

Free think again: aljazeera essay example

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In the war against the Iraqi insurgents, the Pentagon introduced the new policy of journalist embedding amongst the American soldiers. This, they claimed, was an effort to get rid of the past tendency of mishandling and mistreatment of media personnel and to provide the direct footage of what really happens in the battle field. The role of media is thereby seen as largely to shape and influence the public opinion or perception of the war, or the international community's view of the humaneness of the war. The pentagon claimed it was in order to show the factual happenings of the war, whether good or bad, although the journalists themselves and the victims of the war would disagree and term it as basically a tactic to justify the war.

Different narratives of the war offer differing accounts based on which side they originated. In the 8th April, 2003 attack on the Aljazeera building, the official narrative is that US soldiers returned fire on some insurgents who fired at them, allegedly from within the Aljazeera premises (Hugh 2006). However different media networks find it abnormal to have numerous networks hit on the same day.

As the consumers, we are entitled to pure information from the news platforms. Any opinionated news is likely to present as biased as it tends to give one-sided information or to portray a particular party as victimized. For example, the fact that Aljazeera lays emphasis on the tribulations of the Iraqis makes it likely to be confused with journalism bias. The network has been alleged to have shown exclusive footages of American soldier's atrocities leaving out the Iraqi soldiers' bad side deliberately (Jehane 2004). In a nutshell, it is hard for journalism to be free from bias as basically not every material they air is fit for both, if not all, sides of the war. The media

can only come close to being free from bias by airing live footage of the war, at least for the audience to decide. Hand picking the material to be aired is only increasing the likelihood for bias.

In an effort to intimidate the enemy or to justify their excessive use of force, warring sides may publish or broadcast false or manipulated information.

That constitutes propaganda as opinionated journalism largely involves the exclusive views of the news network or airing of specific material likely to alter the public perception of the war. The main difference between fox news and Aljazeera would be the fact that Aljazeera goes about its business in a raw and uncensored manner which airs even sensitive material as long they are affecting the public interest, in what they term as straight journalism (Jehane 2004). The fox news on the other hand is seen openly displaying its ideological orientation by refraining from airing some footage which may be viewed as bloody. It has a little bit more discretion than Aljazeera.

Showing of bloody images is claimed to be in order to promote free speech and editorial independence in a bid to expose the human suffering in the war. This is also to prove that despite its heavy dependence on the Emir's aid, it is a free media house. Its success is not really outwardly provable, as there is a deep rooted belief among the government officials and even word on the street that the ruling family in Qatar is usually the voice behind Aljazeera.

References

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<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RmPUx7OH1T8>