

Vol. 13 No. 42, November 2020

ISSN : 0975-1386

Wesleyan Journal of Research

An International Research Journal

HUMANITIES, SOCIAL & APPLIED SCIENCES

Multidisciplinary | Peer Reviewed | Refereed

UGC Care Listed



Bankura Christian College
Bankura-722101
WEST BENGAL, INDIA

Wesleyan Journal of Research

Vol. 13 No. 42 November 2020 (ISSN: 0975-1386) Impact
Factor: 6.7

UGC Care Listed

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Cultural Entertainment In Society

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Abstract: This article analyzes the current trend towards dilution of the concept of «cultural industries» and the increasing usage of terms such as «entertainment industries», «leisure industries» or even «creative industries». We review recent specialized literature, identify overlapping between the above terms and conclude that this change is a new turning point in the concept of culture, closely associated with new spaces and times for its enjoyment, with the technological evolution of cultural products, changes in the ownership of their suppliers as well as with the shifting roles of author, actor and spectator. To understand this change, we identify and explain three factors: 1) from the strong, closed materiality and textuality of the classic cultural product to the malleability and convertibility permitted by new technologies; 2) from an essentially contemplative, reverent cultural experience to participant experimentation and play; 3) from a desire for permanence and intensity to constitutive contingency and superficiality. We conclude by suggesting wider implications that go beyond the scope of this work: the melting pot that blurs the boundaries between culture and entertainment, which undermines the autonomy of the disputed cultural «field» situated between work and leisure (more pleasant than the first, more demanding than the second), and which also erases the boundaries between cultural entertainment and work (a merged environment of «otium and negotium», «homo ludens» and «homo laborans»).

Keywords: Cultural Industries, Leisure Industries, Entertainment Industries, Creative Industries.

Article History

*Received: 15/10/2020; Accepted: 15/11/2020

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1. Culture and leisure in retrospective

Less than half a century ago, there was a clear difference between Mass Culture (or Cultural Industries)¹ and Mass Entertainment or Leisure. Proof of this lies in two anthologies which came

out within a year of each other from the same publisher, both containing work by highly prestigious contributors (Rosenberg & White, 1957; Larrabee & Meyersohn, 1958). In «Mass Culture», interests listed were popular literature, comics, cinema, radio and television, popular music and advertising. In «Mass Leisure», interests were attributed to the person at play or recreation, not to the consumer of cultural and media industries, although all these activities might be pursued in one's spare time. Pursuits analysed were sport, hobbies, vacations and activities such as membership of an association or social life away from the home (restaurants, social gatherings, bars, pubs and dance halls).

2. Digital leisure and culture: convergence, hyper-productability and transfiguration

The material nature of cultural «texts» (whether written, visual, audiovisual, musical, etc.), is exactly what allows their conversion into economic «goods», as the sequence of their transmission presents them as what we might call «acquirable objects»: books, records or videos (publications) but also television (flow culture) increasingly marketed in the shape of catalogue products («video on demand» for example), or where the stream itself is on sale (pay per view). We might remind ourselves at this point that one of the most solid features of the concept of the Cultural Industry was not the mere commercialization of culture, but also its industrialization, which allowed for reproduction of its media format, using specific equipment (Benjamin, 1973; Lacroix & Tremblay, 1997: 68; Hesmondhalgh, 2007: 55-58; Lash & Lury

❖ From contemplation to participation, from experience to «experimentation» and from informed to «performative»

The textuality and materiality of culture, to a certain extent «cold», «shut», recede and, by contrast, emphasis is placed on their character as «experience», which is liable to result in coproductive participation. And from there, the drift towards phenomena as diverse as games, tourism, theme parks or betting, where the roles of author, actor and spectator become confused, looks to be much easier to digest. That is to say, culture ceases to be perceived as distant, closed work which is treasured, stored away, protected and admired but never touched, and starts to be seen as action, which is fulfilled as soon as the receptor finds something which stimulates and moves him, and that is when its proximity to other leisure time activities becomes immediate. The exclusive ownership of a cultural good, its withdrawal for enjoyment at a later time and the reverence afforded to its author are no longer what sets its value, rather its total availability for access at any time and in any place. On the other hand, these goods are no longer private

property occupying an unalterable space and time as set by their author, but constitutively unfinished texts which fluctuate, proliferate and which are always subject to the possibility of participative intervention, criticism, review, ironic transformation and parody, due to the possibility of mere unlimited reproduction and cooperative, globalised distribution (García Canelini, 2007).

4. From transcendence to contingency, from connoisseur to consumer

Finally, the persistence or transcendence of culture, which outlives not only the moment of contact, but also the life granted both to its author and to its receptor and which travels down the centuries, embodied in works which are the object of veneration and study (Arendt, 1961, 1996), withers before the ephemeral, consumable characteristics of cultural input, always threatened by the fragility of the situation, of the opportunity, instant success and instant forgetting, not due so much to exhaustion, but to inundation: the unstoppable tide of other seductive offers, which are just as ephemeral but which replace the current number one story with those upcoming, just as each wave reaches, breaks over and erases the previous one, as it retreats and leaves foam which is not its own, but the echo of all those which have gone before mixed together. It is then that this immediate form of pleasure from cultural experience seems to merge into the immediate pleasure from other forms of leisure, in its irrelevance and in its, shall we say,

5. Balance and perspectives

All this portrays an ambivalent, paradoxical panorama. On the one hand, there are some who, quite reasonably, lament the fact that attending theatre or opera is to be compared, as regards ways of using one's leisure, with visits to theme parks or casinos (or in its virtual forms: videogames or betting websites), or that a record or book can be considered in the same light as dining out or adventure holidays.

Transcript of Entertainment, Music, Pop Culture, & Fads of the 1920's

Entertainment, Music, Pop Culture, & Fads of the 1920's . Pop Culture The Beginning of the Radio movies The radio was basically the ish of the 1920's. The radio was very popular for the wealthy at the time and the device was mainly used much in the manner of TV's, just without the picture. Later on, the radio would be apart of nearly every American household, approximately 1/3 of America owned a radio by the end of the decade. People would gather around the radio to listen to sporting events, music, the news, and even shows. Movies were always a pretty big deal, but as the 1920's began to approach, movies really started taking off. Big corporations such as Warner

Bros., Paramount, Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, and Fox Film Corporation were all looking to be the first to get their feet in the door of the motion picture era and with those feet came some of the first popular movies and actors.

Robin Hood (1922) - United Artists The 1920's was a time of celebration, partying, and money spending. The movie industry became a major part of the American industry. The first Oscars were held in 1927. The first Oscar movie was a Paramount Picture, called *Wings*. Emil Jennings and Janet Gaynor, were the actors who won an award for having the best acting within the film. Music As stated earlier, the 20's was a time period of nothing but celebrations and partying, and nothing embodied this lifestyle more than Jazz Music. Jazz was a very popular form of music across the nation during the 20's. With prohibition taking over the country, Jazz music began to set a stage in speakeasies, which started giving Jazz a bad name, as the older folks considered the music immoral and saw it as a threat to the old values as the music embraced the Roaring 20's.

Leonard Reed - A famous dancer who created the Shim Sham Shimmy, also known as the anthem of tap. Literature of the 1920's The 1920's weren't just a time of parties and alcohol, there was reading and people actually enjoyed doing it (I know...shocking isn't it!). People would gain much knowledge from books and newspapers. Broadway Broadway also had great success in this era alongside Jazz. The 20's was the prime years for Broadway as it included 50 musicals in just one season. These musicals were originally made by showmen who ere dedicated to the theater and they wanted to make quality entertainment as well as a profit. Some popular musicals were Sally and No, No, Nanette. Famous Authors F. Scott Fitzgerald - Famous for writing "This Side of Paradise" which shot him to stardom. He also wrote the Great Gatsby which is considered one of the greatest pieces of literature of the 20th Century.

Ernest Hemingway - One of the greatest authors of the 20 century, Hemingway wrote many a great novels and short stories such as "The Sun Also Rises" and "In Our Time".

In entertainment that truly entertains (recognizing that some would-be entertainment "flops"), attention is diverted from all other matters, hence occasional usage of one of its synonyms: diversion. In general these commonsensical terms are employed with reference to what Lewis (1978:16-17) calls "moderately complex" (as opposed to "simple" or "highly complex") objects and occasions (e.g., a comic strip, television sitcom, popular song, Broadway play).

Etymologically the verb to entertain evolved from precursors in Latin and Old and Middle French (*entretenir*) meaning to hold

Two, the sociology of entertainment has confined itself to people enacting the role of entertainer – street performers, popular singers, stand-up comics, film and television actors, strippers, pornographic models and actors, and the like. This leaves for other fields the analysis of roles where entertainment, if it occurs at all, is incidental and peripheral to the main purpose of the role or where entertainment comes from a source other than an entertainer (see discussion below of casual leisure). Examples of incidental/peripheral entertainment include entertaining moments in a classical music concert. Four, over the years, sociologists have tended to concentrate on one or two of six distinctive facets of the field of entertainment, classified and discussed in this chapter as 1) nature of entertainment, 2) role of entertainer, 3) public that consumes entertainment (e.g., fans, buffs, audiences), 4) content of entertainment, 5) industry that produces it, and 6) place of entertainment in society.

Two core concepts organize this branch of sociology. One – *entertainment* – may, in light of the preceding discussion, be defined as an object or occasion intentionally provided to a public for their enjoyment, or pleasure, that is meant to hold their attention for the period of time the object or occasion is perceived. the sociology of entertainment is largely at the exploratory stage of development, these definitions should be considered tentative, subject to revision as new, open-ended, discovery-oriented research suggests (Stebbins, 2001a). Indeed, as we learn more about this area, this conceptual core could be expanded with other basic ideas.

Conclusions

It could be argued that the sociology of entertainment is but a branch (a “sub-discipline”) of one or more of the recognized subdisciplines of the sociologies of art, work, leisure, and popular culture. After all, entertainers and their entertainment have found a notable place in each. Moreover, maintaining theoretical and empirical ties with each is important for further development of the sociology of entertainment (the reverse holds as well). The same may be said for its ties with related disciplines, particularly history, aesthetics, cultural studies, and communication studies.

Another reason for considering the sociology of entertainment as a proper subdiscipline is to give it a fighting chance to avoid being regarded as “trivial.” Sure, it is casual leisure for those who consume it, and the product consumed is only moderately complex. But

casual leisure has its profound benefits (Stebbins, 2001b), and the entertainment industry provides work for a significant proportion of the population while generating enormous economic returns for society. The social scientific study of entertainment has already demonstrated in countless ways just how profound entertainment and the entertainer role actually are.

Finally, there is a whiff of hypocrisy in the air when people qualify entertainment as trivial and, in the same breath, relish their hours before the television set and spend hard-earned money taking in live performances of their favorite pop stars.

Meanwhile, sociologists studying entertainment need to be more self-conscious about their subdiscipline.

That is, they must place their studies of musicians, actors, content, history, and the like -- the six facets -- in distinctive, entertainment-related theoretic context, which certainly includes the new theory and sensitizing concepts presented earlier in this chapter. In the end, if unable to develop distinctive theory that organizes its central ideas, the sociology of entertainment will fail to make the claim that it is an identifiable subdiscipline. This is the most critical challenge facing sociologists who declare this area their specialty.

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