

REPRESENTATION OF RELIGION IN POPULAR CULTURE

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This research looks at the systemic exclusion of certain sections of people in various forms of popular culture, such as advertisements, movies, television programmes, etc. This study seeks to examine how in the few representations of these groups, they are either treated as or portrayed as “different” from “normal” people. There are certain stereotypes that govern our limited representation of these groups, for instance, the typical Christian woman according to “Bollywood” would always wear skirts and drink, a habit that is never associated with their representation of Hindu women. For this research we concentrate on religion as a defining identity in such representations. The key feature of this research is examining day-to-day, absolutely mundane portrayals, like how names of characters in advertisements are typically ‘Hindu’ names. Such details are often taken for granted or dismissed as trivialities. This study examines whether this is really the case or whether such trivialities do in fact have a larger social impact in that they contribute to and further enhance such systemic exclusion. In fact popular culture as a whole is often dismissed as kitsch, as divorced from reality, existing in a fantasy land of its own; its political relevance is often considered minimal, however the truth is, that popular culture is politically and ideologically loaded.