The use of media on the creation of a pop singer from the 80s until today: an analysis of Lady Gaga.

José Eduardo Ribeiro de Paiva (PQ), Heloisa Dias Fahl (IC).

Abstract

The research aims the development of a discussion about the creation of a pop singer’s image from the 80s until today and the relevance of media in this process. The concept of Culture Industry established by T. Adorno guides the debate (ADORNO, 2009). His idea added to the analysis of media products from the period mentioned and readings related to the current music and media industries generate conclusions that direct the research to the study of a specific case, the American singer Lady Gaga.

Key words: Pop Culture, Lady Gaga, Culture Industry.

Introduction

The relevance of pop idols on the constitution of our society is undeniable. They are figures that influence opinions, behavior patterns and concepts of selfhood. They also promote money circulation that surpasses the music industry and bring up issues that trigger long debates. A good example is Madonna in the 80s, a key figure on the rupture of social patterns of gender and sexuality. But how do these idols arise and establish themselves in this industry? What do they represent being products and consequences of the Culture Industry at the same time? How does it all work in one of the most relevant pop singers of our generation, the controversial Lady Gaga? These discussions are the main objectives of this research.

Results and Discussion

The chronological study of the music industry makes it clear that the technological development of audio equipments changed how the music listening happens (COLEMAN, 2005). However, when the analysis is based on the social aspects of this industry in this same period, we notice that a lot of relevant elements related to the shaping of the pop idol remain the same. Our society is mostly based on visual aspects causing the performative composition and the artist’s image to be frequently more relevant than the music production itself.

The analyses of some of the most prominent cases from the 80s until today according to their success in music charts and TV channels like Billboard and MTV showed the fundamental aspect of the artist's image and performative concepts to the shaping of their careers and construction as pop idols. This is also based on the concept of "Retromania", which is pop culture’s addiction to its own past and the frequent use of past time elements by the music industry (REYNOLDS, 2011).

Lady Gaga is a clear example of pop culture references’ appropriation to the construction of her image and this fact added to the debates she triggers by breaking social patterns consequently give her great visibility in the media industry.

Conclusions

In a society mostly based on consumption principles and visual existence, pop idols are created and observed from the perspective of their performative and image composition. Pop culture’s addiction to the past and to symbolisms recognized in a community basis, besides the frequent questioning of social patterns, are essential to the creation of meanings and visibility to the pop artist and it was based on these principles that Lady Gaga established herself as one the most relevant pop singers of the current music industry.

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