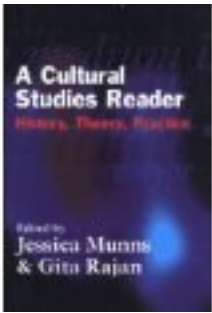


A Cultural Studies Reader



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著者:Eds. Jessica Munns & Gita Rajan

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The "boom" in cultural studies is confirmed, like many academic "movements", by the publication of range of anthologies collecting the key texts for those who weren't "there". Cultural studies predisposes itself to anthologising since much of its influential work is published in the form of essays and interviews, genres more suitable than the book to the task of responding to the complexities of the contemporary moment. While this anthology reproduces some of the quickly canonised essays of European theory and "British Cultural Studies", the editors juxtapose these with an interesting selection of nineteenth century texts, American anthropological work, and Race and Gender studies. Meanwhile, American Studies as a discipline has been relatively slow in engaging in this range of inter- and counter-disciplinary critical perspectives. For students of America this anthology demonstrates that cultural studies is now transatlantic and although the periods of emergence are narrated in terms of their national origins (British and American) many of the other sections reveal more complex genealogies.

Beginning with Matthew Arnold and Karl Marx on the one hand and Frederick Jackson Turner and Frederick Douglass on the other, the editors identify the contested starting points of the role of "culture" on either side of the Atlantic. The insertion of Lacan, Derrida and Foucault in the second section breaks up any developmental histories and insists on reading cultural studies through the prism of what has become forbiddingly

known as "Theory". Although under-represented, the more explicit political projects of cultural studies are evidenced by those like Richard Ohmann addressing the ideology of corporate ads, Cornell West on the role of cultural critics in challenging Western male canon formations, and Ann duCille discussing the way in which the Barbie doll has been merchandised as a racialised, gendered icon of contemporary culture.

Overall, this collection provides American Studies students with a taster of the radical difference promoted under the American academic banner of "multi-cultural studies". By suggesting that disciplinary and national border-crossing are liberating principles of this movement in the global moment, the editors present a challenge to those who view "America" as a self-evident object of study. In the final section Stuart Hall, Richard Johnson, Fredric Jameson and others identify the significance of these transgressions in producing new knowledge and disseminating it in the so-called "public sphere". They make clear that in the era of mass higher education cultural studies has an important role to play in helping us situate ourselves in relation to power formations and thus able to transform them. It is therefore rather odd that the editors end their collection with an interview of J. Hillis Miller, an American literary critic whose "ethics of reading" returns us to the privatised formalism against which cultural studies was a political response.

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