Perspectives

DAIS

POP CULTURE

A CIVILIZATION OR

A PHASE

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The Cultural Globalization of Korean Pop Culture

Pop culture has experienced a massive global expansion, from its origination in the USA to its progression to becoming a trans-national industry, due to a paradigm change in demographics and the increasing adoption of the Western lifestyle. This has resulted in the homogenization of pop universally and in its growth because of increasing diversity and hybridization brought about by a confluence with national cultures. A recent example is the growth and spread of the Korean pop industry. The 'Korean Wave' or 'Hallyu' came about as an attempt to rebuild the economy after 1997 to export Korean cultural products by adopting American technology, and was aggressively promoted, with government backing, in East and South-East Asia, finally reaching the western hemisphere near the late 1990s.The success of the Korean Wave can be attributed to its focus on common generational values, appealing to a new generation's rapidly changing tastes, rather than limiting itself to Korean ideals and views, as well a distinct characteristic that is not typical of the Western pop culture. This cultural boom has seen South Korean music, cinema, television products and food find an enormous market worldwide. In 2018, Korean packaged noodles and ramen earned $413 million in trade, while K-beauty exports totaled more than 6 billion dollars. In 2019, K-pop sensation BTS accounted for nearly $5 billion of South Korea's GDP, surpassing Korea Air's contribution to the nation's economy, and in 2020, Bong Joon-ho's 'Parasite' became the first non-English language film to win a best picture Oscar.This success of Korean pop culture shows how the globalization of pop culture has led to a greater universal acceptance of different cultures, leading to an improvement in nations' economic and political status, beyond the realm of entertainment, and may just be an unconventional yet successful way of promoting and achieving peace in our world today.

By Ananya Mittal (Grade 11)
Editor: Jash Bhatia

Ananya Shah

Praruj Sampat

How does "Pop Culture" impact our daily lives?

Throughout our lives, popular culture is all around us and influences our actions and behaviour. It is the practices and beliefs that we have in common. Pop culture is evident in our daily lives in the shows and movies we watch, the books or comics we read, the art we view, the clothes we wear, or the games we play. But how does pop culture impact us? We see pop culture all day, every day, and the way we interact with it tells us much about ourselves. The kind of books you read, or your favourite music speaks volumes about your tastes or themes that you are interested in. You may also play a game, or own a toy based on a favourite character from a movie or TV show; thus, your interests in pop culture show you the things that you value. Even the food or clothes you prefer can show you this. For example, you may have a favourite restaurant and even argue your case when someone mentions they prefer another one. Furthermore, you may know of or enjoy a certain brand of clothes or shoes that you particularly enjoy wearing and go out of your way to buy from. Therefore, pop culture has a real effect on your daily life, in terms of both your actions and personality.
By Kshitig Seth (Grade 10)
Edited by: Aditya Bhargava

Ananya
Shah

My Journey through Pop Culture

When I hear the term 'pop culture', my mind races to, well, everything. Pop culture is so inextricably linked to my persona that it is nearly impossible to isolate what pop culture is, or what it means to me. Everything I do has roots in pop culture, whether it is the culture of the present, or of the recent past, right from listening to rap, to watching a movie, to going skateboarding. But in explaining my link to pop culture, let me evaluate how it propagates in today's day and age. Pop culture to me, is any trend or event that plays a defining role in influencing the current generation. Extrapolating it to our time – 2020. Technological devices in the palm of our hands has expanded pop culture to something larger than ever before. Pop artists such as Taylor Swift and Eminem can be heard from the comfort of our sofas. No longer do we need going to theatres to watch a play or plotline – they can be seen with a humble écran. An international friend is just one call away instead of being one year away. Pop culture has spread through this digital medium like wildfire. The ability to reach larger masses than ever before emboldened artists to express their artistic talents in new and unseen ways. K-pop, the age of superheroes, TikTok, etc are just a few examples of what the 2010s have brought us. And it is this sea of pop culture that I wade through every day, be it during my bus ride to school, to during lunch, to completing my schoolwork. And this is my journey through pop culture.

By Manav Shah (Grade 11)
Edited by: Aditya Bhargava

Ananya Shah

Tanay Bhandari

Popular culture and its influence on the pinks and blues. My country India is a land of many dichotomies. Mine is a young old nation. Old with its culture, history and traditions. Young because with over 1.3 billion people and the largest working majority we yet have only 20% representation of women in accountable jobs. Mine is a rich poor country. It has many reassures of which its Human Resource is its strength. Yet we struggle with poverty, a deep rooted deprivation even though gender equality could add 770 billion to India's gdp by 2025. Mine is matriarchal-patriarchal society. It reveres the female deity and yet stays indifferent to the plight of its women. The biggest challenge the women in my country face is that of immunity of a system heavily stacked against them Violence that begins from selective female foeticide, deprivation of nutrition, dowry harassment, wife battering, marital rape and ends with death. India's prolonged coronavirus lockdown saw a surge in domestic abuse. Passivity, dependence and ideals of chastity have let men in society go scot free

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An utter lack of will to make them accountable let's this cancerous behaviour eat into the very fabric of our society. On an average 93 women are victims of rape everyday. One third are minors. There is evidence of an average of 240 cases of sexual harassment a day and about 28 dowry deaths by burning. This is only reported violence. Enforcement of prevalent laws and the responsibility of the government to make india safe for women can only happen if the perpetrators do not get amnesty and the survivors are not deprived of justice. Women are inherently weakened because they are financially dependent. Their participation as a part of the labour force actually fell from 10% from 2005 to 2018 and the lockdown has only further shut them out of the productive economy. This has a two pronged effect: it virtually seals the female dependence on a patriarchal structure and it deprives the country of a very valuable resource. It's time to use the influence that pop culture has on society by enforcing a change in gender stereotypes. There needs to be a change of representation of women in our movies, in our advertisements and even our songs. Popular movies like Kabir singh and songs like baby doll and makhna that objectify women need to be called out. Our unconscious conditioning needs to be changed. Women need to be portrayed as productive members of society for them to be treated as such. We need to use our mediums of communication to explain why diversity and inclusivity is good for the country. Diverse perspectives, diverse capabilities and highlighting the fact that adding women to the workplace increases productivity in the workplace. It is time to get our women out of the pigeonholes that they are thrust in, they have a wide deep swathe of talent to be problem solvers and innovators. It's time to give them that chance. Let's use the advantage of the widespread impact of the internet and the increase of viewing audiences to take this conversation forward. The conversation of liberation both sexually and financially. It is a shame that it is yet such a fight. A fight to be independent, a fight to get and education and for some a fight to be born It's time we stop splitting humans into pink and blue.

By Avantika Kampani (Grade 9)
 Edited by: Aditya Bhargava

Creativity from a Crisis: Folklore and Evermore

Last year, Taylor Swift surprised fans with folklore, an indie album weaved with mystical lyrics and enchanting stories. Less than 6 months after, she surprise-released evermore, a sister album to folklore. Both these albums are lyrically and sonically Swift's best albums yet, born purely from quarantine creativity running wild. They display a more matured, subtle side of her music combined with her trademark storytelling.
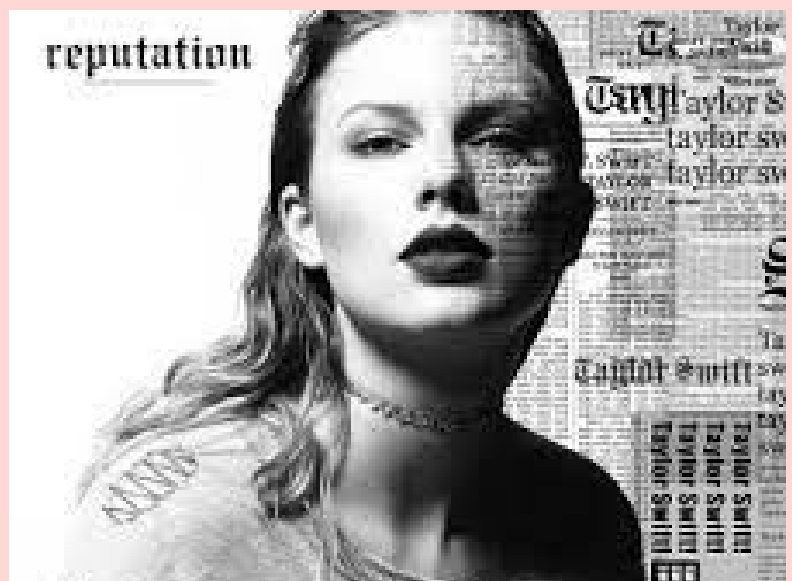
Swift used the lockdown to explore a new sound, and she was wildly successful in her venture. The albums themselves are entwined with parallels, hidden messages and characters that recur through the records; listening to it feels like trying to solve a crossword, the last note bringing a sense of satisfaction and fulfilment. Releasing an album with no promotional buildup, as well as straying from her traditional autobiographical pop ballads, was a risky idea that could have led the album to massively fail. Instead, folklore went on to break numerous records, going on to become the best-selling album of 2020, with evermore following on foot.

Swift mentions that the lockdown left her listless and stuck, and so she spent her time watching movies, reading books and being immersed in tales. Folklore, an unconventional album rife with fictional tales, was born from this cave of stories. The record fell into place naturally after that; in fact, she mentions that she did not tell her record label she was releasing an album a week before the release date.

https://www.buzzfeed.com/larryfitzmaurice/taylor-swift-on-the-making-of-red

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Reputation_(Taylor_Swift_album)

Quarantine also meant collaborating with new artists, such as The National's Aaron Dessner, who played an integral role in producing both the album's haunting alternative feels and Bon Iver to form the poignant "exile". In the "last great american dynasty" she writes about Rebekah Harkness, a misfit widow cast out by society who had "a marvellous time ruining everything" followed by a slow and sudden shift to first person, as she sings "I had a marvellous time ruining everything", satirically commenting on societies' nature to push down women successful by their own means.

 Instead of succumbing to the chaos of the pandemic we were all thrown into, Swift continued to create- less than 6 months after Folklore she released its sister record, Evermore. Although they make powerful records standalone, they complete each other in a way, with inter lapping styles and themes, evermore picking up where folklore left off. One of the main reasons Swift remains so immutable and successful is her ability to make records personal, and connect emotionally with her fans. In "Majorie" she sings about her late grandmother. The song's haunting and soul-stirring nature stems from the fact that the background vocals are taken from old opera recordings of her grandmother.

In this last year, as Swift says, "It turned out that everybody needed a good cry, including us," and these two albums truly encapsulate that.

From writing an entire true-crime documentary in a 3-minute song in "No body No Crime", to a conversation between two estranged lovers in the melancholy "Coney Island" - Taylor Swift has done it all within these records.

By Divya Karnani (Grade 9)
Edited by: Anushree Mishra

https://www.nme.com/blogs/nme-blogs/taylor-swift-reputation-album-artwork-reactions-2129830

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10 years, 3 phases, 23 films: How the Marvel Cinematic Universe changed pop culture:

The past decade has seen a considerable increase in the superhero genre as fans flock from comic-book stores and conventions to theatres, to experience a cinematic panorama like no other. Marvel Studios, at the forefront of revolutionising film pop culture, influenced millions to channel their craving for action and sci-fi through their wildly successful franchise.

It all started in 2008 when superhero films encountered a resurgence after the release of Iron Man – the first instalment of MCU's Phase 1. Subsequently, each addition to the franchise's roster uncovered a new feature of the shared universe. The various movies; sometimes with different characters, set in a different timeline; fuse together to reveal an imposing, overarching storyline. The world of cinema has been heavily affected by this method of narrative to the point that multiple other franchises have attempted similar styles. In 2018, Marvel released Black Panther, a phenomenal film set in Wakanda: a fictional afro-futuristic society. Through a unique blend of elaborate costumes, a stellar soundtrack and an important message, Black Panther was the first mega-budget movie to have an African-American director and a predominantly black cast. Despite Marvel and Disney making such a film later than they should have, the race-and-gender-conscious casting and costuming, cultural integration and diversity assisted the film to become the pop-cultural icon it is today.
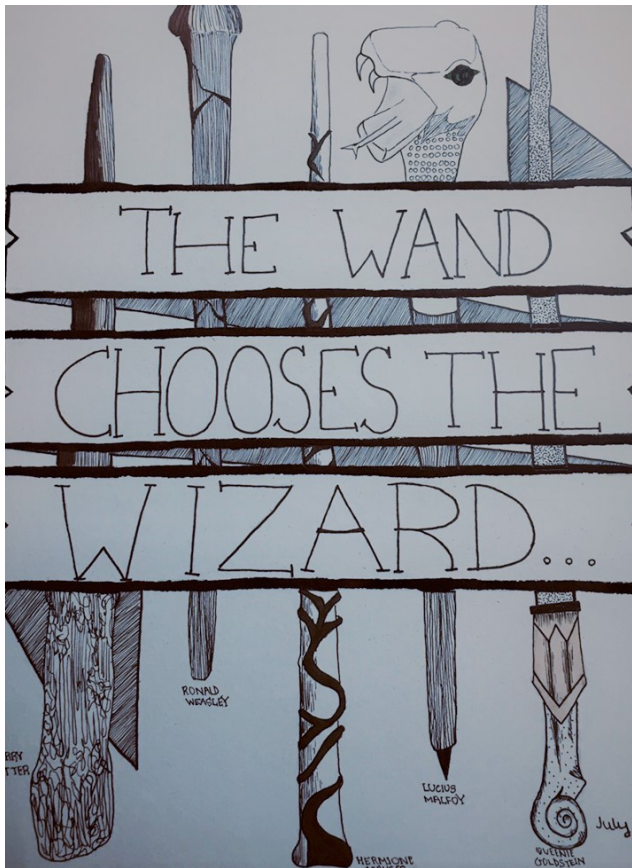
Its essential creation offered underrepresented people a chance to review and reimagine their position in the world – linking fantasy to harsh reality; providing people with a sense of inspiration and escapism towards a vision of true liberation. Before the arrival of the Marvel franchise, leaving the movie before credits was normal. However, after the Marvel Cinematic Universe popularized the extensive use of post-credit scenes people began to stay seated, awaiting small teasers that gave hints to future storylines – a smart move to increase hype, plot and brand-loyalty. Now, if one dares to depart as soon as the movie gets over, it's highly likely that they'd be on the receiving end of judgy looks and haphazardly thrown cheese popcorn. Moreover, MCU fans are more than familiar with the comics' co-writer and leading man Stan Lee's frequent cameo presence in the films - an indelible mark signifying his contribution towards the franchise - surprising the audience with sneaky appearances in every film from Iron Man (2008) to Avengers: Endgame (2019)
 Let's not forget that while MCU has impacted pop culture, the franchise itself is also brimming with several pop culture references; each used in a unique manner providing comedic relief. While normal sci-fi characters are fighting for their lives in heavy battle with no time to spare for chit chat, no Marvel hero is above a pop culture reference, even when the fate of the universe is at risk. Whether it's about Footloose, Star Trek or even SpongeBob – they've kept us entertained. What makes the franchise so very successful is the ability of the writers to translate the character from the page of a comic book to the screen; the expertise to know what to keep and what to edit. Each movie is standalone, yet, skilfully leaves trails for sequels and other films to pick up from. After 10 years of cinematic build-up, in 2019, the Marvel Cinematic Universe's Phase 3 ended with Avengers: Endgame which overtook Avatar's 10-year reign as the world's highest-grossing film.But that's not all. Marvel Studios guaranteed that there'd be Marvel content weekly for the rest of 2021 – ensuring that although the latest film signified the end of an era, the franchise's influence over pop culture is not over

By: Nikita Parera (Grade 9)
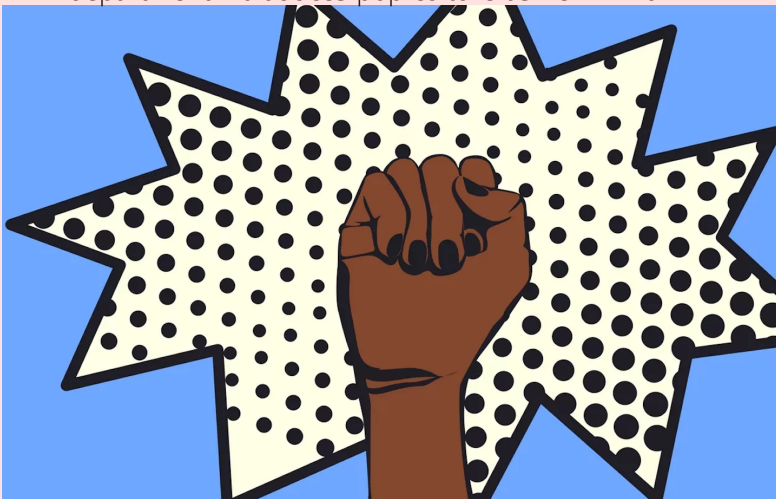 Edited By: Aditya Bhargava.

Anaya shah

Pop Culture in Society

Innumerable celebrities, influencers and even our peers shape how we think, dress, behave and interact with society. In today's times, popular culture has become far more than just groups of esoteric gatherings of individuals – it has become a dynamic identity for millions of people around the world. It has aided in moulding the identities of countless young people over the years.

Pop culture has had a defining role in determining the mannerisms of the youth. For example, when Elvis Presley wore baggy jeans, they became all the craze. When Bob Marley brought out his harmonica, it single-handedly saved the century-old instrument from extinction. When Andy Warhol's Campbell Soup Cans were released, they changed the way photography and art were viewed. Pop culture has always been an integral part of society, to the point of being genre defining in a constantly changing world

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https://sundial.csun.edu/122167/arts-entertainment/english-department-introduces-pop-culture-as-new-minor/

https://www.fifteendesign.co.uk/blog/events-and-politics/

But what of now? With technological growth skyrocketing through the 21st century, pop culture has changed to an unimaginable extent. Artists like Rihanna, Kanye West and Ed Sheeran are living proof of the same. Every decade, nay every year, nay every month, do trends change and fashions adapt. Pop culture has the power to influence today's youth, more than ever. And they have.

Take pop songs and movies for example. From the Marvel Cinematic Universe to the release of Beyoncé's Homecoming, popular culture in the 21st century has been the diet millennials have grown up with all their lives.

To conclude this evaluation, I believe pop culture has had an unimaginable impact on society, over the years. It has been fluid, ever changing, and has influenced young people across generations to a large extent.

By Samiksh Jain (Grade 11)
Edited by: Jash Bhatia

Blog: Is surviving in a world without pop culture plausible?

Popular culture, or as many of us know it, pop culture is a substantial constituent of the socio-cultural identity of the common population at a given point in time. While it does not have any single definition, it is composed of several artistic fields ranging from film to music to art to drama. But the question is, why has pop-culture become the most imperative facet of our society and how has it impacted life ever since its popularization in the 1960's? Is a world without pop culture plausible and even if it is, will it be a world worth living in? Join me as I venture through the past, going to the very roots of popular culture, understanding its key constituents and evaluating the plausibility of a world without it.

The origin of pop culture is extensively concealed, with no specific date in time being credited with its emergence. Common consensus among those intrigued by the timeline of the recognition of pop culture is that the concept of having a medium of mass media appeal first originated during the Shakespearean era, with his dramatic plays forming the base of this essential socio-cultural phenomenon. However, the term 'popular culture' was actually coined in the 19th century, but popularization of the concept can be dated back to the recent past, approximately the 1960's onwards. This was the beginning of a new era; the moment when the notion of mass media appeal embarked on its journey of global domination.

But the question remains, why did popular culture actually become so popular?
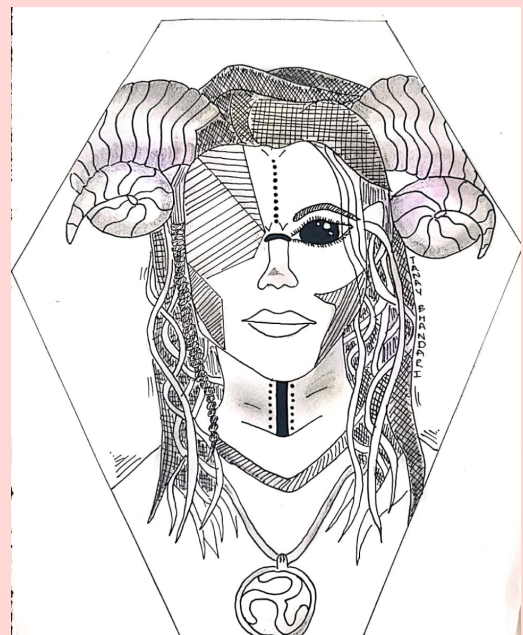
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Well, the answer is simple. There are not many things in the world which connect the global community together in a secure bond, while also propagating individuality. Ladies and gentlemen, popular culture is one of these limited phenomena. The main reason for its widespread popularity is its ability to successfully give the general population a medium to express their identity freely on the global stage. But is that the only reason? Not at all. Let's look at a few pop culture icons and the impact they have had on the people around them, and on the global entity. Oprah Winfrey, an American producer and humanitarian is the host of a tv show, which has inspired a large section of the world's population with over 30 million weekly viewers. Not only does the content she displays serve as a form of entertainment, but it also inspires viewers, and her actions impact their thought process, actions and personality. This is only one of the millions of examples of the influence of pop culture on our community. Upon evaluating all of these facets, can you tell me if it's possible to live in a world without pop culture? The simple answer for me, ladies and gentlemen, is most definitely no. Pop culture links us together with our global brothers while also providing us with an opportunity to express our identity and individuality. It has become a part of our everyday life, and to be honest, taking it away would be stripping us off one of the most important aspects of our social identity. To conclude, I would like to incorporate a quote which efficaciously encapsulates the sentiment expressed by this blog post; "Would it really be worth living in a world without television? I think the survivors would envy the dead."

By: Vansh Bhatia (Grade)
Edited by: Aditya Bhargava

Tanay
Bhandari

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Samiksh Jain

Tanay Bhandari

My veiw on Pop culture

For some reason when I think pop culture I think the late 90's early 200's, which is wild because I wasn't even born in the 90's. And then I realised the reason I think that the 90's encapsulate what opo culture is and what it means to me is because today's pop culture is mired with references to pop culture then, and in a round about fashion when I think of pop culture I'm just actually thinking of pop culture, while thinking I'm thinking about pop culture in an alternate sense. So what is it about velour sweatpants, bebe t-shirts, and Paris Hilton + the Real Housewives that still dominates the cultural landscape, and who allowed this? When it comes to the juicy tracksuits (you're lying if you said you never wanted one), Paris Hilton making everything she owns aggressively pink or the increasingly absurd names of the Kardashian children, I think there are factors above us that control what we see and what we don't. Some call Him god, others call him a Lizard Man (I still think he's part of the illuminati), but is Mark Zuckerburg really controlling everything and stealing all my data so that he can sell me all the things his illuminati bosses have told him to? But we're still supposed to click on the ads Instagram shows us with every scroll or tap, right?

Or did the King of Pop start Pop culture? I mean, wouldn't that make sense? Wait. I'm not sure if I'm allowed to talk about him anymore. I mean for that matter I should probably steer clear from conspiracy theories too (uh Shane Dawson). yikes. Making mistakes can cost a lot in the culture we've created now. No matter the scale, from transgressions to unforgiveable - and why is this tea? Now it doesn't matter if Adrienne had a divorce or if Lisa had to close down her restaurants, the Real Housewives of who even cares anymore goes on and on and on. Who is watching these? And How is Adrienne a housewife she literally owns a basket ball team. Why does this portray women as being in constant competition, having to one up the other to get better? And why does that entertain? And how can't we circle back to the velour track pants. They scream juicy in rhinestones across the butt. But why just women's pants? Does that perhaps say something that we see manifesting in different ways in our society (perhaps our crime rates?)So. I guess I can't find a conclusive answer to why we still worship housewives, or make archaic references in times that have definitely changed. Perhaps I can find what allows this though. As audiences, I think our consumption can be better. Actively choosing to give certain productions your viewership or promoting content that can both entertain while having a positive impact on society might change how we see pop culture. It might change it from the trashy content we all see as a default to everything we want from representation and diversity. We make pop culture so let's make it more than pink pants, nostalgia and turning the other cheek because of that.

By: Vrinda Das (Grade 11)
Edited by: Aditya Bhargava

https://flexxzone.fcmb.com/2020/03/who-said-these-iconic-pop-culture-quotes/

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Inspiration to Millions

Initially, Hip-Hop originated in the regions of New York City that were economically depressed with the emergence of artists, such as, LL Cool J, Biggie and Tupac into the mainstream media. However, it was only with the rise of a poor man from Detroit, Michigan, that brought Hip-Hop into mainstream music. When one of the greatest producers of all time, Dr. Dre discovered him and went on to make him one of the most influential artists of all time, who would also go on to be the first artist to win an Academy Award for Best Original Song and over 15 Grammys. In 1999, Eminem released the Slim Shady LP, which was an instant success, wherein he used his wide-ranging vocabulary and imagination to make light of some of the most serious issues: homophobia and misogyny. Whilst it was met with critical acclaim, it generated immense controversy with the government and among parents, who believed he was a negative influence on the young generation. However, in reality, he was a massive inspiration to them. Rapping about his struggles on songs such as "Rock Bottom", where the strong message and implementation of unique literary techniques made him not only connect with the average

American, but also made him an inspiration all around the world with only his first album.

He continued his success with what is considered his magnum opus: the Marshall Mathers LP. In this album, he reduces his satirical themes and raps about more serious issues, such as, in "The Way I Am", where he is considered to be at his finest.

https://www.theringer.com/music/2019/2/20/18232748/eminem-slim-shady-lp-20th-anniversary

Here, he uses anapestic tetrameter to bring out his struggles with instant fame and its effect on his personal life. In "Stan", the defining song of the album, he raps about a deranged fan, whose obsession with Eminem leads to his untimely demise. Often placed on lists as one of the greatest songs of all time, "Stan" uses hyperbole and other devices to render it a masterpiece. The album would go on to be the second best-selling hip hop album of all time, selling over 11 million records in the US alone, and 20 million worldwide. However, Eminem truly became the rebellious voice of America, with his third album: The Eminem Show.This album begins with the politically charged song, "White America", which refers to the problems parents and the government seemingly have with him and his lyrical themes. He clarifies in the song that he does not care about their opinion, considering his audience is the young generation who feel as though they don't have a voice. He, then, voices his opposition to the war in Afghanistan the Bush administration's (mis)handling of it in the song "Square Dance." He grandly concludes the album with "Till I Collapse", a motivational anthem that encourages one to never give up and rise up to be successful. The album would go on to be the best-selling album of the year worldwide across all genres, selling over 27 million records.

 Lastly, anything Eminem-related could not be written without mentioning his Academy Award-winning song "Lose Yourself", which is popularly considered to be the greatest rap song of all time. This is because of the aggressive and inspirational themes of the song, along with the richness of the song in terms of literary techniques. He implements the iambic pentameter (much like Shakespeare), multisyllabic rhymes and other techniques to produce this No. 1 song, which effectively describes his struggles early in life and how he used his musical talent to overcome his personal and professional problems.
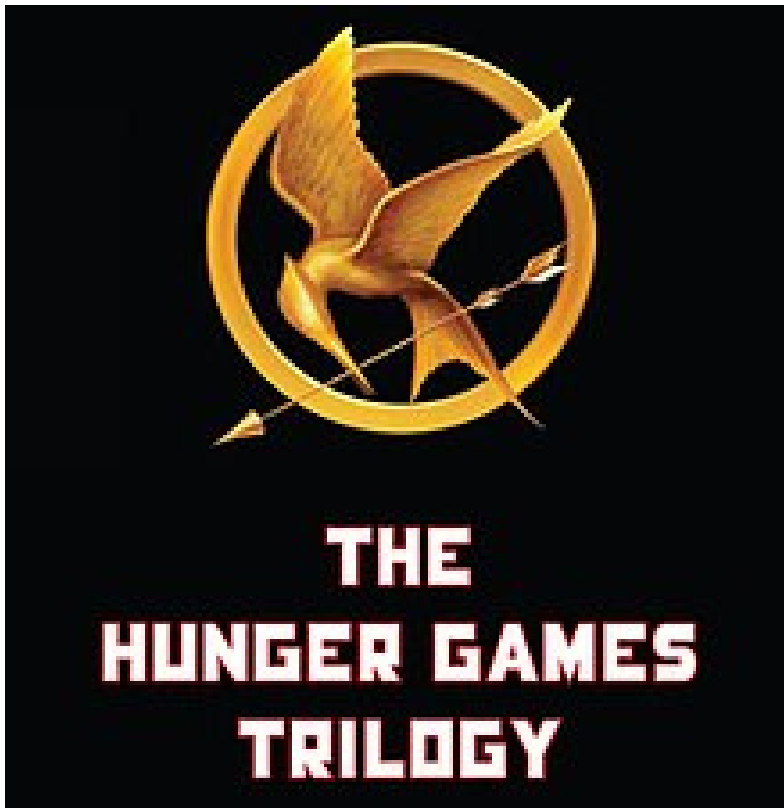
Written by Yashraj (Grade 9)
Edited by Mira Dasgupta

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The Hunger Games

https://www.goodreads.com/book/show/2767052-the-hunger-games

The Hunger Games - a dystopian thriller, a pop cultural phenomenon in its own right. Ever since its inception, the trilogy has changed the way the world of literature and film approaches dystopia. The story of a young girl rising up to fight the system, while simultaneously dealing with her own struggles and aspirations, has a universal appeal. To this end, here's what a few readers had to say:

"It's not merely an action movie or a love story, it's so much more. The main message is that humans put their own survival above any morals they believe they possess, and ultimately, one's primary priority is oneself. It shows what we would do if we are pushed until we 'snap'."~ Moksh, Grade 8

"It is rare to see a fictional universe with as much engagement and consistency as that of the Hunger Games. Not only does the Hunger Games trilogy vividly describe the conditions of the dystopia, it puts us in the centre of the protagonists' predicaments and makes us go through their experiences. An unforgettable experience, the book can be called nothing short of gripping."~ Praruj Sampat, Grade 11

"3 hours straight, the night before my terminal examinations. Best 3 hours I've had in a long time. Be warned, once this trilogy has been picked up, it cannot be put down. Each page makes you anxiously await the next, each plan makes your heart pound. Truly, the Hunger Games ranks up there with the all time greats of fictional worlds." ~ Aditya Bhargava, Grade 11

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Pop Culture Takes Centre-Stage

How did you start with your career in Drama, and why did you choose this field?

The story is long; when I got into high school, I had wanted to be a lawyer. That was my aspiration. However, I was also a devout Christian, and my patron thought that law would conflict with my faith because it sometimes defends things that are just but not moral. At that point in time, English Literature and Drama, like the cultural dances, were very appealing to me. I carried these interests with me to university, where I had to choose between European Literature and Theatre, and after choosing European Literature for a week, I moved to Theatre Arts. My drive was that I loved performing; I learned and taught by doing and demonstrating. It also came at a time where we were going through a very high political temperature at that time, and Theatre was a safe way for me to vent out my political frustrations. As a student leader, there was pressure on me, and since I didn't want to jeopardise my career in any way, so I found myself in Theatre.

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Do you think that modern influences in popular culture have changed the stage of Drama?

 I normally use three images to describe Drama. One, Drama as a light of the society; it illuminates events. Two, Drama as an X-ray for society, Drama gets into the parts of society that no one can see with a naked-eye, Drama gets into the bedroom, which is shut and into your untold past and the hidden closets. Three, Drama as a mirror for society. I believe that Drama moves with society and as the paradigms of society rise and fall, so does the focus of Theatre in order to maintain its authenticity. The most important ingredient that is used in the production of Theatre is what we see in reality. Culture in itself is very dynamic, and inevitably Theatre is very dynamic. Popular culture, which is described as the culture of the people, is why I resonate very clearly with people such as Augusto Boal, whose style of Theatre is going to the people and making them perform their problems and their issues.

 Since you have been a director for a lot of plays, what sort of plays have you preferred working on and do you think you have preferred working on popular plays or rural plays that might be less known?

I love working on straight plays because it is something that I can do on my own without relying on so many people. This is contrasted with musicals where you need the musical director, the choir and the orchestra. However, I would like to say that the collaboration that comes with musicals is amazing because that is the hallmark of Drama. To date, I don't think there is any successful play I've done other than the 'Music Man', which is something I did around 2006. It was a collaboration between the Artistic Director, that was me, the Orchestral Director, the Music Director and the Choir, the four directors worked together to bring out a massive performance, and I can tell you that the joy that came out of that, until now still sticks with me. So while I enjoy straighter plays, I must admit there is a different charm that comes with working with different people. I want to say that I am very erratic with my choices, I find something interesting, and I want to see how it can be transformed on stage. In the past, I have enjoyed physical Theatre like Commedia Dell'Arte, which is a caricature of society that allows you to laugh at society itself.

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As a teacher, I have tried to get stories that revolve around the world. When I've been in Europe, I look at stories from Europe, when in Africa from Africa and so on. I have rotated around many worlds; now, I have the opportunity to look at Asia as well. A story becomes popular based on what is happening in the world at that time. If you get a nice story about the pandemic now, it could be historical because people will resonate with it. The first instance of popular culture in my life was the dances in Africa. We were looking at something that was cultural within an African Context. I, particularly, looked for something from the South African background and found 'Ipi Tombi', which was a very popular story because of the dance and the African drums and the African voices and the African-ness. It was the correct amount of African-ness required to be popular at that time. The next story that I chose was quite controversial in the time where it existed. There was ongoing corruption taking place at that time, and I wanted to highlight that, so I chose a Russian Play called 'The Government Inspector', which was a political satire that perfectly fit the context of Kenya. You could isolate government institutions being satirised within the play, and it became very popular because it had themes that resonated with the current state of the country. I have also done a story about the conflict between parents and children, especially with regards to career choices, which was appreciated by the students.
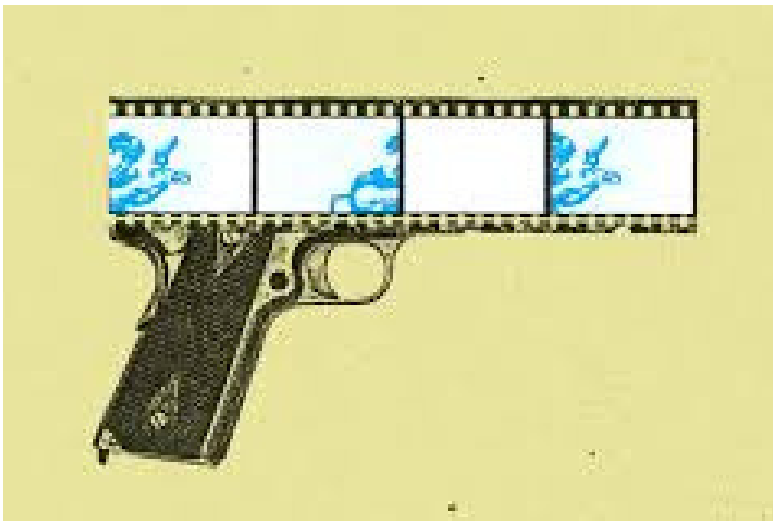
Since you've worked in both English Literature and Theatre, do you think that popular culture has had a varied impact on both forms of creative expression?

I think in a big way, if you look at the language in old literature and Theatre, you will find expressions that are instant, and you can see the influence of the culture in writing. Writers, playwrights and poets will always find a way of representing society. Popular culture will find itself in English Literature and Theatre mainly in terms of the themes and the language. There is so much influence that you can see in the way people speak in a given area. If you look at the rise in popular culture in terms of reading, it rose up in the 19th century, when people tried to deviate from the high moral class that existed in Europe. Out of this, they created a people-oriented culture that was separated from the elitist culture. If you look at the Importance of Being Earnest by Oscar Wilde, the writer mocks and satirises a society because that's what the people did behind the nobility's backs.

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There is an Indian book called 'Miguel Street' that brings the story of the slums in India, and you find a story of the people who are trying to rise up from the slums; the characters are bedevilled by their own lives. The characteristics and the way of doing things are explicitly present in their lives. Any culture thus will be found in literary movements. In Theatre, you find post-modernism to lead us to structureless Drama like Sarah Kane's '4.48 Psychosis'. And so you will find the new culture of social media and multimedia getting into our Theatre and English literature in some way, shape or form.

http://www.colincarlton.com/2018/02/pop-culture-my-new-appreciation-of.html

https://www.washingtonpost.com/sf/opinions/2016/10/26/in-pop-culture-there-are-no-bad-police-shootings/

https://partners.disney.com/mickey-the-true-original-exhibition

PERSPECTIVES

Recommendations

Movies

Light up the sky (Blackpink)

K-Pop sensation Blackpink have proved to be worth all the hype they have been receiving over the past 4 years since their debut with their new film, "Blackpink: Light Up The Sky." This documentary has been a colossal success in terms of its production and direction, portraying the girls as four truly hard-working and dedicated icons in the making, and has reached global levels resulting in non-fans being converted into fans. KPOP has revolutionised modern music with artists making increased appearances in Europe and West Asia. The frequency with which BlackPink's songs are downloaded are representative of why they need no introduction into the civilisation of Pop Culture.

https://deadline.com/2020/09/blackpink-k-pop-netflix-documentary-1234573254/

Mamma mia

Situated on a colorful Greek island, the plot serves as a backdrop to a multitude of ABBA songs. A young woman on the brink of marriage discovers that one of the three men could be her father. She invited all three of them to the wedding without telling her mother. Based on the Broadway musical, Mamma Mia brings new life into ABBA's music, almost thirty years later, thus earning its place as an iconic film, as well as musical. It gives the newer generations a way to enjoy 70s music, thus bringing in pop culture from a different decade and shining it under a whole new light.
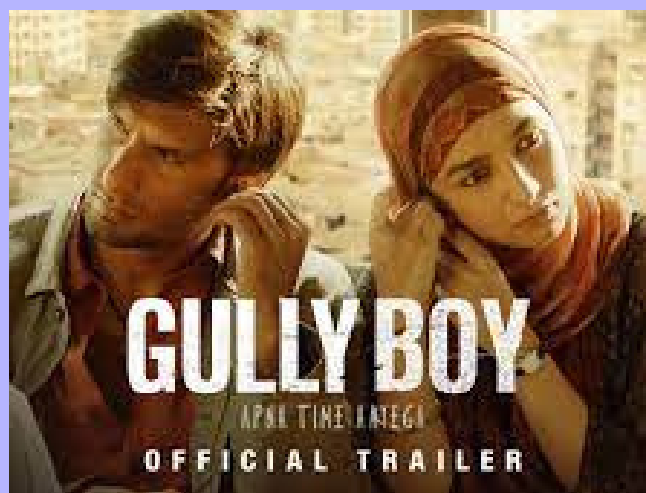
Dark knight

Set within a year after the events of Batman Begins (2005), Batman, the leading characters successfully begin to round up the criminals that plague Gotham City, until a mysterious and sadistic criminal mastermind known only as "The Joker" appears, creating a new wave of chaos. Batman's struggle against the Joker becomes profoundly personal, forcing him to "confront whatever he believes" and improve his technology to stop it. A typical, yet extraordinary, superhero film directed by Christopher Nolan that explored themes of power, humor, and diabolical nature and created a global phenomenon out of the lead characters—Joker and Batman—proves to be one of the most iconic films ever made.

https://www.rottentomatoes.com/m/the_dark_knight_rises

https://qrius.com/gully-boy-movie-review/

Gully Boy

"Gully Boy" is a movie about a 22-year-old boy "Murad" from a ghetto of Mumbai. The film explores the period wherein Murad realizes his vocation as a rapper. Authentic Hip Hop in India is a new phenomenon and, like everywhere else in the world, it emerges from the streets. Art is a distant dream for the colonized poor of India and this story is about Murad's journey from realizing his love for rap and chasing his dream to inadvertently transcending his class. It features street rap in the crevasses of Mumbai's by lanes. As street-music (gully-music) is growing at an exponential rate today, owing to its uber-cool persona and quality of being the voice of the youth, it makes for the perfect recommendation under the theme of pop-culture.

Books

1984 by George Orwell

Winston Smith fights against oppression in Oceania, a place where the Party scrutinizes human actions with a constantly vigilant Big Brother. Defying a ban on individuality, Winston dares to express his thoughts in a diary and pursues a relationship with Julia. These crimes draw Winston into the eyes of the opposition, who must then reform the nonconformist. Big Brother has become an influential figure that is synonymous with dictatorial regimes. It has driven the creation and gathered the following for Dystopia and alternate realities that entrench themselves in the true evils of society.

Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy

Arthur Dent attempts to keep his house from being bulldozed when his friend Ford drives him into space. Turns out Ford is an alien who just saved Arthur from the utter annihilation of Earth. Ford introduces Arthur to his myriad friends, including many headed President Zaphod Beeblebrox and refugee Trillian. Arthur makes his way through the stars while searching for the meaning of life, or something similar, incorporating wit and a dry, absurdist sense of humor to create a work of fiction that readers will never forget. Despite being published in 1979, it's still popular among the youth of today; iconic quotes such as "For a moment, nothing happened. Then, after a second or so, nothing continued to happen" (as well as the iconic "forty-two" reference) lead HHG2G to be firmly cemented in popular culture – over 40 years later.

Lord of the Rings

The future of civilisation lies in the fate of the One Ring, lost for centuries. Powerful forces are unrelenting in their search for it. But fate has placed it in the hands of a young Hobbit named Frodo Baggins, who inherits the Ring and steps into legend. A formidable task awaits Frodo when he becomes the carrier of the Ring - to destroy the One Ring in the fires of Mount Doom where it was forged. LoR reshaped the world of fantasy and through its interwebbed plotlines and rigorous character depiction, garnering great following for the creation of a substantial fictional universe where, through means of languages like Elfish, the following could fully immerse themselves in the sub-culture.

TV shows

Seinfeld

The show stars Jerry Seinfeld as a fictionalized version of himself who is the main protagonist and focuses on his personal life with three of his friends – George, former girlfriend Elaine, and neighbor Cosmo. By combining a mixture of slapstick and verbal wit, it has acquired great popularity as one of the few shows that subscribes to physical humour, differentiating itself from the multitude of sitcoms that have headed in the verbal and intellectual route. It is representative of the lives of Americans under American consumerism guarantees its followers a good time.

https://www.sonypictures.com/tv/seinfeld

https://www.cnet.com/news/seinfeld-is-coming-to-netflix-yada-yada-yada/

Avatar: The Last Airbender

The series is centered around the journey of 12-year-old Aang, the current Avatar and last survivor of his kingdom, the Air Nomads, along with his friends Sokka, Katara, and later Toph, as they strive to end the Fire Nation's war against the other nations of the world. Despite having been released in 2008, Avatar continues to be iconic, both as a source of nostalgia for today's adults and as a franchise that expanded into a sequel show, comics and prequel novels. This series has become ingrained into pop culture, with people deciding which element-bender they'd be in the same way one gets sorted into their Hogwarts House.

https://www.amazon.in/Avatar-Last-Airbender-Art-Animated/dp/1595825045

Fresh Prince of Bel-Air

A wealthy family living in Bel-Air, California, receives a questionable gift from their poorer relationships in Philadelphia when Will Smith, arrives as The Fresh Prince Of Bel-Air. His mother wants him to learn some good old-fashioned values from his successful relatives. But Will shatters the sophisticated serenity of Bel-Air with his streetwise common sense, much to the dismay of his upper-crust uncle, Philip Banks, Aunt Vivian, three conceited cousins and even the butler, Geoffrey. As the Banks family opens their house - and checkbook - to their needy relative, Will easily adapts to their indulgent way of life. Yet, he reminds everyone that the simplest pleasures of family life can't be bought at any price. This show allowed its characters to run against the grain of sociocultural prejudices, and started a movement for African Americans, which largely contributes to today's pop culture.

https://screenrant.com/fresh-prince-relevant-today-will-smith-bad/

https://www.lifestyleasia.com/ind/culture/entertainment/the-fresh-prince-of-bel-air-is-making-a-dramatic-comeback-as-bel-air/

QUIZ

1. To start off, what is your favourite pop culture moment of 2020:
   a. T-Swift releasing two albums out of nowhere **[40 points]**
   b. Megxit happening!!!! **[20 points]**
   c. Parasite sweeping the oscars (yes that happened in 2020 too) **[10 points]**
   d. Four Seasons rejecting Trump and his press con **[0 points]**
   e. Harry Styles looking gorgeous on the December Vogue cover **[30 points]**

2. Which popular tv show do you secretly dislike even though everyone loves it?
   a. F.R.I.E.N.D.S [30 points]
   b. The Office (if you hate this, see a doctor) **[40 points]**
   c. Keeping Up With The Kardashians **[0 points]**
   d. The Queen's Gambit **[20 points]**
   e. I like all of these :) **[10 points]**

3. Did you post your Spotify Wrapped in December?
   a. Yeah, it's fun **[30 points]**
   b. No, I was embarrassed **[40 points]**
   c. No, because I'm not a loser **[20 points]**
   d. I use Apple Music **[10 points]**
   e. I don't know what that is **[0 points]**

4. Pick an iconic Hindi film

a. Yeh Jawaani Hai Deewani **[20 points]**
b.   Jaane Tu Ya Jaane Na **[10 points]**
c.   Kabhi Khushi Kabhu Gham **[0 points]**
d.   Kuch Kuch Hota Hai **[30 points]**
e.   I'm too cool for bollywood **[40 points]**

5. And finally, pick a 90s/2000s trend you wouldn't want back
a. Animal print dresses **[30 points]**
b. Low waist jeans **[20 points]**
c. Side caps **[40 points]**
d. Printed leggings **[0 points]**
e. Lindsay Lohan (we understand) **[10 points]**

Points

If your score is between 0-50:

Joe Biden The Line of Fire

It's June 21st, 2021, 6:37 A.M. Joe Biden is assassinated by a man wearing 'Hello Kitty' pyjamas

https://www.politico.com/story/2012/10/biden-brings-sexy-back-081912

If your score is between 50-100:

Elon's Got A Fetish For His Flowers

Elon Musk files for bankruptcy after investing more than half of his net worth in a florist's entrepreneurship. Question is: who is the florist to Elon Musk???

https://www.theatlantic.com/science/archive/2020/06/elon-musk-juneteenth-spacex-tesla/613330/

PERSPECTIVES

If your score is between 100-150:

KimK+TSwift Collab for Kanye West Disstrack

Woodvale is released, no it's not a folky album, it's a rap album. No the single's music video isn't sunshine and butterflies, it's a Kim Kardashian featurette. Yes it's iconic. Yes, everyone died.

https://www.pinterest.com/pin/144818944254334410/

If your score is between 150-200:

Area51: A Hideout For Mermaids

The A in Area 51 doesnt stand for Aliens, it stands for Ariel. Divers of the Mariana Trench find remnants of mermaid tails, which leads them back to the waterline for Area 51. There's only one logical (even though it's completely illogical) conclusion.

https://www.bbc.com/news/world-us-canada-49568127

PERSPECTIVES

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