Hall: the person and the account

> To put it briefly, representation is the production of meaning through language.

Stuart Hall, The Work of Representation, §1.1, 2013 edition, printed p. 2.

Read the original chapter excerpt, printed pp. 2–3. Activity 1 asks you to distinguish a familiar object, your concept of it and the sign by which you communicate that concept. The glass paragraph explains why a concept or word can be used even when the object is absent.

Coursebook §3.3, printed pp. 76–77, applies selection to people and groups. The maker decides what to include, omit and combine. An image can depict a real action while making some social judgments easier than others.

Reading questions. What is the difference between an observation and an inference about Richie? What does Garrett's voice over Richie's face select for our attention? Which other shot could make another interpretation available? A reading must still account for the evidence.

The linked video. The Media Insider, Stuart Hall's Representation Theory Explained is a secondary explanation. The classroom passage, 1:55–2:16, lets Hall speak. His point about constructed meaning does not mean events are unreal or every viewer is controlled. The supplied chapter is the main reading.

The remaining coursebook section, pp. 78–82, develops stereotypes, counter-stereotypes, ideology, context and audience interpretation. Its categories guide our comparisons; they do not require one film for every identity.

A life written for Instagram



Amalia Ulman, Excellences & Perfections (2014), detail. Courtesy of the artist / Rhizome.

Before reading further, identify a detail in the room, clothing or pose and explain the kind of life it suggests.

Ulman scripted a performance on Instagram and Facebook from April to September 2014. Props, interiors, captions, hashtags and posting patterns made the changing persona recognizable through familiar codes of femininity, aspiration and lifestyle. Its ordinary social media form helped a fiction appear plausible.

> It's a performance.

Ulman, artist interview, Studio International, 2016.

Knowing the project's context changes how we read the same image. This does not establish that all selfies are deceptive or that every follower was fooled. The work is distinct from her later project Privilege.

Hall connection. A photograph makes selected signs available. The life we infer from them is not contained in the objects themselves. Revise one initial inference after receiving the context.

Rhizome project documentation · Artist interview

Asian American experience and class



Danny: debt, insecure work and economic dependence.



Amy: a wealthy home, a business sale and reputation.

Danny and Amy occupy different economic positions within Asian American life. Compare what each can afford, what work requires and whose judgment matters. Shared frustration does not erase unequal resources.

> It’s a design philosophy that recognizes Asian Americans are not a monolith.

Helen Huang, BEEF costume designer, The Costume Designer, 2023.

Huang describes different ethnic backgrounds, family histories and economic circumstances. Amy’s muted boutique clothes contrast with Danny’s thrift-store pieces, repeated clothing and giveaway T-shirts. These choices make a broad social category internally varied.

Today’s continuous extracts show Danny discussing debt and business risk (0:54), then Amy managing a conversation with Naomi in her home (1:48). Use one costume or setting detail and one line or action from each. Wealth gives Amy choices while making the sale consequential; financial insecurity does not make Danny automatically innocent. Neither character supplies a complete image of Asian American experience.

Question. How do class and ethnicity interact here? Identify what the evidence supports and what your comparison leaves out. A maker’s intention is not proof that every viewer responds alike.

Huang interview · Cast interview. Frames: BEEF S1E2, 2023.