

# Media impact on pop culture



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Popular culture has had many influences from the current society. As times change and attitudes also change so does pop culture. Some influences include fashion, music, art, television, and movies. Television became popular in the 1950's. People were anxious to buy a television set for their homes. At first, the programs were carried over from the days of radio. For example, the format of The George Burns Show was very similar to the format used on the radio. Only now the audience could see the characters as well as hear them.

Later in the 1950'ss and early 1960's new programs were introduced to television such as The Donna Reed Show, Father Knows Best, and Leave it to Beaver. These programs reflected the typical middle class family of the 1950's. The father was the bread winner and the mother stayed at home. You never saw the parents in the same bed. In fact, you rarely saw their bedroom. The problems the family faced were usually solved by the wise father. The mother usually supported his decisions, as her role was mainly to take care of the needs of the family.

By the 1960's divorce was occurring in society more than ever before. The Brady Bunch reflected the blended families that were beginning to increase. As the 1960's decade progressed, several nonsense programs aired. These included Gilligan's Island, The Beverly Hillbillies, and I Dream of Jeannie. America was involved in a very unpopular war in Viet Nam. These nonsense shows gave Americans thirty minutes of silly entertainment that distracted them from the stress of the country being at war.

Another very popular television show was Rowan and Martin's Laugh In. This program was definitely a direct reflection of the times. It used humor to

promote the use of drugs and free sex. It also, was extremely anti-war. The format of the show went from one quick shot to the next with short skits or one-liners. It was done all on a subtle level but truly reflected the attitudes of young people at that time. As each decade of the twentieth century came along, television shows reflected the thoughts and lifestyles of the American people and their society.

MASH and All in the Family, for example, dealt with the negative attitudes towards war and racial issues. In the 1980's television programs began to focus on crime, especially in major cities. The crime rate in America was rising. The programs depicted successful law enforcement officers, prosecutors, and lawyers solving the crime and putting the guilty party in prison. Also, in the 1980's-1990's one very successful program was The Cosby Show. It reflected how an African-American family was as successful as any white family through education and professional occupations.

Other programs in the 1990's depicted successful single women, more modern, but fragmented families where the father wasn't necessarily the wise parent, but rather it was the mother who knew how to take care of the family challenges. As we've moved into the twenty-first century many of the programs on television in no way resembled shows of the past. For example, Revenge, Scandal, Nashville have themes of how to get what you want, when you want it. Me first. People committing adultery are presented in a positive light.

There are scenes of lovers naked, having sex. This is a far cry from the days when married couples only, were shown occasionally in the bedroom in twin beds and no "skin" showing. All in all through the years since television

came into the American home, the programs have been a direct reflection of society. Even though society has changed in attitudes and lifestyles, so have the themes of television programs changed to reflect those attitudes and lifestyles.