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FILM ANALYSIS 4

The Merchants of Cool

The film takes a look into the lives of teenagers and how they have turned out to depend on media to determine what seems to be appealing and how the same media focus on their audience to come up with something new to be the highlight of the day. The film further unveils the deep rooted relationship between the two and exposes through contemporary theorists the harsh experiences teenagers cope with.

At first the film introduces us to the cool hunters who are largely responsible for the contemporary culture in teenagers. They go around and get to find trendsetters thus are sought after by different mass media companies for their services. Their targets usually comprise of youth who are in their twenties who possess the ability to have an influence on the lives of others. After identifying their targets it is up to the mass media to take advantage of these people to drive home their own agenda to youth masses that are prone to influence from media since it is where they get acquainted with everything. The culture created by the influence of media cannot be limited since in every youth group regardless of size exist at least one among them that has a great influence over the others. These individuals become the main targets of cool hunters so as they can give their opinions of cool.

From the companies that are out to get the new definition of cool, MTV is one of the key industry players that has taken up this tactic. With the definitions of cool they get they are able to maintain their dominance in the market through influencing the youth. Since the company exists in a dynamic and evolving industry, it has sought to take advantage of the consumer power held by the youth once they are exposed to new forms and trends of cool. Through the critical media theory of the Frankfurt School, in its great influence and power, the media has managed to come up with a unique culture that is appealing to their target markets who find it irresistible (Huczynski, 125). This tactic clearly proves how the media can play a big role in the creation of a new culture from the existing one. Thus such companies have the ability of impacting their audience with their views leaving them little or no room for them to make decisions of their own. This gives them freedom to nurture a generation that suits their existence in the market. A consistent interaction with the market has seen MTV been able to maintain its relevance for some time now. The interactions have led to the company depict a tactic that seems to the future of many companies growing. The company has been able to identify the specific needs of the young generation and has strived to satisfy the needs as a result strengthening its influence on culture. Viewing the company from the perspective of the expectancy value theory it achieves its relevance the way the target market wants it to (Bloom pg. 731). One's level of satisfaction towards a particular medium will definitely impact its medium use reinforcement (Bloom pg. 732). The good relationship reaffirms the bond of the two.

Usually the media is always aware of different aspects of its content that keep its target audience to depend on them for information of the cool. For this case, they take a conscious

approach in coming up with culture a move that can be applauded in satisfying their audience. Moreover, they try to maintain the effects that have already been created on the audience so as the culture can exist for a longer period. There are three conditions that are provided by the dependency theory which determines one's level of dependence on media (Sobaci pg. 180). The first condition is one's dependence on media will be determined by the level of satisfaction from the source (Sobaci pg. 180). The second is dependency can as well be determined by the social stability (Sobaci pg. 181). In case there instability is experienced and ideas are conflicting majority of the people will rely on media to get to know about the confusion so as to be able to come to a decision (Sobaci pg. 181). This therefore makes them rely on media periodically. The last condition of a person's dependability towards a certain media is the availability of alternatives (Sobaci pg. 182). If more alternatives are available the likelihood of a person relying on one source of media reduces. MTV is well aware of the three conditions and has strived to uphold its influence on the youth. With its continual satisfaction, teenagers have always been dependent on it to cope up with what trends. With MTV's vast partnerships with different media sources, it has done out any form of competition thus gratified its audience who are prone to influence. With the ever presence of media the youth have been left to be dependent on it especially after its creation of a new culture comprising of what teenagers fancy.

The social and moral impacts of the new culture created by the media are a sign of a significant problem (Watson pg. 277). The problem is bound to persist bearing in mind that most of the media companies do not play the social responsibility role but rather push for sexuality; an issue which has more influence on the most youth since majority is at a stage where they are

prone to any influence. The freedom which the media has been given has been a point of contention recently since most of the companies are out to maintain relevance to the audience leaving out the aspect of its implication to the young generation (Watson, pg. 280). Moreover, the relationship between the youth, media and culture is cyclical in a way that one of the three affect the other two (Watson, pg. 281). With the culture created the youth are viewed by the community as promiscuous and immoral by the society not because they intend to but as a result of the information provided by the media of how they should be portraying themselves.

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