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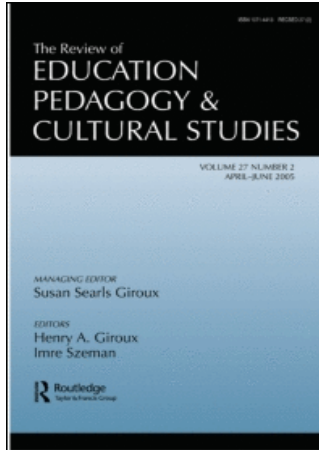
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Introduction: New Cultural Spaces: Cultural Studies in Canada Today

Richard Cavell and Imre Szeman

This special issue of *The Review of Education, Pedagogy & Cultural Studies* highlights work being done in cultural studies today by scholars located in Canadian universities. There is now a long tradition of work in cultural studies in Canada, whether such work has been done (as it now increasingly is) in departments and programs of study explicitly named “Cultural Studies” or within more traditional academic disciplines. The work brought together here highlights the range of issues, concerns, theories, and approaches that constitute cultural studies in Canada at the present time. What connects these topics and approaches is in part the reference in many of the articles to thinkers who might be said to have created an “indigenous” form of cultural studies in Canada *avant la lettre*, such as Harold Innis, Marshall McLuhan, Northrop Frye, and George Grant. But there are other important points of connection as well, not least the ways in which they address themselves to the links between sites of knowledge production and social and political power. In their own way, each article examines critically the institutions of knowledge production and legitimation in Canada—at sites as various as universities, journals, museums, government agencies, advertising, and so on—with an eye toward assessing their role in manufacturing and maintaining social consent, and in understanding better the opportunities for contesting and challenging the injustices produced by existing configurations of power.

Even though cultural studies has become an internationalized form of critical inquiry, and national and cultural spaces have themselves become increasingly permeable to influences and ideas from elsewhere, there remains a specificity to national formations of cultural studies that continue to be worth addressing. In an issue

that presumes to address cultural studies in “Canada,” some attention has to be paid to ways in which this site has been imagined in conjunction with the broader practices of the critical activity called “cultural studies.” We begin therefore by reflecting on the constitution of the spaces of “Canada” (*Canadian* spaces: national, social, institutional) and of culture and cultural studies in Canada (*cultural* spaces).

POPULAR CULTURE AND CANADA

That Canadian spaces are fundamentally *cultural* spaces was the profound insight of Harold Innis. His early studies of Canadian political economies, from the fishing industry to the fur trade, led him to the notion that these articulations of spaces that would come to be known as “Canada” were cultural, in that the exchanges they transacted were simultaneously exchanges of ideas and the forging of social bonds. Marshall McLuhan took this insight to mean that materiality was not circumscribed by objecthood and suggested that media were themselves staples, and that their spatial proliferation would fundamentally sever the cultural hierarchies so carefully put in place by traditional temporalities. These notions are foundational to “cultural studies” as now practiced, though not necessarily to cultural studies in Canada; as Jody Berland has written, “Canadian communication theory has been exploring the spatio-temporal dimensions of contemporary media for some four decades. As yet rarely applied to the study of popular culture, its legacy to that project might be to insist that the production of texts cannot be conceived outside of the production of diverse and exacting spaces.”¹ We begin, then, with a paradox, whereby theories of cultural production indigenous to Canada have not taken the popular as their disciplinary focus.

One doesn’t have to look too far to find the origins of this paradox—the scene of the crime remains as familiar as the ones in those films noir that never got made in Canada, though it does implicate a family that produced one of that genre’s sometime actors. The *Massey Report*’s insistence on high (*unpopular*?) cultural values as a bulwark against the lowbrow mediations from south of the border inaugurated a national act of cultural repression that Canadians still suffer from: if it’s Canadian it must be highbrow and boring; if it’s popular it must be American and watched/read/listened to

furtively, lest national cultural identity yield yet another corpse. Hockey is the one exception (as McLuhan understood when he urged the authors of the *Massey Report* to consider including a chapter on it should they ever publish a second edition) despite (or perhaps because of) unceasing attempts to recuperate it into the high cultural canons (including a series of editorials in the *Globe and Mail* during the spring of 2004 in which the editors lamented its increasing unseemliness).²

Bill Readings has traced the connections between this high cultural model, the Humboltian idea of the university, and the nation state, arguing that unitary and canonical notions of culture have been breaking down in tandem with the decline of the nation state as focaliser of cultural values within the postwar, postcolonial era. "The strong idea of culture arises with the nation-state," he writes, "and we now [1996] face its disappearance as the locus of social meaning. Once the notion of national identity loses its political relevance, the notion of culture becomes effectively unthinkable. The admission that there is nothing to be said about culture *as such* is evident in the institutional rise of Cultural Studies in the 1990s."³ Culture ceases, in this view, to be a product of the nation state and becomes a zone of contestation (hence its indeterminacy, or, if you wish, its protean nature) often tied to identitarian political movements (Afro-Canadian culture, gay culture, and so on; one remembers the magnificent speech beginning "I belong to a culture" in Larry Kramer's play *The Normal Heart*). As Readings remarks, "We have to recognize that the grounds on which we used to make large claims for the humanities have been undermined."⁴ They have been undermined through the fragmentation of the cultural-nationalist monolith, but they have also been undermined by the university's continual marginalization of the study of culture (both traditional and not) in favour of studies deemed "socially beneficial," and this at the very moment when pundits such as Samuel E. Huntington have belatedly come to recognize the role of culture in political configurations.⁵ In effect, cultural studies as a discipline responds by suggesting a return to the Innisian model of culture as a form of political economy, where economy is to be understood in the McLuhanesque sense of having collapsed into the flow of information. Cultural studies thus emerges as a mode of critique of forms of the legitimation of knowledge—of the creation of cultural *capital* in Bourdieu's sense—and first and foremost of the university's role in this process.

At this point we enter into the domain of popular culture, those modes of the production of knowledge normally excluded from academic study, from Barbie dolls to Starbucks coffee (as recently described by Imre Szeman and Susie O'Brien),⁶ and here the legacies of Raymond Williams, E. P. Thompson, Richard Hoggart, and the Birmingham School are most keenly felt. This broadening out of the domain of "culture" *stricto sensu* gives cultural studies a political edge (to write about Barbie Dolls rather than Milton already operates as a mode of critique within the academy) while presenting a political problem: if everything is within the cultural domain, how can culture function as a mode of critique at all? Cultural studies responds with the argument that it is the process of cultural production where critique is focused and no longer on its product *per se*. As McLuhan understood when he argued that media had become our staples, the material has become spectrally in its practices. This argument is particularly attractive within a Canadian context, since our culture has been defined by a material "lack" at least since Northrop Frye wrote his conclusion to the first edition of the *Literary History of Canada*, where he suggested that the absence of cultural content in Canada was redeemed by the forms of literature—all culture in Canada was *popular* culture, in these terms, because high culture was produced elsewhere (which throws some light on the paradox pointed to by Berland). Far from making a cultural studies argument for the dynamism of cultural forms, however, Frye retreated to the position demanded by his structuralist leanings and their transhistorical emplotments. The fact that the archetypes of literature belong to the cultures of the colonizers suggests another reason why Canada has rarely embraced the cultural studies model; even Innis stated, in response to the *Massey Report*, that we had to preserve "our" ties to British culture in the face of the American cultural machine.

The blow that McLuhan sought to strike in his 1953 article on the "Comics and Culture" was aimed against the notion that we lacked an indigenous culture and not against high culture itself, which was clearly unassailable and which he rather liked in any case. To put it in other words, McLuhan was attempting to *situate* culture, and this is another way in which we might think about cultural *spaces*; indeed, his profoundly misunderstood notion of the global village was an attempt to situate the "global" itself—a highly useful move in the current cultural climate, as Lawrence Grossberg has pointed out, where the "spatial turn" in critical theory (even more evident

in 2007 than it was a decade ago when he made his comments) often neglects the element of time.⁷ It was Henri Lefebvre who argued the necessity of the temporal within spatial theory through his articulation of the production of space, and the notion is germane as we think about articulating Canadian spaces as cultural spaces. McLuhan sought to situate these Canadian spaces on the borderline, where, in Grossberg's words, "it is a question of the global becoming local and the local becoming global,"⁸ and this has certain resonances with Readings' comment that "Cultural Studies tend to be suspicious of the exclusionary force of certain boundaries: female/male; north/south; center/margin; high culture/low culture; western/other; heterosexual/homosexual."⁹ McLuhan understood Canada's "borderline" status as uniquely compelling in its cultural production, making it at once a pale copy of its U.S. counterpart and utterly different. Cultural spaces, as cultural studies, in these terms, effects critique through an exploration of the shifting grounds of cultural production.

Those grounds have shifted from the high canonical traditions of elsewhere to the local, "the everyday, the intimate, the immediate," as the editors of *Hop on Pop* have recently put it.¹⁰ This immediacy identifies a methodological stance of *immersion*—the notion that critique cannot be made from a position outside that which it is critiquing; nor can it produce its critique through a metalanguage. Rather, the sort of cultural critique accomplished by cultural studies seeks an articulated sense of the experiential, somewhere between fandom and pessimistic rejection (Adorno in his least productive mode). At its best, it also avoids the all-too-easy form of critique that assumes that cultural objects are inevitably alienated and/or ideologically contaminated; rather, cultural studies requires an awareness that culture reads us as much as we read it; as Proust puts it at the end of the *Recherche*, "it would be incorrect to say . . . that I was thinking of those who might read [my book] as 'my readers.' For . . . they would not be my readers but readers of themselves."¹¹ And reference to a high cultural author should remind us (as Bakhtin did, and Bourdieu after him) that the cultural studies model is as applicable in that milieu as it is in other realms of cultural production; indeed, the political potential of cultural studies as a discipline is undermined through an absolute identification with popular culture.¹²

This breadth of applicability derives from the emergence of cultural studies at a moment of "post theory," where critical

methodologies have in many ways exhausted themselves. As Stephen Pender and Andrew Gray have remarked, "in lieu of 'speaking in totalities,' one of the key elements of Marxist method, cultural studies practitioners have chosen to shore up fragments from what is perceived as a spent modernity, to recycle images from a culture in ruins."¹³ Cultural studies reflects this post-theoretical moment through what the editors of *Hop on Pop* call its "contextualism" and its "situationalism." By the former, they mean not only that "the meaning of texts or practices exists only in relation to complex social and cultural forces" but, concomitantly, that this contextualism "supersedes an attachment to one rigid, global theory."¹⁴ By the latter they stress the particularity of the cultural object. Ernesto Laclau has captured very well this sense of "contamination" of high theory and empiricism: "precisely because we are living in a *post*-theoretical age, theory cannot be opposed by a flourishing empiricity liberated from theoretical fetters. What we have, instead, is a process of mutual contamination between 'theory' and 'empiria'—the former having abandoned its aspiration to constitute a 'superhard transcendality' and the latter having lost the innocence associated with pure 'data.'" This contamination has manifested itself in cultural studies particularly through debates over space and place, local and global, public and private—debates that are subtended by Lefebvre's notion that the materialities of spatialization are socially and culturally produced. It is possible, thus, to map cultural studies onto cultural geography in order to engage with the ways in which cultural forms engage with social ones. This is to return to McLuhan's insight that "media are staples" and to enter into the rhizomatic interrelationships proposed by Deleuze and Guattari, whereby the social and the cultural are interlinked through a "natural" environment which is ultimately a form (and particularly now) of cultural production.

The tensions generated by the demands of the local and the global are exacerbated by the effects of mass media; here the agonisms inherent in the notion of the global village are especially strongly felt in that they express relationally the way in which the global can heighten the sense of the local and the local can counter effects of globalization. In this context, the category of "World Music" is especially telling, since what justifies the "World" moniker is precisely a felt locality, a locality made accessible and evident through the phenomenon of a globalised music industry. As the editors of *Hop on Pop* put it, "the music of Chicano rock bands enters into a

network of global capitalism while also representing a real and concrete place and the many diverse histories that shape that place. In this approach, an appreciation of the particular is not a 'fetishization of the local' but instead offers a way to move beyond the false polarization of the empirical and the theoretical, the global and the local, and the public and the private."¹⁶

Another false polarization is precisely the one between high culture and popular culture. In a sense, Frye was right when he argued that the "universal" forms (or archetypes) underlay all cultural production; in effect, what cultural studies does is to reverse his priorities, suggesting that one of the major modes of entry into high culture is through the popular (and here the connections between folklore studies and cultural studies is pertinent); that, indeed, we "know" high culture through its popular manifestations (one of which is criticism), which is what makes these old forms new. That oscillation between high and low, old and new, is captured by McLuhan and Wilfred Watson in *From Cliché to Archetype*, which is perhaps the most important manifesto for cultural studies yet produced in Canada. Here, Frye's archetypes are put in dynamic relationship with the clichés of cultural production. What is important to note is that cultural studies is not, in this articulation (although it is often so in practice), restricted to so-called "popular" culture. It is equally a way of understanding the transformations of high cultural works, of placing those works in history (again, the reversal of the Frygian mode). A work such as Lucy Maud Montgomery's *Anne of Green Gables* provides an interesting case study here. At once an acknowledged "classic" of Canadian literature, it was rarely taught alongside works such as Sinclair Ross's *As For Me and My House* or Gabrielle Roy's *The Tin Flute*; its popularity (one of the most widely translated and distributed works of Canadian literature) appeared to rule that out. Yet what has brought it fully within the critical domain in which Canadian "classics" are taught are its manifestations in popular culture, be it TV, musical, or film adaptations. At the same time, of course, classical canons have been eroded, which is one of the major effects of mass media and their tendency to take up high cultural norms and "tribalize" them. Rap music comes as a shock to some poetic sensibilities (as when Canadian poet and critic George Elliott Clarke reads out scenes from *Beatrice Chancy* using rap rhythms) because poetry has been so long separated from song. Monteverdi's settings of Petrarch, however, are far from soporily mellifluous, alternating

adagio with *allegro* and *piano* with *forte* in ways that make them seem at once “primitive” and eerily avant-gardist contemporaries of Eminem.

The comparison is meant to shock; this radical juxtaposition of cultural modalities is one of the ways in which cultural studies effects its critiques and recognizes the political underpinnings of cultural production. The comparison also brings us back to where we started, only to recognize that the threat of Americanization permeating the *Massey Report* has become one of the *leitmotifs* of the cultural industry critique inaugurated by Adorno and Horkheimer. This critique has become more nuanced than when it was first proposed, as, for that matter, has Canada’s approach through its cultural policies to the “threat” of Americanization. As Jenkins, McPherson and Shattuc note in “Defining Popular Culture,” “many feminists, multi-culturalists, and global theorists now recognize the possibilities inherent in a postmodern world where identity can be understood as existing at the intersection of many registers. Rather than lament the loss of a totalizing view of the world, they prefer a more nuanced and localized model.”¹⁷ This position coincides with the one that sees Canada as being “post-national” (Frye), a “borderline case” (McLuhan). Hence the urgency for cultural studies readings of Canadian nationalist myths. As O’Brien and Szeman’s critique of the famous Molson Canadian commercial (2000)—“I Am a Canadian”—demonstrates, the ad speaks to all the cultural nationalist clichés—diversity, multiculturalism, bilingualism—while eliding its own situatedness (exacerbated by needs of demographic profiling): “Though the ad speaks powerfully to the values of inclusivity and difference as central components of Canadian identity, the voices in whom that symbolic ‘diversity’ actually exists do not speak—except in disembodied and homogenized form, *spoken for* by Joe, as the generic (while, male, anglophone) Canadian.”¹⁸

This paradox is repeated in Canada’s achievement of its sense of cultural identity by embracing the culture of the most powerful media empire on earth—most Canadians watch American television (the one exception being that hoary icon of national identity, *Hockey Night in Canada*). How, then, can we speak at all of a *Canadian* popular culture? Or is this the wrong question—“In a postmodern landscape characterized by heterogeneity, multiple and fluid identities, blurred boundaries, and the globalization of culture, is it useful even to ask such questions about specific

national configurations?" It is useful, and precisely so in terms of the Canadian model of post-nationalism. Even asking the question reminds us of the lineage connecting cultural studies with postcolonialism; in effect, what Canadian cultural studies argues is for a decolonization of culture, especially of the Frygian notion that culture is transhistorical and atopic. As a place that is the product of not one but two empires, culture was in Canada inevitably tied to imperialism; cultural studies responds by identifying "uniquely post-colonial strategies of meaning-making" that critique dominant cultural models while at the same time refusing to assert national cultural tropes as their more acceptable counterparts. Indeed, as Aniko Bodroghkozy points out, "the tenaciousness of moral panics about the popular among Anglo-Canadian elites suggests the extent to which these elites are still clinging to particular ties that bind."¹⁹ It is in this sense, too, that Canadian spaces are also cultural spaces, and that the practice of cultural studies is likewise a form of cultural resistance.

WHY CULTURAL STUDIES NOW?

Many of the articles collected in this volume were first presented at a day-long special session on cultural studies in Canada at the 2002 Humanities and Social Sciences Federation of Canada Congress in Toronto, Ontario. This session also marked the launch of the Canadian Association of Cultural Studies (CACS), some twenty-five years after the founding of the first cultural studies undergraduate programme in Canada at Trent University (in 1978). There have been numerous attempts in the past to place cultural studies on the Canadian academic agenda, especially since 1990, when among the legions of Americans (and large number of British scholars, too), two (and only two) Canadians were given the opportunity to present essays at the "Cultural Studies: Now and the Future" conference held at the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign. It is this conference that was the basis for the influential book *Cultural Studies*, edited by conference organizers Lawrence Grossberg, Cary Nelson, and Paula Treichler.²⁰ As Jon Stratton and Ien Ang have pointed out, giving the book the same title as the field it purports to represent betrays "a new American hegemony in English-speaking cultural studies."²¹ (Imagine naming a book *Philosophy*, or *Sociology*, and you see what they mean.) The various attempts to

locate (or re-locate) Canada's place in cultural studies (and cultural studies in Canada) over the 1990s in response to this hegemonic U.S. displacement of the Birmingham School—whose own influence and legacy has itself been put into question as cultural studies goes global—including the "Postcolonial Formations" conference at Griffith University in Australia (1993), the publication of the collection *Relocating Cultural Studies* (1993) and a special issue of *University of Toronto Quarterly* (1995), and the founding of the *Topia: Canadian Journal of Cultural Studies* (1998). After long struggle, the cumulative effect of these attempts has been to create the conditions in Canada for cultural studies to assume a more solid and substantial place in the academy, especially for the generation of younger scholars whose work appears in this issue, for whom cultural studies no longer lurks at the margins of academic practice but is at the heart of critical intellectual research and teaching in the humanities and social sciences today.

The apparent opening of Canadian universities to cultural studies at this moment is no doubt linked (if in complex ways) to both subtle and explicit changes in Canadian society that have transformed the economic into the social measure *par excellence*—that is, to the coming-into-being of what has often been referred to as neoliberalism;²² it would be naïve and not in the spirit of cultural studies to avoid looking hard at the objective conditions that make it suddenly permissible or possible (at least in some universities and colleges in Canada) for cultural studies to become institutionally legitimized. But it would be equally a mistake to dismiss too quickly and cynically the success of cultural studies as, for instance, an indication of a decline in university standards (as those who favour certain reified versions of the traditional humanities or social sciences might) or of the full concession of administrators to the imperatives of commodity culture (as those who decry the study of popular culture in the groves of the academe might). The growing interest in cultural studies in Canada should be read as a local sign of the global challenges being made to this economic logic of social life, to its consequences on individual and social experience in a wide-range of registers, and to its implications for our collective future. A full understanding of "why cultural studies now" in Canada would require an analysis of recent transformations in Canadian society and in the institutions of government and the university system as these interact with broader geo-political and geo-social developments. The articles in

this issue each offer up a piece of this larger puzzle that if properly assembled would give us a conceptual map of the sweeping social, cultural, and political transformations that have taken place in Canada and in the rest of the world over the past thirty years—changes which have had a decisive impact on how we explore the politics of culture and understand the task of Canadian cultural studies.

The first group of articles calls into question received ideas about Canadian culture and critical practice. One of the important (if unduly neglected) tasks facing Canadian cultural studies is an excavation of some of the too-quickly forgotten contexts and institutions of Canadian culture. The contributions by Zoë Druick, Gary Genosko, Samir Gandesha, Kristina Marcellus, and Anne Whitelaw expose two kinds of absences in our understanding of the contemporary dynamics of culture and criticism in Canada. Druick's "Remedy and Remediation: The Cultural Theory of the Massey Commission" returns to the *Massey Commission Report* (1951), which has long been seen as a defining document in Canadian cultural life, whether for good or ill. The critical fascination with the *Massey Report* emerges out of its central role in establishing the Canadian cultural policy environment after World War II; equally, the *Report* is crucial to the development of the discourse of cultural nationalism that would frame post-WW II discussions of Canadian culture. Or at least this is how the *Report* has usually been understood. In her investigation of the Massey Commission and the political and cultural contexts out of which it emerged, Druick finds that the typical narratives about the role played by the *Report* overlook the degree to which it reflects the dominance of *internationalist* rather than nationalist discourses in the post-war period. As she shows in great detail, describing the numerous ideological and institutional links connecting the members of the Commission to the liberal internationalism associated especially with the ideas and ideals informing the creation of UNESCO, "the activities of those involved in the Commission and the adult education and other internationally-minded groups of the day demonstrate the degree to which a narrowly nationalist vision was not the Commission's real goal."

Druick's reframing of the aims and ideals of the *Massey Report* has significant consequences for how we view the history of Canadian culture, as well as the critical approaches we might take towards it today. On the one hand, her article forces us to reconsider the legitimacy of cultural nationalism in Canada, an ideology

whose legacy (both imagined and real) continues to seep into how culture is viewed in Canada today. Insofar as nationalisms have currently been superseded politically by an interest in the (hardly unproblematic) politics of cosmopolitanism (or its variants, such as Paul Gilroy's "planetary humanism"),²³ to find an internationalist core to this hitherto paradigmatically nationalist document promises to open up new ways of thinking about Canadian social and cultural policy since the end of World War II. On the other hand, as Druick establishes so effectively, the internationalism of the Massey Commission is one that merges culture, education, trade, and industry into a seamless whole, with any residual insistence on the importance of strong national cultures always already constrained by the imperative of the global perpetuation of a "liberal ecumene" that would lend strength to a capitalist worldview under threat by the Soviets. The Massey Commission was thus not only internationalist as opposed to nationalist in orientation, but also "steeped in a kind of free trade ideology predicated on friendly relations and cultural exchange between trading partners." Critical explorations of culture in Canada have wanted to insist on the possibilities and promise of culture made in Canada, but also on culture made outside of the dictates of the market. The Massey Report, long imagined as a critical resource in both of these areas, is shown by Druick to insist on its opposite: an internationalism that resolutely champions market culture and the culture of the market.

The deformed legacies of the Massey Report are perhaps one of the reasons that the critical analysis and exploration of culture in Canada has often bypassed official sites and institutions. Important work in Canadian cultural studies has often been published outside of academic journals and books, in small magazines such as *Borderlines*, *Fuse*, and *Impulse*.²⁴ Yet many of these sites of cultural studies in Canada have disappeared from view, leaving little physical trace in an academic environment in which pursuit of the new has become all consuming. In "Waterloo: The Cradle of Canadian *Telos*," Genosko, Gandesha, and Marcellus offer up one piece of their on-going project to narrate the story of the intellectual group that developed in conjunction with the journal *Telos*.²⁵ The focus of the article is on the challenges that *Telos* faced almost immediately after its founding, as its radical political aims gave way to academicization at roughly the same moment (the 1970s onward) that the student movement in Canada lost the radical political edge it once possessed. The early growing pains of the journal, which

was to play an important part in the development of theory in Canada, are assessed through an examination of the competing interests at play in the four-day "First International *Telos* Conference: Towards a New Marxism," held in Waterloo in 1970. It is clear that the aim of this reconstitution of the history of *Telos* and those associated with it is not to establish an origin narrative for critical theory or cultural studies in Canada; that this is not on the table is suggested by the authors's care in highlighting competing views of what took place in Waterloo in 1970. Rather, as with Druick's article, this account of the *Telos* group offers insight into how contemporary developments are conditioned by projects (most of which are already forgotten by a younger generation of scholars) carried out in the recent past. The very real dangers of amnesia about recent Canadian intellectual history can be seen in the omissions and elisions concerning Canadian cultural studies found in various accounts of the development of the discipline.²⁶ Just as important, articles such as this one help to challenge the too rapid development of a main line in cultural studies—a straight historical arrow pointing back to the Birmingham School, or, in Canada, to Innis, McLuhan and Grant—which obscures more complex genealogies of critical thought and cultural development.

The final article to deal directly with the challenges of cultural studies in Canada is Anne Whitelaw's "Theorizing in the Bush: Canadian Art History in Algonquin Park." Whitelaw takes up the use and abuse in cultural studies of the concept of "authenticity" as a guarantor of knowledge and insight into specific spaces, formations, or practices. In particular, she probes both the productive and problematic appeal to location and/or experience as a way of situating or locating academic knowledge, in order to gauge the significance of location in Canadian cultural studies. Whitelaw identifies three primary ways in which an awareness of location—a self-identification of the position of the speaking and writing subject, for example—is used in cultural studies. The first and most common of these relates to the politics of identity, while the second involves the tactical or strategic use of autobiography (often in connection to the politics of identity.) It is the third appeal to location and experience that Whitelaw examines in most detail. This is the most direct appeal to geographic space, "where scholars have examined various formations' relative access to power based on where they literally map themselves in the world: in other words, the discussion of where one is situated in relation to the geographic and intellectual 'centre'."

This literal sense of where one is situated geographically gets to the heart of one of the key issues in understanding what the "Canadian" in Canadian cultural studies signifies; this is an issue that is also being addressed more generally in cultural studies as its practices become inter- or transnationalized.²⁷ Whitelaw agrees with Lawrence Grossberg's argument that placing cultural studies in the frame of the nation-state can reproduce the kinds of essentialisms that cultural studies is devoted to overturning. At the same time, she suggests that it is "equally shortsighted to believe that national borders do not affect a level of belonging and identity that has implications for intellectual practice." Cultural studies in the Canadian context, exemplified by the work of scholars such as Jody Berland and Will Straw, has managed to draw attention to the universalizing tendencies of cultural studies in the U.S. and U.K., while simultaneously side-stepping appeals to apparently "natural" tropes of Canadian nationhood (space, wilderness, and so on). Interrogating her own pedagogic practice, Whitelaw affirms the intellectual importance of location for cultural studies (and to cultural studies in Canada in particular), since it focuses attention both on the histories and institutions of intellectual practice as well as on the stakes of intellectual activity.

Near the end of her article, Whitelaw asserts that as much as Innis, McLuhan, and others (Grant and Frye, for instance) have influenced cultural research in Canada, there is now a vast diversity of practices being carried out under the sign of cultural studies, many of which connect themselves to intellectual traditions and practices originating far beyond the borders of Canada and the work of these theoretical predecessors. The articles by Richard Day, Shane Gunster, and Sourayan Mookerjea offer examples of this diversity of approaches and directions. The archive that these articles draw on is as expansive as contemporary cultural theory itself: Day examines the contemporary politics of protest via the legacy of the Situationists and political theorists from Gilles Deleuze to Giorgio Agamben; Gunster traces the dialectic of utopia and mass culture through close interrogation of that most omnipresent form of commodity aesthetics, the automobile advert; and Mookerjea explores Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri's politics of immanence with a critical eye on its gaps and fissures, as well as its potential to act as the basis for a cultural studies of the global commons. While Canada has not entirely disappeared from these scenes, these articles explore cultural spaces that intersect with Canadian ones but

that are also the products of forces that are themselves properly post-national—seismic shocks that still register differently in the hard social strata that makes up specific spaces of power and experience, but that are nevertheless felt everywhere: the faux utopia of the desired commodity, which becomes a site for experiences deferred or inhibited in the rest of everyday life (Gunster); and the struggle for a global commons in response to a capitalism that has itself long been global (Day and Mookerjea).

The article by Shane Gunster showcases one of the approaches to exploring the popular in cultural studies today. In "'On the Road to Nowhere': Utopian Themes in Contemporary Auto Advertising," Gunster patiently unfolds the complex dialectic of ideology and utopia at work in contemporary automobile advertising. His aim is two-fold: First, to understand how the bits and pieces of the individual ads with which we are daily deluged manage to produce and shape our narratives of utopian desire, and second, to look at the specific ways in which automobile advertising "'manages' the wishes it draws upon," mobilizing utopian desires for freedom from the pressures of contemporary capitalist society as a way of tying us ever more strongly to the social logics we long to escape. The drama that unfolds in automobile ads—the use of signifiers of utopian desire to semiotically de-commodify consumer objects "at the very moment when those objects exist most completely as commodities"—is one that we can see at work throughout consumer society, as Fredric Jameson shows us in *The Political Unconscious*.²⁸ Yet even so, auto ads remain an especially significant site for the investigation of the use and abuse of utopian narratives in the practices of consumption. As Gunster reminds us, automobiles are not only the most advertised commodity by far, but because of their intimate connection to "mobility, speed, privacy, power and status" they have a unique connection with dreams of flight and escape. Through a broad survey of the various ads that make up the terrain of automobile adverts, Gunster finds that the association of utopia with commodities forecloses "our ability to conceptualize and believe in the possibility of a world beyond the nexus of exchange." But it does so today in a distinct way. In the past, the promise of the commodity and its failure to live up to it occupied "relatively discrete" moments, which meant that forms of immanent critique were still possible. Gunster argues that because the movement between these moments has become accelerated, due to the fact that they exist within the space of the ads themselves,

utopia today has dissolved “into a species of affective intensity that offers little more than an ephemeral, phantasmagoric and privatized bliss.”

The issue ends with two articles that explore the political limits of our present national and international conjuncture, and which argue for a more radical—and indeed, more *political*—politics than that produced within liberal “democratic” capitalism. As the earlier discussion of the activities of the *Telos* group highlights, there has long been a radical political tradition in Canada, though its migration into the academy (such as it is) is relatively recent. The contributions by Richard Day and Sourayan Mookerjea examine the emergence of new political possibilities, both as a result of novel political forms arising out of our global condition and the prominence of new theoretical vocabularies, such as those associated with the Italian Autonomist tradition or the (related) work of Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri. In his contribution, “Setting up Shop in Nullity: Protest Aesthetics and the New ‘Situationism,’” Day takes up the politics of those new social movements that have been (too quickly) lumped together under the banner of the anti-globalization movement. Noting that those on the left and the right seem perversely united in their condemnation of these movements—diverse as they are in range, focus, and approach—for not being political enough (which is to say for not measuring up to what has typically been taken as political), Day proposes to assess the viability of these movements on their own terms. He argues that the new social movements follow “paths not imaginable by either their contemporary critics *or* their predecessors of the 1950s and ‘60s” and that they promise, finally, a politics that moves past state-centered visions of the political.

The core of the article returns to the political experiments of the Situationist International (SI), such as the aethetico-political practice of *détournement*, which have reappeared on the streets of global capitals in the struggle against global capitalism. But Day notes that new social movements move well past the SI’s emphasis on “autonomy in proliferation”—that is, “the power to determine the conditions of one’s own existence”—to the “logic of affinity,” which supplements this earlier insistence on autonomy from power as domination by placing at the core of their practices “the power to ward off one’s own will to the domination of others.” Too often dismissed as mere dilettantism, as an unworthy heir to the student movements of ‘68, Day draws our attention to the developing and shifting politics of the contemporary moment that are

shaping the spaces of the future; for cultural studies, which has often played at radicalism while meekly deferring to a liberal politics legitimated in the end by the capitalist state, there is no more important task today than to grapple with these emergent, future politics.

The issue ends with a long, conceptually-challenging contribution by Sourayan Mookerjea. Like Day, Mookerjea plunges into the heart of ongoing debates that are reshaping contemporary politics and political theory. He makes manifest some of the latent political possibilities in Hardt and Negri's instant classic, *Empire* (2001), doing so via detours into the work of other contemporary theorists of the popular and the political (from Michel Foucault to Michel de Certeau), and by thinking about *Empire* through the lens of a still emergent Canadian cultural studies and the specificity of Canadian social and political contexts. Mookerjea's "Cultural Studies with Multitudes" is so rich in the range and number of themes, topics, and tropes it explores that it defies easy summary. But at heart of Mookerjea's arguments with, through, and against *Empire* is his identification of that text's surprising failure to identify *race* as a defining category in both the exertion of global power and the possibilities of overturning it to create a global commons. He argues that Hardt and Negri "can find in the movements of global migration the virtual power of creating common locations of nomadism and miscegenation, of projecting its own virtuality toward reality, only by suppressing the fact that the migration of the multitude is everywhere met with the racism of the multitude." What is especially absent is an understanding of race not only in reference to the "contemporary racist exhortations of the moderate Right" but race as a central element of contemporary forms of a disciplinary power largely responsible for the withering of civil society.

Mookerjea mobilizes his criticisms of Hardt and Negri's failure to consider race as definitive of the multitude in order to articulate nothing less than a new, global cultural studies—a cultural studies that would be genuinely attentive to the political forms and social actors that *Empire* brings to light, if incompletely and problematically. In the first part of the article, Mookerjea critiques the utility of that most easily deployable of concepts in cultural studies: resistance. His appeal to a cultural studies ethnography that is described and passionately argued for in the second half of his article emerges out of Tony Bennett's suggestion that what we need in cultural studies today is "a fuller and richer cartography of the spaces between

total compliance and resistance, one which, in preventing these from functioning as bipolar opposites, will allow, in Geertz's terms, a 'thicker' description of the complex flows of culture...[in] uneven relations of power." Mookerjea's model of "creole communication," which needs to be understood as simultaneously a mode of scholarly mapping *and* a decisive political intervention, answers both Bennett's demand for "thick" description in cultural studies and describes a cultural studies that is directly involved in the "global political theatre" of the multitude.

Collectively, the articles in this special issue take up the question that continues to lie at heart of cultural studies: how contemporary forms of power mobilize, work through, and express themselves in and through culture. An investigation of the spaces in and through which culture and power move and operate requires scholars situated in Canada to remain attentive to Canadian spaces and to those global cultural spaces that shape contemporary experience. The articles are invitations to a form of critical work for which we can never have enough comrades-in-arms.

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NOTES

1. Jody Berland, "Angels Dancing: Cultural Technologies and the Production of Space," in *Cultural Studies*, ed. Lawrence Grossberg, Cary Nelson, and Paul Treichler (New York: Routledge: 1992), 39.
2. See both Marshall, McLuhan, "The Comics and Culture," (Saturday Night, 28 February 1953) and *Counterblast* (1954).

3. Bill Readings, *The University in Ruins* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1996), 89–90.
4. *Ibid.*, 90.
5. Samuel E. Huntington, *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of the World Order* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1998).
6. Susie O'Brien and Imre Szeman, *Popular Culture: A User's Guide* (Scarborough, ON: Nelson, 2004).
7. Lawrence Grossberg, "The Space of Culture, The Power of Space," in *The Post-Colonial Question: Common Skies, Divided Horizons*, ed. Iain Chambers and Lidia Curti (London: Routledge, 1996), 169–188.
8. *Ibid.*, 186.
9. Readings, 97.
10. Henry Jenkins, Tara McPherson, and Jane Shattuc, "The Culture that Sticks to Your Skin: A Manifesto for a New Cultural Studies," in *Hop on Pop: The Politics and Pleasures of Popular Culture*, ed. Henry Jenkins, Tara McPherson, and Jane Shattuc (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2003), 3.
11. Marcel Proust, "The Past Recaptured," in *Remembrance of Things Past 2*, trans. Frederick A. Blossom (New York: Random House, 1932), 1113.
12. See particularly Jeremy Lane, "Pierre Bourdieu and the Chronotopes of 'Post-Theory'" in *Post-Theory: New Directions in Criticism*, ed. Martin McQuillan et al. (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1999), 89–100.
13. Stephen Pender and Andrew Gray, "Afterword: Cultural Studies in Canada," *University of Toronto Quarterly* 64.4 (1995): 568.
14. *Ibid.*, 18.
15. Ernesto Laclau, "preface" to *Post-Theory*, vii.
16. Jenkins, McPherson, and Shattuc, "The Culture that Sticks," 21.
17. Henry Jenkins, Tara McPherson, and Jane Shattuc, "Defining Popular Culture," in *Hop on Pop*, 40.
18. O'Brien and Szeman, 210.
19. Aniko Bodroghkozy, "As Canadian As Possible... Anglo-Canadian Popular Culture and the American Other," in *Hop on Pop*, 566–589.
20. In his critical assessment of the conference and the book, Fredric Jameson offers a telling breakdown of the nationalities represented at the conference: "25 Americans, 11 British, 4 Australians, 2 Canadians, and one Hungarian and Italian, respectively." In "On 'Cultural Studies,'" *Social Text* 34 (1993): 25.
21. Jon Stratton and Ien Ang, "On the Impossibility of a Global Cultural Studies: 'British' Cultural Studies in an 'International' Frame," in *Stuart Hall: Critical Dialogues in Cultural Studies*, ed. David Morley & Kuan-Hsing Chen (London: Routledge, 1996), 364.
22. This definition of neoliberalism is forcefully articulated in Pierre Bourdieu, *Acts of Resistance: Against the Tyranny of the Market*, trans. Richard Nice (New York: The New Press, 1998).
23. Paul Gilroy, *Against Race: Imagining Political Culture beyond the Color Line* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2000).
24. See Eldon Garnet, ed., *Impulse Archaeology* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2005), for a sample of this kind of work.
25. See also Gary Genosko, Samir Gandesha, and Kristina Marcellus, "A Crucible of Critical Interdisciplinarity: The Toronto Telos Group," *Topia* 8 (2002): 1–18.

26. In Richard E. Lee's recent global survey of the institutional development of cultural studies, Canada merits a mere page and a half. Even in this abbreviated space, he still manages to get almost everything wrong. Relying on the 1991 special issue of *Canadian Review of Sociology and Anthropology* on cultural studies edited by Raymond Morrow, and a highly selective web survey of cultural studies and communications programs in Canada (focusing on Trent, Guelph, Queen's [!] and Carlton [sic]), Lee claims that "in Canada, cultural studies has remained an Anglophone phenomenon associated with the Birmingham School" (147). See Richard E. Lee, *Life and Times of Cultural Studies: The Politics and Transformation of the Structures of Knowledge* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2003), 147–148.
27. See for instance Ackbar Abbas and John Nguyet Erni, "General Introduction," in *Internationalizing Cultural Studies: An Anthology*, ed. Ackbar Abbas and John Nguyet Erni (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2005), 1–12.
28. Fredric Jameson, "Conclusion: The Dialectic of Utopia and Ideology," in *The Political Unconscious: Narrative as a Socially Symbolic Act* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1981), 281–299.