

Is Media Too White? by Tammy Duong

Think about your favorite TV show. Now think about your favorite characters on that television show. There is a 91% chance that your favorite characters are white. If primetime TV shows were to mirror the world we live in, the statistics of minorities would shock you. According to TV shows the country would be more than ninety-one percent white. There would only be five percent black people, and approximately four percent Asian or Latino people. The lack of racial diversity in the media gives people an unrealistic perspective of our multicultural society.

The use of Caucasian people surpassing minorities during New York Fashion Week in 2014, is one of the prime examples of media being too white. There were 4,621 models presented on the runway, but only 985 of them were people of color. Compared to New York Fashion Week in 2013, the percentage of non colored people has dropped from 80% to 79%. But using minorities in New York Fashion Week has been fluctuating both in a positive and negative direction over the years. Top designers like Tocca are known for using only Caucasian models. If top brands were to use more people of color, it would inspire smaller brands to do the same.

Furthermore, hit TV shows have a pattern of having white actors/actresses as their leads. Shows like “Girls” and “How I Met Your Mother” have little motivation to make their cast more diverse. Programs that do try to include other races tend to display the characters stereotypically. For example, “Avatar: The Last Airbender” was originally a cartoon TV show which involved Asians as the majority cast. But when producers decided to make it a film to be played around the world, they were determined to make the cast Caucasian. Racism in this industry has made many people furious. A few years ago, Nathaniel Claybrooks and Christopher Johnson, two African- American men, auditioned to be in “The Bachelor” but were immediately discriminated against when they got there. They claim that they did not get a fair audition compared to the other white participants. The two men filed a lawsuit against the ABC television show for being racist. People of color have very few roles in the acting industry. This is due to discrimination or lack of motivation to hire anyone with a different skin tone.

Some people may say that media is mostly Caucasian because America is mostly white. But that argument is invalid for many reasons. Even though non colored people are the majority race by 62%, that still doesn't explain why casting directors are hiring 80% white people. The population of Hispanics in America is 17%, yet there are only 3.5% of them being hired in New York. The United States is very multicultural, but the percentage of minorities being hired in the media does not give an accurate image of our country. On the other hand, TV news anchors on Fox Los Angeles and Fox Chicago give an excellent example of including everyone. In a perfect world, other factions of media would mimic what news stations are doing by diversifying who they hire.

In conclusion, media has proven to be discriminating to people of color and favoring white people. This does not show a proper representation of America. The fashion industry, prime time TV, and the movie industry hire white leads. Using the excuse that media is predominantly white because America is mostly white, will no longer work because it simply isn't true. If media were to give an actual embodiment of what this country is comprised of, people wouldn't be ashamed of their skin tone. Little kids wouldn't wonder why that “white girl” is “prettier” than them. Instead they will see someone with their skin tone on the big screen and feel confident about whom they are.