9.6

Globalized Culture

What is interesting is the power and the impact of social media. . . . So we must try to use social media in a good way.

—Malala Yousafzai, Pakistani human rights activist (born 1997)

Essential Question: How has globalization changed culture since 1900?

At the start of the 20th century, political and social developments led to new directions in the arts. Writers, painters, and musicians developed **modernism,** a rejection of tradition in favor of experimentation and uncertainty. World War I, a global depression, and World War II had focused attention on survival. After World War II, however, citizens of wealthier nations began to develop a **consumer culture**—one in which people tended to focus more on what they bought and owned than on where they lived, what they did for a living, or what they believed. As trade restrictions loosened and new technology became more widely available, people worldwide began sampling arts, popular culture, and ideas from faraway countries. However, few could predict the global connectedness made possible by social media, nor its power to do both good and ill.

Political, Social, and Artistic Changes

Change was everywhere at the start of the 20th century. In just about every main field of human endeavor, new perspectives and discoveries were redefining the way people thought about their social and physical environments. Key political changes also helped shape society.

Political Changes At the beginning of the 20th century, imperialism was creating sometimes fierce competition among nations. Two world wars raised the conflict to the level of deadly force, although allies standing together developed a good working relationship and understanding of one another. The Cold War divided much of the world into camps, stressing differences rather than commonalities. After the Cold War, however, both economic and cultural barriers fell, bringing countries closer together. In some key ways, collaboration gradually replaced competition as nations formed cooperative regional organizations such as the European Union and NAFTA as well as global associations such as the United Nations for conflict resolution and the World Trade Organization to regulate international trade.

Social Changes Along with these changes came social changes. International organizations and collaboration brought people of different cultures into closer contact with one another, just as international exchanges had done in the past. Rights movements—civil rights and women's rights especially—helped bring formerly marginalized voices into the mainstream conversation.

People were also questioning long-held beliefs about humans and their environments. Albert Einstein (1879–1955) and other scientists upended people's understanding of physical reality. Sigmund Freud (1856–1939) probed the invisible inner workings of the human psyche. Jean-Paul Sartre (1905–1980) philosophized that nothing had meaning. Technological developments in communication, transportation, and medical and other scientific knowledge brought change after change—from horses to cars, from telegraph to radio, from antibiotics to vaccines.

Artistic Changes These changes were reflected in the visual arts, literature, and music of the time. Cubism, a style Picasso used in his famous painting "Guernica," challenged traditional perspective in the visual arts (See Topic 7.4.) Stream-of-consciousness writing by such authors as Marcel Proust (1971–1922) and James Joyce (1882–1941) rebelled against traditional narrative forms, and atonal music such as that composed by Arnold Schoenberg (1874–1951) explored musical expression outside of familiar tonalities, to name just a few examples. Many scholars suggest these expressions were a response to the mechanized, urbanized society widespread in the early 1900s.

An especially vibrant expression of 20th century perspectives was the Harlem Renaissance, a "rebirth" of African American culture as it sought to distance itself from the stereotyped portrayal of African Americans in literature and onstage. During the Harlem Renaissance, writers, poets, musicians, and social activists made Harlem a thriving center of energy for black artistic expression. Jazz emerged and became an international language.

Global Consumer and Popular Culture

In the 1920s, **popular culture**—the culture of everyday people rather than the educated elite—expressed itself through new media: radio and motion pictures. Radio, movies, and later television created a culture shared throughout a nation, and eventually throughout the world. Radio provided a variety of programs, from easy-going comedies to music hours featuring the latest in big band entertainment, and during World War II it played a vital role in national defense in most industrialized nations. Movies provided relief from the anxieties and pressures of the Great Depression while reflecting it in its themes. Charlie Chaplin's "Little Tramp" character of silent movies epitomized the down and out.

Radio and television also ushered in the consumer culture that characterized much of the developed world after World War II. The "free" programming reaching into the homes of millions of people carried with it commercials

for the products of sponsors. Industry turned from wartime production to the manufacture of consumer products, and people around the world were eager to buy. In the 1990s, the internet connected people around the globe.

Primary News Source for People in the United States
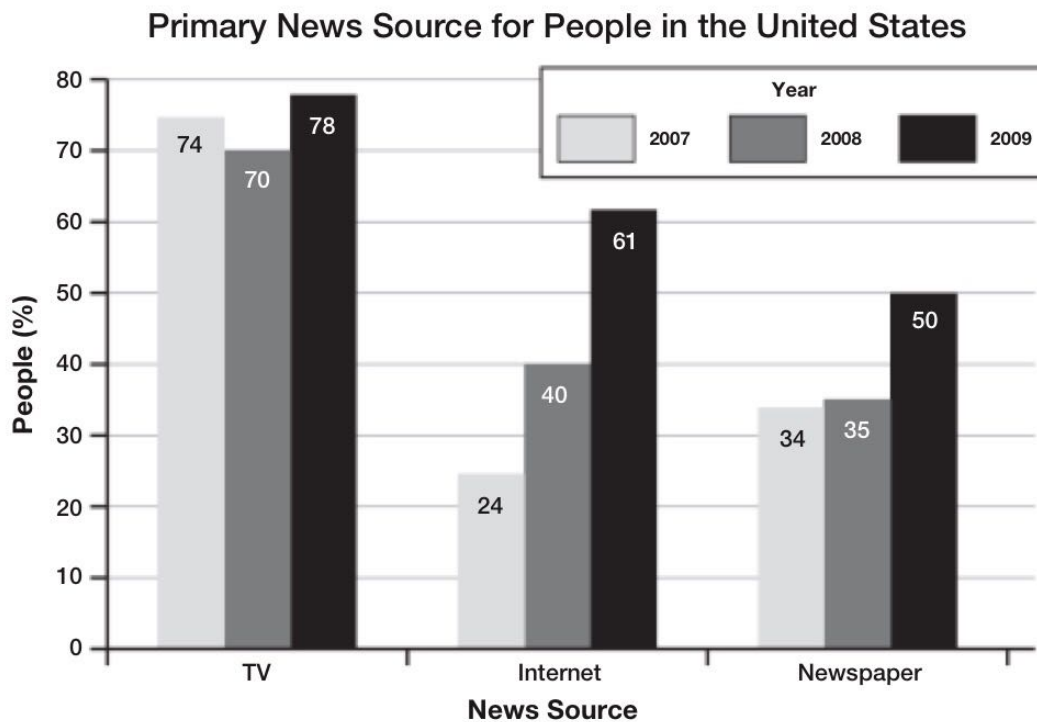
A shift toward online-only sources took place as media outlets set up large online presences.
Source: Pew Research Center for the People.

In the early 21st century, the United States remained the world's most influential culture. Through **Americanization**, people the world over learned more about the United States than Americans learned about the rest of the world. This dominance of the United States created resentment among those who felt that American popular culture diluted their unique cultural identity. In the early 21st century, many people around the world considered American consumer culture to be **throwaway culture**. They objected to the waste and pollution that was part of the focus on newer, cheaper, more disposable products.

English Spreads and Changes Through the influence of the British Empire and through American movies, corporations, and scientific research, English became a second language in much of the world. In the early 21st century, about 300 million people in China were learning English—which was about the same as the population of the United States.

Many English-speaking corporations moved their call centers to India and the Philippines, where there were large numbers of fluent English speakers who would work for relatively low wages. As more people from other countries learned English, they spoke it in new ways. For example, Indian English included the word *prepone*, which meant the opposite of *postpone*.

Global Brands and Commerce As multinational corporations advertised and distributed their products, **global brands** such as Apple, Nike, and Rolex emerged. A company called Interbrand names the top global companies each year based on financial performance, ability to influence consumer choice, and ability to command a premium price. The 2018 winners included Toyota, which sells more cars than any other brand; tech giants Apple, Google, Amazon, Microsoft, and Facebook; and the company that famously announced its desire to "buy the world a Coke" in its 1971 multicultural commercial, Coca-Cola.

Online commerce makes shopping a global affair as well. Sites such as Amazon (in more than 17 countries) and Alibaba (mostly in Asia) make a massive selection of items available. The online auction site eBay operates in 30 different countries. Although their platform is international, these online retailers must pay a variety of sales taxes according to the laws of each country or state in which they sell products.(Connect: Write a paragraph comparing Americanization in the 21st century with assimilation in the 19th century. See Topic 6.3.)

Global Influences on Popular Culture Although the United States is still the dominant culture internationally, influences from other cultures have been welcomed in the United States and elsewhere. For example, Indian musicals made in **Bollywood**, the popular name given to the film industry in Bombay (Mumbai), enjoy popularity worldwide. Bollywood itself is a blend of film styles. India makes more films than any other country.

A style of Japanese hand-drawn animation known as **anime** became hugely influential. In 2016, 60 percent of the world's animated TV shows were based on anime. Anime was introduced to American culture in the 1980s through the movie *Akira.* Television shows in the late 1990s, such as *Pokeman* and *Dragon Ball,* brought anime into the American mainstream.

Reggae music from Jamaica is global in both its origins and its popularity. It emerged in the 1960s, blending New Orleans jazz and rhythm and blues styles with mento, itself a fusion of African rhythms and European elements. It is associated with the Rastafari religion which promotes Pan-Africanism, the connectedness of all Africans whether they live in Africa or in the diaspora. It often blended with musical traditions of other countries as its popularity became global in the 1970s through the music of Bob Marley.

Another style of music that fused a variety of traditions and became a global hit was the Korean music nicknamed **K-pop**. Its artists, who sang in a mixture of Korean and English, became global stars in the early 21st century. Their popularity has also boosted the popularity of other South Korean exports. In fact they are considered so valuable that the government has invested in K-Pop concerts and tours. Internet-based **streaming video** sites such as YouTube and Vimeo helped popularize K-Pop and other musical styles with a global audience.

Social Media and Censorship Facebook, Twitter, Snapchat, and other forms of **social media** changed communication. They can inspire but also manipulate, as attested to by **Malala Yousafzai**, the Pakistani activist and the youngest Nobel Prize laureate. People debated their power for good or ill.

Source: Thinkstock

Since Olympic athletes represent their home nations, the games demonstrate the strength of nationalism. However, since the Olympics draws people together from nearly every country in the world, it is also an example of internationalism.

In some countries, such as China, the government banned social media from outside the country. However, China allowed its own forms of social media, including WeChat, Weibo, and YuKu. The government censored any criticism of the Communist Party that appeared on these platforms.

Global Culture in Sports The globalization of popular culture included sports as well. The establishment of the modern **Olympic Games** in 1896 reflected an early sense of internationalism. In 2016, the Olympics in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, attracted about 3.6 billion viewers worldwide.

Soccer emerged as the most popular sport in the world, in part because it required so little equipment that it could be played almost anywhere. The **World Cup** soccer competition rivaled the Olympics as a global event. Basketball also became a global game, and players such as Michael Jordan and LeBron James became internationally known. In 2014, the National Basketball Association (NBA) included players from 30 countries or territories. In 2017, reporters from 35 countries covered the NBA Finals. In 2018, 27 percent of major league baseball players were foreign-born, from 21 different countries.

As sports became more popular globally, they also became more available to women. Some Muslim female athletes—including fencers, weightlifters, beach volleyball players, hockey players, and figure skaters—competed while wearing hijab, known in English as a headscarf. They adapted athletic wear so they could compete while following traditional Muslim practices regarding female modesty in clothing. Hajar Abulfazi, a soccer player from Afghanistan, explained that she wore the hijab to "show the next generation and their parents how Afghan women and girls can maintain respect for religion and culture while pursuing sports achievements."

Global Culture and Religion

Globalization promoted new religious developments. In the 1970s, former Beatles band member George Harrison released a song containing the words of a Hindu mantra, or sacred utterance. This launched the popularity of the **Hari Krishna** movement, which was based on traditional Hindu scriptures. It quickly gained popularity in the United States and Europe. In what some called **New Age** religions, forms of Buddhism, shamanism, Sufism, and other religious traditions were revived and adapted for a largely Western audience.

In China in the 1990s, **Falun Gong,** a movement based on Buddhist and Daoist traditions, gained popularity. Although the communist government allowed the movement at first, Chinese authorities began to restrict it in 1999. The suppression prompted international protests against the Chinese regime for human rights abuses.

In the early 21st century, most people around the world identified with some form of religion. However, an increasing number of younger people in many countries identified as **nonbelievers**. They were not necessarily atheists (people who do not believe in any god) or agnostics (people who believe that it may not be possible to know if God exists). Most were simply not affiliated with any religious institution.

KEY TERMS BY THEME

SOCIETY: Belief Systems
Hari Krishna
New Age
Falun Gong
nonbelievers

CULTURE: Sports
Olympic Games
World Cup
National Basketball
   Association (NBA)

CULTURE: Arts
consumer culture
modernism
popular culture
Bollywood
anime
reggae
K-pop

SOCIETY: Influences
Americanization
Malala Yousafzai
throwaway culture

**TECHNOLOGY: Commerce
   and Entertainment**
global brand
streaming video
online commerce
social media