

# A heavy load to bear

Business



Boredom has always been, and continues to be, a main fear of humanity.

People innately seek entertainment in an attempt to distract the mind, to become productive, or even ignore reality. Regardless of the reason, this gravitation towards entertainment when combined with modern technology has created a new phenomenon: the globalization of popular culture. Just as the fifteenth century Columbian expeditions across the Atlantic began the first true wave of globalization with regards to food, materials, and racial interactions, the current digital revolution is binding the separate nations of the world into a collective, but not uniform, culture. Modern technology is ushering in an era of unprecedented cultural diffusion through pop culture. This rapid, intense consolidation is being achieved through three main mediums: video games, music, and cinema.

These three forms of amusement are unknowingly moving the world towards a more shared consciousness and culture. Headlines in the modern media constantly harass the educated with ungrounded claims of the negative impacts of videogames on the psyche of any youth unfortunate enough to be infected with their virtual poison. This bullheaded view completely ignores logic, and, more importantly, the fact that these games teach the player about the world. That is not to say that anything found in a videogame should be taken as fact, only a fool would believe that claim. When taken with a grain of salt, however, games can become valuable tools to learn of foreign lands and rich histories. Though some areas of the world are not covered as they should be, if a consumer knows what to buy, he or she can learn about cultures from practically every region on Earth, all through the interactive entertainment of a videogame.

Assassin's Creed runs the player through a fictional storyline of an order of assassins, but that does not diminish the educational, cultural impact of the realistic settings and historical figures the player sees throughout the journey. From the Italian Medici family, who ruled Florence through their sheer banking prowess, to the Sultans and emperors of the Byzantine Empire that held their lands with an iron fist, this fictional game details the real experiences, power struggles, and tragedies of these groups and many others. Other games, too, shed light on various places in the world; Sleeping Dogs places the player in the seamy, dirty life of a Hong Kong undercover police officer in the middle of triad wars, while Max Payne 3 shows the side of Brazil the tourism pamphlets never show: drugs, sex, murder, and poverty. Prior to playing any of the previously mentioned games, a person would likely only know what they got out of their boring ninth grade history textbook or from a blatantly misleading tourism commercial. The games, however, can give the player a feeling for life in the time or place in question, a visual world which can be interacted with, the chance to speak to men long dead, or the ability to truly understand the motivations of a momentous decision. To list off every game that illuminates a culture of the world would take far too long to realistically ever attempt to explain, so take that handful of games and compare it to a drop in the ocean, for that is the true magnitude of their ability.

A key component of any videogame is its music, as it can make or break a pivotal moment of the game. To say that music is only an aspect of videogames, however, is to say that electricity is only useful to run the computer this piece is being written on. Music is so much more than many

give it credit for. Describing its genius as nothing more than a series of vibrations originating from various strings and cylinders of assorted sizes completely ignores what music is at its core: a lyrical expression of one's culture. Everyone experiences this cultural diffusion on a daily basis; it is impossible to escape.

Through this daily exposure, it becomes evident that music is just as diverse as world itself. On one radio station or playlist a listener may be taken on a journey originating in the gentle, rolling, bluegrass hills of rural Kentucky, but end up in the midst of a drug infused rave in a South Korean nightclub. Short of physically traveling, this figurative journey can be one of the greatest methods of discovery. Music acts as a looking glass, allowing an average Joe from nowhere-ville to instantly get a feel for the atmosphere of Tokyo, Los Angeles, London, or any other city on Earth. Listening to PSY's "Gangnam Style" gives insight into the Seoul party scene, while hearing The Arctic Monkey's "Do I Wanna Know" shows the attitude of the London underground.

Through music, two dissimilar people, from two very different places, can get a loose sense of the other, based on the kind of music that person listens to. This power must not be cast aside in the name of some apparent crusade against the vulgarity of modern music, for if modern music is vulgar, then it speaks to modern society as a whole, and must serve as a warning of the dangerous path humanity finds itself on. Another industry helping to connect the peoples of the world is the film industry. The silver screen is a window to another time or another place. Movies in the modern cinema are good for more than just violence and PG sex scenes, despite what many critics say.

<https://assignbuster.com/a-heavy-load-to-bear/>

The market is so broad that of course you will end up with some mindless films, but these do not justify the hasty generalization of an entire medium of media.

The world of the Indian slums, even the mere concept, is completely foreign to the average suburban or rural Westerner, but through watching *Slumdog Millionaire* a basic feel for life in these difficult places may be attained, maybe even inspire one to help those trapped in those poverty pits. A nation's history plays a huge part in its culture, and Japan has one of the richest. *The Last Samurai* gives a viewer a peek into one of the country's most interesting periods, its forced westernization through Commodore Perry. As for African culture, *Invictus* and *The Four Feathers* detail the apartheid period of South Africa and the English imperial conquest and subjugation of much of the continent, respectively. Without these films, many would not truly know how brutal these time periods truly were.

Also, the story of Jackie Robinson is, to most Americans, just a story. The recent film *42* brings the life of this icon of equality and baseball to life for the first time, and despite some of its inaccurate portrayals of some events, overall it does a fantastic job of showing who this legend truly was under that blue Dodgers' hat. Without films of this nature, many viewers would remain ignorant to the rich, troublesome history of the world and its specific regions. Through show biz, the people of the world are beginning to learn about one another on more than a factual, historical level, and that is a priceless trend for any modern society. The cinema is helping to weave the world into a more knowledgeable blend of peoples, but it could never go it

alone, both videogames and music both contribute to this sense of greater understanding.

Modern popular culture is uniting and connecting the world in a way unseen since the creation of the internet, and before that, the 1492 Atlantic expeditions of Christopher Columbus. The modern world is truly entering its third era of globalization, riding in on the back of various videogames, diverse music, and cinematic movies. As the world moves forward, it will be interesting to see if the weight of this unification remains on the shoulders of fictional characters, pop stars, and actors, or if it will shift to a new niche of society.