resisting the idea of choosing a singular ethnic identity to define themselves as had once been demanded (Cornell 2000). Further, immigration of various peoples from around the world, especially by the late twentieth century, has also complicated the claim of a single ethnicity, and changed the world's ethnic landscape. Recognizing this change and the increase in polyethnic individuals, the US Census Bureau, for the first time in 2000, offered multiple choices for race/ethnicity.

Despite these changes, the idea of polyethnicity has not been free of ambiguities and contradictions. For example, according to Cornell (2000), "those who carry multiple racial and ethnic identities may struggle not only against the dominant group's insistence on clear boundaries and unitary classifications, but against the similar insistence on the part of the subordinate groups." Thus, the discourse around ethnic identity tends to be binary and exclusive in nature, and even though there is growing inter-ethnic marriage amongst various groups, the experience of the groups is very different. Lee and Bean (2004) posit the view that Asians and Latinos have much higher rates of interethnic marriages than do blacks, and they are more likely to report polyethnicity than blacks who more often than not claim a single ethnicity and racial identity. This is the case, the authors argue, because blacks have a "legacy of slavery," a history of discrimination, and have been victimized by the "one drop rule" (where having any black blood automatically labeled one black) in the US. However, despite this pressure to identify with one ethnicity or another, polyethnic people are asserting their desired identities and affiliations. But one should keep in mind that those characterized as polyethnics in themselves do not constitute an actual group simply because of the diverse experiences of the individuals in that group. Much research needs to be done in order to capture the varied experiences of polyethnic people, and how they conceive of their identity. Future directions in this area might include multiple ethnic memberships in an increasingly transnational context where national borders are less fixed.

SEE ALSO: Accommodation; Acculturation; Assimilation; Ethnicity; Ethnic Groups; Interracial Unions; Melting Pot; One Drop Rule; Passing; Race; Race and Ethnic Consciousness; Race (Racism)

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popular culture

Toby Miller

The word "popular" denotes "of the people," "by the people," and "for the people." In other words, it is made up of them as *subjects*, whom it textualizes via drama, sport, and information; *workers*, who undertake that textualization

through performances and recording; and *audiences*, who receive the ensuing texts.

Three discourses determine the direction sociologists have taken towards this topic. A discourse about art sees it elevating people above ordinary life, transcending body, time, and place. Conversely, a discourse about folklife expects it to settle us into society through the wellsprings of community, as part of daily existence. And a discourse about pop idealizes fun, offering transcendence through joy but doing so by referring to the everyday (Frith 1991). "The popular" circles across these discourses.

For its part, the concept of culture derives from tending and developing agriculture. With the emergence of capitalism, culture came both to embody instrumentalism and to abjure it, via the industrialization of farming, on the one hand, and the cultivation of individual taste, on the other (Benhabib 2002: 2). Culture has usually been understood in two registers, via the social sciences and the humanities – truth versus beauty. This was a heuristic distinction in the sixteenth century (Williams 1983: 38), but it became substantive as time passed. Culture is now a marker of differences and similarities in taste and status within groups, as explored interpretively or methodically. In today's humanities, theater, film, television, radio, art, craft, writing, music, dance, and electronic gaming are judged by criteria of quality, as framed by practices of cultural criticism and history. For their part, the social sciences focus on the languages, religions, customs, times, and spaces of different groups, as explored ethnographically or statistically. So whereas the humanities articulate differences *within* populations, through symbolic norms (e.g., which class has the cultural capital to appreciate high culture, and which does not), the social sciences articulate differences *between* populations, through social norms (e.g., which people play militaristic electronic games and which do not) (Wallerstein 1989; Bourdieu 1984).

What happens when we put "popular" and "culture" back together, with the commercial world binding them? "Popular culture" clearly relates to markets. Neoclassical economics assumes that expressions of the desire and capacity to pay for services stimulate the provision of

entertainment and hence – when the result is publicly accepted – determine what is "popular." Value is decided through competition between providers to obtain the favor of consumers, with the conflictual rationality of the parties producing value to society. The connection of market entertainment to new identities leads to a variety of sociological reactions. During the Industrial Revolution, anxieties about a suddenly urbanized and educated population raised the prospect of a long-feared "ochlocracy" of "the worthless mob" (Pufendorf 2000: 144). Theorists from both right and left argued that newly literate publics would be vulnerable to manipulation by demagogues. The subsequent emergence of public schooling in the West took as its project empowering, and hence disciplining, the working class.

This notion of the suddenly enfranchised being bamboozled by the unscrupulously fluent has recurred throughout the modern period. It inevitably leads to a primary emphasis on the number and conduct of audiences to popular culture: where they came from, how many there were, and what they did as a consequence of being present. These audiences are conceived as empirical entities that can be known via research instruments derived from sociology, demography, psychology, and marketing. Such concerns are coupled with a secondary concentration on content: *what* were audiences watching when they … And so texts, too, are conceived as empirical entities that can be known, via research instruments derived from sociology, psychology, and literary criticism. So classical Marxism views the popular as a means to false consciousness that diverts the working class from recognizing its economic oppression; feminist approaches have varied between a condemnation of the popular as a similar diversion from gendered consciousness and its celebration as a distinctive part of women's culture; and cultural studies has regarded the popular as a key location for symbolic resistance of class and gender oppression alike (Smith 1987; Hall & Jefferson 1976).

The foremost theorist of popular culture in the sociological literature is Antonio Gramsci, whose activism against Mussolini in the 1920s and 1930s has become an ethical exemplar for progressive intellectuals. Gramsci maintains

that each social group creates "organically, one or more strata of intellectuals which give it homogeneity and an awareness of its own function not only in the economic but also in the social and political fields": the industrial technology, law, economy, and culture of each group. The "'organic' intellectuals which every new class creates alongside itself and elaborates in the course of its development" assist in the emergence of that class, for example via military expertise. Intellectuals operate in "civil society," which denotes "the ensemble of organisms commonly called 'private,' that of 'political society' or 'the State.'" They comprise the "'hegemony' which the dominant group exercises throughout society" as well as the "'direct domination' or command exercised through the State and 'juridical' government." Ordinary people give "'spontaneous' consent" to the "general direction imposed on social life by the dominant fundamental group" (Gramsci 1978: 5–7, 12). In other words, popular culture legitimizes sociopolitical arrangements in the public mind and can be the site of struggle as well as domination.

The counter-idea, that the cultural industries "impress ... the same stamp on everything," derives from Adorno and Horkheimer (1977) of the Frankfurt School, an anti-Nazi group of scholars writing around the same time as Gramsci. After migrating to the US, they found a quietude reminiscent of pre-war Germany. Their explanation for the replication of this attitude in the US lies in the mass production-line organization of entertainment, where businesses use systems of reproduction that ensure identical offerings. Adorno and Horkheimer see consumers as manipulated by those at the economic apex of production. "Domination" masquerades as choice in a "society alienated from itself." Coercion is mistaken for free will, and culture becomes just one more industrial process, subordinated to dominant economic forces within society that insist on standardization.

While much of this dismay is shared by conservatives, for some functionalist sociologists, popular culture represents the apex of modernity. Rather than encouraging alienation, it stands for the expansion of civil society, the moment in history when the state becomes receptive to, and part of, the general community. The population is now part of the social, rather than excluded from the means and politics of political calculation, along with a lessening of authority, the promulgation of individual rights and respect, and the intensely interpersonal, large-scale human interaction necessitated by industrialization and aided by systems of mass communication. The spread of advertising is taken as a model for the breakdown of social barriers, exemplified in the triumph of the popular (Shils 1966).

These approaches have produced a wide array of topics and methods for researching the popular. Cultural studies has perhaps been the most productive. Historical and contemporary analyses of slaves, crowds, pirates, bandits, minorities, women, and the working class have utilized archival, ethnographic, and statistical methods to emphasize day-to-day non-compliance with authority, via practices of consumption that frequently turn into practices of production. For example, UK research on the contemporary has lit upon Teddy Boys, Mods, bikers, skinheads, punks, school students, teen girls, Rastas, truants, dropouts, and magazine readers as its magical agents of history: groups who deviated from the norms of schooling and the transition to work by generating moral panics. Scholar-activists examine the structural underpinnings to collective style, investigating how bricolage subverts the achievement-oriented, materialistic, educationally driven values and appearance of the middle class. The working assumption has often been that subordinate groups adopt and adapt signs and objects of the dominant culture, reorganizing them to manufacture new meanings. Consumption is thought to be the epicenter of such subcultures. Paradoxically, it has also reversed their members' status as consumers. The oppressed become producers of new fashions, inscribing alienation, difference, and powerlessness on their bodies (Hall & Jefferson 1976).

Of course, popular culture leaves its mark on those who create it as well as its audiences. This insight leads us towards a consideration of the popular as itself an industry, whose products encourage agreement with prevailing social relations and whose work practices reflect such agreement. Today, rather than being a

series of entirely nation-based industries, either ideologically or productively, popular culture is internationalized, in terms of the export and import of texts, attendant fears of cultural imperialism, and a New International Division of Cultural Labor. That division sees European football teams composed of players from across the globe, and Hollywood films shot wherever talent is cheap, incentives plentiful, and scenery sufficiently malleable to look like the US (Miller et al. 2001a, 2001b).

This relates to other significant changes in popular culture. The canons of aesthetic judgment and social distinction that once flowed from the humanities and social science approaches to culture, keeping aesthetic tropes somewhat distinct from social norms, have collapsed in on each other. Art and custom are now resources for markets and nations (Yúdice 2002) – reactions to the crisis of belonging and economic necessity occasioned by capitalist globalization. As a consequence, popular culture is more than textual signs or everyday practices (Martín-Barbero 2003). It is also crucial to both advanced and developing economies, and provides the legitimizing ground on which particular groups (e.g., African Americans, gays and lesbians, the hearing-impaired, or evangelical Protestants) claim resources and seek inclusion in national and international narratives (Yúdice 1990). This intermingling has implications for both aesthetic and social hierarchies, which "regulate and structure . . . individual and collective lives" (Parekh 2000: 143) in competitive ways that harness art and collective meaning for social and commercial purposes. To understand and intervene in this environment, sociologists need to be nimble in their use of textual, economic, ethnographic, and political approaches to popular culture.

SEE ALSO: Birmingham School; Consumption, Mass Consumption, and Consumer Culture; Critical Theory/Frankfurt School; Cultural Studies; Culture Industries; Deviance; Elite Culture; Gramsci, Antonio; Leisure, Popular Culture and; Mass Culture and Mass Society; Media; Media and Consumer Culture; Popular Culture Forms; Popular Culture Icons; Shopping; Shopping Malls; Sport

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