**Chapter 10: New Americans, Immigration, Assimilation, and Old Challenges**

**Journal Articles**

[Fetveit, A. (1999). Reality TV in the Digital Era: a Paradox in Visual Culture? *Media Culture Society*, *21*(6), 787-804.](http://mcs.sagepub.com/cgi/reprint/21/6/787?ijkey=rVnd/6JUeG5zw&keytype=ref&siteid=spmcs)

This article examines reality TV and the social phenomena created by the digital era. This examination of modern media looks at various forms of culture presented visually in the digital era.

Questions to Consider:

1. What reality shows are examined in this work? Consider sources and population studied.
2. In 1999 reality shows were in their development stage, arguably. What did the article miss due to the date of this study that we find today with reality shows?

[Michaels, E. (2014). New Immigrant Destinations in Small-Town America: Mexican American Youth in Junior High. *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography*, *43*(6), 720-745.](http://jce.sagepub.com/cgi/reprint/43/6/720?ijkey=4S5.UWPoFb7XU&keytype=ref&siteid=spjce)

This work examines the new places that Mexican American Youth are coming of age. It explains some of the challenges and processes involved with new destinations.

Questions to Consider:

1. What are some of the positive aspects, the author discusses, about these new destinations?
2. How would you apply this article’s findings to old destinations? Consider some of the urban zones like, Los Angeles, New York, Miami.

[Schrauf, R. (1999). Mother Tongue Maintenance among North American Ethnic Groups. *Cross-Cultural Research, 33*(2), 175-192.](http://ccr.sagepub.com/cgi/reprint/33/2/175?ijkey=E8J0oIgTytKng&keytype=ref&siteid=spccr)

This study looks at the conditions under which some ethnic groups maintain their "mother tongues," while others completely lose their native languages.

Questions to Consider:

1. What are some of the factors behind both the loss and persistence of native languages?
2. Does losing or maintaining one's native language have any impact on one's degree of acculturation or assimilation?
3. What does the author suggest researching in the future in order to better understand this issue?
4. Can you think of other ways of researching this topic that might be informative?

[Steuter, E. & Wills, D. (2010). 'The Vermin Have Struck Again': Dehumanizing the Enemy in Post 9/11 Media Representations. *Media, War & Conflict*, *3*(2), 152-168.](http://mwc.sagepub.com/cgi/reprint/3/2/152?ijkey=.MyUcoCnN1abw&keytype=ref&siteid=spmwc)

This article examines the ways in which the media uses dehumanizing rhetoric to re-construct “enemies and thus to generate and sustain public support for military engagement, particularly in the war on terror. Beginning with the concept that language is an essential ingredient to the escalation and justification of conflict, the authors argue that propagandistic discourse, in its ability to disengage critical thought while engaging vitriolic emotion, has been deployed through the use of “a remarkably coherent and consistent set of metaphors which represent the enemy as animals, particularly noxious, verminous, or pestilential animals, or as diseases, especially spreading and metastatic diseases like cancers or viruses” (153). Such depictions of any enemy serve to dehumanize those persons, to mark them as both different and lesser, and work to justify and sustain racially and ethnically grounded stereotypes. “This dehumanization of an entire group or race encourages an unconscious transformation, the imaginative transference that is metaphor’s chief function (Hawkes, 1972: 1), and by which entire populations are collectively stripped of their humanity” (452).

Questions to Consider:

1. Explain how the “war on terror” metaphor works with the metaphor of the enemy as the author presents them. What simplistic beliefs are grounded in the metaphors? What do they promise?
2. “The language of annihilation, eradication, and extermination that so broadly circulates through mainstream news media echoes in unsettling ways the classically propagandistic language identified by scholars of genocide and the rhetoric that precedes and enables it. The coherent body of metaphors analyzed in this article has emerged without significant critical attention as a characteristic part of media discourse surrounding the war on terror” (164). Looking at the lists of examples from newspaper headlines, discuss the various images that have been deployed and construct some general linguistic domains within which these metaphors exist. What other kinds of people are these same domains applied to? In general, is there a body of devalued images that is consistently used to mark “lesser” people?
3. Why is a concern about media depictions of marginalized groups important in the contemporary moment?

[Tyree, T.C. M. & Krishnasamy, A. (2011). Bringing Afrocentricity to the Funnies: An Analysis of Afrocentricity within Aaron McGruder's *The Boondocks. Journal of Black Studies, 42*(1), 23-43.](http://jbs.sagepub.com/cgi/reprint/42/1/23?ijkey=j5SVxQoWTr9TE&keytype=ref&siteid=spjbs)

This article examines the cartoon strip (not the televised version) of *The Boondocks,* drawn by Aaron McGruder, to discover whether McGruder’s underlying rhetorical position is essentially Afrocentric. They look for the principles and concepts of Afrocentricity, particularly the 10 principles of nommo - an Afrocentric word that refers to the power of a word or other kind of work to generate and create reality; nommo is also a communal event that moves toward the creation and maintenance of community, as well as the power of words to create balance and harmony in disharmony.

Questions to Consider:

1. The authors argue that humor is critically important to African Americans. Detail the mechanics of this argument. Is this perspective limited to African Americans? What other groups could potentially use humor in these same ways?
2. Why has Aaron McGruder been described as a “very dangerous Black man” and the “most dangerous Black man in America” (26)? Who does it appeal to, or reflect the perspectives of? Who is not included in the targeted audience for this comic strip?
3. Summarize the qualities highlighted by the authors that authenticate the Afrocentricity of McGruder’s work. In particular, detail the concept of nommo.
4. The authors present the argument that “stylin’ out,” “soundin,” playing the dozens, repetition, and the creation of Ebonics, the language of Africans in the United States, are all important aspects of African American rhetoric” (39). Summarize one or two of these sociocultural practices, focusing on how they serve to positively enhance interpersonal dynamics and reinforce identity for African Americans. Do you agree that this cartoon strip is a positive contributor to African American identity?

[Mehra, B., Merkel, C. & Bishop, A.P. (2004). The Internet for Empowerment of Minority and Marginalized Users. *New Media Society, 6*(6), 781-803.](http://nms.sagepub.com/cgi/reprint/6/6/781?ijkey=BV4FWFJVAyup6&keytype=ref&siteid=spnms)

This article examines the results from 3 digital divide studies to examine the ways that marginalized members of society utilize computers and communications technology as tools of empowerment. Underlying their investigation is the critical concept that these technologies have the potential to allow people to create social equity, and that technology also can serve as a way to deconstruct the burdens of marginality and inequality. Grounding their research is a commitment to engage researchers in a fundamental deconstruction of the digital divide.

Questions to Consider:

1. What is the digital divide? Who are the groups most marginalized by the digital divide?
2. Summarize the findings of the CNI study on how low-income families utilize the Internet, Mehra’s study on how sexual minorities utilize the internet for social change, and the Afya/SisterNet study of Internet empowerment among African American women. Were any of these findings particularly startling to you? Why?
3. The authors argue that “What is common in these contexts is the vision of social equity and social justice via internet use” (795). How is the Internet constructed by these marginalized groups as a vehicle for equity and justice? Is this an effective use, i.e. are these visions realized through usage of the Internet?
4. What are the elements of the authors’ concrete agenda for both studying Internet use among marginalized populations, and deconstructing the digital divide? Is this agenda implementable?

[Brettell, C.B. (2006). Political Belonging and Cultural Belonging: Immigration Status, Citizenship, and Identity among Four Immigrant Populations in a Southwestern City. *American Behavioral Scientist* *50*(1), 70-99.](http://abs.sagepub.com/cgi/reprint/50/1/70?ijkey=3uabIKfGyCREA&keytype=ref&siteid=spabs)

This article examines the concepts of political and cultural belonging through the dual lens of citizenship as composed of rights and responsibilities, and as an identity construction on the other. Brettell argues that immigration status is critical in shaping national, local, and community attitudes towards naturalization and citizenship. Demonstrating the constructed nature of identity, she argues that immigrants have a bifocal outlook on belonging that is grounded in the differences between citizenship as right and responsibility, and citizenship as identity.

Questions to Consider:

1. What role does the route of entrance into the US play in the paths immigrants use to seek naturalization?
2. What are the differences in motivations for seeking citizenship and naturalization as demonstrated by the 4 immigrant groups that the author studied? What socio-cultural factors explain those differences?
3. Why do you think the informants were puzzled by the last question on ethnic ancestry?
4. What does the author mean when she states that the immigrants she worked with have “have a bifocality of outlooks and a dual sense of belonging” (96)? How does this impact the identities they construct when they gain citizenship?

[Littlefield, M.B. (2008). The Media as a System of Racialization: Exploring Images of African American Women and the New Racism. *American Behavioral Scientist, 51*(5), 675-685.](v)

This article presents the argument that “[US] society views a daily discourse on race, gender, and class that continues to reproduce dominant and distorted views of African American womanhood and sexuality” (675). By linking these media representations in popular culture to social constructions of identity of African American women, the author argues that the media serves as a system of racialization that marginalizes, penalizes, and discriminates against these women as a way of constructing the broader racial discourse as a method of social control.

Questions to Consider:

1. How does the author say that American pluralism works against its own ideal of racial integration? How does this lead to the construction of systems of racialization that destroy social justice?
2. What is the central image of African American women portrayed in the media? How is this image related to the historical representations of African women in general, and Black American women in particular?
3. How does the media remake our understanding of the ways reality works? How does this remaking directly impact African American women?
4. What is “the new racism”? How can social justice strategies, such as those advocated by the author, work to deconstruct the new racism?