

Undergraduate Programs in Cultural Studies in Australia and New Zealand/Aotearoa: A survey of the field

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Abstract

This paper outlines initial findings drawn from the Cultural Studies Association of Australasia sponsored project *Mapping Undergraduate Programs in Cultural Studies in Australia and New Zealand/Aotearoa*. The project surveyed programs in Cultural Studies offered by Australian and New Zealand/Aotearoan universities to gauge how Cultural Studies is positioned and the extent to which programs are offered in each country. Highlighting that ‘Cultural Studies’ as both a concept and disciplinary designation conveys some confusion *beyond* the discipline, and that a ‘failure of presence’ is observable in wider dialogues in the humanities and higher education around the definition and purpose of Cultural Studies, this paper asserts that it is with undergraduate programs, as a major expression and point of contact with the discipline, that insight into Cultural Studies’ disciplinary formulation is found. The paper concludes by drawing attention to initiatives that might be undertaken to further raise the profile of the discipline and define ‘the brand’.

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This paper outlines initial findings drawn from a project sponsored by the Cultural Studies Association of Australasia (CSAA), conducted during 2016-17. The project, titled *Mapping Undergraduate Programs in Cultural Studies in Australia and New Zealand/Aotearoa* (hereafter *Mapping Undergraduate Programs*), surveyed programs in Cultural Studies as offered by Australian and New Zealand/Aotearoan universities, in an effort to gauge a general sense of the positioning of Cultural Studies and extent of program offers in each country. The guiding remit of the project centred on identifying the disciplinary foci and areas of specialisation that these programs take, and how specific inflections of the title ‘Cultural Studies’ find application.

Building on the findings derived from the wider project exploring the continuing presence of Cultural Studies in Australia and New Zealand/Aotearoa, and as initially detailed in a presentation delivered at the Annual Conference of the Cultural Studies Association of Australasia in Wellington, December 2017, this paper presents observations on the presence and defining features of undergraduate Cultural Studies programs in the Australian and New Zealand/Aotearoan context. A driving concern underpinning *Mapping Undergraduate Programs* centred on what it is that prospective students and those unfamiliar with the discipline find when encountering Cultural Studies via these programs. It is from this perspective that observations regarding the positioning of the discipline and what is cast here as a ‘failure of presence’ of Cultural Studies in wider public perception will be offered.

Desperately Seeking Cultural Studies

Although Cultural Studies programs in Australian and New Zealand/Aotearoan universities maintain a presence, and significantly, generate vibrant teaching, research and scholarly outcomes, there is work to be done in widening the recognition of Cultural Studies as a field of study both within and beyond the university context. As emerged through the survey of program offers undertaken during this project, the idea of ‘Cultural Studies’ is conflated in a number of sometimes divergent ways. Perhaps most problematic; however, is the application of the title ‘Cultural Studies’ to areas that appear unrecognisable to those working *within* the discipline. Although we discuss in further detail below the problems that attach to such wide (and consequently vague) usage of the term ‘Cultural Studies’, as an initial point of consideration we note Richard Johnson’s (1986, 38) observation (from some time ago) that matters of naming and titling remain fundamental “because a lot hangs...on the kind of unity or coherence we seek”.

Rodman (2015, 160) also points out that Cultural Studies is “vulnerable to appropriation and hijacking”, and in borrowing (albeit with slight inflection) Stuart Hall’s (1992, 278) assertion that, “it can’t just be any old thing which chooses to march under a particular banner”, we suggest that Cultural Studies has work to do in defining and laying claim to its own disciplinary definition. We stress that this is not a call for further dialogue on, now tired, arguments that (have and continue in some quarters to) surround Cultural Studies’ ‘disciplinary status’. Instead, we argue that a more concerted effort to define the location and place of Cultural Studies as a distinct disciplinary formation *and* approach to certain modes of scholarly, intellectual and activist practices within university and wider public spheres should be attended to. Such an undertaking would not only seek to define how Cultural Studies might come to be considered as a field of scholarly, intellectual, and activist practice but would also seek to confront the effects of the appropriation of “the brand” that Rodman (2015, 160) highlights as a prominent issue for the discipline.

We go so far as to suggest that the ‘loose’ usage that attaches to the title ‘Cultural Studies’ should be recognised as a significant concern for those who practice Cultural Studies. Notably, one effect of this flexibility in usage corresponds to the ongoing challenge of attracting and retaining students at undergraduate-level and the continuation of the discipline in forms that remain recognisable. Accordingly, and via the lens that undergraduate programs containing the keywords ‘cultural studies’ provide, this paper sets out to gauge what ‘Cultural Studies’ represents and how certain inflections of its meaning gain form. This paper will not convey a comprehensive account of the minutiae of course offers, staffing profiles or disciplinary traditions taken in the delivery of Cultural Studies in either country, nor will it draw particular attention to the pedagogic and curricula dimensions of the delivery of these programs (with each of these points-of-focus being in themselves worthy undertakings and valuable prompts for future scholarship). This paper will, however, set-out to provide an initial snapshot of the terrain of Cultural Studies in the Australian and New Zealand/Aotearoan context, under the guise noted above; to lay claim to what it is that ‘Cultural Studies’ means, and via the perspective that its programs of study provide, a starting point for defining the nature of Cultural Studies in these contexts will be outlined.

A further intention of this paper is to offer a general point of focus for further discussion and consideration of not only what Cultural Studies in both countries materialises *as* ‘in-practice’,

but where challenges for recognition surface and in which directions for ongoing development of the discipline might proceed. The analysis offered in the latter half of this paper develops some of these broad thematic coalescences, **however in summary, the programs examined for this paper carry similarities in their concern for i) the reading of culture, and the everyday contexts enacted by individuals-as-subject, as ‘text’, ii) the mediation of everyday lives through screen and digital cultures, iii) the performativity of gender and sexualities, with specific emphasis on the inter-relational dynamics of difference, and iv) the critical appraisal of culture as a site of power and change. These themes each deploy from distinct traditions within the discipline, but provide a useful point of initial orientation for defining the landscape of Cultural Studies in Australia and Aotearoa/New Zealand. Further consideration of these themes is outlined below.**

A Short Note on Method

We commenced this project from the view that “we need histories of cultural studies to trace the recurrent dilemmas and to give perspective to our current projects” (Johnson 1986, 42). That this sentiment remains pertinent, it is, we suggest, a significant undertaking to consider what it is that Cultural Studies seeks to ‘do’ and how it continues to define its ‘project’. This is particularly so within present contexts of marked change in the way that the university-as-institution operates, the almost universal questioning of the value of the humanities and indeed, the broader ‘corporatisation’ and ‘marketisation’ of higher education (Hickey 2015, 2016). The assumption running through this paper asserts that something ‘definitional’ about the discipline can be derived from those programs of study that train its students and future practitioners. This corresponds broadly to the sort of disciplinary identification that Shulman (2005) refers to as the ‘signature pedagogies’ of a discipline, and corresponds to the assertion that it is *through* its programs of study that Cultural Studies is best defined.

Methodologically, *Mapping Undergraduate Programs* proceeded via the survey of university program handbook and course documentation to develop a base-line view of current teaching programs in Cultural Studies in Australian and New Zealand/Aotearoan universities¹. Publicly accessible program documentation from each of the 40 universities in Australia and 8 in New Zealand/Aotearoa were searched using the keywords ‘cultural studies’, and following the compilation of program and course detail generated using this search, a thematic analysis that sought to define areas of program focus was conducted. The ‘program trends’ detailed later in this paper outline the themes emergent from this analysis, **but in summary and as outlined in**

Table 1: Program and Major Offers in Cultural Studies, 14 universities in Australia and 1 university in Aotearoa/New Zealand offer programs in ‘Cultural Studies’ as designated by program/major title. An important caveat is however noted here, and as is discussed in further detail below, although programs that include application of Cultural Studies’ theoretical and methodological frames are found, focus is dedicated here to those programs clearly discernible under the title ‘Cultural Studies’.

We do, of course, recognise the limitations that program descriptions offered via handbook entries and similar documentation contain. We also acknowledge that nuance in the delivery and ‘shape’ of courses, courseware and curricula structures correspond to the expertise and interests of those academics who come to teach into these programs and that, apart from the apparent fixity that course and program titles might otherwise suggest, a certain ‘flexibility’ in what translates into classrooms will extend from these idiosyncrasies. Yet, it remains that as outward-facing, publicly focused material, this documentation provides insight into the broad nature and focus of Cultural Studies in Australian and New Zealand/Aotearoan universities, and for this reason, provides a fruitful initial point of analysis for how Cultural Studies gains representation.

Provocations for Mapping Undergraduate Programs

A recent advertisement, contained within a lift-out magazine insert of a major Queensland newspaper, provides an initial point of focus for this paper (*Figures 1 and 2*). The advertisement listed a range of courses of study offered by a prominent Australian regional university, including a curious listing for course offerings in “Cultural Studies”.

INSERT Figures 1 and 2

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BIOLOGY, BIOMEDICAL SCIENCE AND PHARMACY

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Bachelor of Business/Bachelor of Laws
Bachelor of Organisational Leadership

Bachelor of Training and Development
Graduate Certificate in Business

Graduate Certificate in Human Resource Management
Graduate Certificate in Management

Master of Business Administration
Master of Strategic Organisational Development and Human Resource Management

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Bachelor of Historical Inquiry and Practice
Graduate Diploma in Local, Family and Applied History
Graduate Certificate in Arts
Master of Arts

COMPUTER SCIENCE AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

Bachelor of Computer Science*
Bachelor of Computer Science/Bachelor of Laws
Bachelor of Science* (Computational Science)

ECONOMICS AND AGRIBUSINESS

Bachelor of Agribusiness
Bachelor of Agricultural and Resource Economics
Bachelor of Economics
Bachelor of Economics / Bachelor of Laws
Graduate Certificate in Agribusiness
EDUCATION AND TEACHING

Bachelor of Education (Early Childhood Teaching)
Bachelor of Education (K-12 Teaching)

Bachelor of Education (Primary)
Bachelor of Special Education (Primary)/Bachelor of Disability Studies
Bachelor of Training and Development

Graduate Certificate in Education Studies
Graduate Certificate in eLearning

Master of Applied Leadership in Positive Education
Master of Education
Master of Teaching (Primary)
Master of Teaching (Secondary)

ENGLISH, WRITING, MEDIA AND COMMUNICATIONS

Diploma in Professional Communication
Bachelor of Arts (English, Writing, Screen & Media Studies)

Bachelor of Media and Communications

ENVIRONMENTAL AND EARTH SCIENCES

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GEOGRAPHY AND PLANNING

Diploma in Arts
Bachelor of Arts (Geography)
Bachelor of Science* (Geography)
Graduate Certificate in Arts (Geography)
Graduate Diploma in Urban and Regional Planning
Master of Arts (Geography)
LANGUAGES AND CULTURAL STUDIES

Bachelor of Arts (Chinese, French, German, Indonesian, Italian, Japanese and Spanish)

Bachelor of International and Language Studies
Bachelor of International Studies
Bachelor of Languages
Bachelor of Languages and International Business

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Diploma in Prosecution and Advocacy
Bachelor of Agriculture/Bachelor of Laws
Bachelor of Arts/Bachelor of Laws
Bachelor of Business/Bachelor of Laws

Bachelor of Computer Science/Bachelor of Laws
Bachelor of Criminology/Bachelor of Laws
Bachelor of Economics/Bachelor of Laws

Bachelor of Environmental Science/Bachelor of Laws
Bachelor of Criminology

Bachelor of Laws (3 years)
Bachelor of Laws (4 years)
Bachelor of Science/Bachelor of Laws

LINGUISTICS AND APPLIED LINGUISTICS

Bachelor of Arts (Linguistics)
Master of Applied Linguistics
Master of Arts (Linguistics)

NURSING, SOCIAL WORK AND HEALTH

Bachelor of Audiology
Bachelor of Nursing with Honours
Master of Health Management
Master of Nursing Practice**

PEACE POLITICAL AND INTERNATIONAL STUDIES

Diploma in Arts
Advanced Diploma in Arts
Bachelor of Arts (Peace Studies, Political and International Studies)
Bachelor of International and Language Studies

Bachelor of International Studies
Graduate Certificate in Arts
Master of Arts

PSYCHOLOGY AND SOCIAL SCIENCE

Bachelor of Arts (Psychology, Sociology)
Bachelor of Psychological Science
Bachelor of Psychology with Honours
Bachelor of Social Science
Graduate Diploma in Psychology

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Figure 1: Cultural Studies and Inter-culturality

Master of Arts (Geography)	E
LANGUAGES AND CULTURAL STUDIES	C
Bachelor of Arts (Chinese, French, German, Indonesian, Italian, Japanese and Spanish)	N
Bachelor of International and Language Studies	F
Bachelor of International Studies	S
Bachelor of Languages	B
Bachelor of Languages and International Business	B
	G

Figure 2: Inter-culturality, Cultural Studies and lay understandings of ‘culture’

Cultural studies in this inflection draws specifically on what might be referred to as a ‘lay’ understanding of what the ‘culture’ bit of ‘Cultural Studies’ means. While seemingly inferring something that corresponds with *inter-culturality* (in this instance, via language study), it remains that this application of ‘Cultural Studies’ is removed from what those within Cultural Studies would understand of its definition.

Within the discipline in Australian and Aotearoa/New Zealand association with what is referred to here as the ‘Birmingham tradition’ (Turner 2012, 2003; Frow and Morris 1993) perhaps best defines the approaches taken to the teaching of Cultural Studies in each country. Frow and Morris (1993) while acknowledging that these “genealogies are misleading for intellectual work” (xxiii), observe that “the standard genealogy for Australian cultural studies is British” (xxiii) and in particular, that which derives from the theoretical and methodological legacies established out of the *Birmingham Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies*. Within this, the treatment of “the culture of everyday life within subordinated social formations” (Fiske p154) as the stuff of scholarly inquiry, undertaken via methodological application of ‘textual analysis’ (broadly defined) for ‘reading’ culture as an assemblage of “the ordinary processes of human societies and human minds” (Williams XXXX 93) as ‘made’ by people in the practice of living lives, set the tone for Cultural Studies practice, and importantly, a focus for pedagogical enactment².

This focus on culture as that occurring within “the ordinary processes of human societies and human minds” (Williams XXXX 93) provides a useful prompt for the enactment of Cultural Studies, yet as Bennett (2015, 546) notes, the “culture concept” has remained a point of notable perplexity within Cultural Studies, and in particular, Antipodean Cultural Studies, receiving “scant attention to either the distinctive intellectual qualities this concept acquired or the uses to which it was put”. We make this connection between Bennett’s (2015) argument and the example of the advertisement in *Figures 1* and *2* to point out that while ‘culture’ may well be read with some confusion ‘within’ the discipline (per Bennett’s argument), it remains that how ‘culture’ is understood and viewed beyond Cultural Studies is also of significance. At stake is not only how representations of culture-as-concept gain currency in wider senses of the term, but also more specifically, how the claim that Cultural Studies itself has over its own naming and definition should proceed. The use of ‘Cultural Studies’ to refer to course offers in *interculturality* and *cross-cultural communication*, may not be surprising to those within the discipline all too familiar with such tacit, yet misplaced usage, but it stands that this signals a wider ‘image problem’³; one we identify as being representative of a ‘failure of presence’ (the term we give to describe this state of affairs).

The example offered in *Figures 1* and *2* is raised as the touchstone for what is positioned in this paper as a notable conundrum in Cultural Studies. Public understanding, beyond humanities departments (and even sometimes within) of what Cultural Studies *is* and what it *does* represents a problem that deserves attention. Although we remain sympathetic to claims outlined in recent surveys of the discipline around the particular ‘success’ that Cultural Studies has achieved as a ‘public-facing’ discipline and indeed, the incursions it has made into areas including school curricula, policy formation and wider public dialogues (see particularly Turner 2007, 2012), we echo Rodman’s (2015, 160) call that in this present moment “Cultural Studies needs to be more diligent about protecting its ‘brand’”.

Approaching the Discipline

What, then, do prospective students find when they come to Cultural Studies? As a first insight into the dataset that was compiled for this project, a search of university entry and major course and program pathway aggregators⁴ was conducted. Perhaps the most significant of these, the (Australian) *Good Universities Guide* revealed that, using the search terms “Cultural Studies”, a confusing array of programs is revealed—at the time of writing, programs including Curtin University’s *Graduate Certificate in Indigenous Australian Cultural Studies*, Murdoch

University's *Bachelor of Business*, University of Sydney's *Bachelor of Music* and Australian National University's *Bachelor of Pacific Studies* were listed in search results. In a list comprising 23 entries⁵, all but two had any direct connection to a degree program with a major/pathway in Cultural Studies (again, as those within the discipline would recognise it). The exceptions were the University of South Australia's Bachelor of Arts in *History and Cultural Studies* and University of Sydney's *Master of Cultural Studies* (noting, of course, that this is a post-graduate program). While we are far from suggesting that Cultural Studies does not find purpose in programs dedicated to Business, the anthropology of Indigenous Peoples, Music and Pacific Studies, we do speculate on what prospective students make of this array of offers.

Further salt to the wound is added when the Australian Government Department of Education and Training *Quality Indicators for Learning and Teaching* (QILT) database is consulted. 'Cultural Studies' is not recognised as a standalone discipline area within this database. While the larger category "Humanities, Culture and Social Sciences" is presumably the category within which one would assume activities practiced under the banner of Cultural Studies would find a home, no direct reference to 'Cultural Studies' is listed (*Figure 3*).

INSERT Figure 3



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Home > Study Areas > Humanities, Culture & Social Sciences

Humanities, Culture & Social Sciences

This study area includes Political Science, Humanities including History & Geography, Language & Literature.

This includes detailed areas of study including Political Science and Policy Studies, Sociology, Anthropology, History, Archaeology, Geography, Indigenous Studies, Gender Specific Studies, Librarianship, Information Management, Curatorial Studies, Philosophy, Religious Studies and Criminology, Languages, Linguistics and Literature.

Choose a type of institution to view:

All University Non-University

83.2%

Overall quality of educational experience
Humanities, culture and social sciences UG

59.6%

Full-time employment rate
Humanities, culture and social sciences UG

Figure 3: QILT program indicators using the keywords ‘Cultural Studies’

Intriguingly, older disciplines including History, Anthropology and Sociology are referred to, alongside newer disciplines including Creative Industries. While Cultural Studies may have been lauded (and lambasted in equal measure) in the early 1990s for threatening these disciplines, it seems that the score has been levelled. On this point Graeme Turner (2012, 70) reminds that despite the success of Cultural Studies through the 1980s and 1990s, Cultural Studies holds the risk of being something from a particular moment:

[It is] inevitable, perhaps, as cultural studies loses its cool status to newer arrivals such as new media or creative industries...some of us are finding that we must adjust to the fact that we have fewer students who are excited by their exposure to cultural studies.

This ‘failure of presence’ of Cultural Studies in aggregators like the Good Universities Guide and QILT further reinforce McKewen’s (2002) observation that Cultural Studies is a ‘hidden discipline’.

The Data

Australian and New Zealand/Aotearoan universities with defined program offers in Cultural Studies are outlined in *Table 1*. Although it is recognised that programs not strictly named ‘Cultural Studies’ will draw upon Cultural Studies’ attendant stock of content, methods and conceptual themes, in response to the problem of visibility we seek to outline in this paper, inclusion in this listing was reserved to named ‘Cultural Studies’ programs. On this we refer to Bob Hodge’s (2003, 88) observation that Cultural Studies “appears in many descriptions of departments, courses, journals etc., but currently in Australian universities what is studied under this name could be found under many headings, such as English, Cultural/Communication/Film/Media Studies, sometimes separately, sometimes combined”. Concomitantly, focus is given here to specifically named programs and majors.

A further restriction was issued in terms of the problem alluded to earlier; namely, that of usage of the title ‘Cultural Studies’ to designate programs with foci in inter-culturality and similar areas of, what might be seen here as, the literal appendage of the term ‘cultural’. Accordingly, only named ‘Cultural Studies’ programs that resemble connections to what is referred to here as the ‘Birmingham tradition’ are included. *Table 1* is consequently formulated with these restrictions applied.

INSERT Table 1

Table 1: Program and Major Offers in Cultural Studies. Listed alphabetically by university and country designation.

Program Trends

From a survey of those programs that fit the brief for this project, a number of trends appeared, with these trends, we suggest, providing something of a ‘signature’ for the discipline in Australia and New Zealand/Aotearoa. Areas of focus in *Literary and Media Studies, Gender*

Studies, Ethnographic and Field-Based Studies, Screen Studies and programs with more ‘generalist’ foci emerged as indicative of the concerns taken in Cultural Studies programs in Australian and Aotearoan/New Zealand universities. *Table 1* provides a summary of these findings, with the following descriptions of each area offering further insight into the dynamics of these areas of focus.

Literary and Media Studies

A prominent, and perhaps expected, theme in the delivery of Cultural Studies in Australia and New Zealand/Aotearoa included programs that drew association with a literary studies tradition. Notable examples include CQ University’s *English and Cultural Studies* major with courses including *LITR1105 Popular Genres* and *CULT19015 Explorations of the Gothic* and Curtin University’s *Literary and Cultural Studies* major, including courses titled *LCST3000 Reading the City* providing a sense of the literary studies focus taken in both universities (note particular the course prefix codes and the focus on ‘reading’ specific topical assemblages). That both programs are convened under a wider Bachelor of Arts program structure is perhaps not surprising, but nonetheless remains significant with regard the disciplinary location these courses maintain (a notable point especially with regard to the program offers outlined by Victoria University and its placement of Cultural Studies with a Bachelor of Education program). Within these programs, textual analysis and the ‘reading’ and decoding of a range of texts is emphasised, as indicated in the following description:

“Literary and Cultural Studies explores a number of media, including novels, advertisements, newspapers, photographs, paintings, film, fashion, popular music, social space and social media and how these encode and reflect the cultural conditions. By learning how to interpret encodings you can understand past and present culture.”

(Curtin University 2018,

http://courses.curtin.edu.au/course_overview/undergraduate/Literary-Cultural)

Majors such as those offered by Curtin University and CQ University infer connections to a ‘textualist’ tradition, within which the methodological application of Cultural Studies as a practice of reading (or, ‘decoding’) cultural texts is central.

Significantly, this connection to a literary studies tradition is evident across many of the programs explored here, with the capacity for students to decode ‘texts’ providing a defining

feature of these programs. Edith Cowan University, for instance, define their *Media and Cultural Studies* major in the following terms:

The major introduces students to a significant range of contemporary theoretical and critical approaches used to analyse media texts, media technologies and their position in the world today. Students are trained to think critically and to communicate effectively. (Edith Cowan University 2018, <http://www.ecu.edu.au/degrees/courses/bachelor-of-media-and-communication/unitset?id=MAAAIW&crsCd=Y77>)

Significantly, the inflection of textual analysis toward ‘critical’ analysis stands as a further feature of these programs. Although we acknowledge that ‘critical thinking’ has become something of a prominent (albeit, *empty*) signifier in university marketing and advertising in recent years, this association between critical analysis and the decoding of cultural texts links to what might be cast as a ‘foundational’ Cultural Studies practice. This is significant and provides a link to the “textual criticism” that informed early British formations of the discipline; that is, the ‘reading’ of “cultural forms other than literature” (Turner 2003, 10).

Gender Studies

Sexuality and gender-focused course streams also feature prominently in programs in Australia and New Zealand/Aotearoa. A notable example is provided by Victoria University. Apart from being one of the few universities surveyed here to offer Cultural Studies beyond a Bachelor of Arts (in this case, via a minor set within a Bachelor of Education), the focus of this minor is squarely on Sexuality and Gender Studies:

Gender is one of the major ways that human society is organised, whether considered from a social or cultural perspective...The Cultural Studies minor provides you with a critical education in major theories and applications about the place of gender. (Victoria University 2018 <https://www.vu.edu.au/unitsets/EMICUL>)

Two observations emerge from this. Firstly, this inclusion of Cultural Studies with a Bachelor of Education degree is perhaps not surprising, given the associations with formal education that Cultural Studies has maintained from its beginnings (Maton and Wright 2002; Wright

1998). But secondly, for this program, it does however remain significant that such a prominent focus on gender defines the shape of Cultural Studies within this minor.

A scan of the programs listed in *Table 1* reveals that Sexuality and Gender Studies also provide a prominent point of focus within departmental, major and program title designations; as is the case with the University of Sydney's positioning of Cultural Studies within the Department of Gender and Cultural Studies and prominent course offers within the University of Melbourne's major in Screen and Cultural Studies dealing explicitly with sexuality; *SCRN30004 Film noir: History and Sexuality*, and *CULS30004 Thinking Sex* as key examples.

From a slightly different perspective, Cultural Studies' approaches to the analysis of sexuality and gender also inform programs and majors in (*non-Cultural Studies*) cognate discipline areas. The Australian National University draws a heavy focus on Cultural Studies' core concepts within their Gender Studies suite of courses as offered within the School of Culture, History and Language. As the ANU website entry for these courses identifies:

[The] Gender, Sexuality and Culture major aims to develop students' capacity for thinking and communicating creatively and independently about society, identity and culture. It encourages a reflexive and questioning approach to knowledge. It draws on the disciplines of Gender Studies and Cultural Studies... (ANU 2018, <https://programsandcourses.anu.edu.au/major/GEND-MAJ>)

Course offers within this major include typical Cultural Studies fare, with *GEND1002 Reading Popular Culture: An Introduction to Cultural Studies* and *ASIA2311 Gender and Cultural Studies in Asia and the Pacific* providing insight into the framing of Cultural Studies within this Gender Studies major.

Ethnographic Orientations

In some ways conjuring Angela McRobbie's (1997) "three E's" approach to the *empirical*, *ethnographic* and *experiential* in Cultural Studies, a number of programs surveyed here derived from, what we loosely refer to as, an 'ethnographic' tradition. A key example is provided by Southern Cross University, with foundational courses including *HUM00270 Doing Cultural Studies* and *HUM00275 Cultural Studies Research Project* focused on engagement with communities and sites beyond the classroom.

A similar theme is detailed in the program description for Western Sydney University's major in Cultural and Social Analysis. As the site notes:

Cultural and Social Analysis is an interdisciplinary major developing knowledge, research skills and analytic capacities relevant to understanding and interpreting landscapes of cultural diversity and social difference in our contemporary world, both in terms of the broad contours, as well as specific micro-social environments... Topics include popular culture, everyday urban life, cultural and social impacts of scientific theories and new technologies, multiculturalism, and contemporary spirituality.

(Western Sydney University 2018,

<http://handbook.westernsydney.edu.au/hbook/specialisation.aspx?unitset=M1052.1>)

In a similar vein, the University of Wollongong's major in Cultural Studies takes its focus on the analysis of 'everyday practice' as an encountered site of inquiry:

Cultural studies is an innovative field of inquiry that explores the production of culture, with a particular concern for the operations of power in everyday practice. Themes and topics include everyday life, global media and cultures, race, sexuality, identities, and the body and emotion. (University of Wollongong 2018, <https://lha.uow.edu.au/hsi/cultural-studies/index.html>)

Although we recognise that strains of those themes discussed earlier in this paper are present in these programs (for instance, Western Sydney University offer courses in the 'Politics of Sex and Gender', 'History of Sexuality', 'Film Studies' and 'Culture, Discourse and Meaning'), it remains notable that an emphasis on the 'ethnographic' engagement *with* social spaces and practices provides a point of definition for these programs.

Screen Studies

A further presence in the Australian and New Zealand/Aotearoan Cultural Studies landscape derives from areas of focus in Media and Screen Studies. The University of Melbourne major in *Screen and Cultural Studies* provides an indicative example:

...popular media, screen histories, Australian, Hollywood and ArtHouse cinemas and everyday life, television and entertainment, ethnographic and documentary cinema, computer games and the representation of global cultures. (The University of Melbourne 2018, <https://handbook.unimelb.edu.au/components/gd-arts-spec-27>)

It is important to point out that although cast under the guise of screen cultures, the outline for this major shows a comprehensive survey of Cultural Studies *generally*, albeit from the perspective of screen studies *specifically*.

Further attention to screen cultures is noted in several of the programs outlined in *Table 1*; especially in terms of the focus given to areas including film and television studies. Particular prominence is also given to *digital* and *new* media, with this contemporary formation of screen media providing a dominant point of focus in many of the programs outlined here.

Generalist Programs

A number of the programs surveyed took what we cast here as a ‘generalist’ approach to the study of Cultural Studies. Although the Southern Cross University, University of Melbourne and CQ University programs might be considered as ‘generalist’ in their reach across multiple traditions and foci of inquiry, perhaps the most indicative of those programs explored here is that offered by the University of Canterbury:

One of Cultural Studies’ great strengths is its interdisciplinarity, and courses from many subjects can contribute to your Cultural Studies major or minor. We offer four specialised pathways: Gender and Sexuality, Aotearoa New Zealand Studies, Popular and Visual Culture, and Human-Animal Studies. You can also opt for a more diverse approach to your degree and construct your own pathway.

The comprehensive array of pathways and courses dealing with foundational studies in Cultural Studies and areas of specialisation make this a particularly valuable program. The ‘generalist’ approach typically involves a foundational ‘survey’ course (such as the Southern Cross University’s offering, *HUM00270 Doing Cultural Studies*, and *CULT132 Cultural Studies: Reading Culture* offered by the University of Canterbury) followed by a sequence of courses covering major ‘touchstone’ themes in Cultural Studies (as per the structure of the University of Canterbury major) and areas of topical specialisation.

Final Ruminations

This paper sought to offer a survey of the broad themes that define Cultural Studies in Australia and New Zealand/Aotearoa. In doing so, we outlined something of a response to the predicament noted earlier; that Cultural Studies is, at best, somewhat ‘obscured’ in definitional clarity, or as McKewen (2002) claims, an ‘invisible’ discipline. We argued that consideration of the positioning of the discipline should form a significant point of focus in progressing the discipline, and that further to this, prominent points of reception (and representation) for Cultural Studies derive from those programs of study that operate under its name. An extension to this logic suggests that Cultural Studies, following McKewen (2002), Turner (2012) and Rodman (2015) does indeed have something of an image problem, with this ‘failure of presence’ of the discipline beyond immediate program and departmental contexts signifying a problem for the discipline.

A useful analogue for considering this predicament of Cultural Studies’ meanings and reception within wider publics is found in Peter Berger’s (1963) reflections on the reception that Sociology endured in light of prevailing public recognition, and interest in, Psychology mid-20th century. Framing an argument that is prescient to Cultural Studies now, Berger notes:

There are very few jokes about sociologists. This is frustrating for the sociologists, especially if they compare themselves with their more favoured second cousins, the psychologists, who have pretty much taken over that sector of American humor that used to be occupied by clergymen. A psychologist, introduced as such at a party, at once finds himself [sic] the object of considerable attention and uncomfortable mirth. A sociologist in the same circumstance is likely met with no more of a reaction than if he had been announced as an insurance salesman. (1)

This should all sound very familiar. Recent surveys of the field including those by Grossberg (2010), Turner (2012) and Rodman (2015) affirm this point, and in an effort to avoid the pitfall that Paul McKewen (2002, 427) highlights when he refers to Cultural Studies as “in danger of becoming a discipline for insiders, for those already ‘in the know’ and those who stumble across it”, we argue that it is imperative that a wider sense of the presence and purpose of Cultural Studies is broadcast. The response outlined in this paper focused on those degree programs that function under the name ‘Cultural Studies’. As typically a first point of encounter that most

students have with the discipline⁶, it is with what these suggest *on behalf of* the discipline that a sense of the discipline's progression might be gleaned. The risk inherent to Cultural Studies' ongoing development and presence as an attractive field of study for prospective students is writ-through this predicament; a state-of-affairs all the more perplexing given that Cultural Studies' origins as a heavily engaged pedagogical project, and one that was originally enacted at the sharp end of adult and worker's education programs⁷.

To close, we note that Cultural Studies would be well served by attending to two distinct undertakings. The first is somewhat pragmatic and corresponds to the further defining of what counts as 'Cultural Studies'. Surveys such as the one offered here (as superficial in reach as it might be) provide a first step toward gauging what it is that Cultural Studies is now, and how it might continue.

The second corresponds to a more deliberate assertion of those markers that define various national formations of Cultural Studies. Although prominent surveys of the field are present (including Frow and Morris 1993; Turner 2003), we suggest that it is via surveys of teaching programs specifically that significant insights into the ways that Cultural Studies finds activation *within* specific contexts and jurisdictions are to be found. Explication of these programs in turn provides a reference point for considering how Cultural Studies' 'local' projects gain meaning and extend to define the discipline.

A further point for consideration emerges when it is considered that these are 'difficult times' for Cultural Studies and the humanities generally. Apart from important, positive perspectives that reports including Brass and Turner's (2014) *Mapping the Humanities, Arts and Social Sciences in Australia* provide, it remains that changes in the formations of Cultural Studies, the humanities and universities more generally, require attention to the attendant orientations that courses and programs operating under the title of Cultural Studies consequently take. It was from this remit that this paper has sought to provide an initial survey of the ways Cultural Studies finds definition in Australian and NewZealand/Aotearoan undergraduate programs, and we hope, offers a prompt for further scholarship on the place and ongoing relevance of Cultural Studies to wider public and national dialogues.

Notes

¹ The method for this project also followed something akin to Ted Striphas' (1998) survey of Cultural Studies' teaching programs in the United States. Where this project differs from the Striphas survey is that it does not provide, solely, a listing of program offers, but instead seeks to outline some of the major thematic trends in the teaching programs examined.

² This formulation of antipodean Cultural Studies is naturally not without complication; Graeme Turner (1992) has identified the “insensitivity to differences between, rather than within, cultures which may be the most pervasive disease working away at contemporary practice in cultural studies” (642). How successful this transplantation of the Birmingham project has been in the Antipodes is not the focus of this paper, other than to suggest that this formulation of Cultural Studies practice provides a useful starting point for consideration ‘what’s become’ of the discipline in this part of the world.

³In fact, it is with this particular type of usage of “Cultural Studies” that author A recalled a personal experience with a colleague, who, when in conversation about matters of teaching and disciplinary expertise proudly relayed her own capacity to teach Cultural Studies courses; all because she had spent time teaching within schools in New Guinea! The problem is, of course, that this experience could well be within the remit of ‘Cultural Studies’, but not for the reasons this colleague understood.

⁴Including the (Australian) Good University's Guide (<https://www.gooduniversitiesguide.com.au/>), Australian Education Network's Australian Universities (<https://www.australianuniversities.com.au/>), Studies in Australia (<https://www.studiesinaustralia.com/courses-in-australia>) and Open Universities Australia (<https://www.open.edu.au/>). A wider search of the Innovative Research Universities (<https://www.iru.edu.au/>) and Regional University Network (<http://www.run.edu.au/index.php>) revealed no results for the search term “Cultural Studies”.

⁵As originally compiled in October 2017. A more recent search, conducted in October 2018 revealed a significantly reduced list of results; 5 results corresponding to the University of South Australia Bachelor of Arts in History and Cultural Studies and University of Sydney Master of Cultural Studies, alongside further programs in intercultural studies from Tabor College, and Australian Indigenous Cultural Studies from Curtin University.

⁶Although we do acknowledge, and as is perhaps most clearly outlined by Turner (2012), that elements of Cultural Studies practice and theoretical stock-in-trade appear in school curricula across Australia and New Zealand/Aotearoa—including via methodological applications of textual analysis and semiotics, and theory associated with representation, identity and popular

culture amongst other markers—we point out that this content is not explicitly referred to as ‘Cultural Studies’, nor taught under curricula themes identifying this title.

⁷A useful summary of which is found in Steele (1997).

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