

# Free term paper on mass culture and its effects to the society

[Politics](#), [Democracy](#)



**ASSIGN  
BUSTER**

## **Introduction**

Mass culture is often used as an opposite term of high culture, and refers to a culture form that is linked to the contemporary society. An analogy of atomization is used in describing the mass culture, where it is argued that people relate like the atoms found in a compound. The culture covers the majority of people. It is also described and mostly related to globalizations since it is closely linked to the institutionalization of different processes and their different lifestyles. It has been resourceful since problems to deal with mass culture are at the moment being experienced in the society.

Understanding the mass culture helps an individual in essential characteristics and features and cultural phenomena of postindustrial society not forgetting the different means that help in resolving disagreements and conflicts in the society.

The paper discusses Dwight MacDonald article on the Theory of Mass culture, evaluates the different arguments put forward regarding usefulness and merits of mass culture. In evaluating the article main focus is on the various arguments as regards evolution and significance of mass culture. According to MacDonald's arguments, he rejects any positivity that is attached to The Mass Culture arguing that the negatives are by far stronger than the positives. I strongly agree with the argument put forward by the scholar acknowledging that mass cultures future is too bleak.

## **Discussion**

He argues that mass culture is always and has been characterized by a social movement towards homogeneity in terms of education, art, social

thought and lifestyle. In the article, Dwight brings to thought issues about mass media. The issues brought forward are age lines, new homogenized culture, individualism lack, merging of different cultures and lastly, the future of the media culture. He argues that presently there is lack of individual ideas and values. He argues that the media has a lot of influence on peoples thinking and imagination. It seems to halt a person's individual thoughts forcing people to accept lack of imagination. Macdonald claims, "There are theoretical reasons why Mass Culture is not and can never be any good. I take it as axiomatic that culture can only be produced by and for human beings. But in so far as people are organized (more strictly, disorganized) as masses, they lose their human identity and quality" (Dwight, 2003; p. 13/14). It is linked with a style that exhibits commonality in social recognition codes and consumption. The phenomenon is also characterized by reporting and human exchanges in the economic world. As stated above, mass culture seems to promote democracy by including more fulfilled individuals. It feeds the public same ideas thus providing the informed public with collective knowledge, which they share among (Dwight, 2003; p 41). The disadvantage of mass culture is that it can result to a form of depoliticization.

According to MacDonald, the society has been defined as a consumer society that simply refers to consumer led industrial society. This is because it offers the society readymade products to the consumers. The capitalist organizations exploit the information fed to the society by the mass media in making profits. The mass market has no control over it because it has already embraced the mass culture.

He goes ahead and argues that the society lacks the popular culture by Juan Flores whose origin is of the people, made by the people and is for the people. The popular culture does not exist and in turn the culture that exists is the one that defines the cultural world we live in. It surprises him that the society is utterly passive in the consumption of the mass culture. He says in his article "there seems to be a Gresham's Law in cultural as well as monetary circulation" (Dwight, 2003: p. 41). This shows that for McDonald, there is a difference between experiencing culture passively and actively. The popular culture has to do with "making, producing and engaging" whereas mass culture associates itself with the expansion of commodity culture, which emerged due to the post-World War II era and this has to do with passiveness and pacifying everything. McDonald notes that this kind of culture is dangerous for even the future of democracy because it makes us "passive" and it produces the kind of narcotized acceptance of a world, which gives us lots of "cheap entertainment". Hence, mass culture is no good, can never be good meaning that mass culture does not have any good usefulness and that its future is bleak. He argues that the mass culture is a top down culture, which undermines people's participations in the culture that defines them, the culture that defines its own cultural development and expansion.

Increase of drugs use and violence in the society can be associated with mass culture. The negative effects also extend to the working class where they are involved in disputes, industrial problems, dissatisfaction of job positions, greed, corruption, and acquisitiveness are all blamed on the mass culture influence.

It is evident that many have embraced the mass culture and have integrated it in their daily activities. The majority include the peasants and the working class generation. This trend tries to change MacDonald's perspective in that it brings a positive impact to the society. According to the view, mass culture brings in a cultural industrialization phenomenon helping every individual. This fact has been made possible by the decline of values of upper class society to lower class society. It is well known that industrialization has brought a lot of benefits to the society to current day. It resulted in the production of quality and affordable goods to everyone. Previously these goods were only present to only a few upper class individuals (Guins & Cruz 42).

Although mass culture has supported industrialization, industrialization helped to create mass culture. This is because during industrialization era, political and social institutions democratization was associated with literacy spread. School education became mandatory in many countries. Education has become a necessity because the workers had to be highly qualified to serve the sophisticated techniques and machines. In addition, without education, a person could consume media product and get information, in accordance with the means of mass communication. Fiske (Guins & Cruz 215) agrees that mass culture at present time is influenced by political and social institutions. The impact of these institutions has largely been positive. Although acquiring knowledge and learning how to handle mass culture would be a positive method of helping in diminishing the extent in which mass culture affects society, not everybody can handle the pressure of the

mass culture. Many scholars have made comparison of acquiring such knowledge to solving a Rubic cube.

## **Conclusion**

According to the article "The Theory of Mass Culture", it is evident that mass culture strips off individuals their individuality. It also ascertains that mass culture cannot be avoided by the masses. The technologies development and evolution make mass culture inevitable. The only thing that the mass can do is to regulate the amount of mass information they consume.

Preaching the fact that not everything is for consumption in mass culture can also help and create awareness of the threats that mass culture puts forward. This will in turn bring a positive attribution to the ones in the society. The paper discusses the differences between mass culture and popular culture making it clear that mass culture is top down while popular culture is bottom up. For this reason, MacDonald is against the mass culture arguing and proving that the future of mass culture is really bleak. Since mass culture is top down, it is a culture that is been sold to the society. This should not be the case, as the society should come out of the people's needs, creativity and desires. He therefore supports the popular culture, which is of the people, by the people and for the people. This is because the popular culture is of the people's creativity.

However, he also appreciates the fact that mass culture also has its own advantages of making people feel empowered and giving individual's feelings to make them feel good. Although it offers all these, it does not provide a good foundation for being a alternative for democratic

participation. For the above discussed reasons I agree with MacDonald perspective that mass culture is of no good and can never be of any good.

## **Works Cited**

Dwight, MacDonald. "The Theory of Mass Culture'." Guins & Cruz. "Popular Culture: A Reader". Sage, 2005. 40-46.

Juan, Flores. "Pueblo Pueblo: Popular Culture in Time". Popular Culture: A Reader, Sage Publications , 2005.

John, Fiske. Popular Discrimination. "Popular Culture: A Reader", Sage, 2005

Leavis, F. Mass Civilization and Minority Culture'. "Popular Culture: A Reader", Sage, 2005