Popular culture reshape our understanding of the world around us

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Now a days, through entertainment and media, people are exposed to different cultures like Indian, Pakistani, Korean, which were very alienated before, as before we used to live on an island where different cultures felt very different, felt unreachable, or most often alien. But now, due to media platforms using popular culture to expose these ethnicities and cultures, this has led to a pleasant opening of a leeway to explore and learn, alongside some unseen threats which may vary community to community or person to person.
This has therefore led to a reshaping of our world around us as we become a global village of culture (i.e. globalization) with integration for the better or the worse.

On an individual's perspective, the understanding can differ from person to person, culture to culture (as people who don't have access to popular culture, e.g. South Korea, may be left out). But overall, it has led to an understanding where people are now more confident and expressive of their identities than before due to this change.

Moreover K-pop Demon Hunters, the Movie has taken the world by storm with its music topping the charts, breaking records, etc. (KPop Demon Hunters). Now, people are knowledgeable about Korean culture and what the industry of K-pop idols go through, e.g. all the Saja boys representing each negative aspect which has educated the public on the issues faced by the K-pop industry.
This has become much more prominent due to the entertainment sectors like YouTube or TikTok platforms where people have the ability to create and influence media, giving them the ability to reshape the world. Moreover, through dating apps (like Tinder, Omegle, etc.) allowing people of different cultures to interact has led to people marrying in mixed cultural identities (this is also now more culturally accepted and now popular due to many well-known influencers doing so, e.g. Minni Moochi and David, Nick and Carrie, Double Date, etc.). The ""popularization"" has led to a better understanding among cultures to understand each other indefinitely and without much bias, and trying to accept (and even try) different cultures, e.g. henna tattoos, Korean skin care, Indian batik dresses, etc.
While on the other hand, some families are very pleased that now they are represented well throughout the media, like the K-pop Demon Hunters movie, anime (Japanese), Donghua (China-based), Spiderman: Across the Spider-Verse representing a Black Hispanic family alongside White people, etc.

Music too has brought a lot of cultures into light. Naming a few are Hayat Şaşırtır! (Aydilge), La Bamba (Ritchie Valens), Gangnam Style (Psy), Sukiyaki (Kyu Sakamoto), Dragostea Din Tei (O-Zone), Matushka (Russya), and Eres Tú (Mocedades), which are globally recognized, bringing their culture the light that they deserve.

Adding on the promotion of mental health talked about by celebrities like Billie Eilish normalizes

the fact of looking after yourself, therapy, how to battle depression, etc., which makes people more conscious regarding it. This has also sparked the self-expression of creativity where niche subjects like the humanities category are now being treated as equal to those of the STEM subjects, creating more variety in the generation of jobs, etc., like the influencer MrBeast, who became a global icon without traditional media backing.
This also challenges the current norms and values in order to change the outdated laws and rules as it works as a safety valve in form of protests and voices that fight against this (online personas more prevalent) while also releasing necessary tension which builds up in a society.

On the other hand, this has led to some cultures and countries raising concerns of losing the individuality of a prominent culture and everything becoming an integrated global culture. Moreover, ""orthodox"" families are initiating more boundaries to protect their culture's distinct identity. This happens mainly through restrictions on what to watch on television or what to expose their children to.
This merging of culture has alarmed the government, who want to preserve their culture, leading to the initiation of the law of deportation of parents, leaving only children behind, who will adjust to the original culture of the city/country they're living in.

Promotion of oversimplified ideologies can promote stereotypes. The most common ones are the language usages of Korean, Japanese, and Chinese, which are more popular due to anime, where people say phrases from these animated series which are narrowly applied (and sometimes not at all suited) for everyday conversations, leading to misinformation or only a certain aspect of a culture being promoted or idolized. This can further spiral down into culturally based and media-based propaganda, which can build up to moral panic, leading to extra action taken against that racial/ethnic group, leading to racial/ethnic discrimination.

Moreover, this sector is exploited, as one of their main targets is consumerism for more profits, either Western merchandise of Funko Pop, or Korean-based products like skin care, etc. (even sometimes promoting sexist ideologies).

Adding on, this promotes herd culture, meaning people are often controlled by a majority's opinions over certain things, leading to groupthink, leading social media platforms to use bots to increase more positive views so people come to their merchandise thinking majority equals better quality, as many people had a positive experience.

Furthermore, this has also led to negative interactions and high expectations, meaning people now assume that other people need to have a broader perspective and accurate understanding of other cultures as someone who would be from within their community. Best example: racial blindness is often overlooked when recognizing different people from a different cultural background. Koreans/Japanese/Chinese get frustrated when they are confused within their community with someone else by a foreigner. It's even more frustrating for East Asian people when people mix Japanese, Chinese, and Korean face types. But a study shows that as people from around the world have difficulty telling them apart, they also face the same phenomenon for Western people, as discovered by scientists and neurologists.

This also distorts reality, meaning it can over-glamorize aspects of wealth, beauty, and aggression to such an extent that it overshadows the realities. E.g. The Wolf of Wall Street makes wealth look thrilling, K-dramas instill unrealistic love standards, and TV shows that show violence may normalize it, slowly altering reality the way we witness it. Hence, there will be an increase in mental health diseases and disorders like anorexia nervosa, an increase in gang culture (often deviant or criminal), and theft.

Where most of this is a result of cultural hegemony, dominant cultures like America, where their line of products like Starbucks, movies, plays (Hamilton), make "Westernization" desirable or normal.
This can often lead to commodification of culture, whether religious or cultural aspects are commercialized for mass consumption, corrupting and overriding their true meaning.
Leading to alienation and anomie, where people lose their sense of identity as they lose connections when their reality is shaped in such a way that their images replace authentic human relationships.
Overexposure creates a sense of normlessness; people lose guiding values or a moral compass, so they chase endless trends without deeper meaning, like deepfake content.
In conclusion it depends on the context and viewpoints whether if media is reshaping our view on the world for the better or worse and it is debatable if it is redesigning our understanding at all (to a significant amount) as people do only accept ideologies which have been integrated or are easily digestible (or reject them if it is the opposite) while containing bias; as it has been for around from the start of human lives as civilizations evolve.

THE END

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