Culture and Perception

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Culture and Perception – The African American Culture

The world has growth at an unprecedented rate in the past century alone. Cultures fell and new ones were borne out of it. While many cultures were able to stand the test of time, there are many that went extinct over a period of time. The cultures that exist today all derive elements from one another, however, at the same time they are uniquely their own. Given how intermingled and close the world has become as a whole, it is essential that most of us become familiar with a range of cultural backgrounds and make an effort to understand patterns, values, languages, architecture, pastime, art, all the way to how each culture behaves as a society. Thus way, we can always at minimum make the attempt to understand each other and help each other out.

The African American Culture is deeply influenced by their origins in the New World. Their cultural identity is deeply rooted in their historical involvement in the society, especially after being enslaved for such a long period of time. In 1619, the Africans were brought to Jamestown by the Virginia Company as a means of cheap labor. Initially, the Africans that arrived were not slaves, despite their poor economic conditions and the poor treatment they received, they were free to associate with one another (Neuliep, J., 2018). The started their families and their children were born free. However, by 1660s the British passed a law rendering African Americans i.e. the people being brought over from Africa as cheap labor will be treated as slaves from that point onwards.

Considering how the Africans were unfamiliar to the language of the people living in the new world, their language evolved overtime, and was eventually came to be known as Ebonics. The word Ebonics is derived from the word Ebony and Phonics. It was first devised in 1973. It is referred to a grammatically complex speech pattern used by many Black Americans. The thing about Ebonics is the speech pattern is that the language was developed as a result of coming in contact with the Europeans (Neuliep, J., 2018). The new language came as a result of the influence was French, Portuguese, or English. Eventually, as the people progresses and generations of their people started calling America their home, their language evolved and their mannerism. However, despite the progress, there remained a difference between the Europeans that made American their home and the Africans that were brought in the area. As the years have gone by, this gap has been greatly reduced, however, they still remain far behind in terms of education, employment, housing, and income (Puchner, L., & Markowitz, L., 2015).

For far too long, the depiction of the African American culture in the media has mostly concentrated on their origins and their role as slaves and servants. Even the shows that had nothing to be with these subjects often portrayed these segments as society as lesser than their Caucasian counterparts. African Americans on television programs were generally depicted in service or blue-collar occupations, such as house cleaners or a postal worker (Seggar and Wheeler, 1973). If it weren’t these blue-collar positions, then they usually confined to their roles of a cook, a crook, an entertainer, a musician, an athlete, or a corrupt person (Warren 1988). While these depictions have become lesser and lesser in frequency as we entered the 21st century, where media became more progressive, with inclusivity being seen as the theme of the century, the times have changed for the better. In mainstream media, the African American are being given the respect that is owed to them and they deserve in society. The election of Barak Obama as the President of the United States has a lot to do with this change in society, he was key to this changing perception and made people see the other side of a community they treated as inferior to themselves.

Even with the change in views and the mainstream media treating African Americans in a much better light than they did before, what remains is the fact that the government offices and various units of society do not conform to the idea any longer. For instance, a young African American man and his case began trending the news outlets some time ago. The young man Shaquille Dukes was admitted to the hospital with double pneumonia. He stated that the doctor asked him to walk around the hospital so that he may feel better. Thus, he decided to go for a stroll outside the hospital entrance, while remaining within premises. However, he was stopped in his tracks by a security guard that stopped him and accused him of trying to steal the equipment and sale it on eBay (Miettinen & Carter, 2019). The thing that baffles me about this situation is the fact that the young man was hooked on to the IV and was pushing the equipment. As the police officer was transporting the young man, he had a seizure and asthma attack. The stereotypic response to a young black man could have cost him his life, which makes me question what the security guard was thinking in the first place. Media has played a huge role in propagating this view held by people. While it is doing all that it possibly can to revert the view held by society, the slogan “Black Lives Matter” still holds prominence in society as a whole.

The way people are portrayed in the media affects how people portray they in reality. The media not only influences the form and content of information and messages, but it also affects how people understands each other in the process of human communication, especially those from different cultural or ethical groups. Electronic exchange of information plays a huge role in international communication. This often affect and dictate the interaction around the globe. Social media has become ambiguous of international communication. Some people like to use the new age communication vehicle and others like to stick to the regular way of communicating to one another (Boyd, D. M., & Ellison, N. B. 2007).

There are many roles the mass media channels play in intercultural communications, although it does create a lot of impact on intercultural perceptions and interactions. Some of the roles they play is keeping the world connected meaning, other people from across the globe know what is going on in your country or culture from thousands of miles away. Although, it created many different views and stereotypes about other cultures that are false, that has big impact on intercultural perceptions and interactions. It can also create too much diversity in the cultures because of these stereotypes, it raises the question of how to determine rather or not what the media is saying is true or false.

Although, desire it flaws it’s has been very successful as technology gets better and we find and learn new things about each other cultures to eventually be able to help each other and fully understand what each other is saying. There are many things said in the media that could harm intercultural communications although, we cannot rely on the media. We must check or sources to see rather or not the information we have is correct. As a result, we should take everything with a pinch of salt.

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