



MCI Recap: Content and Representation



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Keywords

- **Content**
 - **Def:** The matter dealt with in a field of study
 - *How has content changed over time?*
- **Representation**
 - *For us to receive [things] as meaningful and real, they need a symbolic presence or something standing for them... and nothing concentrates that presence like our everyday media” (Keywords for Media Studies, 56).*

Content

- **Definition:** The content is a message that is communicated to a society that bases its ideology on the identities created through culture
- Media content perpetuates ideology, often promoting basic social arrangements rather than challenging mainstream perspectives
- “A few basic characteristics - race, class, gender and sexual orientation - are illustrative of a sociological approach to content analysis” (M/S, 192).
- Content in media has shifted, but the progress is uneven and incomplete.
Social inequity is widely supported through mass media

Representation

- Lisa Henderson (Prof of Communications UMass Amherst)
- **Definition:** standing for something, a portrayal
 - **Definition:** The result of processes of selection that invariably mean that certain aspects of reality are highlighted and others neglected
- Both Political (elected reps, such as Congress) and Symbolic (***standing for*** something else)

Representation (continued...)

Relation to MCI: representation is **central** to media studies as a whole

- “Meaning takes shape in the interaction of media systems, their workers or producers, and media audiences” (Keywords, 172)
- Representations in media are *not* reality (even if audiences want them to be)
- Historically underrepresented groups are at **risk** to be characterized by a single dimension...complex representations allowing for “intersectionality” are necessary to humanize these stereotyped populations

Relation to Indians on TV (Master of None)

- Dev and his friend struggle with how their race is represented in media
 - Always cast as a taxi driver, IT person, gas station owner, etc.
 - Too many of them will change the shows perception into an “Indian show”
- Societal representation restricts who Dev’s career
- Apartment scene challenges this representative stereotype: three different people juxtaposed to convey complexity of Indians
- Shifting politics of representation on TV: Master of None itself includes people of all ethnicities, whereas the popular sitcoms in the 90’s featured mostly all-white casts (ex. Friends, 1994)

Media Example

- Crazy Rich Asians
 - Wealthy, smart, perfectionist
 - Counterargument: Nick Young's portrayal as average American in U.S. scenes
- Jersey Shore - inevitably represents New Jersey as trashy Italian culture, thus many people assume New Jersey residents exhibit these traits
 - [Video Clip \(0:25\)](#)
 - [Where's The Beach](#)