

The **Final Exam** will take place on
Monday, June 6, 8-11 a.m.

You will be responsible for chs. 9, 10, 14
in our textbook *Media Essentials*,
chapter 7 in *Ways of Seeing*, and the
key concepts from the readings in the
Course Reader/e-readings as well as
lectures from Weeks 5.5 to 10

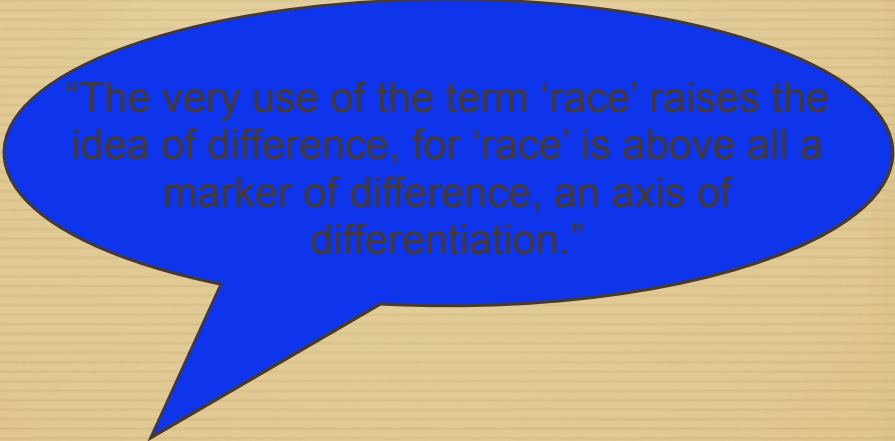
Readings from Weeks 5.5 to 10 to know:

- ~ Brian Locke (The Dancing Itos and the “Enemy Asian Male”)
- ~ Noriega/Hoffman (“Looking for Latinos”); and MAANA (“Memo to Hollywood”)
- ~ Jose Muñoz, (Pedro Zamora and Counterpublicity)
- ~ Herman Gray (Signs of ‘Blackness’)
- ~ Sut Jhally and Justin Lewis (*The Cosby Show* and “enlightened racism”)
- ~ Kathleen Rowe (*Rosanne* and the “unruly woman”)
- ~ Jennifer Gillan (From *Ozzie* to *Ozzy*)
- ~ Christopher Pullen (Gay Identities in the Constructed Reality Environment)
- ~ Richard Conway (Reimagined Masculinities)
- ~ Henry Jenkins (Fan writing and textual poaching) ~ Suzanne Scott lecture on fandom
- ~ Victoria O’Donnell (The business of television)
- ~ Amber Day (Mimesis and the Real in *The Daily Show*)
- ~ Pamela Wilson (Culture Jamming)

Race = Race-*as*- representation

When we see race on television, we see:

- the representation of racial difference*
- the representation of race relations*



“The very use of the term ‘race’ raises the idea of difference, for ‘race’ is above all a marker of difference, an axis of differentiation.”

Ruth Frankenberg
In *White Women, Race Matters:*
The Social Construction of
Whiteness

Questioning Stereotypes:

- ◆ Where do they come from
- ◆ Why do they exist
- ◆ How do they function

2 key concepts about the social significance of cultural imagery

- ~ locks-in white identity as a privileged one
- ~ not so much a question of who is being harmed, but who benefits (for example, from inaccurate or distorted portrayals of African Americans or other ethnic identities)

Controlling images involves
a process of objectification,
subordination, and
justification.

From Darrell Hamamoto,
*Monitored Peril: Asian Americans and the
Politics of TV Representation*

Racial Formation: a sociohistorical process by which racial categories are created, inhabited, transformed, and destroyed

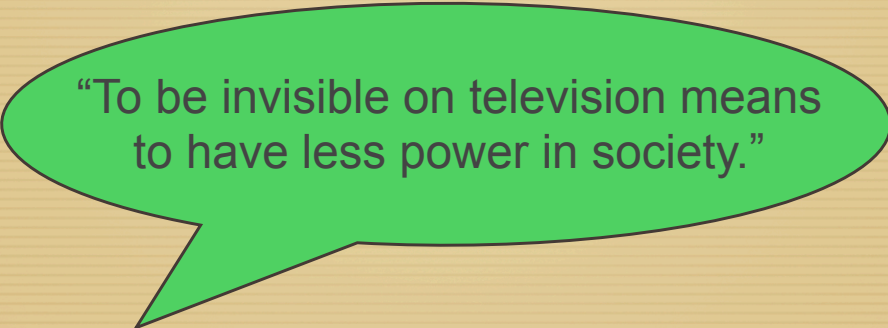
- ~ From a racial formation point of view, race is a matter of both social structure and cultural representation

According to bell hooks, “rap’s capacity as a form of testimony and an articulation of the young, Black, urban critical voice has profound potential as **a language of liberation and social protest.**”

-- In Tricia Rose’s “Fear of a Black Planet: Rap Music and Black Cultural Politics in the 1990s”

RAP MUSIC

- ~ Form of rhymed storytelling
- ~ Began in the 1970s in the Bronx as part of the rise of the Hip Hop genre (5 pillars of Hip Hop include: MCing (rapping), DJing, breaking, graffiti, beatboxing)
- ~ "hip", used as African American Vernacular English (AAVE) as early as 1898, meaning *current* or *in the know*
- ~ African American African Caribbean youth culture articulating the pleasure and problems of poor urban life
- ~ Male rappers speak from a perspective of young men who want social status in a locally meaningful way
- ~ Female rappers tell stories from the perspective of young women skeptical of male declarations of love



“To be invisible on television means
to have less power in society.”

George Gerbner
In *The Electronic Storyteller*

Reaganism is the political discourse Ronald Reagan articulated and embodied, marked by:

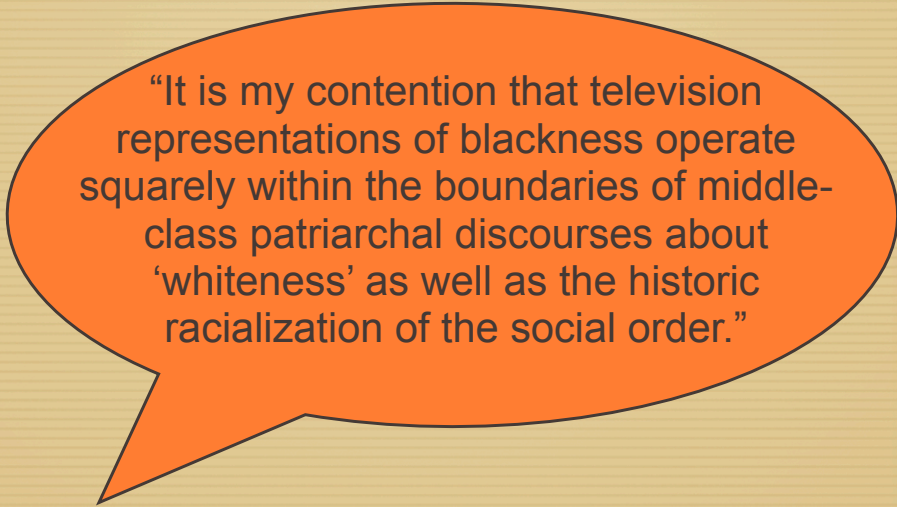
- ~ \$ fear and resentment
- ~ \$ “bad” blacks as social menace and a welfare drain (“good” blacks as in *The Cosby Show*)
- ~ \$ whiteness repositioned as no longer a sign of victimizer, but sign of the victim

What, more myths?

Myth of the middle class

Myth of meritocracy

Myth of upward mobility




“It is my contention that television representations of blackness operate squarely within the boundaries of middle-class patriarchal discourses about ‘whiteness’ as well as the historic racialization of the social order.”

Herman Gray

In *Watching Race: Television and the Struggle for “Blackness”*

Whiteness purports to be both nothing and everything. It is the race that need not speak its name. *Yet it defines itself as no less than whatever it chooses to exclude.* To grow up white is to be the ground zero from which everyone else differs, the thin line around which racial plots thicken, gaining density and intensity. “I didn’t think of myself as white” “I didn’t feel superior. I just felt *normal*.”

—Judith Levine, “White Like Me”



*“To speak of whiteness is to acknowledge
and assign everyone a place in race
relations.”*

Ruth Frankenberg
In *White Women, Race Matters: The
Social Construction of Whiteness*

Whiteness:

- ~ Whiteness is a location of **structural advantage**, of race privilege.
- ~ It is a **“standpoint,”** a place from which white people look at ourselves/ themselves, others, and at society.
- ~ “Whiteness” refers to a set of **cultural practices** that are usually *unmarked and unnamed*.

You can think about whiteness

- ~ as a cultural and material category in society
- ~ as a class ideal
- ~ as having shades, e.g. some ethnic groups moved into the category of 'white,' (for example, Italian Americans and Jewish Americans)
- ~ simultaneously, there is a notion of "white trash"
~ poor members of society who are castigated and not-quite white (not ideally white) based on their class

Gay Moments on Television

- ~ *All In the Family* (1971 on CBS)
- ~ *An American Family* (1973 on PBS)
- ~ *Soap* (1979-1981 on CBS)
- ~ *Dynasty* (1981-1989 on ABC); *All My Children* (daytime drama on ABC)
- ~ *L.A. Law* (1991 on NBC)
- ~ *Roseanne* (1994 on ABC)
- ~ *My So-Called Life* (1994 on ABC)
- ~ *The Real World: San Francisco* (1994 on MTV)
- ~ *Xena: Warrior Princess* (1995-2001, syndicated)
- ~ *Ellen* (1997 on ABC)
- ~ *Will & Grace* (1998-2006 on NBC)
- ~ *Queer As Folk* (2000-2005 on Showtime)
- ~ *Queer Eye for the Straight Guy* (2003-2007 on Bravo)
- ~ *The L-Word* (2004- on Showtime)
- ~ *Glee* (2009- on Fox); *Modern Family* (2009- on ABC)

Gay Moments on Television

- ~ **Which network, and where on the schedule? ~ What is the industrial context?**
- ~ **Which genre? ~ What is the storytelling format/delivery form?**
- ~ **Who watches, and who is a fan of, the program? ~ How do viewers read the text (dominant, negotiated, oppositional)?**
- ~ **Is sexual identity represented as: contained and ideologically safe (“common sense”), or alternative and as part of a counter-narrative, or as spectacle?**
- ~ **Is polysemy (the state of having multiple meanings) potentially something that can lead to social change, or does it get lost in postmodern hyperreality?....**

Stuart Hall's *encoding/decoding*
model

~ 3 modes of decoding:

- ~ Dominant
- ~ Negotiated
- ~ Oppositional

“The parodic excesses of **the unruly woman** and the comic conventions surrounding her provide a space to act out the dilemmas of femininity, to make visible and laughable the tropes of femininity.”

-- In **Kathleen Rowe's**
“Roseanne: Unruly Woman as Domestic Goddess”
(in the Course Reader)

The term queer “marks a flexible space for the expression of all aspects of non-(anti-, contra-) straight cultural production and reception.”

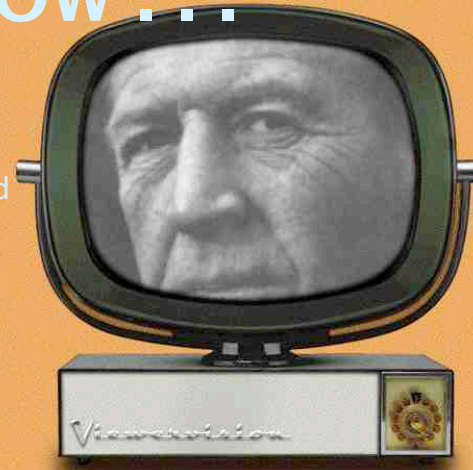
-- **Alexander Doty**

*In Out in Culture: Gay, Lesbian, and Queer Essays
on Popular Culture*

FLOW . . .

“The characteristic organization, and therefore the characteristic experience, is one of sequence or flow. This phenomenon, of planned flow, is then perhaps the defining characteristic of broadcasting, simultaneously as a technology and as a cultural form.”

~ Raymond Williams



Advertising works as a discourse because it:

- ~ Is a 'mythic' system (Roland Barthes)
- ~ The product is juxtaposed with other mythic images in hopes that the consumer will associate the product with the image/myth
- ~ Promotes the ideology of consumerism and capitalism

Advertising (Publicity, *Ways of Seeing*):

- ~ We scarcely notice its impact
- ~ Seems to offer free choice
- ~ Is about social relations not products or objects
- ~ Manufactures glamour
- ~ Operates on envy (of future self)
- ~ The present is by definition insufficient
- ~ Employs the visual language of high art
- ~ Advertising works upon anxiety
- ~ Advertising turns consumption into a substitute for democracy

Is advertising informative?

- Proponents of advertising argue that it provides information
- Critics of advertising point out that this information is suspect because:
 - ◆ advertisers skew information to suit their interests
 - ◆ companies with greater access to advertising budgets will dominate the message system

How does reality television work?

- ~ Provides identification with particular characters (or cast members)
- ~ Provides an unambiguous storyline
- ~ Gives a selective picture/perspective of situation or events
- ~ Follows (or promotes) existing ideological myths
- ~ Presents the notion of hyperreality by collapsing the real and the represented
- ~ Requires audience engagement or participation (e.g., text messaging in your vote, logging on to the internet after/beyond a particular broadcast)

Key Elements of Reality Television:

- ~ Aesthetic
 - ~ Liveness
 - ~ Community
 - ~ Transformation
-
- ~ What role do fans (viewers like us) have in the popularity of and populations seen in Reality TV?

INTERTEXTUALITY:

The act of reading or seeing images “plunges us into a network of textual relations.” A text, i.e., an image, does not possess an independent meaning; the reading or interpretation of it becomes a **process of moving between texts.**

HYPPERREALITY: The blurring of real and fiction

The concept most fundamental to hyperreality is the simulation and the simulacrum. The simulation is characterized by a **blending of 'reality' and representation**, where there is no clear indication of where the former stops and the latter begins. The simulacrum is often defined as a copy with no original.

(**Hyperreality** is used in [semiotics](#) and [postmodern philosophy](#) to describe a hypothetical inability of [consciousness](#) to distinguish [reality](#) from [fantasy](#), especially in technologically advanced postmodern cultures. Hyperreality is a means to characterize the way [consciousness](#) defines what is actually "real" in a world where a multitude of media can radically shape and filter an original event or experience. Some famous theorists of hyperreality include [Jean Baudrillard](#))

TWO MAIN TYPES OF RESISTANCE,
CORRESPONDING TO TWO MAIN
FORMS OF POWER

You can resist

Semiotic power -- the power
to construct meaning

Social power -- the power
to construct a socio-
economic system (which is
hierarchical)

3 approaches in the debate about Media Culture

~ The “MEDIA POWERFUL” perspective

Frankfurt School

Mass Culture = Manufactured Culture

~ The “AUDIENCE POWERFUL” perspective

Consumer Society

Consumer choice metaphorically equated with notions of democracy and freedom

~ The “IN-BETWEEN” perspective

“Agenda-setting” function of the media

Hegemonic state -- an unstable equilibrium in which culturally promoted yet seemingly commonsense ideas serve the function of winning consent from the masses. (Remember, though, Antonio Gramsci did not rule out the possibility of *resistance*.)

CULTURE IS:

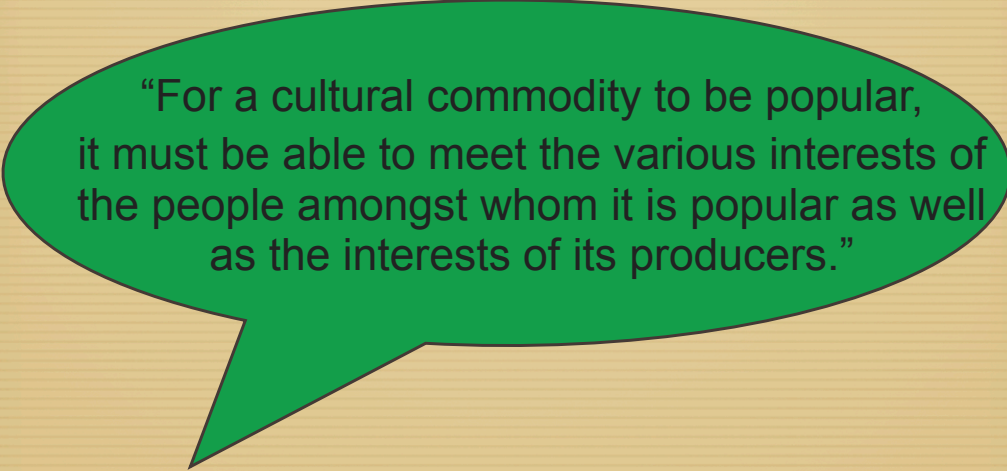
*A way of life -- ideas, beliefs, languages,
institutions*

AND

Rooted in structures of power

CULTURE *AS*:

The object of study, as well as the
site of political critique and
intervention



“For a cultural commodity to be popular, it must be able to meet the various interests of the people amongst whom it is popular as well as the interests of its producers.”

John Fiske
in *Television Culture*

“Watching” Television

- ~ A critical viewer is politically resistant to hegemonic meanings; being a critical viewer is being motivated for sociopolitical reasons to make oppositional or subversive readings “against the grain.”

“Watching” Television

~ Let's do some culture jamming.

