Karin Barber defines popular culture as popular expressions such as music, theatre, fiction, songs, dances, pictures and many more which emerge out of the everyday life of the people. She provides a brief history of popular culture in Africa and how it has evolved over the years. Karin then gives us the meaning of the term popular over different cultures and how the term has developed in our current society. She also talks about how the interpretation of different popular culture text is what brings diversity into the culture as a whole. Each reinterpretation of the text ‘completes’ the work in a different way and provides the audience with the ability to accept the text in the way they prefer. While Karin Barber expresses the origin and meaning of popular culture by showing how it has evolved over the years, and the role it plays in our current society, the definition of popular culture being a product of everyday lives of people is somewhat misleading and could be subject to a different interpretation from what the author tries to put across.

Karin Barber, in her introduction, gives the definition of popular culture as the product of everyday life. She does not provide a context in the introduction for readers to have an idea of what she is trying to put across. She fails to provide a more elaborate meaning for her first definition of popular in the introduction. The product of everyday life creates conflict when held hand in hand with the meaning of tradition. This was one of the few flaws on Barbers introduction.

Barber also makes a strong argument for popular culture being both an object of and a source of historical inquiry while also being bearers of their own past. This is a notion I agree with totally. Current forms of popular culture such as highlife and hiplife music have a long-lasting history dating as far as before Ghana’s Independence. In the text, we find that not only have these forms of popular culture been around for long, but they have also been mutated over periods of times. We find that modern forms of hiplife and highlife have a very similar theme to that of the past but have also incorporated modern forms of music into creating a more diverse and appealing form. This is a point Karin makes evident in her text, and this is an excellent addition to the definition of popular culture and its role in the current society.

Barber also provides concrete evidence to back her claim of popular culture interpretation belongs to the audience rather than the writers. As stated by Karin Barber “popular culture genres are framed in the local produces’ and participants’ own terms. The audience develops a perspective on a topic that they find interesting, attractive or relevant, which sometimes totally deviates from the message the writer or author was trying to put across. This is what makes interpreting various forms of popular culture complicated since a single piece of text could have different interpretations over time. This was a strong point Barber made in her introductory remarks and an essential addition to her book.

Karin also points out the use of the term popular over in various African contexts, including the use of “us, the poor” and them “them, the rich and powerful” which shows the presence of the various class groups in various accessible culture text and how they play a role. This provides evidence that class groups play a significant role in the definition of popular culture. She talks about popular culture being the culture of the ordinary people and not the elites in her introduction and this creates room for arguments since only members of a specific class are seen to be the authors of popular culture while the others are just seen to play no significant role in the creation of these cultures.

Karin Barber provides substantial evidence in her introductory remarks on the origin of African popular culture and how it has evolved over the years. She shows how popular culture has progressed in academia and how the interpretation of popular text varies with the audience reading it. Karin barber fails to provide a yardstick for measuring what can be classified as popular culture and what cannot, but still goes ahead to show how contemporary genres of popular culture are strongly linked to other forgotten cultures of the past, and how they shape society currently.