

Questions relating to geopolitics, popular culture and identity

When going through heavily mediated everyday life, it is important to consider the role of representation in constructing personal worldviews (Dittmer, 2010:68).

1. In the last action film you saw, where did the villains come from? What was the environment like?
2. Where did the hero/heroine come from and what was their 'home' space like?
3. What images would be representative of everyday life in your country?
4. Would everyone in your country be likely to agree with you about those images? Why/why not?

'If as is likely, Stephen Marmura's argument about people seeking media perspectives that are rooted in their own culture is true for many of us, we might want to consider branching out and engaging with other sources. Of course, there is no reason to accept other media uncritically any more than we should adopt our own media uncritically' (Dittmer, 2010: 154).

1. From where do you get most of your daily information about the world?
2. How might your sources of information influence what you hear about, and how those places are described?
3. What are the advantages of having so many voices at our fingertips via technology e.g. the internet?
4. What are the disadvantages of that deluge of information?

'Often in (geo)political debate today we hear about Islam and it is characterised as being something, whether violent, peaceful, harsh toward women or whatever. Often debate is then focused on the end of the sentence –on whether or not Islam is violent, whether or not Islam is respectful of women's human rights. As this chapter illustrates, however, we perhaps ought to be directing our attention to the middle of those sentences - to the *being* and the *is*. These are the words that attempt to fix culture – to make it static and dead. By rendering Islam (or evangelicalism or any culture) into an object, it become impossible to imagine change from within; it only becomes possible to manipulate from outside the object. ... Cultural change can occur, for good or ill, in just the span of a few years – driven from within by active agents' (Dittmer, 2010:132).

1. How are 'outside' cultures described on the news shows you watch?

2. Were they described as static and imprisoned by their own culture, or are they portrayed as dynamic and in flux, active agents in their own future?
3. In what ways do you see yourself as an active participant in popular culture?

Related reading: Dittmer, J. (2010) *Popular Culture, Geopolitics and Identity*, Plymouth, Rowman and Littlefield.

Questions relating to habitus

1. How is habitus defined?
2. According to Bourdieu we develop tastes for certain objects as a result of habitus. Do you agree/disagree?
3. Does habitus determine the kind of sports you follow/play?
4. How can habitus relate to popular culture
5. How can habitus relate to identity?

Related Reading on this topic: Giles, J. & Middleton, T. (2008). *Studying Culture*. Oxford, Blackwell.