

## Theories of the Media

### Jan 13 Notes

- Freedom is the right to act, think, speak under constitution
- The government is taken from the people themselves, and it operates for the good of the people
- “By the people”, the people run the government, and the gov. is made to protect the people
- A gov. for the people, will do and protect the people from the things that may harm them

### **Checks and Balances**

- A system of constitutional gov. Which guards against absolute power by providing for separate exec., judicial, and legislative bodies who share the powers and thereby check and balance one another
- Members of all those branches are either elected by the people, or appointed by the gov.
- They can also be classed back or withdrawn
- “*Separation of powers*” (Judicial power is separated from legislative powers)
- No member of the media is elected, the duty of the press is to hold elective representatives accountable
- Freedom of speech is a fundamental right to communicate one’s opinions and ideas using one’s body and property to anyone who is willing to receive them
- Freedom of expression

### Jan 18 Notes

### **Existing Media Models**

- Primary duties for the press are to examine the character and behavior of elected officials to monitor closely their activities for corruption or incompetence, to critically analyze policy proposals, and to provide reliable, in depth info about social problems (**Elitist Model/Watchdog Function**)
- The press works alongside the public to support reflection and value or policy choice; and advocate search for general societal agreement on common good (**Deliberative model/Common Good**)

### **Symbiosis**

- Free society

- Free market
- Technological development
- These elements continuously enforce and enhance each other
- Development of tech for the demand of society
- Media is a platform for business

### **Rule of Law and Free Market**

- Credibility of a station = financial goals (regulatory bodies keep watch under the rule of law)
- Jian Ghomeshi case - Deliberative Model
- Business Goals and objectives
- A common business goal is to run a profitable operation

### Jan 20th Notes

#### **Recap**

- Article XI:

#### **History: Principles and Goals**

- Educate and empower citizens
- Guide public opinion
- Mid 16th Century - publishing impartial truth based on “matters of fact”
- Enlightenment 18th Century - Fourth Estate: the press as one of the governing institutions of society
- 19th Century - a free independent press was necessary for the protection of the liberties
- 20th Century - social responsibility and objectivism
- Heritage: Ethical and Professional Standards - serving the public, watchdog on power, protecting liberties, forum for diverse opinions, impartiality, credibility, accuracy

#### **Effects Theory**

- By what process is the message received and understood by the audience?
- What effects does the media have on the audience?
- According to behavioural scientists, media may reinforce attitudes through repetition
- Media makes the audience an involuntary “participant”
- On video sharing sites such as youtube, you become a voluntary “participant” based on the viewer’s/reader’s’ choice

## Consciousness Industry

- Thesis: the wealthy minority of citizens must always maintain the status quo, and that is done in one of two ways: by force or by gaining the consent of majority
- This can be accomplished by convincing the majority to identify with and support the present system of rewards and power rather than opposing it, in fact to live their own domination as freedom
- Anti-thesis:
- Hans Magnus Enzenberger: “One of the main purposes of media today is to generate and sustain shared ideology in the public sphere.”
  - Constructing social and political attitudes and values
  - Advocating a search for general societal agreement on the common good

## Jan 25 Notes

- Media effects theory is an umbrella term
- The very sense of media theories is called the effects theory
- Mass media is about communication

## The Role and Influence of Mass Media

- Limited Effect Theory: Because people generally choose what to watch or read based on what they already believe, media exerts a negligible influence and it ignores the media's role in framing and limiting the discussion and debate of issues
- Class Dominant Theory: The media reflects and projects the view of a minority elite, which controls it. Those people who own and control the corporations that produce media comprise this elite
- Culturalist Theory: It combines the other two theories and claims that people interact with media to create their own meanings out of the images and messages they receive. This theory sees audiences as playing an active rather than passive role in relation to mass media.
  
- Objective Reality: Political events as they actually occur; a reality that completely exists independent of any conscious entity to observe it
- Subjective Reality: The 'reality' of political events as they are perceived by actors and citizen; what we perceive
- Constructed Reality: Events as covered by the media

## Is Culturalist Theory Applicable?

It claims that people interact with media to create their own meanings out of the images and messages they receive. This theory sees audiences as playing an active rather than passive role in relation to mass media.

### Feb 8 Notes:

Synergy in 'Sons of Perdition':

- **1st segment** -> Neutral, factual, and rational
- **2nd segment** -> Emotional, touching, sound-bite: "that [moving back to me third mother] killed my dad's spirit"
- Brought about force of synergy: sympathy and sorrow

In revised and less sentimental 2nd segment: gave an account of his state of affairs, said that's the way of being (didn't work as well)

### **Value Added Info or Propaganda**

- V.A.I.: The story/message remains within the original context and the big picture is formed
- Propaganda: The story/message is out of the original context, and the audience is misled
- The trap of "Seeing is Believing":
  - Wide-angle shots
  - Tracking shots
  - Lower camera angle
  - Aerial shots
  - Frame compositions
- Artistic realization of propaganda [in Leni Riefenstahl, WW2]
- Seven devices of propaganda:
  - Name calling: labeling someone to make the audience reject the adversary or adversaries without examining the evidence
  - Glittering Generalities: the use of virtue words that make the audience accept an idea or person without examining the evidence
  - Transfer: using prestige or authority of one idea or person and transferring that to a different person or idea to make it acceptable
  - Testimonial: displaying a respected person, endorsing or rejecting an idea or person
  - Plain Folks: a person is presented as part of common folk, not elites
  - Card Stacking: the selective

- The art of propaganda consists of radical editing techniques, sub-messages, synergy,

### Feb 10 Notes:

#### **Kony Video**

- Appeal to emotion in name-calling, using Gavin -> Jacob -> us
- Glittering generalities: "Deliver your voice"
- Transfer: US Politicians - Republican/Democrat/POTUS... Used the prestige of these players ideas to further their own arguments without the need of your fact check
- Testimonial: Celebs (Gaga, Clooney, Jolie, etc)
- Plain Folks: Jason Russell was paying himself \$140,476 a year during Kony exposure
- Card Staking: Most relied on tactic, by oversimplifying the issue they could make grandiose claims that no one could fact-check
- Bandwagon: Targeted schools - perfect mixture of high disposable income and malleable minds, "If you're not with us you're against us", slacktivism at it's finest

#### **Piecing Together**

- Two-step-flow theory
- Synergy
- Cinematography of propaganda
- Wishful thinking
- Logical fallacies
- The method of creating constructed reality
- Sending subliminal messages
- Culturalist theory
- All these tie together in the sense that they control the masses by manipulating the unconsciousness