

## Role of Culture Studies

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**Abstract:** The study of Cultural studies had been in talks for long as to whether it can be included in the main stream of Literature studies. The concept of popular culture also known as pop culture was not regarded as something to worth study. Pop culture was an outcome of media and the latest changes that was brought by the young generation. It was argued that it cannot be considered as a separate stream for studies. The contribution of John Storey, Richard Johnson and others has made cultural studies an important part of the main stream. It has a deep though process which cannot be ignored as it shows the actual spirit and movement of the contemporary society as well as the liking of the people of different times.

**Key words:** Popular culture, multifaceted, society, value system, power, ideologies.

### Introduction:

Cultural studies as a discipline offers a multifaceted lens through which to examine the complexities of society, particularly through the concept of popular culture. John Storey's text *What is Popular Culture?* serves as a pivotal entry point for understanding these dynamics within cultural theory. By dissecting the components of popular culture, Storey illuminates how it reflects and shapes societal values, ideologies, and power structures. His analysis encourages a critical examination of the ways in which culture is consumed, produced, and resisted. As we embark on this exploration, it becomes clear that popular culture is not merely a collection of entertainment or trends; it is an intricate tapestry that interweaves social meanings and identities. This paper aims to delve into Storey's arguments, establishing a framework for appreciating the profound implications that popular culture holds within cultural studies.

### Definition:

Cultural Studies is a multidisciplinary field that aims to analyse and understand the complexities of culture in its various forms, including popular culture, through a critical lens. It seeks to investigate how cultural practices shape identities and societal structures, emphasizing the interconnectedness of cultural phenomena and their broader implications within specific socio-political contexts.

### John Storey's contributions:

John Storey's contributions to cultural studies significantly reshape our understanding of popular culture, particularly through his influential text *What is Popular Culture?* In this work, Storey challenges traditional conceptions by emphasizing the dynamic interplay between culture and society, positing that popular culture is not merely a reflection of dominant ideologies but a site of resistance and negotiation. This perspective resonates with contemporary cultural theories, which unpack how local communities navigate the complexities of cultural production.

### **Why Cultural Studies are Important:**

The significance of popular culture within cultural studies cannot be overstated, as it serves as a lens through which the complexities of social dynamics, identities, and power relations can be examined. Popular culture encompasses a range of expressions, from mass media to music and fashion, reflecting and shaping the beliefs and practices of society. In John Storey's discourse on popular culture, he emphasizes its role in understanding how cultural consumption is tied to everyday experiences and social contexts, thereby providing a critical framework for analysing the intricate relationships between culture and societal structures. Furthermore, popular culture acts as a site of negotiation of identities, where various groups can assert their presence and challenge dominant narratives, illustrating the ongoing evolution of cultural expression. This interplay between popular culture and cultural studies underscores the necessity of exploring cultural phenomena that resonate with contemporary societal challenges and transformations (Katherine N. Lemon et al., p. 69-96) (Sharon T. Strocchia, p. 496-514).

### **Key Theorists:**

The landscape of cultural studies has been shaped by key theorists who have critically analysed the relationship between culture, power, and society. Among these influential figures, John Storey stands out for his exploration of popular culture, which he discusses in his seminal work *What is Popular Culture?* He argues that popular culture is not merely a reflection of the dominant ideologies but a space where contestation and negotiation occur. Additionally, understanding how public narratives about community and space evolve is crucial; for instance, as noted in (Galati et al.), the public often learns about transformations of urban space through stories in the media. This highlights how the storytelling aspect of planning and cultural production can significantly influence public perception and acceptance. Moreover, (Nematollahi et al.) underscores the importance of community dialogue in shaping desirable living conditions, further emphasizing the intersectionality of cultural studies within the broader socio-political context.

### **Interdisciplinary nature of Cultural Studies:**

The interdisciplinary nature of cultural studies is crucial in understanding the complexities of popular culture, as emphasized in John Storey's work. Cultural studies draw from diverse fields such as sociology, anthropology, and media studies, allowing for a multifaceted exploration of cultural phenomena. This integration of perspectives helps to unravel how cultural practices shape and are shaped by social structures and dynamics. For instance, examining community resistance to housing density reflects the intersection of urban planning, social norms, and collective identities, revealing how cultural values influence spatial dynamics in neighbourhood (Nematollahi et al.). Moreover, the study of green vertical neighbourhood demonstrates the application of environmental theory within cultural contexts, showcasing how sustainability concepts can be interwoven with architectural design to enhance community living.

### **Methodologies used in Cultural Studies:**

In exploring the methodologies employed in cultural studies, it becomes evident that a multi-faceted approach is essential for understanding the complexities of popular culture. John Storey emphasizes the importance of various theoretical frameworks, such as structuralism, post-structuralism, and cultural materialism, in dissecting cultural artifacts and practices. Notably, cultural materialism, as highlighted by Raymond Williams, provides a lens through which the socio-historical contexts of

cultural phenomena can be examined, revealing deeper societal implications. Moreover, contemporary methodologies incorporate digital discourse analysis, reflecting the influence of digital capitalism on cultural production and communication (Christian Fuchs). The adaptability of these methods is crucial, as scholars must traverse traditional boundaries to evaluate how culture operates within a rapidly changing landscape. By engaging with these diverse theoretical perspectives, cultural studies can unveil the intricate relationships between power, ideology, and popular culture, ultimately enriching our understanding of cultural dynamics (Ted Baker et al.).

### **The significance of popular Culture:**

The significance of popular culture in society extends beyond mere entertainment; it serves as a critical lens through which we can examine the dynamics of community identity and cultural exchange. John Storeys exploration of popular culture reveals that it is not only shaped by dominant societal norms but also plays an essential role in constructing shared experiences among diverse groups. For instance, cultural landscapes tourism illustrates how local traditions and contemporary diversity can foster community engagement and attract tourism, suggesting a profound interplay between local identity and broader cultural narratives (Collins et al.). Furthermore, popular culture can act as a catalyst for dialogue among stakeholders regarding community development, aligning with residents' desires for harmonious living environments, thereby reflecting a collective vision of desirability (Nematollahi et al.). Ultimately, popular culture emerges as a vital component in shaping societal values, identities, and social cohesion.

### **Relationship of culture and power:**

The intricate relationship between culture and power in contemporary society reveals how popular culture serves both as a site of resistance and a mechanism of control. While social media ostensibly empowers individuals to partake in cultural production, it paradoxically reinforces corporate power structures that commodify user engagement, as indicated in the discussions by (Sandoval et al.). This complexity underscores the need to critically assess how popular culture shapes public discourse and personal identities. Moreover, the concept of a cultural public sphere, informed by the works of theorists like Jürgen Habermas, illustrates how popular music can facilitate civic engagement and collective identity among diverse groups, as articulated in (Chakravarty et al.). Consequently, this duality suggests that while culture can empower marginalized voices, it also risks perpetuating existing hierarchies, thereby complicating our understanding of its role in both societal cohesion and division.

### **Contemporary Issues:**

When looking at modern problems in cultural studies, it is important to see how sociopolitical movements connect with marketing methods. This connection helps us to look at issues of representation and identity. The term fem-advertising shows this link well. It involves brands using feminist and Black activist themes to join the conversation about social justice, but often this weakens the real impact of those movements. This kind of marketing tends to highlight, yet also erase, important racial and gender identities, like the Strong Black Woman and the White Saviour, creating a tension between real activism and consumerism (Francesca Sobande, p. 2723-2745). Furthermore, the increase of open access in research publishing questions the usual ways of sharing research and brings up both benefits and

criticisms regarding academic privilege and accessibility in the humanities (Martin Paul Eve). These aspects highlight the need for cultural studies to examine the intricate issues of power, identity, and the commercialization of social justice.

### **Effect of Globalization on Culture:**

Globalization strongly affects cultural dynamics, changing how cultural identities are felt and shown. When cultures meet and mix on a global level, traditional practices and norms often get challenged, causing both hybridization and weakening of local identities. This idea connects to Richard Johnson's talk on cultural studies, stressing the significance of context and the interaction of different cultural influences. For example, the global spread of media lets diverse cultural stories come forward but also risks the control of a few, often Western views, creating cultural sameness. Moreover, these changes encourage important looks at power roles and cultural portrayals, key topics in cultural studies. As shown in events like the conference in (National Association for Chicana and Chicano Studies) and the wide range of research discussed in (ILR School et al.), these conversations highlight the complicated nature of understanding globalization's impact on culture, emphasizing that ongoing study and discussion are necessary.

### **Social justice and cultural studies:**

The overlap of cultural studies and social justice movements shows how cultural analysis can reveal and address systemic inequalities. Richard Johnson's look into cultural studies gives a way to understand that cultural practices are not just mirrors of social norms but also battlegrounds for marginalized groups. This viewpoint connects with the rise of social movements, especially during the 1960s and 1970s, which prompted a closer look at justice and representation in cultural discussions (David Luban et al.). The analysis also includes current concepts of food sovereignty, especially in Native American groups, where cultural identity is closely linked to regaining local control and enhancing community health (Elizabeth Hoover, p. 31-70). Therefore, cultural studies act as a crucial viewpoint and an engaged participant in promoting social justice, emphasizing the ongoing interactions between culture, power, and resistance.

### **Challenges faced in today's time:**

Cultural studies is changing, and it faces many problems that could shake its basic principles. A big problem is the increasing division in the field, with various theories—like neo-Marxian, neo-Weberian, and feminist views—competing against each other, making it hard to have a unified story in cultural studies (Douglas Kellner). This division, along with a growing focus on research driven by the market, often results in a limited focus that pushes critical conversations to the side. Additionally, the field struggles with how culture is sold as a product, which takes away from the deep analysis of mass culture that earlier thinkers supported. Turner has pointed out that there is a need for new methods and modern ethnographic studies, indicating that cultural studies have to blend its traditional background with today's societal challenges (Graeme Turner). This constant conflict presents major issues, highlighting the need to rethink the goals and methods of cultural studies to keep it relevant and impactful in current discussions.

### **Conclusion:**

To sum up, Richard Johnson's study of cultural studies shows the need to understand the complex cultural stories that shape what society values. By looking at genres like reality television, (Miller et al.),

we find out how these stories help transfer culture and form ideological views in society. Johnson's work pushes us to really engage with media, pointing out how important it is to recognize the deeper myths and values that shape our views. Additionally, his analysis is similar to the idea of crossing boundaries in literature, as noted in (Holt et al.), by showing that cultural studies goes beyond strict academic lines. This mixed approach not only improves our understanding of different cultural forms but also forces us to rethink strict classifications. In the end, Johnson's ideas set the stage for a better understanding of how culture functions in various situations, encouraging ongoing discussion in the field.

In finishing the look at cultural studies through Richard Johnson's helpful viewpoint, it is clear that this field goes beyond normal academic limits, presenting a complex mix of different areas of study. Johnson's work highlights culture as a changing mix of meanings influenced by several social situations, instead of a fixed thing with set meanings. This view asks scholars to look at cultural items not just as products of their time, but also as sparks for social change. By seeing the many forms of cultural expression and the power dynamics within them, Johnson encourages a closer look at how people and groups manage their identities in a cultural environment full of contradictions. In the end, his work shows the value of self-reflection and conversation in cultural studies, supporting a deeper understanding that is vital for both academic work and social involvement in a world that is becoming more complicated.

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