

# Unit 25

## Global Popular Culture

### Section 1

#### Unit Materials

#### Questions To Consider

Question 1.

In what ways can athletic games reflect tensions between national and global identities?

Question 2.

How have peoples in different times and places adapted popular cultural forms to reflect their cultural needs?

Question 3.

How did twentieth-century technological advances in communication and transportation shape the pace and nature of globalization?

Question 4.

In what ways are specific forms of popular culture related to economic and political processes of globalization?

#### The Big Picture

##### How is this topic related to Increasing Integration?

As popular cultural forms are introduced and accepted into new cultures around the world, they integrate human societies through recreation, sound, and rhythm.

##### How is this topic related to Proliferating Difference?

Individual societies tend to interpret and reformulate introduced popular cultural forms selectively and in culturally appropriate ways. These various interpretations and reformulations reveal social and cultural differences between the world's peoples.

#### Unit Purpose

- Popular culture is a useful lens through which to explore the process of globalization.
- While historians once believed that popular culture was a distinctly national phenomenon, examples such as sports, the Olympic games, and popular music demonstrate that popular culture is frequently a product of complex economic and political forces related to globalization.
- The globalization of popular culture is a multi-directional process that interacts with local and international politics, new technologies, and global economic currents.

- The globalization of popular culture has changed — and continues to change — the ways people around the world live, think, and create.

## Unit Content Overview

The diffusion of popular culture across frontiers and boundaries has been taking place for millennia. Music, games, and jokes traveled with the caravans along the Silk Road, accompanied the armies of the Crusades, and sailed across the oceans in ships during the age of exploration. However, the globalization of popular culture during the twentieth century was more extensive, more pervasive, and more penetrating than during previous eras. Causes included the development of new technologies and the economic globalization of capital, labor, natural resources, production, and consumption. Political factors also played a role, from imperialism and nationalism to totalitarian states and the Cold War; so too did social struggles over the constructions of race, class, ethnicity, religion and gender. The globalization of culture is both a consequence of such historical processes and a lens through which to view them. Cultural globalization is also a salient historical phenomenon in itself, and it is surely the aspect of globalization most visible and meaningful to the largest number of people around the world. Today, the same music can be heard in Harare, Zimbabwe as in Portland, Oregon. Madonna t-shirts, hip-hop pants, and Rasta dreadlocks are found all around the world. Coca-Cola's "We Are the World" campaign was broadcast by television networks on every continent. Indeed, Marshall McLuhan's futuristic "global village" seems a contemporary reality.

This unit explores the globalization of popular culture and its many and varied effects around the world. Frequently, this process has been driven and dominated by developed countries and their transnational companies. However, the peoples of Africa, Asia, Latin America, and the Caribbean have also appropriated and transformed European and North American cultural forms, infusing them with their own cultures and concerns. In some cases, less-developed countries were able to export the products of their own popular cultures to other nations, even to Europe and the United States. The globalization of popular culture may be powerful and pervasive, but it is a complex process where the peoples of the world are active agents as well as passive consumers. In the end, the globalization of culture is a complex multi-directional process, which interacts with internal and international politics, new technologies, and economic globalization, but is itself a powerful historical process that has changed the way people around the world live.

## Unit References

Arjun Appadurai, "Modernity at Large: Cultural Dimensions of Globalization," *Public Worlds* 1 (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1996).

Kevin Chang and Wayne Chen, *Reggae Routes: The Story of Jamaican Music* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1998).

Paul Darby, *Africa, Football and FIFA: Politics, Colonialism and Resistance*. London: Frank Cass, 2002.

Stephen Davis, *Reggae Bloodlines: In Search of the Music and Culture of Jamaica* (New York: Da Capo, 1992).

Paul Dimeo and James Mills, eds., *Soccer in South Asia: Empire, Nation, Diaspora* (London: Frank Cass, 2001).

Andreas Gebesmair and Alfred Smudits, *Global Repertoires: Popular Music Within and Beyond The Transnational Music Industry* (Aldershot, U.K.: Ashgate, 2001).

Allen Guttman, *The Olympics: A History of the Modern Games*, Illinois History of Sports 2 (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2002).

## Global Historical Context

- Time Period: Nineteenth and twentieth centuries
- The nineteenth and twentieth centuries were periods of rapidly accelerating interconnections between the world's peoples. Imperialism, war, and trade each brought more peoples into new economic, political, and social relationships with one another. In the nineteenth century, the development of mass media — especially increased production of newspapers and novels — allowed distant peoples access to cultural trends in far-removed places. In the twentieth century, the invention of the radio, television, and computer enhanced this phenomenon of widespread access. The result was that popular cultural trends in one region could quickly spread across the world, where they could be modified by local traditions and became included in local popular cultures.

### AP Themes

- Examines interactions in economics and politics by demonstrating the ways that popular culture in the last two centuries has been the result of cultural borrowing and blending.
- Explores technology, demography, and environment by examining the role of technological innovations such as rapid transport and mass media in disseminating cultural traditions around the world.
- Discusses cultural and intellectual developments by exploring the ways that popular culture from one place can resonate with — and help to shape — popular culture in another place.

## Related Units

- Unit 9. Connections Across Land: How were land-based trade routes conduits of both commerce and culture? The Eurasian Silk Roads, the Trans-Saharan Gold Road, and the Meso-American Turquoise Road trace the transmission of commodities, religions, and diseases, as well as the movements of people. This unit, along with its companion (Unit 10. Connections Across Water) is related to Unit 25 because it explores an earlier period when cultures were diffused through processes of globalization.
- Unit 15. Early Global Commodities: What is globalization and when did it begin? Before the sixteenth century, the world's four main monetary substances were silver, gold, copper, and shells. But it was China's demand for silver and Spain's newly discovered mines in the Americas that finally created an all-encompassing network of global trade. This unit is related to Unit 25 because the period it covers set the framework for truly global economic, political, social, and cultural interconnections.
- Unit 24. Globalization and Economics: How have the forces of globalization shaped the modern world? This unit travels from the Soviet Union to Sri Lanka and Chile to study the role of technology, and the impact of economic and political changes wrought by globalization. It is related to Unit 25 because it sets the stage for understanding the economic, political, social and environmental impacts of twentieth-century globalization.
- Unit 26. World History and Identity: How have global forces redefined both individual and group identities in the modern world? This unit examines the transnational identity that emerged from the Chinese diaspora and compares it to a newly re-defined national

Chechen identity forged through war with Russia. It is related to Unit 25 because it also focuses on the ways that globalization can effect profound changes in identities around the world.

## **Section 2**

### **Video-Related Materials**

#### **Video Segment 1: The Olympic Games: From Ancient City-State to World Athletes**

This segment explores the way sports have become global events through the example of the Olympic games. The modern Olympic games were revived in the late nineteenth century from an ancient Greek tradition. The Frenchman Pierre de Coubertin founded the modern Olympic games in hopes of instilling senses of honor, sportsmanship, and international cooperation in participants and observers alike. In spite of these ideals, however, the history of the Olympic games reflects the many social and political struggles of the twentieth century. Indeed, the revived Olympic games originally reflected both the racist and sexist stereotypes of the day by idealizing white, male, European bodies, and by restricting the participation of those who did not fit that ideal. In addition, the Olympic games have consistently been disrupted or even cancelled as a result of international events. The games were cancelled during World Wars I and II, were tragically disrupted in 1948 when Israeli athletes were killed, and were boycotted by 50 nations in 1980 as a result of the Soviet Union's invasion of Afghanistan. In the end, even though many participants have tried to live up to the ideal of making the world more peaceful through sports, the Olympic games nevertheless continue to be subject to the struggles of their times.

#### **Video Segment 2: Reggae Music: Out of Africa**

During the twentieth century, music was an important avenue for the globalization of popular culture. This segment looks at one musical form, reggae, and the ways that it both influenced and was influenced by diverse cultural traditions around the world. Reggae had its roots in the slave rhythms of Jamaica and in the early twentieth-century Pan-African vision of Marcus Garvey, which encouraged many Jamaicans to look to Africa as the Promised Land. In the 1930s, many Jamaicans came to believe that the newly-coronated Ethiopian emperor Haile Selassie (originally named Ras Tafari) was the Messiah. This belief was translated into a new religion, Rastafarianism, which spoke to the pain and suffering of poor Jamaicans. In the 1960s, the introduction of American musical styles — especially R&B and soul — led Jamaicans to adapt and transform those styles in new and different ways. One result of this musical cross-fertilization was reggae. Reggae's most powerful prophet was Bob Marley, whose band The Wailers blended this new hybrid sound with the spiritual message of Rastafarianism and a political message of resistance. Through global tours and the established channels of the mass media, Marley's reggae sound was spread around the world. Its particular blend of rhythm, politics, and spirituality struck a responsive chord in audiences from a wide variety of cultures, and it demonstrated clearly that globalization is a multi-directional phenomenon.

#### **Video Segment 3: Soccer and the World Cup**

Sports can often reflect the globalization of popular culture. This is certainly the case for football (called soccer in the U.S.) and its championship World Cup, which is explored in this case study. Football originated among the British working classes in the nineteenth century, but it soon spread around the world with the British Empire and British commerce. Imperial administrators, missionaries, workers, and settlers introduced football wherever they went. In these new places, indigenous peoples often worked to excel at football in order to resist British notions of racial superiority or British colonial dominance. Colonial nationalists encouraged their followers to play football, as they argued that it could help generate a sense of national identity among both players and fans. Once football spread to new places, indigenous peoples introduced new styles to the game that were influenced by local and regional expressions of popular culture. In Brazil, this type of improvisation resulted in a completely new approach to the game that emphasized new strategies and new ways for fans to express team loyalties. In recognition of Brazil's unique contribution to the game, in 1974 the International Federation of Football Associations selected a

Brazilian to be its first non-European president. During his term, he doubled the number of soccer teams eligible to play in the World Cup and created a Women's World Cup — bringing the sport to more people than ever before. Today, Brazil has won more World Cups than any other nation, and two billion people watched the 2002 World Cup that was played in East Asia.

### **Perspectives on the Past: Global Culture and Continuity**

Is globalization stripping the world of its global diversity? Ghanaian master drummer Obo Addy discusses his journey from his home in Accra to the United States, where he now lives. He plays in two bands — one that uses traditional instruments and one that uses western instruments. His hope is for people to never forget where they came from.

## **Video Details**

### **Who Is Interviewed**

- Peter Winn
- Jerry H. Bentley
- Gordon Buffonge

### **Primary Source Materials Featured in the Video**

- Pierre de Coubertin, Olympic organizer
- Kwame Nkrumah, African nationalist
- Obo Addy, Ghanaian master drummer

## **Program Contents**

<b>Begins</b>	<b>Ends</b>	<b>Contents</b>
00:00	01:44	Show tease, show opening credits
01:45	03:47	Program overview/introduction
03:48	11:17	Video Segment 1. <i>The Olympic Games: From Ancient City-State to World Athletes</i>
11:18	18:04	Video Segment 2. <i>Reggae Music: Out of Africa</i>
18:05	24:09	Video Segment 3. <i>Soccer and the World Cup</i>
24:10	26:29	Perspectives on the Past: <i>Global Culture and Continuity</i>
26:30	28:25	Show close and program credits