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In 2005 a brand new reality gameshow came onto UK screens called The Apprentice (BBC, Talkback, 2005 - current).

The show followed on from the popular series in America which debuted the year before to lots of success. The Apprentice is a business based gameshow where contestants compete against each other to try and win Lord Sugar's investment into their company. Even though the show is a gameshow it focusses a lot on the reality aspect of the show. The programme shows the reality aspect because we see the contestants in their everyday life and not just when they are on task. This therefore means we see what type of people they are when they are not in competition with each other. This therefore helps the audience see the other sides of the contestants, therefore it could possibly change the audience's perception of the contestants. One of the main points I will be analysing about The Apprentice is how gender is represented throughout the show. One of the main things I will be analysing is the circuit of culture (du Gay et al, 1997).

The circuit of culture is a framework which was created to show 5 different parts of cultural studies, which includes representation, consumption, identity, production and regulation. For my investigation I will be selecting two parts of the circuit of culture to analyse with my case study, The Apprentice. The two parts I have chosen are representation and consumption and I will be using these to analyse how gender and different races are represented in the show. I will also be looking at consumption and how the contestants are presented to the audience and this will link to how the audience should be inspired by the contestants. For my investigation I will be looking into two specific parts of the circuit of culture (du Gay et al, 1997).

This being representation and consumption. Representation will show how the contestants in The Apprentice are shown to the audience.

For example they are portrayed in different ways to the viewers which therefore means the audience will have different opinions on each contestant. Consumption will show how The Apprentice is made and edited in a certain way so that the viewers only see certain parts of the task, therefore meaning that the contestants are shown in a certain way in which they cannot change. One of the theories that I will be looking at is gender theory. Gender theory shows how different genders and races are represented, in this case how they are represented in TV shows such as The Apprentice, this therefore means that gender theory links well with my investigation because it shows how the contestants are represented. Matthew Sung, of Lancaster University looked at how gender is shown in American reality shows, with one of these shows being The Apprentice USA.

He looks at how males are shown to be the more dominant gender. " Jason shows a rather extreme case of using a masculine style in doing leadership" (Sung, 2012), this is therefore showing how masculinity is shown a lot in The Apprentice as this fits the " social norms". This is because males in The Apprentice are represented as having power and authority over the females. However in the first few episodes of The Apprentice UK the teams are split equally between men and women.

This therefore should mean that the stereotypes of men being very masculine and the women arguing should be avoided, however this was not the case. For example in episode 4 (series 13) of The Apprentice the teams were mixed

slightly, however team "Graphene" was made up of all females. In this episode they needed clear communication but when team leader Siobhan called the sub group, being run by Elizabeth, all they did was shout over each other on the phone.

This was vital to the task but because there was too much arguing they could not get the information they needed and subsequently went on to lose the task. This scene backs up how gender is represented perfectly, it shows how the women were unable to work together without their egos getting in the way. This therefore meets the stereotype of women who work in business, and this is meeting the expectation of how the audience would see these people. One idea which links to consumption is Neoliberalism.

Nick Couldry looks at reality TV based on neoliberalism and whether the reality TV that we see is real or if it is just trying to send a message to the audience." Authenticity. Paradoxically, the necessity to perform (with an unseen audience in mind) is neutralized by the argument that in the end your "real" self must come out.

" (Couldry, 2008) In this extract Couldry is actually talking about how contestants act in Big Brother (C5, Columbia, 2000 - current), but this point can link very strongly to The Apprentice as well. This is because the contestants on The Apprentice are all fighting to win and will not let anyone get in their way so they are all very confident and cocky. They all think they are the ideal person to be Lord Sugar's business partner, therefore showing neoliberalism because they are all in it for themselves, they are only showing self-interest. Representation can be split into many different parts,

one part could be how race is represented in reality TV. This can also link to consumption as the audience will connect more if their race is represented.

Mark P. Orbe, who discusses race in representation says "diverse viewers who passively watched how they were represented on television could utilize the opportunities of reality TV to actively participate in representations of self" (Orbe, 2008). This is supporting the point that the audience can relate to certain contestants for many different reasons with race being one of them. Another representation is how gender is represented, for example The Apprentice always starts with an equal amount of men and women contestants.

This is something which is very important to the audience because women are more likely to favour the female candidates and men are more likely to favour the male candidates. This is because consumption plays a big part of The Apprentice, because all viewers will have a favourite candidate, meaning how they are represented could decide how the audience feel about them. In the book *How Real is Reality TV?* (Escoffery, 2012) it says that "winning is everything", is one of the most spoken lines in the history of The Apprentice. This is because the show features lots of cut away interviews with the contestants where they tell the audience at home how they are the best contestant.

This therefore shows ideology to the audience. This is also very blatant towards the audience and is not discrete. This is because there have a lot of interviews with the contestants where they talk directly to the camera, this then becomes as if they are talking directly towards the audience at home.

This could be seen as if they are motivating the audience at home to be like themselves. They are inspiring the audience to be hard work contestants and to put 100% effort into their jobs. This links to current culture in the UK, such as the current unemployment levels in the UK. This means that the contestants are representing how hard people should be working in their jobs, they are setting an example for the audience at home. The boardroom and the majority of the tasks on *The Apprentice* are set in London.

We also see a lot of establishing shots of the London skyline throughout the programme especially in the opening and closing scenes of each episode. Iain Macrury looks at how London is represented in *The Apprentice*. In the opening shots of each episode the London skyline is shown with the sun rising behind it, Macrury says "London's never looked so good" (Macrury, 2008), this means that *The Apprentice* is glorifying London to the audience at home. This has been done as motivation for the UK public to go out and get a job, as unemployment is always rising in the UK. However *The Apprentice* is only showing the good side to London as well as the minority of the British public. Only a small percentage of people working in the UK work in business in London. Therefore the show is not representing British culture fairly, it is only showing the glorified parts. One of the reasons this could have been done is for any international viewers as for viewers who do not live in the UK, the programme represents the UK in a very nice way and does not show the high levels of unemployment in the UK.

The Apprentice also makes sure to only show locations such as Canary Wharf, as this is the business hub of London, it does not show the rough council estates in any of the opening shots. This is so that the UK is represented in a

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good way to all viewers. In my investigation it is also important to look at the genre of reality TV. This is because to the casual viewer The Apprentice would not be considered a reality TV show. One of the main genres of The Apprentice is a gameshow, which it is because it features contestants trying to stay in the process to win a cash prize at the end and become Lord Sugar's business partner. However the show has been running for 12 years and reality TV has become more popular since the show debuted in 2005. The book Understanding reality television says "over the last decade such a wide range of productions have been categorized as reality TV that one wonders if the term is too general to be helpful" (Holmes, 2004).

This supports the point that The Apprentice is considered a reality show because it features the daily life of the contestants and not just the task. The Apprentice does not fit the norms of reality TV, the audience expects reality shows to follow contestants and celebrities in their everyday life, The Apprentice does this in some part as it follows the candidates on the task but it then becomes a serious show when they enter the boardroom. However with The Apprentice being a reality show it means that the audience can relate to the show more. Kristin M. Barton looked into how audiences interacted with reality shows, they found that in a survey 80% of viewers imagine themselves as contestants and 63% can relate to the contestants on the show (Barton, 2009). These stats back up my points about how audiences consume reality programmes as well as how they see themselves as the contestants. Reality shows have more active audiences compared to passive audiences because they are constantly thinking "what would I do in that situation?" This links very well to my analysis of my case study because reality shows make the

audience consider themselves as part of the process because they are imaging themselves as part of the show or they are supporting particular candidates. As one of the main parts of my investigation I will be looking at how cultural regulation is shown in *The Apprentice* because this links well to consumption.

Cultural regulation is a theory that suggests that the audience are being told what to think. One way this could be shown is that the show is edited in a way to portray certain candidates in a way so that they will then appeal to the audience or not. While the candidates are completing the task they are constantly being followed with cameras but on average we only see 40 minutes' worth of footage from the task from each episode. This means that there is a lot of footage which the audience will not see. This therefore means that when editing the show the BBC can include only certain parts of the footage if they wish. This means that they have control over how characters are represented. This makes me question the authenticity of the programme. Also the candidates are constantly being followed by the cameras compared to some reality shows where the cameras are hidden, this then shows that they might not act genuine in front of the camera.

Annette Hill looked at TV audiences for reality shows, she says "The viewers perception of hidden camera formats as more true to life than formats where they're acting to the camera" (Hill, 2005), this is supporting the fact that everything we see on *The Apprentice* might not be as genuine as it first appears to the viewers. This is also supported in the book *Reality TV* by Hodder and Stoughton, they say that reality TV "Formats only require malleable but forthright characters who could act naturally while keeping half

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an eye on the camera" (Hodder, 2002). This is supporting my point that the candidates might not be acting how they would normally on the task if the cameras were not there. This links well to my next point that they could be acting up to the camera just for entertainment purposes. The Apprentice comes under the gameshow genre so it should be genuine and unscripted however there is evidence that this is not the case. For example to even start the process there are many different stages of interviews and auditions to get onto the show.

Producers of the show should be looking for great business candidates, however they are looking for what will bring entertainment to the show. For example in an article introducing the candidates, Jeff's description says "Jeff is a business analyst and semi-pro hip-hop dancer. Over the past 10 years he has trained several times a week, even performing at the O2 Arena." (Minn, 2017) This is a clear example how entertainment is prioritised in reality TV. The show should be strictly about the task and the candidates, but the show instead uses codes and conventions of reality TV shows.

For example we see the candidates socialising in the house they all live in and we also see their reaction when candidates come home from the board room as well as how they act when not on task. This is very similar to other reality shows like Big Brother. We also see a relaxed side to the candidates on the show The Apprentice: Your Fired (BBC, Talkback, 2006 - current), on the show they laugh and joke with the panel and host about what happened on the task when they should be taken more seriously as they have just been eliminated from the gameshow. Another concept which is

shown in *The Apprentice* is capitalism, this is especially represented through Alan Sugar.

He shows capitalism because he is now a very wealthy man who owns lots of property, but also because he has worked his way up from the bottom to become rich. Nick Couldry says that "Luxury goods are emphasized as highly desirable, as the just deserts and the rewards of each challenge. Contestants and viewers are invited to admire objects, property and land owned by Sugar; we are, for example, reminded that 'he's got his own fleet of executive jets and a Mayfair property portfolio'" (Couldry, 2011), this supports my point that *The Apprentice* shows themes of capitalism to the audience watching. They do not try to hide this either because Lord Sugar often talks about how rich he is, especially in series 13 when he decides he has enough money to hire both of the candidates at the end of the competition. The main part of my investigation is about gender and how it is represented to the audience at home. This is especially shown in the first few episodes of each series when the teams are split into men and women.

Matthew Sung says "Clearly, the division of the contestants into two teams based on gender in *The Apprentice* is a prime example of reproducing the 'battle of the sexes' discourse prevalent in popular culture". (Sung, 2010) This show shows the audience now expect the men and women to go against each other at the start of each series and the show is edited together especially so that they show the stereotype for men and women, for example showing women arguing and men being over masculine. Katherine Kinnick talks about how confrontation on task is set up in *The Apprentice US*: "It should be noted that interpersonal skills were criticized only by competitors,"
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rather than Trump". (Kinnick, 2005) This shows how not everything we see when the contestants are on task is genuine and how The Apprentice sets up conflict and arguments on purpose for the enjoyment of the audience. To sum up my findings I have found out that gender is represented in a very stereotypical way to the audience. This is because the show purposely puts women and men against each other at the start of each series. To add to this they purposely set up conflict during the task as this will add to the women and men showing their stereotypes.

Thus showing the women arguing and talking over each other and therefore not getting the task done or by showing the men trying to prove they are the alpha male in the team. Both these stereotypes are shown to be very obvious, especially in the episodes when the men are against the women. This is because the audience expect them to act in this way based on how the candidates have been represented in previous series. As well as this the candidates are also shown to have made incredible achievements in their careers so far in life, and they talk about these every time they have an interview with the camera. They make this obvious to the audience because they are supposed to idolise the candidates. They are supposed to be setting a good example for the audience and make them want to go out and work as hard as they are. I have also found that The Apprentice does not represent the current UK culture because it only shows the glorified side to London and it never mentions how unemployment rates are always rising.

Overall The Apprentice is a very carefully constructed reality TV show which shows stereotypical business candidates competing against each other to be declared the winner.

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