



representation in media



TERMS

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popular culture	The act of studying cultural aspects of mass media (such as film, TV, advertising, etc).
social media	Websites/applications/platforms designed to enable users to create or share content across the internet.
demographic	A factual (not perceived) characteristic of a population that includes race, gender, sexuality, disability, class, etc.
diversity	A surface level attempt to include people of different backgrounds in a production in order to appear progressive that centers whiteness as the default and what needs to be “diversified”, while positioning people of color (or other marginalized individuals) as the “other”.
inclusion	The meaningful act of "including" marginalized people in institutions that they have historically been barred from. Inclusion requires the tools to enforce the necessary institutional changes that will allow marginalized individuals to thrive.
stereotype	A culturally fixed (and often offensive) image or portrayal of a specific demographic.
archetype	A familiar stock character who has emerged as a result of many years of fables, fairy tales, etc.
counter-type	A positive stereotype that is designed to debunk an existing offensive stereotype.
racism	Discrimination and antagonism directed at individuals of another race accompanied by the belief that this race is inferior to the race of the individuals in power. Example: In the American context, white supremacy.
colorism	Discrimination against individuals with darker skin tones within the same ethnic group as well as preferential treatment of individuals with lighter skin tones.
patriarchy	The institutional system that prioritizes men over non-men.

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transgender	An umbrella term for people whose gender identity differs from the gender they were assigned at birth. Always use the descriptive term preferred by the person.
cisgender	An adjective used to describe a person who identifies with the gender they were assigned with at birth.
anti-LGBTQ	The prejudiced treatment, stereotyping, or discrimination of LGBTQ people.
ableism	The systematic discrimination against disabled individuals and the belief that they are inferior because of their disabilities.
lived experience	Used to describe firsthand knowledge and impressions of living as a marginalized member of a marginalized group as they dwell among the majority group.
white supremacy	the simultaneous belief that white people are superior to all races of people (and should therefore dominate society) as well as a historical and institutional system of oppression that centers on the exploitation of peoples of color and their homelands by White people and European nations.
white privilege	The institutional system of preferential treatment that favors whiteness.
“Bury Your Gays”	A trope where a gay character is seemingly killed off for no good reason and is especially offensive if said gay character is a token character.
tokenism	The act of including only one member of a minority group in a production in order to avoid criticism about “diversity”/“inclusion” and to appear more progressive.
blackface	A racist form of theatrical makeup (including literal black paint) used by a non-Black person to "represent" caricatures of Black people.
brownface	A racist form of theatrical makeup (including literal brown paint/bronzer, etc) used by a non-Brown person to "represent" caricatures of South Asian, Indian, [non-White] Middle Eastern, Arab, Pacific Islander or [non-White] Latinx people.
redface	A racist form of dress and theatrical makeup (that includes warpaint, feathers, headdresses, etc) used by a non-Native to "represent" caricatures of Indigenou/First Nations people.
yellowface	A racist form of theatrical makeup (including the racist use of epicanthic eye folds) used by a non-Asian person to "represent" caricatures of a Asian (most commonly East Asian) person.

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male gaze

The act of viewing a piece of media from the defaulted cisgender male perspective.

white gaze

The act of viewing a piece of media from a defaulted white perspective. Also described as “the study of the other” because it normalizes white experiences while considering the experiences of everyone else to be novel or bizarre.

whitewashing

The act of casting a white actor as a person/character who is historically/canonically a person of color.

sidewashing

The problematic act of interchangeably casting actors of color in certain roles for which they lack the cultural background.

Example: Casting South Asian actors as Egyptians.

genderbending

The act of purposefully casting a character who is canonically one gender as another underrepresented gender.

racebending

The act of purposefully casting a character who is canonically one race (usually white) as another underrepresented race.

pinkwashing

The practice of advertising a business, company, or other institution as LGBTQ+ affirming than it is in actuality for the purpose of increasing sales.
