

WHAT IS CULTURE: BASIC FUNCTIONS

- Culture as **imitation** (reflection, representation, mimesis)
 - Art and culture as imitation (“mimesis”)
 - Culture as essentialisation of our lived experiences (Aristotle)
 - cultural forms such as theater are non-rational and subversive (Plato)
 - theater as „poison“ for the uneducated (Rousseau, Voltaire)
- Culture as **cultivation** (contemplation, education, propaganda)
 - culture as „cultivation of the soul“ (Cicero)
 - culture as a mirror for critical reflection for morality (Diderot, Arnold, Tosaka Jun)
 - culture as propaganda tool of the establishment to dupe the masses (Gramsci, Adorno)
- Culture as **emancipation** (deconstruction, convergence, play)
 - play is the primary formative element in human culture (Freud, Huizinga)
 - authorship becomes diffused (Barthes), while fandom thrives within the media convergence (Jenkins)
 - bypassing “preferred readings” and reading texts within “semiotic democracy” (Hall, Fiske)
 - indulging in anti-art, contradictory culture and escapist “hyperreality” (Baudrillard)

WHAT IS CULTURE:


JAPANESE CULTURE AND THEIR AUDIENCES

- **Classical culture** of aristocratic/military elites (*koten bunka*)
- **Folk culture** of rural communities (*minzoku bunka*)
- **Townsman culture** of city dwellers (*chōnin bunka*)
- **Popular culture** of the commoners (*minshū bunka*)
- **Mass culture** of urban laborers (*taishū bunka*)

- **Counterculture**
 - subversive inversion of elite values and mainstream norms via cultural expression
 - avant-garde, independent, transgressive, asocial/antisocial

WHAT IS CULTURE:

THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN CULTURE AND ART

- **CULTURE** is pursuit of our total perfection by means of getting to know, on all the matters which most concern us, the best which has been thought and said in the world (Mathew Arnold)
- **ART** is aesthetically superior to mass-produced cultural product such as movies, where the genuine “aura” of the work is gone in the industrial age of reproduction (Walter Benjamin)
- Industrially-produced urban mass culture:
 - separates popular culture from work, religious, and social life
 - escapes the confines of elite/folk culture
 - vulgarizes artistic expression
- The transient quality of cultural expression: yesterday’s pop becomes today’s art (and vice versa)
 There are no longer any agreed criteria which can serve to differentiate art from pop