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Research Essay On A Form Of Popular Culture

Question A: 'What we all do every day, what we take for granted and can rarely explain... reveal a great deal about ourselves and modern life' Finkelstein *Slaves of Chic: An A-Z of Consumer Pleasures*, p. xiii. Choose an aspect of popular culture and explain what it tells us about the people who consume/participate in it, as well as what it says about modern life

Introduction

Main focus of this essay is based over popular culture, which is a term used for group of ideas, attitudes, perceptions, images and similar other phenomenon that are considered as ideal ones, as per a casual agreement within the conventions of a specific culture (Erving, 1959). Along with that, the actual focus of the essay would be over 'what we all do every day, what we take for granted and can rarely explain to reveal a great deal about ourselves and modern life'. To explain it well, we would apply the concept of Finkelstein *Slaves of Chic: An A-Z of Consumer Pleasures*, while keeping in focus the view of visual entertainment for this study. The type of visual entertainment that we would be focusing would include fashion obsessions and such TV programs and shows.

Main discussion

Popular culture reveals our responsiveness to the images, themes and philosophies we see in our daily lives (David, 1989). Here, we would particularly talk about the Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows. This is a very popular series of Hollywood movies and people are so much deeply into it that they feel attachment towards every single act that Harry Potter performs. In this movie as well Harry chases the time and evil to devastate Horcruxes, and this is very

much influential on people, as they think evil should be removed from the society to make it better, thus it touches their hearts.

While doing so, Harry reveals the reality of three most dominant objects in the wizarding world: the Deathly Hallows. When people see such curiosities in the movie, they go through an intense thought of being blessed by God; this again puts a lot of impression on our minds (Georg, 1950). This movie also faces a lot of criticism and discussion, as different societies existing in the society and their belief upon such things make them either support or to go against the theme of the movie.

At a specific time in the movie, the Voldemort's power grows stronger and the viewers get excited; they, in one sense, want to be like him. Hollywood icons (actors) who worked in this movie can surely be called as popular culture, as they influence the lives of people through this movie, not because of the reason that people watch them a lot on the screens but also because these actors try to perform acts closer to the reality of their lives. As actors try to imitate and copy the real persons and the realities of life, they get close to the viewers' perceptions. In the movie, a character named above starts controlling the Ministry of Magic & Hogwarts, which is again a thinkable phenomenon for the viewers, as they would surely believe it and their lives will get influenced by this. They may believe that such things happen in real life and when some situation occurs in their lives, they may retrieve that behaviour.

Harry, Ron and Hermione plan to destroy Dumbledore's work and discover the rest of the Horcruxes to overpower the Dark Lord. Now, this again appears as the common societal norm to defeat the wrong and thus people would surely take an impact that wrong gets defeated by the right. But later in the movie, a small hope remains for the Trio, and the remaining Wizarding World, so all they do, should go as intended. This creates the perception in the mind of the viewers that evil always exists in the society. So overall, this

movie gives a very deep thought to the viewers about the theme and different angles of life being discussed in the movie. It overall describes the evil existence in the society which gives rise to many bad acts. It also sheds light on the fact that a positive energy and power is needed to control such evils. Further part of the paper would shed light on other popular cultures around us and the impact which we get from them.

Popular culture effects our lives very deeply although it seems that we are taking minor impacts from them, but still, they are altering our personalities a lot (Judith, 1993). As talked earlier, visuals create a huge impact so, if we talk about TV icons, we can observe that our dressing sense is greatly affected by the red carpet walks of the known models and designers. So again, it appears as a popular culture which influences our choice in dressing. Similar examples of popular cultures may include actors, actresses, preferred brands, magazines, newspaper and news on TV. So consequently, society's definition of beauty is set by the media through different programs which is followed by the people. This all influences our behaviour, as television is one of the main sources of entertainment for a large number of people; so certainly, I consider these people in a sense, are ruling the Western World (Andrew, 1994). Teenagers are usually seen taking strong impacts of TV icons, as they try to copy different styles and ways of talking, walking etc. of these TV icons.

Talking about the young generation, these popular cultures given to the society play a very significant role and both males and females are eager to follow it. Girls usually try to imitate TV models and try to look sexy as much as possible just to follow those actresses. Basically, popular culture is the one which is followed by masses and thus all such TV icons are now known as popular culture for teenagers (Douglas, 1994). And, if we talk about the middle or older age, people still get influenced from a lot of things around them in their daily lives; they take deep influences and later on practice accordingly. We see many times around us that old women when sit together discuss their experiences and most of them follow the

religious acts and pray to God for themselves, because this has been given to them by popular cultures around them. Society has made them learn that when a person grows old, he/she has to turn to God and so they become more religious.

A well-known researcher named Joanne Finkelstein (1994), in his book “Slaves of Chic. An A-Z of Consumer Pleasures” explains the consumer habits and practices and examines their meaning in our lives. He explains in his book how different consumer behaviours are relying on the product exposure, which is given to them through TV advisements or any other media (Joanne, 1994). Consumer behaviour is very highly dependent on popular culture prevailing around them, especially about the product that they intend to buy. If a TV ad shows that a certain celebrity who is liked by the consumers uses a particular product which is highly beneficial, they will readily buy the product without searching for recommendations any further. So in this way, the life of a normal customer is altered through the use of such icons and the societal images are portrayed through such ads. This gives rise to a number of questions like; does all this suppresses the individuals’ own personalities? Is that possible that the one who follows popular cultures considers it beneficial for himself but the reality may be far away? Should popular cultures be encouraged in the society? All such questions need answers, which should be explored as soon as possible (Neil McKendrick et al, 1982). People do get influenced by all such activities occurring around them and they try to imitate them as well, but it is important for the media groups, who are giving rise to such popular cultures, to make sure that they make a positive use of it instead of misleading the society. Media has grown to a very effective level, where anything can be embedded into the minds of the viewers through the use of their favourite personalities, attractive themes and eye catching prospects, which give rise to a new popular culture being followed by masses. So, it should be taken in a positive way to benefit the society and humanity both.

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