Communication and Critical/Cultural Studies

A Conversation about Blow-ups: Communication Studies, Critical Studies, Cultural Studies & the Current Crisis of the Humanities James Hay interviews Toby Miller

Toby Miller

PLEASE SCROLL DOWN FOR ARTICLE

A Conversation about Blow-ups: Communication Studies, Critical Studies, Cultural Studies & the Current Crisis of the Humanities
James Hay interviews Toby Miller

James Hay: Toby, our interview will be part of the second issue that I am editing of *Communication & Critical/Cultural Studies*—a journal now in its tenth volume. I have designed the first two issues for which I am responsible as an inter-generational conversation about the past, present, and futures of the journal's key words—"critical studies," "cultural studies," and "communication studies." The first issue that I edited comprises interviews with a generation that has shaped work occurring under the banner of these terms since at least the 1970s, though I selected interviewees who are still making important interventions in the present. The issue in which our interview will appear is comprised mostly of short essays, by a younger generation, about the usefulness, uptake, contradictions, and challenges of research in 2013 conducted about or from any of the journal's key words.

I have staged this interview with you because many of the arguments advanced in your recent book, *Blow Up the Humanities* (Temple UP, 2012) pertain directly to some of these contradictions and challenges, and because (as I intend to discuss with you) your book does not quite address the past, present, and future of communication studies' and media studies' relation to the Humanities, even though that relation is a useful one to consider from a journal representing new directions occurring at the intersection of critical studies, cultural studies, and communication studies, and from a journal that is sponsored by an academic association (the National Communication Association) which has a long history, since the early twentieth century, in representing "communication studies" as a project born and developed in the US.

Toby Miller: I looked at the NCA webpage along with the Broadcast Education Association and the Association of Education in Journalism and Mass Communication versions. Those sites corroborated what I have learned from a number of people

Toby Miller is a Distinguished Professor at the University of California, Riverside. Correspondence to: Toby Miller, University of California, Riverside, CA 92521, USA. E-mail: tobym69@icloud.com.

I have worked with over the years, as colleagues and as students—people such as Ron Greene, Larry Grossberg, Melissa Deem, cultural-studies scholar Kelly Gates, yourself—plenty of people who have taught me about these institutions and their history. Until about 1996, I'd never heard of "speech communication" or "rhetoric." I'd read *Critical Studies in Mass Communication*, as it was then called, but hadn't recognized that it was a professional-association journal. A lot of this was new to me in the mid- to late-'90s when I became a professor in the US, and I've been patching the story together since.

Part of the problem is that most of the people who bother to tell the story are essentially sacerdotal figures within the elect, and therefore not very critical of the discipline and its history. A lot of the metacriticism is essentially Old Testament— X begat Y begat P begat G—right? When I visited the NCA website today, one of the themes that struck me was that cultural studies and political economy—both of which I'd seen as emergent strengths at NCA during the time I've been involved, albeit as an occasional visitor—are very marginal in the list of preferred topics and approaches. The history endorsed on the website recuperates old traditions.

When *Communication and Critical/Cultural Studies* was proposed, NCA approached many people, including me, to endorse it as an idea, and lend our names to it—even though I was not particularly important to NCA. Somebody may even have said "he's a pain" but he works at a proper university (at that time, NYU).

JH: Surely not.

TM: Surely not. But there is a contradiction that I'm sure you run into as an editor: an effort by NCA to make itself more inclusive, even as it commemorates its disciplinary past and traditions. And editors of journals such as yours strive to make them cutting edge and exciting, even as (because yours is an elected/appointed position) they are obliged to represent the collective interests of the association.

JH: I interviewed Larry Grossberg for the prior issue because he was part of that history in the 1980s and early 1990s, when efforts by his generation to formalize an identity within the association were repeatedly rebuffed. And Larry's story is that they had to go to the International Communication Association (ICA) in order to introduce critical studies and cultural studies, albeit under the banner of "philosophy of communication" [renamed in 2012 the Division of Philosophy, Theory, & Critique], which is another strange compromise in certain respects. But ICA itself was an offshoot of the Speech Communication Association in the late 60s, early 70s, when (because of the global parochialism of something called communication studies in the US) a faction aspired to a more international or cosmopolitan take on communication. I discussed that briefly in my Introduction to the previous issue of the journal.

But alas a conversation about the institutional history of communication studies, and even the way that cultural studies or critical studies get represented through

that history, lies beyond the scope of our interview—or at least the primary reasons that I wanted to conduct an interview with you. As I mentioned at the outset, we can address that history, but I want to do so through a conversation about your recent book, *Blow Up the Humanities*, which does not address directly the history of critical studies and cultural studies in communications studies or media studies.

As a way to get at some of the questions that I have about the salience of *Blow Up the Humanities* for readers of *this* journal in particular, let's first shift our discussion to how your history/biography intersects with the Humanities, critical studies, cultural studies, and communication/media studies

TM: I think the word "critical" as it came into my consciousness in the late 70s/early 80s as a way of understanding "society" was critical theory, which in those days essentially meant anti-functionalist accounts of the social order. I'm referring to non-Parsonian social theory. A very small number of us doing history and political science majors in Australia read (Theodor) Adorno and (Max) Horkheimer, (Jürgen) Habermas, (Louis) Althusser, and (Antonio) Gramsci. Althusser represented a leftist functionalism, Gramsci a more malleable, perhaps more realistic, more hopeful account of the struggle for meaning, and the Frankfurt people a hyper-rationality that supposedly avoided the worst of Marxism, as well as the Right. One struggled through the "rationality guys" from Western Marxism of the post-war period, to get to Gramsci. All these people were interconnected for me, as someone interested in problematizing a basic empiricism and an un-thought-out realism that dominated history and political science. So that meant "critical" to me. People who would have been greatly at variance with those folks, like E. P. Thompson and E. H. Carr, were also part of "my" critical genealogy. Thompson and Carr were obviously also people of the philosophically skeptical Left, but Carr for example wrote that great book acknowledging the consequences of epistemology for empirical work, namely, *What is History?*.

JH: It's interesting that you bring up, and that you once studied, Edward Hallett Carr, because that book had an enormous impact on me, too. But we'll save that for another day. I simply would interject here that your reference to Thompson and Carr speaks to your training's *historiographic* orientation—one that is more or less Marxist. The other names that you mention make claims about history, and the past's relation to the present, but these latter two names are more recognized as historians, and may have had an impact on your twin interests in politics and history.

TM: In addition to theoretical questions from the Left,which interested me, I was energized by the intersection of Marxism and feminism. Susan Brownmiller's notion of rape as a constitutive component of the violence of masculinity and, in fact, of patriarchy, was also very much on the list. Some of my slightly more enlightened— and dialectical—colleagues were also reading Raymond Williams. Nobody I knew was

reading Michel Foucault. I was reading Immanuel Wallerstein, who was in the middle of his great, sweeping world historical projects. These were the people I thought of as doing critical stuff.

The other two terms, cultural studies and communication studies, didn't mean anything to me. They didn't exist when I went to the Australian National University from 1977 to 1980. There was nothing called Communications, as far as I'm aware. No one was studying "the media" except occasionally as a funny add-on to looking at political campaigning in the US. {28:35}.

Philosophy, which I didn't take, was moving very quickly toward the Anglo-American analytical tradition, though there were still some phenomenologists. Sociology and anthropology were mostly functionalist—an anthropology drawing on the social anthropology tradition of the UK but minus the interesting theoretical influences of, say, structuralism—at least among the people that I knew. So I had no relationship to cultural, communication, or media studies, even though people around me were talking about Thompson, Althusser, Gramsci, and Williams, and I was reading those authors (with the exception of Williams—I didn't think literary criticism mattered).

So I hadn't realized you could study the media. It was only after years of working in radio, and working as a speechwriter in the bureaucracy (some of which had occurred after I finished my undergrad degree) that I discovered the things I had learnt on the job were things you could do and criticize (!) academically. All of this came together when I became a graduate student—at a particular historical moment of the late 80s. In that sense, it was a very exciting *late* event for me. All these things were completely unknown to me until I was almost thirty years old.

I was quite shocked when, having made some false starts with graduate studies in Economics a few years earlier, I fully returned to academia, in the late 1980s to discover that the problems I'd had in reconciling my love of popular culture—sports, popular song, cinema, television drama, and so on—with Marxism and feminism, were okay (because I realized that there were feminists who liked men, and Marxists who enjoyed popular culture). Richard Dyer sums this up wonderfully when he says that a lot of the impulse behind the film theory associated with *Screen* in the UK [during the 1970s and 80s] was socialists and feminists trying to work out why they liked things they thought they shouldn't. [30:40] That impulse was very generative and exciting, and I began to meet a bunch of people in Australia who introduced me to the work of Foucault, Stuart Hall, and others involved in worlds that in those days were called "French theory" and "British cultural studies."

JH: And who were those mediators and professors of that for you?

TM: These folks didn't teach me formally. We chatted in pubs and bars. There was Gary Wickham, a sociologist at Murdoch University in Western Australia, which is where I went next. I met him on what is now the 513 bus to Fremantle (in those days, the 143). There was Noel King, recently retired, who wrote a brilliant piece in the *Australian Financial Review* a couple of weeks ago about his wrongful arrest and

imprisonment at the US border a year and a half ago because he was mistaken for somebody of the same name who had absconded with a fortune from Canada thirty years ago. There was Alan Mansfield, who died tragically young. Then John Hartley, John Fiske, Bob Hodge, Tom O'Regan, Lesley Stern, John Tulloch, Jon Stratton, Anne Freadman, Meaghan Morris, Paul Patton, Jim McKay, Ann Game, John Frow, and David Rowe. There was your old grad-school colleague Eric Michaels, whom I knew slightly, and John von Sturmer, a field-hockey international and Lévi-Strauss translator.

These people were located across Australia, normally at lesser-known universities, not at what are called the Sandstone Six, the equivalent of Britain's Russell Group, the Ivies, or the Big-10 or Pac-12 public universities in the US. [33:00] Most were at the equivalent of a Cal State, say—akin to non-doctoral institutions, or lacking full doctoral programs. However, they were the people who were bringing in lots of ideas —some of them through studying outside Australia, in Canada (Stuart Cunningham, Graeme Turner, and Noel King), the UK (Graeme Turner, Bob Hodge, and Noel King) and the US (John Frow and Stuart Cunningham), and some as Thatcherite escapees (Tony Bennett, John Hartley, and David Rowe). There was additional excitement about what was going on in Canada, where Will Straw was striding out from the manse and Jody Berland cultivating the environment. From all of these directions I discovered exciting things and interesting possibilities occurring under the rubric of communication studies and numerous other words. Disciplinary titles meant little.

Communication studies at Murdoch University had started out as a kind of classic, empiricist, US mass-communication, department, which was overthrown by a semiotic insurrection, thanks to Bob Hodge, John Frow, Horst Ruthrof (who went on to be my co-advisor), and others. Like Gunther Kress, Stephen Muecke, and Noel King in South Australia, they rejected the brief dominance of positivistic US communication research in favor of questions about the contestation of meaning, subjectivity, and power. So it was a very exciting time to come into communications. We actually thought Marxism mattered. Imagine that. Alec McHoul also had a big influence on my introduction to communication studies because he combined an interest in deconstruction and ethnomethodology that brought together my inclinations across the social sciences and humanities. So my experience of communication and media studies was eclectic.

JH: Would you say that "communication" or "media" were specific or technical terms that these departments used to represent themselves and their line of research? Or were there Film Studies departments? In other words, are you now looking back at them as Communication Studies or Media Studies? You mentioned that they had begun with a kind of communication research, subsequently "hijacked" by *semiotic guerilla warriors*, so I'm assuming that they had been representing themselves as oriented to the study of communication.

TM: Yes, but typically with a strong media inflection rather than a public-speaking or "speech communication" inflection, and often with an effects-research orientation via

the study of children and the media. Some of them were oriented toward policy and regulation, but by and large not looking at political economy—and as I mentioned, not looking at semiotics or ethnography until people like Gunther Kress, John Fiske, Noel King, and Stephen Muecke flexed their muscles and started talking about the construction of meaning across a broad array of media. Cinema studies tended to emerge a little more from literature departments, as in the US, whereas television studies emerged a little more from Communications. But, in the same way that your work doesn't obey that distinction, so for these people, what they were interested in— and what really impels me—is how textuality is constructed, interpreted, delivered, and disposed of, rather than how textuality, or whatever, is best studied in relation to this or that medium or disciplinary locale. The specificity of the medium is important because it is part of answering the other questions that I posed just now. But the notion that "I don't do that because I study film" is absurd. For example, can you say you study something called "New German Cinema," when it was funded by and shown on German television? That is as silly as saying, "I don't study Hollywood, I study Brazilian cinema," when the national cinema of Brazil and most countries is, guess what, Hollywood. The thing I liked about Communication was that cinema, poetry, theory, whatever you call it, all could be up for grabs. And the early days of the *Australian Journal of Cultural Studies*, which was tragically sold to Methuen then taken over by Routledge, showed the way to do that. If you go back to the very first issue in 1983, you find Gunther Kress and Bob Hodge, language-and-ideology guys, saying "semiotics *is* cultural studies." I don't think anyone would claim that today, but there was that sense that everything could be read, and that reading systems expand across genres and into things like political economy and ethnography. The separation of such matters, and the public-order obsessions of US communications (how do we stop people killing one another/how do we start people learning/how do we sell people things?) were far-distant http://www.theaustralian.com.au/higher-education/opinion/dynamic-days-of-an-implicit-leftism/story-e6frgcko-1226202912921.

JH: So, just to clarify for the reader of this interview—your early studies, were they in economics, or were they in the humanities, or how did the humanities figure in to that trajectory, as complicated and circuitous as it may have been for you?

TM: Australia is just moving, tentatively, to a liberal-arts system. It's called the "Melbourne model," named after what's been imposed at the University of Melbourne by Glyn Davis, a Vice Chancellor there who was a journalist when I read the radio news thirty years ago, then a colleague at Griffith University in Brisbane. But the rest of Australia still hews to the ludicrous British undergrad model, which eschews the broad-based liberal education of the US. So after my first year as an undergrad, I studied nothing but history and political science, because I was a double major. In the years that followed, while working full- and part-time, I enrolled in, but never finished, a couple of degrees, turning to what we would think of as labor relations law and labor market economics. I also started and never finished another degree in the political economy of emergent Asian nations and neo-classical

economics. This was a period in my life when I bounced around the country on one-
or two-year contracts at different universities (Murdoch, Griffith, and so on), never
really enrolled in anything seriously, and was able to get jobs because I'd worked in
the media, been a radio announcer and a speech writer, still thinking I would go back
to such work after this flirtation with academic Leftism, wearing shirts with holes cut
in them, curating hair like Billy Idol's, and so on. Just ask Graeme [Turner] or Tony
[Bennett] about my appearance. You can read this chaotic story in the *Times Higher
Education* piece they asked me to write about my checkered past. There's no
accounting for taste.

JH: I remember when you imported a whole suitcase of that fashion statement to
NYU, and . . .

TM: . . . and somebody I was dating, who was quite a senior media producer, told me
one day I was now too old to go back into the media, that my looks had gone, and I'd
better lift my game—because I was 32 years-old. No portrait in the attic, sadly. In fact,
no attic.

JH: Of course that was before the reality-TV syndrome of "extreme makeovers," so
maybe you would have had some hope—"great expectations," young man—had that
occurred in the twenty-first century.

TM: That's right, I could have been re-made and re-modeled. If only your book with
Laurie Ouellette had come out, and I'd known about what was coming, I could have
been one of those neoliberal entrepreneurs of the self. In any event, there came a
point when I began to think seriously about completing a doctorate. The pathway in
Australia and the UK is different from the US. Instead of plugging away for years like
you had to do, taking classes in well-established fields of knowledge quite outside
what you wanted to write about, I just sat down, as a dissertating student does in the
US, and wrote the hundred thousand words.

I did so in a school called Humanities, which had been the School of Human
Communication. There were people teaching Japanese language, political economy of
Asia, public policy in Asia, ethnomethodology of the media, film studies, philosophy
of language—you name it. It was really a very broad church. My two advisors were
Horst Ruthrof and Tom O'Regan. Ruthrof was a philosopher. He wrote *The Reader's
Construction of Narrative* (1981), which influenced David Bordwell's *Narration in the
Fiction Film* (1985) (which you and I both adored/abhorred), then volumes on the
semiotics of the body and passion. Tom O'Regan researched national television
and cinema. In those days, I was teaching in a "program"—"departments" were
deemed anti-interdisciplinary—called Communication Studies, whose professors
included Tom O'Regan, Zoë Sofoulis, Ien Ang, Krishna Sen, Irma Whitford, John
Hartley, Alec McHoul, and Alan Mansfield—a stack of wonderful people. I learned a
lot by working with them. Bob Hodge was our dean, and Rita Felski, now at the
University of Virginia, and Vijay Mishra were in the English and Comparative

Literature program. It was a very, very exciting time. People were young and constantly inventing things, for the joy of it and the pleasure of cultural politics.

I also worked and learned alongside filmmakers there. John Darling, the eminent director who died a year and a half ago, was there, as was Mitzi Goldman, another very good documentarian. So, I taught the history of documentary in a class with those filmmakers, and my basic role was teaching hundreds of students how to analyze screen texts. I also worked alongside (albeit peripherally) literary scholars—a semiotician of art and Russian literature, Michael O'Toole, and a deconstructor of Australian literature, Niall Lucy.

This was really when I got to know the humanities as a "professor"—or rather in a position somewhere between a teaching assistant and an assistant professor. [45:19] When I finished my PhD, it looked as though my daughter was moving to the US (although she didn't) and my career was going nowhere, so I applied for a job at New York University and came to the US in 1993. I discovered what people reading this journal would think of as "the humanities." That was a long answer—a long and winding trail without the logic or the highlights that the Gringo *curriculum vitae* typically features.

JH: In part my question was trying to remind the US readers of our interview that yours was a different national model and institutional history of the Humanities and Communication, though (as you point out) there are some intersections and overlaps with models that US readers would be familiar with. I also want the journal to acknowledge what is globally complicated, and to a certain extent messy and arbitrary, about the three key words in the journal's title. Critical studies, cultural studies, and communication studies have different histories in different parts of the world, and are shaped (as meanings and as regimes of academic work) at the crossroads of migrating theories and polemics. Reading the history of the National Communication Association from its web page, one is struck not only by how it is shaped by a very particular (nationally specific) lineage of Speech and Rhetoric that developed through the Humanities in the US and that shaped the Humanities in the US, but also by how globally parochial that idea and project of communication studies was—insulated for instance from trends "down under."

TM: In the academic environment and intellectual scene where I encountered the humanities and communication in Australia, and subsequently in New York, people were equally interested in what Terry Eagleton, James W. Carey, Larry Grossberg, Dana Polan, Ellen Seiter, Constance Penley, Andrew Ross, Bob Stam, Faye Ginsburg, George Yúdice, Herman Gray, and James Hay had to say, and regarded them on a continuum. Although there was a restlessness, even a dislike of the US empiricist communication tradition, there was great admiration for much US and Canadian literary criticism, film studies, cultural anthropology, and so on.

JH: Where the traditions of empirical, social- and behavioral-scientific work in communication were not as entrenched as they were in the United States, right?

TM: Absolutely. We thought there was nothing wrong with combining these perspectives. So, as an undergrad, I read the work of Herb Schiller because of his importance in the study of political economy, without knowing there was a thing called Communications. And whilst a lot of us became skeptical of the assumption that patterns of ownership and control could explain media meanings and experiences, we were always respectful of those issues. And we didn't have to worry about saying, "only the text matters," or "only audience uptake matters," or "only ownership and control matters." Because everybody shrugged their shoulders and said, guess what, they all matter. I remain astonished by people who privilege only one of these perspectives. Get a life, get a text, get a reader, get an institution.

JH: One thing that you've not mentioned thus far, and then we'll move quickly to a discussion of your book, is your intersection with an emergent work on something called "cultural policy studies," its relation to Foucauldian studies in governmentality, and how they became part of your interest in citizenship studies. That is a vein of your work that a lot of readers will recognize, and if you could comment briefly on how your *training* (or the vagabond adventurousness in moving through different kinds of theory, and between communication studies and its relation to the humanities in Australia) brought you to that area of inquiry. I also ask this question because it may help readers understand how you arrived at the conclusion or provocation that the Humanities need to be "blown up."

TM: I had an epiphany 27 years ago flying over the Nullabor, which separates Australia's south-west from the rest. Halfway across it on the plane I finally read [Foucault's] *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, and I thought, my god, somebody actually understands what I think, and in a way that I never could. It was a terrific moment. So I became a teenage-Foucauldian at the age of 28. The problems I had with the resistive, semiotically insurrectionist aspects of cultural studies that I was surrounded by—the lack of an institutional grounding and the sense of not knowing how people came up with all these claims—got resolved for me by reading his work. When I moved to Griffith University in 1988, I met the people who were founding the Institute for Cultural Policy Studies (ICPS) at the University: Stuart Cunningham, Tony Bennett, Colin Mercer, Jennifer Craik, Dugald Williamson, David Saunders, Ian Hunter, Jonathan Dawson, Albert Moran, and Peter Anderson. They were animated by such critiques of voluntaristic fantasy.

JH: Graeme Turner?

TM: He wasn't directly involved as much day to day, because the ICPS was at Griffith, though I think he was an external advisor and certainly influential. He was very inspirational in my eyes. When the ICPS became a Key Center [for Cultural & Media Policy] of the Australian Research Council, which happened after I left the country, he was more directly concerned.

ICPS people were very interested in public policy, which was something I knew a little bit about. Unlike them, I'd formally studied policy and "done" it as one of their beloved bureaucrats. They had experienced other epiphanies from mine—Gloucester-in-*King Lear* moments, where they stumbled when they saw. Starting out as true believers in Marxism, cultural nationalism, or popular culture as resistive urges, they had realized that institutional arrangements for delivering culture were as important as whether its contents did or did not represent something. And I liked that, and the Foucauldian work that emerged from it. I didn't need to denounce a Romantic past, because I didn't have one. I'd never had an absolute faith in the urges of the popular, as per a lot of Gramscian adherents, and never thought the state apparatus was completely flawed rather than contradictory. I always thought one needed to understand the state, that ownership and control mattered, but that relative autonomy was a real concept. So I didn't have to slough off long-held shibboleths, nor was I a *converso* to the notion of administrative intellectuals inside the state as saviors. I knew they were boring, uninspired, and hierarchical. But I recognized their importance.

Citizenship first interested me at that time. We're talking about the moment of the collapse of actually existing socialism and the moment when the notion of an oppositional front to patriarchy, a seemingly unitary feminism, was being compromised by First-People's struggles, particularly First People's women's struggles, and migrants' struggles. Neither class nor patriarchy explained what people were experiencing. Citizenship quickly went from being a rather anodyne concept of Civics (taught for decades in US schools) to being something much more expansive. It was a kind of open technology or popular logic where cultural struggles could find expression and possibility. Australia had an expansionary, Keynesian government. While it was eviscerating the trade-union movement via the withdrawal of much economic protectionism, the Australian Labor Party sought to avoid massive unemployment, and had a new middle-class psephological base. Rather like the Democratic party, it was comprised of people who in US terms might be fiscally conservative or liberal, but culturally liberal. That model we're very used to, from the Clinton-era on, of people who want to control deficits and are appalled by opposition to gay marriage, was something the Labor Party worked out with its own version of structural economic adjustment. Instead of being an anodyne counter to the specific struggles of class, gender, or race, citizenship was a means of dealing with the loss of a unified oppositional front and the issues raised by those subjectivities.

I thought that was what the "cultural policy studies"-people offered. And whilst I disagree with some of their reading of Foucault's governmentality work, and how some of them have morphed into prelates of the creative industries, I still think they were on to something. It's significant that Larry [Grossberg] and you were engaged by this development. Anybody who studies a national media system, as you did with your first book on Italian cinema during the 1920s and 30s, has to come to terms with the interplay of the state, capital, and meaning. Sorry, but cybertarian nonsense about prosumers and academic fandom misses the point. It's sweet and adorable, of course . . . No offense, but Edward Shils and other reactionaries said this, and said it

better, fifty years ago. It was plutocratic then, and it's plutocratic now, albeit in the name of demotic chants and narcissography. You can read it in every corporate report on the Internet, in every gossip site on the future of the culture industry, in every government report—so let's not replicate those aged banalities of alleged newness.

JH: And it is interesting that, as I discussed with Graeme Turner and Tony Bennett in the previous issue of this journal, "cultural and media policy" tended to be less of a burning question at US universities because "culture" and "media" were not particularly considered in the US to be in need of "protecting" or "nurturing" by the State, as in other parts of the world. Where were the Key Centers in the US—academic institutions involved in research shaping policies about "culture," "arts," "humanities," and media as "cultural practices"?

It should be clear by now to readers of this interview that your early encounters with "cultural policy studies" and your subsequent (ongoing) writing about the relation of culture, policy, government, and citizenship have brought you to the intervention that you make in *Blow Up the Humanities*. The book begins by differentiating US Humanities and Liberal Arts studies from other versions in other parts of the world. So although we already have mentioned that difference in passing, would you briefly comment, amplify perhaps, the historical conditions that you see as having contributed to that—perhaps commenting on two or three of what you see as the most important contributing factors?

TM: One way of understanding rhetoric, forensics, debate, and speech communication is as an immigrant policing project that set pre-conditions for class mobility. So if you think about all the things that happened in the United States in the Teddy Roosevelt-era and just after, some of that is about recognizing that the Federal government was quite uninvolved domestically, other than controlling labor unrest. The principles of Teddy Roosevelt and Woodrow Wilson about modernization and the new public administration, and going back further, the attempts by Abraham Lincoln to generate a more pragmatic university sector—one that addressed the needs of ordinary people—all occurred alongside, and came to target, the mass migration from Europe of people who didn't have much in common and found themselves in the Midwest. This generated a problem of what to do about white people from the working class who didn't have much education, and lacked a common language. The issue was how to put them to work effectively, in farms and factories, and enhance their upward class mobility in ways that were largely denied to Asians, Latin@s, and African Americans. One way was to endow them with what we now call NBC or Ohio English, the Gringo version of Britain's Received Pronunciation, though as you know, the twang that you sport, James, has now made its appalling way north. Ohioans sound more like southerners than they once did.

So a crucial part of Speech Communication has been to provide people with a common form of speaking English, as per the private-sector consumerist project of Hollywood, which kept stories simple through its doctrine of treble redundancy for audiences for whom English was something to be achieved rather than something

one is born with. Part of Hollywood's project from the 1920s to now replicates speech comm and vice versa—finding a way to *govern talk*. That's actually the great achievement of populist humanities in universities in the United States. It isn't talked about much outside Communication Studies, but it has contributed a great deal, especially since it "opened up" beyond white folks.

Then there's another spark, another component, which is much more about how to recreate the caste of people in the US who will take over running the world from British Imperialists. And what did British Imperialists have as their background, apart from the lower-middle-ranking people who did things like accountancy or didn't go to college? Well, they studied ancient Greek, Latin, theater, and what became literature. And so the Ivies focused, particularly at the turn of the last century, from the nineteenth to the twentieth, on constructing a class of young men, very male and very white (in fact, very WASP-ish, in both senses of the word), with a sense of authority and ethical self-styling, cultivation, and development that would enable them to be Men, and then citizens. This is a "martial masculinity," as I call it in *Blow Up the Humanities*. [01:04:15]

Just as one can draw a line from the late-nineteenth and early twentieth-century origins of speech communication to what goes on today, one can discern links to the model of how to run the world by learning to interpret texts and learning languages that are not in-and-of-themselves useful. That still characterizes a lot of what goes on at the Ivies and wee liberal arts colleges, but also big fancy state schools, like the one you're at [UIUC], California, or Wisconsin.

To elaborate: *ethical incompleteness*, in the German Romantic sense, finding flaws or faults in the subjectivity of character in, say, literary fiction, or television or cinema—but especially literary fiction—was a means of establishing the pedagogue as the ideal subject, and the constant quest for further hermeneutic inquiry as the basis for learning, whether how to run an empire or a social movement. That's what goes on in a lot of heavily interpretive cultural studies in the US, as well as comparative literature, language departments, or English. That's the *other* humanities. Unlike speech comm, it's not very popular with undergraduate students outside the ruling caste and its adherents, but is the *dominant* humanities rhetorically. It's the one the *New York Times* excoriates every year during the Modern Language Association convention, as being obsessed with whether Virginia Woolf slept with Leonard Woolf, sexually or not, and it's what ill-informed people like Stanley Fish claim as what's right or wrong with the humanities.

Conversely, the humanities that is actually taught to people, that folks sign up to study in very large numbers, and that engages the working class and the lower middle class—at big fancy public schools like the one where you work, but also at Research Two or Three institutions—is the humanities of speech communication, mass communication, broadcasting, new media and so on. And those are the two forms of the humanities I'm really engaged with in the new book.

JH: And that's the "completion of an incomplete self," right, that you have discussed before this book, but that in this book you describe as one way that the humanities

becomes an *apparatus of government*, i.e., of governing through culture and through cultural training?

TM: I'm not the first person to have made that point. There were plenty of others; Noel King and Ian Hunter are two of them. But yes, that is very much what the book is about. It's why the US military sends people off to Italy to learn sculpture every year. Why West Point graduates study literature. The same is done in the Australian and Indian military. This isn't resistive. It's orthodox.

JH: It also pertains to the formation and "cultivation" of the subject as citizen—a pathway to "full citizenship" through cultural training. The military examples are interesting and important, but to the extent that the humanities are instrumentalized in that way (as cultural/citizenship training) they also are geared toward regulating who can be counted as a citizen and toward *remedying* (governing) the problem that not everyone can be counted as a citizen. And in that sense, they operate as the cultural and civil instruments of a *soft-warfare* (its peaceful and leisurely pursuit, one might say) for maintaining a "civil society." This last thought is somewhat of a digression but comes to mind because of your military analogies.

TM: Some of this is welcome and some not. You could write a history that said *political citizenship* in the modern Enlightenment era begins with the French and American revolutions through ideas of universal rights and expands massively. You could argue that *economic citizenship* begins with the end of the American Civil War, when the United States federal government creates widow's pensions, but really gets going during the Depression, after the Second World War, and 1940s and 1950s decolonization movements of resistance to residual empire and colonialism. I think Foucault writes about this in one of his last pieces—everyone has given up their lives to something that's a hopeless project. They've fought the Nazis, and other racial supremacist groups. Having been dis-employed throughout the previous decade along with their fathers, they're coming back home, and bloody well want a job. So that becomes a new kind of economic citizenship. Emergent states, starting with India and Indonesia in the late-1940s then moving on through different parts of Asia and Africa in the 50s, 60s, and 70s, take economic citizenship as a given. Economic citizenship changed drastically in the 80s with the regimes of Reagan and Thatcher, the end of the Cold War, the radical redistribution of income upwards, and the notion of corporations having rights. But alongside those plutocratic developments comes *cultural citizenship*. In some ways it has been around for a long time. But it really emerged with the explosion in the number of states over the last thirty years. The right to express who you are, the right to communication, the right to collective identity, all became profoundly important, and obviously the humanities had various parts to play, some opening up possibilities, and some about disciplining.

JH: Your account of the history of humanities as citizenship training/shaping never quite acknowledges how "culture" was articulated to "communication"—to invoke a

pairing that was central to the writing of Raymond Williams in the 1950s and 60, and to James Carey in the 1970s and 80s. At the University of Illinois (my campus), the study of public speaking and speech communication was located in a department of English until roughly the 1920s when, as English became its own technical field of expertise and oriented exclusively toward the literary and reading literacy, English jettisoned the part of the department that was about speech and theater. In the 1920s and 30s, Speech Communication went its own way, through rhetorical studies (cradled in a cultural education—the old "*arts* of speaking") but also through the emergent *sciences* of communication studies. The birth of Speech Communication on my campus is a useful allegory because it tells the history of an institutional connection between communication and culture. However, it also is worth reflecting on in our conversation about your book because the Humanities One and Two that your book describes never were really invested in communication except in terms of writing and reading, but not in terms of speaking, which as we noted at the outset of the interview was peculiar to the history of communication studies that developed in the US. It's interesting to think about that history in light of your initial point about cultural training and the administration of cultural citizenship for immigrant populations in the United States (and particularly in the Midwest, where Communication Studies was born) about universities' role in reforming and improving a particular kind of subject.

TM: I have two responses to that. This early history you mention is also of course when the so-called mass media come along. Engineers in Midwestern universities developing radio stations were looking for content: "OK, we know we're going to have meteorological information and a women's hour, but what's *in* a women's hour? How do we make all this work?" They went to some English professors, who of course turned their noses up and said, "We don't do that." That was one of the impulses (along with the fear of left- and right-wing propaganda and the desire to sell things through advertising) that helped stimulate communications, particularly as "research."

JH: The late 1920s is not only when the local, university-sponsored, "public broadcasting" affiliate (WILL) went on the air; it also (as I was mentioning) was the moment when literary studies, the humanities in that sense, gets somewhat decoupled from a burgeoning communication studies at the University of Illinois.

TM: The other development worth mentioning is Classics. One of the things I do in the book is look at presidential keynote addresses to the various Classics professional societies in the US; there are still half a dozen of them—they just can't help themselves, can they? At key moments, right before the First World War, during the Second World War, during the Vietnam war, and so on, these plenary sessions point to particular problems or crises—the threat posed to them, as they see it, by the rise of English, then creative writing and sociology. They see these three developments as committing a cardinal sin, utilitarianism, because paradoxically pragmatic means of

generating ethically and physically "fit" male leaders of the empire should not be *overtly* harnessed to the interests of empire or employment, but undertaken in the name of ethical self-styling as men. These associations see that being threatened, while communications, like sociology after the Second World War, and later media studies and cultural studies, were regarded as a kind of low-rent but popular demon. So I think it's interesting to ponder classics in that period in the United States as having a crisis of confidence. The entering class for Yale at the turn of the century is fluent in Greek. Twenty years later, nobody can speak it. They're all doing English literature. And you get the emergence within communications of people interested not just in how to create a cross-class form of English speech, but how to train a cohort of people who will take the horns of media production.

JH: Your book charts two historical variants or tendencies that you've described just now in the interview—Humanities One aligned with private universities and Humanities Two aligned with vocational training. Humanities One dominates rhetorically while Humanities Two dominates numerically. These are points that you make in the introduction to your book, so would you amplify briefly whether or how you see these two trends as shaped by a *current* crisis of higher education, whether or how you see them as a historical contradiction, and whether or how the history of the Humanities that you've sketched in our interview has brought us to a crisis.

TM: I do think it's a crisis in the generation of unemployable proto-professors. It's also a crisis of what public intellectualism in the US can and should be. So in terms of creating generations of unemployable people, here's the story. If you're a professor of history or comparative literature or English at an Ivy, you can keep going until the cows come home, until there's no more wheat in Illinois, and everything's fine. Go right ahead, be my guest, right, it's all sweet, keep doing it. But if you keep generating dozens of earnest young PhDs who are capable of inscribing ethical incompleteness and lack into characters, then how on Earth, even if they go to fancy private schools, or indeed, the University of California, are they actually going to get jobs when what's needed are people who can teach web design, communications policy, or how to sell things? Such changes have occurred in part because of neoliberal policies at universities, but also because that's what students want to do. They are voting with their feet right across the United States to study business and communications, other than those at the very top elite Ivies and public institutions. You can see this effect at the level of enrollment, but also publication. At one point I was on the editorial committee for the University of California Press, which was one of maybe five presses in the country that over a couple of years stopped publishing literary criticism in bound copies because nobody bought, read, or reviewed it. So there's a real problem with the fact that the humanities at top schools (Humanities One) and in public discourse generally involves literature and history when that's not what it is for most people studying and teaching. They are learning communications—Humanities Two.

There's a very real crisis at that level and a misrecognition of what needs to be done because the numbers are all going in one direction towards communications and business, away from literature, history, religious studies and so on, at most universities. In addition, there is a very poorly designed, developed, and nurtured research system, nationally, in the United States, that specifically excludes humanities research from the goodies (i.e., major funding streams). We also have a system of massive governmentalization and administrative growth in universities that started on soft money, i.e., grants from science, but now utilizes popular areas like communications and cultural studies to featherbed jobs and provide guaranteed, ongoing cross-subsidy to people in the social sciences and the sciences who do things that no one wants to study, but to which the federal government gives lots of money. This notion of cross-subsidy is a useful corrective to the position enunciated by our elders and betters in administration—or at least in your case and mine, not our elders, but our betters—which is that we are carried by revenue-generating departments, by which they mean, places that get big grants from the federal government through the National Institutes of Health, or the National Science Foundation that then provide soft money which pays for the gigantic increase in administrators *vis-à-vis* faculty.

Another crisis is that the over-production of irrelevant doctorates increases the problem of the "freeway professor," as they're called in California—the person who is highly qualified and skilled but teaching at three different colleges simultaneously, racing around probably in their car, between campuses that are many miles apart. This person is unemployable full-time partly because of a bias against the humanities that I've described in the book, but partly because what they have learned to study is often not strictly germane to where the jobs are.

We must also examine the comprehensive failure of academic bodies such as the Broadcast Education Association, the International Communication Association, The Association for Journalism and Mass Communication and Toilet Training, and the National Communication Association to lobby DC about our status. Look at the American Chemical Society: last I looked, it had four, full-time lobbyists, who were there merely to secure federal funding. All those things, along with the low-rent status of Humanities Two, even within its universities, make for a very real crisis.

There's also the predicament of public intellectualism in the US, the kind of role that, it is said, Diana and Lionel Trilling played, for example, or Daniel Bell, Zbigniew Brzezinski, and Marshall McLuhan—intellectuals who wrote about communications, even if they were in literature or sociology. They saw during the 1960s and 70s how important this was. Their plutocratic but demotic views are essentially the ones that you get echoed today by Mark Zuckerberg, *Wired* magazine, and their academic delegates on Earth. Influences such as James Carey, who looked at the connection between communication and culture in a critical way—who took communication as ritual seriously even as he also considered the economic history of communication— are abjectly missing both at the level of totalizing public intellectual debate as well as the more technical, applied level of the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) and other regulators. Away from the grandstanding accounts that you get in the

futurists from the 1960s and 70s, the Cold War futurists of communications, there's a more technical public intellectual—the "specific intellectual" if you like (in Foucauldian terms, or as per Karl Mannheim), rather than Gramsci's "organic intellectual." The specific intellectual would be able to influence policy as a *technician*, and we've not managed to do that in the big-ticket cultural area of United States policy, namely the FCC. I once asked a very senior economist at the commission how they could decide, perhaps using divining rods, how much competition was necessary. He replied: "Well if you've got x numbers of outlets and programs and owners, then that seems roughly what you need in an industry of this size." And I said, "But given that you have a legal mandate that requires you to do things in the public interest, why don't you ask the public? In other words, why not commission ethnographic research about what audiences actually do with what they are told about politics or about culture and see whether their views index the pluralism you claim can be read off from patterns of ownership and control?" He thought about it and said, "Well, I don't see anything that wouldn't allow us to do that." That was ten years ago. What have they ever done? Hire more economists and more engineers. So there's a very serious crisis at the level of what we teach and at the level of employment, and a second major crisis at the level of our public impact, which is out of all proportion to the number of people who study communications, because of the class bias inherent in the selection system between Humanities One and Humanities Two, disciplinarily and in terms of student bodies.

A major question for me is this: if we accept that at some level the thing that binds the humanities together is a *quest for meaning*—a very complicated term, I recognize— then even if you cannot understand all the world's inter-semiotic systems, you are at least *trying* to comprehend how meaning is generated across different points, how texts are produced and used, and so on. We need to accept that meaning making is not just a question of consciousness and interpretation, but also employment, because that's what most of our students want, and that's what so-called "post-industrial" societies (including China) are heading to—a knowledge economy.

JH: It also seems as if the curriculum that you're suggesting rethinks the old distinctions between culture and science, between culture and political economics, between culture and sociology, and even between culture and business administration, because the Humanities has insulated itself and made itself irrelevant along those fault lines.

TM: Part of our responsibility is to find the means of blending things that have hitherto been kept apart, and that's why I want to see us teaching big, omnibus survey classes that blend political economy, ethnography, and textual analysis. So although that kind of humanities course and curriculum might include the predictable stalwarts of the humanities—Kenneth Burke as the reader of rhetoric, or how to understand the Gettysburg Address—it's more about being in the same room as an environmental studies expert who can explain to us the carbon footprint of printing, an epidemiologist who can explain how people make sense of their everyday environment,

a political economist who can tell us who gains and loses from reading literature (how many books are sold, how many are bought, who reads them), ethnographers who tell us what's done with these texts, and a textual analyst to tell us how meaning is communicated stylistically and formally. Unless we can bring such perspectives together, and do so across media, we're failing to recognize a historic opportunity for the humanities to excel and do exciting things in a period of constraint.

One of the reasons why there's an opportunity amongst all the negativity I've mentioned concerns something you mentioned in one of the questions you sent me in advance of the interview, about the legacy of C. P. Snow's notion of "two cultures." Snow was a renowned physicist, also a novelist, who coined the expression "the corridors of power" that we use today to describe politics. He wrote a small essay in *The New Statesman* in the late-1950s which has been constantly reprinted and is referred to a lot today. In that essay he effectively says, "I can't bring my two parts together, physicist and novelist, and when I go to MIT or South Kensington, I can't find humanities people who are capable of understanding science, though I can find some science people who are capable of understanding humanities. This isn't good enough and it's got to stop." But the training, information, backgrounds and topics for new media and computer science academics are merging with those parts of the campus where you and I have been physically, intellectually, and politically located. Politically we now need to recognize our proximity, our organic closeness, to scientific research and development—more than perhaps has been the case since Marx's time—because of the fact that people who are interested in narrative are interested in *code*. This is true not just in a semiotic sense, which is useful, but does not quite get us to a mathematician's sense of code, or how software and hardware actually work. It is true also because there are sociologists of science and researchers in computer science work or artificial intelligence who like to know how meaning is generated and semiosis is achieved, and who are interested in formalist accounts of narrative. These two groups [Snow's "two cultures"—science and the humanities] sleep with the same people, take the same drugs, wear the same clothes, go to the same parties, and are organically linked. That problematization of two cultures (humanities as the opposite of the sciences) is also potentially the way in for us to make the study of meaning as rich as it can be. This pathway poses certain challenges too because the sciences are in high demand, subject to all kinds of other temptations and policings that are very problematic. I might just mention here the way the Pentagon offers fantastic deals to young computer scientists and especially people designing electronic games, to do the work of the evil empire.

JH: Would you say that something to be gained by "blowing up" a twentieth-century model of the humanities, or for that matter the binarisms of the old institutional model of the Liberal Arts and Sciences, is the potential to move toward a critical communication studies or media studies that continually rethinks communication as culture but that also acknowledges the over-determination of communication and culture—i.e., of not separating culture or communication from other practices, and of recognizing their embeddedness, utility, financial

value, etc., in all sorts of practices. The challenge is not only how to achieve the robust interdisciplinarity that you describe but also to grapple with the inherited Modern (nineteenth- and twentieth-century, post-Enlightenment) definitions of culture and communication, and the still pervasive, Modern fear of hybrid objects of study—as Bruno Latour suggested in *We Have Never Been Modern* (1993), and as Foucault demonstrated in many of his histories.

TM: Well binaries are good to think with. They are both ineradicable and flawed. Binaries deny the interdependence of a pair by differentiating and subordinating half of the couplet. My distinction between Humanities One and Humanities Two is problematic in that way. There is also a lot to be gained from both traditions. Following Humanities One, fascinating philosophical questions are posed in the ancient world and the tradition of great books. Those continue to be worthwhile pursuits for lots of people and are certainly worth knowing. William Shakespeare, Ralph Ellison, Ernest Hemingway all had and still have a lot to say, and we shouldn't take seriously anyone who says that those authors are not worth reading. I actually don't like any of them that much, but we should all read them. My personal "to-read" list would include Chester Himes and Raymond Chandler, for example, or Gramsci. The point is, I want to take the best of that Humanities One tradition without being imprisoned by the idea of "great books," canons, and formalism. The task also involves recognizing that culture has moved from being something epiphenomenal in universities and in society, to the center of most economies, and quite crucial to the work of governance—and therefore something that is worth having a significant public debate about, which could happen through a Humanities Three that breaks down these binaries even as it recognizes we're never going to get rid of them. And when I thought about the humanities, I didn't just mean "blown up" in an incendiary sense, I also meant blown up in a balloon-like way—a *ballon d'essai*.

JH: You mean, to *enlarge* the model of what studies in the humanities might be?

TM: Right. But to do that, areas like communication need to be gaining more than Rodney Dangerfield respect, in top universities and in DC. There needs to be a significant mobilization by the Left and the Center to make that happen. Instead of accepting a subordinate status—the curriculum that college footballers follow when they need to finish a degree.

JH: I'm guessing that a lot of the negative reactions to your book have been from those who assume that you're suggesting to abandon the old ways entirely and, in part, to be more responsive to new media. There are veins of your book that chastise the humanities for not keeping up with sort of recent developments in the contemporary media culture and economy—a current life with media. What have been some of the reactions to your book and has anything surprised you about those reactions?

TM: Well, I was surprised and delighted that *Metro* http://www.metro.us/newyork/lifestyle/education/2012/07/15/your-humanities-degree-may-soon-become-ancient-history/, the free afternoon paper, and *Publisher's Weekly*, a significant magazine in that industry http://www.publishersweekly.com/978-1-4399-0983-6, ran stories on it, and the *Los Angeles Review of Books* ran a symposium that was critical, smart, and cleverly written http://lareviewofbooks.org/article.php?id=1267. And the *Times Higher Education* commissioned a piece http://www.timeshighereducation.co.uk/421749.article. The interesting thing in almost all the reactions published so far is that nobody wants to deal with the numbers, to face up to the underlying political economy of Humanities One versus Humanities Two, and the implications of that. And nobody wants to acknowledge the class distinction created by vocational schools (where you find Humanities Two) and the fancy schools (where you find Humanities One). I am surprised that elegant and interesting engagements with the book don't theorize their own privilege or speaking positions.

The other thing that's been interesting is that the book's arguments resonate outside the US. I've been in the UK since it came out, and given several related talks, including one to the European Consortium for Humanities Research Institutes and Centers at its annual meeting a few weeks ago, and the School of Oriental and African Studies. I emphasize to them that the book is about the US, but I often hear that their experience is similar. A few people back home have told me anecdotally that every now and then the book gets used in hiring and firing meetings.

JH: I appreciate that you have been willing in this interview to engage my interest in thinking about your account of the humanities in relation to communication studies and media studies, because explaining that relation is not the primary aim or thrust of your book. I imagine that the responses have come more from literary studies than from communication and media studies. But that said, it is important to recognize, and you are in a unique position to discuss, several related issues: how communication studies develops out of the humanities, how a media studies curriculum is caught up (at least in the US) in the practices of Humanities One, Two, and Three that your book addresses, how communication studies is part of the historical opposition and contradictions of the "two cultures" (science and the humanities) which Snow wrote about, and how the study of media and popular culture have been part of the transformation (perhaps problems and imagined solutions) of the humanities over the last thirty years—in some respects contributing to the distinction between Humanities One and Two. To the extent that your prescription for a Humanities Three involves engagements with various recent media developments, it occurred to me that we could address a little more energetically that set of questions. Is there anything that you want to add to what you've already said about them?

TM: One of the things some critics have said, and you're alluding to, is that I don't go deeply enough into my preferred version of Humanities Three. You're right that because I'm so focused on slaying the dragon, I'm perhaps overly obsessed with Humanities One and insufficiently respectful or mindful of major developments in

Humanities Two, and of course some media studies manages to combine them. For instance, in the study of film in the United States, it's still the case, even if you're at the woefully traditional Ivies, that if you learn about Hollywood narrative, you're almost certain to learn about the coming of sound, the Paramount Decree, and the impact of the suburbanization and televisualization of the United States after the Second World War on film theaters. The same is true of TV studies. People who learn the history of television learn about technology, political economy, and the star system as well as how to perform textual analysis, and you don't typically see that in Humanities One as I have described it. Virtually nobody in literary studies can explain a literary agent's role in the success of a book, how publishers function, or who owns books. Those questions are not central to literary studies—or rhetorical studies. So there are good aspects to media studies in the US, especially alongside most literary studies, the more humanities side of speech communication, and the more scientist (social-scientific/behavioralist) side of communications.

I also am interested in which kinds of media studies and communication studies really influence the public, and how the humanities could have more influence—both at the level of getting media coverage and affecting policies. I don't think the humanities has that kind of influence now, so that's where I think change is needed. When I talk about a different future for the humanities through engagements with new media technologies, particularly electronic games, I have in mind the "creative industries" discourse that occurs outside the US, though I also am very critical of the creative-industries project because it's become entirely instrumental and intellectually allied with neoliberalism. But again, I really should have amplified that more in the book.

JH: I don't want to conflate too casually your argument about Humanities One, Two, & Three with the history of a "critical" media studies and cultural studies, but your comments in this interview suggest a few intersections. I also don't want to conflate too casually critical media studies and cultural studies. Each has its different history, and its intersections, sometimes through the humanities and sometimes through communications. (Larry Grossberg and I discussed these intersections and divergences in our interview in the previous issue of this journal.) You've written a very compelling historical sketch recently about critical media studies and about "a future for media studies", which you have described as "Media Studies 3.0."[1] You may feel that intervention and proposal for the future already are somewhat dated, but I ask about them because, as in your account of the humanities, the way forward that you propose for media studies involves grappling with the legacy of what you term Media Studies 1.0 and 2.0.

TM: I have brief thoughts that articulate to the pieces you're referring to. The things that I suggest are dominant in Media Studies 1.0 are, if you like, extremely pessimistic views of the media. They give rise to the Payne Fund studies, to effects research as well as the Frankfurt School, where there is a worry about the power of propaganda and commercialism to pervert the minds of the young and the otherwise vulnerable.

That impulse is still very forceful in contemporary conceptions of a "critical" media studies. The dangers posed by "media effects" are among the things that the FBI and the CIA look at when they're explaining away what they see as criminal acts of various kinds, which also dominate *bourgeois* media talk (as if they somehow transcend those effects). If there's a mass murder, people say "He went to church, therefore how could he have done these things, therefore what porn sites did he visit?" rather than "We know why he did it. He is a *macho* who owned firearms and went to a wacko church." For example.

Media Studies 2.0 is much more optimistic. It uses the terms "popular culture" and "popular classes" (as they are called in Latin America and Italy) instead of "mass culture" and the "masses." It is interested in how the popular can be incorporated into the calculations and interests of commerce. In other words, it begins from media corporations' assumption that what the little bastards want is of interest to us, and what they like to watch and do is of interest to us, so we're going to endow it in certain ways. In a sense you could say it's where governmentality reinvents itself, taking energies from the popular classes even as it also seeks to train them.

JH: But that explanation of Media Studies 2.0 does not quite explain the optimism that you associate with that regime of research—particularly when you discuss Media Studies 2.0 through the emergence of fan studies in the late 80s and into the 90s, and through the tendencies in the US to represent that kind of media studies as "cultural studies." Are you suggesting now that fan studies developed out of the trend of "incorporating the Popular into the calculations and interests of commerce"? Doing that historicizes fan and "active audience" studies in an interesting way, and complicates the optimism that you attribute to Media Studies 2.0. I also ask because the 1990's literature on fandom (which developed in part as a response to the political pessimism associated with Media Studies 1.0) still informs accounts of the current mediascape—as in Henry Jenkins' thesis about "convergence culture." So one could argue that Media Studies 1.0 and 2.0 persist in the present. Are you suggesting that a "future for media studies" (a Media Studies 3.0) needs to be self-reflective about and must grapple with the way that those earlier intellectual formations of "critical" work still inform the questions that we ask?

TM: The Media Studies 2.0 optimism derives from uses and gratifications' riposte to effects research, which emphasizes that media consumers actually might make their own meanings and pleasures. That perspective becomes very important fifty years ago (sorry, it's not new) for the way in which popular impulses and energies can re-code the meanings of texts. My problem with Media Studies 2.0 is that just as the political-economy tradition of The Frankfurt School is functionalist in its assumption that there's a limited number of proprietors, that state control or capitalism produce an industrial form of consciousness-making, and that there's no way to avoid that, 2.0 goes too far the other way. Instead of functionalism or any dominant structural force, there is instead supposedly an absolute freedom on the part of individuals and spontaneous, organic collectivities to make their own meanings. It seems to me that both perspectives

are unwarranted and untenable. Neither of them, 1.0's pessimistic functionalism and effects basis, or 2.0's cybertarian interest in individual freedom, grasps the core issues— for instance, the complex and changing situation of work in the media, the massive exploitation of fandom as free demographic research, free creative research, and as a generator of new ideas that are then sold back to them. None of that work properly dealt with labor relations, which are often the most conflictual, most interesting parts of media production, and are not just "functions" in terms of political economy, and cannot be understood by doing narcissography in front of a gaming console with your daughter. Also that work has offered nothing about the environment, by which I mean the media as purposive and destructive ecological actors over centuries of pollution and biosphere chaos. So what is the future of media studies without those things in the mix—without looking at ownership control, at audience response, at new media forms of interpretation, at conflict and functionality simultaneously, at the long historical view and at the broad geographical sweep? Without all that, how can we understand what Fox News viewers think was the reason for the invasion of Iraq in 2003, or what people who sign end-user licensing agreements think they're doing when they pay money to a company every month to play an online game when the agreement also requires that every creation that they come up with while playing the game is the property of the corporation? Unless these questions and perspectives are in the mix, we're not doing due diligence in research and teaching. If we *can* do that, then we'll really have exciting intellectual formations for ourselves and for those around us.

JH: Toby, I think of your work and interventions as having advocated for and demonstrated the importance of introducing questions of government and economy into the humanities, but also into cultural studies and critical studies of media. That said, I also see those interventions as implicitly proposing an *alternative* to older versions of a critical political economic analysis of communication/media. From having read your and others' work, not all of it about media, I've become interested in alternative forms of critical political economic analysis of media and culture, i.e., forms of analysis that don't explain and problematize media economies and media power purely through the operation and alignments of the *big institutions* (State and corporate institutions) of production, distribution, marketing, and audience measurement. That old model of a critical political-economic analysis of communication/media typically understood its projects as different from cultural studies, and certainly earlier dispositions of cultural studies often exacerbated that distinction. So it seems to me that there's a way of reframing the discussion about "media power" through an analysis that doesn't ignore the "big media"-story but that enlarges and complicates that story by studying the little, everyday forms (the *microphysics*) of "media making"—of self-production, self-distribution, self-branding, surveilling one another—and that is as interested in the regime of amateur and semi-professional creative labor as in professional media production.

TM: You've put your finger on a problem with political economy. Over the last fifty years it's been quite functionalist in its doom, gloom, and despair and misses out on

complicated and conflictual issues. One of the reasons I have faith in the idea of the new international division of cultural labor that we look at in *Global Hollywood 2* (BFI, 2005) and *Globalization and Sport* (Sage, 2001) is that it tries to capture more conflictual relations. Having said that, it's terrifically important to be agile, to recognize that an effective study of cultural materials needs to account for the material forms of life in which those cultural materials operate. You cannot just look top-down, you have to look at south-to-south communication, at popular and folkloric forms of communication that are not about corporations and states, at the ongoing and powerful traditions of people right across the world to make meaning in non-commodified and non-state forms. That can also be teenagers in their bedrooms, uncovering new subjectivities they put up online, or connecting kinds of topics that can be trivialized but are important. Those things are tremendously significant and deserve proper engagement and scrutiny, albeit without being romanticized.

So if I'm right in my sense of what you're calling for, I'm absolutely in favor of it. In fact, in writing my book *The Avengers* (BFI, 1997) about the British television series, I learned a lot from writing to people on line whom I knew or heard about who were followers of the show, as I called them—finding out how they made sense of it. They taught me that things I believed to be the case were wrong, but had a *reason* for being wrong. Let me give you a quick example. Remembering *The Avengers* in the mid-60s in Britain when I was a pre-pre-teen, I believed it and the *Man from U.N.C.L.E.* were programmed consecutively on the same night. From talking to various people then going back to program guides from the time, I discovered that I had created a temporal relationship that wasn't there. Such phantasmatic rememberings are not necessarily examples of false consciousness, but young people making sense of genre, narrative, and personal history. They're information, just like program guides. The same applies when you get aberrant decodings of text, fans who become excited about their favorite show, how a video gamer plays a game, or use of the web in daily life. All those things are worthy of discussion, interesting, generative, and just as "politically economic" as a discussion about the Digital Millennium Copyright Act or the rights of workers on the line constructing televisions in Northwestern Mexico.

JH: I think that the important thing to underscore is that you're not bracketing the importance of those institutions or the ways in which any kinds of agency or activity through media occurs outside of that, but it's an analysis that is working back and forth between those conditions of making and whatever kind of *making* is occurring through something called media.

TM: Absolutely. I don't see them as being subordinate, in a hierarchical relationship. I see them as inadequate, one without the other.

JH: Toby, thanks so much for your help with this interview. *Blow Up the Humanities* introduces—mostly indirectly—some important questions and considerations for the

future of critical studies of media and of cultural studies. I appreciate your taking time to make some of those connections more explicit to the readers of this journal.

Note

[1]   Toby Miller, "Media Studies 3.0," *Television & New Media*, 10, no. 1: 5–6 (2009).

References

Theodor Adorno and Max Horkheimer, "The Culture Industry: Enlightenment as Mass Deception," in *Mass Communication and Society*, ed. James Curran, Michael Gurevitch and Janet Woollacott (London: Edward Arnold, 1977), 349–83.

Louis Althusser, *Politics and History: Montesquieu, Rousseau, Hegel, Marx*. Trans. Ben Brewster (London: New Left Books, 1977).

Peter Anderson, n.d., http://www.castgallery.org/cast-living-archive/curators/profile/147/Peter-Anderson.

Ien Ang, *Desperately Seeking the Audience* (London: Routledge, 1990).

Daniel Bell, "The Future World Disorder: The Structural Context of Crises," *Foreign Policy* 27 (1977): 109–35.

Tony Bennett, *Outside Literature* (London: Routledge, 1990).

Krim Benterrak, Stephen Muecke and Paddy Roe, *Reading the Country: Introduction to Nomadology* (Fremantle, WA: Fremantle Arts Centre Press, 1985).

Jody Berland, Will Straw and Dave Tomas, eds., *Theory Rules: Art as Theory, Theory and Art* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press/YYZ Artists Outlet, 1996).

David Bordwell, *Narration in the Fiction Film.* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1985).

Susan Brownmiller, *Against Our Will: Men, Women, and Rape* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1975).

Zbigniew Brzezinski, *Between Two Ages: America's Role in the Technotronic Era* (New York: Viking Press, 1969).

Kenneth Burke, *A Grammar of Motives* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1969).

James W. Carey, *Communication as Culture* (New York: Routledge, 1989).

E. H. Carr, *What is History*? (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1961).

Jennifer Craik, *The Face of Fashion: Cultural Studies in Fashion* (London: Routledge, 1991).

Stuart Cunningham, *Framing Culture: Criticism and Policy in Australia* (Sydney: Allen & Unwin, 1992).

Stuart Cunningham, 2011, http://culturalstudies.podbean.com/2011/03/05/a-conversation-with-stuart-cunningham-about-the-creative-industries/.

John Darling, n.d., http://www.roninfilms.com.au/person/211/john-darling.html.

Glyn Davis, *Breaking Up the ABC* (Sydney: Allen & Unwin, 1988).

Jonathan Dawson, *Screenwriting: A Manual* (Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 2000).

Melissa D. Deem, "From Bobbitt to SCUM: Re-Memberment, Scatological Rhetorics, and Feminist Strategies in the Contemporary United States," *Public Culture* 8, issue 3 (1996): 511–37.

Richard Dyer, *Only Entertainment* (London: Routledge, 1992).

Terry Eagleton, *The Ideology of the Aesthetic* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1990).

Rita Felski, *Beyond Feminist Aesthetics* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1989).

John Fiske, *Television Culture* (New York: Routledge, 1987).

Michel Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, trans. A. M. Sheridan Smith (London: Tavistock, 1970).

Anne Freadman, *The Machinery of Talk: Charles Peirce and the Sign Hypothesis* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2004).

John Frow and Meaghan Morris, eds. *Australian Cultural Studies: A Reader* (Sydney: Allen & Unwin, 1993).

John Frow, *Marxism and Literary History* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1986).

John Frow, 2005, "Australian Cultural Studies: Theory, Story, History," *Australian Humanities Review* 37, http://www.australianhumanitiesreview.org/archive/Issue-December-2005/frow.html.

Ann Game, *Undoing the Social* (Buckingham, UK: Open University Press, 1991).

Kelly Gates, *Our Biometric Future: Facial Recognition Technology and the Culture of Surveillance* (New York: New York University Press, 2011).

Faye Ginsburg, *Contested Lives: The Abortion Debate in an American Community* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989).

Mitzi Goldman, n.d., http://www.roninfilms.com.au/person/276/mitzi-goldman.html.

Antonio Gramsci, *Selections from the Prison Notebooks*, ed. and trans. Quintin Hoare and Geoffrey Nowell-Smith (New York: International Publishers, 1978).

Herman Gray, *Watching Race: Television and the Struggle for Blackness* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1992).

Ronald W. Greene, "Rhetoric and Capitalism: Rhetorical Agency as Communicative Labor," *Philosophy and Rhetoric* 37, issue 3 (2004): 188–206.

Lawrence Grossberg, *We Gotta Get Out of This Place: Political Conservatism and Postmodern Culture* (New York: Routledge, 1992).

Jürgen Habermas, *Legitimation Crisis*, trans. Thomas McCarthy (Boston: Beacon Press, 1975).

Stuart Hall and Paddy Whannell, *The Popular Arts* (New York: Pantheon, 1965).

John Hartley, *The Politics of Pictures* (London: Routledge, 1992).

James Hay, *Popular Film Culture in Fascist Italy: The Passing of the Rex* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1987).

Bob Hodge and Vijay Mishra, *Dark Side of the Dream: Australian Literature and the Postcolonial Mind* (Sydney: Allen & Unwin, 1991).

Bob Hodge, John Fiske and Graeme Turner, *Myths of Oz* (Sydney: Allen & Unwin, 1987).

Bob Hodge, "Culture/Communication/Theory in Australia", *AUMLA* 100 (2003): 88–98.

Robert Hodge and Gunther Kress, *Language as Ideology* (London: Routledge, 1979).

Robert Hodge and Gunther Kress, "Functional Semiotics: Key Concepts for the Analysis of Media, Culture and Society," *Australian Journal of Cultural Studies* 1, issue 1 (1983): 1–17.

Robert Hodge and Gunther Kress, *Social Semiotics* (New York: Cornell University Press, 1988).

Ian Hunter, *Culture and Government* (London: Macmillan, 1988).

Noel King and Stephen Muecke, "Caught Between Two Paradigms: Communication Studies in Australia," *Australian Journal of Communication* 5–6 (1984): 1–2.

Noel King, "Changing the Curriculum: The Place of Film in a Department of English", *Australian Journal of Cultural Studies* 1, issue 1 (1983): 47–55.

Noel King, 2011, http://culturalstudies.podbean.com/2011/06/25/a-conversation-with-noel-king-about-cultural-studies-and-interviewing/.

Noel King, 2013a, March 28, "Falling Through the Cracks in the US Justice System," *Australian Financial Review* http://www.afr.com/p/national/arts_saleroom/falling_through_the_cracks_in_the_1R5kJGXiwMTyMOizSRnCrI.

Noel King, 2013b, "Cultural Mobility and Film Studies in Australia 1975–1990," *Australian Film Theory & Criticism, Volume 1: Critical Positions*. Ed. Noel King, Constantine Verevis and Deane Williams. Bristol: Intellect. 57–93.

Bruno Latour, *We Have Never Been Modern*, trans. Catherine Porter (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1993).

Claude Lévi-Strauss, *The Elementary Structures of Kinship*, rev. ed. Trans. James Bell and John von Sturmer (Boston: Beacon Press, 1969).

Niall Lucy, *Debating Derrida* (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 1995).

Karl Mannheim, *Ideology and Utopia* (London: Routledge, 1936).

Richard Maxwell and Toby Miller, *Greening the Media* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012).

A. W. McHoul, *Telling How Texts Talk: Essays on Reading and Ethnomethodology* (London: Routledge, 1982).

Alec McHoul and Tom O'Regan, "Towards a Paralogics of Textual Technologies: *Batman*, *Glasnost* and Relativism in Cultural Studies," *Southern Review* 25, issue 1 (1992): 5–26.

Jim McKay, *No Pain, No Gain? Sport and Australian Culture* (Sydney: Prentice Hall, 1991).

Marshall McLuhan, *Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man* (New York: Mentor Books, 1964).

Eric Michaels, "A Model of Teleported Texts (With Reference to Aboriginal Television)," *Continuum* 3, issue 2 (1990): 8–31.

Toby Miller, Geoffrey Lawrence, Jim McKay and David Rowe, *Globalization and Sport: Playing the World* (London: Sage, 2001).

Toby Miller, Nitin Govil, John McMurria, Richard Maxwell and Ting Wang, *Global Hollywood 2* (London: British Film Institute, 2005).

Toby Miller, *The Well-Tempered Self: Citizenship, Culture, and the Postmodern Subject* (Baltimore, MD: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993).

Toby Miller, *The Avengers* (London: British Film Institute, 1997).

Toby Miller, *Cultural Citizenship: Cosmopolitanism, Consumerism, and Television in a Neoliberal Age* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2007).

Toby Miller, *Blow Up the Humanities* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2012).

Toby Miller, "Multilayered Intellect," *Times Higher Education*, 2013, January 10, http://www.timeshighereducation.co.uk/multilayered-intellect/422293.article.

Albert Moran, *Images and Industry: Television Drama Production in Australia* (Sydney: Currency Press, 1985).

Meaghan Morris, *The Pirate's Fiancée: Feminism, Reading, Postmodernism* (London: Verso, 1989).

Stephen Muecke, 2011, http://www.podcast-directory.co.uk/episodes/a-conversation-with-stephen-muecke-about-indigenous-and-postcolonial-cultural-studies-14367157.html.

Tom O'Regan, *Australian Television Culture* (Sydney: Allen & Unwin, 1993).

Tom O'Regan, *Australian National Cinema* (London: Routledge, 1996).

L. Michael O'Toole, *The Language of Displayed Art* (Teaneck, NJ: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 1994).

Laurie Ouellette and James Hay, *Better Living Through Reality TV: Television and Post-Welfare Citizenship* (Malden: Blackwell, 2008).

Paul Patton, *Deleuze and the Political* (London: Routledge, 2000).

Constance Penley, *NASA/TREK: Popular Science and Sex in America* (London: Verso, 1997).

Dana Polan, *Power and Paranoia: History, Narrative, and the American Cinema, 1940–1950* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1986).

Andrew Ross, *No Respect: Intellectuals and Popular Culture* (New York: Routledge, 1989).

David Rowe, *Popular Cultures: Rock Music, Sport and the Politics of Pleasure* (London: Sage, 1995).

Horst Ruthrof, *The Reader's Construction of Narrative* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1981).

Horst Ruthrof, *Semantics and the Body: Meaning from Frege to the Postmodern* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1997).

Horst Ruthrof, *The Body in Language* (London: Cassell, 2000).

David Saunders, *Authorship and Copyright* (London: Taylor & Francis, 1992).

Herbert I. Schiller, *Communication and Cultural Domination* (New York: International Arts and Sciences Press, 1976).

Ellen Seiter, *Sold Separately: Children and Parents in Consumer Culture* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1995).

Krishna Sen, *Indonesian Cinema: Framing the New Order* (London: Zed Books, 1994).

Edward Shils, "Mass Society and its Culture," *Reader in Public Opinion and Communication*, 2nd ed., ed. Bernard Berelson and Morris Janowitz (New York: Free Press; London: Collier-Macmillan, 1966), 505–28.

C.P. Snow, *The Two Cultures and a Second Look: An Expanded Version of the Two Cultures and the Scientific Revolution* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987).

Zoë Sofoulis [Sofia], "Exterminating Fetuses: Abortion, Disarmament, and the Sexo-Semiotics of Extraterrestrialism," *diacritics* 14, issue 2 (1984): 47–59.

Robert Stam, *Subversive Pleasures: Bakhtin, Cultural Criticism, and Film* (Baltimore, MD: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1989).

Lesley Stern, *The Scorsese Connection* (London: British Film Institute, 1995).

Jon Stratton, *The Virgin Text: Fiction, Sexuality and Ideology* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1987).

E. P. Thompson, *The Making of the English Working Class*, rev. ed. (London: Victor Gollancz, 1968).

Diana Trilling, *The Beginning of the Journey: The Marriage of Diana and Lionel Trilling* (New York: Mariner, 1995).

John Tulloch and Manuel Alvarado, *Doctor Who: The Unfolding Text* (New York: St Martin's Press, 1983).

Graeme Turner ed., *Nation, Culture, Text: Australian Cultural and Media Studies* (London: Routledge, 1993).

Graeme Turner, *National Fictions: Literature, Film, and the Construction of Australian Narrative* (Sydney: Allen & Unwin, 1986).

Immanuel Wallerstein, *The Modern World-System. Vol. I: Capitalist Agriculture and the Origins of the European World-Economy in the Sixteenth Century* (New York: Academies Press, 1974).

Gary Wickham, "Power and Power Analysis: Beyond Foucault?" *Economy & Society* 12 (1983), issue 4: 468–98.

Raymond Williams, *The Politics of Modernism: Against the New Conformists* (London: Verso, 1989).

Dugald Williamson, *Authorship and Criticism* (Sydney: Local Consumption Publications, 1989).

Leonard Woolf, *Downhill All the Way: An Autobiography of the Years 1919–1939* (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, 1967).

George Yúdice, *The Expediency of Culture: Uses of Culture in the Global Era* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2004).