

Popular Culture Assessment Two

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What is Popular Culture?

When thinking about popular culture and the importance that it holds within society, one has to look at why something is considered popular culture and who decides what popular culture is. In his book *Cultural Theory and Popular Culture*, John Storey states that popular culture "is simply culture that is widely favoured or well liked by many people." (2009, 5) Another way to define popular culture is that which, as Dominic Strinati writes "is produced by the industrial techniques of mass production, and marketed for profit to a mass public of consumers" (2004, 10) and how it is created by the bourgeoisie, and as the 'elite', they choose what we can consume. This implies the amount of power that they hold within society.

An aspect of popular culture that I will be looking at throughout this essay is Disney animation studios. I decided to choose Disney because of the discourses of gender and heteronormativity that they encompass throughout their movies how these messages mirror the ideologies of society and the bourgeoisie. Ideology is a set of shared values and beliefs within a culture or sub-culture and is, as John Storey states "ideology is a crucial concept in the study of popular culture." (Storey 2009a, 2). Dominant ideology plays a crucial role in determining the beliefs that the mass society share. These beliefs are what the dominant, white patriarchal systems and institutions portray throughout their specialist mediums. Dominant ideology, according to Storey, is used in "masking, distortion, or concealment" which present "distorted images of reality" (Storey 2009, 3) French Marxist philosopher, Louis Althusser calls this the theory of 'false consciousness', where a certain ideology is used to control the masses without them being conscious of it. Antonio Gramsci coined the term 'hegemony' to explain how the "dominant class does not simply 'rule' a society, but actively 'leads' it through the exercise of moral and intellectual leadership." (Storey 2009, 56) and this can be seen throughout the messages that Disney animation studios portray through their films. To this extent, Disney employs established hegemonies and narratives which reveal

and perpetuate existing patriarchal and ethnocentric values which are filtered down through their mediums into households across the world. Popular culture therefore is criticised as being "a standardised, formulaic, repetitive and superficial culture" (Strinati 2004, 12) that sustains the dominant discourses that are designed for consumption rather than the critical appreciation that takes place in high-cultural venues such as The Louvre or Royal Opera House.

I will be analysing Disney's messages using rhetoric analysis, exposing how their films infer how women should act and look and how this influences their audience under Louis Althusser's theory of 'false consciousness'. With this I will also be relating the content to various theorists work such as Karl Marx and John Storey. For my analysis, I decided to concentrate on *Beauty and the Beast* (1991) and *Frozen* (2013). The structure and content of the old and new Disney animated film follows similar dominant patriarchal tropes, such as showing the female in a domesticated environment and falling in love with a prince, or the trope of white, ethnocentric beauty. By conducting the rhetorical analysis, I have identified how these items of popular culture promote the dominant ideologies of the gender gap in society and how these messages do not change.

For many, Disney is the epitome of Western cultural norms as it has a "powerful hegemonic hold over children's literature, family entertainment, mainstream taste, and Western popular culture" (Byrne and McQuillan 1999, 2). Marx and Engels defines the divide between the 'proletariat' and 'bourgeoisie' as "the ideas of the ruling class are in every epoch the ruling ideas: i.e. the class which is the ruling material force of society, is at the same time its ruling intellectual force" (2004, 64) which suggests that the ruling class enforces its ideologies onto the mass society. One of the films that suggest Disney challenging dominant ideology is *Beauty and the Beast*. The female protagonist is seen as intelligent, educated, and independent who goes to save her Father from danger. However, the underlying message of *Beauty and the Beast* shows Belle as a prisoner in the Beast's castle and this legitimises male violence towards

women as a means of justifying their power and control and it romanticises the abuse of gender difference with a patriarchal society. Laura Béres describes how women who have been abused "visualize the relationship between power and pleasure as being made up of points of persuasion, resistance and negotiation" (1999, 195) which can be seen throughout *Beauty and the Beast*. Belle negotiates her position with the Beast, she is resistant towards his abuse at first, but Beast's manipulative behaviour shows when he shows Belle his large library is one of the 'points of persuasion' where he is controlling Belle by giving her something to make up for his barbaric manner. The gift is a point of control and depicts the power that the Beast has over Belle and according to Béres, is making women subconsciously maintain "faith in the power of love and marriage and the patriarchy." (1999, 196) Disney's *Beauty and the Beast* became popular culture through its 1992 Academy Award win for the 'Music (Original Score)' category, its win in the 'Music (Original Song)' category - with two other songs nominated - and it was a nominee for the 'Best Picture' and 'Sound' categories. (Academy Awards, 1992) Twenty-five years later, the *Beauty and the Beast* (2017) re-make was released in cinemas and "topped the \$900 million mark at the worldwide box office after less than four weeks in release" (Variety, 2017), catering to a new generation of young girls who can "interpret [abuse] as a sign that their partner cares for them." (1999, 191)

Despite the perceived power of the female protagonists in *Frozen* it could also be argued that they fall into another stereotype - that of their depiction of the physical appearance. *Frozen* made "\$93.9M over [a] five-day holiday period" (Cartoon Brew, 2014) and has since become the "fifth-highest grossing film of all time, [making] \$1.219 billion worldwide" (Variety, 2014) with paraphernalia only continuing its worldwide success and making it the pinnacle of modern popular culture. When looking at *Frozen*, one is met with the idea that these are two films about young women who save themselves. However, as Rose continues to discuss in his article for The Guardian, "think of the last Hollywood family animation you saw that had a female character in the lead role. Now try to think of one that wasn't about a Disney

princess" (Rose, 2011). *Frozen* is still portraying the message of beauty and wealth and Disney's ethnocentric values. As John Fiske suggested in his book *Television Culture*, "characters on television are not just representations of individual people but are encodings of ideology and embodiments of ideological values" (2011, 47) therefore the female characters that Disney convey throughout their animated films represent the companies values, attitudes and beliefs and it is these beliefs that the mass society follow through their 'false consciousness'; they believe Disney's version of "what is acceptable, desirable, attractive, successful and possible" (1992, 62) as Nora Pecora states in her book *Men, Masculinity and the Media*.

One of the dominant discourses that Disney convey is that successful heterosexual relations are dependant upon the woman being physically attractive and thus perpetuates ideas about body image which have been criticised by many contemporary critics such as Celeste Lacroix who discusses how Disney's heroines have "tiny waists, small breasts, slender wrists, legs, and arms" and the "classic porcelain skin tone and delicate features (2004, 220). These gender stereotypes are enforced the first time a child watches a Disney princess movie and can create body issues for them in later years. Through the portrayal of mainly white protagonists, Disney animation studios is ethnocentric and conveys the dominant ideologies of western society. However, as Dawn Elizabeth England, Lara Descartes, and Melissa A. Collier-Meek discuss in their journal article, 'Gender Role Portrayal and the Disney Princesses',

"the Disney Princess movies are produced in the United States and the phenomenon is American, Disney has a strong international presence [...] thus the Disney Princess line and its gender role portrayals have important implications for international children's media as well."

(2010, 555)

This conveys the influence that a dominant company such as Disney has over mass society. The 'elites' dominant discourses about gender roles becomes popular culture and accepted by mass society, who

then think of these discourses as the social norm. Because of Disney being the bourgeoisie within society, their power also means that "the marketing power of the Disney Princess line in particular enhances the probability that children will see one or more of the films." (2010, 557) As Erik Wecks states in his article for Wired magazine (2012), "to cook or clean and look intoxicatingly beautiful for the prince" is a trope that Disney convey through their films. This is also evident from the culture that surrounds the Western film industry such as modelling, plastic surgery and airbrushing to 'get the perfect figure'. Steve Rose discusses in an article for The Guardian how "Disney has somehow cornered the girls' market virtually unchallenged, but – with few exceptions – its heroines have fitted the corporate mould like a dainty foot in a glass slipper" (Rose, 2011) and it is no surprise that young girls grow up expecting to fit into certain roles such as a house-wife and are expected to look beautiful and so grow up under the male-gaze. Even though one could argue that *Beauty and the Beast* and *Frozen* are films that are challenging dominant ideology, it is still a film that manages to be a stereotypical Disney film; the characters are heterosexual, beautiful, and they are still princesses, who Keith M. Booker states are "essentially helpless victims who must be saved by a man" (2010, 3) which is the type of films that Disney know appeal to their audience.

In answer to the question, 'what is popular culture' I argue that it is dependant upon cultural, historical and social context. The mass market appeal of Disney is intended to fit cultural norms across the world. Another reading of popular culture would be post-modernism. In his book, *Cultural Theory and Popular Culture*, Storey states that the post-modern outlook on popular culture is that "postmodern culture is a culture that no longer recognizes the distinction between high and popular culture" (Storey 2009, 12) meaning that it is determined to end the barriers to elitism. Storey explores the notion of the post-modernist approach to popular culture in his book: *Cultural Theory and Popular Culture: A Reader* and states that "for [Frederic] Jameson, postmodernism [...] is capitalism in its purest form, reaching to the

parts of the social formation that other stages of capitalism were unable to reach" (2009, 407) Dominant ideology is constantly being reinterpreted and redefined as culture changes and being moulded into something new, which the middle/working class will still be pushed into the state of 'false consciousness' to accept these new values and beliefs.

When looking at items of popular culture, it is important to consider the concept of postmodernism. This is because products of popular culture can often be repetitive, predictable and lacking in creativity and real authenticity which was found more often in products of art historically. Therefore, Disney animated movies that show princesses at the helm are arguably another way of restraining the mass society in order to control, and as a result, Disney is not seen as high culture, but popular culture, because of it being less thought-provoking and having less of a positive effect on its audience. The films are passively suggesting their dominant discourses into the minds of their audiences and the end result is that the modernism loses the ability to distinguish between high and low art. Disney is a form of entertainment that families worldwide enjoy. To go back to my initial point of what popular culture is, it is "simply culture that is widely favoured or well liked by many people" (2009, 5) and is Disney not 'widely favoured' and 'well liked' by mass society?

ENDS

2026 words

Filmography (in chronological order)

Beauty and the Beast, 1991, dir. Gary Tousdale, Kirk Wise, wr. Linda Woolverton

Frozen, 2013, dir. Chris Buck, Jennifer Lee, wr. Jennifer Lee, Chris Buck, Shane Morris

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Appendices

My appendices consist of the eight reading diaries that I had to write, based on each weekly reading.

Link to Video Essay:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TmEIW3h-g3Y&feature=youtu.be>

What is Popular Culture?

Popular culture is a term that cannot be defined in a specific way. In his book *Cultural Theory and Popular Culture*, John Storey states that popular culture as "is simply culture that is widely favoured or well liked by many people." (2009, 5) There is popular culture that is part of mass society, and then the popular culture that belong to different sub-cultures.

The main points that Storey highlights throughout his chapter, 'What is Popular Culture?', are the five definitions of ideology and how studying ideology can be used in order to understand popular culture. He also discusses Americanisation and how it affects culture in modern day society. Storey states that "taste is a deeply ideological category" (2009, 6) and because popular culture revolves around both dominant ideology and the different tastes of individuals, it is hard to say which one is most dominant when talking about where popular culture derives from. Part of dominant ideology is advertising heterosexual, white relationships, how a male or female should look and favouring white males as the protagonists of storylines. However, Storey argues that "popular culture is the culture that originates from 'the people'" (2009, 9) which can be interpreted as mass society choosing what culture is and this can be advocated by the Marxist theory of 'supply and demand': companies analyse what it selling within society and therefore "mass-[produce] for mass consumption" (Storey 2009, 8). Until society starts question the dominant discourses that are filtered down throughout the media and start questioning dominant ideology, the heterosexual, white, attractive protagonists, will always be the ones that dominate our screens, our magazines and our advertisements.

During his chapter 'What is Popular Culture?', Storey mentions theorists such as Tony Bennett, Raymond Williams, Roland Barthes and Louis Althusser to advocate his research into the definition of popular culture. Storey looks at Althusser's theory of 'false consciousness' to describe how dominant ideology is all around us and we are not aware of it.

In my opinion, the most interesting part of this reading is when Storey is discussing the theory of Americanisation and how "British culture has declined under the homogenizing influence of American culture." (Storey 2009, 8). Hollywood houses all of the main film companies and because of this, American ideology is dominant throughout the films that Hollywood release. I feel like this is the most important point within the chapter because it relates to modern day society. We live in an American society because we are constantly surrounded by texts that derived from American companies.

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The Politics of the Popular

Whilst looking at the political economy of popular culture, we looked at the chapter, 'Mass Culture and Popular Culture' in Dominic Strinati's book: *An Introduction to Studying Popular Culture*, which states that popular culture is "imposed from above by those in positions of power as a type of social control." (2000, 2) This infers that popular culture is imposed from the bourgeoisie; the 'elite' are choosing what we can and cannot consume, and this conveys the power that they hold over society.

The main argument that Strinati poses in his chapter is that popular culture is mass culture and mass culture in itself "is a standardised, formulaic, repetitive and superficial culture" (Strinati 2000, 12) This links in with the Marxist theory of 'supply and demand' where "popular culture [...] is produced by the industrial techniques of mass production, and marketed for profit to a mass public of consumers" (Strinati 2000, 10) This suggests that when a business can see that a certain product is selling well, they will mass produce that product - and products similar - so that the mass society will keep consuming. However, "if culture can't make money then it is unlikely to be produced" (Strinati 2000, 10) meaning that if a product does not sell and is not making money for a company, it will no longer be produced. Political economy is all about products or texts that make money. All texts are political because all of them hold values and beliefs of the company that released them. This also means that with so many people buying into a particular brand or product, it will therefore, in political economy terms, be deemed as popular culture.

Throughout the chapter, Strinati makes references to F.R Leavis and how "Leavis was a critic of mass society and mass culture" (Strinati 2000, 22) and saw Americanisation as dangerous to English society and English values. Strinati also discusses English novelist, George Orwell's similar beliefs to that of Leavis, and speaking about Americanisation, Orwell states that "the most talked of English murder of recent years [has been] committed by an American". (Strinati 2000, 25). Here, Orwell is talking about American culture has 'murdered' English culture and later on states how Americanisation "threatened his

notion of Englishness." (Strinati 2000, 25)

In my opinion, the most interesting part of this chapter was when Strinati discusses mass media and how it can be linked with dominant ideology and the dominant discourses that get filtered down through companies. It was also interesting to think about who decides what popular culture is. It is an ongoing argument within society however, I think that the bourgeoisie determines what popular culture is and what products to release to society because we are surrounded by the same discourses when studying a text. We are shown the right way to act, the right way to look and what the 'in' music, films or television shows at the moment in time. If we do not take part in any of these things, then we are made to feel like 'the other' and an outcast within society.

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Cultures of Resistance

Studying Dick Hebdige is vital when looking at subcultures within society. In his essay 'Subculture in Guins, Raiford and Cruz' (1979), Hebdige discusses what makes a subculture and focuses most of his essay on the subculture of 'punks'.

Throughout the essay, Hebdige explores the culture that surrounds being a 'punk' and what society thinks about the 'punk' sub culture. Hebdige states that there is a certain representation of subcultures within the media that "describe those youngsters who, in their conduct or clothing, proclaim subcultural membership" as "'freaks [and] animals'" (Hebdige 1979, 355). However, Hebdige argues that subcultures are seen in this offensive and wild light because there are "primitive anxieties" (1979, 355) about certain youth groups. Hebdige goes on to argue how the portrayal of different sub cultures create a fluctuation of moral panic within society because the media only present the negative news about subcultures and not positive. For instance, during the punk movement, media outlets aired footage of "foul language on television [and] vomiting and spitting" (Hebdige 1979, 356) coming from punks at a Sex Pistols concert. This behaviour is seen as "basic taboos [that are] deeply sedimented in contemporary British society" (Hebdige 1979, 356). It's also seen as troublesome within society and the dominant discourse of this footage was that punks were to be seen as trouble and violent.

In his chapter, Hebdige makes reference to many other theorists such as Stuart Hall, Roland Barthes and Levi-Strauss to advocate his point that youths within sub cultures are placed within certain negative categories. Hebdige references Hall (1977) to show this by showing how Hall discussed the way "young people who choose to inhabit a spectacular youth culture are simultaneously *returned*, as they are represented on T.V. and in the newspapers to the place where common sense would have them fit" (Hebdige 1979, 356).

The most interesting part of this week's reading was learning how the media - through dominant discourse - convey sub cultures to the public because of the 'fear of the unknown' and how there are moral panic surrounding different sub cultural groups. However, I do think that the reference to the punk sub culture is out dated as punks are not seen as widely in society as they used to be. The punk sub culture has grown and separated into different groups such as 'goths' or 'emos'.

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Orientalism

For week four of popular culture, we studied race within society and how new racism is making an appearance and what is meant by new racism.

In his chapter, 'New(s) Racism: A Discourse Analytical Approach', Van Dijk states that new racism is "contemporary forms of racism" and they are expressed "by text and talk, such as everyday conversations, [...] parliamentary debates, political propaganda, textbooks, scholarly articles, movies, TV programmes and news reports in the press." (2000, 33) In other words, new racism is a subtle type of racism that happens in every day life. It is racism that is not fought, it is casual racism and can also be the most dangerous because of how casual it is; "they may hurt even more, especially when they seem to be so normal, so natural" (Van Dijk 2000, 34), it means that it is 'accepted' in society and that society thinks that it is okay to make these casual racist remarks.

Van Dijk also explores how racism is conveyed within modern day society and how newspapers use negative lexis to portray people of colour in a negative light; they then become 'the other' and because "media discourse is the main source of people's knowledge, attitudes and ideologies," (Van Dijk 2000, 36) it means that society is easily influenced by the media and come to share the same beliefs. Van Dijk noticed that newspapers - when talking about terrorists - referred to "will stereotypically refer to Arab" (Van Dijk 2000, 39) meaning that the newspapers are creating moral panics about Arabs which is shown through the society we live in today where there is Islamophobia in every country because of how Muslims have been presented.

In the second reading, we explored John Storey's *Cultural Theory and Popular Culture* in which he discusses how "only one human race and [...] human biology does not divide people into different 'races'; it is racism." (Storey 2009, 168) Storey explains why it should not be called racism, because there is only

one human race and that having different coloured skin does not mean that you are not part of the human race, it does not mean you are alien, but within society, it means that you are 'the other'. Storey is stating that having a different skin colour does not separate you from society, societal messages do. Storey explores Edward Said's theory of Orientalism and how white people are constantly suppressing people of colour.

Whilst discussing race within the media, I think the most important questions to ask are 'why?'. Why does the media think that it is okay to portray people of colour in a negative light, as terrorists, as people who will hurt people? I find the theory of new racism the most interesting aspect of this reading because it is important in today's society to understand how new racism is conveyed through language and new racism can also be seen in most media texts such as film, television programmes, and adverts.

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Gendered Spaces

The focus of this week's reading was about how masculinity is created and portrayed in men's health magazines. For this, we read Arran Stibbe's journal article, 'Health and the Social Construction of Masculinity in Men's Health Magazine'.

Throughout his article, Stibbe focused on the front covers of Men's Health and how language was used to portray the ideal man. Stibbe states that "the construction of gender within society creates differing patterns of expectation for men and women," (2004, 31) and he makes a good point. Women have been objectified as sexual objects for decades, yet the voyeuristic gaze is shifting in today's society so that men share part of the 'spotlight'. He discusses how the front cover contains imperative language and "imperatives [...] always contain a desirable goal, so placing any goal in this grammatical construction presupposes its desirability." (2004, 37). When a magazine has 'get your dream body' on the front cover with an attractive male by the statement, readers automatically link the statement with the image and Stibbe explains how this "presupposes that you want to look like the cover models." (2004, 38) Also during his chapter, Stibbe states how the dominant discourse of masculinity is conveyed through the magazine and how hegemonic masculinity "is embodied in heterosexual, highly educated, European American men of upper-class economic status," (Stibbe 2004, 35) so to be deemed masculine, you need to be heterosexual, have a good education, have money and belong to the upper-class.

Within his journal article, Stibbe references Will Courtenay when explaining why men are starting to feel self conscious about their bodies and how men's magazines that are discussing how men should look are becoming the new norm in society. Stibbe also references Courtenay when discussing how different language devices are used on magazine front cover to attract the audience's attention, but also how the language is used to make men feel like they should be looking a certain way and which diets to use to achieve this.

In my opinion, the most important part of this reading was recognising that men have anxiety about their looks and their health as well. In today's society, being attractive and wealthy means that you have status, whether it is based on how many Instagram likes you get or how many followers on Twitter you have. Social media has played a big part in the anxiety individuals feel about their looks. Stibbe states that "health is traditionally a female rather than male concern" (2004, 35) but with the increasing number of men's health magazines featuring models or celebrities on their cover, it is hard for men not to feel pressure in society to look the best that they can.

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Popular Culture, Celebrity and Social Class

For this weeks reading, we concentrated on celebrity culture and specifically, the celebrity chav. We had to read the journal article "Celebrity Chav": Fame, femininity and social class' by Imogen Tyler and Bruce Bennett.

Within their article, Tyler and Bennett discusses how "celebrity is an increasingly significant means by which reactionary class attitudes, allegiances and judgements are communicated" (2010, 375) and what being a celebrity means in modern day society. The word 'celebrity' is much broader now than what it was ten years ago. Today, a well known YouTuber is deemed a 'celebrity', an international blogger is considered a 'celebrity' and Instagram 'famous' person is also considered a 'celebrity'. The main argument that they present during their article is how "class remains central to the constitution and meaning of celebrity" (2010, 375) and that celebrities are known for their luxurious lifestyles and being part of the upper-class. Because "celebrity culture is not only thoroughly embedded in everyday social practices, but is more radically constitutive of contemporary social life," (Tyler and Bennett 2010, 376) we are constantly surrounded by what it means to be a celebrity. Tyler and Bennett's main focus throughout their article is the term 'celebrity chav' and what it means. They define 'celebrity chav' as "the moral delinquency of white working-class girls." (2010, 376) and how they are 'dumbing down' society and are "systematically reproduced as abject, gauche and excessive tragic-comic figures " (2010, 376) Another definition that they offer is that the "contemptuous term 'chav' has become widely used to describe young, white, working-class men and women as shiftless, tasteless, unintelligent, immoral or criminal" (2010, 379) They use Kerry Katona as a case study to advocate their points about 'celebrity chav'. They state that "the role of female celebrity chav hinges on excessive corporeality and the continual exposure of a lack of cultural capital, of style and taste, and [Katona] performs this role enthusiastically" (2010, 386) because she embraces her 'working-class' lifestyle and uses her 'celebrity' platform to showcase her

life.

When supporting a range of their points, the authors reference French sociologist, Pierre Bourdieu when discussing the class system that is incorporated into celebrity culture and how "maintaining class distinctions" (2010, 377) is vital in the world of celebrity. They also reference Bourdieu's work when stating how social class and value is a big part of mass society, but it is not something that is often looked at when looking at celebrities.

The most important aspect of this reading - in my opinion - is seeing how celebrity culture is conveyed through dominant discourse but also reading about the hierarchy of celebrity culture. It is hard to forget that there is a hierarchy of celebrity, even though we witness it in everyday conversations by talking about 'A-List' or 'C-List' celebrities.

Bibliography

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East vs. West

With Japanese cinema becoming more and more accessible within European countries, the demand for more, means that Netflix and Amazon Prime have created their own original anime television shows.

During this week, we looked at the journal article, 'Commodifying Asian-ness: entrepreneurship and the making of East Asian popular culture' by Nissim Kadosh Otmazgin.

Throughout the journal article, Otmazgin explores the argument of how East Asian culture is gaining momentum in the economic market and how, "in the past two decades in east and south-east Asia, [...] new markets for popular culture have constantly been created" (2011, 259) in film, television shows and music. There has also been the Kawaii movement that has become a brand new sub-culture in western culture and has been good for the east Asian economic market as it is advertising Japanese culture.

Otmazgin states that "the notion of entrepreneurship is central for understanding and conceptualizing the process of constructing trans-national markets for popular culture and for building new circles of 'Asian' recognition" (2011, 259) and by being an active member within media news, it is obvious that Asian culture is becoming more prominent and that western culture is recognising Asian culture and talent. One just has to look at the phenomenon that is K-Pop (Korean Pop) and how that phenomenon is spreading worldwide. Otmazgin advocates this by discussing how

"popular culture commodities such as movies [...] animation series [...] and fashion magazines, originating in places like Japan [...] have been [...] reaching consumers over different national and linguistic boundaries, and providing the potential for the emergence of a transnational East Asian popular culture."

(Otmazgin 2011, 260)

As Otmazgin states, "entrepreneurs are more than agents delivering commodities across markets. They

represent a major force of organizational change" (2011, 260) and this is what has happened with Asian culture. It conveys a change in society as more people are taking part in this different culture. During his essay, Otmazgin makes references to John Storey (1998) when explainin how different media texts are important to discuss because of how different "popular culture products promote messages and narratives, which [have] a wider potential to shape people's thoughts, identities, and even view of space". (Otmazgin 2011, 264) For instance, if you were to watch one type of film in your life, your knowledge and your thoughts would be confined to that one genre.

In my opinion, the most important part of this reading is when Otmazgin discusses how successful different types of media are in East Asia and how this culture is slowly making its way into Western culture.

Bibliography

Otmazgin, Kadosh Nissim (2011) 'Commodifying Asian-ness: entrepreneurship and the making of East Asian popular culture' *Media, Culture & Society*. (2011) 33.2 pp. 259-274

Popular Gaming Culture

For the final week of popular culture, we looked at how video games fit within culture and how they are deemed as popular culture within society. To study this, we looked at the essay, 'Hyperidentities: Postmodern Identity Patterns in Massively Multiplayer Online Role-playing Games' by Filicak Miroslaw.

Throughout his essay, Miroslaw discusses how "our era is defined by computer-based technologies" (2003, 87) and how because of this, video games are an important part of today's society and technology is all around us. Miroslaw mainly focuses on MMORPG games which stands for massive multiplayer online role playing games. He states how MMORPGs are becoming more popular within society because they allow us to immerse ourselves within a hyperreality and create a hyperidentity and because "we have control over our own image - other people see us in the way we want to be seen" (2003, 90) which means we can be anyone we want when we are playing online role playing games. Immersing ourselves within these online worlds means that "we have an opportunity to painlessly manipulate our identity, to create situations that we could never experience in the real world because of social, sex -, or race-related restrictions" (2003, 90) and Miroslaw states that "postmodernists [...] emphasize that we live in a world of simulation where the boundary between the real and the fictional has disappeared; we have entered into a hyperreality, which is more than reality itself" (2003, 96) With the creation of virtual reality headsets for gaming consoles becoming the new phenomenon on the gaming market, the boundary between real and fictional becomes even more blurred, we may not be creating our own identity, but we are immersing ourselves even deeper in the world that we may be playing in.

Sigmund Freud, Jacques Lacan, and Carl Jung are a few of the theorists that Miroslaw makes references to throughout his work. He uses these authors to advocate his points about how our 'self' is just an illusion

and that "each identity we create is a temporary formation" (2003, 95). We are constantly changing our personas to mirror our every day lives and our different personas reflect the different environments that we may be in or may reflect the people who we associate with.

In my opinion, I think that the argument that Miroslaw presents about how technology is ruling society and how video games are becoming more and more real every year, is important to study when looking at popular culture because technology is forever evolving and this is apparent when the virtual reality headset was released for the Playstation 4.

Bibliography

Miroslaw, Filiciak. 'Hyperidentities: Postmodern Identity Patterns in Massively Multiplayer Online Role-playing Games' *The Video Game Theory Reader*. Ed. Mark J.P Wolf and Bernard Perron. (New York: Routledge, 2003) pp.87-102.