

Topic

- Module outline
- Definitions
 - What is popular culture (various definitions)
 - Hegemony
 - Ideology
 - Discourse

Raymond Williams definitions of culture

- Three definitions
 - Intellectual, spiritual, aesthetic development
 - philosophers, poets, artists
 - Culture as a way of life or particular period of time
 - sport, holidays, religious festivals, fan activity
 - Works and practices of artistic activity
 - pop music, street dance, ballet, websites

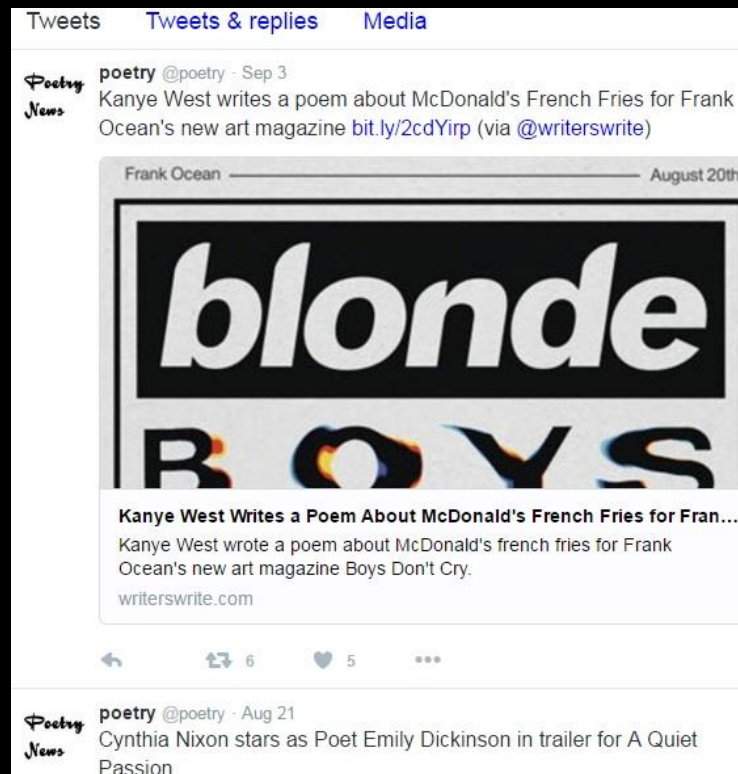
Defining Popular culture

- Well liked by many
- Anything not high culture
- Mass commercially produced culture
- Culture from the people (authentic)
- Struggle between subordinate and dominant groups
- Postmodern culture

How do you know that something is well liked by many people?

Anything Not High Culture

- Have to determine what is High/popular culture
- These classifications may change
- Class distinctions (Bourdieu)



Mass commercial culture

- Popular culture as mass culture
- Commercially produced for mass consumption
- Sees consumption as passive (we can disagree)
- Americanisation – popular culture as American culture



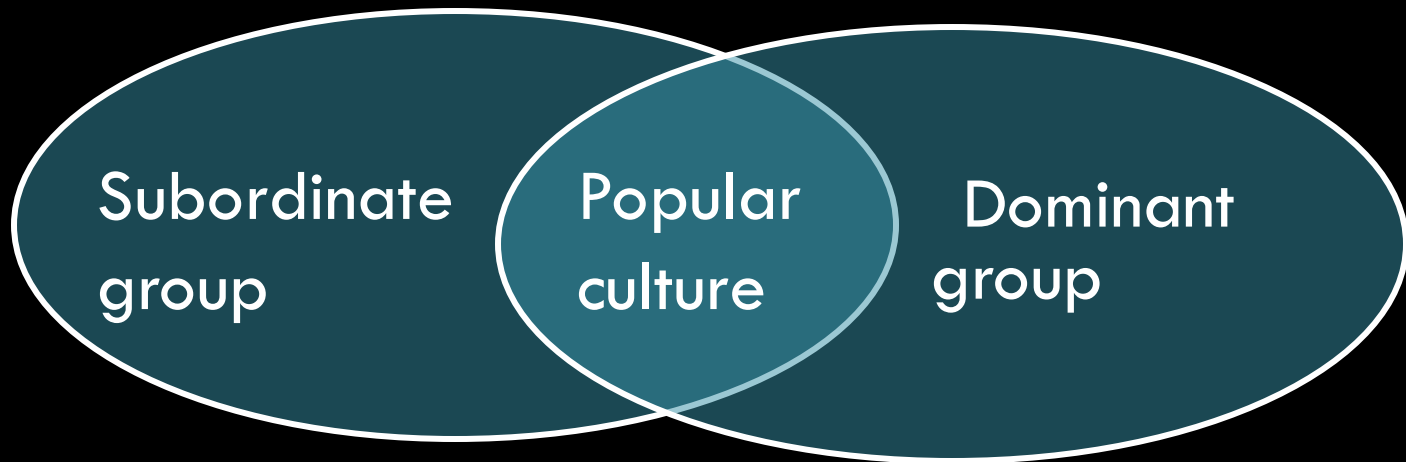


Originating from the People

- Folk/authentic culture
- Who are the people?
- Raw materials themselves are commercially provided

Subordinate v dominant group

- Gramsci – hegemony
- Resistance and incorporation
- Subordinate/dominant/negotiated (discourses/subjectivities)



Hegemonic Theory

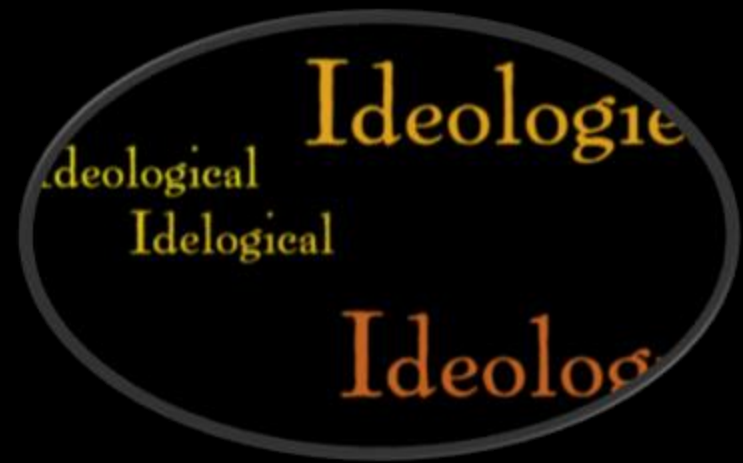
- Articulation
 - What we take from pop culture to cement our identity
- Tension in dominant culture
- Hegemonic ideologies are at work in the media



End of Session 1 Part 1



Skepta



- What is Ideology
 - Body of ideas articulated by a particular group of people
 - Some cultural texts/practices present particular viewpoints
 - Conceals the workings of power
- Ideology in the practices of everyday life
- Barthes – ideology as myth

Discourse

- Power and inequality
- Hall: ways of referring to or constructing knowledge about a particular topic
- Through discourses we make sense of the world
- Foucault: Subjects do not produce discourses but discourses produce subjects?



Identities

- Essentialist versus non essentialist definitions of identity
- Identity = who am I
- Different/similar to others, groups of people
- Identity is relational
- We may have multiple identities
- Badges/symbols of our identity



Examples of popular culture and identity

- Food we consume establishes an identity
- What we eat tells a lot about who we are
- All forms of popular culture that do the same:-
- E.g. Music, Fashion, Television, social media, game playing, cosplay, tattoos, religion, shopping etc. – identity

Summary



- Various definitions of popular culture
- Different ways of analysing and understanding popular culture
- Popular culture is not fixed
- Lived cultural practices are important
- Ideology is also a key concept
- We will look at popular cultural texts and popular cultural practices
- Based on student feedback we are also looking at definitions of identity today.

References

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