The media creates, rather than reflects, a society’s values.

Stance: Disagree

Word Count: 430

Media as we will understand it within this essay are all the forms of communications that are exchanged and consumed by individuals in society. For this paper, we will define that if media is creating society’s values then the values originate and are disseminated meaningfully from the media sources into the value systems of individuals in society. I hold the view that media is not responsible for creating society’s values but that it instead merely reflects these values.

Firstly, media today has transformed from film, print, and radio to include internet-sourced media, such as social media platforms, and websites etc. now includes social media platforms like Twitter, Instagram etc.. The ways that consumers find information and consume the media is affected by the accounts they follow, since the reader only receives information that they has already chosen to follow. This is likely because of how much the media aligns with their values. The social media accounts and platforms that garner the most attention will have a larger audience and therefore a larger voice on the platform. This mode of looking at media consumption is defined as the audience approach and it assumes that the individuals in society are actively contributing to what media is significant. (Chandler 1997). In this way, the media is reflecting to the audience what it already values.

Secondly, media’s role as a marketing tool for product consumption by society requires the media to reflect what society at the time values and desires. For example, the media and advertising in the 1950’s and 60’s started investing more money into campaigns for new products and technologies, which led to profits greatly increasing (“History: 1960s” 2003). The post-war era values were shaped by having a larger affluent middle class that were able to return to optimism and family values that came with the economic boom and the technologies developed from war-time inventions.

Thirdly, based on research conducted by sociologist David Morley, it has been shown that a form of media is more likely to be successful at disseminating meaningful ideas to the audiences receiving it in society if those audiences have ideologies that already work with or parallel those exhibited in the media (Chandler 1997). Additionally, The study showcased different groups of individuals based on their class, race or sex and how their interpretation of the same television program Nationwide were significantly different.

This shows how the information and ideas offered to society in the media is only able to distribute values or ideas as the audience interprets them and even still the values that are accepted are only those that align with the audience, and does not therefore create society’s values as we have defined them.

References: