

TURE... AND WALMART

"Kwame Ture" is the name Stokely Carmichael later took. The below is actually notes from his writing in *Black Power*—which we'll look at later. I leave them here because his position is similar in *Black Power* and in "At Morgan State," and I think these comments are important to consider as we begin.

I. TURE:

"The first necessity of a free people and the first right any oppressor must suspend"
= capacity to determine and define our own values

WE HAVE A RESPONSIBILITY TO

raise hard questions

*challenge the very nature of the society itself:

- beliefs
- values
- institutions

redefine OURSELVES

reclaim our history and identity

CREATE OUR OWN TERMS

- through which to define ourselves
- and our relationship to the society
- ... and to make these terms recognized

POWER

includes "psychological control over the minds of" people

including the distribution of definitions and historical descriptions... by oppressors
that are ACCEPTED by the oppressed

EXAMPLES OF THE POWERFUL INFLUENCE OF DISTRIBUTED TERMS AND DEFINITIONS

The U.S. cavalry has a "victory"

The Indians carry out a "massacre"

(For the U.S.) The Americans have a "revolution" vs the English

(For the English) The Americans are "insubordinate."

Blacks are "lazy, apathetic, dumb, shiftless," ... and this justifies their oppression

Natives are "savages" ... and this justifies the theft of their land

The terms we use

The values we accept

The definition and meaning of those values that we accept

Bear upon our behavior. They legitimize and demonize certain things.

**If we accept values and their definitions without thought... we are likely to act out somebody else's agenda.

THE U.S. EDUCATION SYSTEM

Reinforces entrenched values of the society
Makes certain people feel ashamed about how they talk and act...
Sets certain behavioral and linguistic barriers to "admittance to society"
These rules are selected and enforced by a minority
And they keep the majority peripheral and self-defeating

[WE] need to

- define our own image (as positive)
- Question old values and institutions
- search for new/different forms of political structure
- broaden the base of political participation

(Here Ture is advocating critical inquiry, intellectual production, and he's also gesturing towards a "good" society: broad political participation within a self-selected structure...)

WE CAN ALSO REDEFINE WHAT OUR CLASS IS...

WHAT CAN BE DONE OR SAID IN A CLASS...

WHO IS IN CHARGE OF A CLASS...

WHAT IS IT WE'RE SEEKING TO GET OUT OF A CLASS...

(WHAT IS OF "VALUE" IN THE CLASS...)

Now... about this Walmart thing...

I would call this one variety of "Success Propaganda." It's the sort of thing I'm asking you to bring to class...

For each such piece of propaganda, let's ask:

Who was it made and distributed by?

(Walmart HR?)

To whom was it distributed?

(Walmart employees. Probably specifically managers.)

For what purpose was it made and distributed?

- To influence the behavior of those workers/managers.
- To make them work harder
- To compel them to "adapt to new techniques" (be flexible)
- To inspire a sense of company patriotism in them.
- To affirm that the company is "good."

What VALUES does this propaganda affirm?

Which ones does it affirm explicitly?

"take chances"

What does it affirm IMPLICITLY?

- If you "take risks," you'll "be successful." In this case, you'll be advanced at Walmart.
- "Very successful" people and companies are good.

- Competition is good (being "Out in Front" is good... and the circumstance where this occurs is accepted as good.)
- Development is good ("breaking new ground" is good.)
- Expansion is good ("pioneering new approaches" are good.—note the utilization of the sedimented notion of "pioneering" as good. Note that the "pioneers" were neither really-pioneers [they weren't first] nor "good"... from the perspective of Native Americans.)
- A big retail chain in a town <50,000 people is good.
- (The fate of the small retailers in that town should not be considered.)
- There's something noble and grand about Walmart (it corresponds to Churchill's declaration that "it's the courage to continue that counts.")

What EXAMPLES of "good" people does the propaganda present?

Sam Walton

"Our Company Leaders"

Good worker/assistant manager: Janell Laubacher

- "nothing she won't tackle" (does what she is told)
- "embraces new techniques and ideas" (accepts and adapts to instruction from above)
- is caring and nurturing with "associates" (not workers! "associates!") (does this mean she keeps them happy/not complaining?)
- "gives associates" (is this really a charitable / giving relationship? or one of direction?)
- tools to complete job
- tools to "succeed in their personal careers" (! is being an employee at Walmart a "career"?)

What does this say about society?

Let's say for the moment that a society is a "social unity."

What society really exists for these assistant managers and other workers?

Is it the same as the workplace? Do workers experience "community" or "society" as stockers at Walmart?

What society does this literature INSINUATE exists?

"We learned as a company..."