the Inquiry. But that should not in itself be cause for good feeling, as Docker's was the only significant contribution to the Inquiry that presented any of the theoretical issues that have concerned theorists, critics and historians for decades. Docker's view of popular television and its audiences may be one idiosyncratic extrapolation of current strands of cultural theory, but it is, in Turner's words, 'directly licensed' by them.[9] To applaud Docker's irrelevance could be tantamount to applauding, from the viewpoint of policy

making process, the irrelevance of critical and theoretical input in general.

Advertising and National Culture

This Tribunal inquiry addressed itself to Australian content provisions covering all television programming, *including advertising*. The regulations for television advertising are different from those for other program material. They are directed at prohibiting more than 20 per cent of any advertising being produced overseas, unless Australian crews travel overseas to obtain the footage. They constitute a very high level of protection for local content, and, because they have been in place for thirty years, they have been extremely influential in underwriting the television advertising industry in Australia.

The inquiry into Foreign Content in Advertising has operated virtually as a sidelight to the main act. It is not hard to see why. Advertising is truly the unworthy discourse, as far as both criticism and policy are concerned. If there has been an outstanding consensus amongst critical methods of various persuasions, it is that advertising panders to patriarchal and consumerist mentalities. In the wider scheme of things, this consensus sits comfortably with moves to deregulate a blatantly protected industry. Regulation against foreign advertising content has been the subject of concerted attack from industry – primarily transnational advertisers – as well as high-level economic rationalist sources of advice to government. A recent Industries Assistance Commission (now Industry Commission) report attacked the 'virtual embargo' on foreign-produced ads: 'the sector enjoys an extremely privileged position relative to nearly all other economic activity in Australia'.[10]

The Foreign Content in Advertising segment of the inquiry, therefore, called up the need for a wide-ranging account of the role advertising has played in the formation of national cultural identity, as this has been put forward as the prime rationale for continued regulation.

The argument for making a positive connection between advertising and national culture has to be mounted in two basic areas. From the viewpoint of policy, the weaker argument is the appeal to the effects of deregulation in the area of advertising on the drama production industry. It is clear that drama production could not have developed its scope and depth without the industrial infrastructure of the Australian advertising industry. Evidence for this link is widely accepted and pieces of it are often cited in film and television histories.[11] For this reason, if for no other, deregulating television advertising would have major cultural consequences. The central argument, however, has to grasp the nettle – the positive contribution advertising itself may make to national culture. To this task, cultural studies, in its present forms, is spectacularly unsuited.

Two main patterns of criticism have remained foundational to the cultural critique of advertising. The first is diachronic, focusing on the history of advertising as a main agent of American cultural imperialism. The MacBride Report for UNESCO established the parameters of this pattern, and Jeremy Tunstall's *The Media are American* and Mattelart and Dorfman's *How to Read Donald Duck* continued it, and the general critical perspective on advertising has never seriously diverted from it. The other pattern is synchronic – informed by the early semiotic guerrilla tactics of Roland Barthes' *Mythologies*, it focuses on the cultural reproduction of dominant ideological values embedded through advertising in bourgeois culture. Its classic statement is Judith Williamson's *Decoding Advertisements*. There have been developments, in particular an increasingly strong emphasis on feminist inflections of semiotic guerrilla warfare. Generally speaking, however, the cultural studies approach to advertising, both in critical writing and in curricula, has not advanced significantly beyond the 1950s and 1960s work of Barthes, MacBride and Mattelart and Dorfman.

Under the umbrella of the Tribunal's content regulation, Australian television advertising has developed a strong grammar of national imaging that parallels film and television fiction, but represents a considerably greater permeation, by volume and by mode and degree of penetration, of the mass market. Advertising occupies an average of some three and a half hours a day on each commercial metropolitan television station compared to recent Australian drama content levels of around two hours a week. By dint of repetition, saturation coverage across the most popular networks, and sophisticated textual strategies

that increasingly link programs with their commerical 'environment', advertising must be seen as having considerable cultural valence.

Such indicators of cultural permeation, though crude and problematic from a critical perspective, are important in policy formulation. The real issue is to what extent can a positive character be imputed to them? This is not a question simply of inverting cultural studies' negativity, putting the Mister Sheen gloss on what the critic has regarded as a tawdry business. It is a matter of evaluating the contribution of television advertising in terms other than marking ideological ticks and crosses. It is to describe the impress and influence of advertising in terms that accept that its ideologically regressive elements – its sexism, its chauvinism, its rowdy populism – are bracketed within a more neutral, descriptive cultural and audiovisual history.

Such a history would focus on the central role advertising has played in the development of a popular audiovisual 'grammar' of national identity during the 1970s and 1980s. The so-called 'new' nationalism of this period was most visibly expressed in advertising campaigns, despite the large claims made for the contribution of film and television drama. These campaigns were at key moments explicit attempts at social engineering – for instance, the Life. Be In It campaign and the Advance Australia campaign of the late 1970s and early 1980s. The published aims of Advance Australia make this clear:

> To heighten community and public awareness and pride in Australian skills, achievements and potential. To highlight the role of individual enterprise in the economy. To encourage improvements in quality, design, marketing and other characteristics of Australian identity.[12]

This advertising campaign, and others that came in the wake of its high profile (and state-funded cash flow) sought to redress what attitudinal research had identified as a widespread lack of 'pride in country' and support for Australian manufacturing.[13] This kind of public service advertising has had its counterparts in purely commercial campaigns, which have increasingly over the last fifteen years invented a populist audiovisual grammar of nationalism. Prestige national advertising campaigns now routinely incorporate this established repertoire of Australianist tropes. The fact that this repertoire is used for evidently contradictory purposes, from promoting health to flogging beer and tobacco, and utilises everything from unacceptably sexist to innovative, even progressive, imaging, simply registers the embeddedness and modularity of advertising's nationalism.

What critical appraisal there is of this enormous portfolio of material, and there is very little that is substantial, is unhelpful in articulating a position sensitive to the policy issues. Stephen Alomes' less-then-trenchant put-down of the course of Australian nationalism 'from jingoism to jingleism' in *A Nation at Last?*, Tim Rowse's critique of television populism in the 'humanity' ads, and others engage in critical exercises of the traditional kind.[14]

The kind of 'sophisticated theory of consumption' called for by Kathy Myers in Britain[15] and the magisterial descriptivist account of 'advertising as social communication' given by William Leiss, Stephen Kline and Sut Jhally in North America[16] should be applied to the question of Australian national identity in advertising if we are to advance beyond reflex ideological critique and begin to address urgent and practical policy issues embodied in such inquiries as the Tribunal's.

Feminist Cultural Theory and Bureaucratic Reformism

Of course, all need not be sweetness and light for the reconstructed cultural critic in relation to advertising. Turning to questions of sexism, it is notable that Australia lags behind such countries as Canada and some Scandinavian nations in implementing strategies to modify sexist representations in the mass media. Over the last few years, however, there have been significant initiatives in Australia. The Office of the Status of Women has acted as the co-ordinating secretariat for a body called the National Working Party on the Portrayal of Women in the Media, a body consisting of representatives of the advertising industry, community groups and government departments.

To my knowledge, little or nothing arising from that contemporary feminist scholarship utilising a sophisticated repertoire of theories of representation has been brought to bear on

questions of bureaucratic reformism. Indeed, the most willing and effective advocates of institutional change to public representation of women use 'outdated', reflectionist and empiricist research to derive evidence for change, and a liberal humanist feminism to ground their campaigns.

It is not hard to see why advanced feminist theories of representation have weighed so lightly, despite the considerable body of literature that has been developed around exactly the sorts of questions that animate reformist policy initiatives. As Leiss, Kline and Jhally argue, 'representation' critiques of advertising have been subjective, non-quantitative, and have reduced the specificity of advertising to a generalised social critique.

From the viewpoint of policy, they are subjective because they depend to an unacceptable degree on methods that are difficult to replicate without a high degree of interpretative training. In the hands of a Barthes or a Williamson, semiotic method is powerful and convincing, but there has been a lot of obfuscated and redundant 'normal science' in the area. Representation critiques depend on extrapolated pertinence to an equally unacceptable degree – the findings are not underwritten by content analysis based on accepted sampling techniques. And they are guilty of simply using advertising, because it is arguably the most visible and most insistent form of commercialism, as a springboard into a generalised social critique that is unhelpful within the protocols of piecemeal reformism.

For all these reasons, representation accounts have been of little value in policy calculation, even for those predisposed to accept the assumptions from which they stem.

Media Ownership and Cultural Power

Cultural studies has increasingly moved away from the orthodox political economy model which centres great concern on questions of ownership and control of the mass media. The cultural power that is interesting now resides with audiences and, to a lesser extent, producers of media content itself. Set over against these interests are what appear to cultural theorists as rather hackneyed and predictable arguments for greater diversity and less concentration of media ownership. The calls of a David Bowman, a Paul Chadwick, or an Eric Beecher appear hackneyed and predictable because they are voiced within very narrow terms of cultural debate, and partake in what Walter Benjamin memorably called 'left-wing melancholy'. This miserabilism, this prophetic nay-saying, cultural studies is now resolutely setting itself against.

However, political and cultural power exercised through media control remains one of the key blind spots of public policy in Australia. There is considerable evidence that the issue cuts through established party and factional allegiances and will begin to create intolerable anomalies for public policy. The traditional regulatory rationale for distinguishing between the electronic media and the press will begin to break down through convergence, narrowcasting and internationalisation.

I take the view that this issue will certainly not go away in a postmodernist flush of audience sovereignty, and indeed will increase in centrality as media converge and narrow their focus ever more powerfully toward precise demographic and psychographic fine-tuning. Not only that, but the current theoretical fashion for championing the active audience finds an ironic echo in the rhetoric of consumer sovereignty that is offered by the media owners and the deregulators.

Unambiguous economic and political power will increasingly be translatable into unambiguous cultural power. Those who are best positioned to benefit from enhanced technologies of audience targeting, from the convergence of media of carriage, and from pro-competitive public policy parameters, are precisely those who now exercise enormous power through control of the traditional media. Alliances with social democratic advocates of media reform are set to become a crucial defining mark of the relevance of cultural studies in the near future.

Now, Just Wait a Minute!

Of course, the 'handmaiden' model is easy pickings for those inside the academy. Most people trained in the politics of cultural studies would view their primary role as critics of the dominant political, economic and social order. When

cultural theorists do turn their hand to questions of policy, our command metaphors of resistance, refusal and oppositionalism predispose us to view the policy making process as inevitably compromised, ad hoc, and always incomplete and inadequate, peopled with those inexpert and ungrounded in theory and history or those wielding gross forms of political power for short term ends. These people and processes are then called to the bar of an abstrusely formulated cultural idealism. This critical idealism would retort that mine is the mealy-mouthed voice of liberal bourgeois compromise.

A more reflective critique of the position I am advancing would raise the issue of the long term, leavening effect of critical idealism. From where does tomorrow's public debate and potential consensus issue? From today's utopian, abstruse, left-of-field thinking, that, at the time of its formulation, might appear counterindicated by the realities of the public world. The clearest example of this is the 'sourcing' of femocrat reformism by feminist movement politics. Similar sourcing relationships hold between the environmental movement and green politics, or between ethnic advocacy and official discourses of multiculturalism. A more pragmatic variant of the same objection is that, if cultural studies doesn't hold to the humanities' traditional critical vocation, who will, particularly in the wake of the breakdown of more broadly-based social movements?

These objections seem reasonable, so I want to respond to them carefully.

First, the model of the lone critic prophesying is one I do not wish to discount at all, indeed such a role is the *sine qua non* of critical practice. However, it is rather disingenuous for the academy to don this mantle, when a great deal of the critical work performed within the academy could not plausibly claim such prophetic status. The most effective public intellectuals on issues of culture in the Australian polity are not vanguard theorists, but those who work within the terms of a given (and, one might readily concede, narrow) set of public interest, liberal democratic and social democratic norms. Vanguard theory, on the evidence we have to date, is less than likely to translate into prophetic criticism.

The second response proceeds from the first. To get to the nub of the problem, what is cultural studies' understanding of its political vocation? What is its vision of a better, more just, equitable, participatory, cultural order? What measures are cultural theorists and analysts taking to have this vision articulated widely, including in the public sphere? What alliances are we forming with cultural activists and policy agents and players, and to what extent are we informing ourselves thoroughly about the historical, existing and emergent policy agenda, and identifying where we might fit?

In an interesting interchange between John Fiske and an unnamed interlocutor, published in Fiske's *Reading the Popular*, the politics of Fiske's influential model of resistive populism are brought to the fore. The resistive strategies imputed to consumers of popular culture are ones which, by definition, are never mobilised into organisations that might seek to influence change in any institutional arrangement or professional practice by which cultural meaning is produced and delivered. While Fiske might assert that 'internal or semiotic resistance . . . is an essential prerequisite of social change',[17] the resistance he champions actually undermines the strategies of organised reform movements because it sets itself against ideal standards of professional media practice and against empirical audience measurement. Both are essential if reformism is to gain some purchase in public policy processes.

The missing link is a social democratic view of citizenship and the trainings necessary to activate and motivate it. A renewed concept of citizenship should be becoming increasingly central to cultural studies as it moves into the 1990s. Like many developments in one disciplinary area, this development might easily look like the wheel is being re-invented. Political science, government, sociology, journalism, organisation studies, to say nothing of traditional professional trainings such as law: each of these have particular mobilisations of citizenship embodied in their curriculum profiles. Despite this, the emerging evidence for an attention to citizenship in cultural studies signifies an important advance in emphasis and direction. It demonstrates that it is coming to terms with its neo-Marxist heritage as it realises that other political postures can be as radically reformist as neo-Marxism without being automatically marginalised in the public arena through the latter's dependence on a totalistic and confrontational rhetoric. For this reason, the perspectives of

Australian social democratic thinkers like Hugh Stretton in social theory, Donald Horne, Peter Wilenski, and H. C. 'Nugget' Coombs in cultural and communications areas, or Francis Castles in economics, should assume as great an importance for rethinking the vocation of cultural studies than the international fathers (and mothers) of the discipline.

Replacing shop-worn revolutionary rhetoric with the new command metaphor of citizenship commits cultural studies to a reformist strategy within the terms of a social democratic politics, and thus can connect it more organically to the well-springs of engagement with policy. Even though, as Ham and Hill[18] show, the policy process in modern capitalist states has arisen within a liberal pluralist problematic, it need not be limited by liberalism's underdeveloped ideas of power and of the necessity of struggle for access to decision-making processes.

And this concept of citizenship does not by any means imply a politics of the status quo – a sort of primary school version of civics. Donald Horne uses it to advance his Lockean notion of the 'cultural rights' of the citizen in modern social democracies. Graham Murdock and Peter Golding use it to invite thinking about information poverty in our age of increasingly privatised communications. And it is also being employed to pose questions about new forms of citizenship which may embrace larger units than the individual nation state, such as the emergent European community. Similarly, Mattelart, Delcourt and Mattelart propose a linguistic-cultural transnational community – a 'latin audio-visual space' – in their 1984 report to the French Ministry of Culture.[19] Such concerns have been abroad for decades in the ongoing debate in UNESCO concerning the New World Information and Communications Order (NWICO).

Third, it is a fact that the substantial proportion of cultural studies work is performed within academic arrangements that either prioritise vocational trainings or seek to marry a liberal arts education with gestures toward such training. These institutional orientations will become more established, if not necessarily accepted, under current and any likely future government policies. Pragmatically, then, there are powerful reasons to review the current state of cultural studies.

An increasing series of calls to introduce a policy orientation into cultural studies has been evident in recent years.[20] We hear that cultural studies remains fixated on theoretical and textual orientations which provide little purchase in seeking to equip students with knowledge and skills for citizenship and employment in the 1990s. The gap between textually-based studies and policy cannot be bridged merely by further refinements in theories of representation, in new understandings of the audience or the 'progressive text', or in notions of sub-cultural resistance.

Indeed, two of the British cultural studies apostates, Geoff Hurd and Ian Connell, have argued that cultural critique, as a governing educational model, has actively *deskilled* students:

> Cultural organisations, whether state or commercial, have been regarded as targets for criticism and reconstruction in the light of certain cultural theory. While we accept there is a need for cultural appraisal and reconstruction, we would also suggest that the predominant view of cultural organisations within cultural studies has been misleading and that criticism has been placed before understanding. In short, cultural studies has been critical of enterprises whose modes of operation and social significance it does not properly comprehend.[21]

Questions of policy *do* circulate at the margins of the traditional core curricula of cultural studies. In Trevor Barr's words, moving those marginal interests toward the centre of the curriculum ultimately has to do with 'political empowerment'.[22]

And a focus on policy extended to both types of communications curricula – semiotics-based cultural studies on the one hand, and business communication, journalism, public relations, marketing and advertising on the other – offers the opportunity to bridge yawning gaps between opposing traditions. Its integration into liberal arts and media production programs would encourage a firmer grasp of the social and vocational implications of cultural struggle as embodied in governmental and industrial processes. On the other hand, its integration into industry-driven courses would draw students into a broader appreciation of the politics and ethics of their vocations and the reasonable legitimacy of state intervention.

Finally, many of our protocols are disabling because they take scant account of the local conditions in which theory must be developed.

It might seem like a truism to state that cultural studies might appropriately develop different emphases as it is practised in different parts of the world. However, because Australia is a net importer of ideas as much as goods and services, it is all the more crucial for an Australian cultural studies to be self-critical about its agenda, lest it be set, by default, elsewhere. I can't put it better than the report of the Committee to Review Australian Studies in Tertiary Education, when it said that Australianising tertiary education would prevent the intellectual cringe that slides 'between a vacuous cosmopolitanism and an apologetic provincialism.'[23]

To Australianise is not to call for a form of intellectual tariff blockade. On the contrary, it implies a much stronger and more perspicacious engagement with imported traditions than is generally the case. And it in no way implies an *a priori* defence of the status quo, rejecting out of hand possible benefits flowing from greater internationalisation of inquiry. It does suggest that an *Australian* cultural studies engaging with the policy issues that impact on the future of Australian culture would involve, as we have seen, reconceptualising general theories of advertising, considerably upgrading the focus on regulation as a positive underpinning of cultural production, and re-thinking the politics of culture in a non-British, non-North American setting.

Importing British cultural studies has meant privileging subcultural resistance to a repressive and class-defined state and state apparatus. This has much to do with the far-reaching influence of Thatcherism for over a decade as a negative marker of the agenda for the British left, leading to the generally anti-statist tone of much cultural studies, and the search for positive markers of the intrinsic subversiveness of everyday life which is set firmly against a renewed concept of citizenship. The libertarianism implicit in this approach might find a greater echo in the United States (where the state consistently has willingly abetted rather than mollified economic and cultural imperialism) than it ever should in Australia, or for that matter many other countries where state activity has struggled to regulate for the equitable flow of economic and cultural goods and services.

Consider the perennial issue of the nation as an illustration of the importance of localism in intellectual work. The ascendent current of macro-level thought in cultural studies today lays to rest the nation state and invites linking positive opportunities for internationalism with a renewed communalism. This *may* be appropriate for cultural thought in a European context in the present climate, but it is wholly inappropriate in virtually any context outside the First World, including Australia.

There are high stakes involved in the arguments for internationalism and community against the nation. All the major cultural industries in Australia (film, television, the major arts and the many community-based arts programs sponsored by the Australia Council) derive their policy justification from their being national in scope. It is too early, if indeed it will ever be politically strategic, to pit the internationalist-communalist position against the nation in Australia.

Ultimately, despite Australia's byzantine tripartite system of government, making it one of the most 'governed' countries in the world per capita, it is at the national level that debate on cultural futures has to be staged. The optimum realistic future for local, regional, state, subcultural, ethnic, Aboriginal, experimental or innovative futures in cultural production is unavoidably bound into the future of national cultural policies. In terms both of the intellectual resourcing of policy development and in the myriad ways local, state and subcultural sites of activity depend on national provision and support, the national arena will remain the engine room for cultural policy initiatives. For its part, cultural theory must take greater stock of its potential negative influence on progressive public policy outcomes and, if it is to orient itself in a more valuable way toward policy imperatives, must attend to the tasks of consolidating the legitimacy of policy rhetorics which sustain a national cultural infrastructure.

Implications and Conclusions

Is it possible to regard a policy orientation within cultural studies as simply an add-on element, one more offering in the interdisciplinary smorgasboard? I don't think so. I have sug-

gested that the modal political rhetoric undergirding cultural studies would have to be reexamined, the saliency of neo-Marxist in relation to social democratic language reassessed. This alone would indicate a more thoroughgoing review of the cultural studies enterprise than the smorgasbord model would permit.

There is nothing in what I have said that should be taken to indicate a *less* critical vocation for cultural studies. However, what would count as the critical vocation would change. A cultural studies which grasps and sustains links with policy will inquire across a greatly expanded field, but with methods far less totalistic and abstract, far more modest and specific, than those to which we are accustomed.

To treat policy adequately from a critical perspective, it is necessary to appreciate the coordinated impact of economics, administrative law, cultural history, entertainment financing, government and parliamentary procedures, and so on, on the development of public policy. This means a more subtle and context-sensitive reeducation in the roles of the state in mixed capitalist economies, away from monolithic and wooden grand theories inspired more by critical purism than by the requirements for piecemeal, on-going reformism.

Critical policy research thus implies more, rather than less, critical understanding than is found in the traditions of cultural criticism developed exclusively within humanities-based disciplines, and a significantly greater sensitivity to the extra-academic contexts within which such research must circulate for it to exercise its potential leavening function.

In summary, then, a policy orientation in cultural studies would shift the 'command metaphors' of cultural studies away from rhetorics of resistance, progressiveness, and anti-commercialism on the one hand, and populism on the other, toward those of access, equity, empowerment and the divination of opportunities to exercise appropriate cultural leadership. It would not necessarily discount critical strategies and priorities, but may indeed enhance and broaden them. It is not a call simply to add another 'perspective' to the academic sideboard, but would necessitate rethinking the component parts of the field from the ground up. It offers one major means of rapprochement between the critical and the vocational divide that structures the academic field of cultural and communication studies in Australia, as elsewhere. Finally, it would commit us to a genuine localism, against the abstract theoreticism that usually passes as the currency of international academic rates of exchange.

Notes

1 Meaghan Morris, 'Banality in Cultural Studies', in Patricia Mellencamp (ed.), *Logics of Television* (British Film Institute, London, 1990).

2 John Kelly, 'Iron Lady in a Nanny's Uniform', *Times Higher Education Supplement*, No. 840 (9 December 1988).

3 See, for example, the British journal *Screen*'s new editorial policy (in Vol. 31, No. 1), debate in that and other recent issues, and Richard Collins, *Television: Policy and Culture* (Unwin Hyman, London, 1990).

4 As Manuel Alvarado and John O. Thompson (eds), *The Media Reader* (British Film Institute, London, 1990) do. See also Fred Inglis, *Media Theory: An Introduction* (Blackwell, Oxford, 1990).

5 Elizabeth Jacka, 'Australian Cinema – An Anachronism in the '80s?', in Susan Dermody and Elizabeth Jacka (eds), *The Imaginary Industry: Australian Film in the Late '80s* (Australian Film, Television and Radio School, North Ryde, 1988), p. 118.

6 For discussion, see my 'Figuring the Australian Factor', *Culture & Policy*, Vol. 2, No. 1, 1990.

7 Julie James Bailey, 'Communicating with the Decision Makers: The Role of Research, Scholarship and Teaching in Film and Media Studies', Staff Seminar, Griffith University, 20 October, 1989.

8 John Docker, 'Popular Culture versus the State: an Argument Against Australian Content Regulation for TV', Unpublished ms., Attachment to Federation of Australian Commercial Television Stations (FACTS) submission to ABT Inquiry into Australian Content on Commercial Television, 16 August 1988 (Document D020B, ABT Inquiry File). A shorter version is published as 'Popular Culture versus the State: an Argument Against Australian Content Regulation for TV', *Media Information Australia*, No. 59, 1991. For further discussion, see Stuart Cunningham, Jennifer Craik, Tony Bennett and Ian Hunter, 'Response to Docker', *Media Information Australia*, No. 59, 1991.

9 Graeme Turner, 'It Works for Me: British Cultural Studies, Australian Cultural Studies, Australian Film', Paper delivered to The Future of Cultural Studies Conference, April 1990.

10 Industries Assistance Commission, *International Trade in Services*, Report No. 418 AGPS, 30 June 1989, p. 202.
11 Graham Shirley and Brian Adams, *Australian Cinema: The First Eighty Years* (Angus and Robertson/Currency Press, Sydney, 1983) and Albert Moran, *Images and Industry: Television Drama Production in Australia* (Currency Press, Sydney, 1985).
12 Phillip Lynch, 'Advance Australia', *Bulletin* 2 February 1982, p. 72.
13 See Gary Sturgess, 'The Emerging New Nationalism', *Bulletin* 2 February 1982.
14 Stephen Alomes, *A Nation at Last? The Changing Character of Australian Nationalism 1880–1988* (Angus and Robertson, North Ryde, 1988), p. 338, Tim Rowse and Albert Moran, '"Peculiarly Australian" – The Political Construction of Cultural Identity', in *Australian Society*, 4th edition, eds. Sol Encel and Lois Bryson (Longman Cheshire, Melbourne, 1984) and Noel King and Tim Rowse, '"Typical Aussies": Television and Populism in Australia', *Framework*, Nos. 22/23, Autumn 1983.
15 Kathy Myers, *Understains – the Sense and Seduction of Advertising* (Comedia Publishing Group, London, 1986).
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