Post colonialism and orientalism essay sample

Religion, Islam

Post = After

Colonialism = the process of one country inhabiting another usually instilling their norms and values into that society

Media

Edward said – American-Palestinian

Western media representations often contain a legacy of colonialism

Colonial ideology

-Superiority

-Racial prejudice

-Civilized

Edward Said On Orientalism:

' Orientalism has some perspectives of Marxism, because Marxism argues that we have a small minority of power (promoting capitalism), The western media is presenting the Middle east in a way that is distorted and biased and is very much informed by our post-colonialism ideology' – Everyone that is not in the west I seen as " Cultural others". The Middle East is seen as one country, not a collection of countries, and all the countries within the Middle East are represented under one stereotype of violence. ' the central argument of Orientalism is that where we get these ideas are not innocent or objective, but reflects interests. ' Most newspapers aren't independent, and instead follow the line of the government' ' The human side to the stories is rarely to be found'

' Easy, automatic imagery of terror'

Axis of evil: is a term initially used by the former United States President Bush in his Address on January 29, 2002, and often repeated throughout his presidency, describing governments that he accused of helping terrorism and seeking weapons of mass destruction. Iran, Iraq and North Korea were portrayed by George W. Bush during the State of the Union as possessing nuclear weapons. The Axis of Evil was used to pinpoint these common enemies of the United States and ally the country in support of the war on terror. The term has stirred controversy, as it turned out Iraq never actually possessed any weapons of mass destruction. Nevertheless, " the Bush administration was undeterred by the paucity of evidence and the failure to find a nuclear weapons program or any weapons of mass destruction in Iraq, and remained relentlessly focused on the nuclear weapons ambitions of North Korea and Iran, all the while ignoring or minimizing diplomatic efforts that are not hegemonic and confrontational."

Moral panics

First used by Stan Cohen (Not Albert Cohen)

' Outrage stirred up the media about a particular group or issue'

Cohen emphasized the effect the media can have on creating moral panics

Moral Panics (Muslim Terrorists):

-Bombs, Suicide attacks

-Hijacking planes

-Terrorist cells

-Terrorist training camps

-Jihadist regimes

-Brain-washed

-Islam = Danger – Associated words in the American ideology with Muslims and Islam

-Why they are feared: 9/11, 7/7, Madrid Bombings etc.

-Generate witch hunts (Public hatred)

Creation of Folk Devils

The Mods and Rockers of the 60's were seen as Folk Devil (Mods: Seen as soul-music lovers, Ride vespers and scooters etc.)

In todays society Muslims are seen as ' Folk Devils' in the eyes of the west, it is easy for the western media to portrait them in this way.

' Group, which is seen as trouble makers'

Muslims have become an ideal group for all aspects of the media to vilify in order to seek profits.

Hollywood films are using the stereotype of Muslims being terrorists in order to generate profit, such as ' The Siege' movie on a terrorist attack in New York, Denzel Washington and Bruce Willis (Crude and exaggerated) Demonizing Muslims as evil, dangerous and threatening, reinforcing prejudices.

Western news channels are also predominantly representing Muslims and Islam in a negative light; Nahdi (2003) argues that the western news agenda is ' dominated by careless imagery and reporting on Islam' and that the

stories are easy to put across to the audience with small sound bytes and clips portraying destruction and explosions, commonly related to Muslim terrorists.

Al Jazeera offers an alternative angle than the west, as a middle eastern based institution, it puts across an argument both for and against events, giving a relatively un-biased story. To keep them sub-ordinated, the media use their representations to ' symbolically annihilate' them (Tuchman, G.)

Question for in-class:

It has been said that media representations often reflect the social and political concerns of the age in which they are created. (48)