

SCRUTINIZING THE COPIOUS OUTLOOK AND CUSTOM OF CULTURAL STUDIES

By

***Ranjithkumar, N., & **Chithra, V.**

**Assistant Professor, Department of English, Manonmaniam Sundaranar University College, Puliangudi, Tamil Nadu, India.*

***Assistant Professor, Department of English, Manonmaniam Sundaranar University College, Puliangudi, Tamil Nadu, India.*

Abstract

The study of cultural aspects of any given country has often been neglected when teaching a foreign language. This is no more apparent than in the teaching of English, whether it be in a private institution, school of university. Cultural studies of any country are of the utmost importance, due to the fact that in order to be able to understand how the people and therefore the language function in these countries, one needs to first come to terms with the context in which these people live and communicate and how they develop socially, emotionally, historically and politically.

Keywords: *capitalism, sign, ideology, classless society, image.*

Introduction

Cultural studies was initially developed by 'British Marxist' academics in the late 1950s, 1960s and 1970s and has been subsequently taken up and transformed by scholars from many different disciplines around the world. Cultural studies is avowedly and even radically interdisciplinary and can sometimes be seen as anti disciplinary. A key concern for cultural studies practitioners is the examination of the

forces within and through which socially organized people conduct and participate in the construction of their everyday lives.

During the rise of Neo-liberalism in Britain and the US. Cultural studies both become a global movement and attracted the attention of many conservative opponents both within and beyond Universities for a variety of reasons. Some left-wing critics associated particularly with Marxist

forms of political economy also attracted cultural studies for allegedly overstating the importance of cultural phenomena.

Cultural studies are a field of theoretically, politically and empirically engaged cultural analysis that concentrates upon the political dynamics foundations, defining traits, conflicts and contingencies. Cultural studies researches generally investigate how cultural practices relate to wider systems of power associated with or wider systems of power associated with a operating through social phenomena, such as ideology, class structure, national formations, ethnicity, gender and generation. Cultural studies views cultural not as fixed, bounded, stable and discrete entities but rather constantly interacting and changing sets of practices and processes. The field of cultural studies encompasses a range of theoretical and methodological perspectives and practices. Although distinct from the discipline of cultural anthropology and the interdisciplinary field of ethnic studies, cultural studies draws upon

and has contributed to each of these fields.

Cultural studies combines a variety of politically engaged critical approaches drawn including “semiotics, Marxism, feminist theory, ethnography, critical race theory, post- structuralism, post colonialism, social theory, Political theory, history, philosophy, literary theory media theory, film/video studies, communication studies and art history” to study cultural phenomena in various societies and historical periods cultural studies seeks to understand how meaning is generated, disseminated, contested, bond up with systems of power and control and produced from the social political and economic spheres within a particular social formation or conjuncture. Important theories of cultural hegemony and agency have both influenced and been developed by the cultural studies movement, as have many recent major communication theories and agendas, such as these that attempt to explain and analyzed the cultural forces related and processes of globalization.

As Politics

It remains difficult to join down the boundaries of cultural studies as a coherent, Unified academic discipline with clear art substantive topics, concepts and methods that differentiate it from other disciplines. Cultural studies have always been a multi-or-post-disciplinary field of enquiry which blurs the boundaries between it and other subjects. Yet cultural studies cannot be said to be anything. It is not sociology and it is not linguistics, though it drawn upon these subject areas. Indeed, there must be, as Hall argues, something at stake in cultural studies that differentiates it from other subject area.

For Hall, what is at stake is connection that cultural studies seek to make to matters of power and cultural politics. Hence, cultural studies are a body of theory generated by thinkers who regard the production of theoretical knowledge as a political practice. Here, knowledge is never a neutral or objective phenomenon but a matter of positionality that is of the place from

which one speaks to whom and for what purpose.

There are numerous published accounts of the history of cultural studies. As Dennis Dworkin writes that “a critical moment” in the beginning of cultural studies as a field was when Richard Hoggart used the term in 1964 in founding the centre for contemporary cultural studies at the University of Birmingham. The centre would become home to the development of the intellectual orientation that has become known internationally as the ‘Birmingham school’ of cultural studies, thus becoming the world’s first institutional home of cultural studies. Many cultural studies scholars employed Marxist method of analysis, exploring the relationship between cultural forms and that of the political economy.

As a language

Structuralism extends its reach from “words” to the language of cultural signs in general. Thus human relations, material objects and images are all analyzed through the structures of signs. Typical of Levi-Strauss’s

structuralism is his approaches to food, which he declares is not so much good to eat, as good to think with. That is, food is a Signifies of symbolic meanings, cultural conventions tell us what constitutes food and what does not, the circumstances of their eating and the meanings attached to them. Levi-Strauss tends towards the structuralize trope of binaries, the raw and the cooked, the edible and the inedible, nature and culture, each of which has meaning only in relation to its opposite. Cooking transforms nature into culture and the raw into the cooked. The edible and they are marked not by question of nutrition but by cultural meanings.

Cultural Studies and Marxism

Cultural studies writers have had a long ambiguous but productive relationship with Marxism. Cultural studies are not a Marxist domain but have drawn success from it while subjecting it to vigorous critique. There is little doubt that we like in social formations Organization along capitalist lines that manifest deep class divisions in work, wages, housing, education and health. Further, cultural

practices are commodified by large corporate cultural industries. In those context cultural studies has been partisan in taking up the cause of change.

However, Marxism has been critiqued for its apparent teleology. This is, the positing of an inevitable point to which history is moving namely the demise of capitalism and the arrival of a classless society. A cultural study has resisted the economic determinism inherent in some readings of Marxism and has asserted the specificity of culture. Cultural studies have also been concerned with the apparent success of capitalism-that is, not merely its survival but its transformation and expansion. This has been attributed in part to the winning of consent for capitalism on the level of culture. Hence the interest in questions of culture, ideology and hegemony which we commonly pursued through perspectives dubbed culturalism and structuralism.

Culture and Society

Williams' theoretical influence over the development of cultural studies has

arguably been more profound than that of any, and it began with the publication of *Culture and Society* in 1958. 'Culture and Society' is a book of literary history, but with a crucial difference; its focus is not on literary texts for their own sake but for their relationship to an idea. Williams follows a thread in English thought and writing through the nineteenth and twentieth century in order to establish the cultural grounding of ideas and their representations.

Williams' work in this period enjoys a complicated relationship with the Leavisite tradition. It emphasizes practical criticism and offers a version of English cultural history that in many ways accords with Leavis's invoking an 'uncertain' nostalgia for the 'Organic', "Common culture" of an England that predates and is more English than industrialized England. However, William's view of culture cannot be entirely contained within this tradition; his celebrated opening account of the meaning of the word culture includes that of culture as a whole way of life, material, intellectual and spiritual. Reading the concluding sections of *Culture and Society*. One can

see Williams own position hardening, for focusing on culture as the pre-eminent object of attention and laying the focusing on culture as the pre-eminent object of attention and laying the foundations for the more fully argued and conclusive establishment of the category in the long Revolution. In this book Williams finally breads with the literary moral tradition that inevitably compromises culture and society.

Historians and Cultural Studies

Tony Bennett has claimed that left historians' elitist neglect of popular culture as a field of inquiry during the 1950s effectively delivered the area to the various participants in the mass culture debates from there it was rescued by Hoggart and others, and incorporated into the territory of cultural studies.

Popular culture, even the concept of 'culture' itself, has remained a site of disputation between histories and cultural studies analysts ever since. Despite the importance of the category of history to the developing protocols of cultural studies', the field's relation

with the academic profession-the discipline and institution of history has never been without tension or ambiguity. In recent years, in particular, while a cultural study has taken an increasing interest in history, some historians have expressed a sense of being overtaken or displaced by cultural studies. Notwithstanding its wider ramifications in questioning the construction of history, the balk of the work to proceed from this reorientation of British Social history is, in a sense, internal to the discipline, it deals with substantive issues within British social history and historiography and despite its admitted importance in these areas, need not concern us here.

However, at its outer reaches one would have expected such an intellectual movement within the discipline of history to have been nicely consonant with intellectual movement within cultural studies from the late 1960s to the 1980s.

Parameters of Cultural Studies

There is a difference between the study of culture and institutionalary

located cultural studies. The study of culture has taken place in a variety of academic discipline and in a range of geographical and institutional spaces. However, this is not to be understood as cultural studies. The study of cultural has no origins, and to locate one is to exclude other possible starting points. Nevertheless this does not mean key concepts identified.

Cultural studies is a discursive formation, that is, a cluster of ideas, images and practices , which provide ways of talking about, forms of knowledge and conduct associated with a particular topic, social activity or institutional site in society, cultural studies is constituted by a regulated way of speaking about objects and coheres around key concepts, ideas and concerns. Further cultural studies had a moment at which it named itself, even though that naming marks only a cut or snapshot of an ever-evolving intellectual project.

Feminist Contribution to Cultural Studies

The feminist contribution to cultural studies has been immensely productive and often profoundly

discomforting. The theoretical foundations and political objectives of a 'pre-feminist' cultural study were by no means identical with those of feminism. By the mid 1970s cultural studies established interest in the public domain, in class history, in ideology and hegemony together with its coition about issues of identify, subjectivity and its silence on the personal operation and gendered nature of power-meant that feminist cultural studies had to develop in opposition to much that had hither to been regarded as fundamental. Feminists also looked to some relatively unfashionable theoretical sources for their explanations: Freud, for instance figures more importantly than marx, as, many of the issues for grounded by psychoanalysis-sexuality, family and identity for instance were also central to feminism. Consequently, it is not surprising that feminist interventions into cultural studies should duster around the production of selectivity rather than the production of history. The insistence on the 'personal as political', the explicit recognition of the subordination of women in cultural

analyses and the emphasis on cultural consumption have emerged as specific objectives of feminist work which the 'centre' of cultural studies has come albert somewhat reluctantly to accommodate.

Morag Shiach's account of the relation between feminists and the study of popular culture has outlined how, paradoxically, cultural studies early emphasis on recovering marginalized many of the cultural forms and practices of nineteenth century women', the cultural practices of working class girls, for instance.

Conclusion

Cultural studies do present a radical challenge to the orthodoxies within the humanities and social science. It has enabled the crossing the disciplinary borders and the reframing of our ways to knowing so that we acknowledge the complexity and importance of the idea of culture. Cultural studies commitment to understanding the construction of everyday life has the admirable objectives of doing so in order to change our lives for the better.

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ABOUT THE AUTHORS



Dr N.Ranjithkumar is an Assistant Professor in the Department of English at Manonmaniam Sundaranar University College, Puliangudi, Tamilnadu, India. He has qualified TN SET in English in July 2017. He has Published many Research Papers in UGC-Care Journals, Scopous Indexed Journals and Peer-Reviewed Journals. He Organized National Conference on Global Perspectives on Research, Teaching and Learning for Sustainable Development in Mar Thoma College, Kerala. He Organized International Scholars Meet in Kerala. He teaches TN Public Service Commission- Civil Service Aspirants. He is a Public Speaker and also a Social Activist.



Chithra is an Assistant Professor at Manonmaniam Sundaranar University College, Puliangudi, Tamilnadu, India. She holds M.A., M.Phil. degree in English Literature. She has participated and presented papers in National seminars. She teaches TNPSC-Civil Service aspirants. She holds Msc degree in Psychology. She gives Counselling and guidance sessions to children and young people.
