

Literary Works in the American Culture



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The novel entitled "Uncle Tom's Cabin", for instance, was firstly published in 1852 and sold 7 million copies. American newspaper is started when Boston News-Letter became first regularly published American newspaper in 1704. In 1791, Bill of Rights was ratified in America in which government protected press from censorship. It was proved by First Amendment. Moreover, American magazine was firstly published in 1741. In 1821, "Saturday Evening Post" was published. Then, first magazine boom occurred during 1865 to 1900.

Nowadays people live in the era of information. A nation will achieve prosperity if it has a mastery of information technology. When a nation masters the technology of information, it becomes superpower and controls international policy. The fact shows that information was the important thing, and it became one of dominant aspects from which the Soviet Union crumbled within 1990. It happened not because the Soviet Union was lack of scientist, but because the Western information penetrated the Soviet's young generation. Thus many young generations rebelled against their country's ideology. They compelled the government to change the communism to liberalism, new ideology from Western society, because communism helped them gain nothing.

When America authorized commercial television broadcasting in 1941, it could be said that the information revolution had come. The revolution is quite different from the previous revolution, industrial and technological revolution. Industrial revolution occurred 200 years ago when men created means of transportation employing steam engine and produced manufacturing products like textiles. While technological revolution happened a century ago, at the time electricity and chemical were used by scientists to produce synthesis and plastic.

Information revolution, which is still going on combines computers with telecommunication to create pictures in television, telephone, data of digital computer, and facsimile. Technology of information provides people with advanced services system. It connects inter-computer with electronic post, and it can also transmit information to many countries and villages. Having Masterred information, American succeeds in controlling the world. Technology of information is able to raise the wealth of a certain nation. Accordingly, information

technology help a country achieve victory. Another country, however, which is information illiterate will become the follower of modern country and is capable of doing nothing to increase welfare.

American Literature in the Mass Media

American can be regarded as the master of information technology that is applied its function in communication system. American communication system arises from long national history. It had started when America developed print media such as books, newspapers, and magazines, and they created electronic media such as motion picture, radio, and television. Many novels had been written by novelists and a great number of publishing houses had been established since 19th century. The novel entitled "*Uncle Tom's Cabin*", for instance, was firstly published in 1852 and sold 7 million copies. American newspaper is started when Boston News-Letter became first regularly published American newspaper in 1704. In 1791, Bill of Rights was ratified in America in which government protected press from censorship. It was proved by First Amendment. Moreover, American magazine was firstly published in 1741. In 1821, "*Saturday Evening Post*" was published. Then, first magazine boom occurred during 1865 to 1900.

In analyzing the American literature in the mass media, it is necessary to depict the development of electronic media. American's electronic media had begun when Edwin S. Porter showed "*Great Train Robbery*". It was the first American film to tell a complete story. In 1930s to 1940s, it was the "Golden Age" of movies. At the time, movies released Americans from Depression and War. Again, Hollywood reached box-office year in 1946. It had assets of \$1.7 billion since 87 million Americans saw films each week. It seems that motion pictures

or films evolved. In 1980s, video movies arose from American film industries, and multiplexes replaced large screen theatres. Film industry became video-game business in 1990s

Another American electronic media is radio. The United States had used radio broadcasting when World War I broke out. In 1919, Radio Corporation of America (RCA) was established, and music was transmitted by Frank Conrad over the air waves in Pittsburgh. Radio Soup Operas offered escape from the Great Depression, and president Franklin D. Roosevelt employed radio to fire-side chats with the nation during 1930s to 1940s. At the decades first FM radio station went on the air in New Jersey. Then, Network radio revenues reached a peak in 1948.

When radio lost its programs, television began going on the air in 1950s. Actually, a great number of Americans saw television for the first time at New York's world's fair. And two years later Federation Communication Commerce (FCC) authorized commercial television broadcasting in America. For the first time CBS and NBC demonstrated color television in 1946. In 1954, television broadcasted political events when Army-McCarty hearings were televised. At the time Murrow risked career to challenge McCarty on "See It Now". Then, two years later American television began extensive coverage of presidential elections. In 1969, World watched man's landing on the moon live on television. Again, "All in the Family" brought Archie Bunker and controversial issues to TV comedy two years later. During the decades 1980s, cable television and VCR changed American viewing habits, and network popularity began to decline.

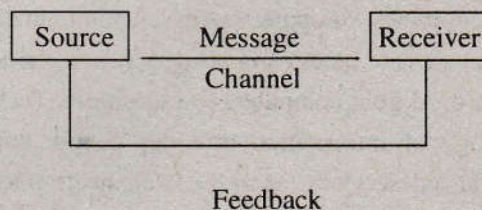
In addition to the considerations described above, this paper is aimed at explaining the mass communication in American society, and

its impact on literary works and mass culture. As Wilson (1995:51) says, mass communication is the process in which individuals share information, ideas and attitudes by using technological devices known as mass media to communicate over great distances to affect large audiences. In this paper culture can be defined as everything that occurs in a society, all of customs and practices handed down from generation to generation (Wilson:1995). In analyzing the culture, the writer depicts mass culture which referred to the things in American popular culture that were mass-produced and shared through the mass media. This definition includes the literature regarded as the product of culture.

American Mass Media

The United States has a great number of mass media such as books, newspapers, magazines, films, radios, and televisions. This paper, however, focus description on television. Television as an electronic media has a particular model of sending and receiving information. The model can be payed attention on figure 1. It consists of at least five components which includes the source, the message, the channel, the receiver, and the feedback.

Figure 1. Communication Process with Feedback



Source: Wilson, Stanle Roy, *Mass Media/ Mass Culture An Introduction 3rd Ed.*
New York: McGraw-Hill,inc., 1995

Those components can be described as follows:

- **Source.** The source is the individual who shares information, ideas, and attitudes with another person. In mass communication like television, the source is a professional communicator who shapes the message to be shared. The communicator here is television reporter who has to collect information or ideas and then distributes them to the audience.
- **Message.** The message is information or source distributed to other individuals. It contains an idea encoded into symbols that are used to remark the idea. What is meant by symbols here are words, pictures or objects used to provide the receiver with the meaning of message. In communication, words and pictures are the most common symbols used to transmit idea
- **Channel.** The channel is the way in which person sends his message. In mass communication, television can be considered as communication channels. The messages of television are transmitted by using electronic devices. Nowadays, all print media messages are transmitted electronically. Wire Services send news via satellite, and the United States transmits the entire contents of the newspaper by satellite to printing plants around the country and to other parts of the world.
- **Receiver.** In the communication process, the receiver is the individual with whom the message is intended to be shared. No receiver means no communication. Communication will not occur unless one of the four components above is available. To share the message, one must be sure that the receiver is listening and is understanding what he has to communicate.
In mass communication, the receiver is usually a large audience that is often referred to

as the masses. Because of the audience's size and diversity, mass communication requires careful choices of symbols that will give similar interpretation among receivers, who have different forms of reference.

- **Feedback.** In mass communication feedback is required since it gives the source an opportunity to determine whether or not the message was correctly comprehended. Feedback can employ many forms. It can contain words, gestures, facial expressions, or any other noticeable act.

In addition to the considerations mentioned above, it can be regarded that communication will give nothing if the receiver or audience is absent. In this case both communicator and audience are quite important to communication system. Former is as human resources who operate the technological devices and also gather the information which public need. And the latter is as human beings who require information or idea which can help them to increase knowledge or insight into.

The Impact of Television on Literature and Mass Culture

Television can build public opinion. The reporter of television using advanced technological devices is able to collect information and is transmitted by television. Then, the public receives the message and shape the opinion about the information. Television has many ways to inform message to audience. Those ways are live drama, Quiz show, Sitcoms, sports and news. Those shows can be explained as follows:

Live Drama. Some of the best dramas ever shown on television were the plays telling real lives from New York Studios in the 1950s. Two of the well-known live dramas of the Golden Age of television were "Rod Serling' *Requiem for a Heavyweight*" and "*Days of Wine and*

Television's impact on American society and culture has been profound. It has changed the lifestyles of most Americans. It has also become a major influence in American culture. And television's impact was almost instantaneous. The program of television has played an fundamental role in the emergence of mass culture in American society. Television started reflecting these changes when the civil rights movement calling for equality for American gained momentum in the 1960s.

Roses" starring Cliff Robertson and Piper Laurie. Those high quality dramas preferred focusing on character development and analysis to on car chases and elaborate scenery.

Quiz shows. Quiz shows having been popular on radio gave greater rewards when transferred to television. For instance, Radio's 64 dollars question became TV's 64,000 dollars question. The fame of the shows rose up when people could share in the delight of winning big money by knowing the right answers to questions. In 1959, television was rocked by its first major scandal when it was revealed that certain quiz-show contestants had been given the questions prior to the programs. It was done to ensure that the most popular contestants would win and return the next week. Until this time, TV programs had been produced by advertising agencies and the shows' sponsors.

Sitcoms. From the beginning the most popular of all the TV entertainment genres has been the situation comedy. Other forms of television entertainment like Western and variety shows have come and gone, yet the sitcoms have endured. In an effort to appeal to middle-class America, early TV continued to produce the family sitcoms having been popular on radio. The settings were always the same i.e. a happy, white, middle-class home with humorous but bland family problems to cope with and solve

by the end of each 30-minute show. A few of the more popular shows in this category were *"Father Knows Best"*, *"Make Room for Daddy"*, *"Leave it to Beaver"* etc.

TV Sports. Sports have become an important part of television programming. It has played an basic role in providing leisure enjoyment for the masses since the 19th century. In 1970, for example, ABC paid 9 million dollars for the rights to "Monday Night Football".

TV News. Television news is profoundly different from newspaper journalism. With TV, people have only two choices that is leave the TV on or turn it off and most people choose to leave their sets on. Eventually some critics started wondering if television wasn't shaping the news rather than merely reporting it. After the killing of Martin Luther King Jr., and Senator Robert F. Kennedy, many Americans became convinced that TV news was the cause of the nation's troubles.

Based on the fact above, it can be said that television's impact on American society and culture has been profound. It has changed the lifestyles of most Americans. It has also become a major influence in American culture. And television's impact was almost instantaneous. The program of television has played an fundamental role in the emergence of mass culture in American society. Television started reflecting

these changes when the civil rights movement calling for equality for American gained momentum in the 1960s. Women and African-Americans started to be portrayed in other than stereotyped roles for the first time. In other words, television has important contribution to raise the mass culture in America. When television become popular in America, there are many big businesses advertising their products through TV programs. As a result, most of people who watch on TV buy the products. People buy the products of big business not because they required the products, but because they are influenced by television's advertisement.

Conclusion

From the fact above, it can be concluded that American mass media can be classified into two categories i.e. print media and electronic one. Print media consists of books, newspapers, and magazines. And electronic media has many forms such as motion pictures, radios, and television.

In mass communication system, there are several components that played an important role in transmitting information. The components are source, message, channel, receiver,

and feedback. Each components has one or more functions.

Then, mass communication or television has affected lifestyles of society. Through television, society is influenced to consume certain products advertised by TV. People buy everything because they are persuaded to follow the television's advertisement in order to increase their prestige. Moreover, television can also motivate authors to write more novels or literary works.

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