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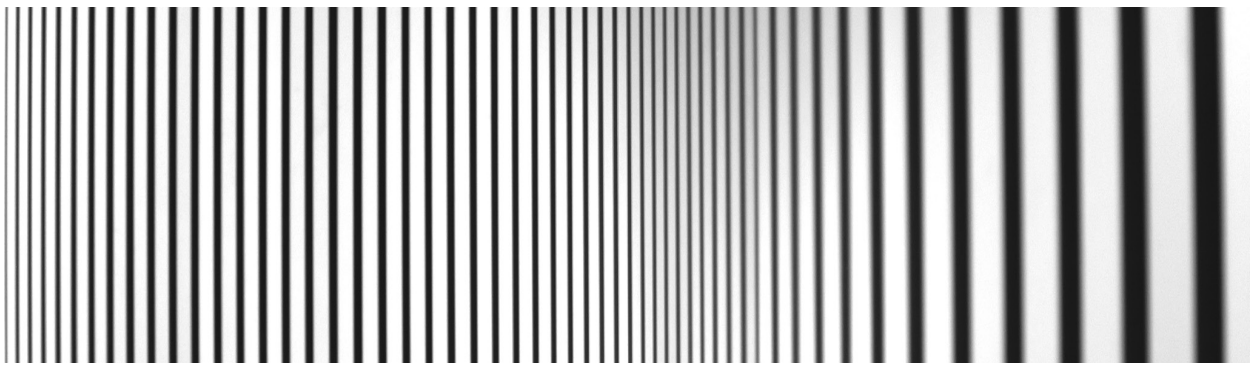
Cultural Sociology



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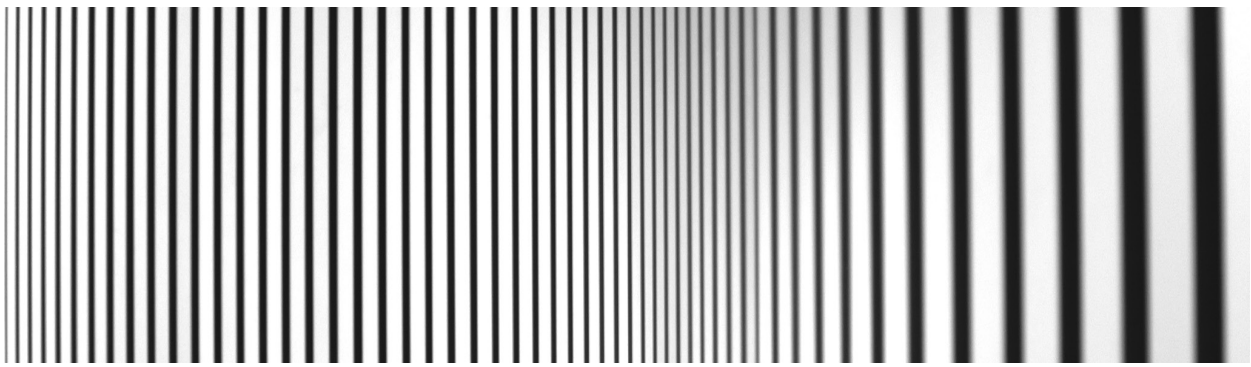

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Sociology and Cultural Studies: A Close and Fraught Relationship

David Inglis

INTRODUCTION

Cultural studies exists in one of the most ambiguous, and sometimes testy, relationships with sociology of any academic discipline. Indeed, the complicated nature of the relationship is created by the very closeness of the two fields. Sociology and cultural studies are very much alike in many ways, and in some senses identical as far as the gaze of the uninitiated is concerned, but each of them is also very keen to display their own apparently unique features at the expense of the other, and thus their relationship is understandable in part as an ongoing state of ritualized antagonism. That antagonism fundamentally flows not from their ostensible differences – which are superficially responsible for the sometimes fractious nature of their relationship – but in fact from their striking underlying similarities. Their symbiotic relationship both drives, and is hidden by, the rhetorical displays of disciplinary identity in which they have often indulged. And that symbiotic relationship comes to seem even more complex when we consider that the broad domain called 'cultural sociology' not only stands in an ambiguous relationship to cultural studies, but also that some authors describable as cultural sociologists regard cultural studies as an exemplar to be heartily avoided, while others – especially in the US – have hailed cultural studies as possessing a range of intellectual resources with which to distance cultural sociology from what they regard as dull, narrow positivistic 'sociology of culture'. The terrain to be mapped in this chapter is complicated and shifts according to the times and places under consideration, but nonetheless is strongly patterned too.

Seidman (1997: 37, 53) notes that the relationship between sociology and cultural studies 'resists a simple or global description', for given the internal complexity of each of its elements, the sociology/cultural studies 'binary is unstable and perhaps collapses into incoherence if pressed more intently'. There are also some important differences in stress and intonation between particular 'national' sociology and cultural studies 'traditions'. Much depends on how particular national educational systems have organized, and continue to regulate, disciplinary terrains. In some national educational fields, cultural studies is much more of a 'humanities' enterprise than a recognizably social scientific project, because it has grown up in, or close to, departments of language and literature and related areas, rather than in, or close to, social science faculties. In such locales – for instance, many, but not all, cultural studies units in

the US – orientations towards 'textualism' are pronounced, both in the sense of cultural studies work not engaging much with 'sociological' knowledges or methods (such as questionnaires or surveys), and in the sense of being very 'academic' in nature, and thus sometimes lacking direct connections to social movements aimed at social transformation, a situation rather less pronounced in, for example, the United Kingdom (Long, 1997; Pfister, 1996; Wolff, 1999).

The concerns and interests of cultural studies scholars, and how they understand what cultural studies 'is', vary depending on what intellectual backgrounds they themselves have and what motivating forces led them to employment in entities designated as cultural studies units, and these factors in turn are shaped by how particular universities and national higher education fields are run and policed by training and tenure systems. For example, for various historical reasons, Australian universities have rather softer barriers between disciplines than those that pertain in other national contexts, hence the greater confusion in the Australian setting in comparison to some other national contexts as to what counts as 'sociology', as 'cultural sociology', and as 'cultural studies' (Seidman, 1997). There is also the issue of *what sorts* of universities facilitate teaching and research in either (cultural) sociology or cultural studies. In the UK, one finds cultural studies units very often in the former polytechnic universities, and less so in the 'old' universities, where sociology since the 1960s gained a fairly strong foothold, and certainly a stronger one than cultural studies has ever been able to achieve.

A complete exposition of the relationships that have pertained and do pertain between sociology, cultural sociology and cultural studies would require a much longer exposition of the specificities of different national education systems, and their organizational particularities, tracing out the morphology of each higher education field and its relations to other social fields (Bourdieu, 1988). In the limited space of this chapter, I will operate more at the level of depicting some of the ways in which (cultural) sociological and cultural studies authors can represent, and have represented, each other discursively, emphasizing how each of them have created and utilized often somewhat negative images of the other, in order to gain a sense of disciplinary identity for themselves. I follow here the important work of McLennan (1998; 2002; 2006). I will generally present ideal-typical modes of such processes of identifying 'self' and 'other', drawing mostly upon the work of British and American authors The approach I adopt hopefully allows us to discern key features of the general relations that have pertained between (cultural) sociology and cultural studies, and to consider that the often fraught relationships between the two antagonists to a significant extent derives more from their actual similarities than their perceived and (self-)constructed differences.

CULTURAL STUDIES AGAINST SOCIOLOGY

Identifying the recurring features of the discursive relations that have pertained and do pertain between sociology and cultural studies of course involves identifying what each of these terms refers to, in terms of identifiable collections of ideas and activities. But any process of identification cannot simply log 'objective' and uncontested characteristics of each discipline, especially given that each term is open to variant, and often polemical, interpretations, and also given that there is much debate among those who self-identify as 'cultural studies authors' as to whether cultural studies is in fact an academic 'discipline' at all. Moreover, authors positioning themselves within each field often rhetorically construct the nature of their field through the means of saying what the field *is not*, with 'sociological' authors identifying what sociology 'is' by defining cultural studies in a certain manner, often a negative one, then claiming that sociology is not what cultural studies 'is' (McLennan, 2002: 632). Likewise, those viewing themselves as cultural studies authors can carry out the same sort of operation; for example, by stressing the multifarious substantive, theoretical and (to a lesser degree) methodological concerns of cultural studies, which contrast with sociology's allegedly much more monolithic nature.

In one of the first textbooks to attempt to map the field, Graeme Turner (1990: 1) began by stating that cultural studies 'is not a discrete or homogeneous theoretical formation, nor is it easy to define'. The implication here is that although cultural studies is difficult to define, the very heterogeneity that causes this is itself distinctive and in fact something to be welcomed, not least because it differentiates cultural studies from what are taken to be more 'conventional' disciplines such as sociology. Indeed for another textbook author, Barker (2000: 4), 'the term "cultural studies" has no referent to which we can point. Rather, cultural studies is constituted by the language-game of cultural studies. The theoretical terms developed and deployed by persons calling their work "cultural studies" is what cultural studies "is"'. On this account, anything dubbed as cultural studies by a particular intellectual producer

is indeed 'in' cultural studies. Yet only a few pages later, Barker has retreated from this complete referential relativism, in the direction of identifying a governing principle which underpins the cultural studies field: the latter is said to be a 'discursive formation … constituted by a regulated way of speaking about objects (which it brings into view) and [which] coheres around key concepts, ideas and concerns' (2000: 6).

Thus cultural studies is both anything you want it to be, but also a set of recurrent themes and practices. Multiplicity and heterogeneity are presented as 'good' things, fundamentally part of the apparent vibrancy of cultural studies. But total heterogeneity risks being categorized as being equivalent to chaos, and synoptic authors generally want to show that cultural studies is not chaotic, but is rather a broad assemblage of positive and interesting things. A sense of (deliberately relatively weak) disciplinary unity can be gained by depicting cultural studies as being heterogeneous in nature, but not totally so. In this way, a certain sense of unity – of political purpose, and of intellectual practice – is achieved, which does not overpower or undermine the alleged heterogeneity of cultural studies interests and modes of inquiry.

Contrasting cultural studies' alleged virtues of intellectual multiplicity and strong political engagement against what are taken to be sociology's failings in these regards, has been a very useful way for cultural studies authors to define the nature of the intellectual terrain they want to lay claim to. I will now identify four rhetorical methods, each of which allows a construction of a certain dimension of cultural studies which is contrasted positively with a corresponding negative feature of (cultural) sociology.

1. Alleged 'Openness' and 'Fluidity'

As McLennan (2002: 633) notes, when many contemporary cultural studies scholars depict what it is that they 'do', they tend to emphasize their subject's 'declared openness to change, its desire to ask questions rather than provide answers, its analytical freedom and pluralism, [and] its self-conscious theoretical instability'. Thus Graeme Turner's textbook from the early 1990s defines cultural studies as 'preeminently a critical field: there is no orthodoxy in this field' (1990: 4), taking this lack of orthodoxy to be what marks out cultural studies from more 'conventional' disciplines such as sociology.

A charge that could be raised against cultural studies is that it is concerned with anything and everything. But many cultural studies scholars can, and do, represent this state of affairs as a beneficial condition. For example, in an influential statement about the nature of the field, Richard Johnson (1986–7), who was the director of the Birmingham Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies (CCCS) in the mid-1980s, argues that the complexity of cultural studies as a set of research practices in fact mirrors the complexity of 'culture' itself.

For Johnson, the term 'cultural studies' is indeed imprecise, but this is a good thing, as definitional and conceptual rigidity would destroy the complexity of the substantive field to be investigated. For Paul Willis (2000: xx), another English cultural studies scholar associated with the Birmingham CCCS in the 1970s, cultural studies is 'condemned to a kind of eclecticism because of the very eclecticism and indissoluble combinations of the dissimilar in the increasingly complex "real" world around us'. While the use of the word 'condemned' suggests a negative appraisal of cultural studies' apparent unavoidable heterogeneity, Willis like many other writers in this area actually wants to celebrate such diversity, drawing on a left-liberal imaginary's positive connotations of the life-affirming properties of (cultural and other forms of) diversity in the face of the allegedly deadening monolithic characteristics of uniformity. It is but a small step from this kind of presentation of matters towards associating sociology with just such a dull uniformity, in terms of both substantive focus and modes of inquiry.

The presentation of cultural studies' fluidity and openness, as opposed to the presentation of the lack of these qualities in other academic fields, often goes hand-in-hand with an emphasis on the broadness of substantive focus that cultural studies enjoys. Thus the statement of the aims and scope of one of the field's flagship journals, the eponymously titled *Cultural Studies*, has it that scholars in the field explore 'the relation[s] between cultural practices, everyday life, material, economic, political, geographical and historical contexts'[2]. On this definition, cultural studies can look at just about everything in human affairs. The notable exception here is that the definition does not mention the 'social' dimensions of human activities, a focus presumably ceded to sociologists, the owners of the concept of the 'social', the gatekeepers of entry into the realm of analysing this sphere of human endeavours. If that is true, then the implication here is that a key difference between cultural sociology and cultural studies is that, while both aim to be sensitive to the specificities of cultural phenomena and to the meaning-making level of human activities, cultural sociology

insists on connecting these matters to the realm of the 'social' (however this may be conceived of, as social actions and forms of agency, or as social structures, patterns and institutions), while cultural studies does not. Whether 'the social' is invoked or not, and defined as a positive resource for thinking or not, would seem to be a key dividing line between cultural studies and cultural sociology for many authors on both sides of this (permeable) dividing line (Inglis and Hughson, 2003). This is complicated, of course, by the fact that how the 'social' is to be defined is a matter of controversy within sociology itself, the contemporary dispute between Bourdieusians and Actor Network Theorists being the most recent version of a debate about what the social is, and whether the term itself is useful or not, that goes back to the founding of the discipline (Inglis with Thorpe, 2012).

2. Alleged Troubling of Disciplinary Boundaries

In a typical contemporary textbook definition of cultural studies given by the British authors Baldwin et al. (2004), they state that:

> Cultural studies is a *new way* of engaging in the study of culture. Many academic subjects have long brought *their own disciplinary concerns* to the study of culture; chief among them are anthropology, history, literary studies, human geography and sociology. However, over the past two or three decades there has been *a renewed interest* in the study of culture which has *crossed disciplinary boundaries*. The resulting activity, cultural studies, has emerged as *an intriguing and exciting area of intellectual activity* which has already *shed important new light* on the character of human cultures and which promises to continue so to do. (2004: 3; emphasis added)

There are two points of interest here. First, the emphasis is on both the 'newness' of cultural studies, and the questions – and means of answering them – it brings to bear on cultural matters. Such innovations transcend 'older', possibly 'antiquated', means of conceptualization, like those to be found in sociology. Second, these authors stress the problematizing of existing disciplinary boundaries, which they take to be fundamentally constitutive of cultural studies' distinctive modes of inquiry. Other authors also stress this dimension, but opinion varies as to how best to characterize it. For Graeme Turner (1990: 11), for example, it 'would be a mistake to see cultural studies as a new discipline, or even a discrete constellation of disciplines. Cultural studies is an interdisciplinary field where certain concerns and methods have converged.'

The notion of 'interdisciplinary field', a space where some of the concerns of sociology, anthropology, cultural history, social history, philosophy and so on have been brought together, seems to be a relatively uncontroversial means of defining cultural studies. However, for Grossberg et al. (1992: 4) cultural studies is in fact simultaneously 'an interdisciplinary, trans-disciplinary, and sometimes counterdisciplinary field'. Graeme Turner seems to agree with this characterization when he adds that this field 'defines itself in part through its disruption of the boundaries between disciplines' (1990: 6). Thus the interdisciplinarity of cultural studies is said to allow not just for the conjunction of different disciplines but for the transgression of their boundaries too in the direction of 'trans-disciplinarity'. Thus for Baldwin et al. (2004: 41), cultural studies is best described as an 'interdiscursive space' made up of a number of focuses – problems, themes, theorizations and methods – drawn from the different disciplines, such that 'there are no fixed boundaries and no fortress walls; theories and themes are drawn in from disciplines and may flow back in a transformed state to influence thinking there'. Willis (2000: xx) takes the discussion a step further when he describes cultural studies as 'a field of at times intractable complexity … perhaps the first great academic experiment in an attempted formulation of a "non-disciplinary" discipline'.

Willis leaves unstated exactly what a 'non-disciplinary discipline' might look like. Adding to the ambiguity, he then goes on to speculate that in fact cultural studies may be more correctly dubbed 'post-disciplinary' rather than 'non-disciplinary' in nature, but he leaves undefined quite what features the paradoxical entity of a 'post-disciplinary discipline' might possess.

Whether cultural studies is labelled by its partisans as inter-, trans- or antidisciplinary in nature, such descriptions connote openness and inclusiveness, the postmodern embracing of all sorts of ideas and approaches, in antithesis to the dry, monolithic dogmatism of 'traditional disciplines'. Some of the more enthusiastic descriptions of cultural studies make it sound like one great ongoing party (e.g. Hays, 2000), a Rabelaisian idyll of unparalleled intellectual fluidity and conceptual suppleness, coupled with, as will be seen below, brave political engagement and sensitivity to the voices of the marginal. But the presentation of cultural studies' beneficent openness is constructed in large part against an imagined monochrome and dogmatic monolith of traditional academic

disciplines, including – perhaps especially – sociology.

For example, in his overview of what makes cultural studies 'distinctive' from other approaches to cultural matters, During (1993: 1) argues that *all* sociological investigations of culture involve '"objectively" describing its institutions as if they belonged to a large, regulated system'. Thus what sociologists would take as the broad variety of perspectives on culture possible within sociology (set out in Inglis and Hughson, 2003), is reduced through the assertion that all of these involve regarding culture in terms of its contribution, or otherwise, to 'large, regulated [social] systems', with the latter always given analytic priority over cultural phenomena. On this sort of view, every sociological approach to culture must involve placing particular cultural phenomena in wider 'social systems', imperialistically reducing 'culture' to an apparently more primal and fundamental 'social', and thus robbing culture of its allegedly true nature, i.e. as heterogeneous, ambiguous and fluid. Likewise, other cultural studies authors, such as Stratton and Ang (1996), can argue that sociology is primarily positivistic, objectivistic and politically reactionary in nature. Sociology's monolithic concerns are presented as antithetical to cultural studies' much more vibrant orientations to cultural processes, subjectivities and everyday experiences. But assertions of *our* fluidity versus *their* dogmatism 'generate their own style of sectarianism and exclusiveness' (McLennan, 1998: 7). Thus the self-descriptions of some cultural studies authors can be viewed not just as exercises in wishful thinking, but also as a form of self-aggrandizement, where the constructed other is presented as the essence of conservatism, narrowness and backward-looking dispositions.

3. Alleged Broadness of Means of Conceptualization

Given the issues above, it is not surprising that cultural studies authors' self-descriptions often highlight the apparent conceptual multiplicity of their subject. Thus one of the most influential British writers in the field in the present day, Tony Bennett (1998), concurs with other authors that cultural studies is an interdisciplinary field, which involves drawing upon a very wide range of concepts and procedures historically associated with particular disciplines. But despite the broadness of conceptual possibilities, certain key notions (however more specifically understood by different authors) occur frequently and recurrently in cultural studies authors' descriptions of the conceptual contours of their subject. Thus according to Barker (2000: 8–10), 'key' cultural studies notions include terms such as 'representation', 'materialism and non-reductionism', 'articulation', 'power', 'popular culture', 'texts', 'readers', 'subjectivity' and 'identity'. In the survey by Tony Bennett et al. (2005) of contemporary, state-of-the-art positions in cultural studies, terms like 'citizenship', 'gender', 'sign', 'everyday', 'body', 'celebrity' and 'mobility' are also said to be very important. But given the centrality of these concepts also in contemporary cultural sociology – as anthologised in textbooks like that authored by Back et al. (2012) – it becomes difficult to separate cultural sociology from cultural studies simply by the invoking of key terms like those mentioned by Tony Bennett, not least because there seems to have been a marked 'leakage' from one domain into the other. From cultural studies into cultural sociology over the last fifteen years or so, there has been a movement of terms and themes like 'celebrity', while some other keywords and concerns have travelled the other way, such as 'mobility' and 'body'. In other words, to attempt to define borders between cultural studies and cultural sociology through the invoking of terms taken to be central to the one or the other domain, is increasingly futile. Nonetheless, cultural sociology's insistence on the 'social', not as one important term but as a crucial meta-term, probably continues to point to ongoing and meaningful differences between sociology and cultural studies at a very broad and general level.

Adding to these complexities, cultural studies authors have tended to claim that there is available in cultural studies a very wide range of specific modes of theorizing the central terms that cultural studies works with or is centred around. A strong tendency towards theoretical diversity in the field is thus often asserted, with it being further claimed that no one school of thought occupies a dominant position within the field. Theoretical fracture, multiplicity and innovation are stressed over homogeneity or orthodoxy. Thus in cultural studies readers aimed at undergraduate courses (e.g. Durham and Kellner, 2005; During, 1993; Munns and Rajan, 1995) there are to be found different sets of writers hailing from a diverse range of theoretical – and in fact 'disciplinary' – schools presented as being canonical in cultural studies, with the effect that the cultural studies canon can be depicted as in some senses an 'anti-canon'.

Schools and figures here include: (1) Marxism (key figures: Marx, Lukács, Adorno, Horkheimer, Benjamin, Althusser, Gramsci, Bakhtin); (2) culturalism (key figures: Hoggart, Williams,

E. P. Thompson); (3) linguistic structuralism (key figures: Saussure, Lévi-Strauss, Barthes); (4) post-structuralist literary and philosophical ideas (key figures: Foucault, Derrida, de Certeau); (5) postmodernist philosophy (key figures: Lyotard, Baudrillard); (6) textualist and interpretivist anthropology (key figure: Geertz); (7) post-structuralist psychoanalysis (key figures: Lacan, Irigaray, Kristeva). Writers currently presented as key cultural studies contributors include Edward Said (post-structural literary criticism and cultural history), Judith Butler (post-structuralist feminism); Stuart Hall (Gramscianism and postmodern identity theory), Cornel West (post-colonial theory), Fredric Jameson (neo-Frankfurt School Marxism) and Donna Haraway (post-structuralist philosophy and science studies). The conceptual terrain from which these authors draw is depicted as being profoundly multi-disciplinary, for it encompasses, among other sources, sociology, anthropology, historiography, literary criticism and various branches of philosophy. In recent times, there has been some evidence of a move to include Bruno Latour and Actor Network Theory more generally in the cultural studies canon, partly because the latter is currently fashionable in various fields, sociology included, or is seen to have impeccably French intellectual credentials (a necessary virtue for one to possess if academic stardom in the Anglo-Saxon academy is to be possible), and also because of that position's often strong attack on what it takes to be mainstream sociology and its allegedly erroneous understandings of what 'the social' is.

How did the apparent theoretical heterodoxy in cultural studies come about? A standard 'founding narrative' of the historical emergence of cultural studies has arisen since the 1980s and has become part of the field's understanding of itself. In this account (see, e.g., Tudor, 1999), which draws to a great extent upon a much cited article by Stuart Hall (1981), cultural studies is seen to have been institutionally 'born' at the University of Birmingham in 1964, when the Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies was formed under the leadership of Richard Hoggart. The first phase of Birmingham Cultural Studies was at the intellectual level 'culturalist' in nature, given Hoggart's position as a doyen of the culturalist position. The emphasis of the latter was on the study – and to some degree, celebration – of 'ordinary' cultures and the creative responses by the English working classes to situations of poverty and underprivilege. The stress on culture both as 'ordinary' and as embodying active and creative human impulses was set out not just in Hoggart's *The Uses of Literacy* (1962 [1957]), but also in Raymond Williams' earlier writing, most notably *The Long Revolution* (1980 [1961]), and in the historian E. P. Thompson's *The Making of the English Working Class* (1976 [1963]). Both Hoggart and Williams were literary scholars, concerned to make a break with the elitist conceptions of 'culture' that the English literary tradition had pursued since the later 18th century, and which encompassed such figures as Burke, Coleridge, Wordsworth, Arnold and Eliot (Williams, 1958). Thus on this account English literary studies and a certain form of leftist, grassroots historiography were at the heart of 'early' cultural studies.

But by the 1970s, this culturalist strain had been seen, in light of analytical importations from France – especially the 'complex Marxism' of Althusser – to be woefully lacking in theoretical substance, being an outdated form of naive humanism. Althusserian Marxism and Saussurean semiotic structuralism arose to take culturalism's place, both being conjoined through the means of a revamped Gramscian analysis of hegemony, with the result that 'subjectivity' and 'identity' became key areas of analytical inquiry over culturalism's concerns with 'ordinary culture' (Hall, 1981). Continuing this standard narration, as cultural studies spread out across the universities of the English speaking world in the 1980s, structuralism gave way to post-structuralism, and Marxism to postmodernism (Grossberg, 1993). Thus by the 1990s, while students were certainly taught the ideas of the likes of Foucault and Derrida, mere lip-service was paid in many 'history of cultural studies' courses to the ideas of the (alleged) 'founders' of the subject (Jones, 1994). Thus the culturalism of Williams and Hoggart was regarded more as a quaint initial staging post of cultural studies than as an ongoing, vibrant research tradition in its own right, the ground having been thoroughly ceded – especially in cultural studies units in North America affiliated to departments of literature – to semiotic post-structuralist 'readings' of 'texts', readings inspired by the work of, among others, Barthes and Derrida.

While this standard narration could be, and indeed has been, challenged from within cultural studies itself (see Wright, 1997), as different factions seek to retell the developmental story to promote their own interests, the Birmingham 'founding myth' remains a powerful form of self-presentation and disciplinary self-understanding in the field. It depicts a historical trajectory the *telos* of which is the apparently self-evident plurality of cultural studies modes of conceptualization, these being presentable in antithesis to the more monolithic concerns of sociology with questions of 'social system' and 'social structure'. This story of the historical evolution of cultural studies can in addition involve emphasis on how

the theoretical plurality of cultural studies ways of thinking today was made possible by Birmingham cultural studies breaking in the later 1970s with what is presented (and was presented at the time) as the dead weight of sociological conservatism.

The work of Stuart Hall is very important in this regard, not just for how he has presented and engaged with sociology since the 1970s, but also in terms of how later cultural studies authors, wishing to narrate the history and 'nature' of their subject, have drawn upon and reproduced his views as to the apparently necessary breaks with sociology Birmingham cultural studies was required to enact. An ongoing critique of sociology by Hall was one of the continuing themes in his work from the mid-1970s onwards (Rojek, 2002). We may say that Birmingham cultural studies gained its distinctive sense of self in large part through a distancing of its project(s) from what was presented as 'mainstream sociology'. Thus in the early 1980s Hall (1981: 21–6) criticized the latter's allegedly static sense of social totality and its neglect of the study of ideology.

Cultural studies' epistemological break, involving the move into the 'complex Marxism' of Althusser, was, Hall claimed, necessitated to a large degree by the need to escape from the suffocating constrictions of a largely bankrupt sociology. The Birmingham view of the late 1970s (which draws quite markedly on neo-Marxist critiques of positivist science, such as that of Adorno and Horkheimer) was that 'mainstream sociology' was primarily empiricist and descriptivist, concerned only with surface images of human activities. On that view, actually existing sociology was itself insufficiently 'sociological' if the latter term connoted a critical analysis of the structures of capitalist society.

For Hall (1981: 25) at this period, part of cultural studies' epistemological practice involved 'posing sociological questions against sociology itself'. For Hall in his later work (e.g. 1997), the same theme is continued: 'conventional sociology' has always treated culture as relatively superficial, ephemeral and less important than the 'material' realm, defining 'culture' often in very narrow terms (a critique also mounted, of course, by advocates of a cultural sociology that should break with the deadening assumptions of mainstream 'sociology of culture', which do not attend to the autonomous and complex nature of culture – see Alexander, 2003). For Hall, cultural studies not only gives full due to the importance of culture in human life, it also is highly sensitive to the multiple definitions, and thus multiple dimensions, of 'culture', sensibilities that have for the most part eluded sociology. Other eminent figures working in the cultural studies field, such as Lawrence Grossberg (1993) in his writings of the early 1990s, have followed Hall's arm's-length attitudes towards sociology, urging cultural studies colleagues to transcend the 'sociological pull' of previous modes of cultural studies (ironically, the Birmingham models adumbrated in large part by Hall in the late 1970s and 1980s) in the direction of postmodern narratives of radical cultural alterity and contingency, drawing more on French thinkers such as Lacan, Lyotard and Laclau and Mouffe, than on more apparently 'sociological' luminaries such as Gramsci. The shared element in these sorts of stories is that 'sociology' is first depicted as very epistemologically limited, and then a break (or series of breaks) with it is designated both as a defining feature of cultural studies and as a key means whereby a much more sophisticated epistemic state is reached by the latter. That state in turn is represented as one of 'healthy' conceptual diversity, as opposed to the more limiting orthodoxies of sociology – orthodoxies themselves rhetorically constructed and then rejected by advocates of cultural sociology as opposed to 'sociology of culture', such as Alexander (2003).

4. Alleged Strong 'Political' Engagement

The final means we will examine by which 'sociology' can function as a signification of all that cultural studies is not involves the apparent ethical and political superiority of the latter over the former. It is common to find cultural studies authors (e.g. Bennett, 1998) defining their subject as one which, despite all its substantive and conceptual multiplicity, is centrally concerned with the relations that pertain between cultural forms and practices on the one hand, and forms and relations of power on the other. This problematic involves the study of enculturation processes and the rendering by powerful groups of arbitrary cultural relations as 'natural' in the minds of those enculturated. It is also said to encompass the analysis of power in its various and multiple forms, clustering around dynamics of class, gender and ethnicity, among other axes (see also Barker, 2000: 5; Turner, 1990: 5).

Of course some sociologists might think that this description equally well fits as a depiction of contemporary (cultural) sociology. But cultural studies authors can differentiate their subject further from sociology by means of claiming that cultural studies involves much more of a focus on political engagement in intellectual practice, as opposed to apolitical scholarship, than does any other discipline, including (indeed perhaps

especially) sociology. Thus the statement of aims of the journal *Cultural Studies* has said that the journal, and by implication the whole field, 'aims to intervene in the processes by which the existing techniques, institutions and structures of power are reproduced, resisted and transformed'[3]. And for Bennett (1998), the politically engaged dimension of cultural studies involving the 'denaturalizing' of those ways of thinking and representing that are presented or taken as 'natural', also involves the dissemination of such critical knowledges, in order both to influence the broader terrain of 'politics' (very broadly defined) and to empower oppressed groups within it. The political programmes expressed in, and developed by, cultural studies work can also be presented as being, like the field itself, very diverse, drawing as they do from political positions within 'a left divided between defenders of neomarxist socialist politics and advocates of a postmarxist identity-based politics' (Seidman, 1997: 41).

Within this manner of representation, while cultural studies is said to be vitally engaged with important contemporaneous matters, sociology drags its heels, burdened both by a tendency towards conservatism in terms of its objects and methods of analysis and by a certain snobbish reserve about what it sees as allegedly ephemeral aspects of culture – rap music lyrics, music videos, fan cultures, and so on – the very cultural forms that cultural studies recognizes as important expressions of contemporary events. While sociology is staid, cultural studies is vibrant, with the result that cultural studies has more truly tapped into contemporary currents than its institutional rival. Yet much contemporary cultural sociology engages with such matters, as a perusal of journals that cater for that field, such as *Cultural Sociology*, the *Journal of Cultural Economy* and the *European Journal of Cultural Studies* attests. Indeed, EJCS is a particularly interesting hybrid case, for although billed as a cultural studies journal, much of its output could easily fit not just into a cultural sociology journal, but in fact into what most people would regard as a 'mainstream sociology' publication. This case should remind us of the increasingly hybrid nature of journal publishing, with various high-profile outlets bridging the (cultural) sociology/cultural studies division in ways that were still relatively rare as recently as the early 2000s.

Cultural studies is also presented by many of its advocates as being strongly politically engaged with the materials it looks at, while sociology adopts a certain form of distance from the objects of its analyses. This is construed in a negative manner, both because sociology is said to be less politically engaged and 'relevant' than cultural studies, and because sociology's posture of distance from its objects of analysis is characterized by a spurious attempt at objectivity. As no form of knowledge is ever objective, runs this argument, sociology's apparent distance from its objects smuggles into its analyses a hidden form of politics, and this politics is reactionary not only because it is undisclosed, but also because it derives from a positivism that falsely presents its findings as the singular 'truth', when in actual fact they are but the reified reflections of hegemonic forces and discourses in the world being investigated. Cultural studies has made a fundamental break with positivist attitudes, seeing them for what they are, while sociology remains stuck behind in what is a 'pre-critical' mindset (During, 1993). We should also note here that an attack on so-called 'mainstream' sociology's positivism, especially in sociology's manifestation in the US higher education field, has frequently been mounted by those, like Alexander (2003), who regard cultural sociology as a post-positivist, hermeneutic exercise that stands in opposition to positivist sociology of culture; but this critique does not usually go hand-in-hand with the cultural studies authors' tendency to align post-positivism with some sort of radical scholarly politics and calls to political engagement. The 'political', 'politicized' and 'transformative' dimension of cultural studies is generally highlighted by programmatic authors, who often turn to sociology to depict what is the antithesis of 'proper' political engagement. Thus when Graeme Turner (1990: 227) contends that cultural studies' 'commitment to understanding the construction of everyday life has the admirable objective of doing so in order to change our lives for the better. Not all academic pursuits have such a practical political objective', he probably has sociology in mind as one, and perhaps as the most exemplary, of the mere 'academic pursuits' that purport to engage with contemporary human life but which are in fact abject in their failure to do so.

SOCIOLOGY AGAINST CULTURAL STUDIES

If cultural studies can be presented as a (loose, fluid, open) entity by its advocates in contradistinction to the alleged closedness of 'traditional disciplines' like sociology, then so too can partisans of sociology gain a sense of disciplinary identity by presenting cultural studies as a negatively construed 'other'. The disciplinary blurring, the politicization and the concerns with popular

culture that cultural studies authors present as the great virtues of their subject, can all be presented as great vices by unconvinced and unsympathetic writers who position themselves as first and foremost 'sociologists'.

One of the more striking examples of negative depictions of cultural studies coming from (those defining themselves as) sociologists in recent years is that issuing from the pens of the British authors Bryan S. Turner and Chris Rojek, both of them notably associated in one way or another with the development of cultural sociological paradigms in British sociology. It is very telling that such a critique of cultural studies has come from authors strongly associated with more cultural sociological dispositions, rather than from more positivist sociology of culture or mainstream sociology that has little interest in cultural matters and debates per se. I suspect that it is Turner and Rojek's relative closeness to cultural studies, as practising cultural sociologists, which propelled them to define with such rhetorical force what they take to be the highly problematic nature of much cultural studies. Scholars in sociology who were less closely positioned to cultural studies would, I think, have been much less perturbed by the alleged failings of the latter, with many mainstream, positivist scholars probably not bothering to develop such a critique in the first place, because in their eyes cultural studies – even if it gets onto their intellectual radar at all – most likely is not even worth mentioning. Being located near a border probably makes one more attentive to the doings of the people on the other side of it, whether these are positively or, as here, negatively construed.

Despite these specificities of orientation, motivation and location, I will use the views of Turner and Rojek to represent some main trends of hostile (British and other) sociological responses to cultural studies. At an institutional and organizational level, Turner and Rojek (2001: vii) lament the alleged fact that 'sociology has, through the so-called cultural turn, been devolved and dissolved into a series of related fields – cultural studies, women's studies, urban studies and media studies'. It is interesting that cultural sociology is not listed here as one of the new sub-fields which are involved in the fragmentation of the sociological discipline. As a concomitant of such processes at the organizational level, at the level of analysis and conceptualization a sort of sociology has arisen that is 'obsessed with the immediacy of commercial and popular cultures'. Rojek and Turner (2000) describe this sort of sociology as 'decorative sociology', and it is clear that they mean by this term a sociology that is all too closely patterned after the nature of (what they take to be) cultural studies. Moreover, they aver that this cultural-studies-derived sociology 'has taken root with such tenacity that it is now the most powerful tendency in … cultural sociology' (2000: 639). The latter, which presumably was free of this taint in the past, has now succumbed to the facile substantive interests and less-than-rigorous methodologies of cultural studies. This is very bad news, as cultural studies 'has no adequate theory or methodology' to grasp cultural processes and artefacts themselves, let alone social relations and institutions, and their relationships to cultural phenomena (Rojek and Turner, 2000: 640).

On this diagnosis, which is a variant on other 'sociological' authors' complaints about cultural studies, cultural sociology has become just like cultural studies, as it has succumbed to an out-and-out textualism, which in its more expansive version regards the human world simply as a series of texts that can be read by the post-Geertzian hermeneutic analyst (but of course with multiple readings possible, because of the 'radical indeterminacy' of meaning), and in its more limited version regards the main foci for analysis as popular cultural texts made available through the mass media. Thus the whole world is reduced to texts and concomitant matters of reading and interpretation, whether those interpretations be the analyst's alone (as in 'critical readings' of films and pop music lyrics) or the analyst's interpretations of other people's interpretations of texts (as in studies of the 'readings' of texts engaged in by particular groups in popular cultural audiences). These readings themselves are often alleged (e.g. Goodwin and Wolff, 1997) to be very arbitrary in nature, claiming to find ideological dimensions or 'resistive' audience readings which are in fact not at all backed up by any sort of systematic evidence. On this view, cultural-studies-style research is content to operate at the level of mere assertions, in the case of readings of media texts, and of the most slipshod quasi-ethnography, in the case of depictions of audience groups.

For sociological critics, cultural studies – and the cultural sociology unfortunately patterned after it – furthermore exhibits little historical sense, being far too concerned with the latest trendy cultural fashions rather than with careful depiction of historically existing life-worlds and the socio-cultural forces that made and transformed them (Rojek and Turner, 2000). When cultural studies does deal with past times, it does so in the most cavalier of fashions. Thus Schudson's (1997) critique of the work of cultural studies star Donna Haraway indicts it for being based on empirically untenable generalizations and uninformed, overly politicized 'readings' of historically existing cultural forms, instead of taking a more properly sociological approach to evidence

and the reconstruction of actors' views as to their own activities.

A certain historical irony arises here. Given the Birmingham CCCS scholars' critique of mainstream sociology in the 1970s for being enslaved to 'surface empiricism', by the present day, for many sociological writers, cultural studies and cultural sociology overly influenced by it appear to have succumbed to exactly that sort of vice, because of their highly impressionistic and unsystematic methods of research and findings (McLennan, 1998: 9). On this scenario, while cultural studies 'ought to benefit from its location at the intersection of the humanities and the social sciences, [it] risks falling between the two', because it threatens to become neither good social science nor good literary study (Goodwin and Wolff, 1997).

Sociological authors have also been quick to identify what they take to be the core conceptual failings of cultural studies. The key claim here is that, as we have already noted, cultural studies has no adequate grasp of the 'social' dimensions of human life, the very element that sociology can understand with great sophistication. Nor in fact can it deal with the cultural dimensions of human life as part of a wider assemblage of social relations (Wood, 1998: 410). For Mouzelis (1995), an author wishing to reinstate what he takes to be 'core' problems of sociological thought back into contemporary sociology, from which he believes they threaten to be banished altogether, cultural studies operates conceptually around a unidimensional realm of the 'cultural', rather than viewing human life through the lens of the interplay between 'social structure' and 'social action'. On this view, cultural studies definitions of 'culture' are so broad that they conceptually colonize every aspect of human life, with the effect that the 'social' level is obliterated from view. Thus 'subjectivity', understood (in a postmodernized version of Althusser) as being formed by multiple and contradictory cultural forces, replaces sociological concerns with 'social actors' or agents, and their action and agency. Consequently, cultural studies thinking is presented as being bereft of any adequate notion of action and agency, being stuck within the confines of the analysis of 'subjectivities'.

Although subjectivities are conceived of as the result of the intersection of dynamic cultural forces, nonetheless the overall analytic framework in which these are located is static, because the core sociological problems of *how* social actors act, and *why* they do so, is not properly engaged with. The 'how' question requires sensitive analytic and methodological tools that cultural studies is unaware of; the 'why' question refers one to issues of social institutions and social structures, concepts (and empirically existing entities) that cultural studies has no idea how to engage with. As Bonnell and Hunt (1999: 11–12) put it, 'causal explanation takes a back seat, if it has a seat at all, to the demystification and deconstruction of power'.

When cultural studies work *does* examine agency, it is according to sociological authors only within the conceptually limited, over-politicized and over-interpreted terms of post-Gramscian concerns with 'acts of resistance', as in the work of de Certeau (1984), where 'even walking down the street is a political act' (Rojek and Turner, 2000: 637). The apparent over-interpretation of each and every text and activity as in some senses 'political' testifies to the dramatic over-politicization of cultural studies, according to these critics. The self-description by cultural studies people of themselves as properly politically *engagé*, in juxtaposition to the bad faith of the mainstream (and naively positivist) sociologist, 'bestowed an automatic moral significance upon the cultural studies approach which contrasted with the alleged academicism of established research traditions'. This was an important shaping factor in the 'moral arrogance, intellectual narrowness and over-confidence' that allegedly characterize at least certain wings of cultural studies in the present day (McLennan, 2002: 634). Furthermore, the over-politicization of cultural studies, according to Collini (1994; see also Tester, 1994) threatens to turn the subject away from any kind of proper scholarly endeavour, into an exercise centred around academic expressions of victimhood – with different 'marginalized' groups, especially centred around gender and ethnicity, each expressing their complaints about their oppression, at the expense of any sense of analytic rigour or scholarly detachment.

BEYOND DIFFERENCES

As we have seen above, those who speak in the name of sociology denounce the perceived inadequacies of cultural studies and cultural-studies-style cultural sociology, just as those who claim to speak 'for' cultural studies allege that sociology is the 'project' that has failed or is failing. However, a number of other modes of representation of the (actual or potential) relations between cultural studies and sociology are possible in the present day. These modes stress points of convergence rather than divergence between the two entities.

The first possibility is for authors positioned within sociology, especially those in the United

States, still to assume that sociology and cultural studies are two separate entities, but in so doing to set cultural studies up as a model of how sociological analysis should be reconfigured so as to overcome its current shortcomings. Very often, these shortcomings are identified as being the very problems that cultural studies scholars have identified as characterizing sociology. Thus the American sociologist Elizabeth Long (1997: 2) echoes cultural studies' allegations as to sociology's long-standing refusal to take 'cultural' matters seriously by arguing that since at least the mid-20th century, (American) sociologists have 'dealt with culture as subsumed to social institutions … social processes, social groups and their practices'. The superiority of cultural studies to sociology is asserted when it is argued – as, for example, by Friedland and Mohr (2004: 2) – who might well define themselves as cultural sociologists – that while sociology has been very slow to take the cultural features of human life seriously, cultural studies scholars 'made a sociological turn long ago'. Writing in the same vein, Hays (2000) argues that cultural studies threatens to steal ownership of ideas to do with 'culture' away from (American) sociologists. On this view, sociology is compelled to attack cultural studies, partly to attempt to retain control over 'cultural' matters, partly to reassert in public its scientific claims to truth, and, as a corollary of both of these factors, to hold on to funding sources that are necessary for its ongoing survival. For Hays, cultural studies is indeed correct to charge sociology – in the guise of positivist sociology of culture – as being obsessed with methodology, as overly narrow in its substantive foci, and as constitutionally apolitical (2000: 596).

These are opinions shared to some degree by Janet Wolff (1999), herself a cultural sociologist with a British background and training but long resident in the US until her retirement, when she contended in the late 1990s that American sociological studies of culture tend to be narrow, ahistorical and naively empiricist. The residual positivism in the sociology of culture means that 'untheorized and unexamined categories of social analysis' (1999: unpaginated) underpin the research practice. Many sociologists seem to be unaware – or deliberately ignore the fact – that analytic categories, like all social categories, are in fact discursive fabrications, shot through with all sorts of assumptions and power relations.

Cultural studies is very reflexively aware of the constructed nature of all categories, be those concepts used by actors or by analysts, a message that the scientism of the positivist sociology of culture refuses to acknowledge. In response to sociologists who argue that cultural studies lacks the component of systematic empirical data-gathering which sociology is the proud possessor of, the cultural sociologist Steven Seidman (1997: 42) argues that just as much as sociology, cultural studies provides 'systematic analyses of the social that are empirical and analytical and that offer perspectives on whole societies'. Likewise, cultural studies textual analysis is a form of empirical investigation too, but a different sort of empirical investigation from the overly narrow conception of the latter that is hegemonic in sociology. In sum, some American cultural sociologists have used cultural studies as an exemplar to criticise what they see as a moribund tradition of positivist sociology of culture. Cultural studies in these sociologists' hands becomes a rhetorical weapon for attacking, and hopefully refashioning, sociological practice itself.

The second possible way of representing relations between sociology and cultural studies that we will look at here, involves presenting a situation whereby the two are said to have enough overlaps with each other to allow for at least the partial overcoming of disciplinary hostilities, such that each entity can learn useful things from the other. For the British author David Chaney (1994: 43), who would likely define himself as a cultural sociologist, both 'sides' share the view that 'culture in all its forms has to be understood as a mode of social practice'. In a similar vein, Wolff (1999: unpaginated) stresses what she sees as the strong 'sociological' element that existed in Birmingham cultural studies in the 1970s, despite all the rhetoric about making breaks with sociology. Wolff sees much Birmingham work as 'firmly grounded in sociology – in the texts of Weber, Marx, Mannheim, the symbolic interactionists and other sociological and ethnographic traditions', and in the deployment of what could be taken as 'mainstream' sociological vocabularies such as that of labelling theory. Thus, just as cultural studies motions can be deployed to help overhaul the naively empiricist categories of mainstream American sociology, in turn 'sociologists can bring to the project of cultural analysis … a focus on institutions and social relations, as well as on the broader perspective of structured axes of social differentiation and their historical transformations – axes of class, status, gender, nationality and ethnicity' (Wolff, 1999: unpaginated). On this account the sociology/cultural studies relationship is, or at least could be, mutually enriching rather than antagonistic. This is also the position reached by McLennan (2002; also 2006), who regards cultural studies as primarily involving engaged modes of social description, while sociology tends more towards analytic explanations. For this author, these differing modes are complementary rather than contradictory.

Finally, it is also possible to argue that the ultimate similarity between the two entities is their shared commitments to leftist politics (Long, 1997: 24–5), increasingly of an 'identity-' rather than class-based sort, and their shared purposes vis-à-vis social transformation (Wood, 1998). There have also been a number of attempts by cultural studies scholars to 'return', as they see it, to core 'sociological' concerns, such as developing more sophisticated and diverse methods and methodologies than has hitherto been the case (e.g. Gray, 2003).

While a spirit of co-operation rather than conflict emanates from the pens of these authors, seeking as they do to present cultural studies and sociology as mutually beneficial to, and supportive of, each other, what they miss is in fact the main point of another representational possibility I will examine here. This involves the argument that what all of the above discourses, whether they stress similarities or dissimilarities between the two entities, do not or cannot see, is the fact that sociology and cultural studies are indeed very 'alike', because they both share the same epistemological dispositions. Constraints of space dictate a highly compressed delineation of this argument, which I have pursued at greater length elsewhere (Inglis, 2005). Chaney (1994: 42) in my view is not quite correct when he asserts that cultural studies is one branch of the sociology of knowledge; it would be more accurate to say that both sociology (especially cultural sociology) and cultural studies are hewn from the same conceptual raw materials.

Despite the variations between sociological and cultural studies approaches to matters cultural, and notwithstanding the variety of positions within each discipline, there is nonetheless an identifiable 'meta-discourse' that unites all these strands (Inglis and Hughson, 2003). Both sociology and cultural studies are derivations of a quintessentially 'social scientific' interpretation of Kantian philosophy. Kant saw each object in the world as having two separate manifestations – on the one hand, there is its *noumenal* side, which is its essence and which exists beyond human perception, and on the other hand, its *phenomenal* side, which is the object as it appears in human perception. Kant (1999 [1787]) sees the human mind as playing an active role in organizing the world that the human being sees presented before it. The mind shapes the phenomenal aspect of things, and thus constitutes the world as we perceive it. However, Kant holds that all human minds are alike, and hence the world as perceived by me is found to be the same world as perceived by anyone else because our minds process the world in the same ways. The history of post-Kantian developments in thought, especially as far as the social sciences are concerned, breaks down this position, denying the existence of *noumena* at all, and seeing the world only as a series of *phenomena*. Different groups of people are seen as possessing 'their own' culture, and it is through this cultural gauze that the world not only is perceived, but is *constituted*. This has become *the* central assumption of the modern social sciences (Bergesen, 2004; Inglis, 2005), as filtered through the Kant-inspired work of Marx (ideologies organize experience), Weber and Durkheim (both of whom aver that 'culture' brings order to conceptual chaos), among others.

Out of this way of thinking comes one of the main tenets of contemporary social science, the notion that all forms of 'reality' are social fabrications (Berger and Luckmann, 1967), as in the case of sociology, or cultural constructions, as in the case of anthropology, literary philosophy, semiotics and cultural studies. Moreover, in both Marx and Weber especially, but also in Nietzsche too, the contention that culture constitutes reality is yoked to the assertion that it is powerful social groups who define cultural categories. Thus 'culture' is made almost synonymous with 'power'. The upshot of this is that cultural matters are seen as being thoroughly shot through with social power relations. No cultural form is ever 'innocent', for each is seen to be harbouring some kind of more or less hidden agenda that is itself rooted in forms of power. Mainstream sociological conceptions of culture are thoroughly permeated with these assumptions. So too in fact are cultural studies conceptions, some of which have derived directly or indirectly from the ideas of Marx and Nietzsche, but which have also come down from the constitutional semiotic work of Saussure, itself contemporaneous with, and as a form of relativizing Kantianism conceptually very similar to, the work of the later Durkheim on cultural-cognitive systems. Given that Saussure (1959 [1906–11]: 112) argued that 'without language, thought is a vague, uncharted nebula. There are no pre-existing ideas, and nothing is distinct before the appearance of language', the radical implication of his version of Kantianism is that the 'reality' perceived within a particular linguistic community is solely a product of language, a view developed by such cultural studies star figures as Derrida and Foucault, whose work is also primarily concerned with the conjunction of language/culture and power. Semiotic claims as to the discursively fabricated, power-ridden nature of 'reality' are in the present day as hegemonic in cultural studies as the equation of culture and social power has become in most brands of the sociology of culture. Such ways of thinking, based around the principles of regarding culture as totally arbitrary, and of equating 'culture' and 'power', constitute the disciplinary

common sense of both sociology and cultural studies today. It is into these ways of thinking that students are inculcated when they take undergraduate and postgraduate degrees in these subjects. Such forms of conceptualizing are so ingrained, that they are, to use Bourdieu's phrase, 'misrecognized' as representing the 'truth' of things in the world, and are pretty much taken at face value. But it is far from being apparent and incontestable that such 'de-naturalizing' modes of thought are themselves 'natural'. They are but one way of understanding how the world and the human beings within it 'work', and are problematized by recent research in psychology which finds that the human mind is not in fact just a blank slate upon which 'society' or 'culture' writes, for even very young children seem to have certain inbuilt capacities to order the world around them in structured ways (Bergesen, 2004). Just because, as both sociology and cultural studies themselves teach, a way of thinking has become endemic among certain social actors, is not enough to make it 'true'. But an apparently hegemonic truth-regime has arisen in both sociology and cultural studies, and its power is attested to, and reproduced, by its taken-for granted nature in these fields.

McLennan (2006: 41) views the recent rise of the genre called 'social and cultural theory' as a 'shared resource for sociology and cultural studies alike', in that it combines forms of theory that are both produced by, and utilizable by, scholars in each field, as opposed to an earlier situation where 'sociological theory' was purely a possession of sociologists and 'cultural theory' the province of cultural studies people. Thus, for example, the work of Bourdieu has become a key reference point in both sociology and cultural studies – even if sociologists pay more attention to his theory of action and his statistical tables, while in cultural studies he is regarded more as a cultural theorist. The already-noted rise to prominence of Bruno Latour in both fields in recent years is another case in point. But most 'social and cultural theory' is fundamentally based upon the – questionable, unrecognized, historically specific – epistemological assumptions mentioned above, and some of its more problematic assertions, such as claims that there is no such thing as 'nature' or that 'sex' is wholly a cultural fabrication (Butler, 1999), go relatively unquestioned, even despite Latour's critique of mainstream sociology's epistemological foundations.

CONCLUSION

Consideration of the multiple relationships between sociology, including the cultural sociology variant, and cultural studies shows that they have often been apparently at war, but their mutual hostility has given each of them a strong sense of themselves. Their ritualised conflict battle has brought certain gains in identity for them both. But beyond rhetorical displays of dissimilarity between them, once one examines their shared epistemological assumptions, one sees that it is actually their likeness that has both allowed and compelled them to engage in the stand-offs they have indulged in. The problem remains that both do not sufficiently acknowledge, or perhaps cannot see at all, the flaws in their joint constitution. For in their strongly shared programme of making culture and power closely related, if not in fact almost synonymous, terms, both sociology and cultural studies treat as 'natural' what are only particular, historically specific ways of thinking and understanding the world. As a result, they have failed to recognize not only their own shared nature, but also the historically constituted and limiting characteristics of that nature.

NOTES

1 Some elements of this chapter appeared in Inglis, D. (2007) `The Warring Twins: Sociology, Cultural Studies, Alterity and Sameness', *History of the Human Sciences*, Vol. 20, No. 2, pp. 99 –122.
2 www.tandfonline.com/action/journalInformation?show=aimsScope&journalCode=rcus20
3 www.tandfonline.com/action/journalInformation?show=aimsScope&journalCode=rcus20

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