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Amira Dweik
California State University, Monterey Bay

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Effects of Media on United States Perception:
A Case Study of Propaganda, Persuasion and Orientalism

Amira Dweik
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Abstract

The following paper is an analytical work centered on Orientalism, Propaganda and Persuasion. Analyzing the Orientalist perspective by Edward Said contributes to the understanding of how propaganda and persuasion continue to be used in the United States media. Looking at the multitude of media messages, this paper analyzes how Arabs continue to be vilified and demonized throughout the United States media.

Introduction to Perceptual Influence

In every civilization, in every nation, the desire for an image of an enemy is prevalent. This enemy can be used to entice public support for changes in a political process, war and overall suppression of a group of people. This tactic generally uses propaganda and persuasion to demonize a group of people that are usually from a different region or ethnic group that are misunderstood and unrepresented (Ratzkoff B. & Jhally, S. 2001).

Over the years, the United States media have vilified Blacks, Asians, Indigenous Nations, Jews, Arabs and many more (Shaheen, 2001). These images were used in order to grain support for political actions. (Ratzkoff B. & Jhally, S. 2001). These political actions can revolve around the economy, military and foreign relations. Since the recent attacks on the World Trade Center, the villains in the U.S. media today are the Arabs. They have been the central focus of the news, films and television. Rarely have they been shown as anything but terrorists, religious fanatics, and chauvinists. This constant portrayal of Arabs has lead to devastating effects. These affects can be seen in the impact film, news and television messages have on the attitudes and beliefs of the general population.

The opinions of individuals can be easily formed through television, radio, and films. With the immense increase in technology, almost every home contains at least one television and it is television that provides the general public with most of the news and entertainment. The general public has become accustomed to believing everything heard through this channel of technology.

This paper is does not explore why vilification of Arabs occurs. The goal of this paper is to examine how these propagandistic and persuasive techniques are used, and where they come from? Also, this paper examines the effects that constant vilification has on the general public and how it contributes to the misunderstanding and demonized perceptions of the Arab world. This paper is meant to provide a template of the actions occurring in the U.S. media. It is not meant to infer why these perceptions are propagated and for whose interest.

Methodology of Perception

Research for this paper began with the War on terror following the attacks of 9-11. It was after the attacks that I began to witness what people thought of the Arab world, and I began to question where their beliefs came from and why they felt such hatred for the Arab world. In understanding where the immense hatred evolved, historical research was done on the Orientalist perspective and its changes over time. Examining the Orientalist perspective in relation to the U.S. media involved developmental research which analyzed the patterns and sequences of the U.S. media on the Arab world. Understanding the progression of how the U.S. media has portrayed the Arab world in different times. Qualitative methods of research were also used to find evidence of the propagandist and persuasive messages within the U.S media. Causal-Comparative Ex-post facto method examined how the U.S. media uses persuasive and propagandistic messages. In order to bring the immense research from different aspects and present them in a clear and concise manner, the descriptive method was used to encompass the range of information and concepts.

Theoretical framework of Lasting Images

The United States mainstream media has used propagandistic and persuasive techniques to formulate common perceptions, beliefs, views and opinions throughout the population (Seppanen, J. Stocchetti, M 2007). In particular the United States media has used these techniques to form a mass public opinion on the Arab Middle East. The U.S. media has created Orientalist perceptions of the Arabs and the Middle East. These Orientalist perceptions have created distorted and biases beliefs of the Arab world that are bases on the continuous portrayals of the "other" through the use of stereotypical and vilifying images. These images have persuaded US media viewers into disliking and having clichéd perceptions of Arabs.

Propaganda and persuasion are equally important for this report in that they contribute to understanding the U.S. media and its mechanics. Propaganda is the forceful manipulation of messages, which in the case of the U.S. media, initiates Orientalist perceptions and beliefs. Orientalist perceptions are then reinforced through persuasion, in that persuasion is the underlying backdrop of messages that are not necessarily forcing viewers to believe a certain way, but reinforces and continues the already constructed Orientalist perceptions.

Orientalism

In understanding where the perception of the Arab Middle East has originated, the Orientalist perspective, examined by Edward Said, provides the best theoretical framework for the basis of this paper. *Orientalism* examines the ideological lense used by the West to view and understand the East. Orientalism "coincides exactly with the period of unparalleled European expansion" (Said, 1976). From the period of imperialism and

colonial expansion, to the War on Terror and 911 attacks, the West has held the same biases and stereotypes about the people of the Middle East (Said, 1976).

During the colonial expansion of the European Empire, English philosophers would propagandize the Orient (Said, 1976). Their depictions of the Arab showed them as intolerable and unable to associate with the European culture (Said, 1976). Arabs were looked at as unable to comprehend the colonial and industrial way of life and were shown as unclean, unkempt and devoid of a civilized culture as a result (Said, 1976). Today, the Arab is generally placed in the role of a villain in films and television (Shaheen, 2001). Propaganda today shows Arabs with the common image of a scarf around the head holding a weapon and yelling praises to Allah. Said explains that the common depiction of Arabs in films shows them as "gullible, devoid of energy and initiative, fulsome flattery, unkindness to animals, with disordered minds that fail to understand what clever Europeans grasp immediately" (Said, 1976). With this bombardment of imagery, the general public has been propagandized in believing that all Arabs are evil and want to destroy Americans. This, according to Said, is considered to be because "rarely were Orientalist's interested in anything except providing the validity of these musty truths" (Said, 1976).

The dynamic power structure of Western political dominance over the East prevents the Arab world from successfully providing alternate images of their culture and history. Their positional superiority, as Said explains, "puts the westerner in a whole series of possible relationships with the Orient without ever losing him to the relative upper hand" (Said, 1976). This means that West is able to maintain their power and continue to have relations with the East. However, the Arab is not a "free subject of

thought" to any degree (Said, 1976). The dominant power of the West has and will continue its domination of the Arab world and the propaganda necessary to keep the general public in a constant fear of what the Arabs may do (Said, 1976).

Within the Orientalist concept, the relationship between the West and the East is greatly emphasized. To understand this relationship, Said provides definitions and categories for the different sides. The West, the powerful and dominate side, is categorized in the position of the Orientalist. The Orientalist is the catalyst of the behavior and perceptions that continue to push this view of the "other". Said explains the Orientalist as the propagators and initiators of the oriental perspective. The role of the Orientalist "makes it his work to always be converting the orient from something, into something else" (Said, 1976). This is what Said considers as a process of conversion. This conversion could be looked at in comparison to propaganda. In order for propaganda to operate effectively an properly, a propagandist is necessary for continue to alter and twist the image of the individual or group they are discussing into something different, depending on what type of a reaction they desire from the general public (Pratkanis A. & Aronson E. 2001).

Propaganda and persuasion contribute immensely to the Orientalist perspective. Propaganda and persuasion help to form the Orientalist perceptions in that they provide the information that indoctrinates the citizens to believe what the Orientalist/ Propagandist wants them to believe. Propaganda and persuasion are powerful forces that many do not know are being applied to their daily lives. However; these forces are deployed everywhere and are extremely dangerous for they are deliberately done for a purpose of keeping the public submissive to the persuasion or propaganda applied

(Hirchi, 2007). These forces shape public opinions, therefore, if done in a manipulative and exploitive fashion can have devastating affects that will be elaborated upon later in this report.

Persuasion

Persuasion is "messages to influence others" (Pratkanis A. & Aronson E. 2001). Persuasion since the time of Aristotle has been used for the "communication of a point of view or position" (Pratkanis A. & Aronson E. 2001). It is used to shape the way the public views issues, people events, conflicts debates ex cetra. It provides the public with a type of "logic and reason" (Pratkanis A. & Aronson E. 2001). Propaganda is used "not to inform and enlighten but rather to move the masses toward a desired position or point of view" (Pratkanis A. & Aronson E. 2001).

To understand how persuasion works and is applied to the public, requires understanding its stages. Pratkanis A. and Aronson E. describe the stages of persuasion as "1. Attract recipient's attention, 2. Arguments in the message must be understood and comprehended, 3. Recipient must learn the arguments contained in the message and come to accept them as true, 4. Recipient acts on this learned knowledge when there is an incentive to do so" (Pratkanis A. & Aronson E. 2001). These stages are important for they are the building blocks towards directing how the public sees and understand society.

For the stages of persuasion to take effect and work properly, key aspects must be put in place. Pre-persuasion, which is how the issue is structured and "how the decision is framed" is made through the communicator (Pratkanis A. & Aronson E. 2001). It is the communicator that "establishes a favorable image in the eyes of the audience" (Pratkanis

A. & Aronson E. 2001). This entails the communicator must have credibility with the audience. Depictions of authority, trustworthiness and likeability are key elements for the captivation of the audience. To focus the message from the persuasive communicator to the audience, the communicator must "target attention and thoughts on exactly what the communicator wants them (audience) to think about" (Pratkanis A. & Aronson E. 2001).

In order for persuasion to be effective it must "control the emotions of the target and follows simple rules "arouse an emotion and then offer target a way of responding to that emotion that just happens to be the desired course of action"(Pratkanis A. & Aronson E. 2001). Persuasion is not only working to sway an audience to a path that is desired, but persuasion is influencing the way in which the audience makes that decision. However, it is argued that propaganda is deceptive, manipulative and unethical. Propaganda is "defined as dissemination of biased ideas and opinions, often through the use of lies and deception" (Pratkanis A. & Aronson E. 2001).

Propaganda

If persuasion involves the way messages are perceived, propaganda is seen as a blatant and forceful pathway to gaining support from the audience it is directed. The negative aspect of propaganda is that it stems from its continuous use of manipulation and exploitation of individuals. Propaganda is a weapon of deception that is used by specific individuals for specific means (Pratkanis A. & Aronson E. 2001).

In comparison to the theoretical framework of Pratkanis & Aronson, propaganda theorist Jacque Ellul defines propaganda as the "expression of opinions or actions carried deliberately by individuals or groups with a view to influencing opinions or actions" (Ellul, 1965). Propaganda is an organized, formulated and dangerous force that exists in

all types of media. Propaganda's goal, focus and purpose is strictly centered on the individuals that it is propagating.

Propaganda involves "modifying of opinions" (Ellul, 1965). In comparison to persuasion, propaganda has a unique organization. The process of propaganda begins with the propagandist. The propagandist analyzes the society as whole; looking at demographics, economics, ethnicities, minorities etc. The propagandist must "know the terrain he is operating; Sentiments, opinions, tendencies and stereotypes" (Ellul, 1965). Following the research of the "terrain" the propagandist must then look at the different aspects of the society. This provides the information needed in order for the propagandist to meld the information according to the society or community (Ellul, 1965). Pre-propaganda is the "creating (of) ambiguities and spreading images" which is the process that follows after the propagandist has culminated enough information of the society in order to provide specific messages and images (Ellul, 1965). Continuous display of these images occurs throughout the media. These images are "successive impulses and shocks aimed at various feelings or thoughts" (Ellul, 1965). Propaganda is by no means something that used to occur that no longer exists (Ellul, 1965). Propaganda is an ongoing, forceful and manipulative process (Ellul, 1965). Propaganda is "carried deliberately by individuals or groups with a view to influencing opinions or actions of other individuals for pre-determined ends and through psychological manipulations" (Ellul, 1965).

Blatant propaganda in our media and the presence of the Orientalist perspective is revealed in an example of the Okalahoma city bombing in 1995. From the initial strike upon the building, the first statements presented, before any investigation took place, was

that the Arabs had formulated and perpetrated the attacks. The first hour and a half discussed Arab terrorist groups attacking the United States. However, it was not until later that evidence was shown that the true perpetrator of the Oklahoma City bombing was Timothy McVeigh, an American. The fact that the first reports were automatically signaling the Arab world as the culprits says a lot about the U.S media and how it operates. It also shows evidence the Orientalist perspective is present in not only the media, but also the general public.

Media Affects

To understand how the US media affects all citizens, analysis of the US media is necessary. Analysis of the media also contributes to understanding the persuasive and propagandist messages given of the Arabs and Middle East. The media is the catalyst that provides the everyday public with the ideas, concepts and beliefs that we they about the economy, education, politics, world conflict, ex cetra. The media "helps shape our social institutions, our political order, (and) culture" (Berger, 2005). The media is a "socialization process" (Berger, 2005). As Arthur Berger states, "media directly and indirectly plays an important role is socializing and enculturating us" (Berger, 2005). As we begin to learn and analyze the media, we are then able to learn about ourselves and how media affects our daily lives. We can see "where we got our ideas, what's important in life, expect out of life and how we could behave" (Berger, 2005).

Arthur Berger an author and media theorist analyzes the strategies and tactics of the media in his book *Making Sense of Media*. As Berger analyzes, strategies of the media begin with those that are in power (i.e. political figures, corporations). Berger describes this as a "forceful relationship connected to political, economic and scientific

institutions" (Berger, 2005). The tactics of the media also correlates to those in power and who they employ that become "subject to the will and power of organizations and similar entities" (Berger, 2005). Tactics and strategies are the genuine makeup of the media, which includes film, television and news. Films are a huge part of people's lives and the messages placed in films carry drastic affects (McQuail, 1984). For the remainder of this report, the media in relation to film will be expanded. This will also include representing how film is one of the most manipulative and strategically insinuative elements of the media (Berger, 2005).

Arthur Berger describes film as "an entire world of cultural signs" (Berger, 2005). These signs represent what we consider important to our daily lives such as body types, expressions and gestures. Equally important is the language used to portray these signs for it is what provides the definitions of the aspects that are intrinsically important to all of us witnessing the multitudes of media messages. By analyzing those things that are important to us (body types, expressions, language ex cetra), it offers an understanding of how we are affected by messages from the media. All of these are important in understanding how we are affected by the bombardment of messages given to us. The importance of understanding these signs, as Berger discusses, is the signs or messages determine our "social relationships" (Berger, 2005). Berger explains social relationships in relation to media mystification, which "mystifies people and convinces them of the justness of arrangements found in societies" (Berger, 2005).

Mystification in media messages is derived from the multitudes of metaphors the media uses in order to portray the persons or places that are popular at the moment (Berger, 2005). The strong affect of media metaphors is mainly the language that is used

alongside the images and videos depicting the 'enemy' (Berger, 2005). Language can provide a false belief if the words are removing the context of the image or video (Frosh, P. & Wolfsfeld, G. 2007). Commonly done in the media, the contexts of images are distorted with various words depicting the opposite of what image is portraying (Frosh, P. & Wolfsfeld, G. 2007). Evidently one can see this occur when looking at magazines. Many times have covers of Time magazine shown an Arab man with both a gun and scarf around his head or in a distressed position and text that falsely represents the reality of the image. When the text is placed onto an image, people are left with no room to analyze and conclude for themselves (Berger, 2005). This is what has happened to the Arab people in the US media. Images continue to portray Arabs as militants and have lead to an Orientalist belief that Arabs are gun-toting militants out to kill the American people and culture (Frosh, P. & Wolfsfeld, G. 2007).

The evidence relating to media messages in relation to othering is numerous (Cottle, 2007). Scholars have accumulated information from the effects of these messages and how they persuade our political views, perceived actions of war, global conflict and many others. As mentioned earlier, the beliefs, perceptions, ideals and stereotypes that are encompassing the population are due to the media and the evidence of these affects can be seen from many sources.

Evidence of Media Messages

Media messages are provided by the persuasive and propagandist media in the US. John Zaller, a political scientist, has spent much of his work looking at the effects of news and political advertising and how the messages they provide their audiences greatly affects beliefs and ideals. Zaller has researched U.S House of Representative's elections,

candidate races for presidency, along with needed support of the citizens in relation to actions such as war. In August of 1990, the U.S. was looking at Iraq in search of a solution for issues revolving around Sadaam Hussein and weapons. A major solution put forth was to enter the country, which we know understand today as the Gulf War. During this time of military incursion, Zaller began to study the American public support for the war and entry of troops into the region (Pratkanis A. & Aronson E. 2001).

In his study, Zaller found that Americans that watched very little news in August of 1990 during the height of news coverage only agreed 23% for the decision to send troops into the Persian Gulf. However, the Americans that "habitually kept track of the news" favored the decision to send troops in Kuwait by 76% (Pratkanis A. & Aronson E. 2001). This present a gain of 53% from those Americans that only watched a little of the news, to those that watched the news habitually (Pratkanis A. & Aronson E. 2001). Zaller also concluded the evidence showed the media provided "one-sided coverage" (Pratkanis A. & Aronson E. 2001).

One can conclude that the evidence from this study is representative of the "evidence for direct effects of the mass media changes in attitudes consistent with the content of mass media messages" (Pratkanis A. & Aronson E. 2001). The frightening fact is, that as a society of individuals, Americans appear to be "adhering mindlessly to what we have been told" (Pratkanis A. & Aronson E. 2001). If the news has such drastic effects on how we view war, then what other types of effects are occurring within media?

Jack G. Shaheen, author of *Reel Bad Arabs*, examined how the media portrays Arabs, and why films continue to depict Arabs in such a negative and monstrous light. Shaheen wanted to "expose an injustice: cinemas systematic, pervasive, and unapologetic

degradation and dehumanization of a people" (Shaheen, 2001). According to Shaheen, the media has "had its enemies" throughout the history of Hollywood (Earp & Jhully, 2006).

After researching over 900 films, from 1896-2001, Shaheen found a patter of underlying stereotypical images of Arabs as villains and demons. We have moved from demonizing the blacks, Indians, Jews, and Japanese (Earp & Jhully, 2006). We have "unlearned other prejudices", but we have not unlearned our prejudices of Arabs (Earp & Jhully, 2006). The Arab image has never changed, they have remained the "cultural other" (Shaheen, 2001). Shaheen's goal was to find out the why Arabs continue to be vilified in films. Shaheen examines how this is hurting the general public, and also providing support for such conflicts as the Israeli occupation of Palestine.

The research performed by Shaheen of 900 films, revealed only a dozen portraying Arabs as more than a villain and fanatic (Shaheen, 2001). Shaheen found that Hollywood was making the Arabs out to be "the most malign group in the history of Hollywood". Depictions of Arabs have always shown them as "one-dimensional caricatures" (Earp & Jhully, 2006). Films show Arabs as "vicious gun men and wide eyed fanatics" which has pre-conditioned the U.S. and other foreign nations into believing these stereotypes (Earp & Jhully, 2006). The stereotypes are "derogatory stereotypes (that) are omnipresent, reaching youngsters, baby boomers and older folk" (Shaheen, 2001). Also found throughout Shaheen's research was common language used to depict Arabs. Common words such as barbaric, "bastards, rag-heads, jackals, (and) towel heads" are said by lead actors that are showing their hate and disdain of the default villain that Arabs have become in the Hollywood films (Shaheen, 2001).

The evidence presented in this report will focus on four films. Two films that provide negative depictions of Arabs and two films that provide positive depictions. The following films have been previously reviewed by Jack G. Shaheen and have been chosen due to their popularity and powerful messages conveyed to the audience.

Children's films are very popular money making films in the Hollywood industry. The innocence of children and their lack of perceptual analysis of messages given from propaganda is a great hindrance to children. One of the most popular films for children during the 1990's as well as today is the film *Aladdin*. *Aladdin*, a Disney film, was "hailed as one of Disney's finest accomplishments" (Earp & Jhully, 2006). However, as Shaheen analyzed, it "recycled every old degrading stereotype from Hollywood silent, black and white past" (Earp & Jhully, 2006).

Before the débuting of *Aladdin*, it was shown at a screen testing so that the producers could get feedback on the content and reaction from the audience. When the critics returned with a drastic dislike of a specific scene, the Disney producers were forced to remove two lines of lyrics at the opening song. The lyrics "where they cut off your ear, if they don't like your face, it's barbaric but hey its home" were found to be offensive to the Arab American community (Shaheen, 2001). Disney removed the first two sentences keeping "it's barbaric but hey its home" (Shaheen, 2001). A journalist of the New York Times stated that "to characterize an entire region with this sort of tongue-cheek bigotry, especially in a move aimed at children, borders on the barbaric" (Shaheen, 2001).

The setting of *Aladdin* takes place in Agrabah, a "backward mythical Kingdom" that is not even representative of Baghdad which was the capital city of the Arab culture

at that time (Shaheen, 2001). Shaheen also found that the pronunciation of names and the writings in the square are not even Arabic they are "nonsensical scribbles" (Shaheen, 2001). The characters in *Aladdin* are also found to fit the many stereotypes in the media, and represent the stereotypes that have been used for so many years in the American film industry. As Shaheen noted, the guards that are after the star in the film, *Aladdin*, are drawn with "bulbous noses and sinister eyes" (Shaheen, 2001). The language that the guards use are phrases like "street rat" and use threats such as cutting off the Princess Jasmine's hand (Shaheen, 2001). However, when looking at the drawing and languages of *Aladdin*, a friend of Shaheen's noted that he is "westernized", he is lighter skinned and does not have the harsh facial structure that the guards are given. *Aladdin* does not even have an accent, as do most of the characters through out the film unless they are a character portraying a bad guy (Shaheen, 2001).

The film *Aladdin* provides evidence of the extent to which the media goes in order to define the Arabs. Not only do they not use Arab actors as characters or the true Arabic language for spoken and written word, but they are continually contributing to the dislike and hated perception that people have of the Arab world. It is an insult and a derogatory action to dehumanize a group in such a way. Images and lyrics, such as those used in *Aladdin* show that the process of demonizing and stereotyping starts at an early age. For a children's film to depict innocent people in such a manner, it is questionable of what types of images and language are used in films for adults.

One of the most popular and high money making films of 1985 was the popular film *Back to the Future.* Chris Lloyd and Michael J. Fox, who played Doc Brown and Marty, the two respectively main characters in the film, are telling the story of a man that

can travel through time. Doc Brown is a bit of a mad scientist and he is working on developing a time machine. Marty is his apprentice and friend. The time machine is a DeLorean, a fancy car, which Marty loves for its sporty attributes. It is this sporty ability that allows the car to reach the 88 mph needed for time travel.

One scene in the film was a blatant and horrific scene depicting Libyans/Arabs. Doc Brown is talking with Marty and admits that the time machine needs plutonium. Marty asked "where did you get the plutonium" and Doc Brown responds saying that he agreed to make a bomb for the Libyans in exchange for the plutonium. Doc. Brown is then warned by his pet dog, Einstein, that something is entering their path. Libyans are then introduced into the scene and they drive up into a mall with their headlights turned off until they enter into the parking lot where Doc. Brown and Marty are discussing the time travel instrument. The dilapidated, old V.W. bus holds two Libyans. One has a "red and white kuffiyeh", a common scarf worn by Arabs which represents the *intifada* or struggle of the Arab people (Shaheen, 2001). The other Libyan is the attacker that begins open firing on Marty and Doc Brown. Doc Brown is killed and Marty is saved due to the Libyans machine gun jamming. As the Libyan tries multiple times to fix his gun, and the driver is unable to make the car move, Marty is able to jump into the DeLorean. The Libyans then begin a high speed chase and due to his inability to kill Marty with a machine gun, the Libyan than takes out and RPG, a rocket propelled grenade. Marty then reaches the 88 mph limit and is transported into the past and he is able to save his friend Doc. Brown by providing him with information that then leads Doc. Brown to purchasing a bullet proof vest to avoid being killed in the future and overcome the crazy, terrorist Libyans.

As Shaheen analyzed this scene, many aspects are completely vilifying and clichéd (Shaheen, 2001). Marty throughout this scene, continues to call the Libyans "bastards", one of the most common words used in context to Arabs (Shaheen, 2001). Also, the fact that Doc. Brown received the plutonium in exchange for making a bomb is yet another stereotype which is placing the Libyans/Arabs in the terrorist role. The kuffiyeh symbolizes the general perception of the Arab world, that all Arabs and especially all terrorists wear the kuffiyeh, a symbol of evil. Shaheen notes that the time this movie was made in 1985, was when "the only Mideast nation with nuclear weapons, perhaps as many as 100, was Israel" (Shaheen, 2001). If no Arab nation was in control of any nuclear weapons, why portray them in that way? One may think that this is due to the immense support of the U.S. military and funds going into Israel (Shaheen, 2001). Showing the Arab world as the terrorists may be a way to keep people from seeing the true workings of the United States. However, this is for the reader to decide, and not the basis of this finding. However, in looking at the film *Back to the Future*, the stereotypes remain, leaving no room for opposition or another voice to enter.

In contrast to these two films that represent the many other films that bastardize, vilify and torment Arabs, the following two films bring a different side to the Arab world (Shaheen, 2001). *Robin Hood: Prince of Thieves*, a popular film and story, was made in 1991 starring Kevin Costner and Morgan Freeman. Costner played the role of Robin Hood, and Freeman played the role of Azeem, an Arab in the Ottoman region.

This film begins with Costner saving Azeem from the Ottoman guards that are holding both men as prisoners. Costner saves Azeem from having his hand cut off, so Azeem vows to protect Costner to repay his debt. Throughout the film, Costner learns the

ways of the Azeem. As Azeem prays, Costner watches and waits until he is done to ask him why is he praying. Costner finds Azeem's faith puzzling and Azeem explains that as a Muslim "it is vanity to force other men to our religion" (Shaheen, 2001). Later Azeem is hailed as "fighting better than twenty knights", he is skilled and "functions as a champion" (Shaheen, 2001). The accomplishments of Azeem throughout the film are numerous. He "employs a telescope, delivers a breach baby, and initiates gunpowder into a decisive battle" (Shaheen, 2001). Costner is honored by Azeem and states "You, truly, are a great one" (Shaheen, 2001). Nearing the end of the film, Azeem saves Robin's life, and in return Robin counters the "slurs of his men" when they refer to Azeem as a "barbarian" (Shaheen, 2001). Robin stops them, saying that Azeem is an equal, and the men begin to praise and treat Azeem as one of their own.

Refreshingly different, this film took a step back from the stereotypes and entered a new way of thinking about the Arab world. Azeem was not a religious fanatic, but yet showed that Muslims are not trying to convert everyone; they want to have peace (Shaheen, 2001). Also, this film shows the intelligence of Azeem which hardly any film does. More commonly are Arabs portrayed as the unintelligent fighters that get killed instantly, but here, Azeem is more skilled, more in tune than any of the other knights (Shaheen, 2001). He is tolerant and patient, respectful and honorable. Azeem was a hero, a role that no Arab is seen in most everyday films. This film shows the hope that can be found in the Hollywood industry and it also shows that not all Arabs are bad, hateful killers. They are like everyone in the world. There are some bad, and some good, but they are certainly not all out to kill everyone, and this movie shows that side.

The *13th Warrior,* a film made in 1999, starring Antonio Banderas and Omar Sharif, is about a real life story of a "highly cultured Arab Muslim" from Baghdad (Shaheen, 2001). Ahmed (Banderas), is a "bone fide Arab champion" (Shaheen, 2001). He helps the Nordic warriors defeat "a terror that must not be named" (Shaheen, 2001). The Norsemen then name Ahmed "friend, Arab and little brother" (Shaheen, 2001). Melehisidek (Sharif), a courier, is an accompaniment with Ahmed. They are attacked by Tartars in the desert and Melehisidek advises Ahmed to "o with god" (Shaheen, 2001). As Ahmed mounts his Arabian horse, which is then ridiculed by the Norsemen for being so small, he "demonstrates that his Arabian can move faster and jump higher than any of the Norsemen's big stallions" (Shaheen, 2001). Ahmed then begins to learn the Norseman's language through immersion, which surprises the Norsemen when they poke fun at Ahmed's mother and he responds with "my mother was a pure woman from a noble family" in the Norse tongue (Shaheen, 2001). This shocks the Norsemen and they are astounded with how well he learned Norse just by "listening" (Shaheen, 2001). Ahmed then becomes a translator for the Norsemen. He saves the Norsemen by directing them to caves when a battle comes near.

In the review of this film, Shaheen found that *The 13th Warrior* "advocates tolerance and respect of other religion and races. No Arabs and Northman appear as fanatics, they do not move to rape maidens; no one ridicules another's faith" (Shaheen, 2001). This film helps to remove the multitudes of stereotypical images found in most other films (Shaheen, 2001). It is more evidence of the type of people that Arabs truly are. This film, along with Robin Hood helps to push the old stereotypes that so many

have of the Arab world way, and replace with them with images of tolerance, respects, honor and intelligence.

Discussion

  The focus of this report has uncovered how propagandistic and persuasive techniques are used by the media, and where they come from. Also analyzed are the effects these actions have had on a specific group of people. In reviewing the evidence provided and the historical and theoretical analyses of the authors, it is clear that an Orientalist perspective has been formed through the media messages with regards to Arabs; and this perspective has created and perpetuated mass misunderstandings and a vilification of Arabs among the general public in the U.S.

  The entirety of this paper could be expanded upon in many aspects. In reference to the Orientalist perspective, more knowledge Orientalist perspective and the way in which people see the Arab world through different lenses provided by the media could be examined more in depth. Also a more detailed look at the workings of the media could be provided, however, for this paper a broad understanding was used in order to offer a basic awareness of the intricate elements of the media.

  With the evidence found throughout this body of work, other researchers could analyze the power of the media and who it is helping by having these types of perceptions of the Arab world. Researchers could also look more qualitatively at the people watching the films and news. Gathering more information from the ground will help to understand how far these propagandistic and persuasive messages reach.

Conclusion

In starting this research and beginning the writing on this paper, my initial work began with uncovering what the media uses in order to establish a tainted view of the Arab world. I wanted to understand how this was done, what it entailed, and what the affects of having this type of power and control of the media did to the common everyday persons view and understanding of this foreign villain. What I set out to find, as compared to what I found in the research is what I had expected, along with much more. In looking at the Orientalist perspective and how it operates, I found that this is what the Western perspective is of the Arab world. The Arab world has been portrayed as the 'other' to the farthest point, and it has been done through persuasion and propaganda tactics. The persuasive side of the media is controlling the general public's emotions on events and issues revolving around politics, war, economics etc. Propaganda is manipulating our opinions by creating uncertainty and spreading false images.

The control of the media and the methods of propaganda and persuasion used to provide such images can be seen in the evidence provided on the four representative films that have had popular responses and repeated viewings by the citizens of the United States. Many films that depict Arabs as an evil people use the same words and images as these films to refer to the Arabs. They all use the typical image of an Arab with a scarf on their head, screaming praises to Allah. They are depicted as religious fanatics that rape and pillage, and are unintelligent caricatures. The few films that do not convey the typical stereotypes of Arabs shows Arabs as mothers, fathers, sisters, brothers, teachers and professionals, rather than religious militant fanatics. The Arabs are not the terrorist or

enemy, they help the people they are friends with, they are quick in thinking and action, and they are skilled workman and fighters (not terrorists, but defenders).

Overall, this paper has found the evidence supporting the hypothesis that the U.S. media maintains an immense amount of control of the types of images that are conveyed. The Arab people are presented as the example of the evil doer in media messages. Until the media changes and provides positive images of the Arabs, the Arab people will continue to be vilified in both media and society. Due to the media, the common idea of what an Arab is and what they do is fanatics, people that are ready to die for their religion to bring down the people in the Western world. People are continuing to believe these stereotypes and allowing their government to propagandize innocent people.

The Arab world is filled with intelligent, modern individuals, opposite to the common perception. There are good and bad Arabs, which one can find everywhere in the world. The media needs to begin to show this side of the Arab world. They are people like all of us, and when the media changes from a one-sided institution to multidimensional entity that provides neutral information of every side involved, the Arab people will no longer be vilified and demonized in people's minds.

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