

## RACISM AND EXCLUSION

The notion of racial difference is now widely accepted to be a cultural construct, based not on essential biological differences but on a particular history of human behavior, thought and discourse.

Important in the development of such understandings were negative Western representations of the perceived character of non-white people during the days of slavery and colonialism. Whether through literature, music, drama, journalism or cartoon, racial exploitation was justified by representation those on the receiving end as irrational, animalistic, lazy, uncivilized, natives.

### Race

1. Racial groups are set apart from others because of visible physical differences
2. **Race** is considered a *social construct*
3. some use the term *racialized group*
  - a. a category of people who have been singled out, by others or themselves, as inferior or superior, on the basis of subjectively selected physical characteristics like skin colour or eye shape.

Media victimize Black people in two ways: through images created by White People who hold racist views and through images created by Black people who have internalized the racist views of Whites. In both cases, however, this racism is unconscious and thus not recognized. Most White people, hooks argues, get their unrealistic ideas of what Blacks are like from images in mass-mediated texts, such as films and television programs, in which they play certain roles. In addition, these images give Black people a distorted view of themselves. The election of Barack Obama to the presidency has played a major role in the way people regard Black people now and suggests that race is no longer a factor that prevents people of any race from becoming president.

Thus, although we may not be aware of the fact, media images have implicit social and ideological dimensions. That is why it is so important for us to examine the media's depictions of racial groups (and ethnic, gender, and other groups) and to understand the ideological content of those depictions.

Exclusion:

- Social *exclusion* of minorities is due to selective ethnic and racial *inclusion* by the majority group. Exclusion occurs because one group wants to defend its social status or resources against another
- Minority groups are seen as 'others', and barriers are built against them when they are perceived as competition.

Social exclusion may take the form of discrimination along a number of dimensions including gender, ethnicity and age, which reduce the opportunity for such groups to gain access to social services and limits their participation in the labour market.

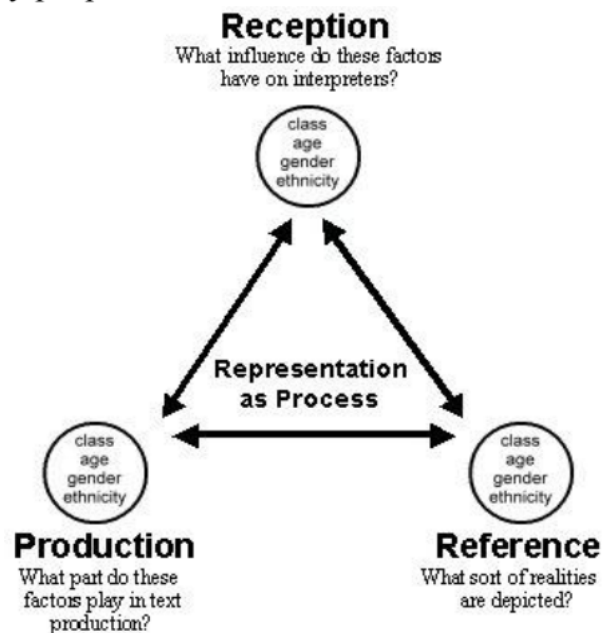
Cultural Exclusion: Cultural exclusion refers to the extent to which diverse values, norms and ways of living are accepted and respected. Inequality and exclusion. People may be excluded because of deliberate action on the part of others (e.g. discrimination by employers); as a result of processes in society which do not involve deliberate action; or even by choice.

## Representations

A media representation is a depiction, a likeness or a constructed image. A representation can be of individual people (such as the American president in the film *Independence Day*, 1996), social groups (such as age groups, gender groups, racial groups), ideas (such as law and

order, unemployment), or events (such as European settlement of Australia or the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001). A representation can be a single image, a sequence of images or a whole program, written words, spoken words or song lyrics.

**Representation refers to the construction in any medium (especially the mass media) of aspects of 'reality' such as people, places, objects, events, cultural identities and other abstract concepts. Such representations may be in speech or writing as well as still or moving pictures.** For instance, in relation to the key markers of identity - Class, Age, Gender and Ethnicity (the 'cage' of identity) - representation involves not only how identities are represented (or rather *constructed*) within the text but also how they are constructed in the processes of production and reception by people whose identities are also differentially marked



in relation to such demographic factors.

Representations invite audiences to understand them and agree with them in certain preferred ways.

However, depending on the audience, different interpretations are to some extent possible.

Representations work in the following ways:

- ***A representation consists of repeated elements.***  
The more we see these elements repeated, the more the representation will appear to be natural or Normal.
- ***We are invited either to identify with or to recognize the representation.*** Producers of the Media representation may have a view of the world that is similar to our own. If their representation fits in with our view of who we are, we may choose to identify with it. This happens, for example, when a movie invites us to imagine ourselves in the role of an appealing character. On the other hand, the producers may see a person, idea or event as somehow foreign or different from them.

- ***The media make categories of people, events or ideas.*** Categories include labels such as ‘the unemployed’, ‘the aged’ or ‘businessman’. The war in Iraq, for example, becomes ‘another Vietnam’. Representations are generalizations about categories and why events, ideas or people belong in them. These categories then become part of our thinking processes.
- ***Representations contain a point of view.*** The meaning in a representation will be selected and constructed, already containing built-in value judgements. All representations contain the point of view of the people who made them.
- ***Representations have a mode of address.*** Hidden behind the apparent naturalness of the representation will be some assumptions about who you are. For example, a news item about youth may address you in a manner that assumes you are a middle-aged businessperson rather than a young person.

### **Under-representation**

Media on both sides of the Atlantic have a history of under-representing ethnic minorities. The situation is deemed gradually to have improved, partly thanks to the development of a range of newer cables channels, but other minorities, including South Americans and Asians, continue to be under-represented. Ethnic minority media presence in the UK, meanwhile, was low prior to the 1980s, when a period of racial unrest prompted a concerted attempt to adopt a more inclusive approach.

Even more importantly, perhaps the rules in which ethnic minorities have been depicted in media texts have tended to be stereotypical, constructing a narrow and generalized version of the lives and identities of such populations if they are repeated often enough, stereotypes. If people who are gay are repeatedly and exclusively depicted as feminine and theatrical, for example, then audiences may gain the impression that all gay men have such characteristics or even that they are defining traits of homo sexuality.

‘Stereotyping reduces, essentializes, naturalizes and fixes “difference”, ‘ argues Stuart Hall and tends to occur when there are gross inequalities of power.

For some decades, **African American film across found that they had little choice but to play stereotypical slaves, housekeepers or violent criminals in white-dominated media industry the situation is parodied beautifully in the 1987 film Hollywood shuffle, which includes a satirical advert for a ‘Black Acting School’ in which white instructors teach aspiring black actors how to play slaves, rapist and gang leader and chastise students for failing to authentically walk or talk ‘black’.**

**The civil rights movement of the 1960s and 1970s had a significant impact on media and the variety of roles in which African Americans were depicted slowly expanded. By the 1990s, it was common to see black policemen, doctor, newsreaders are even respectable sitcom families. Meanwhile, in more recent years, black Hollywood actors such as Denzel Washington, Will Smith, Halle Berry, Wesley Snipes and Morgan Freeman have begun**

regularly to be cast in a range of starring Hollywood roles, including the latter as the president in 2008 is a matter of great interest.

Depictions of Afro-Caribbeans and South Asians have centred consistently on criminality, violence and trouble, with images of angry young non-white men dominating moral panics in the news about muggings in the 1970s and about urban riots, gang culture, shootings and stabbings in the decades that followed.

Black people also are often represented as athletes and other sportspeople, though more rarely as coaches or sports presenters—something that has potentially counter-stereotypical elements, but may sometimes reinforce stereotypes of black aggression and physical power, as against thought, intelligence and responsibility, for example.

**Representations of South Asians, meanwhile, sometimes reference convenience store owner stereotype, sometimes which can include hints of dishonesty and corner cutting. South Asian representations also have also focused on themes such as religious conservatism, strict parenting, a refusal to ‘integrate’ with British culture and arranged marriages, with South Asian women often depicted a quiet, passive and subordinated victims of the latter. Such stereotypical depictions, but progress in this respect remains partial.**

**Reporting of international events often has a significant impact on representations of ethnic minorities. Since the events of September 11<sup>th</sup> 2001, images of Muslims have become increasingly centred on religious extremism and terrorism, in both fiction and non-fiction, in many non-Muslim countries.** Alongside romanticized such extreme and negative images perhaps tap into a broader form of orientalism – a fear of and fascination with the exotic, irrational ‘other’. This international element reinforces stereotypes of black, Arab or Asian minorities in white-dominated countries, as well as the populations of their countries of origin.

## **NEW ETHNICITIES AND DIASPORA**

### ETHNICITY

Ethnicity is conventionally understood to mean certain cultural traits, religious benefits, and traditions that distinguish various groups existing in a society. In the United States, people whose grandparents or parents were from foreign countries – groups such as Italians, poles , Germans, Finns, Jews (who are a special case), Chinese, Vietnams, Mexicans and countless other groups are all considered to have an ethnic identity. They are often identified an Italian-American, Polish Americans, and so on.

Ethnic groups are often stereotyped in the media, because of stereotypes many people have about ethnic groups, but this practice is now under attack. Ethnicity is often confused with race. Associated with the work of Hall (1992), the notion of new ethnicities highlights the culturally constructed and malleable nature of ethnic identities. **If we regard ethnicity as a**

**product of ongoing processes of human thought and representation rather than nature, then it follows that, rather than being a fixed state of being, ethnic identities are always developing, changing or becoming.** Hall's approach focused attention on visible developments in the identities of second and third generation members of minority groups in countries such as the UK. The affiliation of these younger generations to their ethnic roots was increasingly becoming intertwined with the experience of growing up in urban, media-saturated Western environments. Rather than being simply 'Muslim', 'Chinese' or 'Black', they were becoming distinctly and visibly 'black and British' in addition to more specific attachments to neighbourhood, age group, cultural interests and peer groups.

The notion of new ethnicities encapsulates these cultural development, If British Indian consists of countless different combinations of local, generational, age, gender, class, caste and peer-group identities, then to speak of the representation of British Indians by a single spokesperson, character or personality looks simplistic in the extreme. This, though, should not be taken to mean that ethnicity is insignificant or that it does not continue to engender crucial shared experiences, affiliations and collective differences. In order to capture the continuing importance of shared ethnic experience in the context of historical patterns of migration, many theorists have turned to the notion of Diaspora.

## **DIASPORA**

Originating from biological references to the scattering of seeds, the sociological use of the term diaspora refers to the dispersal around the globe of people who share a common point of origin. Diaspora encompasses both migrants themselves and their descendants we grow up within the destination or 'host' country. At the same time as allowing for the development of internal differences within each diasporic population – not least in terms of age, generation and contrasting destination country experiences – diaspora also draws attention to enduring affinities with and attachments to the international diasporic community and, in particular, the country or continents of origin – usually referred to as the 'mother country'. *The term diaspora comes from an ancient Greek word meaning "to scatter about." And that's exactly what the people of a diaspora do — they scatter from their homeland to places across the globe, spreading their culture as they go. The Bible refers to the Diaspora of Jews exiled from Israel by the Babylonians. But the word is now also used more generally to describe any large migration of refugees, language, or culture.*

- The Diaspora is currently estimated to number over thirty million, composed of "NRIs" (Indian citizens not residing in India) and "PIOs" (Persons of Indian Origin who have acquired the citizenship of some other country).
- Diaspora forces us to rethink the rubrics of nation and nationalism, while refiguring the relations of citizens and nation-states.

- How do factors of race, gender and nation intersect to influence the characters' senses of identity and their relations?
- How do the writers' in-between positions influence their writing styles and views of their "home countries," histories and cultures?
- Indian diasporic films: Tamil : Nalathamathi ,kannathil muthamittal  
Hindi Movies: Pardes, Diwale dulhaniya Lejangey, Kabhi Khushi Kabhie Gam,  
Indian English Movies: Hyderabad blues, Fire

Example : Mani Ratnam's film Kannathil Muthamittal (2002), which follows a Tamil Nadu family as they trace their adopted daughter, Amudha's, Sri Lankan Tamil birth mother. Throughout this film the differences between Sri Lankan and Indian experiences of Tamil-ness are thrown into stark relief. Early scenes of comfortable middle-class life in Chennai shift, as the family journey to Sri Lanka, to representations of violence and terror. The hurried exodus of Tamil villagers - their belongings gathered into bundles on their backs - as the Sri Lankan military approach, the destruction of the village by artillery bombardment, and a vicious fire fight between the army and LTTE cadres in a ruined town square are depicted with gritty realism; the visitors from Tamil Nadu a wide-eyed and shocked presence in the midst of unfolding chaos.

### **Definition of popular culture**

Popular culture (often referred to as pop culture) is the totality of ideas, perspectives, attitudes, images and other phenomena that are deemed preferred through an informal consensus within the mainstream of any given society. Popular culture (or "pop culture") refers to the cultural meaning systems and cultural practices employed by the majority of classes in a society.

American Popular Culture includes such "elements" as music, clothing styles, certain popular internet sites, and the use of cell phones (particularly i-phones), mp3 players, movies and T.V. shows.

- Popular culture refers to the aesthetic products created and sold by profit-seeking firms operating in the global entertainment market. Popular culture is another vehicle for class reproduction.
- Who Influences Pop Culture? In modern society, pop culture is influenced by the industries that disseminate cultural material. Film, television, news media, music, publishing, anime.

- What Makes Pop Culture Unique? It is constantly changing It is specific to time and place
- Pop Culture has Broad Appeal : Appeal to a broad spectrum of the public .Is it because broad appeal items are produced and sold by profit making companies in an attempt to maximize profits?
- Pop Culture is Serious Business: Lots of people are making lots of money studying and commenting on popular culture. We will look at a website devoted to our popular culture.. Articles on rap music, SARS and racial relations, women's self esteem via Real Women Have Curves, etc.

### **Sub Culture:**

A Subculture is a group of people with a culture (whether distinct or hidden) which differentiates them from the larger culture to which they belong. Subcultures can be perceived as negative due to their nature of criticism to the dominant societal standard. Subcultures bring together like-minded individuals who feel neglected by societal standards and allow them to develop a sense of identity.

In 2007, Ken Gelder proposed to distinguish subcultures from countercultures based on the level of immersion in society. Gelder further proposed six key ways in which subcultures can be identified:

- Through their often negative relations to work (as 'idle', 'parasitic', at play or at leisure, etc.);
- through their negative or ambivalent relation to class (since subcultures are not 'class-conscious' and don't conform to traditional class definitions);
- through their association with territory (the 'street', the 'hood', the club, etc.), rather than property;
- through their movement out of the home and into non-domestic forms of belonging (i.e. social groups other than the family);