

Article

Contemporary Popular Culture: Purpose, Function, and Social Significance

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Abstract: This study examines the purpose, functions, and social significance of contemporary popular culture within the context of rapid industrial and technological development. The research addresses the growing tension between traditional national culture and modern mass culture, highlighting how the latter reshapes cultural values and social behavior. Despite extensive philosophical discussions by scholars such as Max Horkheimer and José Ortega y Gasset, there remains a gap in systematically understanding the structural components and societal consequences of modern mass culture in transitional societies. The study employs a qualitative methodology based on analysis and synthesis, comparative analysis, generalization, and sociological approaches to examine the evolution and characteristics of mass culture. The findings indicate that contemporary popular culture is primarily driven by industrial production and mass media, emphasizing accessibility, entertainment, and emotional stimulation over intellectual depth. It is characterized by standardization, simplification, and widespread dissemination, often leading to the gradual erosion of traditional cultural forms. The results demonstrate that while mass culture increases access to cultural products and satisfies the demand for leisure, it also contributes to cultural homogenization, weakening national identity, and promoting superficial values. The study concludes that modern popular culture plays a dual role: it functions as a tool for social integration and mass communication, yet simultaneously poses risks to cultural authenticity and moral development. These findings imply the need for balanced cultural policies that preserve traditional values while critically engaging with global mass culture.

Keywords: Mass Culture, Popular Culture, Traditional Culture, Industrial Society, Media Influence, Cultural Transformation, Social Impact

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1. Introduction

Today, with the concept of “mass culture”, aimed at deforming national cultures, denationalization, there is a huge difference between the concepts of culture, which form a component of ethnic culture, that is, traditional culture, created by representatives of ordinary people from time immemorial, which was previously called a culture of vanity and Abyss. Today, the content of the concept of mass culture, which stands in our center of attention, is narrowing and concreting, to which not only the peoples who seek to preserve their original traditional culture, but also the thinkers of the most developed countries, realizing the decline of their national traditional cultures, even creating modern mass culture, understand its catastrophic consequences. Modern mass culture, which is rapidly spreading on a wide scale, “began to realize not the long-standing mass culture of the lower social strata, but the culture that is more massively developed in industrial (industrial) methods and disseminated using the media, which has arisen in the conditions of modern technologies and amenities” [1].

Literature Review

The theoretical foundations of this study are based on the works of prominent scholars, including Max Horkheimer, D. MacDonald, José Ortega y Gasset (*The Collision of Cultures*), Karl Jaspers (*The Spiritual Situation of the World*), Jean Baudrillard (*Phantoms of Our Time*), and Pitirim Sorokin (*Man, Civilization, Society*). In addition, the study draws on A. V. Avramov's dissertation "*Change of Scientific Paradigms in the Conceptualization of the Phenomenon of Mass Culture*" (Veliky Novgorod, 2007), as well as N. N. Bolkhovitinov's work "*American Civilization as a Historical Phenomenon*" published in *American Civilization as a Historical Phenomenon: Perceptions of the USA in American, Western European, and Russian Social Thought* (Moscow: Nauka, 2001).

2. Materials and Methods

The research work used scientific research methods such as analysis and synthesis, generalization, comparative analysis, objectivity, systematicity, and sociological survey.

3. Results

If we pay attention to the true essence of modern mass culture, which is widely used today, we will see that it encompasses the following three concepts as a scientific and philosophical category. First, "culture" is a product of a specific nature. Second, "popularity" is a measure of the distribution of a product. Third, we see that "culture" expresses concepts such as spiritual wealth.

If we look at the history of the emergence of the term "mass culture", we will see that it was first used by the German philosopher and sociologist Max Horkheimer (1895-1973) in 1941 and by the American scientist D. Introduced by McDonald in 1944. This term means, on the one hand, "culture for all", and on the other hand, "incomplete - incomplete culture". The definition of mass culture includes the dissemination and accessibility of spiritual wealth, as well as the ease of its acceptance and the lack of demand for refined taste and thought[2].

As a result of the widespread development of mass media and communication, the scope of delivery of cultural, especially artistic, works has expanded enormously. It was during this period that mass culture was not understood as the part of traditional folk culture intended for the general public, but rather as the use of modern technical means to reach a large part of the population by disseminating a particular genre of art [3].

In fact, modern mass culture is the product of an industrialized, or industrialized, society. The rapid growth of industrial production has led to the emergence of cinematography, sound recording and playback, radio, television, and other forms of mass media. The media, not only creating modern cultural assets of the same-standard form, but also depriving them of the adoption of an elitist culture, Didi became the main means of delivering to the low masses [4].

In fact, some elements of mass culture appeared much earlier. This process is certainly related to the political ideology and the need to instill certain ideas in the people to ensure their religious and political cohesion. Culture existed in a single unit. Works of art were created by professional artists who studied in special educational institutions. Cultural assets, works of art were used in order to ensure ideological-ideological identity and ensure a single common belief, as a result, statues of Gods, athletes and goddesses, temples and other architectural monuments met the aesthetic needs of the broad popular masses, among them ideological ones [5].

Although ancient Greco-Roman culture is officially associated with religious themes, it often encompasses issues of the individual, his destiny, and the relationship of the individual with nature and society.

By the Middle Ages, the situation had changed. Until the 19th century, the church dominated not only economic and political life, but also cultural life.

By the time of the European Renaissance, the situation began to take a completely different direction. While church art began to free its place from secular-inspired art, the culture of the lower illiterate class of society changed very slowly.

By the time of the European Enlightenment, some members of the elite began to argue that culture and the arts had once served the interests of the lower classes of society. This situation led to the educational nature of many genres of art [6]. During the late 18th and 19th centuries, the consciousness of the population of Western countries was significantly secularized, and state institutions and most social relations were completely secularized, that is, freed from the influence of the church. Even among the majority of the population, the upper classes, atheistic views have been formed. For this reason, until the end of the 19th century, the church served as a museum, concert hall, and library for the common people. Only the theater, which is considered a professional art, has maintained its connection with the illiterate masses. Because professional theater was based on folk mysteries (religious dramas), public ceremonies in honor of gods, and mythological plots (folk oral literature). This is probably why various forms and genres of theatrical art developed rapidly. Vaudeville (a small two-act comedy) and operetta, which were close to folk songs and dances, flourished during the Enlightenment.

The class struggle and revolutionary movements that emerged in Europe in the 19th century led to the emergence of a spirit of destruction that had been dormant in the minds of the common people until that time [7]. In Europe, creators of mass culture are beginning to pay special attention to various means that help to further stir up the spirit of the masses.

The rapid development of production, on the one hand, urbanization, and on the other, traditional, did not remain without its influence on the decline of folk culture.

By the 20th century, not only the urban population, but also the traditional culture of the rural population in Western Europe and the United States began to gradually decline. Even the penetration of industrial production and culture into the villages, which are considered the main focus of preserving the traditional culture of the people, that is, the penetration of media and cinema, radio and television, sound recording, its strengthening and video cameras, caused a change in the standard of living of the villagers [8]. The desire to raise the daily living conditions and domestic life in the population to the level of urban living went to kuchaya. These actions caused the population's long-standing national values to gradually devalue and change their image. As a result, elements of a new culture-mass culture – based on industrial production gradually began to take the place of traditional and archaic culture, which was preserved in a rural setting.

Modern popular culture, which is quickly and easily accepted for the public, seemed acceptable, especially since its co-existence, lack of demand for mature thinking, viewership, simplicity and superficiality began to please an ordinary people tired of the worries of a fast life and life [9]. Elements of mass - produced and highly profitable popular culture-books, artists' works, motion pictures, musical works (gramplastinkas, later tapes and tapes with audio and video images), newspapers, leisure and volunteer hordiq tools (new manifestations of behavior and living and norms that serve to strengthen them) - were absorbed into the rural lifestyle and culture in the masses.

In the aftermath, traditional culture began to be overlooked by the masses blindly embracing modern popular culture [10]. Modern popular culture has been able to openly illuminate its various adventures and intimate relationships, easily captivate people with its richness in punishments, criminal events, murder and execution scenes that bring the spirit of man's animal life to junbush, and has become incredibly popular. Pop and rock music have become the main means of young people's leisure time.

In fact, if we take a deeper analysis of the original purpose-provisions of some manifestations of modern popular culture, then the following two goals are in front of them: first, to distribute pornographic products widely, to campaign them in different ways, to bring the most subtle feelings of people to junbush, to inspire dirt and aggression,

provoking intimate relationships in them; Secondly, it can be seen that it is intended to encourage people, especially young people, to use drugs, increase crime, promote various foreign religious beliefs, and invade the peaceful life of the people [11].

The emergence of industrial society opened up great opportunities and avenues for the rise of modern mass culture. The need to satisfy his own pleasures, to volunteer his free time, in the wealthy class, holding (capturing) great wealth, grew day by day. Various means and ways of meeting their needs began to be traced. As a result, new and new directions (forms) of modern mass culture have emerged. On the second hand, the common people in a depressed, spiritual and spiritually depressed state (mainly in industrialized urban populations), crushed by Daily hard work, also "began to buy finished products, go to amusing airy performances, concerts, cafes and clubs, and satisfy their unsatisfied needs from society and personal life".

Some scholars argue that the emergence of mass culture was influenced by the compulsory education process, which was introduced in the UK in 1870. People who took out their literacy were initially detective, smokeless, comic (pictures with short-short texts under them), as well as low-level, liquid, silly, non-idea works tends to read [12].

In 1895, a new form of artistic creativity emerged - cinematography, which did not require even basic literacy from the viewer. During the same period, the rise of amateur musicians to perform popular arias in cafes and restaurants, public songs on the streets of cities and operettas began.

The emergence of these changes in the field of art led to a unique crisis of classical artistic culture. In the period from the second half of the 19th century to the beginning of the 20th century, in plastic (elegant) art, the process of moving away from the realistic image-from Impressionism(the artist's own subjective observation, reflection of feelings and impressions)to various currents of modernism, in particular, avant-garde, Cubism (geometric representation of existence), fovism and constructivism (focusing more on the structure of a work Also, the process of classical transformation (Form Change) begins to be prominent in other genres of "higher" art [13].

It was noted by the German philosopher Friedrich Nissche (1844-1900) and the Spanish philosopher José Ortega-I-Gasset (1883-1955) that modern popular culture has a human spiritual image and the nature of the absorption of national cultures. Later, this concept was studied in Europe, or rather in Germany, at the Frankfurt School. The original meaning of" popular culture "("pop culture") is interpreted as being a co-productive, all-consuming work or practice.

In the 1950s, popular culture became so widespread that prominent thinkers around the world began to create works about it. José Ortega-I-Gasset ("Clash of cultures"), Carl Yaspers ("spiritual state of the World"), Jean Baudriyar ("phantoms of our time"), p.A.Sorokin's works ("Man, Civilization, Society") are among the works devoted to the issue of modern mass culture.

The Spanish philosopher Ortega-I-Gasset had argued in his time that such changes in artistic culture make the element of humanity depicted in art go and go extremely poor and deficient, that the issue of humanity in art can only be realized by someone with special artistic knowledge or talent, that is, art cannot be created for the public, but remains understandable only to the creator [14].

Popular culture has been developing spontaneously for almost a hundred years. The rapid development of industrial production and the increase in free time among people, especially the working class, has led to an increase in the demand for light, thought-provoking, and entertaining "art" works that help to pass the time. The further intensification of the podindustrial society leads, on the one hand, to the strengthening of mental labor, and, on the other hand, to the uniformization of Labor and lifestyle, to embellish people from the demand for philosophical observation, deep contemplation in

a high artistic culture. They also learned to buy ready-made products, go to entertaining air shows, concerts, cafes and clubs, or relax a little while reading light-Elpi comics and the like (later seen on TV and videodisks), listening to gramplastinkas [15]. Architecture led to the formation and development of public urban planning and design, the art of music led to the formation and development of pop and rock music, and sculpture led to the formation and development of genres depicting the structure of the human body in symbolic and deformed forms. This process later led to the rapid formation and spread of today's modern "mass culture".

4. Conclusion

The mass reproduction of mass culture samples is characterized by the following distinctive features. Firstly, lack of deep ideological content, secondly, the division of all social relations into "good" and "bad", thirdly, the predominance of the mood of rapid affectation, fourth, fun, fifth, the use of the same schematic artistic interpretation, sixth, bringing emotion to the junbush and paying special attention to it.

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