

Effects of media stereotyping

Media



Over the years, racial stereotypes have always played a big role in our society. Till today, everyone attaches racial stereotypes and injustice thoughts towards a person without knowing or saying a word to the person. Signs of race and ethnicity are everywhere in our media culture and people are judged based on inaccurate information given by the media such as television, cartoons, dramas, movies and even comic books. These stereotypes will influence the younger generations, create tension between groups and affect people in many ways.

The way that television portrays different races can be very subtle like main character status, level of interaction between races, activity levels, and social status (Maher, 2008). The characters demonstrated in certain television programs are formed by what the writers believe and they take the basic features of a character and expand it thinking the viewers will enjoy it, leading to racial and ethnic stereotypes by using ‘misinformation’ through movies, shows and news reports. Egyptians in this case are being portrayed as uneducated, unethical, raise desert animals, terrorists and uncivilized.

These false information is what the media uses as techniques to portray Egyptians as humans of the underworld and Egypt as a deserted country. Egyptians have been stereotyped as desert residents for many years even though Egypt has been advanced now as a country. They have been looked at as uneducated but fact is there is an American University built in Cairo where many Egyptians have gotten their Bachelors, Masters and PhD’s from, but however the media still influence the public to view the Egyptians as desert people.

In the movie "The Mummy" which was shot at Egypt, individual Egyptians are filthy, greedy, slimey pigs. The Egyptian masses are mindless, murderous zombies who chant the name Imhotep. This has affected Egyptians as well as other stereotyped ethnic groups everywhere. The threat does not only affect the life of the adults but the children as well. In a research done by the University of California about the consequences of racial stereotypes on children, it was said that it has a direct effect on the academic performance of the stereotyped children.

One of the sayings in this research is: "African American and Latino children who are aware of broadly held stereotypes about academic ability perform more poorly on a cognitive task when that task is described as a measure of ability than when the same task is described as a problem-solving task." (Carol Hyman 2003). This applies to all race and ethnic groups everywhere in our world. Racial and ethnic stereotypes in media not only influence the adults but are also adapted and carried over with the children who are the youth of tomorrow and we wouldn't want this stereotype to continue on in the years to come.

It is easy to give out information with no factual back up, but the public preference is what can either stop media propaganda from affecting the public opinion or simply fuel such a dangerous aspect of the media, stereotypes. Hyman, Carol (2003). "Awareness of racial stereotypes happens at an early age, has consequences", UC Berkeley News. Online at: , consulted on May 2003.