

Reflecting on Popular Culture

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Literature, visual arts, graphic arts, plastic arts, decorative arts, performing arts, music, architecture, and other expressionist forms of human intellectual accomplishment, when regarded collectively, constitute the arts (Britannica, 2020). Grouping the arts which are endemic to a given society is what is known as that society's culture (Oxford, 2020). Widespread appreciation of said culture elevates it to the status of popular culture as it is embraced by many societies simultaneously. Additional categories of popular culture can include music, fashion, movies, television shows, animations, comic books, print materials, and graphic novels. With the proliferation of the internet and instantaneous communication combined with methods of capturing still and moving images and distributing them widespread, society has taken on quite a different shape. Today, a video can be produced in China, be uploaded to YouTube, and an hour or even minutes later be vastly viewed and enjoyed by individuals in numerous other countries. This viral spread of cultural arts revolutionized the term popular culture, the subject of this discourse.

The arts evoke thoughts and emotions and thus possess the capability to form a person's opinions on a subject or influence them. A day and age existed where individuals in society once held opinions that were formed solely based on their own personal experiences, those of close family and friends, and those of the community in which they lived. This age has passed as popular culture has been able to extend each individual's realm of influence. Popular culture is extremely relevant today because it is authentic and emerges from the people of a society rather than something which is imposed by high society or, conversely, the product of commercialism (Crossman, 2019). Popular culture, with its endemic and pervasive nature, possesses the capacity to transcend racial, ethnic, and societal barriers. Consequently, society's individuals' opinions can be molded by others who are in entirely different counties, states, or even countries.

Society has social issues, to wit: violence, free-speech, ethnic relations, as well as economic and social class. We have gained a few more issues, to include gender and sexuality, with the advent of gender reassignment surgery and the widespread acceptance of divergent sexual preference. Specific artifacts and expressions of popular culture send messages about these social issues and influence many individuals' distinct positions or understanding of these social issues particularly when they reach virility or are created in one popular culture category and adapted in another one or two categories (Laureate Education, 2018). An example of an artifact that went viral is the South Korean singer Psy's Gangnam Style, which featured funky dance moves and over-the-top confetti sequences. This popular culture artifact blurred ethnic lines as people everywhere embraced it. In contrast, an artifact like the television series Orange Is the New Black portrayed actresses and common women who had not yet attained positions of fame and stardom alongside each other while employing a variety of ethnicities and women on every position in the continuum of sexual preference. Popular culture is immensely impactful and is influencing diverse societies. My comprehension of its categories and various forms within which it is manifested as well as the messaging conveyed by artifacts and expressions has broadened tremendously through collegiate study.

## References

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