

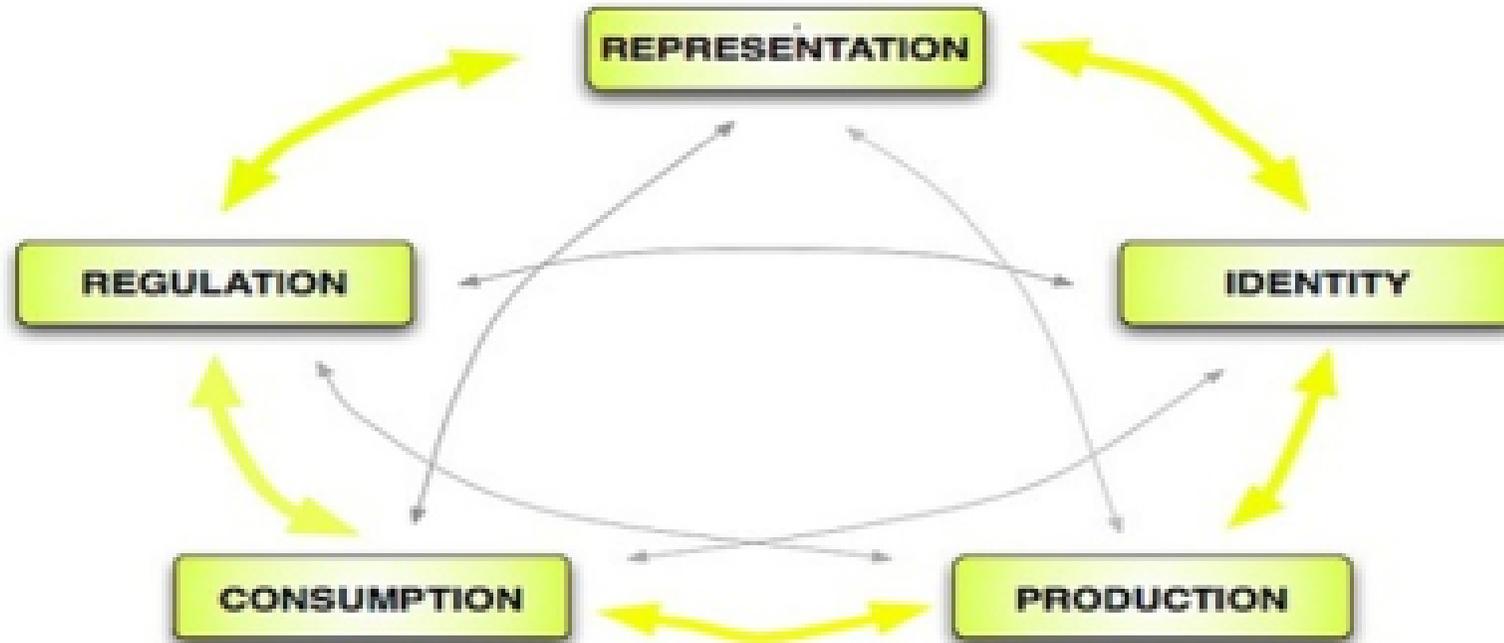
# CULTURAL STUDIES - 2

SEMESTER III, RIZVI COLLEGE (2019-2020)



The process that culture gathers meaning at five different "moments" is - representation, identity, production, consumption and regulation.

## CIRCUIT OF CULTURE



Gay PD, Hall S, Janes L. *Doing cultural studies: the story of the Sony Walkman*. SAGE; 1997.

The theory suggests that in studying a cultural text or artifact you must look at five aspects: its **representation, identity, production, consumption and regulation.**

Du Gay et al.

suggest --- **any**



## **Representation:**

- 'the production and circulation of meaning through language';

## **Regulation:**

- the reproduction of a particular pattern and order of signifying practices (so that things appear to be 'regular' or 'natural');

## **Identity**

- identity gives us a location in the world and presents the link between us and the society in which we live.



## Production

- “cultural economy” economic processes and practices as cultural phenomena, as depending on meaning for their effective operation.

## Consumption:

- In postmodern accounts, cultural consumption is seen as being the very material out of which we construct our identities; we become what we consume



# KEY CONCEPTS IN CULTURE STUDIES

## Representation:

Cultural studies emphasize focus on representation which refers to how the world is socially constructed and represented to us by ourselves in meaningful ways. The major stress of

Representation meaning from language, painting, photography and other media, it uses "signs and symbols to represent whatever exists in the world in terms of a meaningful idea and concept, image".

Representation is the discursive process by which cultural meaning is generated and given shape: "we give things meaning by how we represent them".

For Example: A Bird, A Cross, Traffic Lights.



- It involves use of language, signs and images which stand for or represent things.
- Basically, representation is the creation of the meanings of the concepts created in our minds through language.
- For example, motorcycles being represented as a manly means of transport

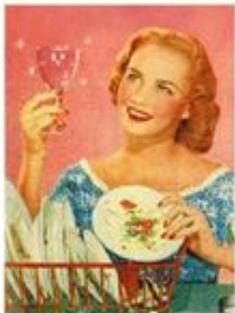


- How signs and symbols represent certain idea & being interpreted to understand its meaning.
- This constant representation forms our perception. And this is how several notions existing in society becomes pervasive.
- For. E.g. how constant representation of women in media normalizes the notion of women as object – normalizing the gender stereotypes further.





You mean a woman can open it?



EYE LINES SOFTENED

CHIN TRIMMED

COMPLEXION  
CLEANED UP

NECK LINES  
REMOVED



## Materialism: (Marvin Harris)

- Cultural studies is concerned with the representations through media cultures which are organized on capitalist lines.
- It is in this context, that, cultural studies have developed a form of cultural materialism concerned with understanding how and why specific meanings are inscribed at the time of production. This is what the audience wants.
- In addition to keeping the focus on signifying practices, cultural studies also try to connect them to political economy. In this manner, cultural studies, as a discipline is concerned with power and the distribution of economic and social resources.



- How material world exhibits deterministic influence over the non-material world. That's how the representation of certain things become a way of life. We accept them.
- Media shows what the audience wants to see. They feed in the same conventional ideas in the audience's minds.



This Mother's Day,  
Get Back To  
The Job  
That Really  
Matters.



**Mr.  
Clean**

©2011 P&G  
[www.mrclean.com](http://www.mrclean.com)



## Non-reductionism:

- In this, each culture is viewed as having its own particular meanings, rules and practices, which cannot be reduced to or explained only in terms of some other category or level of social formation.
- Non-reductionism of cultural studies emphasizes that class, gender, sexuality, race, nation, as well as ethnicity have their own specifics and they cannot be reduced to political economy or to each other.
- However, the culture studies examine culture from a wider perspective – economic, political, gender.
- It questions as to who owns and controls the institutions

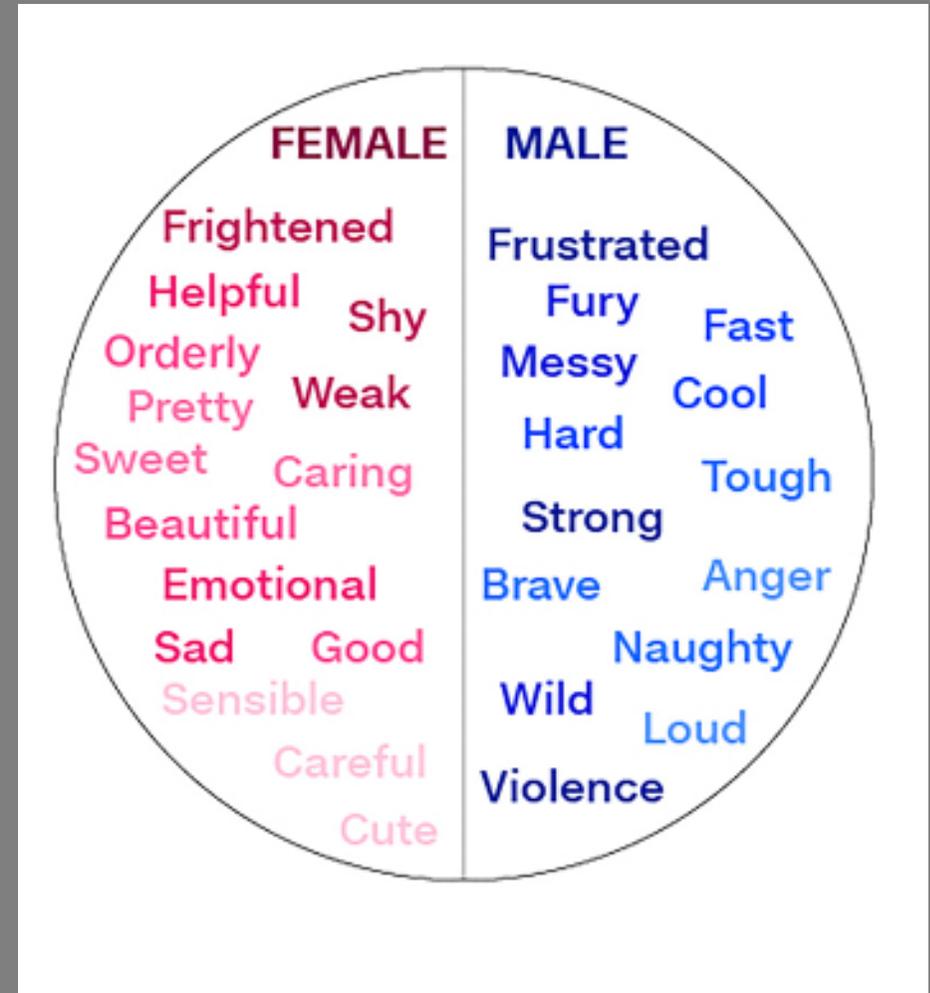


# Articulation

- Articulation refers to expressing/representing as well as 'putting together'. Temporary formation. Articulation, in cultural studies, is a method used to analyze culture.

- Articulation (expression) theorizes the relationship between components of social formation or relationship between cultural and political economy.

- Many disciplines are interrelated



## Power:

Power is the capacity of imposing one's will on others. It is a common argument that media has too much power.

There is startling agreement among cultural studies writers about the centrality of the concept of power. For them, power is seen as pervading at every level of social relationships.

Power may be mobilized when a viewer



**SO THE HARDER A WIFE WORKS, THE CUTER SHE LOOKS!**

I: GOSH, HONEY, YOU SEEM TO THRIVE ON COOKING, CLEANING AND DUSTING—AND I'M ALL TUCKERED OUT BY CLOSING TIME. WHAT'S THE ANSWER?

VITAMINS, DARLING! I ALWAYS GET MY VITAMINS

**Kellogg's PEP**  
VITAMINS—PEP  
NEW BUNCH 1940-41

**Vitamins for pep! PEP for vitamins!\***

show her  
it's a man's world

**Van Heusen**  
man's world  
ties

For men only! . . . brand new man-talking, power-packed patterns that tell her it's a man's world . . . and



# Popular culture:

- Ideology commonly refers to maps of meanings which are presented as universal truths. Ideology is a historically specific meaning obscuring and maintaining power.
- For example, gender representations in advertising depicting women as housewives or sexy bodies, reduces them to such categories. Such portrayal denies them their rightful position as human beings and citizens of society.
- This process of making, maintaining and reproducing dominant meanings and practices is referred to as



## Texts and readers:

- Production of consent refers to popular identification to cultural meanings by signifying practices of hegemonic texts.
- Text refers to written word as well as the practices signified. Texts generally describe a range of cultural objects. Meaning is produced by the interplay of text and reader.
- Texts, as forms of representation, are polysomic by nature, containing the possibility of many different meanings which have to be realized by actual readers. These readers give life to words and images.
- The ways in which texts work can be easily examined, but the meanings, audiences obtain from textual analysis



## Subjectivity and identity:

- Identity is the sense of self and the process of definition of that sense. It is commonly argued that media plays a significant role in this process. Cultural studies looks into:
  - how we come to be the kind of people we are;
  - how we are produced as subjects;
  - and how we identify with descriptions of ourselves.



# THEORIES & ITS RELEVANCE

- **Concept of Culture:**
- Culture is all that man learns and acquires by virtue of being a member of society. It includes all aspects of human activity: from the fine arts to popular entertainment, from everyday behavior to the development of sophisticated technology. It includes plans, rules, techniques, designs and even the policies made for better living.
- Several scholars have put forth numerous theoretical approaches to understand and examine the varied aspects of culture.



## **Diffusionism:**

- is an approach which views the transformation of culture change and evolution of society.
- different societies are at dissimilar levels in terms of their development and maintains that societal change takes place when societies borrow cultural traits from one another.
- Simply means the distribution of a culture and its components from its place of origin to other places.



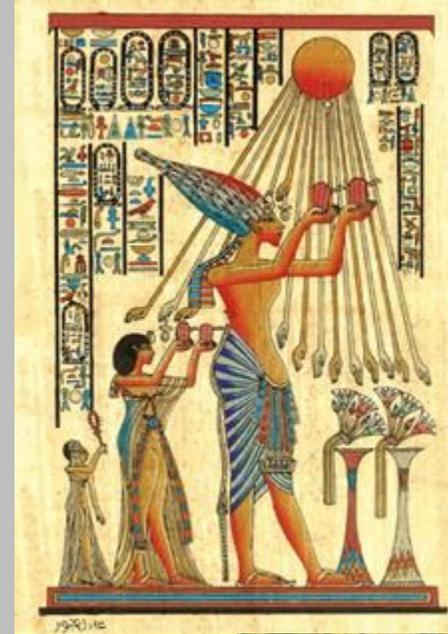
# The British School

- Elliot Smith, William Perry Rivers – main proponents
- Believes cultures spread to many countries from Egypt as it was the centre of civilization

Sun worship in several parts of the world.



**EGYPTIAN  
CIVILIZATION**



## **The German School**

- Friedrich Ratzel, Frobenius, Graebner, Schmidt
- Analyzed culture through geographical aspects and their spread and development historically.

## **The American School**

Mason, Wissler, Kroeber, Lowie

Analyzed cultural areas referring to small geographical regions containing distribution of similar cultural elements  
(video)





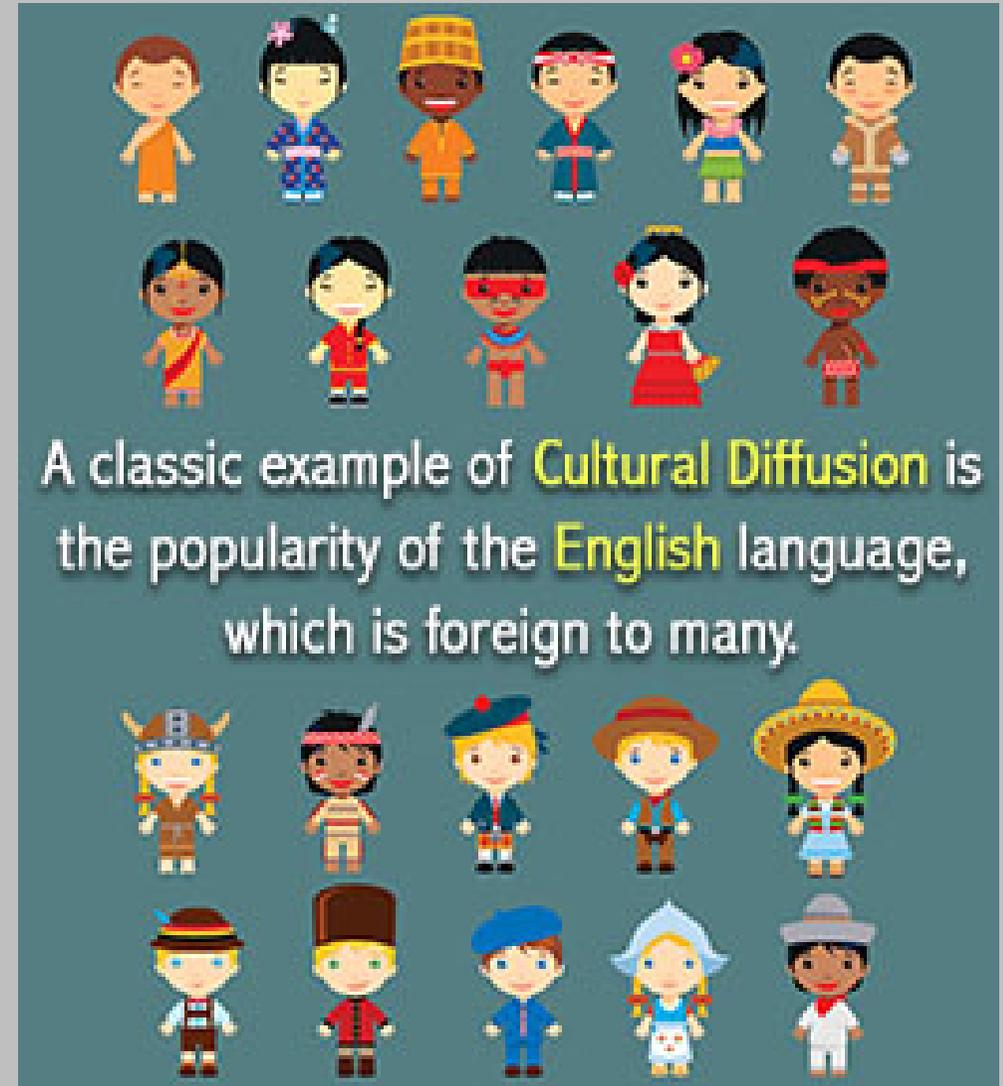
## **Alfred L. Kroeber**

- significantly contributed to the theory of diffusionism. Kroeber put forward the concept of “idea transmission” or “stimulus transmission”. In his article Stimulus Diffusion (1940),
- According to him, diffusion is a process by which cultural material spreads.
- According to him, it should be reworked, adapted, fitted into distinctive proper patterns.
- A broad idea is passed on from one culture to another, but the receiving culture or civilization only internalizes those pieces of the received idea which are suitable for them.



## Diffusionism and Media

- ❑ Mass Media and communication channels can be involved in the diffusion process within a social system.
- ❑ At what rate the ideas spread through technology...
- ❑ Media influences the masses





## Cultural Materialism:

This theory is associated with **Raymond Williams**.

He coined the term Cultural Materialism

Williams emphasized the material significance of culture.

- Culture is made up of texts which are produced and consumed through social processes and ways of life of specific groups .
- It incorporates ideas from Marxism, **cultural** evolution, and **cultural** ecology.



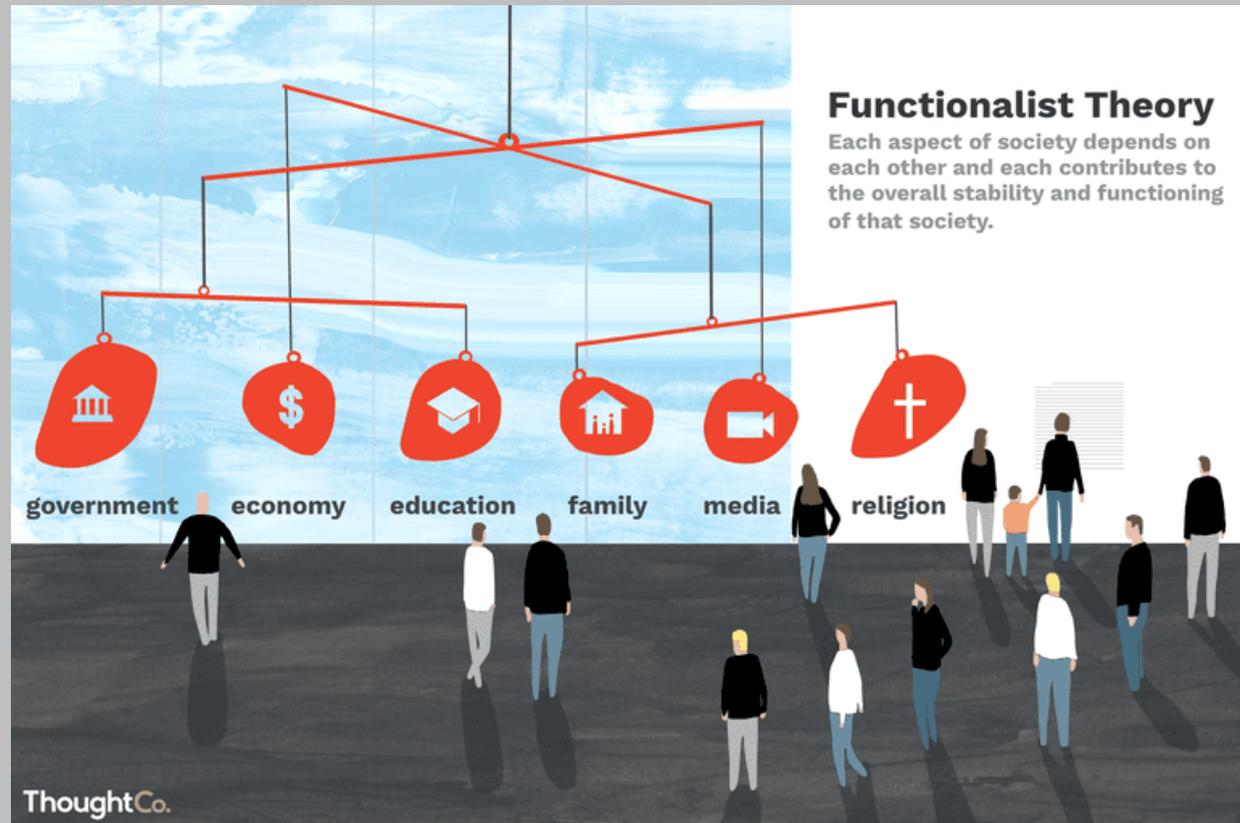
- **Cultural materialism** is a theory examining the relationships between the **physical and economic** aspects of production and **built society, social organization and social relations**, and the values, beliefs, and worldviews that predominate that society.





# Functionalism

- **Functionalism** considers a **culture** as an interrelated whole, not a collection of isolated traits. ...
- Anthropologists were to describe various **cultural** institutions that make up a society, explain their social function, and show their



There are two divisions in functionalism:

- **1. Psychological functionalism:** Malinowski's functionalism focused on how society functions to serve an individual's needs or interests.
- **2. Structural functionalism:** A. R. Radcliffe Brown.
- For him, a society's economic, political, religious and social institutions serve to integrate the society as a whole.



## Popular and Mass Culture

Our daily life is surrounded and invaded by popular culture. For instance music, soap operas on television, comic books and sports, etc.

mass-produced.

is tailored according to the tastes of the mass audiences.

Growth and spread of mass culture is linked with



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