

Chapter 1

Popular Culture and Media Intellectuals: Relationship Between Popular Culture and Capitalism – The Characteristics of the Media Intellectuals

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ABSTRACT

This chapter aims at investigating the relationship between popular culture, the recently dominant culture, and media intellectuals. Popular culture can be defined as daily practices preferred widely by the people. In fact, the term popular culture stems from the word, people, in English. Thus, it refers to a unification of supra-class experience of the majority. Due to its specific characteristics, popular culture stems from culture, mass, high, and folk culture, but it also reflects a more independent and common culture. It is modern, civic, entertaining, and close to consumption. It is also based on dominant values. Therefore, recent intellectuals, whom we cannot think apart from the media, play a significant role in the reproduction of popular culture. Those media intellectuals, a new and defining class, are fed from the popular culture and also contribute to widen this culture among masses. Media intellectuals are primary focal points affecting the system in terms of both consumption culture, daily life, and popular politics. Thus, one of the main actors of popular culture is media intellectuals. Such concepts and the relationships among them will be discussed in this study along with their daily examples, and the role of media intellectuals in reproducing popular culture will be analyzed by means of literature review.

INTRODUCTION

In the simplest term, popular culture can be defined as the “daily life culture of the urban people”. The origin of the term *popular culture* stems from the English word “popular”, which is also derived from the English word “people”. “Popular” concept involves the terms ‘people’, ‘majority of the population’, ‘people/for the majority’, ‘people/by the majority’. Therefore, according to the first impression of the

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word, it does not mean to be a product of a certain group, and it doesn't contain ownership of a certain group: It is popular, in other words, although it doesn't belong to all of the people, it belongs to almost all of the people. The concept impressively corresponds to the mass culture, folklore, labor culture, and sub-group cultures (Erdoğan - Alemdar, 2005:33).

While Erol Mutlu defines popular culture as follows: "It includes public beliefs, practices, and objects, which have their origins in local traditions; in the content of popular culture, there are outstanding cultural forms that have been popular, as well as popular forms that have been raised to the level of the museum tradition (Mutlu, 2001: 25)", according to Veysel Batmaz, popular culture "is the culture of the daily life. In a strict sense, it includes entertainment, which is literally an input of everyday reproduction of labor. In a broad sense, it provides preconditions for the reproduction of a particular lifestyle as an ideology. It creates the atmosphere of dissemination and affirmation of everyday ideology (Batmaz, 1981. 28). " Ünsal Oskay defines popular culture as "facilitating the continuation of real life by repeating real-life in the Fantasia as is; blocking the ways for thinking that there could be another type of life instead; alleviating the pain and shame of adopting the existing one and these ailments(Oskay, 1998: 262) ".

In order for the popular culture to become widespread in the eyes of the masses, there is a need for cultural means. According to Pierre Bourdieu, the spread of innovations in the society is performed by the new culture mediators. The new culture mediators provide an identification in the society by supplying symbolical goods and services. These cultural mediators, which we can define as the media intellectuals, undertake an intermediary mission for settlement of the popular culture between the industry and the people, however, this intermediation prioritizes the acceleration of the capital mobilization rather than reflecting the priorities of the people. These intellectuals, most of whom we know 'well' thanks to the media, motivate people for consuming and non-questioning, while consolidating the domination, and cause the hegemonic culture to become widespread.

The objective of this article is to question the relationship between the media intellectuals and the popular culture, which is the dominant culture of our time. These intellectuals, who play an effective role in the reproduction of the popular culture, are the leading actors of today's popular culture. In this study, by questioning the relationships among concepts such as popular culture, capitalism, media, intellectuals, and media intellectuals, the role of the media intellectuals in the reproduction of culture will be analyzed via literature review.

BACKGROUND

Relationship Between Popular Culture and Capitalism

Being affected by the other cultural forms, popular culture is a mixture of mass, high, and folk cultures. Popular culture is a cultural practice, which is experienced by all of the layers of the society together, and which virtually melts class differences in itself. Popular culture particularly focuses on entertainment and recreation, therefore, it would not be wrong to mention that it is predominantly 'organized' by the culture industry. "Popular culture is fundamentally the culture of today. Its distinctive feature is being popular or widespread, and it is the result of the stressed relationship between the individual and people with its appearance in the social structure. It is surely beyond doubt that this case necessitates us to focus on the effect of our social system on the individual. The popular cultures of capitalized and

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