

Popular culture in today's society

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Reflections of Pop Culture on Society Popular culture, commonly referred to as "pop culture", is constantly changing and heavily influencing people worldwide; one can hardly tell the history of the human race without some mention of pop culture. Pop culture molds and defines the beliefs and values, as well as, influences the actions of society. Social media, as well as the natural ache we all carry to fit in, pushes people to embrace and succumb to pop culture. Pop culture greatly influences what people choose to do, such as: where to eat, what to buy, where to go on vacation, or what music to listen to.

We have all heard an advertisement on the radio for the local restaurants or heard our favorite musician telling us which radio station we should listen to. What about our favorite celebrity boasting about which store they buy their clothes from? We see these people being adored by the public and want to be like them. So we head out to the nearest department store and buy the same brand of jeans or sneakers. When we see celebrities we want to be like them, be adored like them. In his poem "Emily Dickinson and Elvis Presley in Heaven," Hans Ostrom says that Dickinson "sports Levis and western blouses with rhinestones" and

Presley "wears baggy trousers and T-shirts, a letterman's jacket from Tupelo High" (759). Ostrom is making reference to how Emily Dickinson and Elvis Presley are even following current trends in Heaven. Pop culture has a considerable influence on the way we, society, view ourselves and each other. When we look at the covers of magazines and see the thin women and the buff men, we think that is the acceptable way to look and work to make ourselves look that way. We see that as the only way to be considered

attractive and acceptable. As people, want to be like the things we see around us.

We yearn to be accepted and have found that submitting to the current fads gains us the popularity and acceptance we ache for. In the essay "Corn-Pone Opinions" it was said that "We are creatures of outside influence; as a rule we do not think, we only imitate"(Twain 717). If someone hears that a specific movie receiving good reviews from the people in their neighborhood, they will go see that movie to fit in, whether it seems like something that would interest them or not. Someone will spend their whole life going to see the movies or eating at the restaurants that everyone else likes or other such things because "the outside influences are always pouring in upon us, and we are always obeying their orders and accepting their verdicts"(Twain 719). Pop culture is often used as a means to reflect someone's views, which are then accepted into the minds of society. An example of this is the 1954 hit, Godzilla. This movie was released with the intent of spreading the political views of the director, Ishiro Honda. However, the version of the movie that became popular worldwide was "stripped of the political subtext- and the anti-American, antinuclear messages"(Staples 23). Americans would not want to watch a movie that was dripping in disdain towards the American government's decision to use nuclear weapons. Had Godzilla been shown as more than a "conventional monster-on-the-loose movie", it probably would not have been as popular in the United States (Staples 723). Even today people are using social networking sites such as youtube, facebook, and twitter to express their opinions about what is going on in the world (i. e.

Kony 2012). Society is also reflected in popular movies and books. Most teen movies follow the same similar plots with similar characters.

They have a tall, slim female who rules the school with her jock boyfriend. Nowadays the enemy is no longer authority, it is "other teens and the social system that they impose on one another"(Denby 709). These movies have an outcast who, in the end, always triumphs and, somehow, overruns the social system. These movies are so popular and successful because it is what the audience wants to see. People can relate to "the kids who cannot be the beautiful ones, or makeout with them, or avoid being insulted by them"(Denby 709). We view these people as heroes because we, ourselves, want to be like them and triumph. Even books are written in a way that makes them more entertaining for their audience. As a child, you read picture books "using words and images interchangeably"(McCloud 738). Then you progressed to chapter books, which had less pictures, but still used both pictures and words to tell the story, and then novels that do not contain pictures. However, today people have begun to lose an interest in reading. We would rather see pictures telling the story because "words and pictures have great powers to tell stories when creators fully exploit them both"(McCloud 738).

Pop culture has a way of forming itself to fit what society is interested in. Pop culture is one of the biggest contributing factors to the way our society works. It works towards forming our opinions and beliefs and even contributes to what we decide to do, buy, eat, etc,... The things we hear about on the radio, the people we see on television and in movies are all parts of pop culture, working its way into our lives and molding our society.

In conclusion, the extent of pop culture's reflection on society is a major one; I personally believe that it is nothing but a reflection of our society.