



LUND UNIVERSITY

**‘As seen in your prospectus’**

**A critical essay on the representation of ethnic diversity in stock  
photography**

**A Master’s Thesis for the Degree Master of Arts (Two Years) in Visual Culture**

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Spring semester 2014



## ABSTRACT

This work discusses the representation of ethnic diversity in contemporary stock photography imagery in the light of postcolonial critical theory. Departing from the Visual Content analysis of a random sample of stock photography retrieved from the Getty Images database, it attempts an interpretation of the empirical findings following the concepts of Whiteness and Self / Other dichotomy, both belonging to the postcolonial critical theory. The major findings discussed are the high priority ethnic diversity enjoys as a theme for representation in European and north American stock photography agencies compared to their Asian counterparts, and the rapid decrease found in the representation of non-Caucasian models when the needs of representation do not favor the depiction of ethnic diversity but are instead limited to the depiction of single persons or body parts. The discussion unfolds in three semantically interrelated sections. The first section sets the focus on the paradox ways in which the depiction of ethnic diversity in the material examined supports the concept of Whiteness, while the second section attempts an interpretive approach on the visual phenomenon under the concept of Political Correctness. The final section concludes the former two, tracing the common power structures lying in the representation of ethnic diversity in stock photography and in representations of the 'Other' traditionally related to the postcolonial discourse drawing from the concept of the Self / Other dichotomy.

## KEYWORDS

Stock photography Ethnic diversity Whiteness Political Correctness Self / Other  
dichotomy



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## 1. Introduction

The initial thoughts that formed into the research question of this thesis were intrigued by the ‘I, too, am Oxford’ campaign that took place in March 2014 in Oxford.<sup>1</sup> To raise awareness on the ways students of non-Caucasian ethnicities ‘are made to feel different and Othered [sic] from the Oxford community’,<sup>2</sup> sixty-five students stood before the camera holding small placards with a sample of the attitudes they have come across within the campus.<sup>3</sup> The placards varied in content. Among direct statements as ‘My voice is *not* the voice of all black people’ and quotes suggesting verbal subtle racism as ‘Your parents must be so proud you’re here. Like, *so* proud. Seriously. *So* proud’ there was that single one that differed. A black man had written the phrase ‘As seen in your prospectus’, drawn an arrow pointing upwards, and placed his head on top of the placard to have his picture taken, making a comment to the standard, non-discriminatory, politically correct pictures appearing in university leaflets. For a campaign demonstrating, as *The Independent* puts it, ‘the intricacies of racism today’,<sup>4</sup> it is easy to assume that the phenomenon of limited or no representation of such students in a university’s catalogue could provide solid ground for a campaign of the kind, but how could the opposite be happening? How could someone report discrimination through his own inclusion?

Issues of ‘Othering’ in visual representation are traditionally related either to the European colonialism and to its contemporary academic art, or to the ways the power relations found in the latter -implying western cultural superiority- are present in current representations of the

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<sup>1</sup> The campaign was inspired by the ‘I, too, am Harvard’ campaign, which spread to thirty universities and colleges. The Harvard students were inspired in turn by the final line ‘I, too, am America’ in the 1920s poem ‘I, Too’ by Langston Hughes, dealing with racial inequality. J. Henley, ‘Oxford’s ‘students of colour’ on being ‘othered’ at university’, *The Guardian*, 12 March 2014, <http://www.theguardian.com/education/shortcuts/2014/mar/12/oxford-university-students-of-colour-being-othered>, (accessed 14 March 2014).

<sup>2</sup> The quote was taken from the official website of the campaign, <http://itooamoxford.tumblr.com>, 2014, (accessed 20 March 2014).

<sup>3</sup> A small sample of the photographs can be found in appendix A.

<sup>4</sup> B. Dhungel, ‘I, too, am Oxford’: The intricacies of racism today’, *The Independent*, 19 March 2014, <http://www.independent.co.uk/voices/comment/i-too-am-oxford-the-intricacies-of-racism-today-9200337.html>, (accessed 20 March 2014)

non-Western, from BBC's 'Top Gear, India Special',<sup>5</sup> to the artistic re-enactment of a 'human zoo' in Norway.<sup>6</sup> But in the case of a prospectus from a higher education institution as Oxford University, that welcomed its first international student back in 1190,<sup>7</sup> and boldly celebrates a diverse student body of students coming from 150 countries,<sup>8</sup> how could a common ground with issues of 'Othering' exist? In which context could a rhetoric developed to refer to colonial art ever land to a picture of a black man enjoying his time on campus as it appears in the last university catalogue?

This thesis comes to the exploration of the exact above. Using a random sample of stock photography as its empirical material, of a kind of photography exclusively used for commercial and editorial purposes, it pursues the mapping of a -potential- common ground between contemporary, politically correct representations of ethnic diversity and concepts belonging to postcolonial critical theory in order to detect traces of western cultural superiority in the former.

### *1.1 Relevance of work*

There is little doubt that postcolonialism as a discourse has already been popular enough in the academia, if not exhausted as a subject of study. The imprint colonial power had, beyond the economic field, on the construction of identity and cultural belonging has been for decades a fascinating theme for literature scholars, anthropologists, and historians alike. Considering the equal excitement the subject was treated with within the fields of art history and visual studies, whether focusing on representations of primitivism in academic colonial art, or on the last Fox New's interpretation of the Arabic world, *yet another* study on the

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<sup>5</sup> C. Hope, 'India demands apology over Top Gear "India special" ', *The Telegraph*, 11 January 2012, <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/culture/tvandradio/bbc/9007554/India-demands-apology-over-Top-Gear-India-special.html>, (accessed 20 March 2014).

<sup>6</sup> B. Mwesigire, 'Norway to restage 1914 "human zoo" that exhibited Africans as inmates', *The Guardian*, 29 April 2014, <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2014/apr/29/norway-human-zoo-africans-as-inmates>, (accessed 30 April 2014).

<sup>7</sup> University of Oxford, 'Oxford: An International University', [http://www.ox.ac.uk/international/oxford\\_an\\_international\\_university/index.html](http://www.ox.ac.uk/international/oxford_an_international_university/index.html), 2014, (accessed 30 April 2014).

<sup>8</sup> University of Oxford, 'Oxford Around the Globe', [http://www.ox.ac.uk/international/oxford\\_around\\_the\\_globe/index.html](http://www.ox.ac.uk/international/oxford_around_the_globe/index.html), 2013, (accessed 30 April 2014).



stereotypical representations of the eternally oppressed could be easily read as -if not dated- at least boring.

To prevent such a scenario, the present work departs with two major shifts. First, it sets the focus on a rather unexpected visual material for a study drawing from postcolonial concepts, and secondly it ‘reads’ that material not in search of stereotypical representations of the non-Western per se -readily available and manifested in its visual content- but in search of stereotypical power relations in the very *act* of representing an Other. In other words, having as its empirical material the contemporary, politically correct depictions of ethnic diversity in stock photography, of a visual rhetoric that at first seems to be moving towards the exactly opposite direction, it searches for power relations that are stereotypical in the visual representations traditionally related to the postcolonial discourse.

Both the antiracist and non-discriminatory intentions lying in such depictions, and the nature of the medium of stock photography itself, that demands non-biased themes and a certain form of ‘invisibility’ in order to be eligible for multiple commercial and editorial purposes, make such an empirical material suitable for a study that targets the subtler facets of Postcolonialism in the public visual sphere. Appearing to be in clear dialogue with a system of values standing on the antipodes of anything colonial or postcolonial, and engaged with a politically correct rhetoric, stock photography in this work provides the safe ground needed for an updated, more demanding discussion on the various fashions of ‘Othering’ in contemporary representation.

## *1.2 Contribution of work*

All three major subjects this work brings together, Postcolonialism, Political Correctness, and stock photography, have been previously studied. Whether extensively, as the postcolonial power relations lying in the field of cultural representation, or counting only limited bibliography entries -as stock photography does- they all have been subjects of academic research. The originality of this work lies in the systematization of the analysis of stock photography and in the theorization of the representation of ethnic diversity on the ground of postcolonial discourse, where the concept of Political Correctness stands as a western cultural incentive for the reproduction of such visual content.

The representation of ethnic diversity in stock photography is systematically researched using the method of Visual Content Analysis. The interpretive discussion that follows, theorizes the representation of ethnic diversity in stock photography by interrelating concepts belonging to the postcolonial discourse with the notion of Political Correctness under the observation that their visual imprints both lie on, and reproduce similar power relations. The two are connected on the basis of their common western origin, drawing from the foucauldian Power / Knowledge schema.

### *1.3 Structure of work*

Clear as it is, a brief introduction to the subjects this research brings together, along with a short account of the research methods and theories applied in the way is inescapable. What follows in the next chapter is that fundamental background on both stock photography and the concept of political correctness, along with an overview of the research methods of content and discourse analysis. Basic knowledge on the thematics of postcolonial discourse is to come after, stress laid on the concepts important for the development of this work. As in the account of postcolonial discourse, all aspects of each subject being of particular interest and present throughout this research, are highlighted at the end of all paragraphs. In the final paragraph - concluding a chapter that had orientation and contextualization on focus- the research question of the thesis itself finds its place among prior studies on stock photography.

Moving on to the parts of the analysis, the work unfolds in two chapters, with the first consisting of two main subchapters, and the second of three. The first chapter of the analytical part covers an 'on site' research on the ways ethnic diversity is currently depicted in stock photography following the method of Visual Content Analysis on the Getty Images photography. Central in the chapter is the distinction between the Asia-based stock photography agencies -targeting the markets of the Middle East and Gulf region, India, China and Japan- and the agencies based in the West, having a European and North American clientele. The Visual Content Analysis is conducted in a way that not only indicates the different take Asian and western agencies have on the depiction of ethnic diversity, but also highlights the contexts in which it is preferred as a theme, the contexts in which it is not a matter of priority, and the cases when it is appropriate to be almost totally neglected. This first chapter ends with the findings of the Content Analysis given in a descriptive way.

The second chapter is of totally different nature. Departing from the findings of the empirical analysis, it discusses them on the ground of postcolonial discourse, focusing on two postcolonial concepts, the Self / Other dichotomy, and Whiteness. Despite the fact that the chapter draws from the findings of the Getty Images photography, the structure preferred for the discussion is not following the order in which the findings were given, but favors a semantically smooth development instead. The chapter unfolds in three subchapters, with the first focusing on the paradox ways in which the depiction of ethnic diversity supports the concept of Whiteness in the empirical material examined. The second subchapter attempts an interpretive reading of the representation of ethnic diversity in stock photography under the prism of the concept of Political Correctness, and the final subchapter semantically concludes the former two, tracing the common power structures lying in the depiction of ethnic diversity in stock photography and in the representations of the 'Other' traditionally related to Postcolonialism. This final subchapter draws greatly from the -popularized within the postcolonial discourse- concept of the Self / Other dichotomy.

The concluding part of the thesis consists of two subsections. In the first, both the findings of the Visual Content Analysis of the Getty Images, and the conclusions drawn from the discussion are given briefly. Some of the unavoidable soft points that this study demonstrates are emphasized at the very last subchapter to stand as a grip for discussion on the many additional approaches a study on postcolonial aspects in stock photography could take. In this direction, the thesis is concluded with suggestions on future research that could deepen even more on the original question.



## 2. Background

### 2.1 Stock Photography

In its narrowest account, stock photography could be described as the product of a global industry producing and distributing images mostly used for commercial and editorial purposes. These images, that in Frosh's words, compose the 'wallpaper of consumer culture',<sup>9</sup> not only tend to demonstrate a formulaic, stereotypical, generic content, which gets repeatedly overlooked,<sup>10</sup> but at the same time are the product of a just equally overlooked system. Despite the fact that they have been more than present in the everyday visual environment, knowledge on the field beyond the professional worlds of advertising, design and publishing, is rather uncommon.<sup>11</sup> With the 'primitive age' of the industry dating back in the 1970s,<sup>12</sup> and with the occupation -only thirty years later- of an estimated seventy per cent of all commercial and editorial images,<sup>13</sup> Frosh humorously compares the silence surrounding stock photography to 'a plot of a paranoid sci-fi thriller', where the visual landscape is being the subject of hidden forces.<sup>14</sup>

Reality though proves once more rather flat. A historical account of the development of the industry could be confidently substituted by the timeline of the Getty Images Inc., owner of an archive of eighty million photographs and illustrations, and of more than fifty thousand hours of stock film footage.<sup>15</sup> Founded in 1995 by Mark Getty and Jonathan Klein 'with the goal of turning a disjointed and fragmented stock photography market into a thriving,

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<sup>9</sup> P. Frosh, *The Image Factory: Consumer Culture, Photography and the Visual Content Industry*, Oxford, Berg, 2003, p.1.

<sup>10</sup> Frosh, 2003, p.5. ; Frosh's characterizations of stock images do not find their limits in the visual sphere. The colossal stock photography agency Getty Images Inc, owns besides stock images, an equally generic stock of music tracks, sound effects, and audio logos, supporting perhaps this way Frosh's account of the industry given in the words 'the wallpaper of consumer culture'. Getty Images, 'Music', <http://www.gettyimages.com/music>, 2014, (accessed 10 February 2014).

<sup>11</sup> Frosh, 2003, p.3.

<sup>12</sup> *ibid*, p.35.

<sup>13</sup> Anonymous, *Communication Arts*, 1998, cited in Frosh, 2003, p.2. ; The percentage refers to the year 1997. Frosh, 2003, p.29.

<sup>14</sup> *ibid*, p.2.

<sup>15</sup> B. Rogers, 'Getty Images Wants to be the Amazon of Digital Content', <http://www.forbes.com/sites/brucerogers/2013/06/30/getty-images-wants-to-be-the-amazon-of-digital-content/>, 2013, (accessed 15 February 2014).

modernized industry able to meet the changing needs of visual communicators’<sup>16</sup> the company agrees with Frosh’s rough periodization of the field in the 1990s, in which he detects a massive transformation of the industry due to significant organizational and technological changes.<sup>17</sup> Nowadays, Getty Images Inc., having its headquarters in Seattle, stands as a mammoth agency incorporating numerous smaller stock photography agencies and collections ‘from the world’s leading content producers’.<sup>18</sup>

Though it was the above-mentioned strong presence in the everyday visual environment that made the massive Getty Images image bank a sound resource for the retrieval of the empirical material of this work, the Getty Images photography is in the current study detached from any market-related qualities. Seen under a different set of lens, what is sought after is the potential function of this kind of imagery as a visual carrier of Political Correctness and the relationship between the ethnic diversity depicted and the postcolonial critical theory. To achieve that, the focus is drawn on the smaller image banks it incorporates, and on the differences they demonstrate when it comes to the depiction of ethnic diversity, depending on the agency’s geographical location and on its targeted market. Since the overall research question of the present work falls into the postcolonial discourse, the stock photography agencies are distinguished between the -conventionally called- *West-based*, targeting the European and north American market, and the *Asia-based*, targeting domestic markets.

## 2.2 *Political Correctness*

An honest overview of the phenomenon of political correctness owes to the unfamiliar with the subject reader an upfront note on the risks that accompany a heedless treatment of the concept. Originally sprung in the field of politics and not in the academia, and with the term still being more frequent in the public sphere, a mishandling of the notion implies a high chance of an unintentional, subtle engagement to a rhetoric of certain political color. Obvious as it is, a loose treatment of a term that has its politically charged nature pointed out even in

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<sup>16</sup> Getty Images, ‘Press room’, <http://press.gettyimages.com/about-us/getty-images/>, 2014, (accessed 15 February 2014).

<sup>17</sup> Frosh, 2003, p.36.

<sup>18</sup> Getty Images, ‘Image collections’, <http://www.gettyimages.com/creativeimages/imagecollection>, 2014, (accessed 15 February 2014).

its dictionary entries<sup>19</sup> could undermine the quality of this work. To prevent such a mishap a brief account of the phenomenon is given below, focus kept on the various historical and cultural readings it acquires, and on the feature related to the set of problematics discussed within this work, with the latter being in all cases hostile to an interpretation of political or ideological character.

According to the *Oxford Dictionary of Media and Communication*, political correctness in its naked form, refers to ‘an obsessive avoidance of language or behavior which might be perceived as offensive or discriminatory thus “vertically challenged” ’<sup>20</sup> or more precisely perhaps, political correctness can be understood as a policy that openly forbids language that might be regarded as sexist or racist.<sup>21</sup> The origins of the term are not clear,<sup>22</sup> and beyond that, there seems to be a series of changes in its use that eventually separates the history of the term from the history of the notion of political correctness that produced its current cultural imprints.

Following literary historian Ruth Perry in her historical tracing of the term, political correctness seems to be present in the United States as early as the 1960s acquiring though a rather different meaning at the time. The 1960s’ notion was an adaptation to the former Soviet and Chinese usage of the term implying commitment to the party line, and it is only traced in the Black Power Movement and the New Left as a self-mockery on the excess of their own political stances and most doctrinaire members.<sup>23</sup> Gradually, the term obtained a different

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<sup>19</sup> Indicatively, in the *Oxford Dictionary of Critical Theory*, a comment is made on the Right-wing commentators’ habit to openly disregard political correctness as a kind of needless language tyranny. I. Buchanan, ‘political correctness’, in *Oxford Dictionary of Critical Theory*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, online version: 2014. Available from: Lunds Universitet, (accessed 16 February 2014). ; Another example is the *Oxford Dictionary of Media and Communication* entry of the term where reference is made to the ‘conservative popular press’ and its tendency to ‘highlight, exaggerate, or even invent examples of ‘political correctness gone mad’ in order to satirize views othured as the anti-free speech dogma of political left.’ D. Chandler and R. Munday, ‘political correctness’, in *Oxford Dictionary of Media and Communication*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, online version: 2012. Available from: Lunds Universitet, (accessed 16 February 2014).

<sup>20</sup> D. Chandler and R. Munday, ‘political correctness’, in *Oxford Dictionary of Media and Communication*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, online version: 2012, Available from: Lunds Universitet, (accessed 16 February 2014).

<sup>21</sup> I. Buchanan, ‘political correctness’, in *Oxford Dictionary of Critical Theory*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, online version: 2014, Available from: Lunds Universitet, (accessed 16 February 2014).

<sup>22</sup> H. Kohl, ‘The Politically Correct Bypass: Multiculturalism and the Public Schools’, *Social Policy*, vol. 22, no.1, 1991, pp.33-40, cited in ‘J. Bush and K. Harold, A Brief History of PC, with annotated bibliography’, *American Studies International*, vol. 33, no.1 p.42.

<sup>23</sup> R. Perry, ‘A Short History of the Term Politically Correct’, in P. Aufderheide (ed), *Beyond PC: Towards a Politics of Understanding*, Graywolf, St. Paul, 1992, p.72 cited in E.L. Battistella, *Bad Language: Are Some*

meaning, approximating by the 1980s its current content, that is, a term related to certain speech codes, favoring an ethos of a bias-free language and behavior both in the American university campus and in the workplace.<sup>24</sup> During the same decade however, the politically charged aspect of the term was perhaps more prominent than ever. ‘Politically Correct’, as an attribution, was given both by people within the academia to films, TV shows and people of Left-liberal views in the Reagan era, and by the Conservatives either when referring to a rhetorical tool of the Right, or when describing behaviors and phenomena being ‘out of the mainstream of American life’.<sup>25</sup> The following decade came with the popularization of the term that was now including a broadened spectrum of ideological issues which were no longer limited to proper language usage but reached to the cultural production and inevitably to visual representation.

The *non-biased, non-offensive, and non-discriminatory*, as sought-after attributes greatly exceeded both the language sphere and the political rhetoric - in the narrow sense of the term at least- and during the 1990s such qualities were present in fields greatly distant to a politician’s speech, as in the illustration of school books, TV shows and commercials. Ethnic and religious minorities, disadvantaged or formerly stigmatized groups were systematically entering the public visual sphere by all means, included the very outspokenly commercial stock photography industry.

The single feature though that I would like to highlight at this point regarding the phenomenon of political correctness, is that the notion is exclusively being discussed as a western phenomenon, as a cultural product shaped within a certain western context, and more precisely that of the United States. Despite the various obscure definitions of the concept and the numerous attributions when it comes to the origin both of the term, and of the phenomenon,<sup>26</sup> a scholarly linkage to non-western contexts was never attempted, meaning that when it comes to the visual by-products of the concept, a subsequent attribution to a western origin is rather safe.

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*Words Better than Others?*, New York, Oxford University Press, 2005, via Oxford Scholarship Online 2007, Available from: Lunds Universitet, (accessed 18 February 2014).

<sup>24</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>25</sup> J. Bush and K. Harold, ‘A Brief History of PC, with annotated bibliography’, *American Studies International*, vol.33, no.1 p.42.

<sup>26</sup> For a different approach on the history of political correctness, that exceeds the present tense and attempts a reading of the phenomenon as an ideology ‘onto itself’, being traceable in a greater timeframe, see J. Stockton, ‘The History of Political Correctness’, *The International Journal of the Humanities*, vol.5, no.12, p.159.



### 2.3 Methodology

As a research goal, the establishment of a common ground between current representations of ethnic diversity and postcolonial concepts, points towards an analysis of purely theoretical nature. Having under the lens the depiction of ethnic diversity in stock photography imagery, and discussing it, as a visual phenomenon, on the ground of postcolonial discourse, I was scoping to a development that could have drawn solely from discourse analysis as a method. Assuming that I could only refer to secondary sources on the phenomenon and without the need of carrying out my own ‘on site’ research, I was shortly to be proven wrong. Struck by the lack of scholarly work on the visual aesthetics of stock commercial images, I had to come with my own empirical results, meaning that I was heading towards the development of a research that incorporates two significantly distinct parts, each requiring an equally distinct methodology.

Sourcing from both quantitative and qualitative methods, I am conducting the first, empirical part of the research, using the quantitative method of content analysis as my methodological tool. In the second part, I am discussing the results of the empirical analysis on the basis of postcolonial critical theory, meaning that I reached for the qualitative method of discourse analysis. Both methodologies are shortly introduced below.

#### 2.3.1 Content analysis

Though content analysis has been given various definitions depending on the extent of technical detail regarded as important by each specialist, there still is a number of features that compose its core. In their briefest account they can be divided into the features that refer to the nature of the method itself, that is, to the requirements needed in order to be applicable, and secondly, to the external but fundamental qualities a researcher should take into account for sound results.

A content analysis is solely quantitative, meaning that while the objects or events studied, both are and must be considered as message units,<sup>27</sup> the emphasis is given on the periodical

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<sup>27</sup> K. A. Neuendorf, *The content analysis guidebook*, London, SAGE, 2002, p.111

appearance of certain well-defined and measurable elements decided by the researcher. Focus kept on the frequency an element demonstrates in the message pool, or on the ratio between two frequencies, content analysis has been a very popular method in contexts that require summarizing and statistical treatment of data, such as in media studies<sup>28</sup> or in social sciences, establishing its own technical vocabulary. From a basic analysis though, to an analysis that comes in reliable pie charts and bar graphs, additional criteria need to be taken into account. Highlighted by Neuendorf in *The Content Analysis Guidebook*,<sup>29</sup> Rose in *Visual Methodologies*<sup>30</sup> and Bell in his chapter *Content Analysis of Visual Images*, found in *The Handbook of Visual Analysis*,<sup>31</sup> reliability and validity are the most prominent, desired features of all, being mentioned repeatedly.

An in detail account of the technical vocabulary recruited for the content analysis of the Getty Images photography, along with the ways the method was actually applied to the material are found in the third chapter of this work.

### 2.3.2 Discourse analysis

Even for the humblest overview of discourse analysis, a different starting point than French philosopher Michel Foucault must be a true challenge. With his work *The Archaeology of Knowledge* published in 1969,<sup>32</sup> Foucault introduced his approach of analysis, having the entire transformation of the term as a result. Shifting the focus from an interpretation that evolves around the *why* of a phenomenon, and attempts, as Rose puts it, ‘to delve behind the surface appearance of things in order to discover their real meaning’,<sup>33</sup> Foucault traded in penetrative methods in seek of the *real*, for an explanatory account of the *how*.

Concerned with how power works in relation to knowledge, and with the institutionalized practices that promote the latter in ways that are inevitably creating a system of certain power

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<sup>28</sup> P. Bell, ‘Content Analysis of Visual Images’ in *The Handbook of Visual Analysis*, London, SAGE Publications Ltd, 2004, p.13. Available from: Lunds Universitet, (accessed 19 February 2014).

<sup>29</sup> Neuendorf, 2002

<sup>30</sup> G. Rose, *Visual Methodologies: An Introduction to the Interpretation of Visual Materials*, London, SAGE Publications Ltd, 2001. Available from: Lunds Universitet, (accessed 19 February 2014).

<sup>31</sup> Bell, 2004, pp.10-35.

<sup>32</sup> M. Foucault, *L'archéologie du savoir*, Paris, Gallimard, 1969.

<sup>33</sup> Rose, 2001, p.138.

relations, Foucault reinvented discourse. The foucauldian discourse, that is, the *discourse* that agrees with the *discourse* of the analysis method, can -in its naked form- be described as a unit of knowledge that incorporates all that can be said about something, excluding at the same time all that cannot belong in this certain body of knowledge.<sup>34</sup> In foucauldian thinking, a dynamic relation lies between power and knowledge in every discourse, since in terms of their social impact, the most powerful discourses depart from the presentation of their knowledge as true, and are constantly enhanced by it.<sup>35</sup>

A discourse can demonstrate a diversity of forms. It can be used to an analysis of the ways images construct accounts of the social, setting in its focus, what Rose describes as the ‘social modality of the image site’,<sup>36</sup> or it can combine both image and text, advancing this way in its intertextuality. Following Rose, intertextuality as a feature emphasizes the interconnection of any discursive image and text that can be found in a single discourse,<sup>37</sup> a quality that is also adhered to the postcolonial discourse. Sourcing from both primary sources, that were later assigned as postcolonial literature or art, and secondary scholarly works, which form the corpus of postcolonial critical theory, postcolonial discourse, stands as an umbrella term engaging material varying in type and historical origin.

In this direction, this work attempts the introduction of stock photography in postcolonial discourse, discussing on that ground the results of the content analysis of the Getty Images photography. A brief introduction to the thematics of Postcolonialism, along with the specific concepts this work draws from, is to be found in the following subchapter.

## 2.4 Theories

‘Postcolonialism’ or ‘postcolonial theory’ as a term, refers to the field of critical theory engaged with the ideological and cultural impact of the European colonial era, and with the many ways Eurocentric thinking is still present. Unfortunately for the economy of this work, not only the spectrum covered by postcolonial critical theory, but even the nature of the

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<sup>34</sup> M. Sturken and L. Cartwright, *Practices of looking: an introduction to visual culture*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2001, p.354

<sup>35</sup> Rose, 2001, p.138.

<sup>36</sup> *ibid*, p.140.

<sup>37</sup> *ibid*, p.136.

postcolonial discourse itself -standing as a classic paradigm for the previously introduced dynamics that lie between Knowledge and Power- are too important to be violently shortened in a brief account. Instead of a general overview of the various theories and theorists that shaped the discourse,<sup>38</sup> this space is saved for the concepts that originated -or became popular- in postcolonial theory and are necessary for the development of this thesis, being, the concept of the Self / Other dichotomy, and the concepts of Chromatism and Whiteness. All concepts are introduced below.

Popularized by Edward Said with the publication of his work *Orientalism* in 1978,<sup>39</sup> the concept of the Self / Other dichotomy greatly exceeds the context within which it became widely known. A rough periodization of the timespan the concept marks in western thinking before it is introduced in the postcolonial discourse, gives two distinct phases, with the curve set by both the French psychoanalyst and cultural theorist Jacques Lacan, and the French-Lithuanian philosopher Emmanuel Levinas. Initially coined in existential philosophy,<sup>40</sup> the Self / Other dichotomy -or more precisely when referring to existential philosophy, the concept of the Other- does not seem to have an agreed starting point. Having been related to Descartes, Husserl, John Stuart Mill, and Sartre, it is with Levinas' *Totality and Infinity*,<sup>41</sup> that the concept of the Other is freed from the epistemological problematic.<sup>42</sup> In levinassian thinking, the *radically Other*, is *That* on which the Subject has absolutely no power, *That* which is beyond experiencing and resists entirely the Subject's purposes, *That* which eventually creates the perfect *binary opposition*.<sup>43</sup> Meeting the lacanian *Other*, or *grande-autre*<sup>44</sup> in its purely notional nature, that symbolic Other, can never be confronted per se, but it can only be experienced as an embodied quality in other subjects. This moment of confrontation is of utmost importance in the concept of the Other, as it is within it that the

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<sup>38</sup> Frantz Fanon and his analysis of racism and colonialism in *The Wretched of the Earth*, Stuart Hall and his studies on cultural identity, racial prejudice and the media, Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak with the notion of the *Subaltern*, and Homi K. Bhabha who introduced the notion of cultural hybridization, are only the most prominent of the representatives of postcolonial theory.

<sup>39</sup> E. Said, *Orientalism*, New York, Vintage books, 1978.

<sup>40</sup> B. Ashcroft, G. Griffiths, and H. Tiffin, *Post-colonial studies: the key concepts*, London, Routledge, 2007, p. 165.

<sup>41</sup> E. Levinas, *Totalité et infini: essai sur l'extériorité*, Nijhoff, La Haye, 1961.

<sup>42</sup> T. Honderich, 'Other' in *The Oxford Companion to Philosophy*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, online version:2005. Available from: Lunds Universitet, (accessed 1 March 2014). ; B. Ashcroft et al., 2007, p. 165.

<sup>43</sup> I. Buchanan, 'Other' in *Oxford Dictionary of Critical Theory*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, online version: 2014. Available from: Lunds Universitet, (accessed 1 March 2014). ; B. Ashcroft et al., 2007, p. 23.

<sup>44</sup> B. Ashcroft et al., 2007, p.166.

Subject gains identity as being everything that the Other is not. In other words, it is in the gaze of the Other that the Subject gains Self, as it exists through the Self / Other dichotomy.

The latter constitutive powers traced between the notional Self / Other are central in the adaptation of the concept conceived by Edward Said who introduced the dichotomy in postcolonial discourse. Shifting from the initial entirely ontological nature of the dichotomy, Said attempted an analogous use of the concept to describe the formative, constitutive dynamics traced between the colonized and the colonizer in the construction of identity and cultural belonging. In the briefest account of Said's thinking, there are constitutive powers lying in the representations of the non-Western in literature and arts, powers that do not find their limits in the construction of a culturally inferior entity, but inevitably reach to the construction of a culturally superior West. Following Said's words in the adaptation of the concept to the postcolonial context, 'European culture gained in strength and identity by setting itself off against the Orient as a sort of surrogate and even underground self'.<sup>45</sup>

Staying on the Self / Other schema, Ashcroft makes an interesting switch in his definition of the 'Other'. Avoiding Said's strong wording, he trades 'cultural superiority' for 'cultural normality' and 'naturalness'. According to Ashcroft, the process of 'Othering' and the existence of culturally 'others' are crucial in defining what is 'normal' and in locating one's own place in the world.<sup>46</sup> Though that transition made from 'superiority' to 'normality' can seem at first supportive to more subtle forms of contrast between a Self and an Other, it is that latter opposition between normality and abnormality that can be found more frequently in the contemporary representations of an Other. Moving away from the era of European colonialism and from the easily perceived power relations implied by the -then- contemporary representations of the non-Western, what remains unchangeable is that the Other has not ceased to be an object for representation, thus a subject for objectification. Whether it is the culturally inferior Other, or the Other standing in its antithesis from the 'normal', the content of the representation -according to the discussed concept- follows the changing needs of the depicter regarding the formation of his own identity.

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<sup>45</sup> E. Said, 'From *Orientalism*' in G. Desai and S. Nair (ed.) *Postcolonialisms: an anthology of cultural theory and criticism*, New Brunswick, N.J., Rutgers University Press, 2005, p.73.

<sup>46</sup> B. Ashcroft et al., 2007, p.165.

The additional concepts this work recruits, the concepts of Chromatism and Whiteness, are in clear dialogue with the previously introduced notions of ‘normality’ and ‘naturalness’ as found in the field of cultural representation. The two concepts are almost inseparable in their nature. According to Ashcroft, the notion of Chromatism refers to the essentialist distinction made between people on the basis of skin color,<sup>47</sup> while the branch of Whiteness studies deals with the various ways the former distinction was conceived, achieved, and maintained in a worldwide scale by the white peoples of Europe. Central for the understanding of both notions is the place white people have within the ‘people of color’. According to Dyer, they appear to be out of the spectrum, constituting a non-racial entity, and implying in this way that the state of being white is the norm, ‘the natural, inevitable, ordinary way of being human’.<sup>48</sup> Dyer makes an additional note on the inevitable effects this interpretation of the white race as ‘non-ethnic’ has on the non-dominant groups, recognizing a reproduction of the ‘sense of the oddness, differentness, exceptionality of these groups, [of] the feeling that they are departures from the norm’.<sup>49</sup>

## 2.5 Previous studies

Attempting a browsing of previous studies on ethnic diversity in stock photography is soon to come with some disappointing results. Even though studies on the many ways identity and belonging are constructed, are still popular and widely present in various other discourses entertaining similar concepts beyond ethnicity,<sup>50</sup> I have not found a single scholarly research on the topic. Stock photography and the Getty Images image bank are mostly present in business newspapers, reporting the latest on Getty Images Inc.<sup>51</sup> or in articles demonstrating some very technical content on digital access and retrieval in large databases.<sup>52</sup>

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<sup>47</sup> *ibid*, p.36.

<sup>48</sup> R. Dyer, ‘White’ *screen* vol.29, no.4, p.44

<sup>49</sup> *ibid*.

<sup>50</sup> Gender and Queer studies could stand as examples of academic disciplines that have identity on focus.

<sup>51</sup> Indicatively: PR Newswire, ‘The Carlyle Group and Getty Images Management Complete the Acquisition of the Getty Images’, *PR Newswire US*, 18 October 2012, Available from: Lunds Universitet, (accessed 5 March 2014).

<sup>52</sup> Indicatively: PR Newswire, ‘Getty Images and SparkRebel Partnership Transforms Content-Sharing Platforms with Innovative Image Solution’, *PR Newswire US*, 10 September 2012, Available from: Lunds Universitet, (accessed 5 March 2014).

Paul Frosh and his *Image Factory*,<sup>53</sup> published in 2003, is probably the first resource anyone interested in the visual culture aspect of stock photography will come along. Frosh, unfolds his account on stock photography in nine chapters, using the making process of what he describes as the ‘visual culture industry’ as a core. Following the process from the site of production to the final digital retrieval of the product, Frosh sheds light on the interplay within the process employed by the industry and central notions that emerge during the latter, as *success, creativity, meaning, genre, concept* and *catalogue*<sup>54</sup> and on the ways this interplay affects the content of the final product. Later on, shifting the focus to the cultural imprint of the stock photography imagery, Frosh makes a connection to consumerism, discussing the relation under two different prisms, seeing the image both as an agent acquiring an active role in consumption behavior, and as a product of that exact context which is eventually disposable.

Frosh’s own attempts to reach previous studies on stock photography, had been proven equally disappointing as he only refers to two exceptional articles in what he describes as an ‘overwhelming scholarly and critical silence of media and cultural analysts’.<sup>55</sup> These articles are Helen Wilkinson’s study on stock photography in 1930’s Britain,<sup>56</sup> and Abbott Miller’s analysis of the -then- contemporary stock industry,<sup>57</sup> both published in the 1990’s in design journals,<sup>58</sup> and both avoiding a take on stock photography as a mode of cultural production, with Wilkinson preferring an advertisement-based approach and Miller giving an overview of the field.

A work though that needs a reference in this introduction, is Lutz and Collins’ *Reading National Geographic*, published in 1993.<sup>59</sup> Despite the fact that it does not have stock photography as its subject, it is still demonstrating a research question that falls into the postcolonial discourse category, and conducts the empirical research part using content analysis as a method. Questioning the ways the National Geographic Society selects its visual material to give representations of the non-Western world, they explore the possibility of the

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<sup>53</sup> Frosh, 2003.

<sup>54</sup> *ibid*, p.57.

<sup>55</sup> *ibid*, p.49.

<sup>56</sup> H. Wilkinson, ‘The New Heraldry: Stock Photography, Visual Literacy, and Advertising in 1930s Britain’, *Journal of Design History*, vol.10, no.1, 1997, pp. 23-38.

<sup>57</sup> J. A. Miller, ‘Pictures for Rent’, *Eye*, vol.14, no.4, 1994, pp.68-77.

<sup>58</sup> According to Frosh this is a sign of the previously discussed academic disregard. Frosh, 2003, p.49.

<sup>59</sup> C. A. Lutz and J. A. Collins, *Reading National Geographic*, Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1993.

outcome being actually more enlightening towards an understanding of the Western culture. The content analysis was applied to a sample of six hundred photographs and detected the ways features as color, pose and vantage point indicate a level of progress and modernity, leading inevitably to a ranking of culture that follows an alien, applied set of principles to the non-Western world.

Staying on content analysis studies of relevant thematics, Neuendorf describes the number of studies that employ the method on the study of images of racial and ethnic minorities in the media as ‘sizeable’,<sup>60</sup> referring to some indicating cases. She later makes a second account of the studies concerning the status of Hispanics, Asian Americans or Native Americans, focusing this time in commercial content, describing them as ‘few’, showing evidence of underrepresentation and stereotypical portraying.<sup>61</sup>

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<sup>60</sup> Neuendorf, 2002, p.202.

<sup>61</sup> *ibid*, p.203.



### 3. Visual content analysis of the Getty Images photography

This first part of the analytical body of the thesis consists of two sections. In the first section, titled, *3.1 Terminology and Analysis*, a brief introduction to the terminology used in this specific analysis is given, along with a step-by-step report on the ways the method was actually applied on the Getty Images photography. The results of the empirical analysis are found in the second section under the title *3.2 Results of the analysis*, given in a descriptive way with further theoretical elaboration coming in the third part of the thesis. In both parts the categorization of the different ethnicities, e.g. Caucasian ethnicity, Japanese ethnicity etc., is following the one appearing on the Getty Images webpage.

#### *3.1 Terminology and analysis*

- Hypothesis

The method is hypothetico - deductive,<sup>62</sup> meaning that it proceeds by formulating a starting hypothesis to be put into test. Since for the present study a valid numerical account is not an end in itself and the results of the empirical analysis should be eligible for further generalization and theoretical elaboration, there are three different and independent content analyses conducted, each requiring a different hypothesis, but all being semantically connected. The three hypotheses tested are introduced below.

1. The depiction of ethnic diversity in images depicting *groups of people* is more frequent in photographs provided by West-based stock photography agencies than it is in images provided by Asia-based agencies.
2. The representation of non-Caucasian ethnicities in images depicting a *single person* is more frequent in images provided by West-based stock photography agencies than is

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<sup>62</sup> Neuendorf, 2002, p.13

the representation of non-Asian ethnicities in images provided by Asia-based image banks.

3. In images provided by West-based stock photography agencies, the representation of white skin is more frequent than the representation of dark skin, concerning the images depicting *body parts* and not persons.

In content analysis terminology, the former imply directional hypotheses suggesting a negative or positive relationship between two constructs.<sup>63</sup> The formulated hypotheses, though narrow, are formed in a way supportive to the overall research goal of the work, that is, to the exploration of the ways in which western cultural superiority is conveyed through politically correct representations of ethnic diversity.

- Message Units, Population and Sampling

In content analysis, a *message unit* or *unit of analysis* could be quite loosely described as the ‘message holder’, a body of content, that serves as an irreducible ground on which well-defined constructs are measured<sup>64</sup> to prove the validity of a hypothesis. The message units used in a study constitute the *population* of the study. The size of such a *population* depends on the nature of the subject put under the microscope, e.g. a content analysis of hard to access historical documents could give a narrow population, and on the judgment of the researcher, given that the results of the analysis should provide safe ground for generalization.<sup>65</sup> The process in which a population is defined from a larger group of *units*, is called *sampling*.<sup>66</sup> The sampling method mostly preferred in social sciences, is the *random sampling* rather to *non-probability sampling*,<sup>67</sup> and though both have a number of subcategories and technical attributes, this space is saved for the content analysis definition of *randomness*, being, according to Neuendorf, the condition in which every element in a population has an equal

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<sup>63</sup> *ibid.*, p.109.

<sup>64</sup> *ibid.*, p.71.

<sup>65</sup> *ibid.*, p.74.

<sup>66</sup> *ibid.* p.83.

<sup>67</sup> *ibid.*

chance of being selected.<sup>68</sup> The analysis of this thesis followed the *Simple Random Sampling without replacement* method, which, in non-technical language, is the exact equal to pulling units out of a hat without putting them back before the next pick.<sup>69</sup>

Though technical definitions may sound secure in their simplistic description, the actual application of the method to the Getty Images photography did not come without its accompanying challenges. Given the enormous size of the database hosting eighty million images and illustrations and fifty thousand hours of stock film footage,<sup>70</sup> a method of absolutely random sampling would have most probably led to a population hostile to the narrow hypotheses of the analyses. To set a very necessary limit to the results of a potential random sampling, the Getty Images webpage search criteria were put into action, with caution on a potential, hazardous to the validity of the content analysis, guidance of the results. The former was achieved by inserting criteria-words in the search bar that fulfilled two requirements; first, they were to give some results of depicted humans, and secondly they were excluding any language content that could lead to a guided ratio of the ethnicity among the models depicted, e.g. ‘Muslim women’. The *Simple Random Sampling* method in the formation of the population of the analyses refers to the fact that the results were not externally sorted in any way that could undermine their reliability. The only modification made was the exclusion of illustration, and in the case of the images depicting *groups of people* and *single persons* the selection of the options ‘studio photography’ and ‘looking at camera’ for more clarity. The images were registered following the preselected by the Getty Images criterion ‘Best Match’. The inevitable images depicting irrelevant content were not excluded from the population but registered as ‘other’, non-significant units.

Given the size of the Getty Images archive once more, the population of the content analyses was mostly based on personal judgment. To secure a valid generalization of the analyses’ results, the population number was set to five hundred units per analysis.<sup>71</sup> Every single image

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<sup>68</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>69</sup> *ibid.*, p.84.

<sup>70</sup> B., Rogers, ‘Getty Images Wants to be the Amazon of Digital Content’, *Forbes Magazine*, 30 June 2013, <http://www.forbes.com/sites/brucerogers/2013/06/30/getty-images-wants-to-be-the-amazon-of-digital-content/>, (accessed 15 February 2014).

<sup>71</sup> According to Rose, the sample size should also depend on the extent of variation among the relevant images. Rose, 2001, p.64. Framing the population of the study in such a way though, comes in contradiction with the comments made by Neuendorf on the scientific validity of a content analysis, referring that it should demonstrate an ‘a priori design’. Neuendorf, 2002, p.11

that belonged to that population was regarded as a message unit, as a holder of visual content. 'Reading' that manifest message though proved to be harder than expected. Since there is no official catalogue that registers people to ethnicities based on how yellow the yellow undertones of a skin are, or on how much height a frizzy hairstyle should add to the carrier to be given the African tag, conducting such an analysis based on the naked eye leads to questionable findings. To come with the most reliable results possible, I consulted the keywords referring to the ethnicity of the models depicted given by the Getty Images in order to be searchable for the costumers. A group of people showing ethnic diversity is tagged as 'multi-ethnic group'.

- Variables and Values

Considering the systematic nature the method showed early on as at the stage of the framing of the research field, the equally exhaustive ways preferred for the extraction of the information lying in its content cannot be surprising. Having followed Neuendorf once more in the necessary definitions of the methodological tools used in the stage of coding, I proceed to the ways they were actually applied to the Getty Images photography.

Quoting Neuendorf, a variable is 'a definable and measurable construct that varies, that is, holds different values for different individual cases or units'.<sup>72</sup> To exemplify using Bell's own hypothetical example, a content analysis of gender depictions in magazine advertisements most certainly departs from the variable of 'Gender' and unfolds using secondary variables, appropriate to the hypothesis stated. A variable, in other words, is any dimension or quality that can be found varying in different visual contents.<sup>73</sup> A value on the other hand, is the potential form the previously discussed dimension or quality can take. In the example mentioned, the variable of 'Gender' introduces to the research two values 'Male' or 'Female'.

Following the hypotheses already mentioned, there is a total of five variables and ten values introduced in the present study. All variables and values are introduced below:

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<sup>72</sup> Neuendorf, 2002, p.48.

<sup>73</sup> P., Bell, 'Content Analysis of Visual Images' in Leeuwen, T. (ed.), *The Handbook of Visual Analysis*, London, SAGE Publications Ltd, 2004, p.15

1. *Hypothesis*: The depiction of ethnic diversity in images depicting *groups of people* is more frequent in photographs provided by West-based stock photography agencies than it is in images provided by Asia-based agencies.
  - *1st Variable*: Depiction of ethnic diversity in images depicting groups of people provided by West-based stock photography agencies.
    - *Values*: ‘Ethnic diversity depicted’, ‘Ethnic diversity not depicted’
    - *Population*: 500 units
  - *2nd Variable*: Depiction of ethnic diversity in images depicting groups of people provided by Asia-based stock photography agencies.
    - *Values*: ‘Ethnic diversity depicted’, ‘Ethnic diversity not depicted’
    - *Population*: 500 units
  
2. *Hypothesis*: The representation of non-Caucasian ethnicities in images depicting a *single person* is more frequent in images provided by West-based stock photography agencies than is the representation of non-Asian ethnicities in images provided by Asia-based image banks.
  - *1st Variable*: Ethnicity represented in images depicting a single person provided by West-based stock photography agencies.
    - *Values*: ‘Caucasian ethnicity’, ‘non-Caucasian ethnicity’
    - *Population*: 500 units
  - *2nd Variable*: Ethnicity represented in images depicting a single person provided by Asia-based stock photography agencies.
    - *Values*: ‘Asian ethnicity’, ‘non-Asian ethnicity’
    - *Population*: 500 units

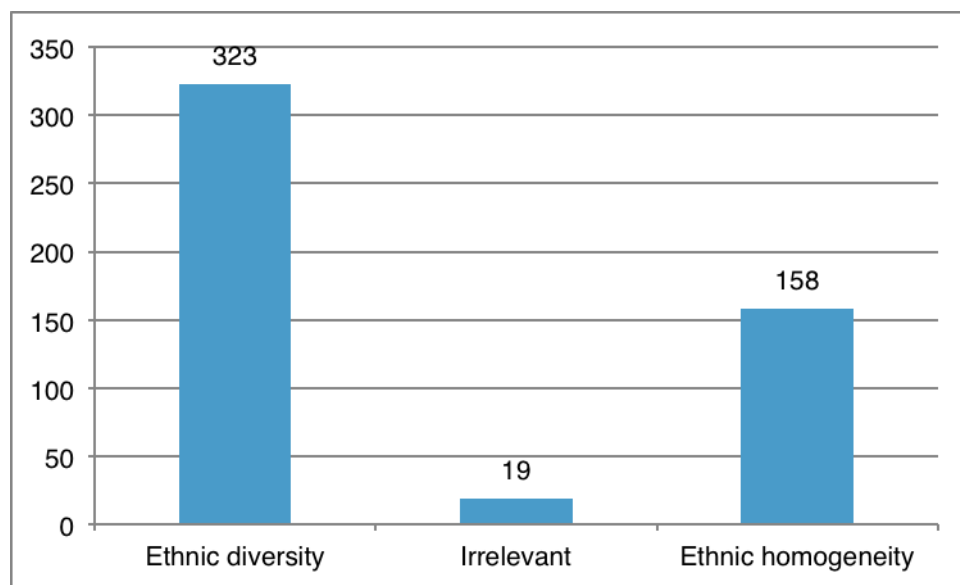
3. *Hypothesis*: In images not depicting a person but *body parts*, the representation of white skin is more frequent.

- *Variable*: Color of skin in images depicting body parts
  - *Values*: ‘white’, ‘non-white’
  - *Population*: 500 units

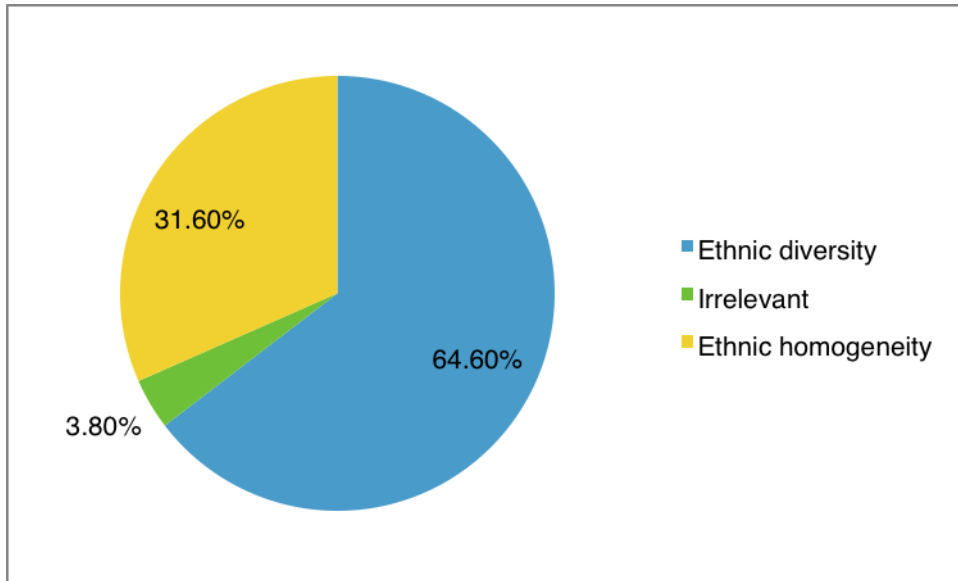
### 3.2 Results of the analysis

*Hypothesis*: The depiction of ethnic diversity in images depicting groups of people is more frequent in photographs provided by West-based stock photography agencies than it is in images provided by Asia-based agencies.

- *1st Variable*: Depiction of ethnic diversity in images depicting groups of people provided by West-based stock photography agencies.



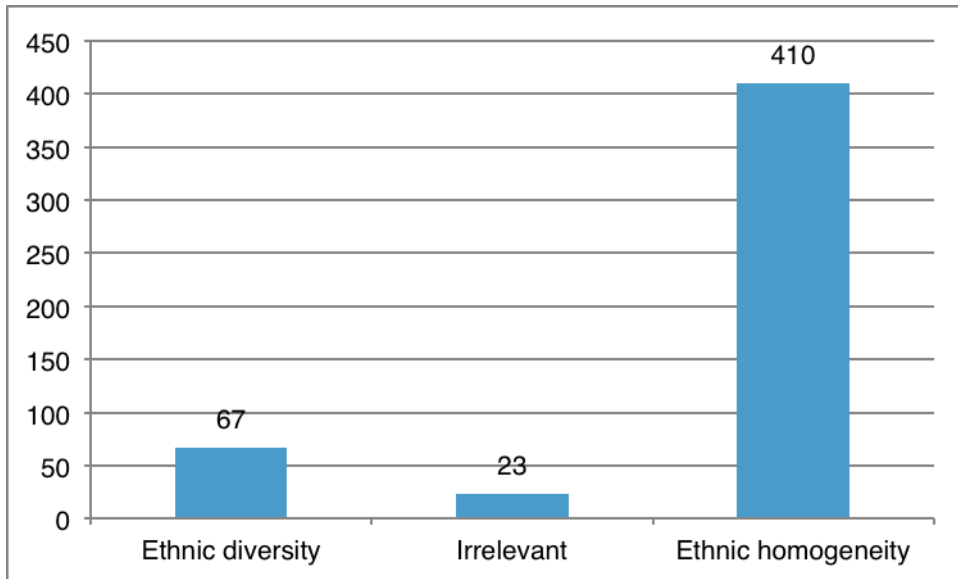
**Fig. 3-1: Absolute numbers of images demonstrating ethnic diversity, irrelevant content, and ethnic homogeneity regarding the sample of images referring to groups of people and retrieved from West-based stock photography agencies.**



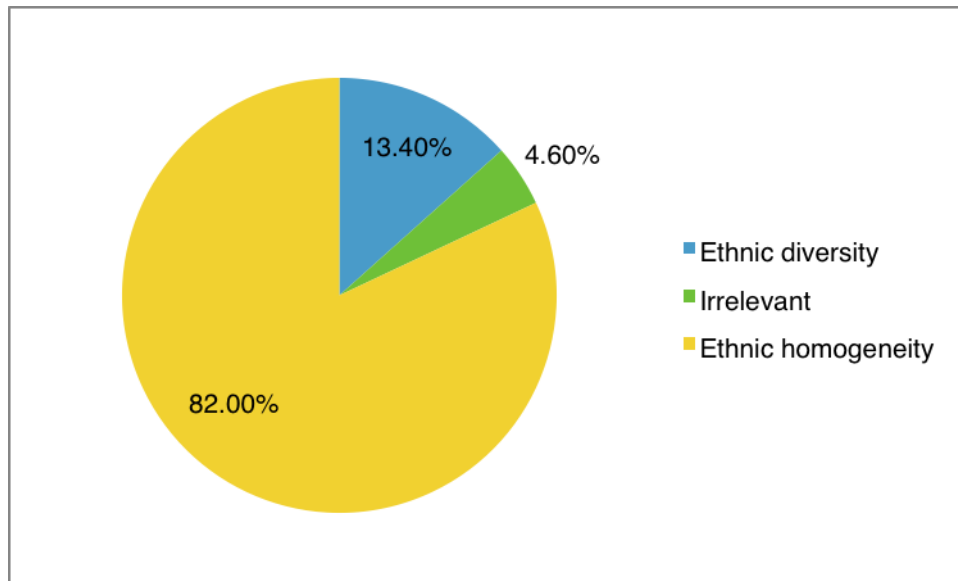
**Fig. 3-2: Percentage of images depicting ethnic diversity, irrelevant content, and ethnic homogeneity regarding the sample of images referring to groups of people retrieved from West-based stock photography agencies.**

Population retrieved from [www.gettyimages.com](http://www.gettyimages.com) on 30th May 2014.

- *2nd Variable:* Depiction of ethnic diversity in images depicting groups of people provided by Asia-based stock photography agencies.



**Fig. 3-3: Absolute numbers of images demonstrating ethnic diversity, irrelevant content, and ethnic homogeneity regarding the sample of images referring to groups of people and retrieved from Asia-based stock photography agencies.**



**Fig. 3-4: Percentage of images depicting ethnic diversity, irrelevant content, and ethnic homogeneity regarding the sample of images referring to groups of people and retrieved from Asia-based stock photography agencies.**

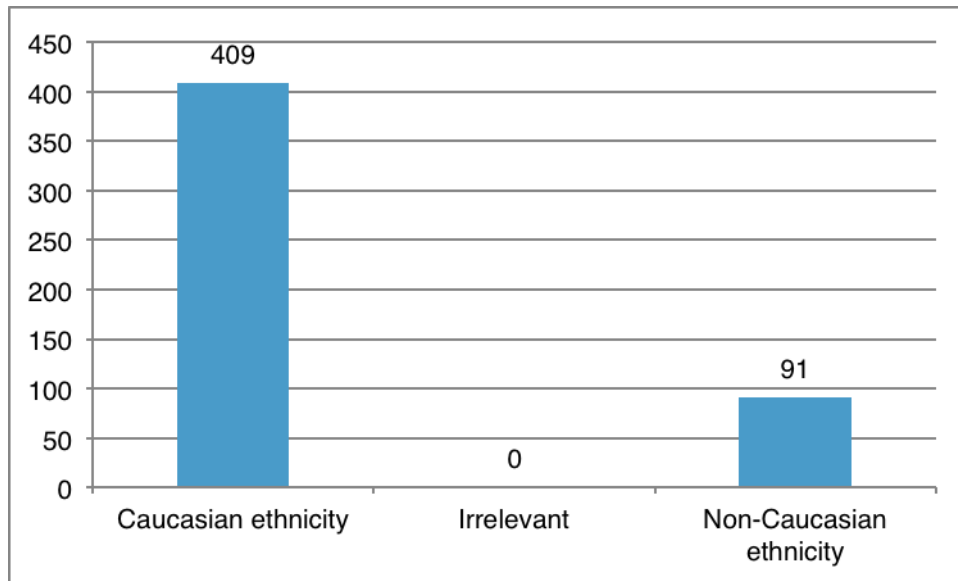
Population retrieved from [www.gettyimages.com](http://www.gettyimages.com) on 30th May 2014.

Taking into account the frequency of ethnic diversity depiction in West-based agencies (64%), versus the frequency of ethnic diversity depiction in Asia-based agencies (12%), it is observed that the frequency of the visual phenomenon is five times higher in the West-based agencies.

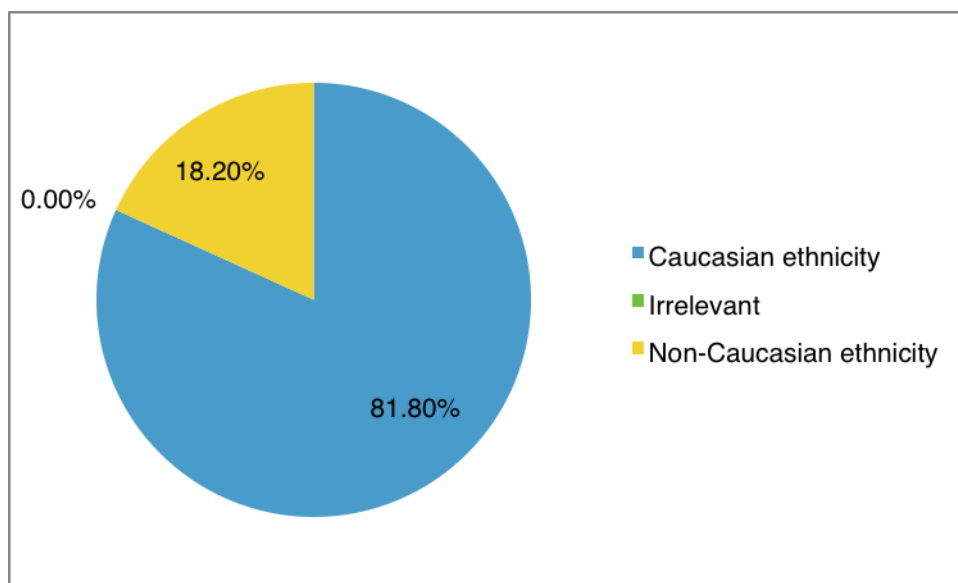
*Hypothesis:* The representation of non-Caucasian ethnicities in images depicting a single person is more frequent in images provided by West-based stock photography agencies than is the representation of non-Asian ethnicities in images provided by Asia-based image banks.

- *1st Variable:* Ethnicity represented in images depicting a single person provided by West-based stock photography agencies.





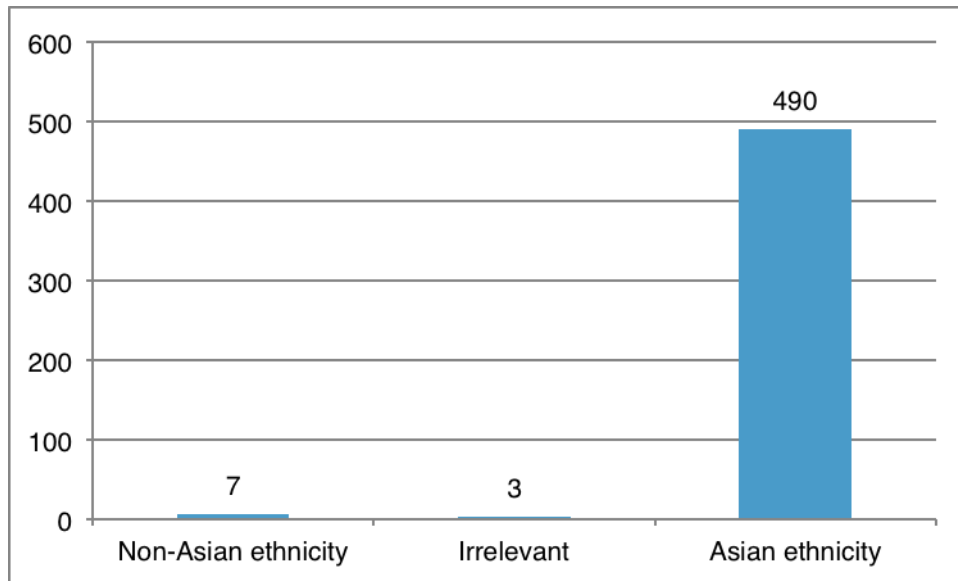
**Fig. 3-5: Absolute numbers of images demonstrating models of Caucasian ethnicity, irrelevant content and models of non-Caucasian ethnicities regarding the sample of images referring to a single person, retrieved from West-based stock photography agencies.**



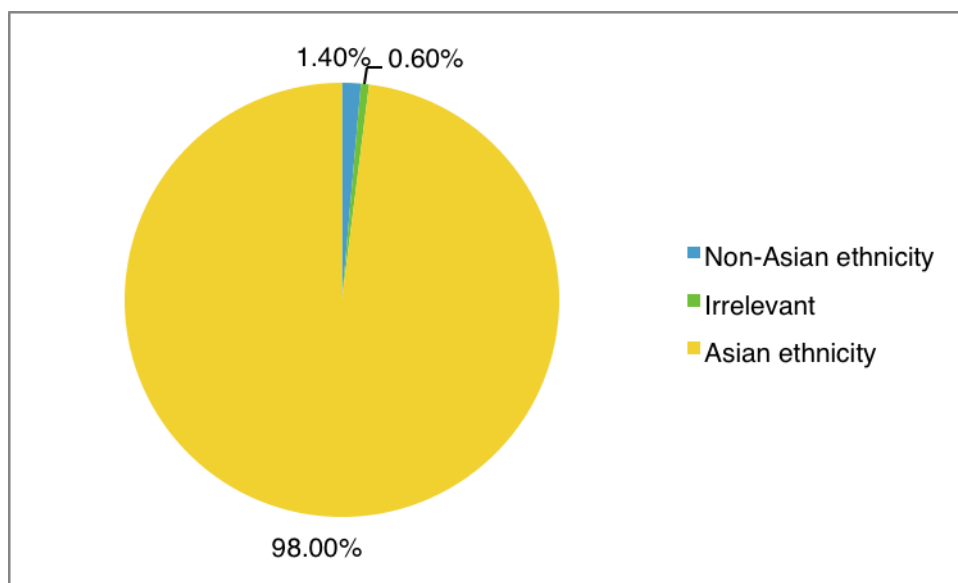
**Fig. 3-6: Percentage of images demonstrating models of Caucasian ethnicity, irrelevant content and models of non-Caucasian ethnicities regarding the sample of images referring to a single person, retrieved from West-based stock photography agencies.**

Population retrieved from [www.gettyimages.com](http://www.gettyimages.com) on 30th May 2014.

- *2nd Variable:* Ethnicity represented in images depicting a single person provided by Asia-based stock photography agencies.



**Fig. 3-7: Absolute numbers of images demonstrating models of Asian ethnicity, irrelevant content and models of non-Asian ethnicities regarding the sample of images referring to a single person and retrieved from Asia-based stock photography agencies.**

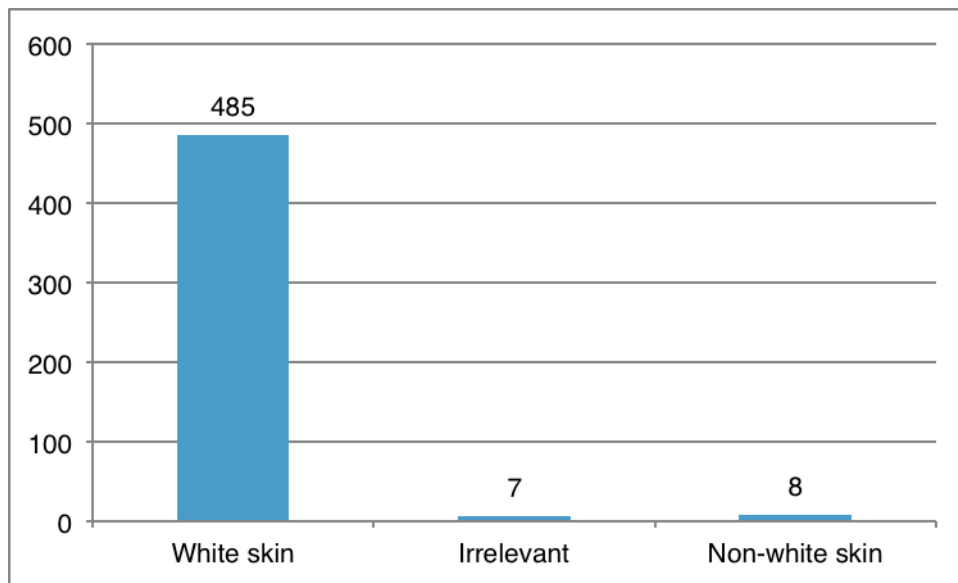


**Fig. 3-8: Percentage of images demonstrating models of Asian ethnicity, irrelevant content and models of non-Asian ethnicities regarding the sample of images referring to a single person and retrieved from Asia-based stock photography agencies.**

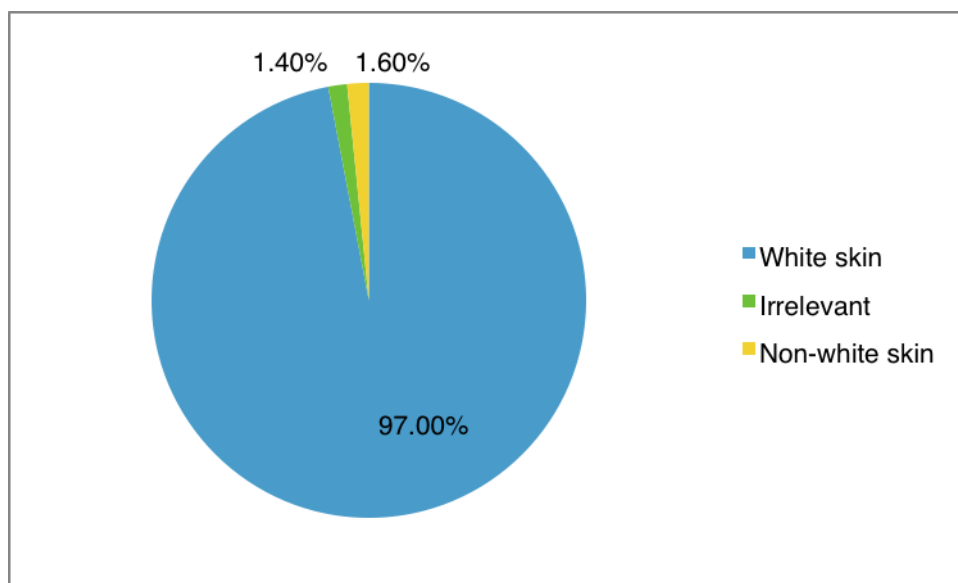
Even though the representation of non-Caucasian ethnicities in West-based stock photography agencies is low (18%), it is still almost 20 times higher than the frequency of representation of non-Asian ethnicities in Asia-based stock photography agencies (1.4%).

*Hypothesis:* In images not depicting a person but body parts, the representation of white skin is more frequent in the images retrieved from West-based stock photography agencies.

- *Variable:* Skin color in images depicting body parts.



**Fig. 3-9:** Absolute numbers of images demonstrating white skin, irrelevant content and non-white skin regarding the sample of images referring to body parts and retrieved from West-based stock photography agencies.



**Fig. 3-10:** Percentage of images demonstrating white skin, irrelevant content and non-white skin regarding the sample of images referring to body parts and retrieved from West-based stock photography agencies.

Population retrieved from [www.gettyimages.com](http://www.gettyimages.com) on 31st May 2014.

White skin is almost exclusively represented in images depicting body parts retrieved from West-based stock photography agencies.

### 3.3 Findings

The visual content analysis of the Getty Images photography indicate a clear distinction between the stock photography agencies targeting the Asian market and the agencies targeting the Western market when it comes to the priority ethnic diversity has as a subject of depiction. All findings are introduced below in a descriptive way with further elaboration coming in the next chapter.

- The depiction of ethnic diversity in stock photography appears to be almost exclusively a western phenomenon, being five times more frequent in western image banks.
- In the majority of the images depicting ethnic diversity the Caucasian model holds the center.
- Within the western stock photography agencies the depiction of ethnic diversity appears to be strongly context related. There is a rapid decrease in the representation of non-Caucasian ethnicities when moving from images depicting *groups of people* to images depicting a *single person*, with the decrease being even more prominent in images showing *body parts* with the representation of white skin in the latter being almost absolute.
- The exceptional representations of black skin in images showing *body parts* are almost exclusively given within a visual narrative that suggests a non-standard scenario. The two cases found in a sample of five hundred photographs was one photograph depicting two black hands holding a book, tagged with the keyword ‘man learns Tibetan language’ and a second one with a Bible reader. There were only six images depicting a black hand simply holding a pen in an office, with the rest of the images showing white body parts.
- The depiction of ethnic diversity in stock photography coming from agencies targeting the Asian markets is exceptional, with the percentage of depiction being 12%.

## 4. Discussion

*A depiction is never just an illustration. It is the material representation, the apparently stabilized product of a process of work. And it is the site of construction and depiction of social difference. To understand a visualization is thus to inquire into its provenance and into the social work that it does. It is to note its principles of exclusion and inclusion, to detect the roles that it makes available, to understand the way in which they are distributed, and to decode the hierarchies and differences that it naturalizes. And it is also to analyze the ways in which authorship is constructed or concealed and the sense of audience is realized.*<sup>74</sup>

The above words, chosen by Gordon Fyfe and John Law for the introduction of the 35th volume of *The sociological review monograph* titled ‘Picturing Power, visual depiction and social relations’ highlight the understructure that lies in every depiction, an understructure of constructed hierarchies and authorships, of ‘naturalized’ exclusions and inclusions that hide in what they refer to as the invisibility of the visual. The following pages constitute an attempt to delve into that ‘invisible’ side of -the ‘invisible’ and overlooked enough- stock photography imagery.

Sourcing from the findings obtained from the visual content analysis of the Getty Images photography presented in the previous chapter, the discussion unfolds in three semantically interrelated sections which -despite the fact that they draw largely from the previous chapter- do not follow a structure based on the order in which the findings were given. The first section departs from what appears to be the most prominent finding of the visual content analysis and reaches to the ways in which the depiction of ethnic diversity not only proves to be constructed but also supportive to the concept of Whiteness. The second section picks up the line from the former and attempts an interpretive approach of the visual phenomenon under the prism of the concept of Political Correctness, while the final section concludes the former two, tracing the common ground in the contemporary depiction of ethnic diversity and in representations of the ‘Other’ traditionally related to postcolonial discourse.

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<sup>74</sup> G. Fyfe and J. Law, ‘Introduction: On the invisibility of the visual’, in G. Fyfe and J. Law (ed.), *The sociological review monograph, Picturing power: visual depiction and social relations*, London, Routledge, 1988, p.1.

#### *4.1 Chromatism and Whiteness in Stock Photography*

Looking back at the findings drawn from the visual content analysis of the Getty Images photography, what immediately stands out is the high priority ethnic diversity has as a subject for depiction in the western stock image agencies, compared to its almost complete neglect in their Asia-based counterparts. The attribution of the phenomenon to the demographic reality that wants the European and North American societies as more ethnically diverse compared to the Asian ones due to historical reasons -implying that the diversity depicted is nothing more than the visual imprint of equally ethnically diverse societies- though quite rational, does not find support from the rest of the findings listed.

The interpretation of the depicted ethnic diversity as descriptive and not as constructed finds a serious opponent in the rapid decrease in the representation of non-Caucasian models when it comes to images depicting a single person (Fig. 3.5), with the drop being even more prominent in images showing body parts where the representation of white skin is the indubitable norm (Fig. 3.9). If the attribution of the western societies' demographic realities would have been enjoying any priority within the stock photography industry; that would logically suggest an analogous representation of different ethnicities in all three categories of images, which -according to the findings of the visual content analysis- is not the case. The representation of dark skin in the images showing body parts appears to be either extremely exceptional, or saved for the needs of a non-standard scenario, whether that would be the depiction of a man learning the Tibetan language or the depiction of a Bible reader. What seems to be routinely repeated though, is the representation of non-Caucasian models in images depicting groups of people, thus in images favoring the depiction of ethnic diversity through racial juxtaposition.

An even closer look at the images depicting ethnically diverse groups, reveals that indications of an intentional, thought-through construction, are not only traced in their comparison to the images depicting single persons or body parts, but reach to their own inner visual rhetoric. There is a visual pattern followed in their scenographic preferences. In most of the material examined, the Caucasian model holds the center of the picture, while there seems to be a well-calculated balance regarding the ethnicity of the models surrounding them; a balance that implies that they were selected as indicative, representative subjects of different ethnicities. Paradoxically enough, all three observations, regarding both the ratio between the different

categories of images, and the visual anatomy preferred in the depiction of ethnically diverse groups -a western visual obsession that appears at first as standing on the antipodes of anything excluding and discriminatory-<sup>75</sup> reveal aspects that come in clear dialogue with concepts of a totally different origin, with concepts conceived to describe the multidimensional ways in which racial discrimination is expressed in the postcolonial world.

The almost absolute exclusion of dark skinned models when diversity is put aside and the needs of representation narrow down to what will simply get-things-done in a 'hand holding pen' photo shoot, indicates that the priority non-Caucasian models enjoy when it comes to the depiction of groups of people, is due to them being 'ethnic', standing out of the norm; a norm that is -in the majority of the cases- embodied in the face of a Caucasian model placed at the centre of the picture. The former imply in turn that the depiction of non-Caucasian models in western stock photography is strongly context related, mostly responding to very practical needs in the visualization of diversity per se -a visual theme that seems accompanying all visual narratives involving more than three people- and vanishes when the depiction of diversity becomes irrelevant. The phenomenon seems to be strongly related to the postcolonial concepts of Chromatism and Whiteness, with the former referring to the distinction between people on the basis of skin color,<sup>76</sup> and the latter -in the words of Ella Shohat and Robert Stam- concerning 'the process by which race and ethnicity were attributed to others while whites were tacitly positioned as invisible norm'.<sup>77</sup>

In the material examined, the patterns of Chromatism and Whiteness coincide with the -already discussed- findings of the visual content analysis that make the depiction of ethnic diversity in western stock photography emerge as constructed. The rapid decrease in the representation of ethnic diversity when the needs of representation call for 'normality', the central place the Caucasian subject has in the majority of the photographs, and the well-calculated ratio in the depicted ethnicities -suggesting objectification- seem to religiously draw from Dyer's words on white domination, which he finds 'reproduced by the way that white people colonize the definition of normal'.<sup>78</sup>

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<sup>75</sup> The visualization of diversity is openly celebrated by Getty Images. Curve by Getty Images, 'Visualizing Diversity', <http://curve.gettyimages.com/article/visualizing-diversity>, 2014, (accessed 1 June 2014).

<sup>76</sup> See section *Theories*.

<sup>77</sup> E. Shohat and R. Stam 'Introduction' in E. Shohat and R. Stam (ed.), *Multiculturalism, postcoloniality, and transnational media*, New Brunswick, N. J., Rutgers University Press, 2003, p.3

<sup>78</sup> R. Dyer, 'White' *screen* vol.29, no.4, p.45.

The rough, superficial ways in which ethnic diversity is found in the western commercial imagery, calls for the investigation of the certain social necessities that it responds to, of the unforeseen needs that demanded its presence in the public visual sphere. What follows, is that interpretive approach on the visual phenomenon under the prism of Political Correctness.

#### *4.2 Political correctness and the representation of ethnic diversity*

As mentioned in the background already given on the concept of Political Correctness regarding its origins and development, the concept seems to have followed a rather unexpected journey that brought a subsequent split in the history of the term and the history of the notion as a result.<sup>79</sup> Focusing on the interests of the present work, that is, on the notion - and not the term- of Political Correctness, its debut is spotted in the 1980s' U.S. politics, and it appears to be primarily related to the avoidance of racist, sexist, or in any way offensive, discriminatory and biased language within the American university campus and workplace. Soon the concept exceeded its original context, entered the broader public sphere and, within a decade, the non-biased, non-offensive and non-discriminatory principles Political Correctness stands for, were traceable in the -then- contemporary television shows, and illustration of school books. Picking up the line from the orchestrated, intentional nature of the representations of ethnic diversity in western stock photography, this section attempts the interpretation of the western visual phenomenon in the light of the above principles. The discussion departs from the assumption that since there are strong indications for the systematic reproduction of that well-calculated visual content, there must be certain social and political necessities that it responds to, a certain causality to be uncovered together with its incentives.

The depiction of ethnic diversity in the material examined seems to be strongly interrelated with the fundamental qualities of Political Correctness. All three observations already discussed under the lens of the postcolonial concepts of Chromatism and Whiteness, also indicate that the visual pattern converges to the political notion that sprung in the American university campus of the 1980s. The priority ethnic diversity has, as a subject for depiction in the images showing groups of people, and the sudden decrease in the representation of non-

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<sup>79</sup> See section *Political Correctness* in 'Background'.



Caucasian ethnicities when the needs of representation call for ‘normality’, appears to stand as the ultimate visualization of the non-discriminatory and non-biased principles introduced by the concept of Political Correctness. The very fact that ethnic diversity appears to be superficially constructed, neither being descriptive, nor present in the rest of the image categories examined, can only support the principles introduced by Political Correctness as being its incentive.

Beyond that, the former are additionally supported by the scenographic preferences these images demonstrate. The racial juxtaposition achieved through the selection of the depicted models on the basis of their skin color, that is due to their quality of being ‘carriers of race’ and departing from the non-racial Caucasian subject -according to the concept of Whiteness at least- bears the same dynamics as the primal, unrefined visual imprints of Political Correctness. Found in the visual content of commercials, television shows and illustrations of the 1990s’, racial juxtaposition has always been central in the visualization of the political notion. The intended balance regarding the race and gender of the main characters in children’s television shows can only be interpreted as a visual phenomenon and not as a coincidence since it appears to be greatly widespread. ‘Captain Planet and the Planetees’,<sup>80</sup> ‘The magic school bus’,<sup>81</sup> ‘The Real Ghostbusters’,<sup>82</sup> ‘Teletubbies’,<sup>83</sup> and the ‘Mighty Morphin Power Rangers’<sup>84</sup> are only some of the television shows that celebrate the non-discriminatory and non-offensive principles of Political Correctness during the 1990s.<sup>85</sup> It is worth mentioning that in the first seasons of the popular show ‘Mighty Morphin Power Rangers’, the ethnic diversity of the characters was further highlighted by the costumes they were wearing, further relating each one of them to a world of racial classification. The ‘black’ power ranger was played by a black actor, the ‘yellow’ was played by an Asian girl, the ‘pink’ was a white girl, and the rest were white boys.

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<sup>80</sup> Captain Planet and the Planetees, Ted Turner and Barbara Pyle, DIC Entertainment, USA, Original broadcast: TBS, Original run: 1990-1996.

<sup>81</sup> The Magic School Bus, Joanna Cole, and Bruce Degen, Nelvana Limited, USA and Canada, Original broadcast: PBS Kids, Original run: 1994-1997.

<sup>82</sup> The Real Ghostbusters, Dan Aykroyd, and Harold Ramis, Columbia Pictures Television, USA, Original broadcast: ABC, Original run: 1986-1991.

<sup>83</sup> Teletubbies, Anne Wood and Andrew Davenport, David G Hiller and Vic Finch, United Kingdom, Original broadcast: BBC, Original run: 1997-2001.

<sup>84</sup> Mighty Morphin Power Rangers, Haim Saban and Shuki Levy, Saban Entertainment, USA, Original broadcast: Fox Kids, Original run: 1993-1995.

<sup>85</sup> Indicative images of the television shows are found in appendix C.

Shifting away from the separate visual imprints of Political Correctness, and focusing on the greater picture discerned, what seems fundamental is that whether the material examined is the contemporary stock photography, or children's television shows of the 1990s, the image of the non-Caucasian subject reaches through its representation, to its objectification. Western in their conception,<sup>86</sup> the visual imprints of Political Correctness seem to be moving towards the exactly opposite direction from their original non-discriminatory intentions. The image of an ethnically 'Other' appears to be intentionally used in order to serve the needs in the representation of ethnic diversity indicated by the Politically Correct principles, that is, of principles that are products of a certain western context. Subsequently, the non-Caucasian subject depicted within a Politically Correct context, is participating to an alien set of principles,<sup>87</sup> a set of principles it only serves due to its quality of being 'ethnic', thus fundamental in the visual construction of non-discrimination.

The power relations discerned in the western contemporary representations of ethnic diversity in stock photography, appear to bear strong similarities to representations belonging to a totally different context, to the representations of the 'Other' traditionally related to postcolonial discourse. In the following paragraph, concluding the discussion unfolded within the previous two sections, the common power structures are being discussed, focusing on the - popularized within the postcolonial discourse- concept of the Self / Other dichotomy.

#### *4.3 The Self / Other dichotomy and the representation of ethnic diversity*

Already introduced in the second chapter of the thesis, the concept of the Self / Other dichotomy greatly exceeds the context within it became widely known. Originally conceived within the branch of existential philosophy, it was only with psychoanalyst Jacques Lacan and philosopher Emmanuel Levinas that the concept was established in western thinking. The transformative, constitutive powers lying at the moment of confrontation of the *radically Other* and the power relations emerged through the subsequent *binary opposition* are central in the adaptation of the dichotomy conceived by Edward Said who introduced the notion in

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<sup>86</sup> The western origin is attributed both due to the fact that the concept of Political Correctness has emerged within a western context, and due to the fact that the discussed representations of ethnic diversity target the western market.

<sup>87</sup> The argument draws from the fact that the representation of ethnic diversity in western stock photography has proved to be constructed and not descriptive of an analogous ethnically diverse western society. See section 4.1.

postcolonial discourse, having its significant popularization as a result. In the adaptation of the concept, Said attempted a metaphorical use of the power relations discussed, to describe the dynamics traced in the construction of identity and culturally belonging in the era of European colonization. Central in Said's thinking is the power that representation has -in literature and arts- in the establishment and reproduction of culturally inferior entities, which subsequently construct a culturally superior Self.

Looking back at the visual patterns preferred for the representation of ethnic diversity in contemporary western stock photography, at first there seems to be absolutely no relevance to the stereotypical representations of the non-Western traditionally related to postcolonial discourse. The nature of stock photography itself that demands a certain form of conventionality, and the principles introduced by Political Correctness that dictate non-biased themes in the public visual sphere, have set the frame for the attributes of commercial imagery. The setting in a stock photography photo shoot aligns with the neutrality of the visual narrative; in the majority of the cases, a white background sets the scenery, and the clothing, posture, and facial expressions of the models indicate cultural homogeneity, nothing that could be related to the representation of inferior and superior constructions. When shifting the focus though from a comparative analysis on the basis of the manifested visual content, to the causality and driving incentives lying in the understructure of such representations, another relationship is revealed. Emerging as common in both kinds of imagery is that the image of an 'Other'<sup>88</sup> is being superficially used to enhance the given western cultural identity.

Concerning the representations of the non-Western which are contemporary or subsequent to the era of European colonialism, the power relations emerging between the depicter and the depicted are traceable in the visual content of the imagery of the kind, thus easily perceived. Drawing metaphorically from the Self / Other dichotomy, Said implies that the representations of the Orient which were repeatedly reproduced, served as a mold to construct everything that constitutes the West, in the juxtaposition of what the West is not. The image of a primitive, uncivilized, 'Other' enhanced in its antithesis the image of a civilized western Self, an identity re-establishment that historically coincides with the transition to the era of

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<sup>88</sup> The argument draws from the fact that the representation of ethnic diversity in western stock photography has proved to be constructed and not descriptive of an analogous ethnically diverse western society. See section 4.1

modernity and industrialization. Though not in a self-evident way, the representations of ethnic diversity in stock photography seem to rail on the same tracks. The common dynamics can be traced both within the visual anatomy of the images depicting groups of people -in a closer look- and outside their manifested content, reaching to the subject of their circulation.

Following Ashcroft definition of the 'Other', who dared a shift from 'cultural superiority' to 'cultural normality' and 'naturalness', and defined the 'Other' as standing in its antithesis to the 'normal', the representation of ethnic diversity in stock photography -through its exclusions and inclusions- seems supportive to the 'Othering' of the non-Caucasian ethnicities. The high frequency their appearances demonstrate when it comes to the images allowing racial juxtaposition and the latter extremely selective representation when it comes to the images depicting body parts, indicate that they are only selected due to their antithesis from the 'normal'. As 'carriers of race' they are necessary in the visual construction of non-discrimination, of a value that originates from the very western concept of Political Correctness. The non-Caucasian ethnicities in the context of stock photography are being thus superficially recruited to further support a western system of values and construct the current cultural identity of the West through their representation. The relation can only be enhanced by the inner logic the images depicting ethnic diversity seem to demonstrate, an inner logic that prefers the Caucasian subject placed in the center of the picture, surrounded by a well-calculated repertoire of 'ethnic' representatives and by the very fact that the visual pattern of ethnic diversity appears to be five times more frequent in the stock photography agencies targeting the western market than in their Asian counterparts.

Shifting the focus from the ways in which the inner logic of the ethnic diversity representations in stock photography aligns with the postcolonial Self / Other dichotomy, and fixing under the lens the circulation of such a visual content, there is an additional way that the Self / Other schema is supported. The non-discriminatory, politically correct, images of ethnic diversity are being produced and consumed by the same people that are exposed on a daily basis to the representation of the non-Western world in the media as standing on the antipodes of not merely politically correct values, but in most of the cases as violating fundamental human rights regarding women or religious minorities. The simultaneous circulation of both visual contents is in clear dialogue with the Self / Other dichotomy as it juxtaposes a culturally 'inferior' to a culturally 'superior' construction.

## 5. Conclusion

This last part of the thesis is consisted of two sections. In the first, the findings and conclusions drawn from the work are given. Some of the inevitable soft points that this work demonstrates are highlighted at the beginning of the very last section to stand as a grip for discussion on the possible alternative approaches a work on the postcolonial aspects in stock photography could take. In this direction, the thesis is concluded with suggestions on future research that could deepen even more on the original question.

### *5.1 Findings and conclusions*

Intrigued by the ‘I, too, am Oxford’ campaign and the ‘As seen in your prospectus’ placard that addressed the most peculiar perhaps kind of discrimination, the discrimination implied by a well-calculated, almost mandatory inclusion, I found my empirical material on stock photography and set off to map the common ground in the contemporary, politically correct, representations of ethnic diversity and in postcolonial discourse. Since this work incorporates in its development two rather different methods, with the findings of the Visual Content Analysis being necessary to the formation of the conclusions of the discourse analysis -which are directly related to the research question- both the empirical findings drawn from the Visual Content Analysis of the Getty Images photography, and the conclusions related to the research question are presented below. For reasons of clarity the results are given in the same order they were first introduced in the main body of the thesis.

The empirical findings from the visual content analysis of the Getty Images photography as found in the third chapter, indicate a clear distinction between the West-based stock photography agencies and their Asia-based counterparts when it comes to the priority ethnic diversity has as a subject for depiction. All findings are listed below.

- The depiction of ethnic diversity in stock photography appears to be almost exclusively a western phenomenon.

- In the majority of the images depicting ethnic diversity the Caucasian model holds the center.
- Within the western stock photography agencies the depiction of ethnic diversity appears to be strongly context related. There is a rapid decrease in the representation of non-Caucasian ethnicities when moving from images depicting *groups of people* to images depicting a *single person*, with the decrease being even more prominent in images showing *body parts* with the representation of white skin in the latter being almost absolute.
- The exceptional representations of black skin in images showing *body parts* are almost exclusively given within a visual narrative that suggests a non-standard scenario.
- The depiction of ethnic diversity in stock photography coming from agencies targeting the Asian markets is exceptional, with a clear preference for models representative of the ethnicity of the targeted market, e.g. Indian models for Indian stock photography agencies.

In the light of the overall research question of the work, that explores the stereotypical power relations traditionally traced in the visual imprints of Postcolonialism, in the depiction of ethnic diversity in stock photography, the findings listed above imply a strong connection to the concept of Whiteness and the Self / Other dichotomy, both belonging to the body of postcolonial critical theory. The conclusions drawn are listed below:

- The central place the Caucasian model holds in the majority of the images depicting ethnic diversity, the decrease in the representation of non-Caucasian models in images depicting *single persons*, and the extremely exceptional representation of dark skin in images showing *body parts*, indicate a clear connection between the visual phenomenon and the concepts of Chromatism and Whiteness. The former refers to the distinction of people on the basis of skin color, and the latter to the place white people have within the ‘people of color’, as being out of the spectrum, making up a non-racial entity that suggests the Caucasian ethnicity as the default way of being human.

- The depiction of non-Caucasian models in images depicting *groups of people* -thus favoring racial juxtaposition- the decrease in their representation in images depicting *single persons* or *body parts*, and the central place the Caucasian model holds in the majority of the images depicting ethnic diversity, indicate that the visual pattern discerned is constructed and not descriptive of an equally ethnically diverse society, responding to certain social and political needs. The phenomenon appears to be the visual equivalent of the concept of Political Correctness, of a concept favoring an ethos of non-biased, non-discriminatory, and non-offensive language that supports race and gender equality. This connection is further supported by the primal visual imprints of Political Correctness that celebrated the representation of ethnic diversity in television shows.
- The constructed visual content of the images depicting ethnic diversity suggest that the non-Caucasian model stands in its juxtaposition from the 'norm', in its quality of being a 'carrier of race', thus necessary in the visual construction of non-discrimination. The image of an ethnically Other is getting used from the Western perspective to further enhance the identity of the western society as being inclusive, tolerant and -eventually- Politically Correct. The analogy seems to bear strong similarities with the concept of the Self / Other dichotomy as adapted in the postcolonial discourse, where the image of an inferior Other is being reproduced to construct a superior Self. The analogy can be traced both within the visual content of the images depicting *groups of people* where the 'ethnic' is being consciously represented to frame the 'non-ethnic' -confirming in this way its racial normality / superiority- and when it comes to the simultaneous circulation of these non-discriminatory and non-offensive images, and to the representation of the non-Western world in the media as standing on the antipodes of politically correct values.

## 5.2 Future work

Methodological terminology, long established theories, figures, and bullet lists of outlined findings and conclusions, can all make a work seem unshakable in its reliability and contribution to knowledge. A work though that sets the focus on stock photography as a visual carrier of both political correctness and postcolonial power structures, cannot ever be exhaustively thought-through. Having a research question of that kind, a question that does not agree with positivist methods and secure lab reports, can always leave room for improvement in the work done already, while it opens up to new ways in which the research question could have been more deeply investigated. These last paragraphs are devoted to the methodological soft points of this work, and to the peripheral, alternative directions that were currently left unexplored, but could add greatly to a future research of the same thematics.

Highlighted by Neuendorf in *The Content Analysis Guidebook*,<sup>89</sup> Rose in *Visual Methodologies*,<sup>90</sup> and Bell in his chapter *Content Analysis of Visual Images*, found in *The Handbook of Visual Analysis*,<sup>91</sup> reliability and validity emerge as the most prominent, desired features a Content Analysis should demonstrate, getting mentioned repeatedly. The validity of a Content Analysis refers to the extent that the engagement between the coding procedure and the starting hypothesis was successful in bringing results. Neuendorf parallels the notion with an ongoing questioning on the suitability of the method preferred for the approach of that specific hypothesis.<sup>92</sup> In the visual content analyses of the Getty Images photography found in the present work, even though all of them give successful, valid results from the hypotheses stated, they fail in aligning with the method's definition of reliability, a mishap that could be prevented in the future.

According to Neuendorf, the Content Analysis' reliability refers to the extent that a measuring procedure brings the same results in its repeat.<sup>93</sup> Bell makes a distinction between the 'inter-coder reliability' and the 'intra-coder reliability', describing the former as regarding the agreement in the results of two coders on the same population, and the latter as referring to

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<sup>89</sup> Neuendorf, 2002

<sup>90</sup> Rose, 2001.

<sup>91</sup> P. Bell, 'Content Analysis of Visual Images' in Jewitt, C. and Leeuwen, T. (ed.), *The Handbook of Visual Analysis*, London, SAGE Publications Ltd, 2004, pp.10-35

<sup>92</sup> Neuendorf, 2002, p.112.

<sup>93</sup> *ibid.*



the agreement within the results a single coder brings on the analysis of different populations.<sup>94</sup> Both depart from the notion that a result is not valuable if the analysis can be conducted only once, or by only a single person.<sup>95</sup> In the case of the present study, the achievement of both inter-coder reliability and intra-coder reliability was out of reach. Since the material was retrieved from the Getty Images webpage, a very busy site that can have new content uploaded many times through a single day, an exact repeat of the analysis that uses the *Simple Random Sampling without replacement* method, and the same search criteria, would most probably bring slightly different results. Given that the recruitment of multiple coders that could achieve inter-coder reliability is an option, this methodological soft point could be addressed with a future delimitation of the material examined. By analyzing only the photographs uploaded within a certain past year, that is, by analyzing material that gets no new entries, multiple content analyses on the exact same material are possible, adding credibility to the findings retrieved. Additionally, a material of that kind could be eligible for its complete demonstration, accompanying the results of the analysis. Both could be achieved with the help of the Getty Images own research services that can provide access to past material that is currently offline.<sup>96</sup>

Focusing now on the discussion that follows the content analysis results, a future, possible study on the same thematics could benefit even further either by the delimitation of the spectrum set under the lens -leading to a case study approach- or by the quite opposite, by the carry-out of a comparative analysis that spreads great in time. Indicatively, below are two different ways in which the research question of this thesis could be alternatively examined.

Given that the origins of the concept of political correctness -despite its various definitions- are well fixed in space and time within the United States of the last decades of the 20th century,<sup>97</sup> the methodological approach of a case study is appropriate. Beyond its eligibility though, a case study comes also in response to the weaknesses found in the present work. By setting strict limits to the empirical material examined, a future study could escape vague wording and generalizations that inevitably lie in conventional notions as the 'East' and the

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<sup>94</sup> P. Bell, 'Content Analysis of Visual Images' in Jewitt, C. and Leeuwen, T. (ed.), *The Handbook of Visual Analysis*, London, SAGE Publications Ltd, 2004, p.20.

<sup>95</sup> Neuendorf, 2002, p.112.

<sup>96</sup> Getty Images, 'Research Services', <http://www.gettyimages.com/creative/frontdoor/researchservices>, 2014, (accessed 1 June 2014).

<sup>97</sup> See subsection 2.2 *Political Correctness*.

‘West’ that are profoundly present in studies belonging to the postcolonial discourse. A possible development of such a study could set under the lens a sizable sample of stock photography imagery that was exclusively produced for the editorial and commercial needs of the United States during the decades of the 1980s and 1990s, that is, during the decades that the concept of political correctness exceeded the field of politics and entered the visual sphere.<sup>98</sup> Departing from the research question of this thesis, a material of that kind could provide solid ground for a case study that examines -through the prism of postcolonial power relations- the potential function of stock photography as a visual carrier of the concept of political correctness.

Leaving behind approaches that are based on the methodology of Visual Content Analysis, a future study could equally benefit from a totally different take on the phenomenon of ethnic diversity in commercial photography. An approach that attempts a *post / ante* comparative analysis and investigates the representations of the ethnically ‘Other’ in the context of the commercial imagery found in the press of the United States, could highlight the switches made during the second half of the 20th century both regarding the frequency in the depiction of non-Caucasian models, and the context, the visual narrative for which they were preferred. J. Abbott Miller in his chapter ‘White on Black on Gray’, detects two phases regarding the representation of ‘other’ ethnicities in the commercial imagery of the United States, with the line drawn in the 1960s, ‘following enormous social and political changes’.<sup>99</sup> Inspired by this study -which semantically carries on the work of Jan Nederveen Pieterse *White on Black, Images of Africa and Blacks in Western Popular Culture*<sup>100</sup> which departs from the late 18th century and the typical racist imagery and pariah caricatures representing ‘Europe’s Africa’, and reaches to the persistence of stereotypical representations in today’s multicultural western societies-<sup>101</sup> a future scholar could dare an update of the timeline already drawn from the previous researchers.

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<sup>98</sup> See subsection 2.2 *Political Correctness*.

<sup>99</sup> E. Lupton and J. A. Miller, *Design, writing, research: writing on graphic design*, New York, Kiosk, 1996, p.103.

<sup>100</sup> J. N. Pieterse, *White on Black: Images of Africa and Blacks in Western Popular Culture*, New Haven, Yale University Press, 1992.

<sup>101</sup> Jan Nederveen Pieterse, ‘White on Black’, <http://www.jannederveenpieterse.com/books.html>, 2014 (accessed 15 May).

Picking up the line from what Miller refers to as the ‘separate-but-equal’ policy in the press of the 1960s’ United States,<sup>102</sup> of a policy that was expressed through publications that were either black-oriented or white-oriented,<sup>103</sup> subsequently attracting segregated advertising campaigns which were in turn recruiting black or white models respectively; a future study could examine the imprint the future appearance of political correctness had on the commercial imagery published, attempting a post / ante analysis. Supportive to this direction are Miller’s own words when elaborating on the incentives underneath the representation of African-Americans in a commercial context,

*‘This incorporation of images of African-Americans in advertising runs parallel to the broader history of film, television, music, textbooks, and other media. This perspective is a necessary partial one, offered from a “white” vantage point that views integration and intercultural representation as an important goal. Critics and activists need to be vigilant about instances of overt racism, and sensitive to traces of the “grammar of race” that are evident everywhere.’<sup>104</sup>*

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<sup>102</sup> E. Lupton and J. A. Miller, *Design, writing, research: writing on graphic design*, New York, Kiosk, 1996, p.118.

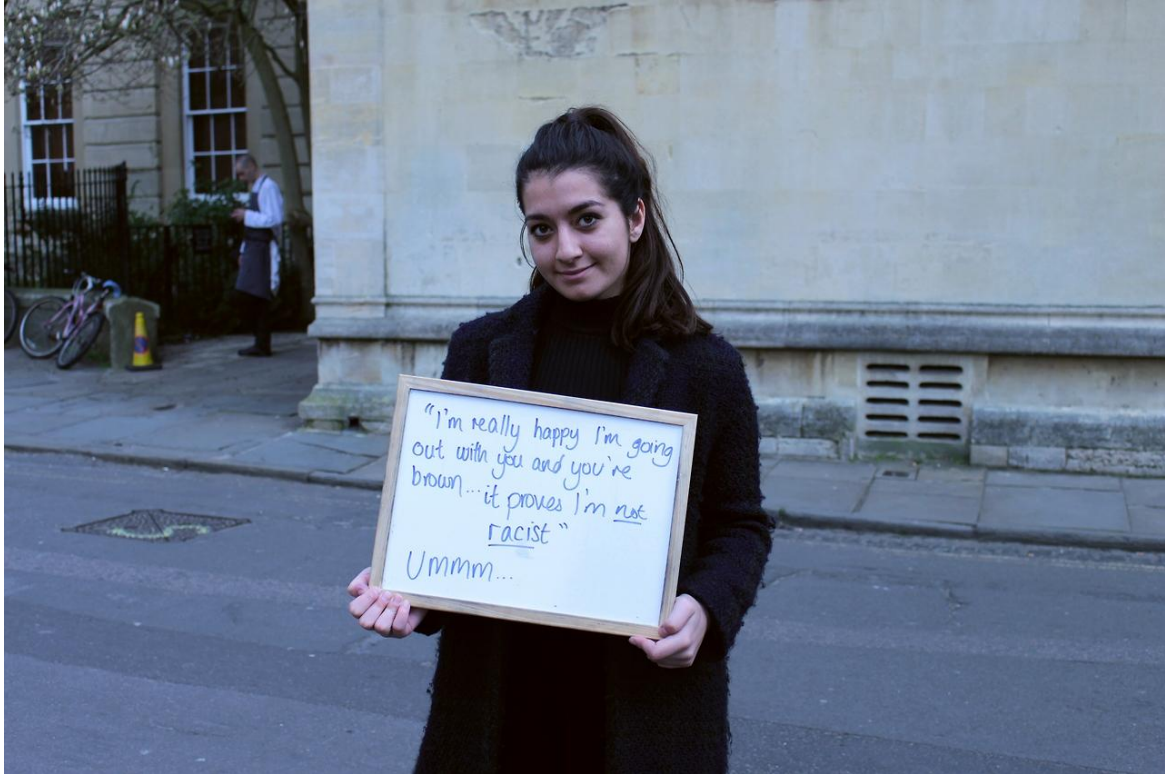
<sup>103</sup> The still circulating magazine ‘Ebony’ targeting the African-American market could stand as an example. *Ebony*, A. D. Barnett (ed. in chief), Chicago, Johnson Publishing Company.

<sup>104</sup> *ibid.*

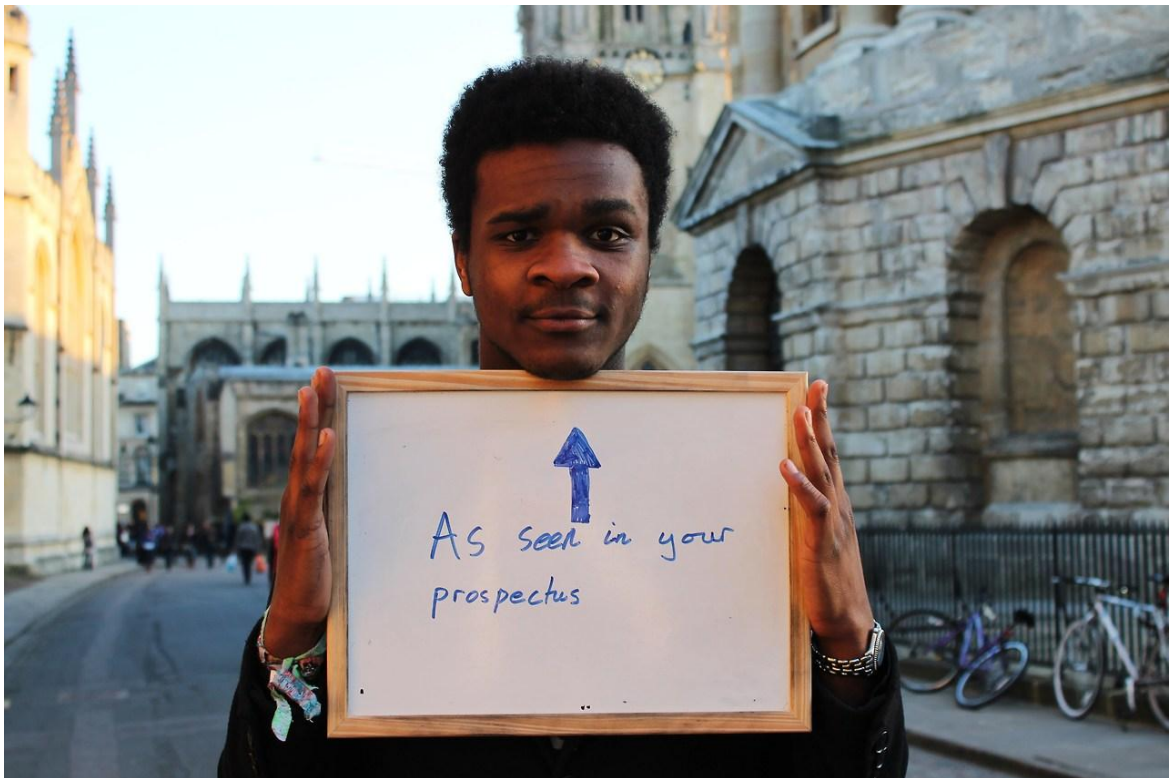


## Appendix A. 'I, too, am Oxford' campaign

Indicative pictures from the 'I, too, am Oxford' campaign.











## Appendix B. Indicative images from the Visual Content Analysis

Asian agencies





gty.im/  
135241014

By  
Amit Dey



gty.im/  
464742517

By  
uniquely india



Western agencies









gty.im/  
187474425

By  
Nislan Hughes





**Appendix C. Indicative images from television shows**

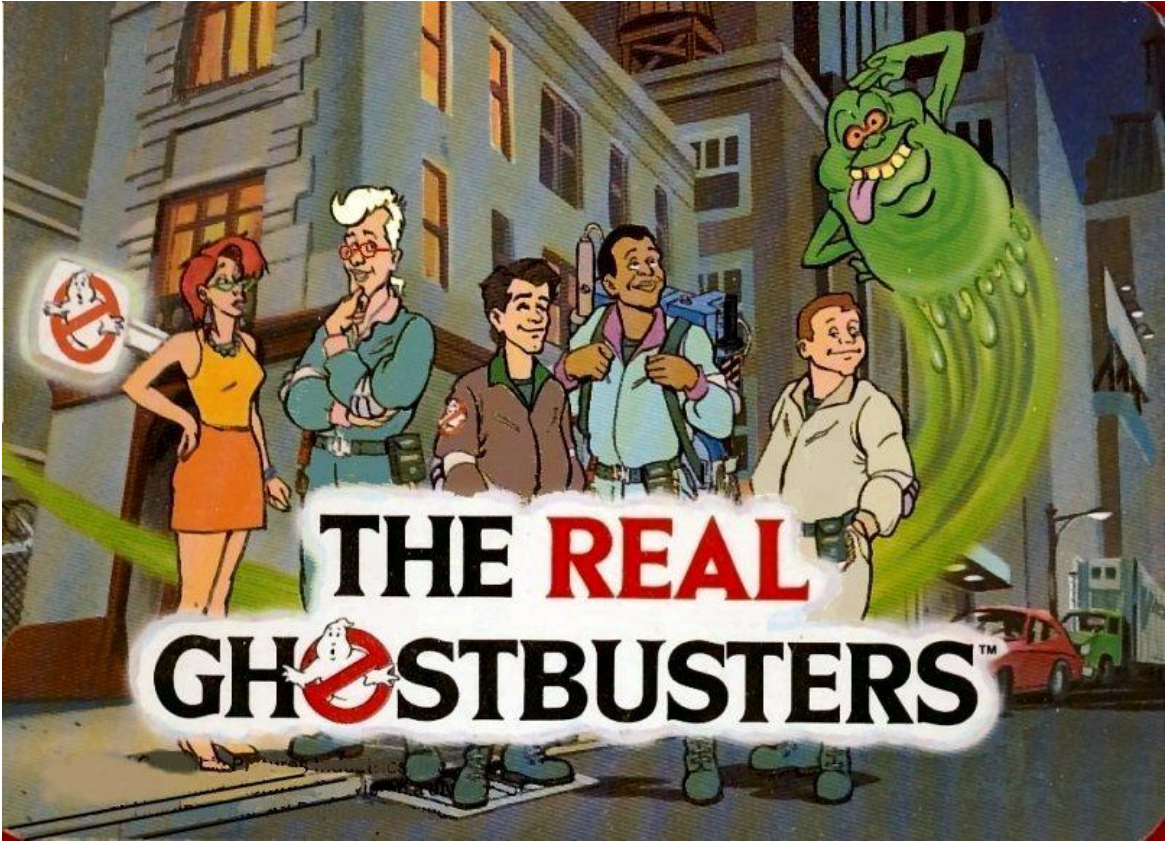
Captain Planet and the Planeteeers



The magic school bus



The Real Ghostbusters



Teletubbies



Mighty Morphin Power Rangers







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