

*A Treasure House of  
English Literature*  
For NTA NET/JRF Exams

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## Coffee houses

- English coffee houses are "places where people gathered to drink coffee, learn the day's news, and perhaps to meet with other local residents and discuss matters of mutual concern."
- Coffee houses also played an essential role in developing financial markets and newspapers.
- The first coffeehouse in England was opened in Oxford in 1652 at St Michael's Alley, Cornhill, by an eccentric Greek named Pasqua Roseé.
- London coffeehouses became known as 'penny universities'; influential patrons included Samuel Pepys, John Dryden, Alexander Pope and Isaac Newton.
- By 1739, there were over 550 coffeehouses in London. However, the coffee house fell out of favour towards the end of the 18th century as the new fashion for tea replaced coffee.
- The Bedford Coffee House, in Covent Garden, was in the 1730s 'the emporium of wit, the seat of criticism, and the standard of taste'.
- Encyclopaedia Britannica (1768-71)
- David Hume-An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding, 1748.
- Adam Smith's book The Wealth of Nations (1776)- is the most important work on economics.
- They are revolutionizing trade concepts and prophesying America's growth as "one of the foremost nations of the world".
- From 1 January 1660 until 31 May 1669, the diary was written in code and deciphered in 1825.
- It gives a day-by-day insight into the decade of the Restoration.
- Geoffrey of Monmouth's Historia Regum Britanniae- earlier documents on British and Welsh traditions to affirm a glorious historical past for the emerging nation of Britain.

## Letters of the Century

- Lord Chesterfield to his son from 1737 until the son died in 1768. They were not intended for publication and only appeared after the writer's death in 1773.
- The critic, Dr Samuel Johnson, asserted that they 'teach the morals of a whore and the manners of a dancing-master.'

## CULTURAL STUDIES

### What is Cultural studies?

- It is an interdisciplinary field concerned with the role of social institutions in the shaping of culture.
- Cultural Studies is political
- It is against the capitalist agenda (e.g. Marxism and Post colonialism)
- It challenges power structure/dynamics
- Its researchers generally investigate how cultural practices relate to wider systems of power associated with or operating through social phenomena.
- It asserts the value of popular culture empowers minority and values their culture, stressing on cultural pluralism and egalitarianism.
- According to cultural studies, no culture is high or low
- Cultural studies combines feminist theory, social theory, political theory, history, philosophy, literary theory, media theory, film/video studies, communication studies, political economy, translation studies, museum studies and art history/criticism to study cultural phenomena in various societies.
- Does not have one methodology
- A scholar of cultural studies has to take multiple theoretical positions.
- A scholar of cultural studies believes that a literary text should be connected to the conditions in which it is created.
- Celebrates multi-dimensional ways of looking at a text.
- It examines How power dynamics are reflected in texts.
- It examines how power and resistance operate in everyday life, and how meaning and values are created.
- It tries to answer the question **why do we live the kind of life we live?**
- It is interdisciplinary and Post disciplinary.
- It coheres around key concepts such as articulation, culture, discourse, ideology, identity, popular culture, power, representation and text.



- In cultural studies, culture is every day practices. Culture is a way of life. Something that gives meaning. Something where meaning is generated or significance is generated

### **Center for Contemporary cultural Studies (CCCS)**

- Richard Hoggart found Center for Contemporary Cultural Studies (CCCS) at the University of Birmingham in UK in 1964. He was the first Director.
- (CCCS) was a research centre at the University of Birmingham.
- From 1964 to 2002, the Centre played a "critical" role in developing the field of cultural studies.
- Stuart Hall succeeded Hoggart as Director.
- From the 1970s onward, Stuart Hall's pioneering work, along with his colleagues Paul Willis, Dick Hebdige, Tony
- Jefferson, Michael Green and Angela McRobbie, created an international intellectual movement.

### **Types of culture**

- Mall culture
- Media culture
- Mass culture and popular culture
- Consumer culture

### **Mall culture**

- Mall is a space of display where goods are displayed for maximum visual in such a fashion that they are attractive enough to instill desire.
- Hence mall emerge primarily as site of gaze and secondarily as a site of shopping.
- Eclecticism and a mixing of products, styles and traditions are a central features of the mall and consumer experience.

### **Media culture**

- Construction of cultural values
- Circulation of symbolic values
- Production of desire.

- Cultural studies of the media begins with the assumption that media culture is political and ideological, and it reproduces existing social values, oppression and inequalities.
- Contemporary cultural studies of media explores "media ecology"

### **Popular culture**

- High culture- elites
- Folk culture- folk people
- Mass culture refers to the cultural products solely designed for mass consumption.
- Popular culture is a positive term for mass produced or mass-disseminated cultural products.

### **Consumer culture**

- Consumer culture is a form of material culture facilitated by the market, which thus created a particular relationship between the consumer and the goods or services he or she uses or consumes.
- It demonstrates the power of capitalism to reproduce the parameters within which citizens of a consumer society live their everyday lives.

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## **KEY THINKERS IN CULTURAL STUDIES**

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### **Stuart Hall**

- Hall was a founder of the influential New Left Review. At Hoggart's invitation, he joined the Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies at Birmingham University in 1964.
- **The Uses of Literacy by Richard Hoggart (1918 - 2014)**
- **Richard Hoggart Came from a working class background**
- **The Uses of Literacy was published in 1957, examining the influence of mass media in the United Kingdom. The book has been described as a key influence in the history of English and media studies and in the founding of cultural studies.**
- **It is an attempt to understand the changes in culture in Britain caused by "massification".**
- **Massification - influence of mass media**
- **He describes how the culture of the people of Manchester is lost because of Massification and Post war mass consumerism.**