

Propaganda in America:
The Many Facets of Disinformation

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I. Introduction

Propaganda is among the many terms that lacks a clear definition but nevertheless signifies something specific for most of us. For some, propaganda refers pointedly to the underhanded lies of the illiberal state. For others, propaganda is something much broader: the practice of exerting influence by strategically manipulating the dissemination of information. This, it seems, is a more realistic definition which acknowledges the overwhelming presence of propaganda here in the US and throughout the global stage.

To be sure, propaganda is everywhere. However, propaganda is not always recognized as such, often because of two central misconceptions. First, many suffer from the erroneous conviction that propaganda must be composed of lies - what is true cannot be propaganda. On the contrary, propaganda can be partial truths, distortions of the truth, the timely or measured release of portions of the truth, and more, insofar as these versions of the truth can be misleading or biased. This discussion gets at the sticky issue of reality and variant perspectives of it. Second, one might mistakenly believe that propaganda is strictly a tool to create change, only to be unsheathed to dramatically alter opinions, the direction of foreign policy, and so on, and only during isolated events. Rather, propaganda can be an ongoing, ever-present force to strengthen the status quo or to intensify existing ideologies and feelings.¹

That said, in our modern era it has become undeniable that propaganda is at least as impactful and important as it is common. And thus, its study warrants much attention. As Americans, we are citizens in the wealthiest and most militarily powerful country in

world history. With that citizenship, and hence tremendous power, comes a responsibility to guide the nation in a decent manner - a responsibility to ourselves, our fellow citizens, and to the rest of the world. And, given the presently globalized, Americanized, commercialized, militarized state of the planet, the nature and direction of a population's decisions have never been so fundamentally and directly connected to the well-being of the planet; we are potentially the crux upon which hinges the future of the world. If that is not intimidating enough, propaganda is everywhere, affecting, directing, and creating our decisions as a nation, in no small part. Our nightly news and our morning papers, our sporting events and our clothing tags, our churches, schools, teachers, parents, politicians, the internet, books, magazines, movies, billboards, bumper stickers, television programs, and the commercials that interrupt them - all of these things provide us with some or another message about the way the world is and works. Often times these sources of reality conflict - more often the more you pay attention. All this information about the world barrages us, and our decisions are suddenly of crucial importance. John Locke can spew eloquent babble all he wants about tacit consent, but I didn't - we didn't - sign up for this!

Like it or not, though, propaganda surrounds us, and if we have tacitly consented to be governed, then we ought to actively consent to our responsibility (moral, ethical, religious, humanistic, or whatever you like) to the lives that our government affects, at home and abroad. This responsibility or obligation to live decently and in a way that ensures the decent treatment of others is a premise of this thesis. Without the desire to do these things or the belief that these things are right, regardless of the source of that belief, the appropriateness of propaganda cannot, in my eyes, be properly assessed.

* * *

As a child, my mother read me the story of Hansel and Gretel. I loved the book and insisted that I hear it before bed so often that I had memorized the story even before I could read. I think most of us, as children, and many of us as adults, find the fairytales and short stories of our youth comforting at least in part because they tell us exactly who is good and who is evil. The character descriptions are pure, set up as part of simplistic, Manichean scenarios. Such circumstances make decisions easier, judgments needless of thought. However, as we grow older we tend to realize that life is not so clear.

If we are observant, certain things become curious or out of sync with the rest of our acquired knowledge. I am sure that each has his or her own experience, but for me it included the recognition of logical disconnects such as this: if I am of European decent, but I live in America, then who lived here before me and where are they now? The irrefutable answer - that some historical leaders of the U.S. were brutal murderers - challenged the basic teachings that I had always received in and out of school. Or, remember: "in 1492, Columbus sailed the ocean blue." Again, as it turned out, I had not received the whole story. In his journal, Columbus writes of the Native Americans, "They would make fine servants. With fifty men we could subjugate them all and make them do whatever we want".² Granted, all historical accounts carry with them some degree of bias, but simply, I had been given the wrong basic impression of the man. And this history - that of the destruction of the Native American societies - is only the dawn of the so-called American history. What are we to make of inconsistencies such as these? When multiple versions of history and, for example, conceptions of our own political and

socioeconomic temporal context conflict, how do we determine which is correct, and why, if so, did we ever believe otherwise?

In response to conflicting information people often employ what is called double-loop learning, through which information is challenged by contrary information, a new theory of explanation emerges in the mind, and the individual applies the new theory to life in order to test its validity until, perhaps, the new theory is again challenged by additional contrary information. Certainly, such a process is how humans become more intelligent, build social skills, and even learn to deal with their physical surroundings. Also, it explains how humans can adopt various sets of ideologies and beliefs in the most general sense. But ideologies can come from a number of sources other than rational assessment and voluntary adoption.

Most basically, ideologies and beliefs are of the utmost consequence for human behavior and interaction. If potential social actors do not believe they should act, then they will be less likely to act, and vice versa. This concept sounds simplistic, but it has arguably become the new tenet of social control. I once heard an interesting analogy: violence is to tyrannical rule, as propaganda is to a free society. That is, tyrannies can control the public by force, but free societies cannot, so they must control minds. This comparison nicely summarizes my concern, and the importance of ideology for social movements and global welfare; whether individuals believe a problem exists or not must be the single most important factor in their decision to act upon it. And, since ideologies and beliefs can be shaped - and are shaped - by a number of forces, there is the possibility to control which groups are successful through manipulating and limiting ideologies and beliefs.

As the American society is open and free to a significant degree, some studies are available that suggest that much of what we learn as children, and much of the information that we continue to receive from the government, the media, advertisements, civil society, and so on, is one form of indoctrination that is ultimately so severe that it fundamentally undermines democracy in any meaningful sense. Consider, for a moment, two conceptions of democracy. The first is one in which the public has the means to participate in some meaningful way in the management of its own affairs and the means of information are open and free. This could be called a participatory democracy. The second model, however, is one in which the public must be barred from managing its own affairs and the means of information must be kept narrowly and rigidly controlled. Such could be called a spectator democracy, with the implication that the citizens have the freedom to observe, but little else. For many, the latter conception may sound peculiar and distant, but it is important to realize that this is the prevailing conception for many of the government, business, and intellectual elites behind the American decision-making process. In fact, it has long been so, not only in operation, but also in theory; there is a long history of propaganda coming from exactly those sources - government, business, and intellectual elites - that describes the explicit desire and perceived need to create and maintain such a system, for a variety of reasons that I will soon explicate.³

In unearthing and providing a study of the details of propaganda, I will present the issues in somewhat of a chronological fashion, first reflecting on the history and development of propaganda, and eventually examining our modern political and social situation in terms of that propaganda model. Integral to the discussion will be the issue of misinformation, which can be closely connected with the mass media, the educational

system, and civil society. Additionally, I will address both the emotional and psychological elements involved in the effective administration of propaganda. I will also provide one case study: a close look at the way the American media treated two concurrent instances of genocide in foreign nations. The first regards that carried out by Pol Pot in Cambodia, an enemy state, while the second regards that carried out in East Timor by Suharto in Indonesia, an friendly state. The results will speak for themselves, though, to summarize, the mass media illustrates their inherent bias towards friendly states quite clearly. Finally, I will look at solutions to the problem of propaganda. Ultimately, I will conclude that, while the establishment or re-establishment of a participatory democracy is very much available to the presently subdued electorate, the population has, for now, allowed its democracy, and hence its freedom, to be swiped from under its collective nose. What we have now, as Americans, is a spectator democracy, a sort of moving train that carries us all, but which we cannot - or, at least, do not - control, by and large. In no small part, we are being "swept along by great drifts of circumstance," more subjects than citizens, less free than we wish to believe.⁴

Such ideas are far from commonplace in mainstream society and in fact they challenge the fundamental basis of our daily life. Thus they require extensive explanation and evidence, both theoretically and in practice. And, to provide strong arguments for these ideas is, in some sense, the goal of this paper. However, if the evidence does mount up and if the situation described above does in the end reflect reality, then action based on an according ideology should become a moral imperative. Ultimately, this paper, I hope, will serve to urgently call on myself and others not to merely observe the crisis, but to help solve it.

II. Historical Summary

What the Framers Had in Mind

One might imagine, having been schooled in the US and having learned unconditional nationalistic loyalty, or patriotism if you like, that certain administrations and American leaders, who might have the public believe something other than the truth for political ends, are misplaced in this, a free and just society. Most US citizens have been exposed to American politicians in some regard and have seen some degree of their deceptive capacities, or at least their ability to reshape words, rationalize abhorrent actions and so on. Either way, many Americans, despite the election turnouts, are surely confident in the way that American democracy functions - as outlined by the constitution. Again, let us imagine, for the sake of analysis, that our democracy does indeed function as the framers intended when they assembled the constitution over two centuries ago. That said, what do we really know about the intentions of the framers of the constitution?

In the introduction to this paper I reflected on my shock when I learned that I had not received the whole story, not even anything close to it, in my studies of Columbus, the Native Americans, and the European takeover of the land that is now the US. If one reads the writings of the Founding Fathers and intends to find democratic rhetoric, they too may have a shock. John Jay, the first US Supreme Court Justice, wrote "the people who own the country ought to govern it" and James Madison agreed, at least initially, declaring that power belonged in the hands of "the more capable set of men" with the

general population fragmented and factionalized. This feeling was in fact unanimous among the nation's founders with the exception of Benjamin Franklin. By the 1790's Madison recognized that the wealthy would not be benevolent leaders, and he eventually denounced the American system as the "daring depravity of the times".⁵ However, the wheels were in motion and the elites maintained a firm grasp on the populace right up through WWI and the establishment of formal, institutionalized propaganda. Oddly enough, the above utterances of the Founding Fathers cannot be found in even high school textbooks on American History.

WWI as a Turning Point

If one sees propaganda as merely the shaping of information or the process of persuasion, then propaganda has probably been around about as long as communication. However, not until World War I did a highly effective, organized, and centralized form of state-sponsored propaganda fully emerge. During the early part of the twentieth century the international community was experiencing a preliminary stage of globalization. Travel had been facilitated by industrialization, advances in communication swept across the West, and the world was becoming relatively smaller. And, for those in power, smaller meant more manageable.

The population in the US during the early 1900's was quite pacifist - far more so than the American population of the twenty first century, though that may not be very meaningful. Nevertheless, in 1915 the masses, the interest groups, and even the majority of the elected officials were fundamentally opposed to the war that had begun to rage in Europe. The Great War, as it was known, belonged to those immediately affected, in

Europe. In 1916, Woodrow Wilson ran for President, and won on the platform of "Peace Without Victory," having appealed to the pacifist - or, at least, staunchly antiwar - sentiment amidst the nation. However, Wilson and his administration were actually committed to the war and needed to mobilize public support behind an American war effort in Europe. Extensive means were employed and within six months, the propaganda campaigns "succeed in turning a pacifist population into a hysterical, war-mongering population which wanted to destroy everything German, tear the Germans limb from limb, go to war and save the world".⁶

Three main phases of persuasion help explain the dramatic shift in the opinion of the American public over such a short period. Also, these phases describe the lessons that would be learned by modern propagandists and used by them up to the present. First, Britain, which had a major stake in securing American support in the war, established "an official, though secret, propaganda bureau in the United States." Headed by Sir Gilbert Parker, the bureau compiled a mailing list of approximately 200,000 US opinion leaders, to whom they sent a barrage of pamphlets, interviews, and speeches "articulating Britain's official view that the Great War was simply a matter of stemming German aggression and atrocities. No indication that the information attached came from an official government campaign was included. As Sir Parker saw it, the campaign "'advised and stimulated' many Americans to write favorably of Britain's cause."⁷

Second, another English propaganda campaign, this one headed by former ambassador to the US, Lord James Bryce, appealed to the humanity of the American population as it compiled a Report of the Committee on Alleged German Outrages. The so-called Bryce Report provided graphic accounts of attacks on women, children, and

prisoners of war, all carried out by heartless, evil Germans. The document had the effect of creating a simplified, good vs. evil understanding of the war in the minds of many Americans. However, as was later exposed, the report contained many "hearsay renderings" and "glaring internal probabilities" and was ultimately discredited by the 1930's.⁸ Nevertheless, the damage was done. (As an aside, such use of propaganda - the announcement of some absurdity which has its effect and is proven false too late to matter - is an important and recurring theme throughout the history of propaganda, which speaks to the amnesia or gullibility of those willing to trust the untrustworthy again and again. Moreover, it should ring a few bells in light of recent accusations and events regarding the Iraq War of 2003.) Not until post-war in Europe, did "the sentiment spread among American troops that atrocity stories had been false concoctions and that the Germans had behaved no worse than any other combatants."⁹

Third, and most important, the Wilson administration established the Committee on Public Information (CPI), or the Creel Commission, headed by George Creel. The Creel Commission was "America's first institutionally coordinated program of national propaganda" and it would spark a paradigm shift for American democracy. This group had the largest effect on the public, distributing 5 million pro-war pamphlets, exaggerating the danger posed by the Germans - again, a technique that rings true even today - and stirring them into a jingoist frenzy in an unprecedented amount of time. In the end, the US did go to war, supported by the hysterical domestic public, and the lessons of effective propaganda reverberated in the ears of America, the West, and, it is worth noting, Hitler.

The Post-WWI Paradigm

The achievements of propaganda in WWI drew much attention to the field of propaganda and ultimately changed the way that American democracy operates. Essentially, state leaders recognized that enormous amounts of resources, when invested in controlling public opinion, could allow elites to operate without significant public intervention. William D'Arcy of the CPI, commended the group's accomplishment of fooling the public and completely altering their general opinion to mobilize for war: "the past year's work" was a "proud page in advertising history."¹⁰ The government and private investors took note too, and financed first a massive, army-coordinated intelligence testing program to gather data on the public, and second the establishment of the Psychological Corporation, which would carry out similar projects. At the same time, the intellectual movement had a growing fascination with the details and implications of thought control. Most notably, Walter Lippman, the famous journalist and intellectual leader

described a "revolution" in "the practice of democracy" as "the manufacture of consent" has become "a self-conscious art and a regular organ of popular government." This is a natural development when "the common interests very largely elude public opinion entirely, and can be managed only by a specialized class whose personal interests reach beyond the locality."¹¹

Several years later, Reinhold Niebuhr made similar remarks, arguing that "'rationality belongs to the cool observers,' while 'the proletariat' follows not reason but faith, based upon a crucial element of 'necessary illusion.'"¹²

This school of thought generally prevailed throughout American leadership until it hit a road bump in the Civil Rights Movement and the backlash from the Vietnam War. That is, in the 1960's and 1970's the otherwise marginalized, disenfranchised, and patriotism-blinded draftees and kin - groups such as women, minorities, and anti-war activists - emerged to express their demands en masse through popular democratic means. The elite reaction to these movements was darkly comedic. In 1973, David Rockefeller, along with a league of elite politicians and policy makers from Europe, Japan, and the US, established the Trilateral Commission, a private international group of such elites that now meets regularly for discussion and publishes documents on their findings. "The Crisis of Democracy," the Trilateral Commission's first publication was in direct reaction to the social ferment of the 1960's. Thus, the "Crisis of Democracy" refers to the crisis that occurs when the marginalized sectors of society press the government for demands. In the view of the Trilateral Commission - which included the likes of to-be President Jimmy Carter and was authored by (the American portion) renowned political theorist Samuel Huntington - these groups posed a threat to the control of the elites. In response, the document proposes that democracies have too much freedom, so personal freedoms must be curtailed in order to preserve the threatened power of the elites.¹³

III. The Media: Capabilities, Incentives, A History of Deception, and the Tools to Make it Happen

A study of the media within a study of American propaganda is crucial and will be considered in both theory and practice throughout the remainder of this paper. First, the mass media reaches an enormous portion of the population, and that which it does not reach directly is arguably affected indirectly anyway. The media is the lens through which we view anything not within our immediate grasp. Foreign countries, other cultures, politicians, and even music, entertainment, and on and on - all of the information that we receive about these things through television, newspapers, magazines, movies, and a growing amount of the internet is inherently shaped to present one perspective or another. And, what we do not hear about - what is cropped off the front page, the evening news, or even the agenda altogether - we do not worry about. In such ways the media is an important study because it directly affects us: our personalities, our opinions, and our actions.

Media analysis is important for other reasons too, however. Much of systemic analysis involves theorizing based on hunches, suspicions, and probabilities. With the media, though, we can sometimes sink our teeth into the evidence. By some accounts, it is much easier to study the media because it is out there for us all to see, examine, and analyze everyday. According to others, reality is difficult to define; what seems objective to someone may seem totally subjective and biased to another. The diversity of our

world complicates the challenge of securing a controlled, scientific study, but sometimes the bias, diversion, lying, or whatever one prefers to call it, becomes abundantly clear. The next chapter on the case study of the media's coverage of Cambodia vs. East Timor provides an in-depth look at the media's role in designing American opinion.

The media, which are owned by major multinational corporations, serve the interests of the elites by propagandizing on their behalf, forwarding specific agendas to the public, and limiting the information that ultimately reaches the electorate, among other tactics. The media, and by that I mean the mainstream, corporate-owned media such as FOX, CBS, NBC, CNN, the New York Times, the Washington Post, television, mainstream magazines, and others, is not merely relevant but crucial to understanding the relationship between American democracy and propaganda because only with the support and achievements of the media have the government and business elites been able to proceed with their hypocritical, murderous, economically scandalous, and fundamentally anti-public (against the interests of the vast majority) programs, which have won them a degree of wealth and power the likes of which has never been known on Earth.

Capabilities

Let us first discern whether or not the media has the capability to mislead and direct opinion, since, if they do not, skepticism is unnecessary. On the one hand, this is perhaps the easiest to prove; about 80 percent of the US population gets their news from mainstream television media. Theoretically, the media could lie or provide information in an intentionally selective manner and many would believe the lie or selective reality

based on what is widely perceived as a reputation of integrity, or at least a substantial degree of honesty, exhibited by the major news corporations. This is not to say that all or even most people believe every last word from the mouths of newscasters. For example, in a 1996 study, researchers found that approximately 65% of the population believed that the media did provide biased accounts of presidential campaigns.¹⁴ However, it seems clear that people in general do not believe that media reports are outright lies. Maybe the media chose to cover Dole's embarrassing tumble off the stage and a suave Clinton one-liner in the same segment. That could be a biased program, but nobody doubts that Clinton spoke those words or that Dole can really tuck and roll for a senior citizen. Bias is present in almost everything - even history textbooks - but the facts are still there between the lines. Bias or not people trust the basics that come from the mainstream media. And, for anyone who is unsure, luckily, they even tell us flat out that they are "on your side," "working for you," or "the channel you can count on." I feel better.

Another issue to consider when discussing the media's capability to influence the public is ownership. If the media wanted to push an agenda or an ideology, they would need to be on the same page, so to speak, if they sought to avoid contradicting one another. With hundreds of news channels, other informational channels, magazines, movie production companies, newspapers, etc., agreement would be nearly impossible, right? Specifically, "There are 1,700 daily newspapers, 11,000 magazines, 9,000 radio and 1,000 television stations, 2,500 book publishers, and 7 movie studios. If each of these were operated by a different owner there would be 25,000 individual media voices in the country."¹⁵ That number of voices would effectively ensure a rich political culture

with a diverse array of perspectives. But there are fewer than 25,000 voices. "For the first time in U.S. history, the country's most widespread news, commentary, and daily entertainment are controlled by six firms that are among the world's largest corporations, two of them foreign."¹⁶ The parent firms are General Electric, Viacom, Disney, Bertelsmann, Time Warner, and News Corp. Close behind these monsters are Sony, AT&T-Liberty Media, and Vivendi Universal, which fill in most of the holes left by the big six. These nine corporations "own all the world's major film studios, TV networks, and music companies, and a sizeable fraction of the most important cable channels, cable systems, magazines, major market TV stations, and book publishers."¹⁷ The number of corporate interests involved here has shrunk rapidly over the past two decades, due to globalization and major mergers. In 1983, fifty dominant media companies controlled the show. By 1990, the fifty companies had become twenty three. We have now entered single digits, and if that weren't bad enough, the remaining major corporations all own each other; it may not be appropriate to really refer to them as six separate entities. "They are intertwined: they own stock in each other, they cooperate in joint media ventures, and among themselves they divide profits from some of the most widely viewed programs on television, cable, and movies."¹⁸ The result can be interpreted as a single media entity that thus inherently operates from a single perspective, whatever that perspective may be. Further, the mainstream media entity exists inside a competitive, capitalist market such that profits are explicitly the top priority, thus deepening the similarity of purpose and goal among the legally separate media corporations. Clearly, the capability of the media to influence the public exists, and examples are provided later in this chapter. The willingness to abuse that capability, however, is less clear.

Incentives

The incentives that the media have to influence the public strengthen the argument for careful skepticism of the media entity. Economics drives every corporation that seeks to survive or prosper in a capitalist economy. On the one hand, the media have a stake in selling themselves to a maximum number of people who can afford both their services and the services which they advertise. This creates two constraints. First, the media must appeal to the public, and often the affluent public that can afford to buy advertised products. In doing so, they must present information in an agreeable manner, which automatically draws the perspective to the center and eliminates the possibility of radical information gaining much time or page space. Also, it encourages the media to sensationalize news in line with a "sex sells" philosophy, in line with the idea that people will buy what presses their buttons. This can also manifest itself in the form of inducing fear or uncertainty so that the public will be drawn to the media to find security and comfort - quite pressing desires for most. Second, the elite ownership and connections of many media conglomerates raises suspicion and reason for skepticism. This is more difficult to prove and requires significant data and explanation, but, for example, GE owns NBC and is also one of the world's largest war contractors. GE therefore has a major economic stake in ensuring that world peace does not occur. Simultaneously, NBC is in a position to affect the public's perspective on international affairs and is under the ownership - and, inherently, the control - of GE.

This is not outright proof, but it is a fishy connection, of which there are many others, and it must be reason for close analysis and some initial distrust of the mainstream media. That is, if the media adheres to certain constraints in the messages that they put forth, massive profits can ensue: the incentive to manipulate information is present. In police work, this is called a motive and is a necessary condition for linking rational actors to wrongdoings. When a major problem exists, whether it is that someone has been murdered, that the terrorist threat has intensified, or that the public is confused or misinformed, the first step of investigation must be to ask why the problem exists. There is often a motive, and behind that motive often lies the guilty party.

Profits are of the utmost importance for media moguls. As should be clear from the concentration of media power over the past twenty years, less competitive or less profitable companies get swallowed up quickly in this business. And top tier investors demand results. George Morris was the corporate secretary of RCA when it still owned NBC. In 1971 he told a journalist: "You really have to go to bed with the big investors...One man in my office does nothing all year long but deal with the many institutions that hold RCA stock."¹⁹ Media critic and scholar James Fallows notes the drawbacks of market-driven media production: "Bottom-line pressure - for survival in newspapers, for increased ratings and profits in TV - has made editors more like managers, and has made reporters more conscious of increasing their flexibility and salability." This matters to the American public because it has ultimately "weakened the media's ability to tell us what we need to know."²⁰ So, not only do the media have incentives to manipulate information, but their incentives may in themselves manipulate

the initial stages of the production of information before it comes close to reaching the public.

James Hamilton comments further on the economics of the media. He notes, "News is a commodity, not a mirror image of reality. To say that the news is a product shaped by forces of supply and demand is hardly surprising today."²¹ Surely, it is not surprising, but even were it not a commodity, who could reasonably expect news to be a mirror image of reality? Consider a biography. Like the news or any media, biographies require selection of information to create a record of a life. Biographies cannot include every piece of minutia connected to the life. Such a written effort would destroy every forest on the planet. I once read about a man who attempted to create an absolute autobiography. Wherever he went he carried with him a book and would include descriptions of his experiences in great detail. But no human could include absolutely everything from even one life. Every second millions of events take place within the microcosm of a human being: synapses jump to create thoughts, muscles contract to create movement, the heart beats, the eyes blink and focus, cells die and are replaced with fresh ones, Vitamin A is extracted from the intestine, the immune system fights an infection, and all of these coalesce to send a human towards larger, more traditionally noteworthy events. That is one life. The news has the challenge of covering about 6 billion, sometimes in a half hour. Of course it is not a mirror image. It could not be any more than could a biography. But the media, because, in part, of their economic incentives, distort that which they do cover to the extent that it is unrecognizable. The world I live in is not the world that I see on TV and often not even the world that I want to see on TV. And, this disconnect may boil down to a simple axiom: there is a

difference between what people want to know, what the media want people to know, and what people should know.

A History of Deception

Even if the media has the capability and the incentive to mislead and divert public opinion, some would argue, that does not mean that they actually do so. After all, many people have had the capability and incentive to commit murder, though they do not because of some ethical, legal, or other outside reason. So, what does the record of the media look like? We can look to instances in the past when the media and massive public relations campaigns tied to the media have clearly shifted opinion or misled the public. Again, Wilson's Committee on Public Information was perhaps the first major US propaganda campaign, facilitated by the media. In six months the campaign succeeded in turning a largely pacifist nation into a group of hypernationalist war mongers who wanted to destroy everything German. The transition was unprecedented and taught a lesson that might be interpreted as the most important lesson for media scholars such as Walter Lippman and others, for whom the goal was to undermine democracy and strictly regiment public opinion.

Similarly, the War of the Worlds study shows the volatility of public opinion and reaction when subjected to the media's influence. In this case, the media was used to generate fear and panic almost instantly, though inadvertently. The study followed a 1938 radio broadcast that threw much of the East coast into a frenzy. Orson Welles

narrated a CBS radio adaptation of "War of the Worlds," a science fiction story by H.G. Wells. The program began, without warning of its fictitious content, with relaxing classical music. The first interruption announced that an atmospheric disturbance had been reported over Nova Scotia and the music recommenced, giving imaginations their opportunity to begin punishing their owners. Subsequent intermittent interruptions revealed piece by piece that the atmospheric interference was actually an alien invasion. Martians had come - to New Jersey! People across America, and especially up and down the Eastern seaboard, panicked, fled their homes, and generally bought the hoax, hook, line, and sinker. In a few instances actual events coincided with the broadcast that exacerbated the communal unnerving and the illusion of reality; a blackout in Concrete, Washington worsened the situation there. The next day, CBS had to apologize to the public for underestimating the effect that the broadcast would have and for not providing warning.²² But, again, the lesson was learned.

Most recently, the 2003 Iraq War has raised questions regarding the media's harping on Saddam Hussein's WMD, which did not exist, and his connection with Al Qaeda, which never existed and was illogical from the start. As New York Times columnist Paul Krugman noted in retrospect, "Suddenly, it was Osama, Osama, Osama...Saddam, Saddam, Saddam...and the networks - the broadcast media - simply picked that up and transferred our feelings of alarm and anger from one villain to another." Like with the War of the Worlds study, the media had us at war when we simply were not. Krugman continues: "They use essentially the kind of logos, martial music, and so on that we saw after Gulf War One had started...So, from the point of view of the American public, Iraq is already the enemy; we're already at war."²³ I will return

to this in the section on propaganda and its modern implications. Clearly the potential for media control is illustrated in these cases, and many other cases are available for the media scholar to discover.

The Tools to Make it Happen

As noted, ideologies and beliefs can be built and shaped, and there can be no question that the highly centralized and far-reaching modern media are well positioned to do just that. But, what techniques can the media employ to deceive the public? We aren't a bunch of halfwits. And besides, somebody is paying attention, right? And they would notice if people were being censored, if the media abused the First Amendment. First, no, we aren't a bunch of halfwits, though many have said so in equally as blunt language. However, the media have several tools at their disposal that make recognizing media disinformation a time consuming and challenging task - a task that requires more resources than most have. Second, yes, plenty of people are paying attention, and they write, speak, and demonstrate about the crimes and shortcomings of the mainstream media. Innumerable books and essays cover media wrongdoings and the causal effect on democracy. Curiously, in most circles they are not well known; they are often censored, refused publishing contracts and jobs, and either blocked from or misrepresented in the mainstream media.

Why doesn't the public see through media disinformation? One might think that if it actually existed, we would notice and reject it. Indeed the governing elites and intellectuals have looked down upon the intelligence of the masses for hundreds of years

and across many cultures and nations. Alexander Hamilton succinctly articulated his opinion of the public, or the "great beast" to be tamed by the leaders, or the "responsible men". "The reigning doctrine was expressed clearly by the President of the Continental Congress and first Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, John Jay: 'The people who own the country ought to govern it.'"²⁴ The owners, incidentally, were the wealthy elites, not "We the people of the United States," as the Preamble of the Constitution so audaciously claims. And the elites, as Walter Lippmann, veteran of Wilson's propaganda committee, explains, "must be free from interference by the general public, who are 'ignorant and meddling outsiders.'" The public must 'be put in its place,' Lippmann continued: their 'function' is to be 'spectators of action,' not participants, apart from periodic electoral exercises when they choose among the specialized class."²⁵ "In the *Encyclopaedia of the Social Sciences*, Harold Lasswell, one of the founders of modern political science, warned that the intelligent few must recognize the 'ignorance and stupidity of the masses' and not succumb to 'democratic dogmatism about men being the best judges of their own interests.'"²⁶ These are not democratic ideals or statements in the interest of democracy. Rather, they are authoritarian in nature - the leaders should really control everything, not the people, because the latter are "stupid."

Of course, how can a misinformed population be expected to act in its best interest? In fact, leaving decisions up to a misinformed public almost ensures that they will not act in their best interests. But, what guarantee exists that such a wholly separate class of men will act in the best interests of the public anyway? There is clearly no democratic accountability in such a system. In the defense of the authoritarians who ruled the country a century or more ago, the concept of a well-informed public is perhaps

a new one. Today, the vast majority of Americans has access to the mainstream media, and very often even live, twenty-four-hour news. In the 1960's and 1970's, groups used the emerging mass media - television, radio, newspapers - as well as technology such as telephones - a tool of communication which exercises uncontested dominance over the pony express of yore - to stay informed about events at home and abroad. The Civil Rights movement and the anti-war protests of the Vietnam era emerged because the public was informed, people were in contact with one another, and they acted in the true spirit of democracy to struggle against and correct the mistakes of the government, the truly "responsible men." In fact, studies show that when the public is informed, they do generally make appropriate decisions on political matters. David Thelen conducted research on Capital Hill just after C-SPAN began sending Congressional dialogue into people's homes. He performed content analysis studies on incoming constituent mail regarding the Iran Contra crisis of 1979. The results concluded that the public response was, rather than apathetic and uninformed, was quite passionate and sophisticated.²⁷ Unfortunately, the public at large do not often have the opportunity to make informed decisions, to a significant degree because of the media methods employed, intentionally or not, which divert public attention from meaningful issues, restrict the range of information that enters the public household, and otherwise mislead the population.

Among the newest and most obvious tools of the mainstream media to reach and influence a maximum number of people in unison is new technology, accompanied by a shrinking, globalizing world. Given global access, live satellite feeds, and the high-tech homes of the West, the virtual media monopoly under the media moguls can send any message they like into millions of homes, thereby blocking out competing messages

simultaneously. It was said of the Britons governing India that never before had so few ruled so many. It can today be confidently said of the mainstream media that never before have so few informed, or misinformed so many. Their influence cannot be understated.

Generally, however, the content of the media is not controlled by crude intervention, by the government, executives, or other decision makers, though such is certainly not without precedent. More often, the restriction of media content occurs almost naturally after the selections have been made of writers and editors, who share ideologies with the people with the real power - the elites. Undoubtedly, editors have a tremendous amount of power; TV newsroom and newspaper editors control the selection of topics, the distribution of concerns, the emphasis placed on given topics, the framing of issues, and the bounding of debate, and the filtering of information. And, the major news media such as the NYT and the Washington Post indirectly set the national agenda; the selections made by the dominant media forces have a ripple effect that largely decides the content covered in smaller, local papers. This has the effect of building a homogeneous mainstream media that appears open and free but actually remains rigidly controlled.

I will expand on some of these tools. Many of the techniques of diversion and misinformation often cited by media critics are not always techniques employed intentionally for those purposes. Often the systemic constraints imposed on the media tend to naturally select editors with a certain perspective. For example, more than likely, most editors are likely not involved in conspiracies to fool the public, but this does not mean that the means by which editors are brought up the ranks does not inherently induce

a strict selection process. Again, the competitive nature of the news media business requires the media to appeal to a maximum portion of the population in the name of profits. Thus, editors cannot afford, literally, to alienate any significant portion of its base; news must remain within a certain range of political, cultural, religious, and social ideologies regardless of its appropriateness or lack thereof given the circumstance. Also, editors are those who have not angered the powerful elites: investors, stockholders, bosses, or those with political power. Those who do anger the powerful are not only looked over for promotions, but they tend to lose their jobs.

Coleman McCarthy, Professor at Georgetown University, Georgetown Law, George Washington University, American University and the University of Maryland, and long-time columnist for the Washington Post, lost his column during the call to war in Iraq in 2003. As an outspoken pacifist, his views were not welcome in the so-deemed liberal Post.

Peter Arnett, who won a Pulitzer Prize for his reporting in Vietnam, was among the last American reporters in Baghdad during the US war effort in 2003. During an interview for Iraqi TV, he said, "The first war plan has failed because of Iraqi resistance. Now they are trying to write another war plan. Clearly, the American war planners misjudged the determination of the Iraqi forces." He was promptly fired. "It was wrong for Mr. Arnett to grant an interview to state-controlled Iraqi TV, especially at a time of war, and it was wrong for him to discuss his personal observations and opinions in that interview," NBC News President Neal Shapiro said in a statement. Arnett's observations deviated from the acceptable range of mainstream media perspectives. If his observations had been pro-US, we would almost surely have a different situation. The

Daily Mirror of England quickly picked up Arnett, who didn't seem to suffer the same attacks abroad, in other nations of the Coalition. Piers Morgan, an editor for the Daily Mirror, told CNN, "Peter is one of the most respected journalists in the world, and we are delighted he is joining us to expose the truth about a war increasingly dominated by propaganda."²⁸ Whether or not you agree with Mr. Arnett's comments in their context, what remains clear is the state loyalty of the US media and their willingness to affect media content based on that loyalty.

Bill Maher, creator and host of "Politically Incorrect" for eight years, was fired from ABC after he, in his words, "made those remarks about the terrorists not being cowards." Such a remark might seem insensitive to some and generally offensive to others who perceive those words as a compliment, but the remark is also fairly obvious. The terrorists who committed the atrocities on 9/11 were many things. They were violent monsters and vengeful murderers with no respect for human life, but they were not cowards. That is not to say they should get medals for bravery - bravery is not always a good thing. Maher's comments were not brazen nor false, but they were outside the reasonable bounds for the mainstream media, in particular because they were viewed as unpatriotic during a frenzy of nationwide jingoism. Maher has no regrets though: "...if I had to choose between losing my soul or losing my show, I'm glad I chose losing my show. You know, I never sold out. When I came over to the network, everybody said you're going to lose your edge. You're going to sellout. Well, I didn't and I got fired."²⁹

Many have fallen victim to censorship. It can occur for many reasons, a few of which are illustrated above. Ownership plays a role here as well: "multi-sector ownership creates disincentives for papers to investigate topics that adversely affect other

branches of their empire. When the publisher HarperCollins, a News Corporation company, decided not to publish the ex-governor of Hong Kong Chris Patten's book, it was reported that this was because Murdoch feared it might affect adversely his media interests in China. 'Kill the book,' Murdoch was reported to have demanded."³⁰ More often though, censorship takes the form of an informal de facto censorship imposed by commercial constraints, the need for corporate sponsorship, a short-term market demand for media that promotes violence and fear rather than peace and love, and self-censorship. As media scholar John Street notes, "self-censorship may indeed prove to be a much more common, pervasive and insidious form of control."³¹ Subtle and informal, self-censorship is dangerous both because of what it restricts and its nearly undetectable quality. Dan Rather, a mainstream media figurehead and target of conservatives who condemn the media as liberal, seems to agree. On the BBC television show *Newsnight*, he spoke these words about the American media: "It's an obscene comparison, but there was a time in South Africa when people would put flaming tires around people's necks if they dissented. In some ways, the fear is that you will be neck-laced here, you will have a flaming tire of lack of patriotism put around your neck...It's that fear that keeps journalists from asking the toughest of the tough questions and to continue to bore-in on the tough questions so often."³² In other words, silence is patriotic.

Secrecy is a form of censorship and a prominent means of manipulating the information that reaches the public and even the media. If journalists do not know about stories, then they can't blab about them. Dan Rather's words speak volumes regarding secrecy as a tool of the media. A sea of books filled with shocking exposés is available to the public. (On one level, the US is an extremely free and open society; again, the

forms of control in practice are not generally crude and formal.) But, these exposés never make it to the headlines or the evening news. Why? If I can find these stories - and lots of this stuff is surprising, sexy, scary, everything that sells - then why can't multibillion-dollar corporations? Of course, they can, but they are silent and self-censored. (For an example see Greg Palast's New York Times Bestseller, The Best Democracy Money Can Buy, which contains information on how the Republicans fixed the 2000 vote in Florida, intelligence mistakes and nonsensical top-down orders surrounding the 9-11 attacks and subsequent investigations, the real reason the Exxon Valdez crashed, and other stories that could fit inside a short segment and would enrage the national public. If it's true that in the media industry bad news is good news, then these stories are a dream come true. Just say ratings.)

Another constraint imposed on media content is the requirement of concision. The American public has a short attention span that needs stimulation - the more the better. (Have you been to a professional sporting event lately? The noise is constant and blaring, the lights and advertisements blinding and unavoidable. And the news screen is no better, with the constant scrolls, pop-up charts, the ever-waving flag in one corner and the Terror Alert level display in the other. It is only a matter of time before some poor kid has an epileptic fit and files a suit.) Truly, the news, like all other programs, must accommodate this peculiarity. However, the requirement of concision presents an obstacle for democracy. "The very structure of the media is designed to induce conformity to established doctrine. In a three-minute stretch between commercials, or in seven hundred words, it is impossible to present unfamiliar thoughts or surprising conclusions with the argument and evidence required to afford them some credibility.

Regurgitation of welcome pieties faces no such problem."³³ As a result, the content of TV news is inherently restricted to the shallow and familiar. This effectively eliminates the possibility of complex, controversial views like "the media is propaganda and erodes our democracy" or "the U.S. is and has been for decades the world's greatest terrorist threat." For most, these issues are conveniently not familiar, nor can they be through the TV news media.

One school of thought asserts that nearly everything is political, especially that surrounding the media: news, sitcoms, books, magazines, movies, etc. Even the media that is not clearly about politics is nevertheless political insofar as it serves as a distraction from the political, preventing sectors of the population from participating in politics in a meaningful or informed way. This form of propaganda is as clever, if indeed intentional, as it is subtle. The distraction can result from the order that pieces of information are released, from shifting the focus to other events, or again, from simply focusing on the apolitical as much as possible.

One way to remove the public from politics then is to focus on the apolitical in such a way so as to produce a nationwide mood of anti-politics, an effort with which the media can be of assistance today. Such a focus, however, has been in the planning for some time. John Dewey, one of the most important liberal thinkers of the early 20th century, once said, "government is the shadow cast over society by business," and this statement seems increasingly true since globalization and multinational corporate domination has taken deeper root. After the passing of the Helms-Burton Act, U.S. business won the right to propagandize in the workplace, taking another step towards demonizing unions and creating a general mood of anti-politics. More specifically,

businesses found ways of focusing society's negative sentiment at the federal government rather than at business, which is, at least sometimes, the source of economic discontent. Thus, people became confused about the actual source of their problems, holding only the government accountable for the conditions of society. This gives business almost completely free, unaccountable, undemocratic power to influence the population as they see fit. The result is widening inequality, environmental degradation, and the reduction of the individual's ability to live freely (the reduction of meaningful, sustainable democracy).

The media is allowed to engage in discussion based on the two-party system; Republicans and Democrats are both invested in the status quo and deeply dependent on business interests for political power. However, discussion outside that range is, for the most part, strictly prohibited. The effective result is an account of reality of the fairytale kind, where citizens can choose one side or the other and no more complexity is relevant or appropriate. This is not to say, of course, that discourse outside of this framework does not exist. Political rhetoric on both extremes of the spectrum is certainly legal and exists throughout the newsletters, mass-emails, and phone trees of unions, churches, and an endless sea of other lobby groups and nongovernmental organizations. However, these information sources operate on a wholly different mechanism, untapped by the Joe Six-Packs and the many who are not exposed to political issues by means other than television and periodicals - which reach the masses through name recognition and, in the periodicals' case, the capacity to be sold on every corner.

Humans can be persuaded, distracted, and misinformed, and though the media are not wholly evil or deceitful, such can be their role: to persuade, to distract, to misinform

or to withhold information for political aims. One must remember that the media too, like politicians, have business interests (consider corporate advertisers and network ownership), and accordingly, they have biases. Noam Chomsky, a leading political critic and scholar on the subject, writes:

Many other factors induce the media to conform to the requirements of the state-corporate nexus. To confront power is costly and difficult; high standards of evidence and argument are imposed, and critical analysis is naturally not welcomed by those who are in a position to react vigorously and to determine the array of rewards and punishments. Conformity to a 'patriotic agenda,' in contrast, imposes no such costs. Charges against official enemies barely require substantiation.³⁴

Instead, people are encouraged not to think and those who do are marginalized; divergence from the norm is frowned upon, particularly if interpreted as unpatriotic.³⁵ Again, patriotism, fear, and the notion that democracy is in danger become tools for the manipulation of public opinion. "If there is any popular challenge to their rule, the United States is entitled to resort to violence to 'restore democracy' - to adopt the term conventionally used in reference to the Reagan Doctrine in Nicaragua."³⁶ Simply, one cannot expect to get a complete story of U.S. involvement in any violent action from U.S. mainstream media, and moreover, while the lack of responsibility displayed by the public surmounts to violence, the media, through limiting and distorting the information supplied to the masses, surely exacerbate the public's decision-making disabilities. Besides the case study, this paper is freckled with more specific examples of the media as a manipulative tool.

Ultimately, these techniques should be noted and observed while practicing healthy skepticism. The media have the broad capability, the incentive, and the tools to tamper with information to produce a given outcome. Plus, they have a record of doing

so. In an American courtroom they would be as good as guilty. So, while "we cannot hope to prove power ascriptions...this should not preclude a detailed study of the ways in which media conglomerates affect government policy, or media campaigns result in shifts in public opinion, or production practices deny opportunities for participation of certain groups or interests."³⁷

IV. Case Study: East Timor and Cambodia, Worthy and Unworthy Victims

One obstacle to empirically analyzing the media and media content is the difficulty of securing control in the real world. The best and most convincing empirical tests hold all variables constant but one in order to determine the effect of altering that one variable. In history and media coverage, it is essentially impossible to imagine holding all but one variable constant; enumerable factors are involved. However, a few examples do exist in which all variables are, at least, extremely close. In this case study, the leaders of two nations, Cambodia and Indonesia, carried out comparably atrocious acts of violence and genocide, killing around the same number of people around the same time. The single variable that blatantly differs, though, is the nature of the relationship that these leaders held with the US. Simply, Suharto's Indonesia was friendly with the US, while Pol Pot's Cambodia was not.

Having noted this single significant difference, I will analyze American media coverage of these two individuals and their crimes to determine if the media presented and continue to present an objective or skewed view of reality to the public. Essentially I will attempt to answer this question: does the media propagandize the public by favoring friendly monsters and disfavoring unfriendly monsters based on politics? If my results yield a positive response, then they suggest that the media is part of the propaganda system and are capable of and willing to disinform, consciously or not, the public, thus

generating a false perspective of the world in the public mind. Moreover, the specific example of media failure surrounding East Timor and Cambodia has limited significance. More importantly, the media failure here illustrates one example of a much larger flaw in our democracy. As Supreme Court Justice Powell observed, "no individual can obtain for himself the information needed for the intelligent discharge of his political responsibilities."³⁸ It follows, of course, that if the press fails to deliver accurate information to the public, particularly based on sheer political bias, then the public's decision-making abilities begin to dissolve and our democracy is jeopardized. In fact, as the results will show, such is already the case.

Pol Pot led the Khmer Rouge guerrilla forces to victory in their overthrow of the Cambodian Lon Nol Regime. He took power in 1975 and then served as Prime Minister of the new Khmer Rouge government from 1976 until 1979, when Vietnam invaded Cambodia and overthrew his regime. Despite his official removal from power he continued to control Khmer Rouge forces in the mountains of southwestern Cambodia until 1985. During those years he and his forces continued to exert violence across the country. The death and genocide that scorched Cambodia during the 1970's can best be grouped into three phases:

Phase I: From 1969 through April 1975, U.S. bombing at a historically unprecedented level and a civil war sustained by the United States left the country in utter ruins. Though Congress legislated an end to the bombing in August 1973, U.S. government participation in the ongoing slaughter continued until the Khmer Rouge victory April 1975.

Phase II: From April 1975 through 1978 Cambodia was subjected to the murderous rule of the Khmer Rouge (Democratic Kampuchea, DK), overthrown by the Vietnamese invasion of Cambodia in December 1978.

Phase III: Vietnam installed the Heng Samrin regime in power in Cambodia, but the Democratic Kampuchea (DK) coalition, based

primarily on the Khmer Rouge, maintained international recognition apart from the Soviet Bloc. Reconstructed with the aid of China and the United States on the Thai-Cambodia border and in Thai bases, continue to carry out activities in Cambodia of a sort called "terrorist" when a friendly government is the target.³⁹

Total death estimates from the media range between one and two million when discussing Pol Pot's murderous Khmer Rouge. However, "the best estimates of numbers executed run from 100,000-400,000, with excess deaths from all causes". A significant portion of "excess deaths" can be attributed to the "residual effects of the prior devastation," or the US bombing campaign and other military engagements.⁴⁰

Suharto came into power in 1965-1966, with the aid and support of the US government, when he overthrew the Sukarno government. He earned American support by transforming Indonesia's Cold War state of limbo into a state of ardent anti-communism. He "wiped out the Indonesian Communist Party - exterminating a sizable part of its mass base in the process, in widespread massacres that claimed at least 500,000 and perhaps more than a million victims," amidst American delight. Like other dictators of the time, Suharto maintained US support by instituting a very favorable atmosphere for international investors, who "flocked in to exploit the timber, mineral and oil resources, as well as the cheap, repressed labor."⁴¹ Then, in 1975, Suharto's Indonesia invaded and occupied the small neighboring country of East Timor. During the swift occupation, the Indonesian army killed an estimated 200,000 from a population of only 700,000. It would appear that, by any account, the deaths of 700,000-1,200,000+ would align Suharto with the likes of Pol Pot. Yet, US support did not ebb. In fact, Nobel Peace Prize winner Jimmy Carter and his administration supplied Suharto and his thugs with US-made arms during these genocidal years. And, the media fell in line as well.

Lexis Nexis searches of Suharto and Pol Pot show a clear media tendency to cover Pol Pot more often in a negative light, to more often associate him with genocide than the US ally Suharto. I performed several regional searches of US media to compare the media's coverage of Pol Pot and Suharto. This data was collected recently, on March 31, 2004. I will present the graphs together in their entirety and subsequently comment on their significance.

Figure 1 shows the number of articles Nexis gathered from all available dates that featured Pol Pot or Suharto in the headline of the article:

Figure 1:

	Pol Pot (Headline)	Suharto (Headline)
Midwest:	113	135
Northeast:	247	396
Southeast:	210	288
Western:	116	151
Total:	686	970

Figure 2 shows the number of articles Nexis gathered from all available dates that featured either "Pol Pot" and "genocide" in the headline or "Suharto" and "genocide":

Figure 2:

	Pol Pot + Genocide (Headline)	Suharto + Genocide (Headline)
Midwest:	0	0
Northeast:	8	0
Southeast:	7	0
Western:	0	0
Total:	15	0

Figure 3 shows the number of articles Nexis gathered from all available dates that featured either "Pol Pot" in the headline and "genocide" in the text or "Suharto" in the headline and "genocide" the text:

Figure 3:

	Pol Pot(Headline) w/ Genocide (in Text)	Suharto (Headline) w/ Genocide (in Text)
Midwest:	35	0
Northeast:	63	0
Southeast:	60	2
Western:	35	1
Total:	193	3

Figure 4. shows the number of articles Nexis gathered from all available dates that featured both "Pol Pot" and "genocide" in the text of the article or both "Suharto" and "genocide" in the text of the article.

Figure 4:

	Pol Pot + Genocide (Text)	Suharto + Genocide (Text)
Midwest:	191	41
Northeast:	421	42
Southeast:	445	68
Western:	293	47
Total:	1,350	198

These interesting results warrant some analysis and explanation. To start, Figure 1 reveals that the US media actually cover Suharto more often than they do Pol Pot, and significantly so - over 40 percent more often. However, comparing Figure 1 with the other data suggests that, when they do cover Suharto, it is usually not in the context of his genocidal crimes. Rather, American journalists admire Suharto as a "profoundly spiritual man" or a "reforming autocrat."⁴² Or, they comment on his international financial savvy, noting the profitability of his "deregulated economy" and how he smartly "opened Indonesia to foreign investors and kept the Japanese, Indonesia's largest supplier of foreign aid, from grabbing more than a quarter of the market for goods imported into the country" - all admirable qualities that would lead the Clinton administration to name Suharto "our kind of guy."⁴³

And when the media do refer to the massacres that he coordinated, it is done in the passive voice or by some method to defer blame. He did not murder a million innocents. He's our friend! Instead, the New York Times shifts culpability to the "now-defunct Indonesian Communist Party, which was blamed for an attempted uprising in 1965 that touched off a wave of violence that took up to 500,000 lives and led Suharto to seize power from Sukarno in a military coup."⁴⁴

In contrast, coverage of Pol Pot's genocide is much more common, as drawn from this data. As the numbers indicate, the discussion and repetition of Pol Pot's genocide by the media dwarfs that of Suharto, even though Suharto is mentioned more often. Pol Pot, the Communist enemy, "created a reign of terror" and was infamous for his "killing fields" and "death and ruin from which the country is still struggling to recover."⁴⁵

(Incidentally, the New York Times quotes on Suharto and Pol Pot that I have referenced above are from the same author, Seth Mydans, the Times expert on Southeast Asia.)

Indeed, Pol Pot is surely guilty of Mydans' accusations. But notice not only the media's double standard when discussing Suharto, but also the absence of commentary on the role of the US in destroying Cambodia. Instead, the media focus solely on the crimes of the enemy state. "Atrocities by the Khmer Rouge could be attributed to the Communist enemy and valuable propaganda points could be scored, although nothing useful could be done, or was even proposed, for the Cambodian victims."⁴⁶

The difference in the coverage of these two genocidal monsters should not be surprising, but it should be meaningful and shocking despite its predictability. This study (along with the endless sea of other similar studies) implies, essentially, that the media cannot be trusted to provide an accurate portrayal of reality to the public. If one were to

only consider US coverage of these two individuals, one would leave the page with major misunderstandings of how these men lived and behaved. And this has a ripple effect throughout civil society. As a test, try asking a few friends to identify Pol Pot, Suharto, and their home countries. I did, and wasn't surprised. Again, this specific case may not be of the utmost importance in and of itself, but it should serve as a message regarding the larger issue of the media and propaganda. Media propaganda may often be subtle and clever, but it is present and has consequences.

V. Education and Civil Society

The media are not the sole source of propaganda, though it may have close links to other forms of propaganda. Education and the functioning of the civil society serve as propagandizing forces, or forces which marginalize large sectors of the public and divert them from pursuing their interests, on two main levels. First, the interpersonal level describes the way that society operates on the large scale, and will be the subject of this chapter. And second, the intrapersonal level involves the processes internal to all of us as humans, which I will discuss directly subsequent to this chapter on emotions and the psyche.

This discussion may be clarified by beginning with some major problems and tracing them back to identify education and the civil society as key roots of these problems. As far back as elementary school, most of us can recall that many people behave differently individually or one-on-one than they do as part of a group. Peer pressure and an array of complex emotional and psychological elements come into play when individuals identify themselves as part of a group and when those groups express certain ideas or ideologies. I will address the emotional and psychological aspects in depth in the following sections, but it is worth noting here that our education and civil society naturally plays a role in our development as Americans. Children view the President as a hero and the government as a heroic institution, in part because children's incapacities to understand various shades of gray and in part because of what may be

seen as patriotic indoctrination from a very young age. Kids are saying the Pledge of Allegiance before they know what it means. Try asking a second grader what a republic is. This tool of propaganda has kids telling themselves that the US stands for "liberty and justice for all" and that they are to be unconditionally allegiant to our purely altruistic state. "The US is your team and the US is good" - every morning, 5 days a week. Most children still believe literally in Santa Clause and the Easter Bunny by the time they have the Pledge memorized. Yet this is, by and large, an uncontested element of the American education system, perhaps because patriotism is fervent across generations. Despite your political perspective, chances are that you think the US government has made at least a few very serious mistakes. So, despite your political perspective, chances are that you think that American children routinely pledge allegiance to a fallible and heavily armed institution.

At the same time, American schools and the civil society teach war, not peace. History classes test students on major events. For me, anyways, this meant violent events and events surrounding violent events, even if they were not described as such. We learned about all wars of American involvement, about Presidents, Generals, and their decisions in time of armed crisis. This is not to say that we did not discuss peaceful and progressive events such as the Women's Suffrage movement, the Civil Rights movement, and the anti-war protests of the 1960's and 1970's, but they were far less emphasized and a long list of American peacemakers was left out of the textbooks. Albert Einstein, who is virtually deified by educators, said, "We must begin to inoculate our children against militarism by educating them in the spirit of pacifism...Our schoolbooks glorify war and

conceal its horrors. They indoctrinate children with hatred. I would teach peace rather than war, love rather than hate... Textbooks should be rewritten."⁴⁷

Additionally, during my studies the US carried out acts of violence across the globe. In my lifetime the US government has bombed El Salvador, Nicaragua, Panama, Iraq, Sudan, Afghanistan, Yugoslavia, Afghanistan again, and Iraq again – to build a shortlist. In none of these instances was the new, resulting government democratic or respectful of human rights. And, the US provides aid to nations with some of the worst human rights records in the world; today, Columbia and Israel stand out. So, even if I did learn about peace in school, how was I to take it seriously amidst so much state-sponsored violence? After all, I am allegiant. On April 13, 1999, two disturbed students at Columbine High School in Littleton, Colorado, shocked their school and the nation by opening fire on their teachers and classmates, killing many students and one teacher before turning their guns on themselves.

In the national discussion that followed this tragic event, a persistent theme was sounded over and over again: The mass media must share a significant part of the blame for this incident and others like it. President Clinton called upon the producers of mass media messages to reduce gratuitous violence. The clear implication of Clinton's rhetoric was that exposure to violent entertainment images increased the probability of this type of violent behavior.⁴⁸

On the same day as the Littleton shootings, the US military, authorized by President Clinton, dropped more bombs in Kosovo than on any other day throughout the duration of the war. Of all the explanations of the Columbine incident, virtually no one in the mass media considered the prominence and acceptability of state-sponsored violence as a potential cause.

Another big problem, as I see it, involves the enabling of the civil society to operate smoothly amidst an atmosphere of what has been called "*acceptable violence*." In our modern, democratic state, probably the most destructive and most preventable examples of acceptable violence are ignorance, apathy, and amnesia as exhibited by the citizens of our own state. The United States is very clearly violent, as nearly every state in humankind's history has been, but only the consent, tacit or not, of the U.S. citizens can ultimately permit most state violence to occur. Nonresistance, that is, is in itself an important behavioral choice or lifestyle.

The state itself, as Foucault points out, may attempt to define the extent and nature of acceptable and unacceptable violence, but freethinking minds are not bound by the beliefs of others. And, in a democracy, those minds can design the state to closely suit their own beliefs, one would hope. That is, in a democracy, the citizens of the state have an obligation to assign power responsibly, and they thus have a responsibility for the ways in which the power is used. However, quite often in our society there is a disconnection between the acknowledged responsibilities of the state and those of the citizens. Those who call the acceptability of state violence into question rarely call into question the ignorance, apathy, and amnesia of the domestic population that is regularly responsible for allowing the state violence to proliferate. It seems that, in our historical moment, the relationship between the state and violence has become inappropriate; the two are too tightly knit and exclusive of their connection to the citizens. The state may be hailed or condemned for its violence, but the citizens are left out of the equation, or leave themselves out of the equation. It is the reason for this disconnection between the citizens and the state's actions – the ignorance, apathy, and amnesia of the citizens –

which has today contributed immensely to the ability of the democratic state to act violently and which has clearly emerged as a most dangerous form of acceptable violence.

Thus far, this section may read so as to condemn the citizens of the U.S. for atrocious, perhaps heretical acts, but what are the reasons for citizens' ignorance, apathy, and amnesia? Any list is long and incomplete. First, in the wealthiest nation in the world, the role of comfort becomes an issue. Any world historian knows the rich never revolt. So, it should come as not surprise that many are content to live with their blinders on, in their little box, or mansion as it were, happily ever after, without concern for the suffering of others. The lifestyle is conducive to apathy.

Second, education is understandably correlated with ignorance, depending on what one considers to be education. A certain element of laziness or a lack of time and resources must play a significant role. Education in any thorough sense takes a tremendous amount of time, energy, and money. Ignorance is naturally difficult to overcome. Additionally, we should be aware of the source of our education, and maybe some skepticism of our own education with regard to those sources can be healthy. I discussed my shock, having been lied to in elementary school about the character of certain icons of American history such as Columbus. Such shock and experience can be a blessing. Scholar of American history Howard Zinn writes, "George Orwell, who was a very wise man, wrote: 'Who controls the past controls the future. And who controls the present controls the past.' In other words, those who dominate our society are in a position to write our histories. And if they can do that, they can decide our futures."⁴⁹ So, who controls our past? Hollywood film production companies, book publishers, and

moneyed donors to educational institutions certainly control a substantial portion of that information. Further unearthing the answer to that question will be an integral part of identifying the nature of the propaganda that affects each unique individual.

Finally, the state has interests, and pursuing them requires the consent, in some form, of the public. Often, when the interests call for violence, the state, which is truly a brilliant propaganda machine, will create simple, Manichean (or good vs. evil, black and white) scenarios for the public. The state manufactures a purely evil public enemy, instilling fear in the hearts of citizens, and inevitably appealing to patriotism to rally the public behind state-sponsored violence. Humans, being the self-preserving, social, often shortsighted beings that they are, are often convinced of the pure and just motives of their own government and, as ignorance contributes here, are inclined to forget the past and to ignore the logic which history so effectively and routinely suggests.

An older but classic example of citizen ignorance and apathy toward state violence is that of U.S. involvement in Nicaragua under Reagan. Again, Chomsky writes:

Nicaragua in the 1980's was subjected to a violent assault by the U.S. Tens of thousands of people died. The country was substantially destroyed; it may never recover. The international terrorist attack (he refers to the CIA direct involvement and support of the terrorist group called the Contras against the legitimately democratic Sandanista leadership) was accompanied by a devastating economic war, which a small country isolated by a vengeful and cruel superpower could scarcely sustain.⁵⁰

This historic event particularly stands out since it so clearly illustrates the senselessly destructive and violent role of U.S. military intervention as observed by the international community:

They (Nicaragua) went to the World Court, which ruled in their favor, ordering the U.S. to desist and pay substantial reparations. The U.S. dismissed the court judgment with contempt, responding with an immediate escalation of the attack. So Nicaragua then went to the Security Council, which considered a resolution calling on states to observe international law. The U.S. alone vetoed it. They went to the General Assembly, where they got a similar resolution that passed with the U.S. and Israel opposed two years in a row.⁵¹

The U.S. media and government appealed to patriotism, fear of instability close to home, and the virtue of democracy – as ironic as that may be in this context – to calm the American public and distract them from foreign opinion and opinion of dissent. The U.S. influence on Nicaragua was much more severe than the attack on the U.S. in 2001. International opinion nearly unanimously condemned U.S. action in Nicaragua. Yet, those funding the horrendous operations, U.S. citizens, did not, as a whole, come close to intervening in the matter. Again, ignorance, apathy, and, to some extent, amnesia, in conjunction with the federal government and media bias, led to brutal massacres and international disgust and anger. Hopefully the American public would learn from this, note the loss incurred to Nicaraguans, consider their universal condemnation, reconsider their headstrong arrogance, and react more appropriately during later U.S. military interventions.

The present situation with Iraq provides a contemporary example of continued ignorance, apathy, and amnesia, in particular on the part of far too much of the American public. The tactics to encourage public support for the war and subsequent occupation have been strikingly similar to those surrounding the conflict in Nicaragua, or nearly any other major US conflict for that matter. Taking advantage of the fury of patriotism which raged post-9-11, the Bush administration has played a constant drumbeat for violent

reaction to the enemy of the time. Bush has used the fear of U.S. citizens, harping on threats to our freedoms and democratic ways. Again, the violent assault is unprovoked. Again international opinion has spoken out against U.S. actions. Again, in U.S. news, we are the purely good angels of fairytale quality, while the Iraqi leadership, our former ally, is our utter opposite: evil villains. Ignorance, apathy, and amnesia continue to flourish inside U.S. borders and contribute to Bush's war effort, while the media continue to limit well-rounded debate and coverage of the growing international anti-war movement.

Consider the logic which history so effectively and routinely suggests; the facts do not lie. The U.S. is not a beacon of light with the moral authority to condemn the unlawful use of force. The U.S. was itself condemned by the World Court for its unlawful use of force in Nicaragua in 1986. The U.S. has a history of support for despotic regimes; "a random hit list from the last fifty years would include the Philippines, Indonesia, Vietnam, Guatemala, Haiti, El Salvador, Nicaragua, South Africa, Uganda, Pakistan, Turkey, Iraq, and most recently various human rights abusers in Central Asia who are the newest recipients of military aid." The U.S. does not have a history of non-violent, democratic, or humanitarian regime change: "again, almost at random, consider Pinochet in Chile, the Shah in Iran, or Diem and Thieu in Vietnam."⁵² It is doubtful that the U.S. has any genuine interest in relieving the Iraqi people from Hussein's wrath; the U.S. actually supported Hussein up through his most atrocious crimes, including the gassing of his own people and the Iranians, during the Iran-Iraq war of the 1980's. The list of ridiculous and easily disprovable claims consistently made by the Bush administration and the media is a long one and it makes a clear point: U.S. public support for this war was not built on logic, but rather on patriotism, fear, a lack of

knowledge, failure or refusal to learn or to resist, and a disregard or neglect for the simple facts of the past. Remedies for these illnesses are not on FOX or CBS, but they are not impossible to uncover. In fact, due to globalization, information is more easily accessible than ever before. This shifts an increasing proportion of the blame for state violence on the citizens of the state.

Ultimately, it seems that the citizens of the United States, to a significant degree, are responsible for the violence in Iraq in 2003 and the ongoing occupation. The citizens set the ball in motion through elections and initially emotion-driven unconditional patriotic support. This so-called acceptable violence – ignorance, apathy, and amnesia – which allows the momentum of the war machine to continue, is not an excuse simply because it is overlooked by society and considered to be acceptable. This so-called acceptable violence is condemnable, as it is at the root of the modern relationship between the state and violence. One might ask if inaction can be considered violent. The answer to that question depends on the circumstances. In this case, the U.S. citizens overwhelmingly and hastily supported a war on terrorism; they acted – gave their consent. Now, as the war on terrorism takes a new turn, and one asks if inaction can be considered violent, the answer is, firmly, yes. The American public needs to take responsibility for their initial actions and finish what they started. Unfortunately, due in large part to their diminishing but still prevalent ignorance, apathy, and amnesia, acceptable violence continues to take its toll.

Civil society is full of distraction from the meaningful. By *the meaningful*, I mean that which has consequence for the wellbeing of human life. As I noted, one school of thought asserts that nearly everything is political, especially that surrounding the

media: news, sitcoms, books, magazines, movies, etc. Even that media that is not clearly about politics is nevertheless political insofar as it serves as a distraction from the political, preventing sectors of the population from participating in politics in a meaningful or informed way. In such a way, most forms of entertainment, particularly sports and some game shows that are too obvious not to mention (The Price is Right and Wheel of Fortune among others) - the most purely apolitical and commercialism-friendly types of entertainment - can be seen as fundamentally anti-political and dangerous for those touched by American political consequence..

VI. Emotional Manipulation

I recently spoke with an acquaintance - not so much a friend, and thus I did not know what I was getting myself into - who lost family and friends in the attack on September 11. Somehow politics came up in the conversation and we talked for a few moments about her loss and her reactions to the attacks. Somewhat understandably, she was filled with hatred and the desire for revenge, in a general sense, on "them" which I took to mean either terrorists or Arabs but which was probably more than a little of both. I asked if she thought military attacks would stop terrorism, but her response was essentially that, in either case, the attack on the Trade Towers warranted, or demanded, rather, a retaliatory attack. Regardless of its effect, she wanted what she considered to be justice, which stood in glaring contrast, at least in my eyes, with peace. And, while I do not share her feelings per se, I know that such feelings - a desire for violent revenge - are not unusual.

With those feelings in mind, consider the following facts regarding the conflict which has, since 9-11, come to be known as the War on Terror. Throughout the latter half of the 20th century, the United States earned a reputation in the Middle East for suppressing human rights, creating and exacerbating violence through the propping-up of repressive regimes, and through the militarization of the region. Generally, rather than

working for sustainability and long-term goals, the U.S. sought its immediate interests first, thus failing to implement a consistent policy and instead encouraging conflict through violence and hypocrisy.⁵³ To specify, “the chief complaints revolve around U.S. support for what are seen as repressive and corrupt regimes, the exploitative practices by American oil companies and other corporations, the prejudicial use of the United Nations, the arming and bankrolling of a militaristic and expansionist Israel, destabilization efforts against internationally recognized governments, as well as direct military intervention.”⁵⁴ And this sentiment applies generally across the board: to the poor, the suffering, and the elites. Osama bin Laden articulated his own views and those of Al Qaeda in a taped statement released on October 7, 2001 which refers to the 9-11 attacks: “Our nation (the Islamic world) has been tasting this humiliation and this degradation for more than 80 years. Its sons are killed, its blood is shed, its sanctuaries are attacked, and no one hears and no one heeds....Millions of innocent children are being killed as I speak.”⁵⁵ The Islamic world clearly feels dismay, humiliation and anger about the historically destructive role of the U.S., particularly considering the religiously sensitive land on which U.S.-led atrocities occur. Given a reasonable account of history, this should be clear and understandable and no further persuasion should be necessary.

It is against this historical background – of U.S. hypocrisy and inconsistency, of U.S.- inflicted humanitarian disasters, and of the repression of Arab populations often under the boot of U.S.-supported, authoritarian political structures – that George W. Bush finds the audacity (or perhaps the ignorance) to say, “They hate...democratically elected government. They hate our freedoms – our freedom of religion, our freedom of speech, our freedom to vote and assemble and disagree with each other,” and it is against this

historical background that the American population accepts these words as full explanation for the attacks of September 11th.⁵⁶ As Dr. Samer Shehata puts it, Bush's words "reflect a profound misunderstanding of the basic problem. The overwhelming majority of Arabs and Muslims love freedom and democracy as much as we do. The problem is that from their perspective, U.S. Middle East policy is guided by neither of these two noble principles."⁵⁷ Osama bin Laden even explains the reciprocal reasons behind September 11th: "We kill the kings of the infidels, kings of the crusaders, civilian infidels in exchange for those of our children they kill....We will do as they do. If they kill our women and innocent people, we will kill their women and innocent people."⁵⁸ Clearly, both sides (depending, indeed, on who exactly one considers to be the sides) have reached a point where reason and notions of forgiveness and understanding have been eliminated and all that is sought after is violent revenge, which is exacerbated by violent revenge, and so on. It is no wonder, then, that justice as revenge - a primarily emotional element of conflict - is a major obstacle to peace and reconciliation.

These issues raise a series of questions. Most obviously, why do we have a desire for violent revenge in some circumstances? Clearly, emotions play a key role. It certainly seems possible that emotions can be used to bypass reason and to facilitate the manipulation of the public.

In attempting to understand and analyze the desire for revenge, I reflected on my own personal thoughts and opinions. Rationally, if either peace or peace concurrent with justice is the goal, then violence in the name of revenge is unproductive if not backwards. Philosophically, I generally subscribe to the strategy and ethics of nonviolence, so violent retaliation is immoral, strategically inferior for the purpose of peace or victory, and, as

violence naturally focuses our attention on fear and self-defense, thus creating a Manichean scenario in our collective cultural mind in which "the we" are the otherwise arbitrary role of pure good, revenge serves to prolong conflict by removing reason from the equation. However, others - many others - seem to find revenge acceptable. Might I ever?

When I was nine years old my six-year-old brother was diagnosed with cancer, a burden that he and my family would bear for the next seven years until his death. This experience of living with my brother during his battle with cancer - in and out of hospital beds, emergency rooms, his being able to come home but not without heavy dosages of pain medication - is the closest clue that I have as to the feelings and emotions that one experiences when they or their loved ones are victimized or traumatized by others. But, my brother's disease, as far as I am aware, did not result from human actions: he contracted the disease at such an age that doctors believed it could not have been prevented. However, the emotions that I experienced during those years and which I continue to experience today help me to understand - and to expand my imagination regarding - others' reactions when loved ones become victimized by something human, something tangible, something mortal, something capable of the same type of victimization. So when I consider hypotheticals of very personal and emotional trauma - a brutally murdered mother, a raped girlfriend - my expanded imagination, or perhaps just my humanity stirs something inside me that I wish I did not have. It suppresses rationality, perhaps as a survival mechanism of some sort, and explains to me without words how some desire revenge so unrelentingly and without concern for rationale.

Logically, then, we must ask, do our emotions make us easy to manipulate? Can these human reactions play into the hands of those with an agenda and an ability to manifest and channel emotion? How natural are these emotional reactions anyways? Can they be taught? And, how necessary are they?

Certainly, emotions, for better or worse, change - reverse, intensify, modify, or what have you - our opinions and perceptions of concepts and events. One school of thought, represented by sociologist Gustave LeBon, asserts that the "conscious personality" and the ability of the individual to use reason in his actions become impaired by emotion. That is, to some degree, we lose control of ourselves and are, as a result, subject to the will of our emotions. Additionally, emotions are not self-contained phenomena; they exist for a reason, in causal relationships with corresponding impetuses and consequences, which implies that the introduction of certain pieces of information can effectively derail the public's control of itself. Enter the media, with supreme power over information; while they may not necessarily tell us what to think, they undoubtedly tell us what to think about. Again, the media's linking of Iraq and Al-Qaeda comes to mind. The nation already fostered intense, violent emotions toward Al-Qaeda and Osama bin Laden after 9-11. Then, the simple implication that Saddam Hussein was connected threw support behind the Iraq war. The world is full of monsters and villains, but not monsters and villains who massacred Americans in America.

Such emotions are also felt not only personally but as a nation, as a group. After the attacks, American flags sold out of Wal-Mart's across the country and went up on bumper stickers, windows, lapel pins, businesses - everywhere - and to not display a flag

could be interpreted as unpatriotic. The 2001-2002 period was a time of intense national, emotional unity. Expert on propaganda Jacques Ellul writes on such instances:

...the individual is considered part of the mass and included in it (and so far as possible systematically integrated into it), because in that way his psychic defenses are weakened, his reactions are easier to provoke, and the propagandist profits from the process of diffusion of emotions through the mass, and, at the same time, from the pressures felt by an individual when in a group. Emotionalism, impulsiveness, excess, etc. - all of these characteristics of the individual caught up in a mass are well known and very helpful to propaganda.⁵⁹

Joseph Goebels, Hitler's infamous propagandist, practiced propaganda as a black art, with these concepts in mind. Through nationalism, institutional lying and spreading fear and paranoia, he created the belief that the Nazi state was fundamental to the well being of the German citizen. Eventually the level of nationalist allegiance created a tight connection between the state or group and the individual. An insult toward the state was tantamount to a personal insult and would generate a personal emotional reaction. This degree of elitist ethnocentrism and jingoist pride finds parallels in modern American culture. Generalizations are usually dangerous and almost always riddled with exceptions, but the requirement of patriotism and the acceptance of US initiatives, particularly anti-terrorism ones - regardless of their method or plausibility - has reached what could be interpreted as frightening heights, especially since 9-11. People and comments were and are American or un-American, which carries substantial weight as long as God blesses America and American-ness.

For example, my own father refused to wear the near-obligatory American flag pin on his lapel, purely on principle, cautious of the dangers of nationalism and knee-jerk support of and obedience to the state. On a number of occasions he was questioned and

criticized for not showing his support for our country, president, troops, fill-in-the-buzz-word. The "with us or against us" mentality had, in the minds of some, falsely and unfairly sided my father with those who hate America.

Incidentally, the concept of deeming ideas and comments un-American speaks to the quality of our democracy, where speech is clearly not fully free: only the American is welcome, whatever that means. In any case, dissent directed at the American government, if anything is un-American, or un'merican. What does that mean for the prospect of unbiased media? Media obedience becomes essentially a requirement during times like the post 9-11 era. Americanism has no comparable international counterpart; in most advanced, liberal democracies the cultures do not discriminate and exclude in such a way. That is, while degrees of nationalism exist in every country, the idea, for example, of a Spanish talk show host being called un-Spanish and then losing his job for criticizing the Spanish government or speaking frankly about its enemies is laughable, or a British news broadcaster being called un-British or a French reporter being called un-French. I think that, as Americans, it is important that we keep this in mind as we exercise our patriotism. Something is different about the way that our country operates, and that something does not scream free speech.

VII. Psychological Manipulation

As humans, our psyches react and respond to forces that stimulate our unconscious. What we often call our "gut reaction" is actually more complex and involves our histories, our personalities, and a number of experiences that have served to build and affect them both. Whether we are responding to President Bush claiming that the terrorists "hate our freedoms" or we are watching a small group of Palestinians dancing in the street following the 9-11 attacks, whether we are reacting to the flag-waving of national unity or the curiously confident answers of the media and the government on some puzzling and intricately complicated issue, our psyches play a major role. And, to clarify, our psyches can be closely intertwined with our emotions, but emotional and psychological elements are quite different; one might consider the psyche as the reason why certain emotions occur at certain times, much of which may be inherent, while much may be acquired. Specifically, analyzing the psyche here will involve a consideration of the ways people react to and judge others' behavior or existence. In any event, however, it seems clear and fundamentally important to me that variant psychological perspectives both create and fuel conflict. This observation

becomes still more burdensome when one arrives at the conclusion that the psyche can be manipulated to reinforce certain beliefs.

As Lederach notes, "the immediacy of hatred and prejudice, or racism and xenophobia, as primary factors and motivators of the conflict means that its transformation must be rooted in social-psychological and spiritual dimensions that traditionally have been seen as either irrelevant or outside the competency of international diplomacy."⁶⁰ The concept sounds simple....Well, no, it sounds extremely complicated, though it can be stated concisely; its complexity is ominously boding regardless of Lederach's intent to intimidate his readers. That is, that conflict resolution and peace likely depend on deep-rooted psychological (and spiritual) issues means that conflict resolution must enter the realm of psychology, about which, it seems, much more is written than understood.

Nevertheless, how can we access those psychological dimensions? What are the reasons for hatred, prejudice, and broad generalizations and stereotyping, and how can groups overcome or work with these things in order to establish a common peace and a common justice? Lederach believes the answer is "reconciliation" through "building relationship(s) between antagonists."⁶¹ He suggests that "space for the acknowledging of the past and envisioning of the future is the necessary ingredient for reframing the present."⁶² However, I think that while he has the right end in mind, he may be missing a link along the way.

One way that the psyche can create variant and inherently opposed conceptions of justice is to do so along societal lines, of potentially the most vague sense, though we might consider Huntington's Arabs vs. the West (Clash of Civilizations) model for

clarity. Carl Jung, psychology scholar and expert of the first half of the twentieth century, offers one explanation. He describes what he calls the "shadow" as "the inferior part of the personality, sum of all personal and collective psychic elements which, because of their incompatibility with the chosen conscious attitude, are denied expression in life and therefore coalesce into a relatively autonomous 'splinter personality' with contrary tendencies in the unconscious."⁶³ He goes on: "the shadow personifies everything that the subject refuses to acknowledge about himself and yet is always thrusting itself upon him directly or indirectly."⁶⁴ The concept is that we project onto others that which we reject in ourselves, and we reject it in ourselves precisely because we consider it to be evil or wrong, because of any of a number of our influences - primarily cultural. Further, something that is extremely other, or different from us, becomes a good candidate for projection simply by virtue of its otherness.

For example, according to Jung, it would be easier for me to project my shadow onto Arab terrorists than onto Timothy McVeigh, though they both attacked the U.S. on its own soil: the latter is not other. Moreover, we, as Americans, project the evil specifics of our shadow onto the Arabs not because that is how they actually are - the details are arbitrary with respect to the actual Arab culture, or that of the "other" de jour - but rather because the specifics are revolting to us. Remember the nonsensical words of George W. Bush: "they hate our freedoms."⁶⁵ And the country at large jumps on the bandwagon. Though, surely, Americans are not the only group guilty of shadow projection.

Through such a psychological process, hatred, prejudice, and stereotypes can continue to flourish without any reason or rationale behind them whatsoever. The otherness, and thus the evil characteristics projected onto the others, facilitates society's

acceptance of recurrent violent attacks carried out by their state or violent organ of choice, even in the name of justice, and the cycle or downward spiral continues.

What's worse, this sort of psychological auto-programming is guided towards a specific end by many cultural influences, beginning at a very young age. We live in an extremely coercive society that essentially tells our psyche exactly what or who our shadow should be - what is most evil and vile and disgusting.

A few years ago I wrote a spur-of-the-moment autobiography in about five minutes. I composed it spontaneously at the end of a Freshmen class; I was unaware that the assignment was coming. The experience was telling. How do you define yourself in a page of scribble? The people and events to which you refer, I came to realize, must be the most important, and there cannot be many. I wrote about my younger brother, to whom I have already referred in this paper, his battle with cancer, and my own lengthy struggle with God, the concept of fairness, and anyone who had ever taught me much about either. At the time, God did not seem so loving, justice did not seem inevitable, and my teachers (and parents) did not seem so reliable. Suddenly, as a preteen, I began to realize that the world was not as clear as some had once insinuated, and it opened a Pandora's box. I wrote in the autobiography, "What else that I had been told was potentially false? What did I *really know* about myself and this world?" The implication is that society encourages general homogeneity, burying individuality and the chance to understand the world in an unbiased way with generic and influential messages from language, the media, peer pressure, political, religious, cultural, and educational institutions, and other powerful sources. Certain ideas, philosophies, actions, and lifestyles become characterized by society as "good" or "bad," "acceptable" or

“unacceptable,” and suddenly one’s decisions are made for them; society strips one’s conscious potential to become their own person.

To make matters worse, the self must cope with this submersion into society during its earliest years of existence, a time when the self is naïve, ignorant, and willing to take all for granted, especially from trusted sources like parents and teachers. The result is rarely a confused self. Rather society regularly succeeds at homogenizing humans, guiding selves into predetermined religious, political, and cultural roles.

And, if an individual psyche is homogenized into society successfully, that identity is no less a true identity than would be any alternative; that is, wherever individuals receive influence, the resulting person defines the self, and the psyche becomes naturally attached to that self - its beliefs, attitudes, opinions, and so on. People often cling to the idea of themselves, or rather, the various opinions perceived as truths that they use to assemble their idea of themselves. Thus, an individual can find difficulty allowing these truths to dissolve, as they are or were part of the self. Also, humans, as social beings, are comfortable as part of a recognized group, as oriented beings, and are usually tightly attached to their notions of themselves, whatever that may be, especially when they lead economically prosperous or particularly pleasurable lives. Because of these issues, the propaganda that young people receive - in schools, churches, and social groups, from teachers, parents, peers, other social leaders, and various forms of media - is particularly dangerous, as it can last a lifetime.

VIII. The Propaganda Model Today: Implications for Tomorrow and the Prospects for Solutions

Clearly, propaganda has changed the way we, as citizens, perceive the rest of the world, whether we are aware of this or not. The degree to which propaganda affects us, though, is of immense importance. Today, as the US enters a new phase in military imperialism, our ability to cope with and penetrate the subtle, clever barrage of propaganda will have significant recourse on the future of our nation and our planet. Propaganda of many forms threatens our freedom of speech, our democracy, and our general well-being. So, what might we expect to see if the tide does not change, if propaganda continues to flourish?

We have recently witnessed the dramatic effects of propaganda in action, as the government and the media succeeded in turning American public support for aggression toward Iraq. On "Meet the Press" in September of 2003, Vice President Dick Cheney again, even after the war had wound down and the occupation had wound up, implied a connection between Saddam Hussein and 9/11. Yet, in a not-so-surprising-anymore move, Defense Secretary Rumsfeld and then President Bush himself "said there was no evidence that Hussein was responsible for the attacks," only two and three days after Cheney's insinuation, respectively. What convenient timing, fellas.

Regardless, it is the implied message of Hussein's connection to the tragedy of 9/11 which resonates with the American people. Polls indicate (9/22/03) nearly 70% of the public believe Saddam Hussein was involved in the attack on the World Trade Center and Pentagon. Why? Could it be because the administration thought this: if Americans held Hussein responsible for 9/11, then they would support a war against Hussein that the administration desperately wanted but the world was overwhelmingly against?⁶⁶

Despite the motivations of the administration, it seems evident that the public was misled through a time of war, with a vast majority of the population somehow believing in a falsity that can only reasonably be connected to their willingness to support a war against Iraq. Amidst the fury of patriotism, someone failed to promote the truth. Spreading important information is (or maybe just should be) the job of the media, yet they facilitated the implication of a connection between Hussein and 9-11, allowing a whopping 70% of the population to believe a blatant falsehood. And the citizens of the US, the check-writers for the Iraq War, apparently failed to do their homework as well, or even to question the information they received with any intensity. George Orwell once wrote, "The nationalist not only does not disapprove of atrocities committed by his own side, but he has a remarkable capacity for not even hearing about them."⁶⁷ If propaganda continues to dominate our society, we can expect more of this: a jumble of confusion, lies, misdirected hate, fear, and violence.

Beyond the media and the public, the current administration has taken steps to alter the direction of international relations and international law. They are attempting to establish "what the US calls a 'new norm' in international relations. The new norm is 'preventive war'...preventive war holds that the United States - alone, since nobody else has this right - has the right to attack any country that it claims to be a potential challenge to it."⁶⁸ Article 2(4) of the United Nations Charter, perhaps the most fundamental

underpinning of international law since WWII, notes that "All Members shall refrain in their international relations from the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any state, or in any other manner inconsistent with the Purposes of the United Nations." The doctrine of preventive war trounces this keystone of international law and international peace, to the dismay of the international community at large as well as those interested in a paradigm of peace. Instead of adherence to the UN Charter, current policies suggest that the US will attack additional defenseless enemies in the name of the War on Terror

If propaganda continues to dominate our society, we can expect more of this.

Voltaire said, "It is dangerous to be right when the government is wrong." This has perhaps never been more true from within a modern liberal democracy. Of course it could also be said that, here and now, it is similarly dangerous to be wrong when the government is wrong. Since 9-11, the US has failed utterly to address the grievances expressed by terrorists - the same grievances that have been voiced for decades. Instead, the government has inflamed the violent movement, ensuring more attacks. The general feeling from within the intelligence agencies of the US is that it is not a matter of if but when more attacks will occur. Indeed, the Bush administration's approach to anti-terrorism is a backwards one; terrorism, as the US refers to it, is a reactionary element, which exists because of military action against it or its people. It has been said many times the Iraq war has created 1,000 bin Ladens, and that it played into Osama's devious trap. Rumsfeld, in his leaked White House memo from October 16, 2003, considers this possibility: "Today, we lack metrics to know if we are winning or losing the global war on terror. Are we capturing, killing or deterring and dissuading more terrorists every day

than the madrassas and the radical clerics are recruiting, training and deploying against us?"⁶⁹ I doubt he would have to ask if the answer was yes. I am from Atlanta, Georgia, where it is commonly known that if one pours gasoline down a nest of fire ants, the original nest may be vacated, but a half dozen new ones will spring up around it. This, it seems, is the nature of terrorism as well. And, if propaganda continues to dominate our society, and we continue to fight this violent, uphill battle, terrorism will not simply fade. It will multiply.

As numerous problems linked to propaganda potentially plague our future, a search for solutions seems an urgently necessary step. I will discuss some solutions by topic, as I grouped them under chapter headings.

The Media

As Ben Bagdikian writes, "To give citizens a choice in ideas and information is to give them a choice in politics: if a nation has narrowly controlled information, it will soon have narrowly controlled politics."⁷⁰ Unfortunately, such has become the case in the US. A very small number of intertwined corporations control the vast majority of information that reaches the citizens of America. Information is increasingly regimented by numerous means discussed in this paper - importantly, the intensifying concentration of media ownership - thus impairing democracy, narrowly controlling politics.

While some might argue that this problem runs as deep as the roots of capitalism, such need not be the case, though the media ownership crisis is surely an argument against small government. Laissez faire economics, in this context, undermine

democracy. Indeed, it seems logical that if "concentration is too great it ought to be diluted."⁷¹ One solution, then, involves decentralizing media control from few owners to many. "Antitrust laws are generally applied to corporations whose market power tends to limit competition and restrain healthy trade...(and) 80 or 100 percent control (of local markets) would arouse even the most somnolent administration."⁷² In this sense, the control is again in the hands of the voters, to make media propaganda a political issue, though it is not inconceivable that some responsible Congressmen could push forward with the issue...eventually (the problem of course being that the media essentially control the public agenda).

Another solution involves attacking the support system of the media monopoly: advertising revenue. "Mass advertising is the engine that drives much of the media into giantism, toward monopoly, toward socially insignificant editorial content, and raises barriers to new media entrepreneurs. A progressive tax on advertising would reverse or slow the present self-feeding process."⁷³ However, today, the prospect of status quo systemic self-reform is not in sight.

At the root of all this and other solutions to propaganda is the public and their actions. Progressive social and political change does not happen on its own, and we cannot reasonably expect the media moguls to abdicate their thrones. As Noam Chomsky, one of the greatest activists and media scholars of the past century, writes, "The organization and self-education of groups in the community and workplace, and their networking and activism, continue to be the fundamental elements in steps toward the democratization of our social life and any meaningful social change. Only to the extent that such developments succeed can we hope to see media that are free and

independent."⁷⁴ Other major social democratic accomplishments, such as the Women's Suffrage movement, the Civil Rights movement, and the anti-war protests of the 1960's and 1970's, required extensive public commitment and sacrifice before the government caved in to their demands. But they did cave.

Education and Civil Society

Opposing propaganda here involves, at least, a major pedagogical shift. Schools teach war, but not peace. Schools expose children to

the glories of Ceasar's wars, Napoleon's wars, America's Revolutionary War, the War of 1812, the Civil War, the Panish-American War, World War I, World War II, and the global preparation for World War III. The schools masterfully (teach) them the militarists: George Washington, Robert E. Lee, U. S. Grant, Davy Crockett, Cromwell, Pershing, Churchill, Eisenhowewr, Custer, and Patton. They (study) Valley Forge, Gettysburg, Lexington and Concord, Iwo Jima, and the Alamo. If SAT scores were based on high-schoolers' knowledge of violence and war, we would have a nation of young geniuses.⁷⁵

Instead, for balance at least but more importantly for the lessons learned, kids should study - and by this I mean not merely their birth and death dates and their country of origin, but their message - the lives and teachings of "Gandhi, King, Rankin, Muste, Merton, Addams, Jesus, Dolci, Giovanni Bernadone, Ballou, Mayer, Schweitzer, Einstein, the Berrigans, Abdul Ghaffer Kahn, Nearing, Lithuli, Baez, Tolstoy, Camara, Sharp, Sandperl, Sibley, Penn, Fox, Woolman, and Pérez-Esquivel."⁷⁶ To again quote Einstein, a widely recognized phenomenon of intellect and Time's Man of the Century, "We must begin to inoculate our children against militarism by educating them in the spirit of pacifism...Our schoolbooks glorify war and conceal its horrors. They

indoctrinate children with hatred. I would teach peace rather than war, love rather than hate...Textbooks should be rewritten."⁷⁷ This could be done rather easily if the will were present: in private schools the mighty dollar speaks loudly enough, and in public schools I am sure that a student-organized campaign would make progress. Who would publicly argue that teaching peace was a bad idea?

Also, the Pledge of Allegiance should be banished, for reasons additional to its God-referencing unconstitutionality. Kids are saying the Pledge of Allegiance before they know what it means. Try asking a second grader what a republic is. This tool of propaganda has kids telling themselves that the US stands for "liberty and justice for all" and that they are to be unconditionally allegiant to the country. "The US is your team and the US is good" - every morning, 5 days a week. Most children still believe literally in Santa Clause and the Easter Bunny by the time they have the Pledge memorized. Yet this is, by and large, an uncontested element of the American education system, perhaps because patriotism is fervent across generations. Despite your political perspective, chances are that you think the US government has made at least a few very serious mistakes. So, despite your political perspective, chances are that you think that American children routinely pledge allegiance to a fallible and heavily armed institution. And, aside from that, unconditional support of any human creation seems more than a bit rash and destines its beholder to error.

Churches, a major contributor to American civil society, which has quite a religious fundamentalist culture, are a touchy issue. Thankfully, people are free to worship as they wish and to interpret their religious doctrines as they wish. However, I should make one comment on the dominant religion of the US, the religion of every

American President, perhaps with the exception of Thomas Jefferson, a Deist. That religion, of course, is Christianity. And, I think Gandhi put it best when he said, "The only people who do not think Jesus was pacifist are the Christians." Every time "God Bless America" follows a call to war in a State of the Union Address, I am, well, confused. It seems, in any case, that religion has much to offer, but it can also be used as a propagandist's weapon, which those seeking awareness of their surroundings would be wise to keep in mind.

Additionally, based simply on the action of the US government, it should come as no surprise that Americans are surrounded, more so than are other cultures, by violent communities. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. spoke, "I know that I could never again raise my voice against the violence of the oppressed in the ghettos without having first spoken clearly to the greatest purveyor of violence in the world today - my own government."⁷⁸ Our government is the clear and undisputed global superpower in one realm: war making. And, the US is the sole First World liberal democracy that continues to exercise capital punishment, sending the message that, yes, it is ok to kill sometimes. Yet Americans are surprised to see violence at home and in their backyards, carried out by the children who were once taught that the President is a hero, that the military are heroic, that violence can be acceptable. Influencing government policies, like many of the other solutions, is totally in the hands of the populace, and I will elaborate on the importance of each individual, but before change can begin, the will to act must be present. Certainly, none of these factors are wholly responsible for the state of the civil society, but they surely play a role in building, at least, the minds that will become adults.

Finally, motivating the rich and privileged global societies is a fundamental step towards diminishing the amount of violence and injustice in the world as well as towards confronting and resisting propaganda, but doing so has historically proven to be an overwhelming challenge. The rich own the vast majority of the world's resources and wealth, they control most significant decision-making mechanisms, and they are thus capable of and responsible for creating violence and injustice on a large – a global – scale. But, any world historian knows that, typically, the rich do not revolt. Often, it seems, the rich have no need or desire to revolt because they are under no direct threat and are not in the path of violence. On the contrary, they tend to be quite comfortable and resistant to change. So, the question follows, how does one motivate a privileged group, which is pivotal in the struggle against violence, to act against and challenge violence, even when that could mean challenging the governing institutions and status quo from which that group enjoys its privilege? First, it is my contention that the rich are unmotivated for three principle reasons: the comfort of their lifestyle, the social pressure which surrounds them, and the ignorance, amnesia, and apathy which characterize the privileged class in part because the governing institutions encourage these attitudes among citizens, and in part because the citizens themselves deem these attitudes acceptable. Moreover, in order to overcome these obstacles and thus begin to motivate the rich and privileged class, one must employ the following three strategies, which largely reflect previously stated goals: provide the public with the truth, educate and inform the public with directness, and ensure that all conflict which directly or indirectly engages the privileged class be nonviolent. Most importantly, it is here crucial to realize

the positive role that the privileged class could play in facilitating the rapid retreat of propaganda and its buttresses.

Emotional and Psychological Manipulation

The challenge here becomes finding methods to deal with emotions and the psyche, both of which can, it seems, produce individual and social conditions conducive to fostering a state of mind that is receptive to propaganda, and both of which may not be separable from the natural human condition. The remaining option, then, is to attempt not to eliminate the emotion and psychological processes that create the desire for revenge, as well as hatred and prejudice, but rather to work with those naturally occurring human manifestations to redirect their intense energies. That is "to be at all germane to contemporary conflict, peacebuilding must be rooted in and responsive to the experiential and subjective realities shaping people's perspectives and needs."⁷⁹

Obviously and as usual, deriving solutions for complex and persistent problems such as these presents a daunting task, but still a few possibilities come to mind. I find the following solution, which can apply equally to both emotional and psychological issues, to be, in some sense, simple and unsophisticated, but nevertheless correct. Often, such is the beauty of spiritual insight. Buddhist philosopher Thich Naht Hahn tells a story in his book Being Peace which illustrates nicely the idea that all should be responsible for themselves if they are to behave responsibly in society:

There is a story in the Pali Canon about a father and a daughter who performed in the circus. The father would place a very long bamboo stick on his forehead, and his daughter would climb to the top of the stick. When they did this, people gave them some money to buy rice and curry to eat. One day the father told the daughter, 'My dear daughter, we have

to take care of each other. You have to take care of your father, and I have to take care of you, so that we will be safe. Our performance is very dangerous.' Because if she fell, both would not be able to earn their living. If she fell, then broke her leg, they wouldn't have anything to eat. 'My daughter, we have to take care of each other so we can continue to earn our living.' The daughter was wise. She said, 'Father, you should say it this way: 'Each one of us has to take care of himself or herself, so that we can continue to earn our living.' Because during the performance, you take care of yourself only. You stay very stable, very alert. That will help me. And if when I climb I take care of myself, I climb very carefully, I do not let anything wrong happen to me. That is the way you should say it, Father. You take good care of yourself, and I take good care of myself. In that way we can continue to earn our living.'⁸⁰

It seems clear, given the individualistic and self-contained nature of the emotional and psychological problems discussed, that being very alert, very careful, and very stable are all profoundly positive means of ensuring the responsible quality of our own behavior amidst the human society.

More specifically, those seeking to transcend the dangers of propaganda will need more concrete solutions. Regarding the role of human emotion in evoking the desire for revenge, it seems that emotional preparation, which is closely tied to the Buddhist wisdom above, may offer some potential.. One can prepare one's self emotionally for the possibility of suffering to come, ensuring an understanding of just and peaceful reactions before emotions are present to warp one's perceptions and drive reason from the mind. Again, Hahn writes, "Perceiving includes our ideas or concepts about reality. When you look at a pencil, you perceive it, but the pencil itself may be different from the pencil in your mind. If you look at me, the me in myself may be different from the me you perceive."⁸¹ Pertinently, "We have to perceive our political and economic systems correctly in order to see what is going wrong. Perception is very important for our well-being, for our peace. Perception should be free from emotions and ignorance, free from

illusions."⁸² This is no easy task, particularly since, as one's perceptions change and are influenced by conflicting information, it can become difficult to know that which is most reasonable. But, it seems both inherently and experientially understandable that, given study and reflection, clarity persists. Indeed, this presumes the availability of the resources necessary for study and reflection, so, in other words, do your best, as some effort is better than none and arguably better than the status quo.

Resolving the complexities of the psyche is, as should come as no surprise, complex. As Hahn asserts, "In order to have a correct perception, we need to have a direct encounter."⁸³ First, this idea has growing prominence in America, and certainly more popularity in much of the rest of the world; travel and surround yourself with diversity if you want to understand other cultures and ways of being; study abroad to really learn about the culture(s) of your affection. Second, having a direct encounter means at least attempting to understand the grievances behind the enemy's actions or reactions. Doing so, rather than blindly perpetuating the conflict out of fear or hatred, marks a major step towards building relationships, creating reconciliation, and peacefully removing the tools of propaganda.

Also, however, Hahn's quote speaks to Jung's notion of the shadow. That is, when something ceases to become the other, then it also ceases, in large part, to be a potential recipient for projections of enemies' shadows. The implication is that, for example, if the American and Arab cultures could intertwine and encounter one another to a greater extent - and build relationships - then unsubstantiated claims and name-calling would diminish, thereby reducing the impulse to prolong or even continue conflict. In such a case, the ignorance and fear exhibited by many Americans would be

reduced, lessening the likelihood of war. While this suggestion is too late for the Iraq War of 2003, the same applies for other cultures and potential conflicts of the future. The momentum of globalization, in this instance, offers great hope, but one must hope, and, perhaps, fight like hell to ensure that, globalization creates a productive bond between Earth's cultures before the existing conflicts do irreparable damage, however one wants to define that. Additionally, people can psychologically prepare themselves in much the same way that they can emotionally prepare. The simple awareness of the existence of one's shadow and the effects of its projection onto others may help to limit the detriment to the peace process that the collective shadow reserves in its looming potential.

* * *

I originally wanted to conclude this paper on a positive note, focusing on various reasons for hope and the imaginable heights of human progress. However as I compiled my research and thought realistically about its message, I eventually felt less able to honestly arrive at such an end - a confidently positive note.

On the one hand there are some legitimate and extremely important reasons for hope. While the post-modern challenges of combating propaganda are no less than monumental in both depth and scope, we are not left without solutions. The systemic problems of media propaganda and of education and civil society have clear solutions but first require the domestic population to develop the desire and the will to struggle for them. The answers to the problems of human emotion and the human psyche are in the problems themselves: they are of humans - the problems have human roots. Yet, through tragic irony of the stranger-than-fiction type, the difficulties that we

face at this stage are not only within us, but are also requirements of social performance upon which our survival may depend.

Moreover, civilization may be acquiring more destructive potential, but it is also becoming, in the long term, more free and democratic. This phenomenon is in line with Hegel's dialectic, which asserts that society will in fact gravitate towards increased freedom through strings of conflicts and resolutions. Largely missing from this disconcerting account of propaganda is the long list of successful struggles against tyranny and oppression. Just think of the societies of 1904, or 1804. In the long run, it seems clear that the momentum of freedom is strong and stubborn. Most recently the peace protests against the Bush administration's war effort in Iraq set a new precedent. Unlike the quite effective protests of the Vietnam era, these protests brought millions into the streets before the war even began. Even through the fog of propaganda the calls for peace were loud and clear and sent the message that the populations of the US and the rest of the world will not stand for such acts of aggression. Civilization, from one perspective, seemed to be on the right track. Sort of.

But the populations of the US and the rest of the world did not have to stand long for the acts of aggression. The newest type of warfare saw fast results and rapid destruction. This type of warfare is, in fact, too fast to mount an effective resistance to it if the resistance starts anew with each conflict. The Iraq War of 2003, part of the larger "war to save civilization itself," as Bush puts it, was not heartening for those hoping for a lasting peace and universal freedom.⁸⁴ It exhibited without question that propaganda is prevailing; the peace movement, at least with regard to the isolated incident at hand,

failed in 2003 and the US military invaded Iraq, supported by the government and a large majority of the public. Very few Americans actively resisted.

Established media and government mechanisms of opinion containment continue to flourish despite some challenge from below and the exposure of innumerable scandals, lies, cover-ups, and media failings. Mainstream American political dissent seems to revolve around the notion that, by and large, our problems can be corrected in the November election. The result is not only the maintenance but the entrenchment of the structure of disinformation.

Indeed, in the long-term history seems to bring greater freedom, for some anyway. But meanwhile the twentieth century was by far the bloodiest and most gruesome to date. And where control by force has faded, it has been superseded by control by propagandizing. The nature of freedom has surely morphed, but perhaps freedom has not spread as far and deeply as we like to imagine.

Personally, I find solace in observing the gradual - yes slow, but at least not stagnant - progression of Hegel's dialectic. Serfs and servants replaced slaves, and workers replaced serfs and servants. Previously repressed groups such as women and non-whites have acquired at least official equality with the rest of the American population. Tolerance is more fashionable and expected today than it was a generation ago. These changes are certainly not wholly inconsequential. Freedom seems to prevail slowly but surely.

Today however, we are living in a time when the continuation of that progression is uncertain. The most powerful leaders and governments of the world have played a role in drastically widening the rich-poor gap during the past few decades, and new weapons

technology presents new threats to a vast portion of the Earth's population. The disgusting working conditions that we could not tolerate within our borders have now been shipped offshore, where they are financially supported by consumer spending. And the corporate influence over American politics now seems to increasingly threaten some of the most basic and most important social reforms and safety nets in place in the US: healthcare, social security, public education, environmental protection, and so on, thus diminishing the level of unofficial freedom (perhaps the only type with practical value) naturally allotted to huge sectors of the population. So, while freedom in America has increased in the long term, the nature of freedom has changed to such an extent that we must consider what should be the new standard. Our freedom of information is threatened, our freedom to choose and act is inhibited when information is distorted or manipulated, and so one must worry for the true and practical degree of freedom for the American civilian in our short-term circumstance.

Thus, now seems an appropriately urgent time to remember that the Hegelian dialectic is not an automatic or predetermined function. It is very largely based on the actions of groups and individuals who struggled and sacrificed during their lifetime to protect and ensure heightened levels of freedom for future generations. We cannot sit back as benign observers and expect the dialectic to occur on its own; we can try to help it along, or not. To do so, or not, is wholly our choice given basic knowledge and an awareness of American society. Throughout history, the brave and self-confident pursuers of at least one type of freedom have embraced their opportunity to help those in need and to invigorate that freedom in a genuine sense and create positive change.

However, far more have acted to preserve the status quo, by active participation, apathetic acquiescence, or something in between.

The effect of this is very real and too often overlooked, ignored as trite, old news, or never recognized at all. Real people are suffering and dying; whether the cause is a lack of adequate nutrition and healthcare or whether they are shot to death or blown up by US weapons, many of these human beings are suffering and dying because of policies that we are involved in and over which we can have an effect. And, the media and other facets of disinformation are, for whatever reason, essentially ensuring that we, as Americans, do not act to change these policies.

Bush says "we wage war to save civilization itself." But this civilization seems neither civil nor worthy of preservation in its current, specific form. We need change - drastic change, the kind that will not follow (in any foreseeable sense) from a Presidential election or from passive discontent alone. The dissemination of a new kind of information - a type that prioritizes the many over the money, the people over the profits, and the communities over the corporations - requires first raising awareness of the mechanisms of disinformation and, far more importantly, a willingness of a great many to sacrifice, to work, to act. Support must be withdrawn from institutions of disinformation and placed instead behind systems of fairer education. Only then can we more honestly begin to have confident hope in the future of freedom.

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This has been an interesting, exciting, and appropriate time to compile such a work of thoughts and observations about this topic. Of the many issues that are of constant importance and interest to those so inclined to politics, the issue of propaganda seems most relevant to this period. It is after all the crux on which hinge most other issues in the contemporary political realm. And, a history of propaganda is being written in this age of technology, communication, individualism, militarism, and corporate dominance. The Bush 43 administration and today's media corporations have performed masterfully with respect to population control and manipulation, not in wholly new ways or for wholly new reasons than did previous sets, but perhaps with a greater focus, a heightened consciousness of its role, and an awesome ability to use propaganda as a political tool. For this reason, I have found this project to be quite difficult to conclude. It seems almost unfair to stop here, in the middle of the storm. (And to be honest, this project may never truly end...)

At the same time, though, despite the frustration of concluding this essay prematurely, and despite the sadness and disappointment that comes with watching propaganda become an ever more looming threat, the last year or so has likely done more to strengthen the argument that this essay forwards, and provide information on its behalf, than I could ever have done beforehand. That is, in some way, this era is an affirmation of the assertions that I am setting forth.

Inside of two years the propaganda model was illustrated with remarkable concision and clarity. The Bush 43 administration made assertions as to the connection between Iraq and Al-Qaeda as an excuse to invade Iraq. The mainstream media parroted the assertions of the administration without sufficient concern for accuracy in reporting

what turned out to be lies. That is, with the help of the media, the Bush administration convinced a clear majority of the population that Iraq had ties to Al-Qaeda; in February of 2003, 76 percent of Americans believed that Saddam Hussein and Al-Qaeda had links.⁸⁵ Then, a little more than a year later, the 9-11 Commission found that no link existed.⁸⁶ But, as usual, the damage was already done. This makes the task of proving the existence of the propaganda model much easier.

Propaganda is alive and well in America. There is no doubt about that, but the socio-political climate seems to be undergoing a period of drastic shifts. While the Bush administration is taking the country in one direction, it has also sparked a culture of dissent and distrust of traditional sources of information. Books, documentary films, music, websites, and other sources of information and expression (this essay among them) have emerged in opposition to current policies and lies. However, whether this new movement will have any profound, democratizing effect on the institution of propaganda in America is yet to be seen. The coming years could be pivotal as to the future of propaganda and the ultimate consequences will surely depend on our collective awareness and action. As Edmund Burke once wisely noted, “All that is required for evil to triumph is for good men to do nothing.”⁸⁷ The words may have never been so true.

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