

PANEL 11: MEDIA, TEXT AND REPRESENTATION

Hip hop as poetry?

In recent years there has been the building of a body of criticism in Hip hop as poetry. For some, the need to quantify the term 'poetry' as to argue hip hop's place within the term has been an important issue. My dissertation will begin by focussing on this issue: how has poetry been defined? And how has hip hop has been placed within the 'box'. I will look at the cultural significance of poetry in terms of its status as 'high art' and resistance to hip hop poetry due to its perceived 'low art' status. This will move the dissertation into the area of who are the resisters and why have they become the gatekeepers of the status of poetry. I will do this by reading journal articles, major hip hop poetic academic books, newspaper articles and recorded debates about hip hop poetics, mixing academic thought alongside those of poets.

The Media and Female Offenders

This dissertation will involve both primary and secondary research. It is important to understand whether the media demonise women who commit crime, furthermore, violent crimes. If it does so, the Criminal Justice System can work towards changing public perceptions, which may then effect how women see themselves and are treated within the system (Burkhart, 1973). The proposed research project will explore whether women who commit crime are demonised by the media. The research will explore negative outcomes of the media, on both public views and female offenders. Chibnall's (1977) eight news values, later updated by Jewkes (2011) to twelve news values will be used within this dissertation to explore how the media choose what stories to publish. Furthermore, how this can distort the reality of crime; as a result, distorting public perceptions. Agnew's Strain Theory (2007) will be another theorist used within this dissertation. The theory of Strain allows for an explanation into why women commit crime. Strain like domestic abuse increases negative emotions which can lead to crime to get what they want or to achieve momentary success. Abuse victims especially see this as a way out. With this, Becker's (1963) labelling theory will be used to explore how female offenders are labelled by the media and what effect this can have on them both inside and outside of prison. Lastly, Storrs (2006) and Newburn (2013) will be used throughout this dissertation to explain how crime itself is distorted not only by the media, but by surveys like the British Crime Survey and Police Recorded Crimes. There is a social assumption that there is a common understanding of what crime is and who commits specific crimes. However, the media use this, and distort reality of the most simplistic things; so if they can do this with crime, they can do this with who commits it. All of these criminological researchers will be used alongside the primary research carried out to explore the research question and allow for gaps to show; which as a result, the research found will fill.

The effects on the self of British Muslims in Cambridgeshire, due to the misconceptions of Islam through the Media

The purpose of this dissertation is to research and explore the correlation between the media representation of the religion of Islam and how this affects the view of the self of British Muslims in the Cambridgeshire area. The researcher is interested in this topic as British Muslims suffer discrimination by association which means that the beliefs of Muslims and the teachings of Islam are associated with the actions of terrorist groups. The researcher wants to explore different attitudes, negative societal views and where they stem from. The research will measure the true amount of multicultural themes within the area of Cambridgeshire and if this has been affected due to the recent actions of groups such as ISIS for example which will reveal if Muslims as individuals feel as though they may have to suppress their beliefs in order to integrate and function as a member of a western society.

Does the media representation of prisons differ from reality?

The research is being conducted on the media's representation of prisons in the U.K and whether this is a true reflection of prisons. Prisons have been subject to negative media attention and it is important to explore whether this is an accurate portrayal or not as public perception can be gained via media (Jewkes, 2015). There will also be an examination of the negative effects media portrayal can have on the public's confidence in our penal system using relevant academic literature. Mason (2006) states that public confidence in the penal system is undermined by dramatic media portrayal. Mason (2006) also states that the media representation is not based on fact and the articles are overly dramatic. The methodology that will be used is content analysis of news articles, as this will give the media's representation. The content analysis will form the basis of the interview questions that will be conducted with three ex prison officers as this will a true representation of prisons from their perspective.

Sampling, intertextuality and the relationship between Rap and Literature

This study is focused on the works of some of Hip Hop's most influential figures such as Kendrick Lamar to analyse the content, techniques and impact of rap music, in direct comparison to the works and theories of literatures most prominent, and often canonical authors. When considering what impactful literature is many are drawn to canonical works of pre 20th century authors and the widely-studied epics of classical geniuses. Many think of classic Greek tragedies, Victorian novels or Romantic era poetry, but seldom do they consider the impact of contemporary popular culture, especially that of Hip Hop and rap music (and the works of black rap artists). Some of the main points covered in this study are: the use of intertextuality in Kendrick's work to create a complex and layered narrative within both individual tracks and entire albums; how this intertextuality is born form and feeds back into the field of black literature and the identity of black Americans as well as the similarities between Hip Hop's sampling and the use of intertextuality in novels and literary works.