

(Ebook free) Carnival Culture: The Trashing of Taste in America

# Carnival Culture: The Trashing of Taste in America

*James B. Twitchell*

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#4104077 in Books 1992-07 Original language: English PDF # 1 9.25 x 6.50 x 1.00l, #File Name: 0231078307306 pages | File size: 60.Mb

**James B. Twitchell : Carnival Culture: The Trashing of Taste in America** before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Carnival Culture: The Trashing of Taste in America:

6 of 6 people found the following review helpful. And Your Point Is . . .?By CustomerGiven the provocative title, I expected to find a full-blown critique of the state of our current culture and just how it got that way. Was I ever wrong: the book was overblown and there was no critique. Nor was there a defense of today's culture. While the book was good at explaining today's culture and its history (particularly the development of the paperback book), there is no follow-up. As one earlier reviewer perceptively noted, it's as if the author was merely writing a term paper. And nowhere is this more evident than in his description of professional wrestling, which he seems to have researched solely on his television set. As if to provide a bit of validity to this exposition, he includes a lengthy quote from Roland Barthes' essay on wrestling. Nice, except that Barthes doesn't know what he's talking about, either, and something I would expect from a term paper, not a book. The sections on wrestling and movies only serve to date the book rather badly, and without any sort of conclusions or judgments, the book dates as badly as an issue of Life magazine, only it lacks any nostalgia value. Skip this one and read Neil Postman's Amusing Ourselves to Death instead (which, by the way, the author does critique; dismissing it as a mere jeremiad.) If you must buy this tome, buy it on the cheap; your disappointment will then be less.3 of 3 people found the following review helpful. Brilliantly perceptiveBy nytexanoThere's very little written on this subject-the steady decline and vulgarization of taste values in mass media. As Mr Twitchell states, the word 'vulgar' is losing it's meaning due to the tidal wave of vulgarity which inundates our culture.The trends which now dominate American culture were presciently beheld when they were still

far more difficult to perceive in the early 90s, when the book was written. This is, by far, the best book on the subject I know of. It was written before the muzzle of PC was strapped onto American discourse. 8 of 8 people found the following review helpful. a garage sale, dig through the crap to find the good stuff By mjmay@bayou.uh.edu This text was required for a course in Mass Media and Culture. I have read many books on this very topic and find that Twitchell has some good things to offer to the discussion. However, it is horribly written. The writing is reminiscent of a college sophomore's English term paper. The chapters are long and grossly unorganized. He repeats his points, is unjudicious in the selection of his quotes, and includes superfluous examples from the media with little to no connection. In short, this is an ideal example of how NOT to write.

This study examines how the changes in publishing, movie making and television programming since the 1960s have affected taste, particularly what is considered vulgar. Show business, the industry of American culture, wreaks the most havoc on American taste by pandering to what most paying customers want to see. Twitchell's expose comes not to celebrate popular or "carnival" culture, as much as to answer questions about it: is vulgarity the result of repression or of freedom?; what is the relationship between machine-made entertainments and aesthetic values?; does television carnivalize or exalt cultural norms?; why do certain stories get told, and why do certain stories get told too often?; why are some of the most consistently profitable industries in the world those that transport audio and visual sequences we claim we can do without?; and why are today's "A" movies really yesterday's "B" movies dressed up with \$50 million budgets? James Twitchell's book examines the current popularity of the "high take on the low culture" among academics, the contemporary view of taste as oppressive, and the reluctance to admit that something is in bad taste.

From School Library Journal YA-- Are the three great purveyors of mass culture in the U. S.--book publishing, motion pictures, and television--creating a culture that glorifies the vulgar and the mediocre at the expense of worthwhile qualities in American life? According to the author of this often humorous and sarcastic but cogently reasoned book, the answer, unfortunately, is "Yes." Surveying a vast wasteland of American pop culture through a trail of such icons as professional wrestling, Madonna, Stephen King novels, and "America's Funniest Home Videos," Twitchell believes that the media has raised the "low-brow" to a level of respectability that excludes what used to be high brow from American life. This is a provocative book that should get the attention of YA readers, who are, the author maintains, the major target and biggest fans of the new "trash" culture.- Richard Lisker, Fairfax County Public Library, Fairfax, Copyright 1992 Reed Business Information, Inc. [Twitchell cites] numerous examples of crassness, inanity and sheer disregard for the idea of quality in publishing, television, and the movies.... A veritable catalogue of vulgarity. (New York Times Book ) Vividly dissects American entertainment. (Newsweek) More horrifying than anything Stephen King could concoct. (San Francisco Chronicle) Twitchell is on to something when he argues that democracy has canonized a new culture as, driven by the will of the majority, books have given way to movies, which in turn have been usurped by TV in a canon he describes as 'carnival culture.'... Twitchell shows that the mass media, a forum for our common concerns and anxieties, have made possible the ascent of the tastes of the young and the unsophisticated to cultural dominance. (Publishers Weekly) About the Author James B. Twitchell teaches English and advertising at the University of Florida in Gainesville. His many books include *Adult USA: The Triumph of Advertising in American Culture* and *Lead Us Into Temptation: The Triumph of American Materialism*, both published by Columbia.