

A Reading of *New Cultural Studies*: Reflecting on Theoretical Aspects of Cultural Studies

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Abstract

This essay is concerned with a practice of reading a book with radical agendas, titled *New Cultural Studies*, which attempts to address a question in relation to the position of ‘theory’ in cultural studies. Today, there seems to be a call for more immediate visible achievements or results among government, industry and academia. The contemporary situation leads to an atmosphere of a disregard of more abstract and reflective thinking, which means the decline of theory in the academic world, let alone in cultural studies. Over the past two decades, theory or philosophical thought has been exposed to the transformation of its surroundings, including the rise of neoliberal economy, serious terrorist attacks, many deaths of leading theorists, etc. Under the current tide of globalization, we seem to be forced into paralyzed way of thought process, not realizing how we should proceed in the field of cultural studies. Through the reading of monographs which deal with the possibilities of new cultural studies, we discuss the meanings of facing up to theories which cultural studies has traditionally drawn upon..

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1. Background of ‘new’ cultural studies

Over the last couple of decades, people around the world have experienced a variety of social changes, social earthquakes, especially since the collapse of the Berlin Wall. Striking instances are the end of Cold War, the political religious and ethnic strife, the rising tide of globalization and a political economy under neoliberal economical policy. We could say that the current social, political and economic climate of globalization has also promoted such a trend in the academic world, exposing scholars and researchers to competition for survival. It urges them to demonstrate tangible and concrete achievements rather than the intangible and abstract, that is, academic work involved with reflection and philosophical thought that would require large amounts of time and energy. While visible results or achievements are more highly valued, a study of theory itself including a critique of assumptions that regulate our way of thinking is placed on the sidelines of the academic world. This situation might be compared to the dominant statement in American academism: ‘publish or perish’. Scholars and researchers are expected to perform in terms of their contribution to society by publishing the results of their studies in order to live up to

their financial sponsors’ expectations. Arts scholars, especially specializing in the work of literature and philosophy, however, find it difficult to produce a regular accomplishment. If they are forced to publish or produce visible results in the form of publications, they will tend to churn out ‘products’ of their half-accomplished work without enough time and energy to be reflective of their study itself.

Scholars of cultural studies are not exceptional. We have to understand their positions under the background. We could say that in fact they cannot address theoretical aspects of cultural studies head-on. But we have to pay attention to the specific context that has surrounded cultural studies for the past two decades. What is important is to spotlight and reconsider how ‘theory’ is located in an academic genre of cultural studies.

Then, we take up one publication with an intriguing title, *New Cultural Studies* (edited by Gary Hall and Clare Birchall, 2006), reading the agendas each author raised in order to reconsider the meanings of the practice of dealing with ‘theory’ itself. This book is mainly divided into four parts, starting with an introductory chapter (*New Cultural Studies: Adventures in Theory*), Part I (*New Adventures in*

Theory), Part II (New Theories), Parts III (New Transformations), Part IV (New Adventures in Cultural Studies).

To begin with, we roughly review an outline of cultural studies in Britain, giving attention to a critique of American cultural studies which have developed with its own features different from British cultural studies. Paying attention to this difference can provide a preliminary thought that would lead us to the main discussion in this essay. What we deal with in this paper is just to give a certain consideration to a couple of chapters in *New Cultural Studies*, but we are sure that it will become an important step to further and deep discussion that would enable us to recognize how much or how little 'theory' is estimated in cultural studies. In addition, by reading the critique of the contemporary tide in academism including cultural studies, and the possibility of a new mode of cultural studies, we might have an opportunity to reconsider our attitude toward the subject of our research or analysis of a social formation.

2. A critique of American cultural studies

Half a century has passed since theorists with working class roots, including Richard Hoggart (1957) or Raymond Williams (1958) presented radical perspectives on culture, providing a momentum that eventually created British cultural studies. It was based on the claim that culture should be regarded as a moment of a social formation rather than a mere position dependent on the dynamics of social events such as political economic practices in a base-superstructure rhetoric under Marxist dominant discourses. The movement toward an alternative concept of culture which could play an autonomous role in society, involved with Contemporary French Thought would develop into a rising tide as symbolized in active practices of the Birmingham Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies. In the course of time cultural studies was introduced to American academism, where it was transformed into another variety with its own characteristics. Alan O'Connor (1989) made an analysis of American cultural studies, giving a critical account of its features. We could summarize them by saying that British cultural studies was characterized by its application to diverse social events with an extensive theoretical approach, while American cultural studies would tend to be treated as a theory of postmodernism, paying little attention to the tradition of British cultural studies. A. O'Connor (1989)

described one of the main features of American cultural studies. Cultural studies there was understood by scholars in the United States, mainly referring to Lawrence Grossberg, who would supposedly discuss cultural studies without taking into consideration British traits. 'Cultural studies in the United States is discussed with particular reference to the work of Grossberg'(1989: 405). In addition, 'The main problem of Grossberg's influence is that in making his case for postmodernism and more concrete studies of "cultural apparatuses" he apparently discards most of cultural studies as it has developed in Britain. At conferences in the United States, cultural studies has become synonymous with various types of postmodern theorizing'(p.407). Such a tendency is due to the two main reasons: one is about an object of analysis characteristic of British society (the media); the other is about the identity of American scholars engaged with cultural studies. O'Connor says explicitly, 'There are two factors which encourage this development. The first is the difficulty in the United States of reading the cultural studies style of theorizing through concrete examples when most of the examples are specific to British society. ... The second difficulty is the relative isolation of cultural studies scholars in the United States and the relative absence of a Left intellectual tradition. Cultural studies in the United States is being sponsored by scholars who rarely have any connection to existing political and cultural movements and are somewhat surprised that this might even be possible'(p.407).

3. The main agenda of *New Cultural Studies*

Ten reasons for some people to lead to the moves toward 'beyond theory' are listed (G. Hall & C. Birchall, 2006: 7-12). They can be summarized below and some critical points should be given to discussion.

(1) The crisis of the left:

The current crisis in leftist ideology and politics are symbolized by political and social events that have happened for the last two decades — the fall of the Berlin Wall, the collapse of the former Soviet Republics, the reshaping of Eastern Europe, and so on. The trend of thought that has characterized that sort of ideology, that is, Marxism or Post-Marxism, seems to be viewed as a dinosaur. In a similar way, scholars concerned with those thoughts appear to fall into anachronism.

(2) The marketisation of the university:

The surge in neo-liberalism has promoted the global

marketplace to be extremely competitive, forcing the government to cut its budget deficits, including the reduction of the higher education expenditures. The drastic curtailment of academic funding urges the university authorities to gain 'external' funds except finances from the government. Researchers have been pushed into intensely competitive society, paying more attention to practical aspects of academic research, that is to say, visible outcomes and numerical values on which scholars involved in a theoretically or philosophically oriented field tend to place less value. It is regarded as valuable whether the expected effects of research and education in universities are economically and socially 'productive', in other words, immediately 'useful'.

(3) The rise of the 'new economy'

The decline of theory has also been promoted by the 'new economy' under the consumption that intellectual property and ideas as material assets are highly estimated (Gibson, 2004).

(4) The creation of the 'creative industries'

The rise of the new economy instead of the decline of theory has been produced and accelerated by the dominant discourse of neo-liberalism. While neo-liberal reduction of funding for academic research and higher education is discouraging both universities and their students from being concerned with metaphysical and abstract fields such as philosophy and literature, the new information economy closely associated with the 'new economy' has been produced and privileged. We are now, whether in academic or business world, urged to devote ourselves to a practical aspect of our daily life, that is, moneymaking.

(5) The celebration of the public intellectual

In contrast to a term of 'ivory tower', which used to be much-publicized, poking fun at the university that means the restrictive and closed atmosphere of the university, faculty members who can play as a role of a bridge between arts and humanities and business are increasingly welcome among the public. Those people tend to get a lot of media exposure, featured on TV or in a magazine, trying to explain to the public real-world events, relating them to their expertise in an easily understood manner. It is important to give clear and understandable explanations. Intellectual figures, successful in doing this, are growing in popularity, so that they result in reigning supreme at different situations.

(6) Lack of time

Theory can often be extremely demanding in terms of the time and effort one is required to spend on it: not just thinking about it, but also reading, learning and even understanding it (G. Hall & C. Birchall, 2006: 9). What 'the contemporary university's "audit culture" has also produced' is, Hall and Birchall argue, 'securing external funding, delivering excellent teaching and learning that external reviewers and students rate highly, and dealing with the increased administrative load'. This situation has led to common perceptions that many researchers cannot find enough time to be committed to theory which demands laborious process of reading and writing difficult texts, which might end up getting nowhere, unproductive, underestimated by the university authorities and funding bodies. Researchers involved with theory should face up to the fact that they have to be prepared to be ridden by fears of 'publish or perish'. Little wonder that many promising young scholars and researchers do not prefer to fall victim to the vicious circle awaiting theorists. To wish to be highly estimated is human. It is natural that many researchers are inclined to pursue the best way to survive and succeed in the academic world.

(7) Changes to the academic publishing industry

As both institutions and their students have found it harder and harder to purchase texts, the traditional market for the academic monograph has experienced something of a decline (G. Hall & C. Birchall, 2006: 10). This encourages publishers to make a shift from theoretical treatises for graduate students to accessible introductions for 'the relatively large undergraduate student market'. The more popularized the university is, the more the number of the students who find it difficult to understand metaphysical aspects of theory increases. Instead they prefer more practical dimensions of systematic knowledge, which have had an effect on the academic publishing industry.

(8) Fashion

As G. Hall & C. Birchall put it, theory such as the literary / philosophical / critical / cultural kind is not as fashionable as it used to be.

(9) The many deaths of theory

The death of Jacques Derrida in 2004 symbolizes the end of an era. We could say that it has marked the end of the golden age of leading figures who contributed to the creation and development of postmodern thought: Althusser, Barthes, de Man, Deleuze, Lacan, Lyotard, Foucault et al. Today, there seems to be no parallel tide of thought to those collective

moment of the once much discussed thought particularly in 1960s and 70s. We cannot see, for instance, a new generation that matches the radical concept of Foucault's, the order of discourse and the formation of discourse which eventually regulate the limit of our way of thinking. In fact, we can observe the critique of Foucault in the work of Michel de Certeau (1988, 1984), spotlighting the aspect of crafty way of everyday life, the art of survival that could transcend the strategic network of the dominant system. Although we should admit that part of Certeau's insight in terms of tactics of resistance is taken over to the work of John Fiske (1987), we cannot see enough accumulation of the work both in theoretical and empirical perspective to form a paradigm. What does it mean that we address the critique of theory head-on? Is it just out of date or an anachronism?

(10) 9/11 and all that

‘There is also a sense of “post-theoretical” political urgency apparent within cultural studies at the moment: an urgency which, especially after 9/11 and the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, is seen as leaving little time for the supposedly elitist, Eurocentric, text-based concerns of Derrida, Lacan, Lyotard, Irigaray, Kristeva, Butler, Bhabha, Spivak et al’ (G. Hall & C. Birchall, 2006: 12). Considering the trend of thought after the end of the Cold War in 1989, theory doesn't seem to deal with old animosities and new dangers the collapse of Communism created. We could say that the terrorist attacks of 9/11 marked the moves of the decline of theory, as though paralyzing the function and value of theory

As pointed out above, we have sketched ten reasons for the contemporary decline of theory's influence in the field of cultural studies. Given many of most convincing backlashes against theory-oriented cultural studies, there seems to have been a literal deathwatch on theory in cultural studies. Then, how can we explain that some of the contemporary scholars in cultural studies are returning to theory? G. Hall & C. Birchall provide three responses to the question, which are to be discussed below.

Response 1:

Hall & Birchall point out the first reason as follows: “The first reason is that theory is frequently concerned with examining and testing the kind of founding ideas, narratives and systems of thought that (as we saw previously with the example of Marxist-inspired left-historical progressive politics) cultural studies all too often relies upon (p.12). This statement suggests that even though the contemporary

cultural studies is supposedly oriented to more political and moral aspect, the relationship between cultural studies and theory is inseparable. Hall & Birchall (p.13) refer to the relationship of moralists to theory, citing Brown (2001: 29): ‘Significantly, theory has been a regular target for moralists, Brown observes, frequently being chastised for its “failure” to tell the left what to struggle for and how to act’. Hall & Birchall argue that an anti-political moralism is identifiable in cultural studies. They point out that we can find an anti-political moralism over the course of the 1990s and early 2000s, which urges cultural studies to stay away from the self-reflexivity of theory and return to a concern with real politics. The problem is that an anti-political and anti-theoretical moralism has become hysterical, attempting to hide political despair and paralysis since the decline of the left. It is time to create a new cultural studies not based on moralism but on theory.

The second response to the argument that we should pay more attention to theory in cultural studies is due to the recognition that theory provides cultural studies with a means of thought and reflection. It is particularly worth noting that we can be motivated to be self-reflective through ambiguity and contradiction which even can lead cultural studies to paralysis. The approach is essentially associated with the insight of Julia Kristeva (1986) into the destruction of the conventional semiotics. Kristeva's attitude requires us to pay much attention to ambiguous phases of social events, what is called ‘carnival’ by Mikhail Bakhtin (1986), which are eventually mediated through discourse and represented as communicative events. In the process of this sort of identification (being communicatively represented) the ‘real world’ is being transformed into the realm of discourse, only by which we can recognize the reality or believability of what is going on around us. For instance, we feel as if we could grasp the meanings of social events through the media such as TV, newspapers, the Internet, etc. Individual experiences, memories, and even thought tend to be generalized, categorized and unified into collective representations. Representations are characteristic of polarization of our concept of things: old / new, West / East, developed / developing, the human / machine, etc. These clearly articulated terms are not only helpful in understanding events that appear around us, but also tempting us to totally rely on the dichotomy between the two which is to be produced by the function of polarization of diverse elements.

We could even say that the way we divide the issues of cultural studies into a political aspect and a theoretical one is preoccupied with a particular frame of thought based on such dichotomy classification. Now, what we are supposed to do is to cut deeply into the contemporary stereotype which has been formed in cultural studies for the past two decades since the end of Cold War, and provide a necessary theoretical base to construct a new phase of cultural studies. In doing so, it is theory that counts. Without theory it is impossible to proceed in the field where we have to deal with what is complicated and even confused. Theory could be compared to a traffic controller in the intersection with broken traffic lights.

The third response to the question as to the emphasized necessity of theory in cultural studies is related to the identity of cultural studies itself. A reflective analysis can help the modes of a certain discipline, in which critical attitudes weigh heavily, to be strong and flexible. The same seems to hold for cultural studies. Originally, cultural studies assumed a critical character, which were sensitive to social discrimination and power relations. Cultural studies might have entered a new era with old continuous criticism which could turn into a canonical theory. An additional, and even essential reason to stress the importance of theory in cultural studies is that we need to be self-reflective of cultural studies itself which is supposed to be reflective of anything else. It is worthy of critical reconsideration of the contemporary cultural studies itself because cultural studies, with no exception, is in the midst of neo-liberalism with the strong power to transform academism into a life-or-death struggle which would force us to be concentrated on practical sides of study. Without self-reflectivity, cultural studies could be become a naïve collaborator to promote such trend. Hall & Birchall (p.16) note, "To put it another way, this time using the words of Paul Bowman from his chapter in this book (author note: Paul Bowman 2006: 170): if, as Slavoj Žižek (2001: 225)says,, cultural studies functions "as a discourse which pretends to be critically self-reflective, revealing predominant power relations, while in reality it obfuscates its own mode of participating in them," theory can help cultural studies appreciate and understand this, and even "to apply some of its own stock insights *to itself*."

We could say that the main aspiration of Hall & Birchall is to recreate cultural studies, giving reconsideration to it beyond the conventional boundaries and genres. They point out the potential danger that we tend to classify each

category and discuss under such a paradigm, "The assumption that often underpins this "checklist" approach – that the ultimate aim of all examination and enquiry is to arrive at the politics of a given subject, be it seen in terms of class, race, gender, ethnicity, sexuality or whatever – marginalises and excludes other possible readings: readings which do not place politics, moralistically, in a position where it is always already known and decided upon in advance; and which make allowances both for a text's singularity and its performative possibilities' (p.20).

4. A reading of Chapter 2 and 3 (New Cultural Studies): an alternative notion of the dialectic and articulation

Gary Hall (2006), a scholar of 'deconstruction' associated with Derrida, has unexceptionally been under increasing pressure that would compel himself to look small in the dominance of post-theoretical discourse especially since the events of September 11. In a monograph, Chapter 2 of *New Cultural Studies* we deal with, G. Hall emphasizes that we should approach the subject of research from a critical reflective viewpoint describing 'Practical "real-world" issues can only be engaged if careful thought has been given over to the question of *how* they can be engaged'(2006: 33). Cultural studies has privileged access to such a methodology. While he refers to the value of cultural studies that includes a reflective perspective on practical issues, Hall never forgets to stress the importance of the self-reflectivity of cultural studies itself as well as the reflectivity of social issues: 'cultural studies has the right to analyse and criticise everything, including itself and its politics'(p.48).

Gary Hall turns a critical attention to the mode cultural studies has been concerned with, that is, the concept of hegemony. Stuart Hall, a leading theorist in cultural studies, as director of the Birmingham Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies (CCCS) during the period from 1968 to 1979, would draw upon the two following theories: one is overdetermination by a Marxist philosopher Louis Althusser (2005, 1965); the other the concept of hegemony by Antonio Gramsci (1971). The concept of hegemony had long been dominant in cultural studies. But Gary Hall attempts to reconsider the conventional concept of hegemony referring to Lawrence Grossberg, "For Gramsci, the popular was a key site at which ongoing political struggle took place

– which of course is why Hall (note by author: Hall here is Stuart Hall) was so interested in “deconstructing” popular culture: “Popular culture is one of the sites where ... socialism might be constituted. That is why “popular culture” matters. ... But once it’s no longer the site of such hegemonic struggle, then cultural studies’ attention needs to move on’(2006: 37).

Furthermore, Gary Hall (p.39) pays much attention to the criticism of the traditional mode of power, referring to Michael Hardt & Antonio Negri (2000). ‘Hardt’s and Negri’s thesis is this: a new era is emerging, what they call Empire, for which the current methods of analysis are no longer adequate. They are inadequate because “they remain fixated on attacking on old form of power and propose a strategy of liberation that could be effective only on that old terrain ... What is missing here is a recognition of the novelty of the structures and logics of power that order the contemporary world. Hardt and Negri. (2000: 146)”’. Conventional modes of power that would dominate the discourse of discussion about social and political issues in cultural studies seem to be questionable in terms of effectiveness. We could say that it can lead to the decline of theory in cultural studies. Whatever the reason, cultural studies faces a new dimension in which we have to draw upon an alternative theory.

Gary Hall presents a new concept of the dialectic with reference to Jack Derrida, reading Hardt and Negri. Hall describes two concepts of the dialectic: the conventional one and a non-conventional one. The former is the process in which we can find synthesis, totalization and reconciliation through the phase of the negative. The latter is non-dialectical. Hall reads in *Empire* (2000) of Hardt and Negri, the coexistence of dialectic and non-dialectic phase. Non-dialectic dimension still leaves each element untouched: different and diverse perspectives are valued. Hardt and Negri stress the importance of coexistence based on dialectic and non-dialectic aspects. They pay much attention to the mixed phase of difference as well as reconciliation between the different factors. The situation in which different factors such as individual voice and opinion might be compared to the notion of a ‘carnival’ Mikhail Bakhtin called Dostoevsky’s polyphonic style. Hardt and Negri regard a non-dialectic condition of uncertainty and chaos as a moment that could deconstruct an apparently taken-for-granted world and find a solution to end a political standoff, not relying upon the conventional notion of the dialectic. That way of

thinking does not symbolize the decline of theory, but imply the rise of an alternative theory and propose a new application of the contemporary European thought to the current political and social issues, which could tempt us to enter the realm of Kenneth Burke (1959): congruity of incongruity, and furthermore encourage us to be interested in the ‘Menippea’ world Bakhtin would suggest, which consists of contrast, filled with contradictions, oppositional relations and figures of oxymoron. As Gary Hall observes it, this attitude counts in terms of politics: ‘A responsible political decision rather requires respect for both poles of this (non-oppositional) relation between the old and new, common and singular, calculable and incalculable’(2006: 46).

We go on to Chapter 3 in *New Cultural Studies* ‘Cultural studies and post-Marxism’ by Jeremy Valentine and we take up another illustration of the underlying assumption that theory should not be disvalued.

Valentine’s point of argument with theory can be narrowed down to two main ideas: one is the paradigm shift from Marxism to post-Marxism that was supposedly presented by theorists in 1960s such as Louis Althusser; the other an attempt to transcend post-Marxism that would be represented in the notion of ‘articulation’ by Ernest Laclau & Chantal Mouffe (1985). As for the former, Valentine summarizes the transition from Marxism to post-Marxism, saying, ‘Marxism is critical because its materialist assumptions undermine the view that social formations are natural or are given by a god. This critical approach is also aimed at Marxism itself. “Post-Marxism” is simply a term with which to categorise this process. The term is needed in order to differentiate a critical materialist approach from a dogmatic approach which tends to regard Marxism as canonical’(2006: 54). According to the traditional notion of Marxism, the base and superstructure metaphor holds a leading position in understanding the relationship between culture and society. In the paradigm, economy is the base of society, which would establish and regulate aspects of culture. Culture is not considered to be autonomous but positioned as an existence dependent on economy, the base of society. In contrast, a notion of autonomy of culture would reverse the frame, causing a denial of ‘economic determinism’, which Raymond William, one of early leading theorists in cultural studies, also suggested. Valentine describes as follows: ‘A distinct from the original positions of Marx and Engels,

post-Marxism is concerned with developing a materialist understanding of the increasing complexity of social relations and the place of production within them. The significance of the political dimension of culture emerges from the analysis of such complex relations'(p.55). Following Antonio Gramsci and Louis Althusser, Ernest Laclau & Chantal Mouffe (1985) approached the notion of hegemony from a radical perspective, providing the concept of articulation, on which Stuart Hall would heavily draw. Laclau & Mouffe attempted to apply a moment that could produce power to more contingent one rather than depending upon a class struggle over hegemony, stating, 'It was done by generalizing the Marxist logic of conflict across the social formation without the requirement of a reference to class struggle as the necessary content of conflict'(p.61). This description is noted by author: 'It' is referred to 'to subordinate the narrow Marxist understanding of politics as a class struggle determined by economic phenomena to a broader radical democratic notion of politics'(pp.60-1).

Drawing upon Althusser in terms of critical viewpoint, Laclau & Mouffe developed a notion of articulation that would have an influence on Stuart Hall. The concept of articulation was presented as an explanation of the dynamics of discourse. Valentine gives a critical discussion to the introduction of a notion of articulation by Laclau & Mouffe: 'The truth of discourse is established politically through the elimination of rival discourses or their hegemonic subordination to a dominant discourse. This allows Laclau & Mouffe to account for the existence of a social formation in terms of its 'articulation', the capacity of a subjective social agent to establish discursive unity over diverse elements by establishing an antagonistic relation to what they are not, and thus creating the illusion of necessity within what would otherwise be a random and arbitrary existence (see Slack 1996). In this respect 'populism' determines Laclau & Mouffe's theory of what knowledge is (2006: 62). Valentine criticizes Laclau & Mouffe's argument that the concept of articulation would function as a versatile apparatus to account for a social formation. Valentine says, 'Moreover, the level of articulation is privileged in Laclau & Mouffe's account, in that it establishes the overdetermined character of a social formation, the presence of everything in everything else. Articulation is confined to a specific location as it takes place in the symbolic realm which stands over discourses as their conditions of existence. The symbolic is the mega-being,

or Being in the upper case, of all beings. At the same time the fact of 'articulation' is purely contingent in that, like the unity of a social formation, it may or may not happen'(2006: 62). Furthermore, Valentine refers to the concept of subjectivity from a viewpoint of contingency, discussing critically the extended application of the concept that could lead to an alternative ideology in favor of the privileged position of self-determination. '... the idea that one is free and self-determined may also be an ideological illusion which is particularly compatible with the self-image of capitalism as morally justified. Indeed, the emphasis on freedom and self-determination within liberal social formations discourages the idea that one is dependent on being hegemonically articulated with others for one's existence'(2006: 63).

The question here is how will we rely upon the dialectic mode: the conventional mode of the dialectic; the non-traditional notion of the dialectic. The former mode seems to be related to the concept of hegemony which inevitably includes negotiations to overcome or solve any conflict in a social formation. If the symbolic is contingent, a notion of articulation can be adapted not only to the former type of the dialectic, but also the latter mode of the dialectic. It stimulates us to reflect upon or even deconstruct the moves towards uniformity or standardization. In addition, it means the subversion of the conventional notion of hegemony, causing the deconstruction of the dichotomy: the new and old; developed / developing and so on. It urges us to reconsider the validity of articulation. Valentine makes an explicit comment: 'Just because dislocatory capitalism and the state are external to the articulated space of hegemony, it does not follow that they are external to the existence of a social formation. In which case the limit of hegemony is a problem of knowledge, of knowing how the non-articulated is linked with the articulated, something which cannot be satisfied with reference to the concept of articulation itself, as the problem is larger than it. Articulation does not therefore determine the levels of a social formation. It is only one element within it. Which means that any further development of a materialist analysis of a social formation would have to begin from that which is not articulated. The task for cultural studies would be to conceive the political dimension of culture which is not articulated'(2006: 67).

Giving extended reconsideration to the significance of theory in cultural studies in reference to the two above

discussions about the reflection of the hypotheses theorists (Derrida, Laclau & Mouffe, etc.) proposed, we could have an opportunity to evoke and stimulate the accumulated resources of academic or practical attempts in cultural studies. If the contemporary cultural studies face a serious deadlock, such a practice of rereading an apparently 'out-of-date' thought might encourage us to carve out a unique way to cultural studies that could deal with current complicated political issues. If we state conclusive words, we could say, it is not until we face up to 'theory' which has formed the basis of cultural studies that we can break through the stagnation currently overshadowing cultural studies. As the saying goes, you should consult the past if you want to learn about the future. Without any aspiration to commit ourselves to 'theory', in order to be reflective of theory itself cultural studies has frequently drawn upon, we could not break free from the pitfall of a vicious circle.

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