

MICHEL

DEGRAFF:

So at the end of the course, what I've been wanting-- and I think that was achieved for the greater part-- is to have students become very analytical when it comes to the use of language, race, religion, gender, as technologies, technologies to create hierarchies of power. But if you think of something that Steven Biko once said, Biko once said that the most efficient tool of the oppressor is the mind of the oppressed.

So after the students to understand how when you grow up in a society where there are various hierarchies that are imposed on that society based on tools, like how we perceive race, how we perceive language varieties, how we perceive gender, how we perceive religion, and we ourselves-- both myself as a faculty of MIT, but also the students, are students coming from different social groupings-- we bring those hierarchies with us.

And often, it's implicit-- not aware of that. So at the end of the course, one thing which became clear to me is that the students became more aware of how these cultural phenomena and the use of them and the position of them are used as tools to maintain those hierarchies. So what became clear to me is that towards the end of the course, the students were indeed very self-conscious of the uses of culture, of race, of religion, of issues about migration in creating those walls. And I think now they have tools that they can use to break those walls within themselves, but also within the social groups.