

4-D: Digital, Dynamic, Diverse, Democratic - Conference on New Media and Multicultural America

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**Clara M Chu on diversity**

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...That allow us to be familiar with is that the culture that we're socialized into influence consciously or unconsciously our behavior. So how we act, how we do certain things in Germany, it's because we're socialized that way, and we may not necessarily think about how we go about these things.

So oftentimes people ask, what's the difference between culture, ethnicity and race. Well, one of the definitions that I like to use is by Omi and Winant in terms of what race is. And they describe race as a concept which signifies and symbolizes social conflicts and interests by referring to different types of human bodies. That means that whenever we think about race, we think about how physically someone might look. However, that physical difference shouldn't be a matter, okay? It's okay to say, you know, this person is taller, or this person is darker, or this person has curlier hair. Where this difference does matter is when we start to attribute it positively to one feature and negatively to another feature, and that's where concept of race is important. It's for all of us to recognize that we socialize into categorizing individuals. And categorizing in ways that sometimes to better understand a particular group or start to generalize and to stereotype.

Now these as information and culture institutions are very important. When we are thinking of situations where we're in a conflict, any time there's been a war, then it's the conqueror who decides what history is told. It's the conqueror who will destroy the culture, culture institutions or other information institutions of the particular locale that they have conquered. So this is just one example of some images you'll see of the damage in Iraq.

So just to show how important information is: You have seen pictures that were there ??? after Katrina, so, post-Katrina, as individuals were trying to find dry land, trying to survive after the heavy flood. Then you saw that the media reported very similar instances. So to my right hand side you'll see that the description is: Two white residents of new Orleans, and they indicated that they were able to find food that they were carrying with them. On the left-hand side then you have an African American fellow, and what they say is that he looted, or he stole, the food. So, very similar images, but the description of how the media represented the information was very different. There

was no interviewing the happening of these two cases. It was just the particular representation. And this happens very often in the media.

So information is not that thing. So the information they share with you, they share with your students in the classroom, the information that you see in the media or the information that we collect or maybe access from the libraries may have some bias. And so for us is to recognize that bias may exist or may not exist, and just to have all that diversity of material. I'm not saying get rid of that bias material, because that's what learning is about. Learning is about making sure that all of these materials exist, to represent the full spectrum of society.