

What is Cultural Studies?

Cultural Practices

Cultural studies aims to examine its subject matter in terms of **cultural practices** and their **relations to power**. Its constant goal is to expose power relationships and examine how these relationships influence and shape cultural practices.

Cultural Contexts

Cultural studies is not simply the study of culture as though it was a discrete entity divorced from its social or political context. Its objective is to understand culture in all its complex forms and to analyse the **social and political context** within which it manifests itself.

Cultural Forms

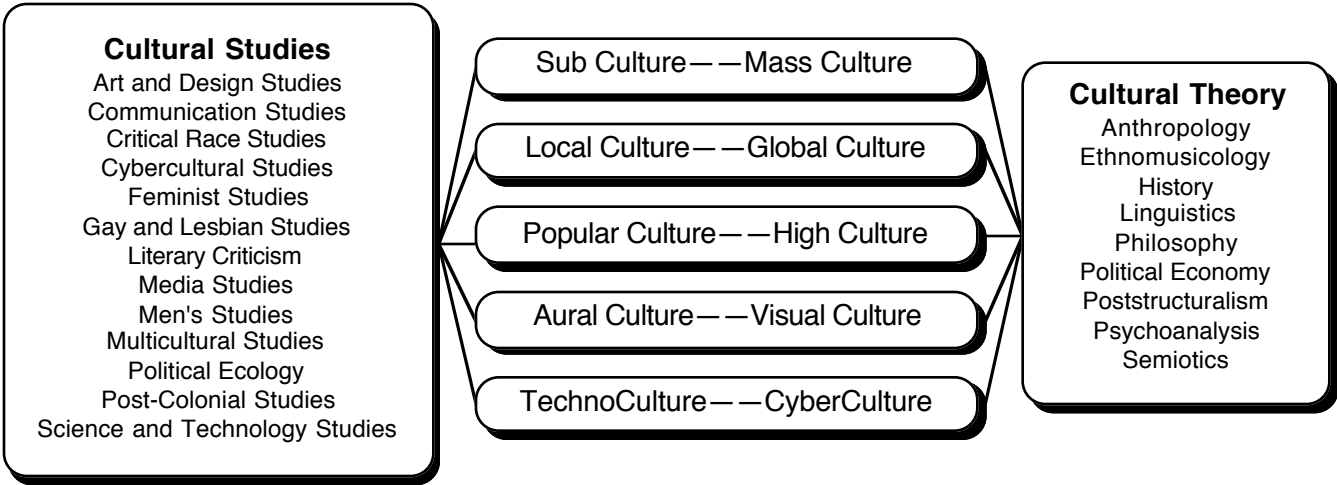
Culture in cultural studies always performs two functions: it is both the **object** of study and the **location** of political criticism and action. Cultural studies aims to be both an intellectual and pragmatic enterprise.

Cultural Theory

Cultural studies attempts to **expose and reconcile the division of knowledge**, to overcome the split between tacit (that is, intuitive knowledge based on local cultures) and objective (so-called universal) forms of knowledge. It assumes a common identity and interest between the knower and the known, between the observer and what is being observed.

Politics of Culture

Cultural studies is committed to a **moral evaluation of modern society and to a radical line** of political action. The tradition of cultural studies is not one of value-free scholarship but one committed to social reconstruction by critical political involvement. Thus cultural studies aims to **understand and change** the structures of dominance everywhere, but in industrial societies in particular. From Sardar, Ziauddin & Van Loon, Borin (1997). *Cultural Studies for Beginners*. Cambridge: Icon Books, p. 9.



Stephen Petrina (2003)