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### **Cultural Studies and the Terms of Neo-liberal Discourse: Responding to the Neo-liberal Critique**

Recent decades have witnessed an intense critique—much of it inflected by Cultural Studies theory—of global capitalism. A counter position informed by neo-liberalism, meanwhile, has attempted to silence such critiques. Neo-liberalism represents Cultural Studies (and the humanities generally) as “relativistic” when it questions moral foundations, as “unclear” when it asserts semantic instability, as “unpatriotic” when it questions narratives of national identity, and as “impractical” when it defends creative and critical thinking rather than wage-earning skills as the basis of education. This is an effort to codify the boundaries of “legitimate” critical inquiry and educational curriculums. How might those committed to openness, critical questioning, and self-reflexivity (whether we call this “Cultural Studies” or something else) best respond? In this presentation, I argue against a response that presupposes the centrality of the terms (clarity, practicality, etc.) of neo-liberal discourse as this may contribute to the codification (i.e. institutionalization) of “legitimate” boundaries of Cultural Studies itself.