Spaces and Places of Cultural Studies

By Mikko Lehtonen

Abstract

As cultural studies has sought for a foothold in universities, it has faced pressures of modern disciplinarity it aims at to challenge and alter. In the conjuncture of neo-liberal university policies new weight is given to multidisciplinarity as an instrument for reshaping universities in favour of cost-effectiveness and quick-fix applications. In this new situation cultural studies has to defend purposeful and enduring diversity in and of universities. In order to be able to do this it has to think of itself not only as a critical space but also as such place where universities could critically reflect themselves and their place in the world.

Keywords: Cultural studies, universities, disciplines, neoliberalism, diversity

Spaces and Places of Cultural Studies

Stories told of cultural studies stress its worldly nature, repeating that its agenda is, or at least should be, informed by the contexts studied.[1] Along with scholars who work e.g. in fields of women's studies or postcolonial studies, cultural studies practitioners like to see themselves as cunning smugglers of earthly questions inside the walls of academia.

The multi-, cross-, post- or anti-disciplinary project of cultural studies came famously into existence outside the universities. It has, however, for 40 years sought its place inside academia (e.g. Bennett 1998, Dworkin 1997, Grossberg 1997a and 1997b, Lee 2003). Establishing cultural studies projects, programmes, centres and like, has in the last decades primarily taken place in academic contexts. There has been some discussion on how cultural studies changes the academic contexts it works in (e.g. Hall 1992, Williams 1989), but not that much debate on how academic contexts have produced various pressures on the forms cultural studies has assumed.[2]

In this text, I outline the two-way traffic between cultural studies and its academic contexts. First, I discuss university cultures that form immediate contexts of cultural studies scholars' activities, looking at both heteronomous and autonomous elements of these cultures. Second, I look closer at workings of academic disciplines and the pressures disciplinarity produces for cultural studies. Finally, I look closer at various locations of cultural studies in the contemporary (neo-liberal) academia in the light of two somewhat different notions of cultural studies, i.e., cultural studies as a space and as a place.

I University Cultures

What kinds of contexts of action are universities for cultural studies? In order to get a grip on this, let me discuss the notion of *university cultures*. By "university cultures" I refer to certain simultaneously real and symbolic practices.[3] These practices consist of certain procedures and assumptions, a body of relatively stable workings and suppositions. The shared values, norms and behaviours constitute a certain culture pervading all academic disciplines (classic portrayals of the phenomenon are Becher 1989 and Clark 1987, see also Ylijoki 2000, 2005 and 2008).[4]

Usually university cultures are thought to consist of such things as an interest in knowledge for its own sake, critical thinking, specialised knowledge, disputation, openness, scepticism, tolerance, reflection, academic freedom and the like (e.g. Merton 1968). Such characterisations, however, are first and foremost ideal, based rather on how academia wants to be seen than on how it actually works.

Heteronomy

One of self-idealisations of academia is the tendency to see itself as a predominantly autonomous field of action. But university cultures are not self-sufficient in the sense of being dependent only on themselves. On the contrary, it is relatively easy to perceive various ways in which university cultures are heteronomous, that is, dependent on factors other than universities. Let me refer to just three such elements:

First, various academic disciplines are linked to trajectories of life and professions their practitioners study and educate functionaries to. To take one example, literary studies, in which I graduated, are in many ways tied to literary institutions, reproducing not only their values but also the institutions themselves. In the late modern world it would be quite difficult to imagine literary public sphere without the research and training contributions of academic literary scholars. Another example is media studies, in which I currently work. Media scholars too reproduce the phenomena they study – not only by educating journalists and passing on certain professional habits and attitudes but also, for example, by acquiescing to the division of labour between different media forms as they scatter into groups of print media, television, radio, film and internet researchers[5].

Second, the national considerations also have their impacts on university cultures. In late modern nation states there are certain canons of subjects that nations must study and teach at the highest level if they want to be considered as modern and civilised. These canons vary to some extent (say, between Australia, India or Sweden), but the specific variations are all built on certain modern classifications, differentiating between natural and human sciences, social sciences and the humanities, international and national fields, theoretical and empirical sciences etc. Much the same way as each nation has to have a flag and a national anthem, they also need to have universities with certain academic disciplines in order to be accepted as full members of the family of modern nations. This, of course, is just one of the paradoxical outcomes of the modern universal compulsion to clothe transnational imperatives in national guises, but it nevertheless has its impact in shaping the assumedly universal institutions into particular national forms (e.g. Sassen 2006).

Third, universities are as educative and research institutes tied in manifold ways to transnational and national economies, politics and cultures. The forms of practical connections between universities, economic agents, states and actors of civil societies vary, but they all have their hopes and fears in relation to universities. Political and economic agents also have their ways of ensuring that universities assume their designated place. The compulsive or persuasive policies towards universities vary from one conjuncture to another. In the current neo-liberal conjuncture universities are coerced and coaxed to recreate themselves in the image

of enterprises (e.g. Slaughter & Leslie 1997, Canaan & Shumar ed. 2008) that behave largely in a market-oriented way while competing for external funding.

Cultural studies exists in ambiguous relation to these elements of heteronomity. For cultural studies there are no self-evident professions or institutions to reproduce. Neither is cultural studies a predominantly national (let alone nationalistic) field of research in the sense that it would have been born for purposes of constructing nationally oriented understandings of contemporary world. Cultural studies also tends to have a critical stance towards various transnational and national economic, political and cultural forces, even though there are also pressures towards exploitation of its findings among entrepreneurs and policy makers. Instead of dependencies outlined above, cultural studies brings forward other kinds of ideas on relations between universities and civil society, stressing that academic researchers are not in their work responsible first and foremost for nations, enterprises or professions but for those who cannot in conditions of modern division of labour work as intellectuals.

Autonomy

Universities and single academic disciplines rarely reflect these dependencies. Perhaps this is part of their persistent habit of not paying too much attention to reflecting their own actual ways of thinking and acting (apart from idealisations produced on various ceremonious occasions).

To stress the heteronomous nature of university cultures is not, of course, to say that they are determined only from the outside. The centuries long traditions of universities themselves also imprint these cultures, as is often stressed at various academic anniversaries. Usually these traditions are seen to emanate from mediaeval universities, famously based on a model offered by the guilds (Reeves 1969). As mediaeval guilds, the first universities also distinguished between apprenticeship, journeymanship and mastership from each other. This model gave the universities four premises that still largely persist: First, novices do indeed belong to the same organisation as the masters. Second, there are progressive levels in learning. Third, the disciples in the middle of their education (journeymen) can teach the novices. Fourth, the master has a monopoly of teaching and learning.

Modern universities are much more diverse and segmented in structure than the mediaeval ones[6]. Moreover, in addition to the traditional task of teaching, modern universities have also assumed the more recent task of research. In recent years these two tasks, teaching and research, have been further complemented by a third one, known as service activities, that in the neo-liberal conjuncture first and foremost imply an incentive to contribute to economic development.

In spite of the introduction of new duties, the mediaeval guild model is still recognisable in modern universities, especially within academic disciplines. The guild model is not officially subscribed to, but practically it is adhered to.

What makes the suppositions, norms and practical workings of universities effective is primarily the fact that they are largely implicit, not publicly articulated nor subjected to critical scrutiny (cf. Gerholm 1990). This, of course, is a normal *modus operandi* of power. Only a dim-witted ruler would try to make explicit the workings of his power. (On the other hand, a witless ruler would probably not even know what the sources of his power are.)

The implicit cultures influence daily academic practices in such a strong way that in comparison to this mute coercion and patronising all that universities publicly proclaim of themselves – be they strategies, statutes, degree requirements or other – are doomed to seem quite insipid. Anyone wishing to study the values, norms and workings of universities in printed form would no doubt be disappointed as the values, norms etc. are not recorded, but must be ferreted out by each and every one as best they can. This, in its turn, guarantees that the power of the masters remains largely unquestioned.

Cultural studies has an uneasy relation to allegedly autonomous features of universities. In its multi-, inter-, cross-, post- or anti-disciplinary tones it resembles in some ways pre-modern universities with their generalist approaches. In stressing worldly research and teaching agendas it represents an alternative view concerning new "service activities" of universities, willing to work not for enterprises but for civil society. Finally, in relation to disciplinary power, cultural studies aims to work as a meta-discipline, a field where university can critically measure itself. (I will return to this last point.)

Academic feudalism and socialism

Two metaphors come relatively effortlessly to mind when trying to decipher what is going on in contemporary universities. They are metaphors of universities as feudal states and of universities as "actually existing socialism". The former depicts traditional modern university with relatively big autonomy and small external economic pressures, whereas the latter describes (paradoxically) the current "academic capitalism" (of which see Ylijoki 2003).

Feudal states were famously made up of the king, noble landowners and vassals who were granted possession of land by the landowners. The feudal system was characterized by absence of public authority and the exercise of administrative and judicial functions by local lords. Academic disciplines are indeed reminiscent of autonomic fiefs with their own noblemen and limited openness in their functioning. The noblemen, known as professors, "form the core of local, national, and international scientific establishments" and "play a key part in the development of scientific knowledge" (Elias 1982: 5). Socialisation into one's own discipline here equals socialisation into implicit traditional knowledges of one's fief (cf. Gerholm 1990). After learning the unwritten rules one gains inclusion in the disciplinary "us".

If the universities at the level of disciplines are reminiscent of feudal fiefs, as wholes they recall "actually existing socialism". "Actually existing socialism" meant, among other things, modifying reality into a highly aesthetic form in the sense that what mattered was not the quantity nor indeed the quality of production or the population's actual quality of living. What mattered in this simulation was, instead, how the production was represented to central government and how the powers-that-be represented the reality to the people.

Under the neo-liberal university policies the university reality is largely aestheticized in the sense that *Schein* (how things seem to be) takes precedence over *Sein* (how things actually are). In other words, in contemporary universities outer appearances take precedence over the real state of things, at least in relations between universities and ministries of education or in the public images of universities. At stake in negotiations between state funded universities and ministries of education is not what the universities really do (particularly in relation to the actual quality of teaching or research), but what they appear to do in numerical terms. The neo-liberal university policies cast the university leaders in the role of factory managers in "actually existing socialism" and the heads of faculties and departments in the roles of middle management. The discussions between universities and governmental departments concern what the universities say they produce, not what they really produce.

Both models are awkward for cultural studies project. Feudalism tends to produce neurotic disciplinary identities with constant guarding of academic borders, occasional xenophobia and (luckily infrequent) ostracism. Actually existing socialism creates aversion towards research agendas set from the civil society as well as towards production of critical knowledge.

II Disciplinarities

Modern university cultures are predominantly disciplinary cultures. First year students or new PhD students do not acculturate into universities as wholes but into disciplines. One way to characterise the invisible disciplinary acculturation of novices into academia is to portray it as their acquisition of a discipline-specific habitus.[7] This does not involve the explicit transmission of rules or learning of roles, but "a tacit understanding gained by participating in the practices of a certain field" (Becher & Huber 1990: 237). Socialisation or acculturation to university cultures occurs largely by learning the norms and workings of disciplines by trial and error.[8] These norms and workings constitute the hidden curriculum of each discipline, conceptualized by Oili-Helena Ylijoki (2000: 341) as their *moral orders*.[9]

The new members of staff are recruited from those who have internalised this tacit knowledge. The university cultures thus reproduce themselves first by invisible teaching of invisible norms, and, second, by filling teaching positions with

those who have absorbed these norms thereby successfully acculturating to the discipline in question.

These invisible norms form a glass ceiling, felt sorely by many who have tried to spark off debates on the paradigmatic matters of various disciplines, only to find that with their best intentions they have been condemned to be heretics, not one of "us".

If the values, norms and workings of universities were explicit and public, free for all to read, weigh up and criticise, universities would surely be different. This might bring with it such academic freedom of thinking and interaction that is not available to those who have to grope their ways blindfold through the normative jungle. Now, however, we live in universities where the norms and workings are neither explicit nor rationalised.

Cultural studies relation to disciplinarity is uneasy – not least because many of its practitioners are forced or other refugees from disciplines they were educated in. For some time cultural studies has been seen as a means by which the university thinks about itself (Hall 2008: 18). In its anti- and inter-disciplinarity cultural studies is a "reluctant discipline" (Bennett 1998) or a meta-discipline ("meta" meaning here that it is a field that does not take disciplinarity as an unquestioned premise but tries, instead, to scrutinise the conditions and consequences of academic disciplinary system). As such, cultural studies has a potential to be simultaneously a free field ("third space" between discrete disciplines), a battlefield (a forum for demarcations and confrontations) and a field of overlap[10]. It has a potential to produce hybridising bricolages and to bring together elements that have elsewhere been separated from each other. (I will return to this towards the end of this text.)

Tacit and expressed disciplinarity

To stress various negative consequences of disciplinarity, as I have done above, is not to say that the disciplinary organisation of academic research and teaching is totally without foundation. Obviously there has to be *some* kind of division of labour between academic researchers so that they can produce cumulative areas of knowledge. In order to be able to say something about something one has to delimit the topics one is talking about as well as the ways one talks about them. As in all other discursive action, in academic work, too, one has to define an object and a way to speak about it.

Modern disciplinarity, however, has also non-productive dimensions. Choosing the object and accepted ways of talking about it inevitably excludes numerous things from disciplinary considerations. In the last instance disciplines can only institute themselves by the aid of what lies outside them, by distinguishing themselves from that which they are not, i.e., what they exclude or expel from their limits (Hall 2008: 71–72, Weber 1987). Also disciplines, indeed, have constitutive

outsides and cannot, hence, be "self-identical, independent, autonomous, or self-contained" (Hall 2008: 72).

The homogeneity of academic disciplines is produced, however, not only tacitly but also overtly. The homogeneity is based, on the one hand, on various attempts to draw distinctions between one's own and other disciplines, and, on the other hand, in a constant guarding and homogenising of areas thus formed. Disciplinary power resides first and foremost in questions concerning what is studied and how. It also underlies in questions concerning for whom or what the research is carried on. In other words, disciplinary power is power to define proper objects of knowledge and correct ways to view them.

The openness of cultural studies lies in this sense exactly in its anti-disciplinary nature. In cultural studies there are no given objects of knowledge. "Culture" is no such object, since cultural studies approaches culture not as something that is already known. Culture is not in cultural studies something that is used to explain things, but a thing that has itself to be explained. For cultural studies culture is not an answer but a question and a means of asking. In this sense cultural studies is not grounded on a given theory of culture but is rather meta-theory that aims at explaining the explainer, that is, culture.

Multidisciplinarity

Advocating multidisciplinarity used to equal being against the academic grain. All of a sudden multidisciplinarity, however, seems now to be the hottest hot among academic policy makers. For cultural studies practitioners who have been advocating the blessedness of multidisciplinarity for aeons, it is baffling to come across the new academic fashion of reiterating the seemingly identical mantra in official speeches and documents. Today, it is not uncommon to hear even from state authorities that cross-disciplinary areas of research are vital to the future of universities.

An optimistic reading of this twist would point out that universities and officialdom have finally realised that the modern disciplinary division of academic labour does not fit the logic of the late modern world and that most of today's relevant research questions lie in the no man's lands between modern disciplines. An optimist would relate new weight given for multidisciplinarity to the fact that contemporary disciplinary divisions were formed in conditions of classical modernity and that they do epitomise modern sphere logic (e.g. between "society" and "culture"), as well as the logic of the internal divisions of the public sphere (e.g. between press, literature, film and television, music, drama, visual arts etc.). The optimist would further stress that in late modernity it is increasingly troublesome to try to understand these spheres and modalities in isolation from each other.

The pessimist, on the other hand, might think that the new inclination towards multidisciplinarity is linked to neo-liberal policies where universities are turned upside down in order to eliminate overlap, to build bigger units than before and,

instead of basic research, to emphasise such applied research that would yield immediate harvests. In this new mode of knowledge production (Gibbons et al. 1994) university research is "transforming from the traditional discipline-based basic research into transdisciplinary, problem-oriented project research carried out with external funding" (Ylijoki 2005: 557).

The pessimist might further ponder whether the new multidisciplinarity does really entail a critical stance towards current logic of disciplinarity – apart from possible administrative reforms. Does not the policy that consumes basic resources of universities in fact buttress the walls between the disciplines as each discipline curls up around its "core contents"? In this sense one might even ponder whether this specific form of multidisciplinarity in fact contributes in maintaining the disciplinary borders intact.

III Spaces and Places of Cultural studies

Like other cultural formations, the university cultures, too, are ambivalent, entailing tradition and innovation, structure and action, subservience and autonomy. If university cultures were purely repressive, academia would be occupied exclusively by masochists. Even in the prevailing circumstances innovation, action and autonomy are salient elements of research and teaching.

The thousand-dollar question is, then: How could innovation, action and autonomy also be necessary elements of university cultures? By this I mean the challenge of organising research and teaching so as to promote true innovativeness (instead of contemporary self-proclaimed "innovativeness" that mostly serves a quick productive application) and the activity of those working at the universities.

Organising Anarchy

Here we come up against the classical question: How to organise anarchy? My own, undeniably Utopian but perhaps for that very reason most topical answer is: By making visible violence that is intrinsic in disciplinarity and hence re-opening the domain of politics in universities.

To open this up a bit: The disciplinary system tends to represent itself as a natural one, but, in order to function as legitimately instituted fields of knowledge, disciplines must repress their multiple dependencies on existing power-relations. Disciplines cannot found itself, as Gary Hall (2008: 73) reminds. Instead, their authority must come from somewhere else that is outside the disciplines and precedes them. This authorizing authority is none other than state (ibid.).

Disciplines must be actively reminded of the constitutive violence on which their identities are built. They must be time and again pointed out that "any such differentiation or demarcation that goes to institute a discipline – the judgment or decision as to what to include and what to exclude, what should be taken inside

and what expelled – is an inherently unstable and irreducibly violent one" (Hall 2008: 73).

Trouble is that in current disciplinary university system it is difficult to produce spaces and places for openly *political* discussions concerning academic work. By "political" I mean such dialogues where participants would from the outset admit that there are no pregiven or self-explanatory premises for outlining the place, content or segmentation of academic work. If the historical and discursive character of disciplines were made explicit, the domain of politics could be perhaps (re)opened in universities. By making the academia to remember what it has forgotten, i.e., by denaturalizing the basic assumptions of current disciplinary system, cultural studies could represent a new political challenge of *organised diversity* in universities.

Cultural Studies as a Space and a Place

In order to be able to do this, cultural studies should be thought not only as a space but also as a place. What do I mean by this? Cultural studies is often depicted as a space, that is, an area for actions and effects. As a space cultural studies is, as it were, a free field, a "third space" somewhere beyond disciplinary determinations. But should we, given the diverse institutionalisation of cultural studies in the last decades, also speak of cultural studies in less abstract terms, that is, as a place? And if cultural studies was seen as a place, what kind of place would it be?

The problem in this shift of perspective is, of course, that places are all too often spoken of in terms of stasis with more or less clear cut boundaries. Prevailing notions of places imply that they are more or less limited and gain their identities from and within themselves. These notions imply that places are containers, so to speak, and not clusters of relations[11]. Places are not conceived as interfaces, but as enclosures with permanent origins and immoveable centres. These images effectively prevent us from thinking of places from the perspectives of activity, decentredness and change. On the contrary, the prevailing imagery calls for emphasizing the borders that keep places apart from other places, instead of foregrounding all the connections places have to the realities of which they are parts. Moreover, in these images each individual is first and foremost tied to one single place, whereas in real life, of course, people are successively and often also simultaneously linked to many places. Place is represented in this imagery as a self-sufficient autotopy. It is a locus of constant guarding of borders, of endless inclusion of "us" and exclusion of "them".

Perhaps such notions of places have made cultural studies scholars speak of their project more in terms of space than place. But should one not try to redefine the dominant notions of what places are also in relation to cultural studies? This would not necessarily be a futile exercise, since the conceptualisations of what a place is also have implications for the ways academic disciplines and fields of

research are conceived of. Perhaps it is no coincidence that dominant ideas of places closely resemble dominant ideas of disciplines as such autotopies in need of constant border guarding?

The alternative way of imagining places that might also help to think of cultural studies as a place in a new way would be an idea of a place as a historical formation where numerous elements from outside the place "itself" are present. This would entail thinking of a place as a cluster of relations, not as a container. To adapt a metaphor widely used in cultural studies, places could be perceived as *diasporic*.

A diasporic place? Perhaps, but not a diasporic place in the sense of it being filled with nostalgic longing for some original home terrain one has been forced to relinquish. Perhaps, instead, a diasporic place in the sense of a dwelling for a considerable number of people who have had to find refuge, a different place to be in, a new terrain of hope and new beginnings. A diasporic place as a field in which one can feel anchored and at home in, but which is not expected to be eternally identical with itself. A place without "roots" in the sense of origins, but with a lot of "routes" in the sense of passages and pathways (cf. Gilroy 1995).

The idea of cultural studies as a diasporic place might bring back the idea cherished at the beginning of the 1990s, that is, the idea of practitioners of cultural studies as nomads (e.g. Grossberg 1992: 126). The idea of a diasporic place is close to a notion of researchers as nomads in the sense that those in diaspora must also be acutely aware of their own positionality. But whereas the idea of a nomad easily leads to romanticizing cultural researchers as some kind of free-ranging intellectuals without any external determinations, the idea of cultural studies as a specific diasporic place might bring with it questions of institutional power. To ask who, when, how and under which conditions have to travel and temporarily settle down is to ask in what contexts the intellectual movement in question takes place. What are the institutional power relations that determine such displacements and dislocations? How do these relations over-determine diasporic formations? In other words, how do the power relations imprint the spaces and places of cultural studies, and how does this affect its make-up?

The challenge of cultural studies

As the mantra of multidisciplinarity gains popularity among neoconservatives, it is vital to bear in mind that multidisciplinarity, too, always has its contexts that affect its forms and usages. Multidisciplinarity is not an automatic passage to critical heaven. It can also be used as a neo-liberal instrument for readjusting universities in favour of cost-effectiveness and quick-fix applications. Such multidisciplinarity often leaves the traditional disciplinary borders untouched and is organised around projects where researchers from various disciplines gather temporarily only to quickly return to their immutable academic homes.

In relation to such multidisciplinary the challenge that cultural studies should represent along other fields with expressed emancipatory interests of knowledge is different. It is the challenge of *purposeful and enduring diversity*. If disciplinarity equals scarcity, regulation and control, purposeful and enduring diversity represents abundance, variation and potentiality. It represents an effort to build an environment conducive to diversity, an effort to put "diversity at the centre of the curriculum and the demographics of university" (Appadurai 1996: 26). It is a project where there are no given objects whose meaning and nature is established in advance by disciplinary conventions (Nelson and Gaonkar 1996: 18).

Purposefully diverse new formations do not easily enter universities where each feudal lord stands guard over his modest plot. New formations may not be viewed with delight in university leaderships for whom they may not at first glance represent a promise of such results that would bring riches to their institutions. And yet the hope for universities lies in hybrids and impure cross-breedings. In a world where modern divisions between economy, politics and culture are increasingly blurred and where media boundaries become more and more insignificant, the hope of understanding what is going on does not lie in fostering the purity of disciplines.

In late modern contexts the pursuit of disciplinary purity would mean the pursuit of a dead space. In order to fight against disciplinary pressures as well as neoliberal coercion towards artificial multidisciplinarity, spaces of cultural studies should also be organised into places – places of discontent, endless suspicion and questioning that is also directed towards the non-place one dwells in. As a meta-discipline where university critically reflects itself cultural studies might also contribute to another kind of university (Hall 2008) that is not only a possibility but also a necessity.

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Notes

1 An often cited example of this is Hall 1992, especially pp. 278–279.

2 To give just one relatively recent example of such pressures: In today's Finnish academia, it is nowadays virtually *de rigueur* to write in English and submit manuscripts to international, most often Anglo-American, forums. Otherwise one's chances of success in the battle for domestic research funding are thin. Now, this is diametrically opposed to the worldly ethos of cultural studies, creating a situation where an increasing proportion of cultural research is directed at other scholars and not to those whose lives are the topic of research. This produces, indeed, a vicious circle where one has to publish extensively in English in order to publish more in the future – again in English. By this I do not intend to say that Finnish cultural studies practitioners should publish only in Finnish or that Japanese colleagues should always prefer their own mother tongue. English is undeniably *lingua franca* of also the international cultural studies community with all obvious pros and cons (of which see Fornäs and Lehtonen 2005). One cannot escape the imperatives of English when communicating with colleagues from all over the world. This, however, should not divert Finnish, Japanese or other cultural studies scholars from acting as public intellectuals also in their own languages and home countries.

3 Cf. what Ludwig Huber (1990: 241) writes: "The term culture refers here to both everyday life and social and cognitive structures of universities and is linked to an idea of acculturation or socialisation as the development of certain dispositions to act that are specific for universities and disciplines, produced in and reproducing their culture."

4 The conscious choice of the plural – 'university culture*s*' – instead of the singular refers, of course, to the fact that in universities there are several disparate (normally discipline based) cultures. Disciplines differ from each other in many ways, among them attitudes to socio-political issues, social background of their practitioners, external relations and resources (Huber 1990). The most common breeding grounds of cultural studies – humanities, social sciences and education – are, however, not necessarily that different from each other.

5 The emergent research area of multimodality and intermediality (of which see, e.g., Kress and van Leeuwen 2001) is an exception to this rule.

6 It is well known that in mediaeval universities there were no modern disciplines. Instead, teaching was organised so that students were first trained in *trivium* (logic, grammar and rhetoric) and *quadrivium* (arithmetic, geometry, astronomy and music), specialising only after that in medicine, jurisprudence or theology. The university went by the name *universitas*, meaning a whole or the whole world.

7 A small example of this comes from my own university where students are in their exam papers always asked to identify their main subject. As I teach the multidisciplinary Media Culture program that is a main subject only at the MA and PhD levels, my basic degree students have routinely to affirm in the beginning of each exam that they do not belong in the last instance to the field they are studying with me but are instead inhabitants of another area .

8 "Any person entering a new group with the ambition of becoming a fully fledged, competent member has to learn to comply with its academic rules. This applies also to academic departments", writes Tomas Gerholm (1990: 263).

9 Ludwig Huber (1990: 248) describes this acculturation or socialisation as follows: "individuals act as they do only in part consciously and directly in response to goals. Born into certain fields and then initiated to others, and finding themselves in certain positions surrounded by clusters (groups) of people sharing this situation, people somehow grasp how the game works, learn by doing and incorporate the generating schemes very much as a child learns its mother tongue and patterns of social behaviour, i.e. a practical competence [...] without knowing the rules or consciously complying with them."

10 On these three types of fields, see Fornäs & al. 2002.

11 On these metaphors, see Lehtonen 2005. On conceptualisations concerning spaces and places, see Massey 2005, part four.

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