usage Levi-Strauss derived, not from Marx, but from Durkheim (the Durkheim who analysed the social categories of thought—e.g. in Primitive Classification—rather than the Durkheim of The Division Of Labour, who became the founding father of American structural-functionalism).

Levi-Strauss did, on occasion, toy with certain Marxist formulations. Thus, 'Marxism, if not Marx himself, has too commonly reasoned as though practices followed directly from praxis. Without questioning the undoubted primacy of infrastructures, I believe that there is always a mediator between praxis and practices, namely, the conceptual scheme by the operation of which matter and form, neither with any independent existence, are realized as structures, that is as entities which are both empirical and intelligible'. But this—to coin another phrase—was largely 'gestural'. This structuralism shared with culturalism a radical break with the terms of the base/superstructure metaphor, as derived from the simpler parts of the German Ideology. And, though "It is to this theory of the superstructures, scarcely touched on by Marx" to which Levi-Strauss aspired to contribute, his contribution was such as to break in a radical way with its whole terms of reference, as finally and irrevocably in the 'culturalists' did. Here—and we must include Althusser in this characterization—culturalists and structuralists alike ascribed to the domains hitherto defined as 'super-structural' a specificity and effectivity, a constitutive primacy, which pushed them beyond the terms of reference of 'base' and 'superstructure'. Levi-Strauss and Althusser, too, were anti-reductionist and anti-economist in their very cast of thought, and critically attacked that transitive causality which, for so long, had passed itself off as 'classical Marxism'.

Levi-Strauss worked consistently with the term 'culture'. He regarded 'ideologies' as of much lesser importance: mere 'secondary rationalizations'. Like Williams and Goldmann, he worked, not at the level of correspondences between the content of a practice, but at the level of their forms and structures. But the manner in which these were conceptualized were altogether at variance with either the 'culturalism' of Williams or Goldmann's 'genetic structuralism'. This divergence can be identified in three distinct ways. First, he conceptualized 'culture' as the categories and framework in thought and language through which different societies classified their different conditions of existence—above all (since Levi-Strauss was an anthropologist), the relations between the human and the natural worlds. Second, he thought of the manner and practice through which these categories and mental frameworks were produced and transformed, largely on an analogy with the ways in which language itself—the principal medium of 'culture'—operated. He identified what was specific to them and their operation as the 'production of meaning': they were, above all, signifying practices. Third, after some early flirtations with Durkheim and Mauss's social categories of thought, he largely gave up the question of the relation between signifying and non-signifying practices—between 'culture' and 'not-culture', to use other terms—for the sake of concentrating on the internal relations within signifying practices by means of which the categories of meaning were produced. This left the question of determinacy, of totality, largely in abeyance. The causal logic of determinacy was abandoned in favour of a structuralist causality—a logic of arrangement, of internal relations, of articulation of parts within a structure. Each of these aspects is also positively present in Althusser's work and that of the Marxist structuralists, even when the terms of reference had been reground in Marx's 'immense theoretical revolution'. In one of Althusser's seminal formulations about ideology—defined as the themes, concepts and representations through which men and women 'live', in
an imaginary relation, their relation to their real conditions of existence—we can see the skeleton outline of Levi-Strauss’s ‘conceptual schemes between praxis and practices’. ‘Ideologies’ are here being conceptualized, not as the contents and surface forms of ideas, but as the unconscious categories through which conditions are represented and lived. We have already commented on the active presence in Althusser’s thinking of the linguistic paradigm—the second element identified above. And though, in the concept of ‘over-determination’—one of his most seminal and fruitful contributions—Althusser did return to the problems of the relations between practices and the question of determinacy (proposing, incidentally, a thoroughly novel and highly suggestive reformulation, which has received far too little subsequent attention), he did tend to reinforce the ‘relative autonomy’ of different practices, and their internal specificities, conditions and effects at the expense of an ‘expressive’ conception of the totality, with its typical homologies and correspondences.

Aside from the wholly distinct intellectual and conceptual universes within which these alternative paradigms developed, there were certain points where, despite their apparent overlaps, culturalism and structuralism were starkly counterposed. We can identify this counterposition at one of its sharpest points precisely around the concept of ‘experience’, and the rôle the term played in each perspective. Whereas, in ‘culturalism’, experience was the ground—the terrain of ‘the lived’—where consciousness and conditions intersected, structuralism insisted that ‘experience’ could not, by definition, be the ground of anything, since one could only ‘live’ and experience one’s conditions in and through the categories, classifications and frameworks of the culture. These categories, however, did not arise from or in experience: rather, experience was their ‘effect’. The culturalists had defined the forms of consciousness and culture as collective. But they had stopped far short of the radical proposition that, in culture and in language, the subject was ‘spoken by’ the categories of culture in which he/she thought, rather than ‘speaking them’. These categories were, however, not merely collective rather than individual productions: they were unconscious structures. That is why, though Levi-Strauss spoke only of ‘Culture’, his concept provided the basis for an easy translation, by Althusser, into the conceptual framework of ideology: ‘Ideology is indeed a system of “representations”, but in the majority of cases these representations have nothing to do with “consciousness”: ... it is above all as structures that they impose on the vast majority of men, not via their “consciousness” ... it is within this ideological unconsciousness that men succeed in altering the “lived” relation between them and the world and acquiring that new form of specific unconsciousness called “consciousness” (For Marx, p. 233). It was, in this sense, that ‘experience’ was conceived, not as an authenticating source but as an effect: not as a reflection of the real but as an ‘imaginary relation’. It was only a short step—the one which separates For Marx from the ‘Ideological State Apparatuses’ essay—to the development of an account of how this ‘imaginary relation’ served, not simply the dominance of a ruling class over a dominated one, but (through the reproduction of the relations of production, and the constitution of labour-power in a form fit for capitalist exploitation) the expanded reproduction of the mode of production itself. Many of the other lines of divergence between the two paradigms flow from this point: the conception of ‘men’ as bearers of the structures that speak and place them, rather than as active agents in the making of their own history; the emphasis on a structural rather than a historical ‘logic’; the preoccupation with the constitution—in ‘theory’—of a non-ideological, scientific discourse; and hence the privileging of conceptual work and of Theory as guaranteed; the recasting of history.
as a march of the structures (cf. passim, *The Poverty of Theory*): the structuralist 'machine'...

There is no space in which to follow through the many ramifications which have followed from the development of one or other of these 'master paradigms' in Cultural Studies. Though they by no means account for all, or even nearly all, of the many strategies adopted, it is fair to say that, between them, they have defined the principal lines of development in the field. The seminal debates have been polarized around their thematics; some of the best concrete work has flowed from the efforts to set one or other of these paradigms to work on particular problems and materials. Characteristically—the sectarian and self-righteous climate of critical intellectual work in England being what it is, and its dependency being so marked—the arguments and debates have most frequently been over-polarized into their extremes. At these extremities, they frequently appear only as mirror-reflections or inversions of one another. Here, the broad typologies we have been working with—for the sake of convenient exposition—become the prison-house of thought.

Without suggesting that there can be any easy synthesis between them, it might usefully be said at this point that neither 'culturalism' nor 'structuralism' is, in its present manifestation, adequate to the task of constructing the study of culture as a conceptually clarified and theoretically informed domain of study. Nevertheless, something fundamental to it emerges from a rough comparison of their respective strengths and limitations.

The great strength of the structuralisms is their stress on 'determinate conditions'. They remind us that, unless the dialectic really can be held, in any particular analysis, between both halves of the proposition—that 'men make history . . . on the basis of conditions which are not of their making'—the result will inevitably be a naive humanism, with its necessary consequence: a voluntarist and populist political practice. The fact that 'men' can become conscious of their conditions, organize to struggle against them and in fact transform them—without which no active politics can even be conceived, let alone practised—must not be allowed to override the awareness of the fact that, in capitalist relations, men and women are placed and positioned in relations which constitute them as agents. 'Pessimism of the intellect, optimism of the will' is a better starting point than a simple heroic affirmation. Structuralism does enable us to begin to think—as Marx insisted—of the *relations* of a structure on the basis of something other than their reduction to relationships between 'people'. This was Marx's privileged level of abstraction: that which enabled him to break with the obvious but incorrect starting point of 'political economy'—bare individuals.

But this connects with a second strength: the recognition by structuralism not only of the necessity of abstraction as the instrument of thought through which 'real relations' are appropriated, but also of the presence, in Marx's work, of a continuous and complex movement *between different levels of abstraction*. It is, of course, the case—as 'culturalism' argues—that, in historical reality, practices do not appear neatly distinguished out into their respective instances. However, to think about or to analyse the complexity of the real, the act of practice of thinking is required; and this necessitates the use of the power of abstraction and analysis, the formation of concepts with which to cut into the complexity of the real, in order precisely to reveal and bring to light relationships and structures which cannot be visible to the naïve naked eye, and which can neither present nor authenticate themselves: 'In the analysis of economic forms, neither microscopes nor chemical reagents are of assistance. The
power of abstraction must replace both'. Of course, structuralism has frequently taken this proposition to its extreme. Because thought is impossible without 'the power of abstraction', it has confused this with giving an absolute primacy to the level of the formation of concepts—and at the highest, most abstract level of abstraction only: Theory with a capital 'T' then becomes judge and jury. But this is precisely to lose the insight just won from Marx's own practice. For it is clear in, for example, Capital, that the method—whilst, of course, taking place 'in thought' (as Marx asked in the 1857 Introduction, where else?)—rests, not on the simple exercise of abstraction but on the movement and relations which the argument is constantly establishing between different levels of abstraction: at each, the premises in play must be distinguished from those which—for the sake of the argument—have to be held constant. The movement to another level of magnification (to deploy the microscope metaphor) requires the specifying of further conditions of existence not supplied at a previous, more abstract level: in this way, by successive abstractions of different magnitudes, to move towards the constitution, the reproduction, of 'the concrete in thought' as an effect of a certain kind of thinking. This method is adequately represented in neither the absolutism of Theoretical Practice, in structuralism, nor in the anti-abstraction 'Poverty Of Theory' position into which, in reaction, culturalism appears to have been driven or driven itself. Nevertheless it is intrinsically theoretical, and must be. Here, structuralism's insistence that thought does not reflect reality, but is articulated on and appropriates it, is a necessary starting point. An adequate working through of the consequences of this argument might begin to produce a method which takes us outside the permanent oscillations between abstraction/anti-abstraction and the false dichotomies of Theoreticism vs. Empiricism which have both marked and disfigured the structuralism/culturalism encounter to date.

Structuralism has another strength, in its conception of 'the whole'. There is a sense in which, though culturalism constantly insists on the radical particularity of its practices, its mode of conceptualizing the 'totality' has something of the complex simplicity of an expressive totality behind it. Its complexity is constituted by the fluidity with which practices move into and out of one another: but this complexity is reducible, conceptually, to the 'simplicity' of praxis—human activity, as such—in which the same contradictions constantly appear, homologically reflected in each. Structuralism goes too far in erecting the machine of a 'Structure', with its self-generating propensities (a 'Spinozian eternity', whose function is only the sum of its effects: a truly structuralist deviation), equipped with its distinctive instances. Yet it represents an advance over culturalism in the conception it has of the necessary complexity of the unity of a structure (over-determination being a more successful way of thinking this complexity than the combinatory invariance of structuralist causality). Moreover, it has the conceptual ability to think of a unity which is constructed through the differences between, rather than the homology of, practices. Here, again, it has won a critical insight about Marx's method: one thinks of the complex passages of the 1857 Introduction to the Grundrisse where Marx demonstrates how it is possible to think of the 'unity' of a social formation as constructed, not out of identity but out of difference. Of course, the stress on difference can—and has—led the structuralisms into a fundamental conceptual heterogeneity, in which all sense of structure and totality is lost. Foucault and other post-Althusserians have taken this devious path into the absolute, not the relative, autonomy of practices, via their necessary heterogeneity and 'necessary non-correspondence'. But the emphasis on unity-in-difference, on complex unity—Marx's concrete as the 'unity of many determinations'—can be
marked in another, and ultimately more fruitful direction: towards the problematic of relative autonomy and 'over-determination', and the study of articulation. Again, articulation contains the danger of a high formalism. But it also has the considerable advantage of enabling us to think of how specific practices (articulated around contradictions which do not all arise in the same way, at the same point, in the same moment), can nevertheless be thought together. The structuralist paradigm thus does—if properly developed—enable us to begin really to conceptualize the specificity of different practices (analytically distinguished, abstracted out), without losing its grip on the ensemble which they constitute. Culturalism constantly affirms the specificity of different practices—'culture' must not be absorbed into 'the economic': but it lacks an adequate way of establishing this specificity theoretically.

The third strength which structuralism exhibits lies in its decentering of 'experience' and its seminal work in elaborating the neglected category of 'ideology'. It is difficult to conceive of a Cultural Studies thought within a Marxist paradigm which is innocent of the category of 'ideology'. Of course, culturalism constantly makes reference to this concept: but it does not in fact lie at the centre of its conceptual universe. The authenticating power and reference of 'experience' imposes a barrier between culturalism and a proper conception of 'ideology'. Yet, without it, the effectivity of 'culture' for the reproduction of a particular mode of production cannot be grasped. It is true that there is a marked tendency in the more recent structuralist conceptualisations of 'ideology' to give it a functionalist reading—as the necessary cement of the social formation. From this position, it is indeed impossible—as culturalism would correctly argue—to conceive either of ideologies which are not, by definition, 'dominant': or of the concept of struggle (the latter's appearance in Althusser's famous ISA's article being—to coin yet another phrase—largely 'gestural'). Nevertheless, work is already being done which suggests ways in which the field of ideology may be adequately conceptualized as a terrain of struggle (through the work of Gramsci, and more recently, of Laclau), and these have structuralist rather than culturalist bearings.

Culturalism's strengths can almost be derived from the weaknesses of the structuralist position already noted, and from the latter's strategic absentees and silences. It has insisted, correctly, on the affirmative moment of the development of conscious struggle and organization as a necessary element in the analysis of history, ideology and consciousness: against its persistent down-grading in the structuralist paradigm. Here, again, it is largely Gramsci who has provided us with a set of more refined terms through which to link the largely 'unconscious' and given cultural categories of 'common sense' with the formation of more active and organic ideologies, which have the capacity to intervene in the ground of common sense and popular traditions and, through such interventions, to organize masses of men and women. In this sense, culturalism properly restores the dialectic between the unconsciousness of cultural categories and the moment of conscious organization: even if, in its characteristic movement, it has tended to match structuralism's over-emphasis on 'conditions' with an altogether too-inclusive emphasis on 'consciousness'. It therefore not only recovers—as the necessary moment of any analysis—the process by means of which classes-in-themselves, defined primarily by the way in which economic relations position 'men' as agents—become active historical and political forces—for-themselves: it also—against its own anti-theoretical good sense—requires that, when properly developed, each moment must be understood in terms of the level of abstraction at which the analysis is operating. Again, Gramsci has begun to point a way through
this false polarization in his discussion of 'the passage between the structure and the sphere of the complex superstructures', and its distinct forms and moments.

We have concentrated in this argument largely on a characterization of what seem to us to be the two seminal paradigms at work in Cultural Studies. Of course, they are by no means the only active ones. New developments and lines of thinking are by no means adequately netted with reference to them. Nevertheless, these paradigms can, in a sense, be deployed to measure what appear to us to be the radical weaknesses or inadequacies of those which offer themselves as alternative rallying-points. Here, briefly, we identify three.

The first is that which follows on from Levi-Strauss, early semiotics and the terms of the linguistic paradigm, and the centering on 'signifying practices', moving by way of psychoanalytic concepts and Lacan to a radical recentering of virtually the whole terrain of Cultural Studies around the terms 'discourse' and 'the subject'. One way of understanding this line of thinking is to see it as an attempt to fill that empty space in early structuralism (of both the Marxist and non-Marxist varieties) where, in earlier discourses, 'the subject' and subjectivity might have been expected to appear but did not. This is, of course, precisely one of the key points where culturalism brings its pointed criticisms to bear on structuralism's 'process without a subject'. The difference is that, whereas culturalism would correct for the hyper-structuralism of earlier models by restoring the unified subject (collective or individual) of consciousness at the centre of 'the Structure', discourse theory, by way of the Freudian concepts of the unconscious and the Lacanian concepts of how subjects are constituted in language (through the entry into the Symbolic and the Law of Culture), restores the depersonalized subject, the contradictory subject, as a set of positions in language and knowledge, from which culture can appear to be enunciated. This approach clearly identifies a gap, not only in structuralism but in Marxism itself. The problem is that the manner in which this 'subject' of culture is conceptualized is of a trans-historical and 'universal' character: it addresses the subject-in-general, not historically-determinate social subjects, or socially determinate particular languages. Thus it is incapable, so far, of moving its in-general propositions to the level of concrete historical analysis. The second difficulty is that the processes of contradiction and struggle—lodged by early structuralism wholly at the level of 'the structure'—are now, by one of those persistent mirror-inversions, lodged exclusively at the level of the unconscious processes of the subject. It may be, as culturalism often argues, that the 'subjective' is necessary moment of any such analysis. But this is a very different proposition from dismantling the whole of the social processes of particular modes of production and social formations, and reconstituting them exclusively at the level of unconscious psychoanalytic processes. Though important work has been done, both within this paradigm and to define and develop it, its claims to have replaced all the terms of the earlier paradigms with a more adequate set of concepts seems wildly over-ambitious. Its claims to have integrated Marxist into a more adequate materialism is, largely, a semantic rather than a conceptual claim.

A second development is the attempt to return to the terms of a more classical 'political economy' of culture. This position argues that the concentration on the cultural and ideological aspects has been widely over-done. It would restore the older terms of 'base/superstructure', finding, in the last-instance determination of the cultural-ideological by the economic, that hierarchy of determinations which both alternatives appear to lack. This position insists that the economic processes and
structures of cultural production are more significant than their cultural-ideological aspect: and that these are quite adequately caught in the more classical terminology of profit, exploitation, surplus-value and the analysis of culture as commodity. It retains a notion of ideology as ‘false consciousness’.

There is, of course, some strength to the claim that both structuralism and culturalism, in their different ways, have neglected the economic analysis of cultural and ideological production. All the same, with the return to this more ‘classical’ terrain, many of the problems which originally beset it also reappear. The specificity of the effect of the cultural and ideological dimension once more tends to disappear. It tends to conceive the economic level as not only a ‘necessary’ but a ‘sufficient’ explanation of cultural and ideological effects. Its focus on the analysis of the commodity form, similarly, blurs all the carefully established distinctions between different practices, since it is the most generic aspects of the commodity-form which attract attention. Its deductions are therefore, largely, confined to an epochal level of abstraction: the generalizations about the commodity-form hold true throughout the capitalist epoch as a whole. Very little by way of concrete and conjunctural analysis can be derived at this high-level ‘logic of capital’ form of abstraction. It also tends to its own kind of functionalism—a functionalism of ‘logic’ rather than of ‘structure’ or history. This approach, too, has insights which are well worth following through. But it sacrifices too much of what has been painfully secured, without a compensating gain in explanatory power.

The third position is closely related to the structuralist enterprise, but has followed the path of ‘difference’ through into a radical heterogeneity. Foucault’s work currently enjoying another of those uncritical periods of discipleship through which British intellectuals reproduce today their dependency on yesterday’s French ideas—has had an exceedingly positive effect: above all because—in suspending the nearly-insoluble problems of determination Foucault has made possible a welcome return to the concrete analysis of particular ideological and discursive formations, and the sites of their elaboration. Foucault and Gramsci between them account for much of the most productive work on concrete analysis now being undertaken in the field: thereby reinforcing and—paradoxically—supporting the sense of the concrete historical instance which has always been one of culturalism’s principal strengths. But, again, Foucault’s example is positive only if his general epistemological position is not swallowed whole. For in fact Foucault so resolutely suspends judgment, and adopts so thoroughgoing a scepticism about any determinacy or relationship between practices, other than the largely contingent, that we are entitled to see him, not as an agnostic on these questions, but as deeply committed to the necessary non-correspondence of all practices to one another. From such a position neither a social formation, nor the State, can be adequately thought. And indeed Foucault is constantly falling into the pit which he has dug for himself. For when—against his well-defended epistemological positions—he stumbles across certain ‘correspondences’ (for example, the simple fact that all the major moments of transition he has traced in each of his studies—on the prison, sexuality, medicine, the asylum, language and political economy—all appear to converge around exactly that point where industrial capitalism and the bourgeois make their fateful, historical rendezvous), he lapses into a vulgar reductionism, which thoroughly belies the sophisticated positions he has elsewhere advanced.¹

¹ He is quite capable of wheeling in through the back door the classes he recently expelled from the front.
I have said enough to indicate that, in my view, the line in Cultural Studies which has attempted to think forwards from the best elements in the structuralist and culturalist enterprises, by way of some of the concepts elaborated in Gramsci's work, comes closest to meeting the requirements of the field of study. And the reason for that should by now also be obvious. Though neither structuralism nor culturalism will do, as self-sufficient paradigms of study, they have a centrality to the field which all the other contenders lack because, between them (in their divergences as well as their convergences) they address what must be the core problem of Cultural Studies. They constantly return us to the terrain marked out by those strongly coupled but not mutually exclusive concepts culture/ideology. They pose, together, the problems consequent on trying to think both the specificity of different practices and the forms of the articulated unity they constitute. They make a constant, if flawed, return to the base/superstructure metaphor. They are correct in insisting that this question—which resumes all the problems of a non-reductive determinacy—is the heart of the matter: and that, on the solution of this problem will turn the capacity of Cultural Studies to supercede the endless oscillations between idealism and reductionism. They confront—even if in radically opposed ways—the dialectic between conditions and consciousness. At another level, they pose the question of the relation between the logic of thinking and the 'logic' of historical process. They continue to hold out the promise of a properly materialist theory of culture. In their sustained and mutually reinforcing antagonisms they hold out no promise of an easy synthesis. But, between them, they define where, if at all, is the space, and what are the limits, within which such a synthesis might be constituted. In Cultural Studies, theirs are the 'names of the game'.