

Definition and culture
is consumed with
brain-numbing



Definition and source of popular culture

Popular culture refers broadly to common arts or life practices, in both quantitative and qualitative senses. In theory, the term has been used more specifically to mean a certain form of common culture that occurs only in the contemporary period. In this account, popular culture is different from both high culture and folk culture: in contrast to the former, pop culture is mass-produced; contrasting the latter, it is mass-consumed.

Popular culture has been defined in a number of ways. First, pop culture is basically a culture that is generally privileged or preferred by the wider population. This definition tells us that popular culture can be quantified. It is possible to estimate the sales of music CDs, videos and books.

We can also estimate the attendance of people at music concerts, festivals and sports activities. It is also possible to estimate preferences for various films by examining market research figures. All these statistics can be used to describe the specific popular culture within the mainstream.

Pop culture has also been referred to as the left-over culture after the masses settle on the high culture (Storey 8). This means that pop culture is a residue class established to take in cultural contexts and practices that do not fit in the high culture. Popular culture differentiates itself from high culture through its inferiority complex or its susceptibility to factorial influence. In other words, while high culture stems from individual inner-self creation, popular culture is a consequence of situational factors that are vulnerable to changes.

Another definition of popular culture is as mass culture or culture of the populace. This perspective supports the idea of popular culture being mass-produced and mass-consumed. Here, the traditional cultural values are completely assumed and culture is consumed with brain-numbing passivity (Storey 9).

The texts and practices in this context are regarded as forms of public fantasy. In this sense, pop culture can be seen as a way of escaping from the inner selves and living in a dream-world. Storey further defines popular culture as that culture which derives from the people or a culture of the people for the people (10).

Basing the conclusion on these definitions, a viable definition for pop culture is all those aspects of life which are not creatively exclusive or narrowly intellectual and which are typically, though not necessarily, disseminated through people. Pop culture involves spoken and printed word, pictures, sounds, objects and artifacts. It therefore embraces all levels of the society and cultures other than the popular, mass and folk. Pop culture involves most of the perplexing elements of life which hammer people daily.

In the contemporary world, popular culture originates from the media. The perceptions of the people about life are largely influenced by what the media presents. Cultural consumerism is shaped and facilitated by the way products are advertised and advocated through the media channels. An important thing to note is that pop culture is very evident in the younger generations who have lived up with technology.

Earlier, pop culture originated from primitive sources such as printed media and it was mostly associated with the higher class who could afford the media. However, televisions, internet and other media channels have emerged to be the dominant sources of culture. Indeed, these sources have accelerated the globalization of pop culture to a great deal. For instance, the use of the iPhone has just become a global pop culture due to media technology advances.

Role of pop culture on mainstream culture

Popular culture especially in the American context has played a central role in racial segregation and prejudice. Gause thinks that popular culture in American society is the very sea of existence (335). Pop culture is not just the information people get from the media, but involves various issues that are grounded in the entertainment business.

As much as the culture relates to the expression of superlative universal human values, usually the need and struggle for freedom from oppression and autocracy, popular culture is an instrument of the culture industries, employed to swing people toward conformity and consumption.

In pop culture as well as the media, many stereotypes exist. Although the media sometimes enhance group understanding via sensitive evaluations of ethnic experiences, issues and cultures, it also increases group misunderstanding via recurring presentations of disparaging stereotypes and overemphasizing on negative themes. Indeed, the media have transmitted both correct and wrong information.

Other forms such as television and the internet can interact and influence personal identity; they can challenge or underpin stereotypes and intolerance.

Although the stereotypes of ethnicity in America started long in history, the media have continued to bring about negative images and propaganda. From historical research, it is apparent that some ethnic groups such as African-Americans have been represented in pop culture as inferior to the whites and submissive to them.

In almost all media forms, black poor have been portrayed negatively indicating the inferiority of their popular culture. As Gaudelli notes, racism sinister in its manifestation, is normally the subject of media display that tends to preoccupy, frame and crack dialogue about this important issue (265).

Popular culture is an important tool that reveals the role of individual groups in the society. In essence, pop culture is a concept that revolves around different spheres of life that can be differentiated by various aspects including but not limited to age, gender, period of time, geography, nationhood, ethnicity and religion. That is, popular culture may be evident in a particular age group, geographical area, ethnic group, and so on. In that respect, the pop culture describes the position of the individual group in the society as well as the value it creates for that society.

For instance, the portrayal of women in the Japanese animation reveals about their role in the society today. For a very long time, the role of

Japanese women had been a hot topic among the commentators on the <https://assignbuster.com/definition-and-culture-is-consumed-with-brain-numbing/>

situation of present Japan. The popular culture reveals that the public opinion is changing and the role of women is no longer the housewife. Shojo and shonen animations portray women as strong individuals. Here, the role of women gives girls a role model in contrast to the traditional submissiveness (Ogi 790).

Similarly, the American sports as a popular culture describes the role of African-Americans within the American mainstream. As noted earlier, this ethnic group has been regarded as inferior by the white popular cultures. However, American sports especially basketball and athletics have portrayed African-Americans as to be more capable than even the whites (Darinson 118).

The sports culture portrays the excellence and contribution of the blacks as a whole and this has even increased their popularity in the media. More than any other time in history, the blacks are appearing frequently in the media talks and advertisement just because of their involvement in sports, fashion and music cultures.

Fashion as an American popular culture

In American history and around the globe, fashion is deemed as a vital component to the current American popular culture in which a majority of human beings subsist. The origin of the fashion pop culture in America can be ideally investigated by looking back in history, with the emanating dynamic trends in body wears as well as the varying marketed products witnessed throughout each generation. Ideally, American fashion and what most people wear dates back to the ancient times.

Ever since the primordial times, fashion has significantly progressed right through various American societies, thereby settling in the global environment.

Fashion is in essence prevalent within the global pop culture. However, the development of fashion occurs in differently consigned places around the globe. Trend setters as well as designers are continually working hard to expand and equally advance American fashion to higher limits. Primarily, fashion development in American culture could start out in humble designers' rooms, which could then be recognized by the popular fashion labels.

The labels would eventually lead the upcoming designers into becoming great national figures as their fashions would be advertised and marketed across the American states. If these fashions become popular and appealing to the clothing and apparel industry, then the designers would be recognized worldwide through the support provided by the global fashion labels (Steele 443).

In fact, the American popular culture, fashion, has given birth to brilliant clothing ideas which have been offered opportunities to develop to global brands. Resistance from other countries has been the only major influence on American fashion for many years.

For instance, the Chinese encourages the wearing of Cheongsam and Qipao which facilitate the preservation of their culture while West Africa recognizes Naa-sheka and Dashiki fashion which symbolizes the true picture of an African. Therefore, with the development of the fashion as the American pop
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culture, the increase of risque apparel and accessories has been witnessed which insistently push the boundaries of what the society can accept or not.

Societal institutions such as Churches and schools as well as business entities like banks and leading shops have persistently challenged the use of the risque fashion. Nevertheless, this is steadily changing of direction as the popularity of more atypical designs frequently seen on catwalk penetrated into the market and the designs obtained fashion status in the American societies (Martin 575).

In American culture, official clothing and business attires are still considered fundamentals for use in specific functions. Nonetheless, time has considerably changed preference within the clothing industry. For instance, in the 1950s and 60s, jeans were linked to rebellious youths, juvenile delinquent or the bad guys. Moreover, in the 1960s, attendants at the church dances authorized the wearing of some respectable attire and jeans were in any case not permitted (Koester 8).

In fact, the American parents declared that appropriate trousers must be worn in family gatherings. With time, renowned designers including Calvin Klein and Fiorucci have dominated the American popular fashion. As a result, jeans within the American environment and other parts of the world have significantly gained a universal acceptance as stylish, affordable and durable fashion items.

The most appealing thing in the recent past is technology which has commercialized the clothing and apparel industry and made it weightier than any other time in history. The employment of digital editing in advertising <https://assignbuster.com/definition-and-culture-is-consumed-with-brain-numbing/>

has enabled fashion designers to fully exploit marketing techniques that assist in targeting the potential consumers.

They are also enabled to use techniques like persuasive advertising and sex appeals which apply more to the current markets. These developments have spearheaded the emergence of different fashions in the American culture (Koester 8). The American technological development have been so crucial in allowing the evolutionary processors of interactions with the internet, even to the extent of providing more opportunities for direct dealings through catalogue websites, online promotion and shopping of new fashions.

Hence, the wave by which the popular American fashions are spreading to the rest of the world is really surprising. This is because the American designers have kept on creating new attires to ensure that fashions and all its feats have transformed to sustain its demand in the coming generations.

The debatable question is whether the American society changed fashion or whether fashion has changed the American society. There is absolutely no eminent doubt that this discussion will require investigations into changing trends in the American values and attitudes presented by the individuals from diverse societal classes, as well as the roles of institutions within the American societies in either censoring or supporting fashion as a pop culture in America.

The topic on fashion can be explored by examining the changes in fashion production, purchase, and marketing of apparel. This is a promising focus since changes in American fashions are fast and very furious. Further,

clothes and its related accessories share some characteristics with other consumable commodities of the popular cultures.

According to Martin, styles in both clothing and music are ideally assimilated not only by the performers and designers in the market places, but equally by the consumers of the products in their everyday actions and choices (575). This research source is important as it provides the influences in the American clothing fashion which may be traced right from various subcultures, leisure interest groups and racial or ethnic communities.

The source also gives a comparison between the American popular culture and other cultures. Conversely, Koester distinguishes the information on how the pop culture is integrated in the daily lives of the Americans (8). This source is vitally relevant as it provides answers to the question of individuals taking fashion for granted simply because they are accessible and familiar populist orientation. The source further highlights how fashion comes to individuals with price tags.

Justification of popularity

The American fashion culture is a global phenomenon. Since the World War II, American fashion culture has been a great force in countries across the world. Starting with the cowboy fashions up to the hippy fashions, we witness the popularity of the American fashion not only in the American context but also in the global context.

It appears that the world cannot escape the influence brought about by the American popular culture. Through the advancement of technology and the

development of media, more fashion information is being broadcasted on a global basis.

Meanwhile, all through the second half of the 20th century, the fashion industry in America has continued to expand to international market in an effort to lower costs and strengthen their competitive position among foreign manufacturers. In the mean time, upscale fashion designers developed into recognized brand names all through the 20th century.

The American logos appeared as status symbols, frequently reproduced in the underground markets and yearned for by the younger generation, especially because hip hop and rap celebrities started wearing those fashions. The more they appeared in music videos and magazines wearing the labels, the more the fashion pop culture penetrated the markets.

The hip hop pioneering stars are perhaps the group that made and still make the biggest impact on the popularity of the fashion culture in America. These stars wore American labels almost religiously and the fashion designers rewarded them by designing labels with their specific names and identities. Within a short time, the labels were selling everywhere the hip hop songs played. More recently, the popularity of American fashion has made celebrities in the music industry to move to the fashion design industry.

In 1995, celebrity Jay-Z and two other stars established a clothing company which has portrayed remarkable success in the industry. In 1999, P Diddy also established a clothing company for men. Popular stars are increasingly featured in popular magazines, wearing the latest American fashions that consumers across the world seek to imitate.

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Projected longevity

As noted before, the growth and impact of fashion culture of Americans has increased significantly in the 20th century. This is a consequence of the technological advancement in media technology especially information technology. Thanks to the growing technology, other countries across the world are exposed to fashions of the American popular culture.

Recurring images of cultural mixture in the media have taken a central role in leveraging the culture of other countries. Globalization and westernization is gradually capturing and the media has become the source of information dissemination. The US fashion culture is becoming commercialized, which enhances the visibility and awareness in the media while augmenting its power of appeal.

Apparel continues to assume a central role in the American economy, the pop culture and even ideas of sexuality and politics. Music and films continue to inspire new fashions and has reached the extent of inspiring designers from the minority groups. The growing success of minority designers is becoming increasingly favored in Hollywood by celebrities marking a wider cultural trend.

Possibly the best evidence that minority designers are climbing towards the top in this field is made by the annual awards presented by CFDA.

Participants from these ethnic groups share the top prizes with established designers. The growing eminence of new designers is not restricted to high-end fashion only, but they have also developed low-priced assortment for mass-market retailers. The moment of the young designers is no passing

trend especially that some of them have already demonstrated sign of longevity.

Conclusion

Popular culture is essentially all those aspects of life which are not creatively exclusive or narrowly intellectual and which are typically, though not necessarily, disseminated through people. In the present time, the pop culture originates from contemporary media forms such as televisions, films and the internet. For the United States, the development of fashion as a popular culture is perhaps the most outstanding.

This culture has grown to the extent of becoming a global phenomenon through commercialization. Its popularity has greatly been influenced by hip hop celebrities who have gone to an extent of investing in the industry. The worldwide popularity of American designers and the emergence of new designers from minority groups is a clear indication that fashion is destined to live longer as a key component of the American popular culture.

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