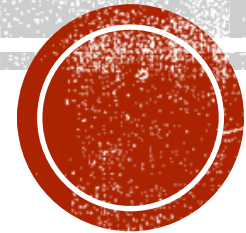


CULTURE AND CIVILIZATION

Week 3



QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

- Provide one cultural example of something that represents “the best that has been thought or said”?
- “the best that has been thought or said” in your culture
- “How are these questions connected to the idea of “cultural ideology”



IDEOLOGY

- A system of meaning that helps define and explain the world and that makes value judgements about that world
 - Worldview, belief system, values – organized in the activities, protocols and education one engages when growing up
 - In Media: how specific depictions fit into broader definitions and understandings of cultural and social issues/meaning
- Dominant ideology/cultural contestations
 - “Normalization”/”Deviancy”
 - Hegemony: consent (common sense); social constructions
 - “Natural”; contestations of power (elite definitions)
- Media “re-present” reality



CULTURE AND CIVILIZATION TRADITION

- Power: Emanates from Crown/Elites – governs subordinate classes
 - The proletariat “knew” their place
- 19th Century: Industrialization & Urbanization = shifts relationship
 - End of “common” culture; emergence of mass (commercial culture/standardization/mass production) & subcultures
- Threatened traditional notions of cultural cohesion (dismantlement) and social stability (direct challenges to political and cultural authority) = ***Destabilizing of the Social Order! Collapse of Authority!***
- *Hearkens back to a mythic past*; Barbarism threatens Civilization



MATTHEW ARNOLD: CULTURE AND ANARCHY

(1867-9)

- Culture = The best which has been thought and said
- Our lives and their value depend upon the fresh and free play of the best thoughts upon our stock notions and habits
- All men can pursue perfection through attention to “sweetness and light
- A national glow of life and thought occurs when the whole of society is in the fullest measure permeated by thought, sensible to beauty, intelligent and alive.
- Culture nourishes us beyond class relationships towards a “profound sense of settled order and security”
- We should follow reason, not our impulses; authority should assure this
 - We need to disentangle ourselves from the “machinery” in pursuit of perfection in our humanity
 - Culture = order = society
 - Anarchy = bad (revolutionary activities/riots do not help society); should be forbidden and repressed by law that is authoritative and sovereign (STATE)
 - State is the embodiment and progenitor of culture; must be protected



MATTHEW ARNOLD

- Inaugurates tradition positioning popular culture in broader framework of Culture
 - Draws upon Romantic tradition (Coleridge)
 - Dominant theoretical framework up until the 1950s; enormous influence
- IDEAS:
 - Class Nature of his discourse
 - Culture is a balm to “minister to the diseased spirit of the time”
 - Culture is the *seeking* of culture
 - Anarchy (popular culture) is a disruptive force; must be policed; lower classes had lost sense of subordination and deference
 - The fix = Culture and coercion (“education”); civilize the masses – Culture would defeat their impulses to question/rebel
 - Popular culture is symptomatic of a profound decline (politically and socially)
- Culture impacts all classes to find their true place (“Orientalism”)



COMMUNICATION AND CULTURE

- Culture
 - Activities, products, ongoing social process; way of life, everything we do, the way we interpret and understand the world in certain ways and exclude other ways of doing so; symbolic communication; construction of meaning

Are the arguments still valid?

High Culture?

Cultural Power?

Mass/Popular Culture?

Media Effects?



CZECH CULTURE: VALUES AND ATTITUDES

- Resilience
- Reserve
- Cleverness
- “It isn’t possible”
- Foreigners/Minorities
- Women
- Hierarchy/Titles
- Wealth/Money
- Nostalgia
- National Pride
- Religion



MEDIA

- Communication = the creation and use of symbol systems that convey information and meaning
- Culture = the symbols of expression that individuals, groups, and societies use to make sense of daily life and to articulate their values.
- History of media evolution; emergence to convergence
- The *stories* that circulate in the media can shape a society's perceptions and attitudes
- **Culture as skyscraper?**
- **Culture as map?**



CULTURAL/MEDIA LITERACY

- Developing a media-literate critical perspective involves mastering five overlapping stages that build on one another:
 - Description: paying close attention, taking notes, and researching the subject under study
 - Analysis: discovering and focusing on significant patterns that emerge from the description stage
 - Interpretation: asking and answering “What does that mean?” and “So what?” questions about one’s findings
 - Evaluation: arriving at a judgment about whether something is good, bad, or mediocre, which involves subordinating one’s personal taste to the critical “bigger picture” resulting from the first three stages
 - Engagement: taking some action that connects our critical perspective with our role as citizens to question our media institutions, adding our own voice to the process of shaping the cultural environment



FIRST GROUP ASSIGNMENT: DISCUSS

- What is your culture (or what defines a/an _____)
- Do you identify with your culture?
- How is your culture/cultural identity mis/perceived by others?
- How are social relationships understood/enacted
 - Family
 - Gender
 - Class
 - Marriage/Dating/Sex
- How are you active in your identity? What does it mean to you?



FIRST GROUP ASSIGNMENT: DIRECTIONS

- Discuss the topics at hand; your discussion should engage the readings, the class ideas, and your own thinking across the perspectival divides
- Summarize the discussion in a video of no more than 5 minutes.
 - The Video will be graded on
 - The depth and breadth of the discussion summary
 - How it ties into the class (readings/discussions)
 - How it is presented (not just a list of answers to the questions)
 - How it concludes, namely with a set of outcomes/points that were arrived at or questions that remained
 - Show us that you engaged the questions, what interesting points emerged, and where it all wrapped up
 - Upload your video to the HW vault: Group Discussion 1
- DUE SUNDAY October 20 at midnight

