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HOW TO (RE)DISCIPLINE LITERATURE THROUGH A CULTURAL STUDIES LENS

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Abstract

Starting from Valentine Cunningham's dichotomy between "good reading" (107), i.e. the ideology-free reading of the literary text, and "bad reading" (88), that is, reading theory against the textual grain, this article aims to discuss the lures and ruses of cultural studies, once applied to the study of literature. I shall focus on the literature-cultural studies dyad, which in the past four decades has led to a revision of academic curricula and the literary canon and, most importantly, to the socio-political understanding of literature as *text in context*. Special attention will be paid to the lack of consensus on cultural studies as a well-established discipline: while some scholars and critics take the discipline as a means whereby literary study can mirror different ideologies, power relations, hegemony, social practices and humanity in general, others vilify cultural studies because it makes literary studies impure. As I argue, literature can be read through a cultural studies lens as long as their knowledge and methods of analysis are duly appropriated and employed by their practitioners.

Keywords: *literature; aesthetics; text; cultural studies; ideology; context.*

INTRODUCTION

It goes without saying that in today's academic world, cultural studies is more than just a buzzword. It is a subject in its own right with a leftist agenda, which has turned interdisciplinarity into its staple *modus operandi* employed in order to

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give new vigour to the humanities, to reshape and even to blur the traditional boundaries between various fields of study and research. Nowadays the field of cultural studies has incorporated literary studies and ceased to serve as the latter's prosthesis earlier than the 1990s, when both a "desire" and "a pervasive fear" of the identity of literary study (Bérubé 3) became the two extremes of this hybrid field of cultural inquiry. This is because, lacking any critical methodology of its own, we understand the emergence of cultural studies in literary studies as a problematic outcome of heated intellectual disputes: cultural studies is a discipline that turns the notion of "text" into a broad category including non-literary materials analysed through various approaches that are alien to literature. In this context, English departments across the globe have chosen to discuss and interpret cultural texts via a large number of conceptual tools pertaining to other disciplines, such as history, philosophy, semiotics, economics, sociology, anthropology, psychoanalysis, linguistics, etc. or by having recourse to heavily ideologized theoretical frameworks like deconstruction, poststructuralism, postmodernism, feminism, postcolonialism, ecocriticism, posthumanism and other *posts* or *isms* that are still en route to defining and refining their theoretical frameworks. This has inevitably split academics, critics and cultural theorists into two camps: the former views cultural studies as the means whereby literary study can intervene in the social world of power, hegemony, and humanity in broad terms whereas the latter inveighs against cultural studies, as it de-essentializes the proper study of literature *qua* literary criticism.

Valentine Cunningham's thought-provoking study entitled *Reading After Theory* (2002) is a magisterial plea for a return to a careful (close-) reading of the literary text which should not be lessened or sapped by excessive theory. In the words of Cunningham, "a critical Rip Van Winkle waking up now after fifty years of slumber wouldn't recognize the critical tower of Babel he'd returned to" (13). Furthermore, "literary theory in fact diminishes the literary, diminishes texts, by reducing them to formulae, to the formulaic, to the status only of the model, of models of literary functions, even of the literary at large, but still only a model" (Cunningham 122). Conversely, in 1991, Antony Easthope proclaimed the collapse of the old paradigm of genuine literary study adumbrated by the transition from F.R. Leavis's elitist approach to literature—only "a very small minority" is able to

appreciate art and literature (3)—to Terry Eagleton's new interpretative model he summarizes as follows:

> I am countering the theories set out in this book not with a *literary* theory, but with a different kind of discourse—whether one call it of 'culture', 'signifying practices' or whatever is not of first importance—which would include the objects ('literature') with which these other theories deal, but which would transform them by setting them in a wider context. (205; original emphasis)

Following in the footsteps of Eagleton, Easthope enthusiastically engages in a critical dialogue with the old philological tradition so as to advocate "signifying practices" and their potential to give shape to "a kind of 'unified field theory'" (5) meant to study literary texts in tandem with popular culture. In a nutshell, Easthope enthusiastically, if not imperatively, calls his new approach "literary into cultural studies", the very title of his book published in 1991.

Notwithstanding these opposites, my aim is to seek to calibrate the pure study of literature with "Theory with a capital T" (Cunningham 15), which gained momentum in the 1960s, when literature *and* context became good bedfellows. Thus, my reading of the literature-cultural studies dyad will turn out to be volatile, particularly against the present cultural and geo-political background reflected, represented or questioned by literature in an effort to raise readers' awareness of historical, economic, cultural and socio-political changes. Such changes are embedded in what Eagleton and Easthope call "signifying practices" or, in Michel Foucault's terms, "discursive formations" (117), i.e. historically determined social systems that produce meaning and knowledge. With Easthope's hopeful perspective of "literature into cultural studies" (Easthope, 1991) in mind, I wish to elaborate on the ups and downs of the literature-cultural studies dyad in order to grasp the extent to which this combination—still refuted by some departments of literature in American and European universities on the grounds of its potential to contest aesthetics—can shed new light on literary texts in conjunction with their socio-cultural contexts, without infusing them with ideologies of all kinds.

LITERATURE AS LITERATURE?

In his plea for a return to the literary text, Cunningham avers that "all readers arrive at the book, the page, simply laden with *presuppositional baggage*, much of which is, inevitably, of a literary-theoretical kind" (4; my emphasis). Echoing John Hillis Miller's idea that "there is no innocent reading" (viii) precisely because of the public's prejudices, beliefs, opinions and notions which, once shaped by their education, impose themselves as ethical and intellectual knowledge, Cunningham's remark points to a blend of text and theory or, rather, to the primacy of theory over text. This has been the case since antiquity, he argues, for theorising about literature began with Plato and Aristotle. Be it negatively (à la Plato) or positively (à la Aristotle) valued, literature was deemed as imitation of reality—a recipe for writing that ruled supreme from classical times until the advent of modernism, when literary theory proliferated like never before. Ultimately, the avalanche of contemporary theory urges Cunningham to ask: "What to do with it, and in the tumultuous aftermath of it?" (2)

Paradoxically enough, our "presuppositional baggage," be it stuffed with literary theory or with beliefs, opinions or ideologies, has been endorsed until the mid-twentieth century by a few theoretical schools that centred their critical discourse on the very literariness of the literary text. This search for unity and intrinsic properties or features of the literary text had long been formulated by Aristotle in his *Poetics*: a fictional work is an imitation of life—an aesthetic imperative in place up until the rise of the novel in the eighteenth century. Later on, Coleridge advocated the Kantian idea of organic unity and aesthetic impartiality, considering poetry to be "that species of composition, which is opposed to works of science, by proposing for its *immediate* object pleasure, not truth [...] and proposing to itself such delight from the *whole*, as is compatible with a distinct gratification from each component *part" (211; original emphasis)*. It is precisely this organicity cultivated by Coleridge that determined the Russian Formalists, Structuralists and American New Critics to scrutinise the literary text—generally poems—in terms of a literary use of language or its ironic, paradoxical and ambiguous quality. The prosodic, syntactic and semantic levels of analysis whereby language is "defamiliarized" by removing the object "from the automatism of perception" (Shklovsky 21) passes for an "essentialist" (Eagleton, The Event of Literature 33) quality of literature which, for Russian

Formalists, was mistakenly meant as the one and only strategy of interpreting various genres. Apart from wrongly applying the same analytic—as mechanical—framework to non-poetic genres, the Russian Formalists insisted on the autonomy of the work of art, particularly on the work's form, in an age when highly ideologized artifacts began to be churned out for the working class under the ambit of socialist realism. By the same token, the Structuralists' approach celebrated universal patterns and structures that ignored social change, whereas the New Critics argued in favour of one single interpretation of the text, which was completely cut off from authorial intent, socio-historical context and the reader's response. Notwithstanding the similar analytic grids established by the three schools in order to explain the value of literature as literature, their concerns were overridden by "the early impact of so-called mass culture, along with accelerating scientific and technological advances, on the everyday language that forms the literary artist's raw materials" (Eagleton, The Event of Literature 35). In this light, Eagleton's pithy remark enables us to think of literature as a volatile concept which needs to be reconsidered, if not semantically enlarged, due to the challenges posed by context. Whereas Cunningham staunchly believes that "reading always comes after" (3), since literary texts are contaminated by theory and, consequently, bereft of their intrinsic aesthetic value, Eagleton rebukes the idea of aesthetics as an end in itself that is strengthened by the "so-called" (53) literary canon. For Eagleton, the aesthetic principle and the (conservative) conventions that underlie the canon as a literary institution are prone to cultural and historical change, and are far from being fixed properties pertaining strictly to literary texts:

> Design, formal complexity, unifying themes, moral depth and imaginative creativity, however, are fortunately not the monopoly of literature. They can be just as characteristic of a treatise on human psychology or a history of modern Burma […] Political theory, to be sure, is supposed to guide our action in the world; but then so in a sense is literature […] It is as though the literary institution informs you that a certain text is worthwhile by presenting it to the critic to be inspected, and the critic then obediently proceeds to unearth the evidence that will confirm the correctness of this view by rehearsing the very critical procedures by which the institution has already reached its judgement. (54, 55-56)

As a philosopher of literature, Eagleton unshackles the field from the constraints of aesthetic conservatism, laying emphasis on fictionality and functionality as the common features of a wide range of texts understood as literature. Aiming to define what literature means today, the English critic undermines the radical position of those scholars who claim that the discipline cannot be redisciplined in accordance with other formal and generic criteria which are perceived to be the opposites of the dogmatic *qua* aesthetic view on literature: "And this spontaneous conformity to a deeply questionable dogma is sufficient grounds for scepticism when we are informed by the aestheticians that they have the key to the nature of literature in their possession" (58).

Contrary to Eagleton's revisionist perspective, Cunningham's (utopian?) wish to purge literary texts from any theoretical residues by reinstating the practice of close reading and, implicitly, of the aesthetic as the primordial property of literature subtly points to the contention between autonomous and committed literature (*littérature engagée*). For Cunningham, "all true and good reading is close reading" (167), and this "readerly tact" (169) must appease the power of unfettered theory. Posited by Kant in his *Critique of Judgement* (1790), this approach to literature as autonomous was developed by Friedrich Schiller, Charles Baudelaire, Stéphane Mallarmé, Walter Pater and Oscar Wilde and theorised, apart from the Russian Formalists and Prague Structuralists, by key critics such as René Wellek and Austin Warren, and Northrop Frye. In addition, literary autonomy has formed the object of study for leading sociologists like Pierre Bourdieu, who, in *The Rules of Art: Genesis and Structure of the Literary Field*, offers a new insight into the art's autonomy. According to Bourdieu, art represents a "field" (xx) that is shaped by the social and historical context in which it is produced and received. In stark opposition to Bourdieu's thesis, Theodor Adorno's theory of autonomous art divorced from any social utility is another case in point.

These ideas about art's autonomy—which are highly expressive of literature as a paradigmatic discipline with its own recognisable interpretive methods and "critical procedures" (Eagleton 56)—have always circulated in parallel with non-literary texts produced for mass consumption. As Eagleton explains, aesthetic features "are not restricted to works we dub literary. Assonance, chiasmus and synecdoche may be more common in an advertisement than in a piece of naturalistic fiction" (53) and they can thus

ensure the poeticity of the advertisement designed for profitable purposes. This dislocation, or transfer, of literary devices onto extra-literary texts has gradually led to the resemantization of the term "literature" as a vast corpus of printed material scrutinised with the help of both literary techniques and conceptual tools borrowed from other humanistic sciences such as sociology, psychology, philosophy, history, economics or anthropology. This challenging method, i.e. "literary into cultural studies" (Easthope, 1991), has a lot to do with the dismantling of the literary studies paradigm, or with what Easthope calls "literary value as hegemony" (41). The question, then, if cultural studies as a bastard discipline is engagée turns out to be useless, as long as it is employed to uncover multiple, non-aesthetic meanings of a literary or non-literary text. As "a site on which meanings—of variable meanings—takes place" (Bennett 174), the literary text fails to have a fixed identity ensured by a consistent interpretation at all times. Consequently, it is shaped à rebours not by its materiality or existence in a given space and time but by its various and changing significations. It is like a tabula rasa ready to be written by meaning. In Stanley Fish's opinion, the literary text is constructed in much the same way, as it is meaningfully activated by "interpretive communities" (14), i.e. heterogeneous interpretations provided by readerly groups who are able to recognise the formal features of literary texts which cannot exist outside these communities. Ultimately, for Fish, both the formal characteristics of a literary text and what the text reveals to us are actually the result of our conventional or institutional interpretation of it.

Easthope's questioning of the inherent value of literature via Marxist, deconstructionist or reader-response theories, on the one hand, and his new model which casts literature in the mould of cultural studies, on the other, are the result of a politicised agenda that has spawned new ways of looking at literature today. His anti-essentialist position resembles that of Eagleton, for whom literature is an "event"—as he puts it in the title of his 2012 book—assessed by readers according to the societal values and ideological background that prevail in a certain historical period. In a nutshell, similar to Eagleton's endeavour to answer the question "What is literature?", Easthope's redisciplining of the high form of art that is literature via cultural studies—particularly by putting it side by side with popular culture texts—has for decades turned into a "signifying practice" (5) which, however, continues to stir a topical

question: Are literature and cultural studies good bedfellows? Unlike Cunningham's jeremiad against theory, I prefer a neutral standpoint, highlighting the benefits of cultural studies as long as literary techniques and cultural studies-inflected approaches are calibrated and complementary to each other, rather than mutually exclusive.

LITERARY THROUGH CULTURAL STUDIES

Doing literature with cultural studies is a common analytical practice today. Augured in the 1990s (see Easthope's seminal book mentioned earlier), this approach—which, from the outset, proclaimed itself to be highly interdisciplinary—was a trendsetter which, however, raised an eyebrow among many critics, researchers and, particularly, academics in both American and European universities. The first vehement reactions to the "literary into cultural studies" new trend came from literature scholars who complained either about the diminishing role of traditional literary criticism or, most importantly, about the contamination of literary study with all sorts of ideological figées which, unless used cautiously, especially by students, could supersede the literary text as such. Once institutionalised, cultural studies as a subject has been fiercely disputed by conservatives allergic to theory and extolled by those addicted to semiotics, structuralism, post-structuralism or psychoanalysis, who have discovered that post-colonial, gender, ethnic, queer and cultural studies "emerged in full force in the wake of 'pure' or 'high' theory, which for the most part they have put behind them" (Eagleton ix). The cohort of scholars who have followed in the footsteps of Easthope, with Eagleton among them, have become acutely aware that, due to historical, cultural and technological changes, literature means more than literary artistic value, all the more so as it is produced, circulated and consumed simultaneously with mass culture. The rise of the novel in the eighteenth century is a telling example, for the new genre—at odds with romance—was demotic by definition and committed to portraying everyday life incidents. In cultural studies terms, literature is a network of texts that are produced, circulated and, once received, are socially effective. Nevertheless, "the extent to which cultural studies becomes a mode of reading in literary study (as opposed to, say, a mode of reading in mass media and communications) will, conversely, be the extent to which cultural studies

foregrounds the rhetorical operations of literature" (Bérubé 5). This complementary relationship should be a beacon of hope when it comes to the future of literary studies, and of the humanities as a whole, but there is a caveat to this: literary critics and historians ought to come to terms with the crisis the humanities have been facing for more than two decades and, as a result, departments of literature craving for the "Western Canon" à la Harold Bloom (1994), for the "Great Literature" (Easthope 52) or for the "Great Tradition" (Leavis, 1948) should reinvent themselves so as to survive financially. But, above all, literary scholars must understand that literary texts do not have a fixed identity, and that reading is performed by "interpretive communities" (Fish 14) differently at different times. Or, if their material identity is fixed in a specific space and time, our task is to understand their context of production and circulation in a given cultural and historical background, weighing their aesthetic value and potential for social action alike, what they mean and most notably how they mean. Michael Bérubé maintains that the dispute over cultural studies revolves around a "crisis of reproduction" sparked by the problem of whether "there is any useful social purpose served either by literary study, narrowly conceived, or by cultural studies, broadly conceived" (6). In my view, studying the literary text side by side with socio-historical and cultural changes could not be but profitable, since its intrinsic value might be buttressed or questioned according to various generational analyses and responses to it. Bourdieu's question addressed in the Preface to The Rules of Art encapsulates this point very well and encourages other disciplines—sociology of art, in his case—to contribute to the reshaping of the literary discourse through a cultural studies lens. Should the sociologist, just like any other specialist in a non-literary field, be a pariah, "an ally of what is repugnant to the 'creators' of an era, the content and the context, the 'referent' and the hors-texte, beyond the pale of literature?" (xvi; original emphasis). At the opposite end, Easthope poses as a detractor of the old school, claiming that "each literature-as-construction critic denies literary value by presuming it can only be an essence borne by certain texts, each with a fixed identity as they march confidently across history always demanding the same readings from different readers" (52).

Left out of the Kantian project, the study of high-brow literature is at a crossroads because it not only runs the risk of being polluted by ideology but also of being incorporated in the vast realm of texts of any kind—mainly popular

culture texts—perceived as literature. Easthope is right in saying that the aesthetic category is thus challenged, since the inclusion of popular culture texts in the study of literature makes the latter "immanent" and elevates it to the status of "artifact" (165). Thus, the materiality of production has supplanted the abstract power of the aesthetic, and this is the real bone of contention fuelled by those who believe that cultural studies has adulterated both literary aesthetics and literary practice. The same holds true for literary theory, and Eagleton's question about context, or about what should be taken into account as coming from outside the field of literature, is legitimate, as nowadays the discipline no longer lends itself to the practice of close reading but for pedagogical purposes meant to uphold its nominalist value:

> Theory is one thing, while art or life is another [...] How could we speak of an absolute identity, one entirely without relations to what lies outside itself? By what conceptual means (and all concepts are unavoidably general, including 'this', 'unique', 'inimitable', 'unutterably distinctive' and so on) could we come to identify such a state of affairs? (14-15)

Far from depleting the literary text of its aesthetic qualities, the cultural studies method brings to light unexplored meanings with the help of historical, socio-cultural, philosophical, economic or other discourses. As mentioned before, close reading is the ground zero for students of philology who have to learn how to read a text and what the text means. For me, this activity represents a rite of initiation or the first stage of signification with which undergraduates get, or must get, familiar in the first years of study whereas the cultural studies method stands for the second stage which is complex and should be carefully tackled and taught so that students should not perform a theoretical/conceptual/cultural studies-based analysis for which the literary text is a mere pretext, and not its object of study. Cultural studies does not weaken the aesthetic when examining the cultural roles of literature and it can thus "intensify the study of literature as a complex intertextual phenomenon" (Culler 47). Furthermore, ever since the 1980s, the staggering growth and impact of cultural studies upon minor literary works—women writers, Asian, Asian-American, Afro-American, US Latino authors, to a large extent—and marginalized groups has led both to a re-evaluation of the canon and to questions about the power of literature to represent the culture to which it belongs. Inevitably, the defenders of literary

studies have lambasted the approach, arguing that aesthetic excellence has been obscured, or that the representation of minority groups has gained momentum in the name of social justice, gender equality and political correctness. However, aesthetic excellence has never been a matter of universal agreement, nor has it been the choice of canonical works the same everywhere. I side with Jonathan Culler when he states that

> It is within that context of representing something that the 'best' works are chosen: you don't omit Sidney, Spenser, and Shakespeare from your Elizabethan course if you think they are the best poets of the period, just as you include what you take to be the 'best' works of Asian-American literature, if that is what you are teaching. What has changed is an interest in choosing works to represent a range of cultural experiences as well as a range of literary forms. (48-49)

Labelled as a perfidious form of dealing with literary studies, cultural studies has often—and zealously—been accused of confining the work of art to "lumps of text churned out by a ubiquitous ideology machine" (Felski 28). In other words, it has imposed itself as a new hegemony, as "bad reading" (Cunningham 88), a condition bemoaned by a chorus of critics in the past decades, such as James Soderholm, Alvin Kernan and John Ellis, to mention just a few. But, before being an "ideological apparatus" (79), to use Louis Althusser's concept, cultural studies is a discipline both academics and students still need to get conversant with, particularly in universities outside the US and the UK. This is because the beneficial interdisciplinary method it advertises is something they take at face value, without having a thorough understanding of other disciplines and of how they can be interwoven with the literary method.

Established by the Birmingham Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies in 1964, the discipline of cultural studies has since developed and rippled out not only in the US, where "it is now being used as ammunition in America's own culture wars" (Felski 31) but also in Canada, South Korea, Australia and New Zealand. Scholars from all these countries have, as expected, reinterpreted the Birmingham tradition because they are conversant with how it all began, unlike contemporary scholars who have no idea of this critical dialogue between different cultural studies schools. Felski bemoans the superficial understanding and practice of cultural studies and, for good reason, she is entitled to declare that "cultural studies sounds like a synonym for studying culture, a convenient

handle for anyone with interdisciplinary interests" who, nevertheless, "feel free to use the term without needing to learn anything about the field" (32). Richard Hoggart, one of the founders of the Birmingham Centre and leading figure of the old cultural studies paradigm, was among the first to underline the importance of literary techniques for cultural studies, particularly when he examined popular culture. A classic study like Dick Hebdige's *Subculture: The Meaning of Style* (1979) is another perfect illustration of how cultural studies—accused of completely ignoring form—analyses form (the Dadaist and Surrealist bricolage) and content (British youth subcultures represented by Punks, Mods and Skinheads) with the purpose of showing how societal conventions are undermined by a rhetoric of resistance. Hebdige's book is at once an aesthetic and a sociological investigation, and his understanding of the aesthetic reveals how the concept acquired a heavily contextual dimension which lost its Kantian meaning of pure beauty:

> 'Pure' conceptless, valueless uses of 'beauty' are rare. It has certainly been a mistake for aestheticians to take this sense of beauty as the paradigmatic aesthetic concept – to act, that is, as if by giving an account of it one automatically has given an account for all aesthetic properties. Many, I would wager most, aesthetic terms are 'impure' – they reflect, even require, beliefs and values [...] (Eaton 34)

The aesthetic promoted by cultural studies is therefore multidirectional and sensitive to entertainment and cultural leisure induced by different forms of popular art. It is not meant, as many denigrators have argued, to be fundamentally political because of the ideologies institutionalised by cultural studies, but as a property that is as dynamic as meaning and critical reflexivity. Umberto Eco's *On Ugliness* (2007) may be a serviceable argument at this point, since ugliness, the opposite of beauty, is a polysemic word whose unstable meanings are shaped by both aesthetic norms that vary from one culture to another and by social, religious and racial stereotypes. In light of the previous examples, I believe that this is what makes cultural studies special, namely a broad definition of aesthetics applied to culture in general, and to literature as a repository of various types of texts, in particular, be they images, stories, symbols, ads and so on. In spite of the ideological discontents voiced by conservatives who would like to dismiss kitsch, extra-literary texts or other

forms of what they deem as bad taste, the cultural studies method is inextricably linked today to literature and high art, "but it does require an awareness of the relations and flows of interchange between different cultural spheres" (Felski 39) so as to shed light on hegemonic power, conditions of production, circulation and reception, social action and cultural stereotypes. In order to do that properly, the kind of "close reading" refashioned by cultural studies in its application to the study of literature should rest on knowing what cultural studies really does, on the one hand, and on mastering one's specialism and all the other disciplines to which cultural studies has recourse with a view to analysing the meanings of culture. Only this way can it provide a fresh insight into the literary and better—apart from professors, critics, researchers and the lot—students' intellectual equipment for the current demands of the labour market. Ultimately, this should be the way in which literature is redisciplined by cultural studies whereas cultural studies is disciplined by the interpretive techniques of literature.

CONCLUSIONS

This article has made the case that the intrinsic aesthetic value of highbrow literary texts can be fruitfully challenged by the field of cultural studies by dint of Antony Easthope's new model of reading literature through the former's hybrid methodology. Even if Cunningham's plea for the purity of the literary text as "good reading" (107) is absolutely tenable, one should not forget that literature, as Terry Eagleton convincingly shows, has its own theory or, better say, theories which remove(s) its formal properties from the grand narrative of literature as high art. By mingling axiological with social, historical, anthropological, philosophical, semiotic, economic and political analysis, cultural studies is engaged in performing a "symptomatic analysis" (Culler 54) of cultural objects—artifacts, in the case of literature—which not only diversifies interpretation but also makes the boundaries of meaning porous. Of course, this may pass for a politics of interpretation which is nothing short of the fight for supremacy in literary criticism when it comes to the white literary canon and schools of criticism. Commenting on the complementarity of literature and cultural studies, Rita Felski tells us in a conciliatory tone that "literary studies and cultural studies are related fields but they are also distinct fields. It makes as little sense to deny the differences between them as it does to think of them as implacable

enemies locked in a struggle for supremacy" (40). In the long run, for pedagogical and critical purposes, the conflation of literature and cultural studies equips us with a set of conceptual tools which, motley as they are, help us understand the nuanced dimension of creativity, use of language and aesthetic pleasure, once they encounter the rich socio-political agenda of cultural studies.

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