

## Div Lit Week 7: Culture

### Discussion: "Culture, resistance and things we do with our hair"

#### 1. Objectives of class:

- Explore how culture is raced
- Explore how culture/race is imprinted on/enacted by the body
- Explore how particular racialised/cultural ways of being have material implications
- Explore notions of cultural resistance

#### 2. Material:

- **Kuumba, M. Bahati and Femi Ajanaku (1998) Dreadlocks: The hair aesthetics of cultural resistance and collective identity formation. *Mobilization* 3(2): 227-243 (in reader)**
- Other useful resources:
  - Erasmus, Z. (1997) 'Oe! My Hare Gaan Huistoe!': Hair-Styling as Black Cultural Practice. *Agenda*, 32, 11-16
  - Good Hair ft. Chris Rock- HD Official Trailer. Accessed at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1m-4qzx08So>

#### 3. Method:

- **Discuss**

Provide anecdotes from the article. It is useful to create handouts or cards with the anecdotes. The anecdotes selected here are what the people being interviewed said about their dreadlocks on Kuumba & Ajanaku, p. 84. Ask students to read anecdotes and discuss the following:

  - *"Along with other aspects of African culture, coarse and kinky hair texture and traditional styling (braids and twists) became negatively stigmatized in the context of African colonialism."* (Kuumba & Ajanaku)
  - *"There's a large beauty industry aimed at the black community based on the simulating Euro-style hair texture, length, and styles."* (Kuumba & Ajanaku)
  - *"Black African folks are asked to give up so much in America, I think maintaining our hair naturally is both a political and cultural statement."* (Kuumba & Ajanaku)
  - *"For black women, you're damned if you do, damned if you don't, If you've got straight hair, you're pegged as selling out. If you don't straighten your hair, you're seen as not practicing appropriate grooming practices."* (Ingrid Banks in Kuumba & Ajanaku)