

Div Lit Week 10: Post-colonialism

Discussion: "Suit, tie and a touch of juju"

1. Objectives of class:

- Explore the construction of Africa in mainstream global media
- Explore how these constructions are a function of colonialism
- Explore South Africa's relationship to the rest of the continent

2. Material:

- **Brookes, H. J. (1995). 'Suit, tie, and a touch of juju' - The ideological construction of Africa: a critical discourse analysis of news on Africa in the British Press. *Discourse and Society*, 6(4), 461-494**
- **Handout – Suit, tie and a touch of juju**
- Other useful resources:
 - Peter Hitchens "He has four wives and he faced 783 counts of corruption: PETER HITCHENS on South Africa's next president". Accessed at <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/debate/article-1165473/He-wives-faced-783-corruption-charges-PETER-HITCHENS-South-Africas-president.html>
 - Lindy Mtongana 'Danse Macabre' and other frightening phrases". Accessed at http://www.sagoodnews.co.za/newsletter_archive/danse_macabre_and_other_frightening_phrases.html

3. Method:

- **Read**

Provide students with the handout and ask them to read.

- **Discuss**

Ask students to discuss the following questions (on the handout):

1. The data (the newspapers) was printed in 1990. Do you think much has changed since then in the constructions of Africa?
2. Paul Taylor argues "More often they just attribute the struggles in black-governed states entirely to internal conditions, as if these states are not also products of history and geopolitics."
 - a. Can we talk about Africa without looking at history and structures that be?
 - b. Whose lens are we using to look and talk about Africa?

- c. Why is Africa treated like one homogenous place?
3. “South Africa’s representation is not typical of the rest of Africa.” – Why is this? What implications does this have for Africa and South Africa?
4. When a South African is going to Kenya or Nigeria, they are often quoted as saying “I am going to Africa.” What does this tell us about the constructions of Africa for South Africans?

Suit, tie and a touch of juju

“Perhaps the most archetypal metaphorical construction of Africa is in terms of darkness. The symbolic use of darkness suggests evil, sin, paganism and unenlightenment. Africans are primitive, savage, murderous and violent. Darkness gives a sense of anarchy and chaos that is beyond normal understanding.” *Brookes, p. 474*

“The roles of African participants, on the other, suggest the power-hungry, despotic and anarchic nature of Africans, their irrational savagery, their petty and trivial behaviour, their parasitic dependency on the West and their general helplessness, lack of initiative and impotency. Consequently, the West takes on the role of leadership based on the assumption of the moral high ground which legitimates and justifies its somewhat reluctant role of ‘intervention’ in Africa. The West is the senior partner or parent who shoulders the burden of responsibility for the helpless, savage, self-destructive and child-like African. The West is also provider, potential provider, rescuer and potential mediator. Yet there is a suggestion of distancing or resistance to these roles, based on the intimation that western efforts in Africa are fruitless and a drain on western resources.” *Brookes, p. 478*

Suite, tie and a bit of juju – “These headlines reflect the major proposition of the articles, that Africa may try to emulate the West, but just below the surface the sorcery and savagery lurk. Drawing on the language and style of a recipe, the headlines shock and, in the case of the Daily Telegraph, simultaneously ridicule.” *Brookes, p. 484*

In light of Brooke’s assertions above, consider the following questions:

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