3. Idealized/Romanticized communities- The working class are often presented most positively in the context of community, where they are seen as respectable and hardworking heroes that overcame adversity in their lives, shown in the media in EastEnders where life rotates around pubs and family life. It can also be seen in beer or jeans adverts depicting working class hard-work as masculine and macho. Unfortunately, with the decline of tradition industries like coal and steel, these communities lack correlation to real life.

Jones (2011) suggests images are romanticized and filtered through a middle-class gaze. E.g. the former EastEnders writer said that it was ‘created by middle class people with their view on the working class that is patronizing, idealistic and untruthful’. The director in 2015 (a contemporary example) has criticised drama schools for lacking working-class actors (https://www.thestage.co.uk/news/2015/bbc-casting-director-critical-drama-schools-diversity/). He also points out that this view has changed from being patronized to despised due to the decline in communities and a new class, the underclass of chavs, has evolved.

4. White Trash, Scum, Chavs- Think The Catherine Tate Show or Little Britain. Demeaning and hostile stereotype of the working class (chav) that emerged late 1990s/early 2000s and is a dominant one in mass media, replacing the hard working people.

Lawler (2005) argues this stereotype represents the working class as ‘worthless, frightening and threatening chavs etc. with bad clothes, behaviour and taste’. Contemporary media representations of chavs can be seen in People Like Us (http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2282189/BBC-People-Like-Us-faked-make-appear-drunk-fat-lazy-style-laugh-chavs-Jeremy-Kyle-style-laugh-chavs.html) or the Jeremy Kyle show. Lawler also says calling them ‘chavs’ is a way for the middle class to maintain their identity and superiority. Tyler (2008) agrees that the word ‘chav’ has become a form of middle class abuse.

Representations of the Middle Class

They are overrepresented, with more exposure than justified compared to their proportion of the demographic, and show positively as mature, sensible role models who cope with problems they face. Middle class families (think cereal-packet family) are well functioning and consume the media that shows they are what should be aspired to. These representations promote the dominant ideology and legitimise social and structural inequalities, by suggesting those higher up in the class structure are more successful and worthy.

 Representations of the Upper Class

Often shown through coverage of the Monarchy, gossip about princesses and royal weddings, as they show the rich and powerful upper class easily. The upper class are presented as well-bred, superior and respectable, if a little eccentric. Their lavish lifestyles easily provide media content, about their new estates, cars and fashion lines which are shown in magazines and on TV. A contemporary example in TV is Downton Abbey. Pluralists see such coverage as providing what audiences want, but Neo-Marxists argue it encourages envy of their wealth and, once again, promotes the dominant ideology and social class inequalities are legitimised.