



HERITAGE

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Project Stereotype

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“It is a peculiar sensation, this double-consciousness, this sense of always looking at one's self through the eyes of others, of measuring one's soul by the tape of a world that looks on in amused contempt and pity.”
-W. E. B. Du Bois-

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“So have you heard the jokes about blonds, Blacks, Asian Americans,…” We’ve all heard these jokes, many of which are perceived as harmless. Stereotypes are widely used in society. They are used to sell products, to make public policy and as a decoding tool. However, they can be harmful. Society Organized Against Racism, SOAR, is a national organization whose mission is to eliminate multiple forms of discrimination, including sexual, spiritual and political, and race based. To achieve this goal, SOAR sponsors a number of community education programs—designed to challenge the use of stereotypes and other manifestations of discrimination. One such program was held at PC on October 15, 2009.

The local PC chapter of SOAR organized PROJECT STEREOTYPE. As part of this community discussion on the use of stereotypes, students were asked to wear nametags throughout the day. The chosen stereotype was supposed to represent the labels they encounter on a daily basis. Although this project was done last year by the African American Society on-campus, this year it was a little different. A discussion forum was held later that day to allow Project Stereotype’s participants to discuss and process their experiences. SOAR invited Dr. Julia Jordan-Zachery, Assistant Professor of the Political Science Department and Director of the Black Studies Program to join our discussion. Dr. Jordan-Zachery was an excellent moderator as she stimulated conversation and shared valuable information with us.

The open forum began with people reading and explaining their stereotype. The stereotypes shared were diverse—ranging from gender, race, social identity, and personal beliefs. Some of the stereotypes were “looking for a husband,” “emo,” “track star,” “sellout,” “loud mouth tree hugging radical feminist,” “not American enough or Spanish enough,” and “I’m good at jumping fences

because I’m Latino.” The diversity in the stereotypes was reflective of the diversity of the program’s participants. Dr. Jordan-Zachery then asked us to explain the differences between generalizations, stereotypes, and categories. Students had a surprisingly tough time with this assignment. Her goal was to get us to critically assess our knowledge.

The group was then asked to share the reactions they received from others about their labels. One participant, whose stereotype read “radical feminist,” said that someone read her label and asked her “well, that’s what you are, isn’t it?” Another person stated that when they explained their label of not being American or Spanish enough someone responded by saying “wow, that’s tough to go through!” Dr. Jordan-Zachery said that common stereotypes can be the result of one’s perception. For example, African American women are seen by many as being very promiscuous. This is the result of the perception of European men who traveled to Africa and saw African women “scantily” dressed in comparison to European women. The levels of exposure between African women and white women differed. While Africans were one with nature and their body, Europeans were taught to dress modestly according to their standards of decency—what we now call the “Cult of True Womanhood”. This stereotype led to the belief that all black women are to be seen in a less virtuous light of unfairly. This attitude was used to justify the belief that black women are able to participate in labor that only men were required to do. Further, the stereotype of promiscuity among black women resulted in their sexual abuse. According to Dr. Jordan-Zachery, black women who were raped were not protected under law in America until the late 1900s, meaning that (some) men were never convicted of raping black women until

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Stereotypes In Sports: Serena Williams

By Taylor Ford '12

During a recent U. S. Open match, Ms. Williams went into what the media termed a tirade against the line judge. According to reports, Serena threatened the line judge after she called a foot-fault against her. According to Dr. Boyce Watkins, Williams' aggression and attitude have been "influenced by her Compton upbringing." Watkins also asserted that there was no need for Williams to "get gangsta" on the line judge. The question I have is: was it necessary and appropriate for Dr. Watkins' to use such charged language in his critique of Williams' behavior? I argue that Mr. Watkins's use of race-gendered stereotypes is just as harmful to society at large as some have claimed about Williams' behavior. No, I am not excusing Serena's behavior, what I am doing is critically responding to what is a systematic response to Black women. A response that is apt to treat these women as dangerous and in need of control.

Both terms, "Compton" and "gangsta" are racially charged. They connote violence and a basic lack of humanity. When coupled with pre-existing images of Black womanhood, they are used to send a particular message about Black folk in general and Black women more specifically. When Black women are introduced, culturally and politically, some either assume they are the "nurturers", that is the Mammy stereotype, or they are loud, angry and "ghetto"—the Sapphire and Jezebel stereotypes. Watkins relies on these socially constructed images in his critique of Williams' behavior.

Let us take a look at the contextualization of Williams' behavior to a geographic area. Compton, California is often portrayed as a violent predominately Black community. By linking Serena's behavior to this specific geographical area, Mr. Watkins is relying on what social scientists refer to as a culture of violence argument. What is being suggested is that folk from Compton subscribe to a particular negative value set and regardless of their achievements, this cannot be overcome. Watkins' article, states that people don't dislike Williams because she is black; they dislike her because she *acts* black. "In essence, Mr. Watkins is suggesting that Williams is innately, or at least culturally, violent. Such an argument was used to support the eugenics movement. The question I would like to ask, is how exactly does one *act* black? I also wonder, were other tennis players such as John McEnroe "acting black" or was he behaving in a perfectly acceptable manner for a "white man" during their tirades?

John McEnroe, a world renowned tennis player, was known for his many tantrums and outbursts directed towards officials. Indeed, he has capitalized on this image in his role of a spokesperson for different companies. During his 16 years as a professional tennis player he was banned for his misconduct and tantrums. If being aggressive is considered a "black thing,"

then should McEnroe be classified as acting black, just as Williams was? When McEnroe engaged in similar behavior it was not stated that his outburst was a result of where he was born or raised (he was born in Germany on a military base), neither was it asserted that people disliked him because he acted white. This is the case because of the existence of white privilege. The privilege to name others while ignoring the dominant group's behavior.

Not only is the "naming" and "defining" of these two players different. How their behavior is treated also differs. McEnroe, who was fined and even suspended, received numerous chances. However, the discussion is whether or not to ban Williams from the Grand Slam Tournament after this one incident. Why is it that after this one incident, Williams has the possibility of being banned without being given a second chance? When McEnroe lashed out against officials, it seemed to be expected and simply a part of his playing style, but when Williams lashes out, she may be banned

from a tournament. I do believe that this is the result of the larger society's understanding of the intersection of race and gender. Williams' behavior, it is suggested, is innate. This suggests that she cannot be controlled. McEnroe's behavior is part of his playing style—

something that can be controlled, as such he poses less of a threat.

Race and class have long been used in the naming and defining of Black women in U.S. culture. Politically, they are used to suggest that Black women are loose and immoral. Culturally, they are used to suggest that Black women are immoral. The Williams sisters have posed as a challenge to the tennis world. Their bodies, their hair styles, to the way they behave on and off the court. It has been suggested that they win only because they are stronger and not necessarily better players. This is where the danger lies. Black women, in their quest for social justice and equality, have to fight against their negative social construction. They are in a constant battle for their humanity. So for Watkins to suggest that Serena is "acting Black" is not only damaging to Serena, but is damaging to all Black women, who, regardless of their background, will be perceived as coming from Compton and as 'acting black' (as defined through White privilege).

"No, I am not excusing Serena's behavior, what I am doing is critically responding to what is a systematic response to Black women."

Citations:

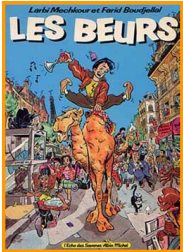
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Diasporic View: Les Beurs, North Africans in France

French troops first landed in North Africa, also known as the Maghreb, in 1830, as a part of Napoleon's attack on Egypt. This conquest led to the colonization of North Africa by the French who had an interest in the area's language, literature, history and culture. Cultural exchange took place all over the region especially in the coastal areas of Algeria, Tunisia and Morocco. French influence can be seen in the architecture, literature and languages that later came from the North African region. Colonization also led to migration of North African migrants to France; migration occurred in large numbers particularly after both World War I and World War II. North African men from Algeria, Tunisia and Morocco were sent to fight alongside French soldiers and most of them never returned home, instead they settled in Paris and Bourdeaux to take jobs in factories. According to statistics from the 1980's, about 25% of the total population of Paris was made up of migrants from North Africa, primarily from Algeria.



Beur Publication

Descendants of the original migrants from North Africa refer to themselves as Les Beurs, to help distinguish their cultural identity from that of their North African parents and grandparents and their European peers. The term "Beurs" first appeared in the 1980's to express the identification this generation felt with both Arab and French cultures, youth in this generation have spent most of their lives in France.

These second and third generation children of North African migrants have French nationality due to the status of Algeria, Tunisia and Morocco as colonies of France thereby making the countries de facto French soil. The Beur culture is very different from the original culture that the North African migrants brought with them; this new culture takes into account the race and class issues faced by North Africans in France. Beurs fought for equality and against racism by organizing marches and protests in Paris to create awareness of their cause. The culture also gave birth to an arts movement with its own writers, singers and artists that gave the Beur movement a new mode for expression. By the end of the 1980's, the Beurs had gained public visibility and a political platform; which helped to establish the North African migrant identity beyond its roots in colonialism.

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Map of French colonization of North Africa

Providence College Black Alumni Committee

The Providence College Black Alumni Committee seeks to provide and promote activities and opportunities for alumni of African descent to continue or rekindle their connection to the Providence College family.

We will bridge those connections through three main paths:

- 1.) Building and maintaining relationships with each other as former students of this institution
- 2.) Inspiring and developing bonds with present day students of African descent and
- 3.) Supporting and contributing to the entire college community as a whole in its efforts to live out its mission and goals

Additionally, we will continually acknowledge and honor those who have played significant roles in the lives of people of color who have matriculated at Providence College.

We value:

People - who care about the entire family of humanity and the desire to express their noble principles through the Providence College experience, **R**espect - as the cornerstone of relationships and a key building block to understanding, **O**penness - as the language to thoughtful expressions and clear learning, **V**ision - to focus on the inspiration of the past, the appreciation for the present and the aspirations toward the future, **I**ntegrity - as the climate of all of our internal and external activities, **D**iversity - of people and ideas as healthy components to a quality life, **E**quality - as the recognition of each person's talents - allowing to surface in safe and inspiring environments, **N**etworking - to demonstrate the natural interdependence all societal beings should enjoy, **C**ompassion - as the force behind our thoughts and the heartbeat of our actions, and **E**njoyment - as the by-product of all that we hope to do and to be.

Continued from Page 1 a law was established.

Dr. Jordan-Zachery shared her personal experiences with stereotypes. While living in Washington, D.C. according to Dr. Jordan-Zachery, the media often engaged in the following portrayals: Black men will always shoot people and often sell drugs; all Latinos cut people; Asians are always poor victims of Latinos or Black predators; White men and women are just happy go lucky folk, unless they are victims of Blacks or Latinos. She told us that these beliefs were frequently portrayed in the news and with little to no contradictory evidence. The danger of this is that individuals can organize their lives according to these stereotypic portrayals of those considered "Other". She stated that stereotypes are strange because the majority of people who follow them have never experienced them or know anyone who has. These people simply go by what they hear and make assumptions even though they have nothing to justify their judgments with. As an example of how this information is used as specific, concrete and correct knowledge, Dr. Jordan-Zachery talked about her grandmother's response to Latinos. Her grandmother, she said, would always say "those Latino's, they will cut you," because of what she saw on the news about Latin American gangs.

Next there was a discussion of HIV/AIDS and the stereotypes linked to the disease. What was once constructed as a disease affecting the White gay community is now a disease affecting women of color. According to Dr. Jordan-Zachery, the majority of people who are mostly likely to be affected by AIDS are Black women and Latinas. However, there exists the belief that this is not a disease affecting these

The danger of this is that individuals can organize their lives according to these stereotypic portrayals of those considered "Other".

communities. This misinformation, in part, stems from stereotypes around sexuality and gender functioning.

Finally, the group discussed hair related stereotypes. We discussed that it is often perceived as anti-feminine for girls/women to wear their hair short. For example, short hair is sometimes linked to issues of sexuality—so for example only "butches" wear short hair. Additionally, we discussed how African Americans who straightened their hair were sometimes perceived as trying to be white. And those that did not straighten their hair were told that they should in order to look more presentable to others.

PROJECT STEREOTYPE was an educational experience which allowed many to express their feelings in a comfortable group setting. Everyone left with a better understanding of how stereotypes are created, why they persist, and how we might be able to challenge their use. Through educating people on the devastating effects of stereotypes and their impact on society it might affect the use and prevalence of stereotypes when encountering others.

To learn more about laws concerning rape and African American victims of rape, visit the following link: http://new.vawnet.org/category/Main_Doc.php?docid=578 Article entitled: "Sexual Violence in the Lives of African American Women: Risk Response, and Resilience" by Carolyn M. West, Ph.D.

Scholarships

IES Abroad Merit-Based Scholarship for Under-represented Students. The IES Abroad Merit-Based Scholarship for Under-represented Students is open to students who have been traditionally under-represented on study abroad programs. This group includes, but is not limited to, students from under-represented racial and ethnic groups, first generation to college students, students from low income families and students with a history of overcoming adversity. Award Amount: \$5,000. Deadline: Varies.

Woodrow Wilson-Rockefeller Brothers Fund Fellowships for Aspiring Teachers of Color. The goal of the fellowship fund is to help recruit, support, and retain individuals of color as K-12 public school teachers in the United States. This Fellowship offers an important opportunity to ensure that greater numbers of highly qualified teachers of color enter public school classrooms around the country. Award Amount: \$30,000.

The Sidney B. Williams, Jr. Intellectual Property Law School Scholarship. This is a scholarship for minorities inter-

ested in intellectual property law. Amount: \$10,000. Deadline: Ongoing.

Berrien Fragos Thorn Arts Scholarship for Migrant Farmworkers. Eligible applicants must demonstrate an interest in pursuing further development of their talents in one of the following disciplines: Visual-painting, sculpture, photography; Performing-dance, theatre, music; Media-film, video, animation, computer graphics; Literary-poetry, short stories; and Crafts-traditional folk arts, furniture, weaving, pottery, etc. Award Amount: \$500. Requests will be reviewed case-by-case. Deadline: Ongoing.

Gloria and Joseph Mattera National Scholarship Fund for Migrant Children. This scholarship provides financial assistance to migrant youth further their education to achieve their personal and career goals who are entering or enrolled in college or other types of post-secondary programs. Award Amount: \$150-

For more info <http://www.multiculturaladvantage.com/scholarship.asp>