

Autobiography of Intercultural Encounters



Module 1

Activity 2: Vertical and horizontal influences

Commentary



According to Maalouf (2000) our culture is not just about traditions handed down through the generations but is also influenced by the cultural diversity transmitted throughout a globalised world. This diversity has been increased by, for example, migration and religious movement, by international travel and commerce, by the reach of the media, by international sporting events and by international law. This means that, in any intercultural encounter, the people involved are likely to have shared cultural references as well as cultural differences.

The McIndians poster humorously demonstrates this complex interplay of cultural influences, illustrating how our cultures and tastes change through contact with others.

1. This Arabic writing shows the food is *halal* and therefore suitable for Muslim customers.
2. The name 'McIndians' proclaims the Indian identity of the owners.
3. There is no heritage link between the Native Indians of North America and the British Indian owners of this outlet. However, the reference to 'cowboys and Indians' jokingly distinguishes the American cowboys (McDonald's) from the food served in this Indian fast food restaurant. Notably, in English the word 'cowboys' is associated with bad quality workmanship.
4. This fast food outlet is situated in an English city and the owners are British Indians.
5. Coca Cola is a huge global brand of American origin.
6. The McIndians menu shows an international mix of culinary traditions (Turkish, American, Indian) that is commonplace in many independent British fast food outlets.
7. The crescent and minaret symbol  represent the Muslim identity of the owners.
8. The 'Mc' is a reference to the American fast food company McDonald's.