LONDON SOUTH BANK UNIVERSITY

Unit Guide

Significant Others

AME –2- SOT

Faculty of Arts and Human Sciences

Significant Others
Contents

1. Unit Details

Unit title	Significant Others
Unit level	Two
Unit reference number	SOT-2-AME
Credit value	15 credits
Student study hours	150 hours (10 hours per week during semester of 15 weeks)
Contact hours	36 hours
Private study hours	125 hours
Pre-requisite learning	None
Co-requisite units	None
Courses	BSc (Hons) Media and Society BA (Hons) Media Studies Combined BA (Hons) Digital Film and Video BA (Hons) Digital Media Arts BA (Hons) Digital Photography BA (Hons) Writing for Media Arts BA (Hons) Sonic Media BA (Hons) Game Cultures
Year and Semester	2007-8, Semester 1
Unit co-ordinator	Dr Jenny Owen
Unit co-ordinator contact details	Room B404 Tel: 020 7815 5892 owenjs@lsbu.ac.uk
Subject area	Department of Arts, Media and English
Summary of assessment method	One 2000 word essay

2. Short Description

This unit is about identity and the importance of identity in cultural and media studies. It will introduce you to a variety of theoretical frameworks within which identity and the representation of identity has been studied. Using a thematic structure of case studies that include 'the body and the other', crime and the 'other' and 'looking at the other' – we will explore a number of frameworks for understanding our culture and the way signifying systems create meaning within our society.

These frameworks will be broadly poststructuralist in approach – this means they will be concerned to explore language and text, difference and distinction, desire and lack, discourse and power, and the nature of identity/the self/the subject. You will find, during the course of the unit, that a sense of 'self' (subjectivity) and 'normality' are frequently produced through a construction or projection of 'the other', in short, the significant other. You will also discover that this sense of 'self' should probably not be taken for granted, is not necessarily grounded in biology (in the body) or in essentialist ideas about identity – that in fact, identity is always socially located.

Issues of equality and diversity
This unit addresses equality and diversity issues precisely because it is concerned with the social construction of identity. You will be able to draw on your own media disciplines (film, TV, photography, games etc) to fulfil the assignment and all materials for the unit are placed on Blackboard to ensure that all students, and those students with visual impairments or dyslexia can access them easily.

3. Aims of the Unit:
- To develop your understanding of meaning and representation
- To develop your skills in the critical analysis of media and culture
- To consider the theoretical frameworks of media analysis, including structuralism, poststructuralism and feminism
- To develop appropriate and relevant academic communication skills

4. Learning Outcomes:

4.1 Knowledge and Understanding
By the end of the unit you should be able to:
- Demonstrate an understanding of how media representations make meaning
- Critically analyse a range of media texts

4.2 Intellectual Skills
- Demonstrate a critical awareness of different methods and rationales for discursive media analysis

4.3 Practical Skills
- Communicate clearly both orally and in writing

4.4 Transferable Skills
You will have the opportunity to develop:
- Interactive group skills in tutorials
- Oral communication skills in tutorials
- Critical and analytical skills in tutorials and essay writing

5. Assessment of the Unit

The unit will be assessed by a 2000 word essay. You will need to achieve an overall pass of 40% or above to successfully complete the unit.

Your essay should demonstrate:

- An understanding of how media representations make meaning
- A critical analysis of a range of media texts
- A critical awareness of some of the different methods and rationales for discursive media analysis
- Clear communication skills in written English

Please read recommended key texts (Significant Others Reader and on BB) as a starting point as well as relevant texts from the Unit Guide. In your essay, you must refer clearly to relevant academic work addressed during this unit, summarising the main arguments in your own words. You must utilise the Harvard system of referencing at all times (see 9.1 Core Materials in Unit Guide).

In your essay remember to use concrete media examples to clarify your argument. There are plenty of academic studies in the field of media analysis to help you shape your own discussion.

Your essay is only 2000 words long so be succinct and structure and edit your work carefully.

The essay must be submitted to the Faculty Office (FAHS), Borough Road, Room B266 in the assessment period in January 2007 (exact date TBC). Please check the Media noticeboards outside B402 and Blackboard for the precise date for submission of the essay.

NB: Two copies of the essay are required. One will be returned to you with tutor's comments; one is for our records. If you do not submit two copies you will only get the feedback sheet and not the essay itself.

Essay writing check list

Essay writing is a complex juggling act

Writing the essay will test many different skills:
- Your use of language
- Your ability to present your work clearly
- Your ability to research your topic
- Your mastery of academic writing
- Your ability to think critically
- Your levels of knowledge about the subject

General advice on academic essay writing:
   http://www.utoronto.ca/writing/essay/html

N. Williams (2004) *How to get a 2:1 in Media, Communication, Cultural Studies*, London, Sage

S. Cottrell (1999) *The Study Skills Handbook*, London, Macmillan.

What we expect from your essay

(1) 2000 words – word processed – with bibliography…NO plastic folders – these take up lots of space and are bad for the environment!
(2) 2 copies handed in by the deadline.
(3) Each essay should contain a reference to at least ONE key text; at least ONE text from the 'useful reading' list; at least ONE text chosen by you from your own research activities; and at least ONE case study researched by you…
(4) You will need to summarise and analyse these texts in relation to your chosen question and explore your case study in relation to the question and the academic texts.

(5) Make sure you refer to the texts you have read by citing their bibliographical details

(6) You might find the following webpage helpsheets useful:

On referencing: http://www.lisa.lsbu.ac.uk/helpsheets/hs30.pdf

On plagiarism: http://www.lisa.lsbu.ac.uk/helpsheets/hs4.pdf

What we DO NOT want from your essay

(1) Over-dependence on web sources.
(2) Over-dependence on lecture material.
(3) Over-dependence on case studies used in lectures. You may make reference to case studies referred to in lectures but we will also expect to see reference to examples researched by you. You may however, write in detail about *Shawshank Redemption* or *Battle for Algiers* – providing you draw on your own analysis as well as mine!
(4) Journalistic type rants with no reference to any of the reading.

Essay Questions

The essay will assess the extent to which you have understood the key concepts, and have absorbed and processed the content of this unit. The assignment will test the learning outcomes of this unit and relate to the broader criteria for Level Two units.

Choose **ONE** essay from the following list. The notes in italics are designed to give you some ideas of how you might like to approach the essay.

NB:
Regardless of which essay question you choose to answer your essay you should aim to include (as a minimum requirement) a reference to one key text, one 'useful reading' text, one text that you have researched for yourself and at least one, usually two case studies.

1. Masculinity is a 'multiple masquerade'. Discuss with reference to two 'buddy body movies' of your choice.

This question invites you to deconstruct the opening quotation which is taken from Holmund's piece in your Reader. You will need to read the Holmund (and the Neale and Tasker) carefully, summarising their arguments, in order to discuss notions of gender essentialism and theories of masquerade. You can use Holmlund's discussion of Lock Up and Tango and Cash as a starting point for your own analysis of two 'buddy body movies' but be careful not to simply reproduce his discussion.

2. Butler argues that all gender is drag. Do you agree? Discuss with reference to specific examples.

Try to read some Butler in the original (although she is quite difficult); secondary accounts are fine. Summarise Butler's key arguments about gender and identity and the notion of performativity. You will need to illustrate your argument with examples from film, TV, photography etc.. Madonna. v. Pink, work of Del LaGrace in photography, Lara Croft in film/games, Buffy etc.

3. In what ways do the media reproduce essentialist gender identities? Discuss with a critical analysis of a small selection of specific media representations (in film, TV, photography, games, music, journalism or scripts).

Engage with ideas of feminism, post feminism, Butler and performativity. Explore whether it is the case that media reproduce essentialist gender identities. Can you think of examples where this is not the case? What about men? Are men and women equally subject to this process?

Your analyses of media texts should reveal our cultural understandings of sex/gender and sexuality.

4. Posthumanism celebrates the 'other' in terms of monstrosity, transformation, disruption and leakiness. With reference to either films, TV programmes, photography and video games you have studied, consider how posthuman figures of difference help us rethink our subjectivity.

You will need to think about the way cultural identity (and gender identity) is organized around points of difference – the idea of the body as Other – long history of fascination with bodies that don't conform – challenges the idea of the Enlightenment subject, exposes our cultural anxieties – you can use the Alien

films as your example – but obviously very many others out there – Frankenstein, X Men, I Robot, The Fly, Spiderman etc….use your examples to unpick assumptions about the normal/natural, reflect on how these 'other' bodies trouble, disrupt and challenge commonsense notions of the human body.

5. Foucault's disciplinary society is characterised by 'the eye of power whose gaze nothing escapes'. How useful is Foucault's critique for analysing media texts? Discuss in relation to examples from film, TV, photography, games, music, journalism or scripts you have studied.

Define and discuss Foucault's position on power, knowledge and what he means by the disciplinary society. Quote from Foucault in the original for higher marks. Summarise the key texts. Identify your own case study – prison films are obvious, but any text where characters are 'under the gaze 'of authority: Truman Show, Lost TV series, Matrix, Spiderman film/video game would be interesting.. Cite directly and with details from the case study – focus on dialogue, music, visual effects – identifying one/two key scenes. Use my analysis of The Shawshank Redemption as a model to help you. Locate specific instances in the film where Foucault's theory of panopticism plays an influential role. Think about how particular characters relate to Foucault's ideas. Describe the roles that different characters play. Who performs the surveillance? Who is being watched? Who, therefore, possesses the power and authority? What do they do with that power and authority? Think about the power structures in the film. Who has power? Why? How did they get it? How did they keep it? Who wants power? How do they plan to get it? Do they get it? What will they do with it if they have it?

6. Critically analyse the ways in which the figure of the dangerous youth is produced in the mediascape. Discuss in relation to examples from film, TV, photography, games, music, journalism or scripts you have studied.

Explore literature on moral panics – Cohen's Mods and Rockers and then a range of secondary and more up to date studies. Choose case study with 'dangerous youth': films such as Rebel without a Cause; Westside Story/Romeo and Juliet; Lord of the Flies; CSI episodes; newspaper portrayals of chavs

7. What can representations of criminal women tell us about our anxieties regarding the Other? In your response, use specific examples from film, TV, photography, games, music, journalism or scripts you have studied.

Crime and punishment is a signifying system and what constitutes a criminal offence, a criminal, or an appropriate punishment is not an unchanging 'fact'/truth but the result of competing discourses. Discourses produce and legitimise certain forms of knowledge about particular subjects – the hooded youth or the female offender…we draw on these discourses to locate ourselves within the signifying system. Explore the idea of representation and why it is important. Look at particular figures – Rosemary West or Myra Hindley – or fictional accounts such as TV series Bad Girls. These programmes reveal society's anxieties about femininity and a desire to control it in some way. Eg. Kate in Lost TV series very interesting 'bad girl' in terms of her representation – she is portrayed very positively, and yet she is also a murderer (or so we are led to believe).
Discuss idea of the 'other' – criminals serve as mythical Others – against whom society can define and describe normality…Take a look at Songbirds, Channel 4 TV, 15/12/05 – how are criminal women depicted in this unusual self-scripted 'pop' opera?

8. Critically analyse approaches to subjectivity in the work of at least two photographers you have studied.

Look at work of, Martin Parr, Diane Arbus, Jeff Wall, Richard Avedon or any other photographer you are interested in. Images should go in appendix and are not a substitute for writing about the image/s in detail.. Read the discussion on subjectivity in the core text and apply to your discussion.

9. To what extent do stereotypes contribute to the representation of a cultural Other? Discuss with reference to either the representation of Islam or black identity in contemporary media.

Definition of stereotype and relation to representation. Draw on screening of Battle for Algiers, or do case study of immigration, July 7 bombings, Birmingham riots, French riots. Read and summarise Said and Foucault. Discuss the usefulness of 'discourse' analysis – what is meant by discourse etc.

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6. Feedback

Written feedback on your essay will normally be given 20 working days after the submission of an assignment.

On receiving your marked assignment please read the feedback sheet carefully as well as the handwritten comments on the essay itself. If the feedback suggests that a key issue for you is your essay writing style and command of English, please make every effort to attend essay writing classes at the Learning Development Unit at Caxton House.

If you would like to discuss your essay with Dr Jenny Owen please make an appointment to see her – remember to bring your copy of the essay with you.

Your feedback sheet will look like the sheet on page 12 of this unit guide. There will be categories for research, content, critical thinking and analysis, appropriate use of case studies, structure and written English and presentation.

	Excellent 1st (70-100%)	Very Good 2:1 (60-69%)	Good 2:2 (50-59%)	Pass 3rd (40-49%)	Poor (Fail) 30 – 39%	Very Poor (Fail) 0-29%
Research 1. Evidence of relevant research using a range of books, journals, websites and other sources. 2. Use of independently researched sources.						
Content 1. Question answered directly. 2. Includes relevant material only. 3. Key concepts identified. 4. Demonstrates good understanding of ideas 5. Material well summarised						
Critical Thinking and analysis 1. Thorough and critical understanding of concepts. 2. Clearly developed arguments						
Appropriate use of case studies/examples 1. Arguments supported effectively with case studies/examples from specified media (eg. TV, video games, film, magazines, photography etc)						
Structure **1.** Effective introduction and conclusion. 2. Clear paragraphing 3. Coherent and logical structure.						
Written English and presentation 1. Readable and interesting style. 2. Good spelling and punctuation 3. Correct use of Harvard referencing system 4. Correct use of bibliographical information						

Lecturer's comments:

I recommend you visit the Learning and Development Centre for additional study skills support YES/NO

Marker(s): Dr Jenny Owen/Dr Phil Hammond/Dr Terry Daniels

Mark:………………………..

NB: All grades are provisional and subject to confirmation by the relevant Assessment/Exam Board

7. Introduction to studying the unit

7.1 Overview of the main content
The unit has been organised thematically in order to help you explore the importance of identity in our culture. In Week One there will be an introductory lecture that will explore the idea of the 'significant other' and its importance in media and cultural theory (there is also a supporting essay included in the Notes section of the Unit Guide to help you understand the unit in more detail). This introduction will also identify some of the key concepts you will need to understand throughout the unit: essentialism, structuralism, poststructuralism, discourse, power and theories of subjectivity.

In weeks 2, 3 and 4 we will explore the 'other' in relation to our first theme – 'The body as Other' where our focus will be on gender, sexuality and ideas of the post human; in weeks 5, 6 and 7 we will explore 'crime and the other' and in the final weeks of the unit we will focus on 'looking at the other' where we will explore the 'other' in photography and in western representations of Islam. In week 12 there will be a final lecture that will help you identify key issues in the unit and offer you support and ideas for your essay assignment

7.2 Overview of types of classes

The unit consist of twelve weeks of lectures and/screenings that will take place on Friday afternoons from 3pm to 6pm. Please consult the timetable for confirmation of the location of the lecture theatre.

The three hour block will include opportunities for discussion of key texts and essay revision.

7.3 Importance of student self-managed learning time

Managing your own study is a central part of undergraduate life. To help you do this you must make every effort to attend the lectures and to read the key texts which are provided for you in the Unit Reader and on BB. The key texts have been chosen to complement the lectures and as core reading to help you prepare for writing your essay. We will expect to see reference to the key texts in your essays, as well as references to other reading outlined in the unit guide.

You will need to read the key texts carefully, taking notes and underlining key passages. You will also need to decide which media text you will want to use to

illustrate your essay; you can choose from film, TV, photography, journalism, video game, music/soundscape etc.

There are also a range of journals that you might find helpful in researching your essay: *New Formations, Cultural Studies, Media, Culture and Society, Popular Music, Convergence* and *Screen*.

We also recommend the following books as good general introductions to many of the topics addressed in this unit:

Roland Barthes (1990) *A Lover's Discourse – fragments*, London, Penguin – analyses the feelings of a romantic desire.

J. Beynon (2002) *Masculinities and Cultures*, Maidenhead, Oxford University Press.

Catherine Belsey (2002*) Poststructuralism: A very short introduction*, Oxford University Press – a really excellent, concise account of this theoretical framework, with lots of examples drawn from the media and culture. Only £6.99 – worth every penny!

S.During (ed) (1993) *The Cultural Studies Reader*, London, Routledge.

Anthony Easthope and Kate McGowan (eds) (2004) *A Critical and Cutlural Theory Reader*, Maidenhead, Open University Press – a useful selection of key texts with additional summaries and explanations of the main ideas at the back of the book which students should find very helpful.

Umberto Eco (1994) *Misreadings*, London, Picador – fictional analytical essays, with a teasing, dry sense of humour.

Jessica Evans and Stuart Hall (eds) (1999) *Visual Culture: The Reader*, London, Sage – a collection of key essays in the critical analysis of images. This book is probably worth buying as you will almost certainly use it again in your final year – however, it is very expensive.

David Morley and Kevin Robins (1995) *Spaces of Identity: Global Media, Electronic Landscapes and Cultural Boundaries*, London, Routledge.

C.Weedon (1992) *Feminist Practice and Poststructuralist Theory*, Oxford, Blackwell – explains the main ideas of poststructuralism and feminism.

Chris Weedon (2004) *Identity and Culture: Narrative of Difference and Belonging*, Maidenhead, Oxford University Press.

Liz Wells (1998) *Photography: A Critical Introduction* (second edition), London, Routledge.

Liz Wells (2003) *The Photography Reader*, London, Routledge.

Kath Woodward (2002) *Understanding Identity*, London, Arnold. Excellent discussion of centrality of identity in contemporary cultural theory – written in accessible style with some good examples to illustrate her ideas.

Most of this material will be available in the Perry Library; however, you may have to venture elsewhere for further research. Information on London university libraries can be found at the Perry Library and on the LIS web page: http://www.lsbu.ac.uk/~lis/opacs/index.htmil . The British Film Institute Library is also available to students. Passes are available to all Arts and Media students and can be collected from the Perry Library.

In addition to the Unit Reader you are advised to make regular visits to the Blackboard site. Blackboard is a virtual classroom that you can access to exchange information with staff and other students. The unit guide, lectures and information relating to writing the essay will all be posted on Blackboard for you to access. To do this successfully you will need your LSBU username and password. The enrolment access code is: cluwrost (lower case). If you have problems logging on to Blackboard you will need to go to www.lsbu.ac.uk/bb/student/helpsheet.html.

Please check the Blackboard announcement page regularly as this is the main way in which staff can communicate with students during term-time.

Help with study skills
The Learning Development Centre (LDC) is located in Caxton House, Borough Road and provides services to all LSBU students. The LDC provides a programme of study skills sessions designed to help you at all stages of your academic career – however good your study skills are there is usually room for improvement! The study skills programme offers advice on general learning skills such as academic English (English for academic purposes), essay writing, research skills and note-taking. Sessions take place either at Caxton House or in the Perry Library (which runs regular lunch time essay clinics) – these sessions are free, so use them!

Information for students with disabilities/dyslexia

The Learning Support Unit is based within the LDC and provides services for students with disabilities and dyslexia at both the pre-entry stage and while studying at LSBU. Advice and support is available for all students with a disability/dyslexia to enable you to manage your specific academic and practical needs. This includes:

- an initial screening and full assessment if you think you may have dyslexia
- one to one advice and guidance
- arrangements for examinations and assessments (may include extra time in exams and extensions for coursework)
- disability/dyslexia workshops
- one-to-one tutorials
- student focus groups
- disability access across campus
- technical support and access
- support worker service

If you are a student with a disability or dyslexia – or you think you may need to be assessed for dyslexia – please contact the LSU as soon as possible. The sooner any arrangements you need can be made, the better equipped you will be to succeed on your course.

LSU at Caxton House – 0207 815 6400 or www.lsbu.ac.uk/caxton

7.4 Employability

Recent research by Skillset (*Overview of anticipated trends in the future use of skills in the audiovisual industry to 2010*, September 2004) acknowledges the need for media workers to keep apace with digital and new technologies by acquiring a more 'complex skillset'. The report identifies 'soft skills' as being vital to this complex skillset – and it is these skills that 'theory' units like Significant Others helps foster. Soft-skills include verbal and written communication, planning, team-working, good interpersonal qualities and problem solving. These skills offer individuals a competitive advantage in the job market.

Skillset also highlights the extent to which media workers of the future will need to direct their own learning, given that it is an industry dominated by freelancers and small businesses. This unit with its structure of lecture programme and self managed learning reinforces students' understanding that the self-management of skills development is part of the professional ethic of media workers.

8. Programme of teaching, learning and assessment

The Lecture Programme – at a glance

Lecture 1	What is the significant other? An Introduction to the Unit
Theme One: The body as other	
Lecture 2	Gendered difference 1: Beyond Mulvey
Lecture 3	Gendered difference 2: Imag (in) ing Gender
Lecture 4	Posthumanism: Loving the alien
Theme Two: Crime and the Other	
Lecture 5	Crime and Punishment in the Prison Film: Foucault, discourse theory and *The Shawshank Redemption*
Lecture 6	Screening: *The Shawshank Redemption*
Lecture 7	Youth, Crime and the 'Other': The iconography of the hoodie
Lecture 8	Bad Girls and She-Devils: Women and Crime
Theme 3: Looking at the Other	
Lecture 9	Photography and the Other
Lecture 10	Western Images of Islam
Lecture 11	Screening: *The Battle for Algiers*
Lecture 12	The Significant Other Revisited

PROGRAMME OF LECTURES

Friday 28 September 2007
Lecture 1: **What is a significant other? An introduction to the unit**

What is a 'significant other' and why is the idea of the 'other' important in media and cultural theory? How will I be able to use the ideas I encounter in this unit to engage with my own media/cultural practice? The lecture programme as a whole will help you explore the idea of 'the other' by drawing on a number of themes – the criminal as 'other', Islam as 'other', gender and sexuality as 'other'. In addition, this introductory lecture will identify some of the key concepts you will need to understand: essentialism, structuralism, poststructuralism, discourse and power and theories of subjectivity.

Key Texts (in Unit Guide Reader):

Read Jenny Owen (2006) 'What is a Significant Other' (located in Notes section in this Unit Guide)

Kath Woodward (2002) 'Embodying Identity' in *Understanding Identity*, London, Arnold.

Useful reading:

Catherine Belsey (2002*) Poststructuralism: A very short introduction*, Oxford University Press

Anthony Easthope and Kate McGowan (eds) (2004) *A Critical and Cutlural Theory Reader*, Maidenhead, Open University Press

Jessica Evans and Stuart Hall (eds) (1999) *Visual Culture: The Reader*, London, Sage

J.Lechte (2002) *Key Contemporary Concepts*, London, Sage – useful supplement to your dictionary

K.Woodward (ed) (1997) *Identity and Difference*, London, Sage.

Kath Woodward (2002) *Understanding Identity*, London, Arnold.

M. Sturken and L. Cartwright (2001) *Practices of Looking*, Oxford, Oxford University Press.

C.Weedon (1992) *Feminist Practice and Poststructuralist Theory*, Oxford, Blackwell
Will Wright (1994) 'The structure of myth and the structure of the western film' in John Storey (ed) *Cultural Theory and Popular Culture: A Reader*, Hemel Hempstead, Harvester Wheatsheaf.

Useful websites

www.theory.org.uk
This site is maintained by David Gauntlett of Bournemouth Media School. It is a fun and creative site, with an engaging approach to poststructuralist ideas (with particular reference to Foucault, Butler, queer theory, identity etc). Also gives loads of links to related sites.

www.popcultures.com – lots of cultural studies related essays

www.arasite.org – cultural studies related essays and also student work.

Theme One: The Body as Other

Friday 5 October 2007
Lecture 2: Gendered Difference 1: Beyond Mulvey

Post structuralist theory sees gender not as biologically essential but as a hybrid and fluid cultural construction.We will begin our exploration of gender by looking again at the work of Laura Mulvey, and its implications for our positioning as sexed subjects. We will begin to unpick the shortcomings of Mulvey, and to consider how a poststructuralist reading of cultural texts might differ from an essentialist reading. We will critically engage with Mulvey by asking questions about the presentation of the male form as a spectacle and the consequences of the female gaze.

Key Texts:

Steve Neale (1993) 'Masculinity as spectacle: Reflections on men and mainstream cinema' in *Screening the Male: Exploring Masculinities in Hollywood Cinema* (eds) Steven Cohan and Ina Rae Hark, London, Routledge.

Chris Holmlund (1993) 'Masculinity as multiple masquerade: The 'mature' Stallone and the Stallone clone' in *Screening the Male: Exploring Masculinities in Hollywood Cinema* (eds) Steven Cohan and Ina Rae Hark, London, Routledge.

Yvonne Tasker (2000) (ed) 'The body in crisis or the body triumphant?' in *Spectacular Bodies: Gender, Genre and Action Cinema*, London, Routledge.

Useful reading

Judith Butler (1993) *Bodies that Matter: On the discursive limits of sex*, NY, Routledge.

S. Cohen and I.R. Hark (editors) Screening the Male: Exploring Masculinities in Hollywood Cinema (1993) London: Routledge

Jude Davies and Carole R. Smith Gender, Ethnicity and Sexuality in contemporary American film (1997) Keele University Press

Wendy Holloway (2001) 'Gender difference and the production of subjectivity' in Margaret Wetherall et al (eds) *Discourse theory and practice*, London, Sage.

Laura Mulvey "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema" in <u>The Sexual Subject</u>

Maran Sarup (1993) *An introductory guide to post-structuralism and postmodernism*, second edition, Hemel Hempstead, Harvester Wheatsheaf.

Jackie Stacey <u>Star-gazing: Hollywood Cinema and Female Spectatorship</u> (1998) London: Routledge

Yvonne Tasker <u>Spectacular Bodies: Gender, Genre and the action cinema</u> (1993) London: Routledge

Matthew Tinkcom and Amy Villarejo <u>Keyframes: popular cinema and cultural studies</u> (2001) London: Routledge

Chris Weedon (1992) *Feminist Practice and Poststructuralist theory*, Oxford, Blackwell.

Chris Weedon (1994) 'Feminism and the principles of poststructuralism' in John Storey (ed) *Cultural Theory and Popular Culture: A Reader*, Hemel Hempstead, Harvester Wheatsheaf.

Gail Weiss (1999) *Body Images: Embodiment as Corporeality*, NY, Routledge.

Suggested media texts for use in the essay

Die Hard (1988, 1990 etc)
Lock Up (1989)
Beverly Hills Cop (1984 and 1989)
Tango and Cash (1989)
Boyz in the Hood (1990)
Terminator (1984, 1991 etc)
Lethal Weapon (1997, 1999 etc)

Essay Questions relating to this topic:

Masculinity is a 'multiple masquerade'. Discuss with reference to two 'buddy body movies' of your choice**.**

Friday 12 October 2007
Lecture 3: Gendered Difference 2: Imag(in)ing Gender

In this lecture we will delve deeper into the idea of gender as a performance, looking particularly at the work of Judith Butler. We will be exploring the production of gender categories and the corresponding possibilities of transcending and shifting between competing versions of masculinity, femininity. What are the consequences for our subjectivity when our stable gender identities are challenged or overturned? The lecture will consider alternative visions of gender, sexuality and desire, and the impact they may have on our subjectivity and our practice, through an exploration of The Silence of the Lambs (1991: Jonathon Demme).

Key Texts (in Unit Reader)

Stevi Jackson and Sue Scott (2001) 'Putting the Body's Feet on the Ground: Towards a sociological reconceptualization of gendered sexual embodiment' in *Constructing Gendered Bodies* (eds) Kathryn Backett-Milburn and Linda McKie, London, Palgrave.

Chris Barker (2000) 'Sex, Subjectivity and Representation', pp 244-248 in *Cultural Studies: Theory and Practice*, London, Sage.

Useful Reading

Carol Bigwood (1998) 'Renaturalising the body (with the help of Merleau-Ponty' in Don Welton (ed) *Body and Flesh: A Philosophical Reader*, Cambridge, Massachusetts, Blackwell.

Judith Butler Gender Trouble: feminism and the subversion of identity (1990) London: Routledge

Judith Butler Bodies that Matter: on the discursive limits of 'sex' (1993) London: Routledge

Judith Butler (1993) 'Subjects of Sex/Gender/Desire' in Simon During (ed) *The Cultural Studies Reader*, London, Routledge.

Jeffrey Weeks Against Nature: Essays on Sexuality, History and Identity (1991) London: Rivers Oram Press

Suggested media texts for use in the essay
Madonna
Nadia Almada from *Big Brother*
Ripley in *Alien* series
Photographic work of Del LaGrace (*Hermaphrodyke: Self Portraits of Desire* series, 1995)
The *Sims,* PC or videogame
Work of Char Davies – piece called *Osmose* (virtual reality piece)

Essay Questions relating to this topic:

Butler argues that all gender is drag. Do you agree? Discuss with reference to examples from film, TV, photography, games, music, journalism or scripts you have studied

In what ways do the media reproduce essentialist gender identities? Discuss with a critical analysis of a small selection of specific media representations (in film, TV, photography, games, music, journalism or scripts).

Friday 19 October 2007
Lecture 4 – Posthumanism: Loving the Alien

This week we will be looking back over the theme of the body, and drawing out alternative ways of imagining our subjectivity. Posthumanism celebrates the possibilities of the Other by placing it firmly at the centre of existence. We will be exploring the concepts of monstrosity, transformation, disruption and leakiness, with particular reference to the *Alien* trilogy (Ridley Scott, 1979). How can we locate these fantasies and imaginings in a wider network of anxiety about the figure of the Other?

Key Texts (in Unit Reader)

Steve Neale (1990) 'You've got to be fucking kidding!' Knowledge, belief and judgement in Science Fiction' in *Alien Zone* (ed) Annette Kuhn, London, Verso.

Jon Dovey and Helena W. Kennedy (2006) 'Bodies and Machines: Cyborg subjectivity and gameplay' in *Game Cultures: Computer Games as New Media*, Oxford University Press.

Useful reading
Barbara Creed The Monstrous Feminine: Feminism, Film and Psychoanalysis (1993) London: Routledge

Thomas Csordas Embodiment and Experience: the existential ground of culture and self (1994) Cambridge University Press

Kelly Hurley "Reading Like an Alien" in Halberstam, J and Livingstone, I, Posthuman Bodies (1999) Bloomington Press

Judith Halberstam and Ira Livingstone Posthuman Bodies (1999) Bloomington Press

Judith Halberstam Skin Shows: Gothic Horror and the technology of monsters (1998) Duke University Press

Donna Haraway Simians, Cyborgs and Women: the Reinvention of Nature (1991) London: Free Association

Margrit Shildrick Leaky Bodies and Boundaries:Feminism, Postmodernism and Bioethics (1997) London: Routledge

Margrit Shildrick <u>Embodying the Monster: encounters with the vulnerable self</u> (2001) London: Sage

Donna Haraway (1991) 'A Cyborg Manifesto: Science, Technology and Socialist-Feminism in the Late Twentieth Century' in *Simians, Cyborgs and Women: The reinvention of nature*, London, Free Association.

N. Katherine Hayles (1999) 'Prologue' in *How we became posthuman: Virtual bodies in Cybernetics, Literature and Informatics*, Chicago, University of Chicago Press.

Jean Baudrillard (1983) *Simulations*, NY, Semiotexte

Francis Fukuyama (2002) *Our Posthuman future: Consequences of the biotechnology revolution*, London, Profile Books

E. Graham (2002) *The representation of the posthuman*, Manchester, MUP

Stuart Sim (2001) Lytotard and the inhuman, Cambridge, Icon Books.

B. Stafford (1993) *Body Criticism*, Cambridge, MA, The MIT Press.

Suggested media texts for use in the essay

AI (Steven Spielberg, 2001)
Gattaca (Andrew Niccol, 1997)
Robcop (Paul Verhoeven, 1986)
Bladerunner (Ridley Scott, 1982)
The Matrix (Andy and Larry Wachowski, 1999, 2003)
Lara Croft – film and video game
Johnny Nmemonic (Robert Longo, 1995)
Terminator (James Cameron, 1984)
X-Men (Bryan Singer, 2000)
Photographic work of Daniel Lee (photo-shop hybrids, animals morphed onto humans)
Work of Patricia Piccinini – sculpture and photography
Work of Stelarc – performance artist

Essay Questions relating to this topic:

Posthumanism celebrates the 'other' in terms of monstrosity, transformation, disruption and leakiness. With reference to either films, TV programmes, photography and video games you have studied, consider how posthuman figures of difference help us rethink our subjectivity.

Theme Two: Crime and the Other

Friday 26 October 2007
Lecture 5: Crime and punishment in the prison film: Foucault, discourse theory and *The Shawshank Redemption*

In this lecture we will explore crime and punishment as a signifying system with particular attention to the work of Michel Foucault and his arguments about the disciplinary society or the carceral archipelago. Foucault argues that modern forms of knowledge and power have produced distinctive forms of subjectivity or ways of thinking about identity/the self. Foucault wrote about the asylum, the hospital, the regulation of sexuality and on changing forms of punishment. All these topics had in common the fact that they were studies of the emergence and operation of modern forms of power and their connections with discipline like psychiatry, medicine, sexology, psychoanalysis and criminology. Foucault made some important connections between the rise of the human sciences and the regulation/control of individuals and populations. His work is viewed by some scholars as describing the modern world/modernity as a 'prison house of technical knowledge', while for others his conception of power as productive and everywhere, allows for the possibilities of resistance.

The lecture will focus on exploring Foucauldian ideas about crime and punishment in relation to films about prison and imprisonment, with particular reference to *The Shawshank Redemption*.

Key Texts:

Michel Foucault, (1977) 'The means of correct training', *Discipline and Punish*, London, Penguin pp170-194 and 'Panopticism' pp195-228, ibid.

Claire Valier (2002) 'Foucault, penality and social regulation' in *Theories of Crime and Punishment*, London, Longman.

Useful reading:

Anita Biressi (2001) *Crime, Fear and the Law in True Crime Stories*, London, Palgrave.

Kidd-Hewitt, David and Osborne, Richard (1995*) Crime and the Media: The Postmodern Spectacle*, London, Pluto Press

Mark Kermode, *Shawshank Redemption*, BFI Modern Classics, London, BFI

Stephen Knight (2004) *Crime Fiction: 1800-2000*, London, Palgrave Macmillan.

Garland, David (1990) *Punishment and Modern Society: A Study in Social Theory,* Oxford, Clarendon Press.

Paul Mason (1995) 'Prime Time Punishment: The British Prison and Television' in (ed) David Kidd-Hewitt and Richard Osborne (1995) *Crime and the Media: The Postmodern Spectacle*, London, Pluto Press.

Schlesinger, P., and Tumber,H, (1994) *Reporting Crime: The Media Politics of Criminal Justice,* Oxford, Clarendon Press.

Richard Sparks, (1992) *Television and the Drama of Crime: Moral Tales and the place of crime in public life,* OUP.

John Tagg (1987) 'Evidence, Truth and Order: A means of surveillance' in Jessica Evans and Stuart Hall (eds) (1999) *Visual Culture: The Reader*, London, Sage

Useful websites

www.foucault.info

Suggested media texts for use in the essay

The Shawshank Redemption(1994)
Papillon
The Bird Man of Alcatraz(1962)
Stalag 17 (1953)
Bridge on the River Kwai (1957)
Deer Hunter (1978)
Midnight Express (1978)
Escape from New York (1981)
Murder in the First (1995)
Judge Dredd (1995)
Dead Men Walking (1995)
Prisoner Cell Block H (TV series)
Bad Girls (TV series)
Matrix films

Use of CCTV
Early photographs of criminals (Galton etc)

Essay Questions relating to this topic:

Foucault's disciplinary society is characterised by 'the eye of power whose gaze nothing escapes'. How useful is Foucault's critique for analysing media texts? Discuss in relation to examples from film, TV, photography, games, music, journalism or scripts you have studied.

Friday November 2 2007
Lecture 6: Screening: *The Shawshank Redemption* (1994, Frank Darabond)

Questions to consider during the screening:

1) To what extent does prison iconography in the film conform to or differ from most prison films?

2) Identify instances of the 'panopticon'/the eye of power in the film.

3) Identify instances of the theme of freedom.

4) Identify instances of the theme of identity – how is the idea of a stable or essential identity reinforced or questioned in the film?

5) What 'techniques of discipline' can you identify in the film?

You can write about this film in your essay providing you also draw on other examples to supplement your discussion.

Friday 9 November 2007
Lecture 7: Youth, Crime and the Other: the iconography of the hoodie

In this lecture, we will be revisiting the concept of 'moral panics', with particular reference to the figure of the dangerous youth. Drawing on the work of Foucault, we will examine how the nebulous category of 'youth' has been romanticised, medicalised, distorted and legislated in the mediascape. We will be exploring how the media frenzy surrounding Anti-Social Behaviour Orders (ASBOs) and the mythology of youth in cultural texts produce an ambivalent vision of the transition between childhood and adulthood.

Key text

Extract from Mike Presdee, *Cultural Criminology and the Carnival of Crime* (2000) London: Routledge

Maggie Wykes (2001) 'High Jinks: Youth, Crime and Community' in *News Crime and Culture*, London, Pluto.

Useful reading

L. Chisolm *et al* (edited collection), Childhood, Youth and Social Change (1990)

Chas Critcher (2003) *Moral Panics and the Media*, Maidenhead, Open University Press.

Jon Dovey (2000*) Freakshow*, London, Pluto

Jonathon Epstein, Youth Culture: Identity in a Postmodern World (1998)

Johan Fornäs and Göran Bolin Youth Culture in Late Modernity (1995) London: Sage

Lawrence Grossberg (1994) 'The Deconstruction of Youth' in John Storey (ed) *Cultural Theory and Popular Culture: A Reader*, Hemel Hempstead, Harvester Wheatsheaf.

Jan Jagodzinski Youth Fantasies: the perverse landscapes of the media (2004) New York: Palgrave Macmillan

Kenneth Leech <u>Youthquake: the growth of a counter-culture through two decades</u> (1973) University of Chicago Press

John Muncie, <u>Youth and Crime: A Critical Collection</u> (1999)

Mike Presdee, <u>Cultural Criminology and the Carnival of Crime</u> (2000) London: Routledge

John Springhall <u>Youth, Popular Culture and Moral Panics: penny gaffs to gangsta rap 1830-1996</u> (1998) Basingstoke: Macmillan

Maggie Wykes (2001) in *News Crime and Culture*, London, Pluto

Suggested media texts for use in the essay

Anthony Burgess *A Clockwork Orange* (1962) directed by Stanley Kubrick (1972)
Quadrophenia
Kids (Larry Clarke)
Rebel without a Cause
Westside Story or Romeo and Juliet
Lord of the Flies (film and book)
CSI episodes (TV series, Channel 5)
newspaper portrayals of chavs
Happy Slapping phenomenon (look at google video)
Grand Theft Auto video game
Kidulthood (2006)
Shameless (Channel 4 TV series, 2005)
Little Britain (BBC TV comedy series, Vicky Pollard character)
Catherine Tate Show (BBC TV – 'Am I bothered?')
Teens on Trial (Channel 4)
Brat Camp (Channel 4)
Jackass (C4)
Southpark (C4)

Essay Question relating to this topic:

Critically analyse the ways in which the figure of the dangerous youth is produced in the mediascape. Discuss in relation to examples from film, TV, photography, games, music, journalism or scripts you have studied.

Friday November 16 2007
Lecture 8: Bad Girls and She-Devils: women and crime

In this lecture, we will be expanding our Foucaultian horizons to reflect upon the 'contemporary monstrosity' surrounding criminal women. Historically, the criminal acts of women are seen as illustrations of a number of anxieties, including class division, sexual antagonism and excessive desire or freedom. Criminal women continue to embody and signify ideas of moral decay, and their criminal acts are assessed in different ways to those of their male counterparts. We will explore the popular pulp fiction assessments of a number of contemporary figures alongside historical folklore.

 Key text

Maggie Wykes (2001)'Journalism, Justice, Gender and Violence' in *News Crime and Culture*, London, Pluto

Useful reading

Aileen: Life and Death of a Serial Killer (2004) documentary directed by Nick Broomfield

Margaret Atwood Alias Grace (1997) London: Virago Press

Barney Bardsley, 'Trial by Media: Popular images of women and crime' in Flowers in Hell: An Investigation into Women and Crime, 1987, London, Pandora.

Deborah Cameron and Elizabeth Frazer The Lust to Kill: a feminist investigation of sexual murder (1987) Polity Press: Cambridge

Norman Fairclough Discourse and Social Change (1992) Cambridge: Polity Press

Frances Heidenshohn, 'Images of deviant women', Women and Crime (1985), London, Macmillan.

Myra Hindley: A Life Sentence (1996) Channel 4 documentary

Adam Jaworski and Nikolas Coupland (editors) The Discourse Reader (1999) London: Routledge

McCracken, Scott (1998) *Pulp: Reading Popular Fiction*, Manchester University Press.

Munt, Sally, R, (1994) *Murder by the Book? Feminism and the Crime Novel,* London, Routledge.

Judith Walkowitz <u>City of Dreadful Delight: narratives of sexual danger in late Victorian London</u> (1992) London: Virago

Suggested media texts for use in the essay

Aileen: Life and Death of a serial killer (2003, Nick Broomfield)
Myra Hindley: A Life behind Bars (1996, Channel 4)
Bad Girls – TV series
Lost – depiction of character of Kate
Songbirds, Channel 4 TV, 15/12/05
Prisoner Cell Block H (Australian TV series)

Essay Questions relating to this topic:

What can representations of criminal women tell us about our anxieties regarding the Other? In your response, use specific examples from film, TV, photography, games, music, journalism or scripts you have studied**.**

Theme Three: Looking at the Other

Friday November 23 2007
Lecture 9: **Photography and the other**

This week we focus on photography and the construction of the 'other' by focusing on the work of British photographer Martin Parr.

We will look at Parr's photographs from different series such as 'Think of England', 'Bored Couples' and 'The Last Resort', to explore ideas of subjectivity and difference in relation to both Parr, as author, and his critics.

Key Text:

Gen Doy (2005) 'Subjects and Pictures' in *Picturing the Self: Changing Views of the Subject in Visual Culture*, London, IB Tauris.

Michelle Henning 'The subject as object: Photography and the human body' in Liz Wells (ed) (1998) *Photography: A Critical Introduction*, London, Routledge.

Useful reading:

Susan Bordo (1999) *The Male Body: A new look in public and private*, Farrar, Straus and Giroux, New York..

Regis Durand (1995) 'How to see (photographically)', pp141-151, in *Fugitive Images: From Photography to Video*, Petro, Patrice, Indiana University Press.

Andy Grundberg (1999) 'Subject and Style: Prospects for a New Documentary' pp196-199, in *Crisis of the Real: Writing on Photography since 1974,* Aperture.

David Levi Strauss (2003) 'Epiphany of the Other' pp42-50 in *Between the Eyes: Essays on Photography and Politics*, Strauss, Aperture.

Suzanne Moore (1988) 'Here's looking at You Kid!' (eds) Lorraine Gamman and Margaret Marshment, *The Female Gaze: Women as Viewers of Popular Culture,* The Women's Press, London.

Suggested photographers for use in the essay
Work of Diane Arbus, Richard Avedon, Lisette Modell.
Ethnographic photography (Horniman Museum)

Essay Question relating to this topic:

Critically analyse approaches to subjectivity in the work of at least two photographers you have studied?

Friday November 30 2007
Lecture 10: Western Images of Islam (Jenny Owen)

In this lecture we will explore the way the 'other' has been constructed in relation to ideas of the 'orient' and Islam. Recent events have renewed the focus on Islamic alterity, a positioning of Muslim difference that may be traced from Western Orientalism, through the Rushdie Affair, the reporting of the 9/11 attacks in the USA, and more recently the July 2005 attacks in London. Muslims are frequently represented in newspaper reports, however, they are much less visible in other forms of media. In any event Islam is largely presented as at once known and unknown. This lecture will examine such representation of cultural difference, examining how the Western media constructs Islam as Other.

Key Text:

Elizabeth Poole (2002) *Reporting Islam: Media representations of British Muslims*, London, NY, IB Taurus.

Useful reading:

Aijaz Ahmad (1990) 'The Rushdie Affair and the British Press' in Dan Cohnn-Sherbok (ed) *The Salman Rushdie Controversy in Inter-religious perspective*, Lewiston, Lampeter, Mellen.

Ali Behdad (1994) *Belated Travelers: Orientalism in the Age of Colonial Dissolution*, Durham, London, Duke University Press.

Homi.K.Bhabha (1999) 'The Other Question: The Stereotype and Colonial Discourse' in J.Evans and S.Hall (eds) *Visual Culture: The Reader*, London, Sage.

Mary Ann Doane (1999) 'Dark Continents: Epistemologies of racial and sexual difference in psychoanalysis and the cinema' in J.Evans and S.Hall (eds) *Visual Culture: The Reader*, London, Sage.

Stuart Hall (1997) *Representation: Cultural Representations and Signifying practices*, London, Sage.

Stuart Hall (2001) 'The Spectacle of the Other' in Margaret Wetherell et al (eds) *Discourse Theory and Practice*, London, Sage.

Mohja Kahf (1999) *Western Representations of the Muslim woman: from Termagant to Odalisque*, Austin, University of Texas Press.

Bruce. B. Lawrence (1998) *Shattering the myth: Islam beyond violence*, Princeton, NJ, Princeton University Press.

Elizabeth Poole (2002) *Reporting Islam: Media representations of British Muslims*, London, NY, IB Taurus.

Malise Ruthven (1991) A Satanic Affair: Salman Rushdie and the Wrath of Islam, London, Hogarth.

Edward Said (1985) *Orientalism*, London, Penguin.

Edward Said (1993) *Culture and Imperialism*, London, Chatto and Windus.

Edward Said (2004) From 'Orientalism' in A. Easthope and K.McGowan (eds) *A Critical and Cultural Theory Reader*, Maidenhead, Open University Press**.**

Edward Said (1997) 'Islam and the West' in *Covering Islam: How the Media and the experts determine how we see the rest of the world'*, London, Vintage, Chpt 1, part 1.

M. Sturken and L. Cartwright (2001) *Practices of Looking*, Oxford, OUP.

Andrew Tolson (1996) *Mediations: Text and Discourse in Media Studies*, New York, Arnold, Chpt 7.

Cornel West (1993) 'The New Cultural Politics of Difference' in Simon During (ed) *The Cultural Studies Reader*, London, Routledge.

K. Woodward (ed) (1997) *Identity and Difference*, London, Sage.

Robert Young (1990) *White Mythologies: Writing History and the West*, NY, Routledge.

Robert Young (1995*) Colonial Desire: Hybridity in Theory, Culture and Race*, London, Routledge.

Suggested media texts for use in the essay

The Battle for Algiers
Newspaper/magazine coverage of veiled Muslim women
Newspaper coverage of Islam and Muslims in general
Work of contemporary video artist and photographer, Shirin Neshat, piece called 'Rapture' – explores gender, identity and culture.

Essay Question relating to this topic:

To what extent do stereotypes contribute to the representation of a cultural Other? Discuss with reference to either the representation of Islam or black identity in contemporary media.

Friday December 7 2007
Lecture 11: Screening: *The Battle for Algiers (1965)*
By way of contrast to the stereotypical representation of Islam and Muslims in much contemporary media, we will watch Gillo Pontecorvo's classic film *The Battle of Algiers* (1965), a 'drama-documentary' describing the Algerian insurrection against their French colonial masters in the late 1950s. The film's point of view takes the side of the rebellious Algerians and leads us through a harrowing set of sequences where Algerian women plant bombs in a café, a milk bar and the offices of Air France. The film's positioning of the audience as sympathisers with the 'terrorists' raises difficult questions for the viewer; however, as a leader of the FLN (the Algerian liberation movement) points out, when he is attacked in the film by a French journalist for deploying bombs in baskets to kill civilians, 'Give us your bombers [aircraft] and you can have our baskets'.

Key text:

Ben Highmore (2005) 'Colonial Spacing – Control and conflict in the colonial and neo-colonial city' in Cityscapes: Cultural readings in the material and symbolic city, London, Palgrave.

Questions to consider during the screening:

(1) Does the film conform to the strictures of orientalist discourse?
(2) Are the Algerians represented as the Other?
(3) What discourses besides orientalism can you identify?

Friday December 14 2006
Lecture 12: The significant other revisited

In this lecture we will revisit the key themes addressed in lectures and consider how best to prepare for the assignment.

9. Learning Resources

9.1 Core Materials

Providing references and a bibliography

You should make only shorthand references to sources in the text of your work. Full details of each source should be given in the bibliography.

References

References indicate the sources from which information is drawn. Referencing should be done to acknowledge your debt to other writers, demonstrate the body of knowledge on which your research is based and enable those who read your work to identify and locate your sources readily.

The Harvard method of referencing is now the most commonly used in textbooks and essay writing. It is an easy method to use and we recommend it for this reason.

References within the body of your work

Direct quotations, statements of fact, attributed statements and the like must always be followed by a short reference. You should not give full details here; the full title of the work, its place of publication and publisher should appear in the bibliography at the end of the essay.

The author's surname, the year of publication and the page number(s) should appear after the statement. For example,

Laura Mulvey argues, "Cinema offers a number of different pleasures" (Mulvey, 1975: 806).

In some cases you will not have consulted the original source, but will have come across the information in a secondary source. You should acknowledge that you did not consult the original source thus

Laura Mulvey argues, "Cinema offers a number of different pleasures" (Mulvey, 1975, cited in Tolson, 1996: 210).

Quotations

It must be made clear when you are quoting directly from speech and writing. Quotations of fewer than three lines should be enclosed in quotation marks and included in the paragraph, as in the example above.

Quotations of more than three lines should be separated from the main paragraph and indented. They do not need quotation marks.

Bibliography

In the body of your essay you will only have provided a short reference to the author. At the end of your essay you must give full details of each publication to which you referred in the essay.

List, in alphabetical order by surname, the sources to which you made shorthand references in the text of your work. There is no need to divide your list into separate sections for books, journal articles etc. You simply need to provide one alphabetical list of all sources.

Books should be cited thus:

Kuhn, A (1994) Women's Pictures London: Verso

Author (date of publication in brackets) title underlined or *in italics* place of publication: publisher.

Articles in edited collections:

Meech, P (1999) 'Advertising' in J Stokes and A reading (Eds.) The Media in Britain: Current Debates and Developments London: Macmillan, pp. 25-40.

Author of article, date of publication (in brackets) title of chapter (in inverted commas) in Editor (s) of book (Ed(s).) title of book underlined or *in italics* place of publication, publisher, page numbers.

Journal articles:

Mulvey, L (1975) 'Visual pleasure and narrative cinema', <u>Screen</u> vol. 16 no. 3 (1975), pp. 6-18.

Author of article, date of publication of the journal (in brackets) title of article (in inverted commas), title of journal <u>underlined</u> or *in italics*, volume details, page numbers. No publisher is necessary.

Newspapers and magazines (print editions)

Walker, M (1997) 'Comin' at Ya!' <u>The Guardian</u> 29 April 1997. Media section pp. 2-3.

Author of the article, year of publication of the newspaper (in brackets) title of article (in inverted commas) title of newspaper or magazine <u>underlined</u> or *in italics* full date of publication, page number(s). No publisher is necessary.

Most newspaper and magazine articles show the author of the article. Where no author is shown (e.g. an editorial) you should list the newspaper as author.

Web sites:

Just as with a printed book or article, you need an author, date and title of an Internet article. For the publisher use the web site address or URL. Because Internet resources are often updated you should give the date you retrieved the article:

Stafford, R (2002) <u>Where's the black in the Union Jack?</u> <u>www.itpmag.demon.co.uk/blackbritishcinema.html</u> Date accessed: 5 September 2004

The web sites of institutions such as the BBC often sometimes attach authors' names to articles, but if there is no name put the institution as the author.

BBC (2004) <u>About the BBC: purpose and values</u> <u>www.bbc.co.uk</u> Date accessed: 5 September 2004

Films:

Jurassic Park. Steven Spielberg. USA. 1993

Title underlined or *in italics*. Director's name Country of production. Year of release.

Videotape, audiotape and DVD

Give the format and the producers of the videotape, audiotape or DVD:

Brief Encounter David Lean. UK. 1945. Rank Classic Collection. VHS.

Television and radio broadcasts:

Auntie: the Inside Story of the BBC part 1: The House That Reith Built. BBC2 2 June 1995.

Title of series underlined or *in italics,* title of episode, channel and date of transmission.

NOTES

What is a 'significant other'? (Jenny Owen, Introduction to Significant Others Lecture, 28/09/07)

NB:

The notes in this document form the basis of the PowerPoint presentation for the first lecture in the Significant Others lecture programme. You may use this material in your final assignment providing you acknowledge it as a source, using the Harvard reference system. However, you should be very wary of quoting great chunks of it. Use this document to guide your own reading and to develop your own ideas. You will lose marks in your assignment if you borrow too heavily from lecture notes given by staff. If you do use material from this document you should refer to it as - Jenny Owen (2006) Introduction to Significant Others lecture, LSBU, 29/09/06 – and don't forget to give page numbers – just as you would with any other citation. If you are citing authors that I have cited you must say so – even better, read them for yourself!! If in doubt about how to reference your work please ask me or refer to notes on referencing in 9.1 Core Materials section of this Unit Guide.

What is a 'significant other' and why is the idea of the 'other' important in media and cultural theory? How will I be able to use the ideas I encounter in this unit to engage with my own media/cultural practice? The lecture programme is organised thematically to help you engage with lots of examples from the media and culture

Why is the unit called Significant Others?

The title of this unit is quite strange and intriguing. What does it mean?

The phrase has two meanings really. Sometimes people use the term 'significant other' to describe their partner – 'my other half' – the person/people who have significance in their lives. However, this isn't really how we are using the term, although it is related. For us the phrase 'significant other' is a reference to our interest in issues of identity, difference and how identity is produced. So if you want to know what this unit is all about it is IDENTITY, DIFFERENCE and the REPRESENTATION of identity and difference.

Let me explain further. Stuart Hall (1992) argues that identities are not self-generating or internal to the self but cultural all the way – they are socially/culturally produced; and that subjects (selves, you and me) are constituted through processes of acculturation (socialisation). For Hall, the 'inner core of the subject is not autonomous and self-sufficient but is formed in relation

to the 'significant others' who mediates to the subject the values, meanings and symbols (the culture) of the worlds he/she inhabits'.

So, when we called this unit SIGNIFICANT OTHERS it was to this idea that we were referring.

From this perspective our identity is not autonomous, inherent or an 'essential' or given part of us (that we are born with perhaps) – instead our identity is culturally produced by significant others – could be the family, religion, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, age etc – in short, our identity is produced by the power relations we are born into and that shape our lives.

In contemporary western society there is a pervasive, 'commonsense' view that we have 'true selves', a 'real me', an identity that is ours to possess and shape, and very often we think of identity as finding expression in an array of representation – our music (hiphop, R&B, soul, garage, funk, punk) or our clothes (skater-boy, Goth, hippie, punk), or our lifestyles (Sloane ranger, traveller, yuppie). In this way of thinking, our identity is seen as something that can be signified through signs of taste, belief, attitudes and lifestyle. In Cultural Studies and Media Studies we are concerned to 'map' and understand how identity is shaped and how it is represented. Cultural Studies writers – and particularly writers associated with post-structuralism (more of this later) take issue with the 'commonsense' idea that our identities are natural, innate or that we can be reduced to some kind of essential 'I' – or pure essence of self. And it is in this unit, Significant Others that we will engage with many of the arguments that they engage with.

Why does identity matter? Are we living in an era of 'identity crisis'?

In modern, western societies the notion of who we are - and that by using our reason, we can understand and shape the world - has led to an increasingly individualistic (possibly fragmented) society, driven by what might even be called an 'identity crisis' – or if not a crisis – an increased concentration on the importance of identity. Not just individual identity either. National identity too has become very important.

In latter part of 20th century nationalist movements in places as far afield as Yugoslavia and Rwanda led to the slaughter of millions. These nationalist movements used the idea of an essential national identity as a justification for violence and terror.

Now in first decade of 21st century there is a new 'identity' conundrum around the terror attacks – first on the US in Sept 2001 and more recently in Madrid (2004) and London (2005). These attacks, led by so-called 'fundamentalist' Islamists have raised a number of questions for all of us: what does it mean to be a Muslim in the west? What does it mean to live in a multi-ethnic, multi-faith society?

Those are the big questions. For those of us living in these cities, there are smaller, more personal questions about identity – how can we be sure of the 'identity' of the person sitting next to us…especially when he/she looks like us…how can we tell whether or not someone is a suicide bomber since they can pass amongst us so easily. When we look at the CCTV footage of the 7 July 2005 bombers they just look like ordinary lads. Nothing unusual at all. Jeans, trainers, rucksacks – could be your brother or husband/boyfriend.

Not just a philosophical question this. Also about our human rights and civil liberties. The police got it horribly wrong with Jean Charles de Menedez, the innocent Brazilian shot dead at Stockwell tube (July 2005), and now the forces of the state – the police and judiciary – are being used to control us in more repressive ways than before. Our identities in relation to the state now seem quite fragile and under threat. How would you prove that you are not a suicide bomber in such a situation?

Guardian on 22 September 2005 ran a story about a French journalist who was stopped on the tube and arrested on suspicion of being a terrorist because his behaviour seemed suspicious. The grounds for the arrest (as told to the journalist by the police) were that he went into the station without looking at the police officers at the entrance or by the gates, that two other men had entered the station at the same time as him, that he was wearing a jacket the police deemed 'too warm for the season', that he was carrying a bulky rucksack that he kept with him at all times, that he looked at people coming on the platform and that he played with his phone and then took a paper from inside his jacket!!! After being arrested, having his house searched, finger prints and DNA samples taken the journalist was eventually released without charge. All these details about this man will remain on the Police National Computer (PNC) even though the police consider him innocent – and if they fully share this information with Interpol and other police databases around the world, this man's details will presumably be passed on.

The article ends with the journalist saying:

> 'Isn't a state that keeps files on innocent persons a police state? This erosion of our fundamental liberties should be of concern to us all. All men are suspect but some men are more suspect than others (with apologies to George Orwell)'.

Not just in politics that identity in 21st century is played out. Also in media industries – in celebrity culture and more broadly, the entertainment industries but more of this in the section on the 'media and identity'.

Ways of looking at identity (essentialism, anti-essentialism and strategic essentialism)

In the west the search for identity is based on the idea that such a 'thing' can be found and that identity is a core of self that we all possess – some kind of essence of identity. We call this way of thinking – essentialism. An essentialist point of view would say that stable truths could be found to describe the essence of femininity or blackness for example.

Not everyone subscribes to this view however. Post-structuralist writers argue that identity is cultural 'all the way down' and is specific to particular times and places – this would be the anti-essentialist argument – identities are what are called 'discursive constructions' which change their meanings according to time, place and usage.

There is a further term related to essentialism and this is strategic essentialism. In the women's movement for instance the fixed category of 'woman' has been used for the purposes of mobilising women in feminist political action – even though there are clearly very many kinds of 'women' – black, Asian, disabled, gay, working class, upper class etc.

In the 20th century a number of sociologists have explored the way in which identity is constructed. American sociologist Erving Goffman writing in the 1960s used theatrical metaphors (the social actor) to explore the ways in which meaningful social relationships are created and maintained between individuals. He was concerned to map how people learn to 'manage' their identities/their presentation of self. His most famous example is that of the waiter who presents one self in the dining room (a polite and deferential self) and another self in the kitchen (cynical or disdainful) – for Goffman it is the encounter (the social context) that shapes the self, not some innate essence of self.

Another American sociologist, also writing in the 1960s, H. Garfinkel (1967) focused on the way an inter-sexed person called 'Agnes' managed her adopted gender. Garfinkel's study of Agnes' 'passing' as a woman showed the various ways in which gender identity is maintained without recourse to some kind of biological essence. Agnes was not biologically a female (as far as anyone could tell at the time) but she appeared convincingly female, with a conventional figure, no facial hair, and small hands and feet. She seemed perfectly at ease in normal female clothing, and her voice and manner were conventionally female. Biologically, she also had male genitalia, and no uterus or ovaries. There was some evidence of female hormonal activity; however, Agnes was raised as a boy until she was 17.

The biographical account offered by Agnes showed continual problems with a masculine identity and the gradual emergence of feminine signs. She finally left home, dressed as a girl, and lived in another town for a while where she sought

hospital treatment [for a sex-change operation]. Agnes' adult life was fraught with problems especially since she formed a close relationship to a boyfriend 'Bill'. She was offered a sex-change operation, involving castration and the partial reconstruction of female genitalia.

In short, Garfinkel's study of Agnes and her 'passing' as female, demonstrates that unlike with Goffman (who saw individuals managing their identities in episodes – like the waiter) – Agnes was able to manage her female identity on an almost full time basis; this seemed to suggest that if Agnes could do it, so can we...perhaps that is what we all do all the time – manage our identities, and it has nothing to do with any biological 'reality'.

Anthony Giddens (1991) the UK sociologist argues that self identity is constituted by the ability to sustain a narrative about the self – a biographical continuity. Identity is not a collection of traits we possess, or something we possess – it is a way of thinking about ourselves – however, what we think about ourselves changes from circumstance to circumstance and over time. Giddens sees identity as a project – something we create – something always in process, moving towards rather than an arrival (cited by Chris Barker, 2000, p166).

Stuart Hall in 'The question of cultural identity' (1992) identified three different ways of conceptualising identity. For Hall identity for the modern subject has become 'decentred' and there are five 'ruptures in the discourse of modern knowledge' that have contributed to this: Marxism, Psychoanalysis, Feminism, the centrality of language and the work of Foucault. (See Chris Barker, 2000, p166 for detailed discussion of this).

(1) The Enlightenment subject
The idea of self as a unique unified agent emerged in the Enlightenment period – this was a philosophical movement associated with the idea that reason and rationality form the basis for human progress. This is also known as the Cartesian subject – Descartes famously pronounced that 'I think, therefore I am' – this declaration placed the rational, conscious individual at the heart of western philosophy (cited by Chris Barker, 2000, p166).

(2) The sociological subject
If the self is 'cultural all the way down' then we might want to call this self the sociological subject. Stuart Hall says that for this subject the inner core

> 'was not autonomous and self sufficient but was formed in relation to significant others, who mediated to the subject the values, meanings and symbols – the culture – of the worlds he/she inhabited'.

Our first significant others are likely to be family, from whom we learn through praise and punishment, imitation and language 'how to do' social life. In the sociological subject the self is conceived as having some kind of inner core but it

is formed interactively between the inner world and the outside social world – indeed, the internalisation of social values ensures that the individual is stitched into the fabric of the social structure.

(3) The postmodern subject

This subject is different from the sociological subject because he/she is decentred or postmodern. This subject has shifting, fragmented and multiple identities.

Stuart Hall argues therefore from an anti-essentialist position in which cultural identity is seen as something that coheres around points of similarity and points of difference – there is no essence of cultural identity to be discovered, in stead 'cultural identity is continually being produced within the vectors of similarity and difference' (Chris Barker, 2000, p177).

Thus, identifications of class, gender, sexuality, age, ethnicity, nationality, political position, moralilty, religion etc are discursive positions that are unstable. The meaning of Americanness, Britishness, Frenchness, Blackness, masculinity, femininity and so forth, are subject to continual change since meaning is never finished or completed.

> 'Identity therefore becomes a cut or a snapshot of unfolding meanings – it is a strategic positioning which makes meaning possible. This anti-essentialist position does not mean that we cannot speak of identity. Rather, it points us to the political nature of identity as a 'production' and to the possibility of multiple, shifting and fragmented identities which can be articulated together in a variety of ways' (Chris Barker, 2000, p177).

The media and identity: the performance of 'extraordinary subjectivity'

In the last 10 years the 'intrusion of the individual' as Jon Dovey (2000) calls it has penetrated all forms of media. In his book *Freakshow: First Person Media and Factual TV* Dovey explores the ways in which the subjective and personal (autobiographical and confessional) have proliferated in factual TV throughout the 1990s. We see it in shows like *Video Diaries*, reality TV (*Big Brother*) but also in all forms of documentary and factual entertainment – like *Supernanny* and *Little Angels* - where people expose their families and themselves to the scrutinising gaze of the TV camera and the TV audience. Then of course there are the celebrity exposes – '*I'm a celebrity get me outta here…*', the spin off romance - *Jordan and Peter* (last time I tuned in it was to hear Peter describing in great detail the exact words that were spoken and the emotions felt, when Jordan/Katie Price gave birth to their baby), *Britney and Kevin* and so on. This intimate revelation is a key part of the public performance of identity…and it's not just the public who are engaged in it, increasingly filmmakers themselves are in

the picture and not behind the camera….it is this that Dovey calls 'first person media'.

Dovey is not entirely comfortable with these developments, hence the title of his book *Freakshow.* For him it is neoliberal economics that have opened up new domains for expression of identity and these spaces have been filled by voices proclaiming and celebrating their own 'freakishness' – they are performing their 'extraordinary subjectivities' (Dovey, 2000, pp1-14).

Not just TV of course where these experiments with identity are being 'performed'. The pages of women's (increasingly men's) and celebrity magazines (like *Hello!* and *OK!* And *Heat*) are full of both celebrities and ordinary people confessing and performing their identities in one way or another. Cyberspace is also another important arena for people to assert and experiment with identity – there are virtual communities of all kinds for people to find affinities with – from the harmless (people who enjoy *Eastenders* and want to discuss it with one another in a dedicated chatroom) to the more sinister (young people who want to talk about suicide). In 1996 Jennifer Ripley set up a webcam in her bedroom and by 1997 was claiming that she had over 15000 users and was earning over $200,000 a year for allowing viewers into her private domain (Dovey, 2000, pp24-5).

In Foucauldian terms (we'll consider Foucault in more detail later in the Unit) we are witnessing the 'evolution of a new 'regime of truth' based upon the foregrounding of individual subjective experience at the expense of more general truth claims' about the nature of the world. For Dovey, these changes in TV mirror wider changes in our society where the focus is on the subjective rather than the objective, towards reflexivity rather than transparency and towards a 'theatre of intimacy' which reflects not only the political economy of global mass media but also important developments in the relationship between identity and culture' (Dovey, 2000,p26). For Dovey, 'the incessant performance of intimacy, of deviance and horror in factual programming is part of a mechanism for producing normative identities in the public, communicative spaces of broadcasting' (Dovey, 2000, p26).

Normative identities suggest both a moral hegemony and the idea of the coherent subject. This is at odds with critical theory which proposes a fragmented, decentred self, and the emergence of complex 'cyborg' identities; however, Dovey suggests that first person media with 'its contested iteration of 'raw' intimate human experience, can be seen as creating a balance for that lack of narrative coherence, for the complexity in our own lives' (2000, p26).

In short, argues Dovey:

'Subjectivity, the personal, the intimate' are the only responses to a 'chaotic, senseless, out-of-control world in which the kind of objectivity demanded by grand narratives is no longer possible' (2000, p26).

In documentary film a good example of this turn to first person narrative can be seen in the work of Nick Broomfield. Broomfield's style is characterised by a display of strategies for dealing with the personal, the subjective. Broomfield is not the only filmmaker to use these strategies, but he's one of the most famous, along with Michael Moore. Broomfield's early documentary style was quite different. It was clearly oppositional and more obviously political with films such as *Rent Strike* (1974). By the 1990s he'd developed an 'entertaining and irritating documentary style that is predicated on his own bumbling ineffectual presence as investigator…the figure who constantly fails to get the essential interview' (Dovey, 2000, p28).

In Broomfield's films (*The Leader, the Driver and the Driver's Wife*, 1991, about Afrikaner neo fascist Eugene Terreblanche, *Aileen Wournos: The Selling of a Serial Killer*, 1993; *Hiedi Fleiss: Hollywood Madam*, 1995; *Fetishes*, 1996; *Kurt and Courtney*, 1997) he has honed his skill at showing what used to be considered irrelevant to the story – its institutional and methodological superstructure, the behind-the-scenes stuff – now, all of this gets foregrounded and the process of documentary film making is laid out for us to see. The purpose and effect of this is to signal the idea of 'objectivity' as deeply problematic. As a viewer however, these films can be quite troubling. We ask ourselves, what is Broomfield trying to say about the characters in his films and the situations they find themselves in – are we destined merely to find out more about him? What is it that we are seeing and what should we think about what we are seeing? In Broomfield's films we are just not sure.

Dovey is also very interested in the idea of the confessional tone of so much first person programme making. He uses the ideas of Michel Foucault to explore this approach, arguing for example, that Foucault's work on the history of confession is a way of 'framing the contemporary demand for first person, subjective speech in contemporary media' (Dovey,2000, p105).

Foucault's work, argues Dovey (2000, pp105-106) is relevant in a number of ways:

(1) Foucault claims that the confession is a foundation of western ontology; that without 'confessional discourse there would be no self'. Foucault argues that confessional discourse has 'dispersed itself into every aspect of social practice as a structuring process which generates the whole experience of individual identity' (Dovey, 2000, p105).
(2) This self-speaking takes place within power relations – the priest, the doctor, the teacher, the analyst – and these relations play out the speaker's submission to the naming authority.

(3) In TV the ideological significance of exposure to difference or deviance is to position the TV viewer as the confessor. In this analysis the viewer internalises and endorses a set of social norms against which a display of deviance can be measured.

(4) For Foucault 'speaking out' – naming, confessing – are part of a 'perpetual spiral of power and pleasure' so that what is 'peculiar to modern societies, in fact, is not that they consigned sex to a shadow existence but that they dedicated themselves to speaking of it ad infinitum, while exploiting it as a secret – you can see this approach in Jordan and Pete/Britney and Kevin – the address to the viewer is 'here, listen to my secrets' – 'just you and me' – but the viewer cannot keep their secrets because they are a public!

(5) For Foucault relationships of repression and liberation are paralleled by power and pleasure – power is a productive force and not necessarily always negative. Thus, 'whilst some of the identity formations produced within the TV matrix may carry the mark of power as people are constructed as deviant, outsiders or marginal, it is possible to argue that there are other forms of self-speaking that slip the net of the confessional and become politically challenging, empowering statements not just for the individual speakers but for the social body' (Dovey, 2000, p106).

Contemporary confessional media are quite different from 'Church confession' – now we have open-discourse, a torrent of self-speaking on the TV, internet, mobile phone. Indeed, the mobile phone is a good example of the 'open confessional' – our daily life is now constantly interspersed with openly private moments. The idea of the confession no longer 'commands a totalising grip on identity' – and we now have what Dovey calls 'TV's matrix of self-hood' (2000, p108).

Another writer who uses Foucauldian ideas to useful effect is David Marshall in *Celebrity and Power* (1997). Marshall sees celebrity as a set of discourses that regulate the relationship between what it means to be an individual and what it means to be part of a wider collective identity.

In *Understanding Media: Inside Celebrity* (2005) Desmond Hesemondhalgh identifies Marshall's indebtedness to Foucault. Hesmondhalgh argues that Marshall (1997), like Foucault, is interested in understanding the nature of power, and that Marshall sees celebrity as involving a different and less definable form of power than those forms invested in institutions like legislatures, government bureaucracies and even the media (Hesmondhalgh, 2005, pp120-121).

Unlike critiques which see power in merely oppositional terms (those who have power and those who don't) a Foucauldian approach offers us a way of thinking about the dispersed nature of power and its operation; and also insights into the ways that power is internalised. Foucault's work shows how modern forms of power are distinct from older forms and so he sees power less as primarily

invested in the state, business or producers; he sees it instead as more widely dispersed in the family, schools, medicine, law etc (Hesmondhalgh, 2005, p121).

This has important political implications because liberal pluralists and Marxists emphasise the state as a key locus for political action. Foucault's approach suggests that political action is possible and desirable in a whole host of places neglected very often by the radical left. It is easy to see why therefore, that Foucault's ideas have been very fashionable in an era of new social movements based around questions of identity and experience – feminism, queer activism, environmentalism etc (Hesmondhalgh, 2005: p121)

Central to Foucault's work is the idea that power works through discourses or discursive formations, sets of social rules/knowledge that govern what it is possible to say, do or know. Hesmondhalgh argues that for Marshall, celebrity

'provides social rules and knowledge that regulates the relationship between being an individual and being part of a wider collective identity' (2005, p122).

To explain this Hesmondhalgh argues that Marshall points to two contradictory representations of personal and collective power in modern western democracies – and makes the following points:
1) All individuals have power either as citizens or as consumers.
2) Democracy means that the collective will is all powerful.

So, which is it?

Hesmondhalgh notes that there has been considerable anxiety throughout the late 19th and 20th centuries about the masses; large collectivities have been historically associated with the non-rational (the mob/the crowd) which was seen as volatile and dangerous. However, the collective is also seen as desirable; if the masses can be controlled, educated and contained, they can act as consumers for products or as voters legitimising authority of rulers – all of which are very useful in late capitalist societies.
Hesmondhalgh argues that in Marshall's view it is celebrity that helps achieve this accommodation, and this is why he thinks it is important. Modern life involves complex relationships between attempts to run the 'system' on the basis of reason and on the other, the way human beings continue to be driven by the non-rational aspects of themselves. So, for Marshall, celebrity provides the opportunity to think about how the non-rational domain of the emotions has important social implications (cited by Hesmondhalgh, 2005, p122)

Hesemondhalgh (2005) argues that for Marshall (1997) it is the entertainment industries that construct celebrities and celebrities play two very important roles in mass, democratic societies:
(1) Celebrities act as representative embodiments for the rest of us; they tell us what it is like to be an individual – we witness their struggles to present

themselves to the world, and relate this to our own efforts to present ourselves: 'the celebrity is the independent individual par excellence' (Marshall, 1997, p246 cited by Hesmondhalgh, 2005, p122). Discourses of celebrity suggest that anyone can achieve successful individuality by sheer force of will.

(2) Celebrities serve to control the masses and channel their emotional energies. Variety of celebrities in entertainment industries can act as brand names, organising mass taste into marketable units for consumption and who can act as points of identification for audiences in a society in which other forms of collective identity such as class and ethnicity, are arguably becoming looser. Sharon Osbourne is a good example of this – her presentation of self is all about being an 'ordinary' mum who has survived the ups and downs of a long marriage and three teenage children, who struggles with an eating disorder and cancer. The Osbournes do useful work therefore in reinforcing the primacy of the nuclear family – they are as 'unconventional' as can be but they are all recognisable in their roles of loving mum, batty dad, badly behaved teens. The message is, if they can survive drugs, eating disorders and the freakiness of fame, then so can we.

In short, celebrities provide key ways in which people come together in containable ways rather than in groups that might be more disruptive of the social order.

Some concluding thoughts:

- This unit is called Significant Others because our identity is not inherent – our identity/identities are culturally produced by significant others (family, religion, ethnicity, gender) – we are produced by the power relations that shape our lives.
- In the west common sense view is that we have 'true selves' and that our identity is expressed through various forms of representation – our music, our clothes – our lifestyles.
- While our identity may be signified through signs of taste, belief, attitudes or lifestyle, in media/cultural studies we question the assumption that identity is either something we possess or a fixed quality. At the same time we are concerned to map the ways identity is represented in the media and what these representations can tell us about ourselves at any given time.
- We have encountered some important concepts: essentialism, anti-essentialism and strategic essentialism – you will need to familiarise yourself with these terms and be able to discuss them in your essay.
- We have also identified a number of ways of looking at identity: Goffman and his presentation of self (the waiter who presents two different identities); Garfinkel and 'Agnes' who manages her gendered identity on a full time basis; Giddens who proposes self identity is all about sustaining

narratives of the self and then Stuart Hall – with his enlightenment subject, his sociological subject and his postmodern subject.

- Finally, we looked at the media and identity, noting how prevalent the subjective and the personal (autobiographical and confessional), what Dovey (2000) calls 'first person media' have become in recent years. This focus on producing normative identities produces both a moral imperative and the suggestion that there is such a thing as a coherent subject. Dovey (2000) suggests that first person media may create a balance for audiences who in fact lack that narrative coherence in increasingly complex lives

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