**Production, Consumption and representation**

**Circuit of culture**

1. There are many cultures within a society including popular cultures

2. How do these maintain their identity, undergo change, interact with other cultures

3. Du Gay presented the circuit of culture – in 1997

4. It consists of five positions that are malleable and he argues, the circuit of culture provides a venue through which any analysis of a cultural text or artefact must pass to be studied adequately

   • **Representation; Identity; Production; Consumption; Regulation**

**Theories of Representation**

   • **Reflective approach**

   1. The reflective approach is about how meaning lies in the object, person, idea or real world event

   2. The theory that suggests language works by reflecting or imitating the truth that is fixed 'out there' is sometimes called 'mimetic'

   • **Mimetic approach**

   1. The Greeks used the notion of mimesis to explain how language, drawings and paintings mirrored or imitated nature.

   2. Visual signs might bear some relationship to the object(s) they are representing

   • **Intentional approach**

   1. The intentional approach holds that the speaker or author imposes their own unique meaning on the world through language

   2. Words mean what the author intends them to mean

   3. However, it ignores the audience.

   • **Constructionist approach**

   1. This approach recognises the social character of language

   2. and that the meaning is not fixed but that we construct meaning

   3. meanings depends on what the words or sounds or images stands for

   • **Thus, these different ideas relate to representation on the circuit of culture and are different ways of understanding how representation works**

**meme theory**

   1. A meme is an idea, behaviour or style that spreads from person to person within a culture

**Idea, behaviour or style that spreads from person to person**

1. A meme acts as a unit for carrying cultural ideas, symbols or practices
2. Which can be transmitted from one mind to another through writing, speech, gestures, rituals or other phenomena
3. Richard Dawkins in *The Selfish Gene* coined the phrase
4. It could include melodies, catch-phrases, fashion,

## Variation, mutation, competition, inheritance

1. Memes evolve through a process of variation, mutation, competition and inheritance which influences reproductive success of the meme

## Three conditions

- There are three conditions that Dawkins suggested needed to exist for evolution to occur
    - Variation or the introduction of new change to existing elements
    - Heredity or replication – the capacity to create copies of elements
    - Differential 'fitness' or the opportunity for one element to be more or less suited to the environment than another

## Criticisms of meme theory

## Gap in gene/meme analogy

1. The question is whether gene theory can be applied to culture and to ideas

## Primitive view of the sign

1. When we think of semiotics the concept of meme is a rather simple view of the sign.
2. Others suggest that meme could be replaced by the word 'concept' or idea
3. Despite that we do use the term viral and virus in relation to ideas that spread (e.g. viral marketing)
- **Thus meme theory is also another way of understanding how production and consumption might work in relation to the circuit of culture**

## Active consumers

1. This is about how a culture goes about consuming what is produced
2. One of the ideas that has become prominent is that of the active consumer
3. We think about consumers who make meanings from the texts they engage with
4. Individuals are able to reject or negotiate media messages as well as take them on board

## Encoding – decoding

1. In the encoding/decoding the receiver is able to negotiate and influence the messages in a more interactive manner than earlier theories suggest

2. New media means that communication is not one way

3. Individuals can leave comments, feedback and reviews on websites

4. They can set up their own blogs and wikis or create personal profiles to produce their own content

5. SO academics no longer talk about consumers or audiences but users or sometimes prosumers

- **Thus, this highlights how consumption and production might work on the circuit of culture**

**Post-cinematic society**

1. Some cultural theorists suggests we are moving to a post-cinematic age

**Rise of interactivity, gaming, multimedia**

1. Which includes technologies that are associated with the rise of interactivity, gaming, multimedia and the proliferation of different internet platforms

2. The rise of the post-cinematic context has transformed how we engage with texts

**Taking cinematic technologies forward in new directions**

1. New technology intervenes into and transforms our cultural landscape

2. For example, some literary best sellers have been written with the requirements of Hollywood films in mind

3. But Shaviro argues the cinematic era is coming to a close

4. New technologies are taking cinematic technologies in new directions

5. From DVD menus, extras, commentaries, outtakes, integrated marketing strategies with other areas (such as gaming, animation etc.)

- **This relates to consumption and changing nature of consumption (as well as production) on the circuit of culture**

**Discourse - regulation**

1. Regulation refers to forces that limit or determine the consumption of a text

2. So the perceptions of disapproval may be significant in forming identity

**Foucault**

1. Foucault was interested in the rules and practices that produced and regulated discourse in different historical periods

2. He uses discourse to mean a group of statements which provide a language for and a way of representing and knowing about a particular issue or topic

**Regulates conduct of others**

1. Discourse governs the way a topic can be meaningfully talked about and reasoned about

2. It influences how ideas are put into practice and used to regulate the conduct of others

**Operates across different institutions, texts, arenas etc.**

1. Discourse appears across a range of texts – and as a form of conduct at a number of different institutional sites within society

- **Discourse relates to how culture may be regulated – what is acceptable and not acceptable – on the circuit of culture**

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**Power Knowledge**

**Foucault rejected classical Marxist ideology**

1. Marx had argued that in every era, ideas reflect the economic basis of society
2. So the ruling ideas are those of the ruling classes which govern a society
3. Foucault argues against this theory of ideology as it reduces all relations between knowledge and power to a question of class power and class interests

**Gramsci**

1. Gramsci was influenced by Marx, but rejected class reductionism
2. Gramsci – suggested that particular social groups struggle in many different ways Including ideologically
3. To win the consent of other groups and achieve a kind of ascendancy over them
4. Gramsci called this power hegemony

- **So the representations and interpretations (consumption) are areas of struggle in the circuit of culture**

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**Power**

**Power**

1. Foucault argues that there is always power present in relation to discourse/knowledge
2. But he wrote about power circulating rather than being in a chain
3. Where power permeates all levels of social existence and operates at every site of social live

**Where there is power there is resistance**

**Modern form of power – private/individualised**

1. The modern form of disciplinary regulation and power is private – individualised
2. Prisoners are shut away from the public and under surveillance by the authorities
3. Punishment is individualised
4. The body has become a new site of disciplinary regime

- **Thus – what is acceptable in relation to the circuit of culture becomes associated with the body with individual acceptability (it could be argued)**

**Identities**

1. Identity refers to how meaning is constructed or made and internalised by the person or cultural group when confined with a text.

**Global spaces**

1. Recently there has been a lot of interest in how space is also produced, consumed, regulated and imagined

2. This fascination with space and place has emerged with the debates about postmodernity and the processes of globalisation

**Virtual spaces**

1. There has also been interest in virtual space or cyberspace

2. where virtual worlds provide a new dimension of space **a**nd may allow for new processes of identity formation and performance

3. So feminist geographers (Doreen Massey) have noted that space and place are gendered

4. And there are places, often through self-regulation, where women and sometimes men, cannot enter

- **This relates to the notion of identities in the circuit of culture and how this might lead us to interpret representations in particular ways**

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**Contexts- Individual contexts and wider**

1. I think we can relate these things to the contexts in the circuit of culture

**The circuit of culture revisited**

1. We could look at a product such as a mobile phone and relate it to all the aspects of the circuit of culture.

**Articulation**

1. some of the elements in the circuit of culture may be stronger at certain times and may form together in two or more distinct elements (called articulation)

2. Which may not be stable and may change

3. When analysing a text we need an awareness of the wider picture.

Identity

1. Thus, when we think about identity in relation to popular culture, we can think about it in the context of the circuit of culture as well.

2. Some aspects of the circuit of culture may be relevant to your identity analysis, but other aspects might not – particularly the articulation element – what people tend to take on board to reinforce their own sense of self.

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