What pop culture does for society

In this article, I shall try to define what "popular culture" is, show some of its functions in our society, and point to some of the factors that influence its capacity to fulfill these functions.

influence its capacity to fulfill these functions.

These factors I shall call "the Ceremonial Valence" and "the Organizational Authority."

The great French sociologist Durkheim had a theory according to which he strength of an idea, as an influence upon our behavior, was proportional to the number of people whom we knew shared that idea.

And the way people shared that idea was through a special type of symbol—an emblem, a flag—which stood for both the idea and the fact that it was widely shared.

was widely shared.

was widely shared.
When we saw that flag, we knew
that other people shared the idea the
flag stood for, and this very experience: would reinforce our commitment to the idea, especially if the
flag was the occasion for common
action, i.e. a ceremony, like saluting
the flag. This phenomenon is the "Ceremonial Valence" of communication.

OUR DEFINITION of popular culture follows from this theory: It is the sum of the information and entertainment that is aimed either at the whole population or to large blocks of it—social class groups, ethnic groups, excupedional groups, political groups. This definition encompasses the overt function of popular culture, which is the information and the relaxation of the citizenty. The more invisible function is to maintain a prideful identification to our sub-groups (class, ethnicity, education, etc.), but also to reintegrate us in our devotion to the total society, the country.

This integrative function is all the more necessary that our society has become more diverse and its division of labor more more diverse and its division of labor mare us, and make the sharing of our life experience more difficult.

For many couples, separated by sex roles and job experience, the sharing of popular culture is the major opportunity—besides the raising of thilden—for pleasant interaction and agreement.

agreement.
THE DIVISION of popular culture

between information and entertain-ment is somewhat arbitrary, because in popular culture, news is largely a form of entertainment, and entertain-ment is a form of news. In the first place, the tales of woe happening to others draw attention to our comparative luck and safety. They often degrade those who are our social

our comparative inck and satety. They often degrade those who are our social superiors.

They draw attention to the studies of the second place, entertainment tells us what styles are "in," even what politics and morals are "in." And this capacity to guide us is derived from the Ceremonial Valence mentioned above: The fact that we know that millions of people are watching what we are watching. ANOTHER FACTOR in the persussiveness of popular culture is "Organizational Authority." There are two basic sources of organizational authority.

The first is to speak in the name of a particular group or, even better, to speak in the name of the whole mation. The other is to be able to assert a consciout to the sacred.

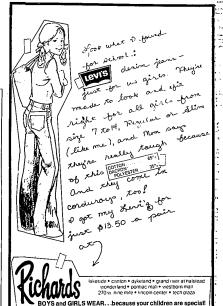
equivalent to the claim of a connection to the sacred. When we are children, an example of organizational authority is the peer group. Examples of the sacred are first and foremest our parents, our teachers. For adults, sources of the sacred are (were?) the president of the United States, the Supreme Court, the Great Academics speaking from their knowledge of Advanced Science, the High Clergy, the Famous Artists.

ORGANIZATIONS will claim to

ORGANIZATIONS will claim to represent us because they are devoted to our welfare. Such are the agencies of government, the churches, the meical profession, the mass medical profession, the mass medical profession, the mass medical representativeness than the local media. To tell us what we think, they will use national surveys. Critics will tell us what shows are compatible with good taste and our cultural traditions.

I Question to students: Between the "Ceremonial Valence" and the "Organizational Authority" of popular culture, how do we make up our own mind? For that matter, is our own mind still left to us?





Hunting time near; train the kids

By LEM MESEE

Suddenly it's almost fall and hunting

Suddenly it's almost fall and hunting season.

The Oakland County Sportsmen's Club will hold its annual young hunter safety clinic this Sunday, Sept. 10.

President Ron Soncrainte said registation will begin at 8 am., and training will run from 8:15 a.m. to 4 p.m.

The course is required for all forms of hunting, within Michigan. Every yungster aged 12:16 who wises to yungster aged 12:16 who wises to the safety course.

Clinic co-chairmen Soncrainte and John Prizielle said most sessions will be held outdoors, rain or shine. So dress of the day should be geared to the weather.

Sandwiches, soft drinks and snacks will be available for those who wish to purchase them. Pricnic tables are available for those who pack their lunches.

The clinic is on the sportsmen's club grounds at 4770 Waterford Road, just pursus



north of US-10, in Waterford Township, Registration fee is \$1.

HUNTERS WHO wish to participate in put-take pheasant hunting may obtain the special permits from local Michigan license agents and DNR field offices.

offices.

In addition to the special permit, hunters will need a current small game license (or all-encompassing sportsmar's license) and a \$1 public access stamp.

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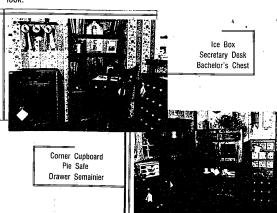


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