

Reception & Use of Media Content

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How TV News Makes Arabs &
Muslims Feel About Themselves

Framing the Study

- This article looks at implications of news programming and young Arab Americans and Muslims, especially how they feel about themselves and their sense of identity
- Arabs' & Muslims' personal interpretation of news content impacts self-conception and public displays of identity
- Cultivation theory: people learn much of what they know from TV; this information is used to shape our social realities

- TV in particular shapes how people from diverse ethnic backgrounds are portrayed and perceived by society
- Simply watching TV, an act that seems inherently passive, we are in fact actively creating and interpreting meaning from the stories we see and hear
- TV affects viewers' values and attitudes; exposure to TV messages affect perceptions of reality
- Self-Concept: how people perceive themselves, is the result of how other people perceive them, and their opinion and evaluation of those external appraisals

Anger & Frustration

- Disappointment with the mainstream news industry in the US, which perpetuates images that lead to a feeling of frustration, anger & disgust
- Feel helpless to respond to criticism (im)posed by cable news' 'talk show' format
 - demeaning of Arab viewpoints
- Did not consider the guest or commentators [expert/authority] credible

Islamophobia

- hate crimes against Muslims are well documented post-9/11, but anti-Islamic rhetoric has escalated in the news
- "the term 'Islamophobia' does not adequately express the full range and depth of antipathy towards Islam and Muslims in the West today. It is an inadequate term".."A more accurate expression would be 'anti-Islamic racism' for it combines the elements of dislike of a religion and active discrimination against the people belonging to that religion."
- website: <http://www.islamophobia-watch.com>

Source of News

- The majority of the participants reported frequently augmenting TV news content by visiting news Web sites
- They used Facebook and Twitter to stay updated on current events
- Strong praise for the Internet because of a perceived promotion of diversity of opinions

Impact of News Images on Identity

- Strong disapproval for people who changed their names to more Western-sounding ones
- considered Muslim women exceptionally courageous for wearing the hijab

Part of the Solution: Recommendations

- Engage others in an ongoing dialogue
- Use of alternative news sources
- Refuse the correlation of “terrorist” with that of Muslim and Arab
 - article: [The Aurora Shooting](#)

Finding Home in a Song & a
Dance: Nation, Culture, Bollywood

Framing the Study

- Bollywood films can evoke 'home' for members of the South Asian diaspora
- It is the largest film industry in the world, doubling the production of film in Hollywood
- Diasporic Community: consists of people displaced from their homelands through voluntary or forced migrations
 - Transmission of cultural values/norms
 - Coming to terms with multiple home spaces

- C. Mohanty: reminds us 'home' is not necessarily a physical space, but rather can be a space where we create a sense of belonging emotionally, politically & through our ideas and beliefs
- G. Gopinath: complicated relationship queer subjects have with 'home' and 'nation' because of their outsider status to 'home' within a social system where men dominate, and which assumes and enforces heterosexuality as the norm [heteropatriarchy]

- India opened up its economy in 1991
[Globalization]

- Mediascapes: images of the world created by
the media and their global distribution

Bollywood Crossings: Culture in the Movies

- When heterosexual, upper middle-class, diasporic audiences use Bollywood films to cultivate relationships with home, those relationships often become an uncontested acceptance of the nation and its norms
 - Sanjay: Bollywood is India; the 'Bollywood Dream;' a recreated nostalgic space
 - Ashwini: Bollywood is a bride; hybrid world
 - Zulfi: Bollywood is a contested space; continually struggle with its meaning

Queering the Nation

- Queer diasporic group reclaiming Bollywood in ways that might open up the exclusions inherent in its representations
- G. Gopinath: a traditionally invisible queer subjectivity within the nation might be able to negotiate alternative modes of belonging to the nation

- (song) "Yeh dosti" or "This friendship":
particular pleasure is taken in this song and the bond between the two male protagonists, because it is one that has been subversively read by critics as signifying a possibly gay relationship
- Salim's embodiment of the classic film heroine (Basant) produces a space where the queer South Asian diasporic community finally gets to go home; a home where they are seen in their fullness, both South Asian and Queer and desirable

- Their queer embodiments of characters reclaim and re-imagine films that evoke the nostalgia of their teenage years
- 'home' exists only in the interstices of fantasy and reality, of here and there
- R. Hedge: home is an imaginary construct that shifts between all those geographical, historical, emotional, and sensory spaces.
- The members of Satrang have formulated alternative modes of belonging to a nation that is not able to embrace their subjectivities in all their fullness
- Their gender-queer performances have subverted and rewritten conventional norms

Imaginary Homes, Lost and Found

- One's relationship with that home is dependent on one's subject position
 - From a marginalized position, the conflation of Bollywood and India is contested as hegemonic discourses about gender and sexuality are performed
 - The marginalized find spaces not only to rewrite themselves but perhaps to rescript the imaginary discourses of the nation

"Why Don't You Act Your
Color?": Pre Teen Girls, Identity,
& Popular Music

Framing the Study

- This study looks at the social and cultural dimensions of pre teen girls' popular music experience focusing on racial and gendered identities
- What the author calls "why don't you act your color?" explores the relationships between race, gender, music and the social and cultural interactions and constructions of difference

The "Central Girls"

- Popular music was omnipresent and integral to their everyday lives; listening, dancing & singing to music meant more than entertainment, it communicated not only pleasure but also their racial and gendered identities
- The girls' frustration with each other and their struggles to understand what it means to "act your color" are an important part of their existence with popular music

Cultural Studies and Audience Scholarship

- Understanding how people make sense of media and how media experiences affect everyday life
- Grounded in the assumption that media and popular cultural experiences are important socialization practices that both negatively and positively influence how we construct a sense of self and others

- Meaning Construction: social process influenced by a variety of contextual conditions – daily interactions with others, societal belief systems, economic relations, cultural experiences, media texts and familial practices
 - create belief systems that function ideologically
- Belief Systems: more often than not, serve to privilege some people and ways of being over than others
 - The Central girls rely upon social and cultural belief systems about heterosexual relationships and particular gender behaviors to interpret media content

- Identity Construction: Feminist scholars argue that identity is “communicated” and “practiced” [performed] rather than predetermined by race, gender, class, age, sexuality, ability and ethnicity
 - We understand place in the social and cultural world as complicated and enriched by many multiple and layered identities
- Identity is simultaneously how we communicate a sense of self to others and how we are constructed by the world around us

Arguing Over Images: Native American Mascots & Race

Framing the Study

- Arguments about Native American mascots are actually arguments about race, and hence a barometer of race relations in our society
- Euro-Americans were able to fabricate Native Americans as mascots because of prevailing sociohistorical conditions

- A set of social relations and cultural categories made it possible, pleasurable and powerful for Euro-Americans to elaborate images of Indians in athletic context:
 - Euro-Ams. have always fashioned individual and collective identities for themselves by Playing Indian
 - The conquest of Native America simultaneously empowered Euro-Ams. to appropriate, invent and otherwise represent Native Americans and to long for aspects of indigenous cultures destroyed by conquest
 - With the rise of public culture, the production of Indianness in spectacles, exhibition and other sundry entertainments proliferated, offering templates for elaboration in sporting contexts

- Native American mascots have relied on stereotypical images of Indians
- Mascots reduce past and present Native Americans to well-worn clichés derived from dime novels, Wild West shows, movies, scouting and advertising
- Mascot invention depends on decontextualization
 - the warrior (savage-noble)
 - the clown (ignoble)

In Defense of Mascots

- Interconnected arguments that collectively labor to make such images acceptable and to defuse the controversy: respect, intention, fairness & common sense
- Refuse to take seriously the concerns of living Native Americans
- Exhibit a propensity to tell Native Americans how it is or how they should feel
- Question the grounding of critics; infantilize them
- Inability to see or talk about race
- Claim parity between their ethnic heritage and racial condition and that of Native Americans

In Opposition to Mascots

- Overlapping arguments foregrounded by race, history and power
- Overtly engage with and challenge supporters' knowledge and understanding
- Direct attention to race and its effects
- Actively racialize the debate
- Historicize the use of American Indian nicknames and symbols, connecting them with broader patterns of discrimination and oppression

Interpretation of the Argument

- Texts, images and performances do not have fixed meanings but rather audiences actively interpret them, negotiating and literally creating their significance
- Audiences struggle with one another, and often with social institutions, including the media, to give meaning to signs; their worlds of experience and collective heritage; and their position, perspectives and possibilities