**The Propaganda Model from *Manufacturing Consent*:
Inconsistent and Outdated**

By Michael Read, M.A.

A thesis submitted to
the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research
in partial fulfillment of
the requirements for the degree of
Master of Arts

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Abstract

Through examination of the individual filters of the propaganda model, the examination of the effect of Internet journalism on the mass media, the acts of owners, and an examination of the foundations of the American regime, this research will show that the propaganda model of *Manufacturing Consent* is no longer relevant in examining the structure of the mass media.

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Chapter 1 – Introduction

The mass media has a unique place in Western civilization. The mass media in general and the news media, or free press, specifically is the only for-profit industry that is accorded constitutional protection from legislative restrictions. In fact, Sir Winston Churchill referred to the free press as the enemy of tyranny.¹ The freedom of the press is considered both a necessary and sufficient ingredient a democracy. With such importance in mind, the operation and the organization of the free press and how it affects society becomes an important area of study for political science. One such attempt to explain the relationship between the press and the news is the propaganda model as presented in Edward S. Herman and Noam Chomsky's *Manufacturing Consent: The Political Economy of the Mass Media*. This thesis will explain the propaganda model and show it to be an ineffective model to illustrate the relationship between the media and news as it has been overtaken by events and outdated by technology.

¹ Hume, James C., ed; 1995; *The Wit and Wisdom of Winston Churchill* (New York, NY: Harper Perennial) P. 76

It should be noted that not all of Churchill's comments regarding the press were as praiseworthy.

How is the free press protected? The simple answer is that the protections for the free press come from a state's constitution. A brief comparison of the protection of the press in Canada and the United States, the scope of this thesis, will show that the level of protection varies from jurisdiction to jurisdiction. In the *Constitution of the United States of America*, the first amendment formally provides absolute protection of freedom of the press by stating the following:

*Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the People peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances.*² (Emphasis added)

A quick survey of jurisprudence regarding the first amendment will show limitations on a right that is, at least on paper, absolute. As the old cliché goes, you cannot yell fire in a crowded theatre, you cannot print or broadcast information that you know to be false. Protection for the press in Canada is slightly different, and by no means absolute. *The Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*, part of the *Constitution Act of 1982*, defines protection of as:

Section 2. Everyone has the following fundamental freedoms:
 (b) freedom of thought, belief, opinion and expression, including *freedom of the press and other media of communication*,³ (emphasis added)

The protection created by s.2 is limited by s.1, which reads:

Section 1. The *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* guarantees the rights and freedoms set out in it subject to only to such reasonable limits prescribed by law as can be demonstrably justified in a free and democratic society.⁴

² "Appendix: Constitution of the United States of America" Pp. 555 – 573 in Nichols, Mary P. & Nichols, David K., eds.; 1996; *Readings in American Government*, 5th Edition (Dubuque, IA: Kendall/Hunt Publishing) P. 565

³ "Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms" Part I, ss. 1 – 34 in *Constitution Act, 1982*, s.2

⁴ *Ibid*, s.1

Regardless of the relative limits of any one country's protection of the press, the fact remains that the press, the mass media, is the only for-profit industry given the highest legal protection from government intervention that a state can provide.

Noam Chomsky is a Professor of Linguistics and Philosophy and Institute Professor at Massachusetts Institute of Technology. He has received honorary degrees from several universities, including the University of London, the University of Chicago, and Delhi University. Chomsky is a Fellow of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, a Member of the National Academy of Arts and Sciences and the National Academy.⁵ He is a frequent guest lecturer at university functions - he even lectured at the University of New Brunswick in 1996.

Chomsky is also the author of several books and articles on linguistics, philosophy, intellectual history, and contemporary issues. Several books have been written on Chomsky's work in the field of linguistics.⁶ Chomsky established his academic reputation through challenging the behaviourist ideas on grammar and language. Chomsky argued that fundamental grammar is innate and cannot be taught.⁷ Chomsky's work in contemporary issues includes *Turning the Tide*, about the United States and Latin America; *The Culture of Terrorism*, about the United States as a sponsor of terrorism in Latin America; *Pirates and Emperors: International Terrorism and the Real World*, about the content of mass media and how it socially constructs terrorism; and, most recently, *A Life of Dissent*, his autobiography. Including the work under

⁵ Chomsky; 1987; from the back cover

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Cogswell; 1996; Pp. 58 – 68

examination in this thesis, *Manufacturing Consent*, that is only five books out over seven hundred examples of Chomsky's work.⁸

Noam Chomsky has considerable influence among the political left, particularly in the universities and the media. He gained early political recognition as an activist in his academic career at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) as result of his anti-Viet-Nam war protests. He was one of the first faculty members at the institute, a major recipient of research grants from the United States Department of Defense, to publicly protest the war in Viet Nam. Chomsky's anti-Vietnam activism earned him a place on Richard Nixon's infamous "Enemies List".⁹ *Manufacturing Consent*, Chomsky's look at how the mass media controls thought in such a way as to promote the continued existence of the American regime, was adapted into a documentary film series by Canada's National Film Board. David Cogswell's *Chomsky For Beginners* cites a Chicago Tribune survey rating Chomsky as "'the most cited living author' adding that among intellectual luminaries of all eras, he ranks eighth, just behind Plato and Sigmund Freud."¹⁰ However, Richard Posner's recent study of the decline of the institution of the public intellectual ranks Chomsky near the bottom of a list of the top one hundred intellectuals of the 1990s.¹¹ Despite an apparent decline in the last decade, non-academics, particularly celebrity activists, who are more likely to reach a larger audience than mainstream academics, also often cite Chomsky.

Available biographical information on Edward S. Herman is more limited. It is not that one author is necessarily more influential than the other, but that most work in

⁸ Achbar, Mark; Wintonick, Peter; 1992; *Manufacturing Consent: Noam Chomsky and the Media* (Montreal: Necessary Illusions Productions and the National Film Board of Canada) from the video cover

⁹ Achbar; Wintonick; 1992; 00:18:46

¹⁰ Cogswell, David; 1996; *Chomsky for Beginners* (London: Writers and Readers Publishing), P.1

¹¹ Brooks; 2002; P.9

regards to the propaganda model such as the National Film Board documentary concentrate almost completely on Chomsky.¹² Herman is Professor Emeritus of Finance at the Wharton School of the University of Pennsylvania. He is an economist and media analyst with a specialty in corporate and regularity issues as well as political economy and the media. Along with several collaborations with Chomsky and frequent articles for *Z Magazine*, Edward S. Herman is the author of several books including *Corporate Power, Corporate Control* (1981); *Demonstration Elections* (1984); *The Real Terror Network* (1982); *The Myth of the Liberal Media: An Edward Herman Reader* (1999).¹³

The purpose of the *Manufacturing Consent* is to sketch out a “propaganda model” and apply it to the performance of the mass media in the United States. The effort reflects Chomsky and Herman’s belief, based on their many years of study of the workings of the media, that they, the mass media, serve to mobilize support for the special interests that dominate the state and private activity, and that their choices, emphases, and omissions by analyzing them in such terms.¹⁴ On its own, though, such a thesis is inherently relativistic. What are “special interests” – pharmaceutical companies, human rights organizations? Does the mobilization start in the press and work its way up or down? As it stands, two academics of opposing views could use the same thesis to prove different things. It is as if *Manufacturing Consent* begins on the verge of logical fallacy akin to the proverbial “chicken or the egg” argument. In this case, which came first, the interests or the support? Such a thesis needs a methodology to construct arguments that do not trap it in reflexivity.

¹² Edward Herman appears Achbar; Wontonick; 1992; for approximately 45 seconds.

¹³ “Edward Herman’s Z Net Home Page” *Z Magazine.com*
<http://www.zmag.org/bios/homepage.cfm?authorID=72>

¹⁴ Chomsky, Hermann; 1988; *Manufacturing Consent: the Political Economy of the Mass Media* (New York: Pantheon Books) P. 1

In Chomsky's studies of the media, he uses a methodology that has been known to combine scientific objectivity with common sense simplicity. Chomsky takes two examples of atrocities, one caused by enemies of the United States and the other caused by the United States or one of its allies, and compares amount of news coverage in the *New York Times*, or another leading paper, by the column inches.¹⁵ In the National Film Board documentary *Manufacturing Consent*, Chomsky uses the *New York Times* coverage of the Indonesian invasion of East Timor, the act of an American ally, and their coverage of Pol Pot's Cambodia, an act of a Soviet ally. By measuring the coverage in column inches, Chomsky shows that between 1975 and 1979 the *New York Times* devoted 1,175 column inches to articles on the topic of "Cambodia" but only 79 column inches on the topic of "Timor".¹⁶ To Chomsky, the discrepancy in the literal length of newspaper coverage between East Timor and Cambodia is evidence of his and Herman's thesis.

In the documentary *Manufacturing Consent*, Chomsky admits that arguing through example is not an adequate system for an analysis of the institution of the media. History simply does not provide enough examples that are similar enough in scope to provide a causal link between lack of coverage of an event and the institution of the mass media organized to suppress news of the event.¹⁷

This lack of a sufficient quantity of historical examples is the reason for the propaganda model, to systematically examine the institution of the mass media, itself, rather than just paired examples of news coverage. The propaganda model states that very little raw news actually reaches the mass public. The propaganda model states that

¹⁵ Achbar, Wintonick; 1992; 00:53:57

¹⁶ Ibid; 1:05:15

¹⁷ Ibid; 1:07:32

the mass media is organized as institution so that raw news must pass through five filters: (1) size, ownership, and profit orientation of the mass media; (2) advertising as the primary income source of the mass media; (3) the reliance of the media on information provided by government, business, and “experts” funded and approved by these primary sources and agents of power; (4) “flak” as a means of disciplining the media; (5) “anticommunism” as a national religion and control mechanism.¹⁸

Before discussing the five filters one issue must be set aside, that of the “conspiracy theory”. Due in part to past anti-government activism, Chomsky’s work in *Manufacturing Consent*, even the name alone, seems to suggest, in the words of Tom Wolfe: “a world of beige board tables, in smoky rooms with men in gray suits and no faces.”¹⁹ Chomsky anticipates this criticism and states that his examination of the media is based on a “free market analysis” of the institution of the media, with the results largely an outcome of the workings of market forces.²⁰ To Chomsky, it is not a conspiracy if it is the normal way of arranging affairs.

The five filters of the propaganda model serves to create “concision”. Concision is the name the news media professionals give to a bare minimum in order to make it fit within the format of “news”. The idea that all news has to fit into this kind of format is an unquestioned assumption. It is a format that was established in the early days of television. It is structured around “commercial breaks” every few minutes as required by sponsors who pay for the programming. The principle of concision assures that only

¹⁸ Chomsky, Herman; 1988; Pp. 1&2

¹⁹ Tom Wolfe on PBS’ *World of Ideas with Bill Moyers* documented in Akbar, Wintonick, 1991; *Manufacturing Consent: Noam Chomsky and the Media, Part One: Thought Control in a Democratic Society* (Montreal: Necessary Illusions, National Film Board) 00:27:35

²⁰ Chomsky, Herman; 1988, P. xii

conventional ideas will pass through the media filter because ideas that everyone knows by heart require no support.²¹

The first filter is the size, ownership, and profit orientation of the mass media. In the United States there are over 25, 000 organs of the mass media. This number includes all the television stations, radio stations, movie studios, newspapers, magazines, and book publishers. When Chomsky and Herman published *Manufacturing Consent* in 1988, fifty corporations controlled most of the major media outlets in the United States. To establish a presence in the media in competition with the largest corporations traditionally requires a financial commitment that few can afford. The concentration of ownership of the mass media and the size of the media itself has the effect of shutting off access to the media to all but the wealthy.²²

The second filter is advertising, the license to do business. For most of the traditional media, the business of the mass media is the business of advertising. Advertising revenues account for the profits in the mediums of basic television, radio, newspapers, and magazines. Advertising revenues allow the products of these media to be sold at a price below the cost of production. The more a medium is subsidized by advertising revenue, the more it can compete with other medium. With the mass media dependent on advertising revenues, the mass media becomes more accountable to the advertiser than the consumer. Advertisers like to advertise in affluent media that cater to the interests of the wealthy because the wealthy have more money to spend. This puts any medium that wishes to cater to the interests of the working class at an immediate disadvantage. Advertisers will also not support any media that does not support them. If

²¹ Cogswell; 1996; P. 98

²² Chomsky, Herman; 1988; Pp. 3-14

a particular medium, whether it is an alternative newspaper or a television program, has the potential to turn away consumers, the advertisers will withdraw support. Without the financial support of advertising, the medium will not be able to afford to stay in business. To Chomsky, the dependence on advertising to subsidize the cost of production directly translates in media loyalty to the advertiser, not the consumer.²³

“Sourcing”, where the news comes from, reliance on information provided by government, business, and various “experts”, is the third filter. This filter is based on the idea that in order to fill their daily quotas for news material, the news media need steady reliable sources of news information. Reporters cannot be everywhere at once waiting for news stories to break so they concentrate their workday activities in places where news breaks routinely. These are places ranging from the White House, to Congress, to the Pentagon, to the New York Stock Exchange, to the local city hall, to the local police department. Business leaders are also credible sources for news stories. Most government departments have information agencies that supply the media with news. Information from these sources does not have to be checked or backed up; it is deemed credible by virtue of whom it comes from. It is partly a matter of cost, taking information from sources that may be presumed credible reduces investigative expense, whereas material from sources that are not *prima facie* credible, or that will elicit criticism and threats, requires careful checking and costly research. Corporations also sponsor third-party “experts” through the funding of think tanks.²⁴

“Flak” is the fourth filter of the propaganda model. “Flak” refers to negative responses to a media statement or program. It may take the form of letters, telegrams,

²³ Ibid; Pp. 14 - 18

²⁴ Ibid, Pp. 18 - 25

phone calls, petitions, lawsuits, speeches and bills before Congress, and other modes of complaint, threat, and punitive action. The powerful can fund think tanks and monitoring operations that attack the media or funding political campaigns of candidates who support their policies and will take a hard line toward media deviation from the corporate agenda.²⁵

“Anticommunism” is the fifth filter of the propaganda model. Before the fall of the Soviet Union in 1988, communism gave the population an enemy against which to mobilize. Communism as the ultimate evil has always been the specter haunting property owner, as it threatens the very root of their class position and superior status. “Anticommunism” is both an ideology and religion. It allows the news world to be dichotomized into a world of Communist and anti-Communist powers and rooting for “our side” to be considered an entirely legitimate news practice.²⁶

Obviously with the break up of the Soviet Union and the dismantlement of the Soviet empire in Eastern Europe, “anticommunism” is no longer the filter it used to be. After the breakup of the Soviet Union, there was some confusion about who or what would replace Communism as the enemy to rally the people against. At first some believed that the new enemy would be Saddam Hussein and he served the purpose, albeit for only a short period. The decisive victory of the Gulf War, though, lead the mainstream media to portray Hussein as a recurring international nuisance, a regional problem rather than a permanent threat to international peace and security. Chomsky believes that the more reliable and malleable image for the media has been that of Islamic

²⁵ Chomsky, Herman; 1988; Pp. 26 - 28

²⁶ Ibid. Pp 29 - 30

fundamentalists, Muslims, or Middle Easterners in general, who are portrayed as rabid extremists and terrorists as a general cultural trait.²⁷

Before continuing, this author would like to note the following regarding the methodology of this thesis. While this thesis is being written, an act of mass murder on an unprecedented scale occurred September 11, 2001, when alleged operatives of Osama bin Laden's Al Qaeda terrorist network hijacked four airplanes and flew two into the North and South Towers of the World Trade Centre in New York City, a third into the Pentagon in Washington, DC, and fourth crashed into a field in rural Pennsylvania after passengers apparently overpowered their hijackers and possibly prevented another deliberate crash into a public or government building. Investigations of the attack of September 11, 2001 (often stated as 911 in newspaper shorthand) have lead the United States government to declare war on terrorism and those states that support it. Currently, the United States is bombing Afghanistan. Recent appearances of anthrax at media outlets; including American Media, NBC, and ABC; and political offices; including those of the Senate of Canada, the Chancellor of Germany, and the United States Senate Majority Leader; seem to suggest that it is larger than a single organization or the organization in question is larger than it seemed. The relationship between these events and this thesis is as follows. This war has already been characterized as fundamentally different from the previous war, Operation: Desert Storm, in both its scope and coverage. Since Chomsky's arguments in *Manufacturing Consent* were published before Operation: Desert Storm and have not been updated since, any arguments using coverage of war since the publication of *Manufacturing Consent* will concentrate on the most recent war,

²⁷ Cogswell, 1996; P. 97

Operation: Desert Storm, rather than the current war, Operation: Enduring Freedom, unless something specific from the current war is relevant.

This thesis will examine the propaganda model and its application on the performance of the mass media from *Manufacturing Consent* in light of Chomsky's belief that the mass media serve to mobilize support for the special interests that dominate the state and private activity and that their choices, emphases, and omissions can often be understood best, and sometimes with striking clarity and insight, by analyzing them in such terms. This examination will be conducted in four parts. First, the methodology of the propaganda model and its application will be examined thoroughly. This will entail examining the individual filters on both their individual and collective merit as well as the effects of the propaganda model's application on the evidence in the arguments. Second, the propaganda model will be further examined in the light of the development of new media, the World Wide Web in particular, and how such developments have, or have not, changed the mass media. Third, the overt actions and statements of media owners in relation to the editorial direction of their businesses will be examined with the idea in mind that the relationship between ownership and content is not as subtle as *Manufacturing Consent* suggests. Fourth, another theoretical model will be suggested regarding the organization of the mass media using the Madisonian "interests vs. interest" model of organization that is the core organizing principle of the United States government, which transcends government into society in the form of special interests groups. Fifth, the findings of the previous chapters will be synthesized and conclusions shall be made. Ultimately, *Manufacturing Consent* presents a model that is inadequate to begin with and is further outdated by new media.

Chapter 2 – The Propaganda Model: The Sum of its Parts?

This chapter will examine the five filters that constitute the propaganda model. *Manufacturing Consent* argues that these five filters have the effect on information of concision and dichotomization into news. This chapter will examine the individual filters and their contribution to the model as a whole and argue that the five filters are inadequate to explain the way news is presented to the public.

The methodology of *Manufacturing Consent* presents the reader with a major conundrum. The first chapter establishes the five filters of the propaganda model. The last chapter concludes that the model exists. The middle chapters show the effects of concision and dichotomization apparently caused by the model with titles such as “Worthy and Unworthy Victims”²⁸ and “Legitimizing versus Meaningless Third World Elections: El Salvador, Guatemala, and Nicaragua”²⁹. At no point, though, does *Manufacturing Consent* demonstrate the causal relationship between the five filters, collectively or individually, and the content of the news discussed within the text. The

²⁸ Chomsky, Herman, 1988; P. 37

²⁹ Ibid, P. 87

reader is given a cause in the propaganda model and an effect in concision and dichotomization of what constitutes news, but there is no demonstrable relationship between this cause and this effect.

Notwithstanding the lack of cause and effect between the propaganda model and the news, there must be some intellectual attraction to the propaganda model as it is quite popular among academia thirteen years after its original publication. This author postulates that the attraction may be to filters themselves rather than the model as a whole. As such, the individual filters need to be examined as to their effects on the mass media.

As stated in the introduction the first filter is the size, ownership, and profit orientation of the mass media. *Manufacturing Consent* argues that the most dominant media companies are quite large businesses that are controlled by wealthy people or managers who are subject to sharp constraints by owners and other market-profit-oriented forces; and they are closely interlocked, and have important common interests, with other major corporations, banks, and government.³⁰ In short, the fact that the mass media is a “for profit” industry will affect news choices.

Manufacturing Consent argues that only a small number companies, twenty-four companies, make up the ownership of the mass media.³¹ It further argues that the primary affiliation of the directors of ten large media companies, or their parent company, is disproportionately that of corporate executive. Slightly more than forty-one percent of the outside directors of the ten large media companies – Dow Jones & Co.;

³⁰ Chomsky, Herman; 1988; P. 14

³¹ Ibid, P. 10

Washington Post; New York Times, Inc.; CBS; Times-Mirror; Capital Cities; General Electric; Gannet; and Knight-Ridder – are classified as “corporate executive”.³²

These arguments are somewhat nebulous. In a current dialogue, or spat, with Chomsky over the nature of Operation: Enduring Freedom on the website for the magazine *The Nation*, regular contributor Christopher Hitchens states, “I cannot remember a time when the press was not owned by the rich”.³³ In fact, since the invention of the printing press, the media has always been in the hands of a rich elite. Whether it was the church or the state, itself, it was not until mid-eighteenth century when private citizens, albeit wealthy private citizens, had the opportunity to take part in the media, making the printing press an instrument of print capitalism and enabling the media to become a mass phenomenon. Even the labour press in England, the demise of which despite having a heavy readership is recurrent theme in the first chapter, was controlled by labour organizations that had membership dues as revenue to cover the cost of production until said costs escalated beyond what its members could subsidize. One item that is included on the chart illustrating the proportion of outside directors but does not figure into the arguments is the proportion of outside directors that belong to the classification of “non-profit organization”. According to *Manufacturing Consent*, non-profit organizations constitute 15.8% of the primary affiliation of outside directors of the ten large media corporations or their parent corporations surveyed.³⁴ That is the second highest representation of a designated group in the ten companies surveyed. For reasons unexplained, though, the effect of the presence of non-profit organizations on the board of directors of the major media companies is not examined.

³² Chomsky, Herman, 1988, P. 11

³³ Hitchens; 2001; P. 1

³⁴ Chomsky, Herman; 1988; P. 11

Another issue with the arguments of *Manufacturing Consent* in regards to this filter is that it focuses on ownership rather than venue. For example, since the original publication of *Manufacturing Consent*, there has been major consolidation of the mass media. In the United States since the publication of *Manufacturing Consent*, cable giant Turner Broadcasting, an insignificant player according to the 1988 text³⁵; was purchased by Time Warner, which was later merged with Internet service provider America Online. Walt Disney Corporation purchased American Broadcasting Corporation. Viacom purchased CBS from White-Westinghouse. In Canada, the largest regional telephone company in the country, Bell Canada, purchased a controlling interest in CTV, the Thomson newspaper chain that includes the national newspaper *The Globe and Mail*, and Expressvu direct-to-home satellite service. At the same time, CanWest Broadcasting purchased several independent television stations to expand their regional television network, *Global*, into a true national television network; the Southam/Hollinger newspaper chain that included the other national Canadian newspaper, *The National Post*; and the Internet portal *Canada.com*.

The aforementioned examples point to two simultaneous, yet opposing, phenomena: the consolidation of ownership and the multiplication of venue. With the “larger”³⁶ corporations, some of which are not even in the media business, buying up the “smaller” corporations, the number of individuals who effectively control the media is shrinking. At the same time, the number of media enterprises over which they have

³⁵ Chomsky, Herman; 1988; P. 6

³⁶ In this case of recent media mergers, “larger” is often a confusing term. America Online bought Time-Warner, not because it was the larger, at least how we traditionally define larger, firm of the two. Time-Warner was larger in the area of profits, assets (including subsidiaries), and number of employees. America Online, though, had a higher market capitalization, or share value. Therefore, for the purposes of a merger of two publicly traded corporations which, as a business transaction, is completed by shareholders selling their shares in one company to the other, the company with the higher market capitalization, America Online, bought the one with the company with the lower market capitalization, Time-Warner.

effective control has grown exponentially. Using the aforementioned AOL/Time-Warner example, the board of AOL/Time-Warner is responsible for the following companies: America Online (Internet service provider); Road Runner (broadband cable internet provider); Netscape Communications (software developer specializing in web browsers); Time Magazine; Little, Brown, and company (publisher); DC Comics (comic book company famous for its various titles featuring Superman and Batman, among others) Warner Bros. Pictures (movie studio); New Line Cinema (smaller movie studio); Fine Line Films (even smaller movie studio specializing in “independent” films); The Warner Bros. Studio Store (retail chain which sells Warner Bros., WB, and DC Comics themed merchandise); WB (national TV network, the fifth largest); Time-Warner Communications (cable provider); CNN/US (cable news network); CNN Headline News (cable news headlines); CNN *Sports Illustrated* (sports news); CNN money (business news); CNN International (emphasizes international news); CNN Airport Network (special version broadcast by satellite to airports); CNN Radio Network; TBS Superstation (cable superstation), Turner Network Television (smaller cable superstation), Home Box Office (premium cable specialty cable channel), Cinemax (smaller premium cable specialty cable channel), Turner Classic Movies (basic cable channel which exclusively shows older films), and Moviefone (1-800 and internet business that gives movie show times and allows customers to purchase tickets on the phone and online).³⁷ This is but a mere executive summary of the companies that comprise AOL/Time-Warner. Missing are the various CNN websites that the main

³⁷ AOL TimeWarner; 2001; “About Us” *AOL Time Warner.com*
<http://www.aoltimewarner.com/about/index.html> (last update: 8/07/01)

corporation lists as different corporate entities, as well as the non-English language/overseas enterprises.

Some of these businesses even compete between themselves. Towards the end of 2001, Warner Bros. will have released *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone*³⁸, the first of a planned seven film adaptations of JK Rowling's Harry Potter novels, on November 16th and New Line Cinema will have released *The Fellowship of the Ring*, the first of a series of film adaptations of JRR Tolkien's *Lord of the Rings* trilogy, on December 19th. While these films will have been released four weeks apart, the argument is that if the first film turns out, as suggested by sales of the original novels, to be quite popular, ticket sales for the first film in its fifth week may harm ticket sales of the second film in its first week. Since the individual studios paid in excess of two hundred million dollars for just the film rights for both properties, once distribution and marketing costs are factored, Warner Bros. and New Line Cinema could have two hit films, but AOL/Time-Warner could have one net loss. In the holiday season of 1992, Walt Disney Studios released *Cutthroat Island* on the same weekend as Disney subsidiary Touchstone Pictures released *The Ref*. The latter made a twenty million dollar profit. The former was a one hundred million dollar loss.

There is internal competition in the news media, as well. CNN/US broadcasts twenty-four hours a day and so does its offshoots. NBC also has two cable news networks, CNBC (a financial news network) and MSNBC (a joint venture with Microsoft). These two cable news networks compete against each other and the nightly news cast on the main network. The concept of internal competition is a concept that *Manufacturing Consent* fails to examine in worthwhile manner. It is enough that the

³⁸ Canadian and European title, released as *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone* in the United States.

companies get bigger and the bosses get smaller to call ownership and profit a filter in the propaganda model.

Is small ownership of large media corporations a problem? This author concedes the fact that the fewer the hands that control the mass media, the more problematic it could be. On the other hand, as the ownership shrinks the avenues of the media are multiplying, these two seemingly conflicting phenomena simply cannot be examined in isolation of each other. Since *Manufacturing Consent* was written in age before mega-mergers, when cable broadcasters were only of “growing importance”³⁹, and one could be forgiven for writing a book about the mass media without the appearance of the words “Internet” and “World Wide Web”, it can avoid such an examination. Unfortunately, the avoidance of said examination makes it tragically out of date.

How can a board the size of the board of pre-merger AOL, or even a larger post-merger board with Time-Warner executives included, maintain effective control over so many businesses, some of which are in direct competition? Simply, it cannot. Authority is delegated to presidents, vice-presidents, assistant vice-presidents and division heads. So far as subsidiaries generate revenue and profit, the boards allow executives to operate with a great deal of autonomy. The modern media corporation is essentially too large and too diversified for an elite to maintain effective day-to-day control.

Is this to say that the ownership of the media remain aloof to the day-to-day operations of their corporations? No, the history of the twentieth century is replete with examples of owners of media corporations who very openly push forward their own agenda. Regardless of whether it is William Randolph Hearst or Ted Turner, owners have used their businesses to put their corporate interests on the public agenda. A

³⁹ Chomsky, Hermann; 1988; P. 5

subsequent chapter will discuss this point in more detail, but, for the purposes of this chapter, the history of owners using their media conglomerates for their personal end shows them to do so in such a public way that it further contradicts the propaganda model which argues that this is a very subtle, structural process based on corporate structures and elite domination rather than owners using their businesses as the veritable soapbox or bully pulpit.

Manufacturing Consent makes an odd case for its second filter, advertising. Advertising provides the mass media with an internal subsidy, funds to cover the cost of production in order to deliver the programming or newspaper to the public at little to no cost. For the most part, the mass media generates its profits from advertising revenues, with cover prices and subscription fees meant to cover the distribution costs. This leaves one to wonder why advertising is a filter unto itself as opposed to a component of the first filter. The case for advertising as a filter could be as simple as news organizations in the corporate media are loathe to do critical stories that are critical of the corporations that sponsor their programs or could harm them financially, but only does this in a roundabout way. *Manufacturing Consent* makes the case that the corporate media is not “democratic” because programmers gear their schedules to audiences that will attract advertisers of products that are targeted towards affluent consumers.⁴⁰ *Manufacturing Consent* does not specify if this refers to programming for primetime, daytime, or both. It further makes a vague argument with a quote from then head of NBC-TV, Grant Tinker, that “television is an advertising-supported, and to the extent that support falls out, programming will change.”⁴¹ What is unclear about this argument is if “support” is

⁴⁰ Ibid, P. 16

⁴¹ Ibid; quoted in Gitlin, Todd; 1983; P. 253 in *Inside Prime Time* (New York: Pantheon Books)

strictly advertiser support or audience support and if advertiser support is a reaction to audience support.

In making the case of advertising as the second filter, *Manufacturing Consent* prefers to examine corporate influence on public television rather than advertisement influence on corporate media. *Manufacturing Consent* uses the case of when public television station lost its corporate funding from Gulf + Western over a documentary it aired titled *Hungry for Profit* which was critical of the activities of multinational companies in the Third World. The CEO complained that the documentary was “virulently anti-business if not anti-American,” and that the station’s carrying of the documentary was not the behaviour “of a friend” of the corporation.⁴² *Manufacturing Consent* fails to make any attempt to explain or provide judgement on the content or validity of the criticisms of multinational corporations. That the content was critical enough that a corporation withdrew its funding to the station is enough. Since the corporation withdrew its funding from a public television station instead of its sponsorship of a program in the corporate media, it proves that corporations will occasionally sanction programming that they disagree with but does not advance the thesis that advertising is the second filter since the issue is the sponsorship of a public television station as a whole rather than the corporate sponsorship of a program.

Building on the Gulf + Western example, *Manufacturing Consent* further proves how woefully out of date it is. It argues that large corporate advertisers on television will rarely sponsor programs that engage in serious criticisms of corporate activities, such as the problem of environmental degradation, the workings of the military-industrial complex, or corporate support of and benefits from Third World tyrannies. It uses the

⁴² Ibid, P. 17

example of a proposed, yet unnamed, documentary series at NBC-TV that failed because of lack of sponsorship at a time when corporations were spending money on commercials and other publicity regarding environmental problems.⁴³ *Manufacturing Consent* uses this to make the argument that:

“Television networks learn over time that such programs will not sell and would have to be carried at a financial sacrifice, and that, in addition, they may offend powerful advertisers.”⁴⁴

On this point, *Manufacturing Consent* may have a point. In the week after the terrorist attack on the World Trade Centre, when late-night talk shows went back on the air, there was a controversy over the first post 9/11 instalment of “public affairs”⁴⁵ program *Politically Incorrect*. In discussing the mindset of the attackers with guest Dineesh D’Souza, the host, Bill Maher, agreed that the terrorist hijackers of the planes that were flown into the World Trade Centre were in their own minds soldiers and not, as mainstream opinion makers characterized them, cowards. He added:

“We [Americans] have been cowards. Lobbing cruise missiles from 2000 miles away – that’s cowardly. Staying in the airplane when it hits the building – say what you want about it – is not cowardly.”⁴⁶

In what *Manufacturing Consent* terms the fourth filter – flak, viewers who construed Maher’s remarks as calling American servicemen, who would soon be involved in whatever reciprocal action that would take place, “cowards” began to call the shows sponsors. Two sponsors, Sears and Federal Express, dropped their sponsorship of the show. Two nights later, an emotional Maher clarified his remarks saying the accusations of cowardice were not aimed at the military but at the policy makers, particularly the

⁴³ Ibid

⁴⁴ Ibid

⁴⁵ In this case, the term is used for lack of a better term to describe the format of the program. It is after all, hosted by a stand-up comedian.

⁴⁶ *Politically Incorrect* ABC September 17, 2001 (HBO Downtown Productions). The quote also made Media Research Centres year-in-review “notable quotes” list that is conducted to expose egregious bias of both the right and the left.

previous administration of President Bill Clinton, who ordered such retaliation for past attacks as bombing factories without proof they were actually connected to terrorism and training camps they knew were empty.⁴⁷ As of this writing, *Politically Incorrect* is still on the air.

Ultimately, though, on this matter, *Manufacturing Consent* is incorrect. In the decade since the publication of *Manufacturing Consent*, news and public affairs programming has exploded on network television. Even discounting the advent of cable news and the Internet, all three of the Big Three networks – ABC, NBC, and CBS – have regular prime time public affairs series and the odd prime time news special. Saturday night, typically the night with the lowest viewers, is the only night of the week where a television viewer who does not have cable cannot find national public affairs programming in primetime. Some of these programs have different editions of the same program – 2 editions of *60 Minutes* on CBS, 2 editions of *20/20* and 5 editions of *Nightline* on ABC, 4 editions of *Dateline NBC* on NBC – in addition to their other primetime news programs – *48 Hours* on CBS, *Primetime Live* on ABC. The audience for these programs is sufficient to warrant multiple editions, as they all began as single editions. They are also relatively inexpensive, when compared to the cost of providing sixty minutes of entertainment programming. The talent and production costs for public affairs programming are mostly fixed costs so it is not a great financial loss if a program fails, versus entertainment production that typically costs at least one million dollars an hour and has only a 15% success rate.

⁴⁷ Ibid. September 20, 2001. Despite the show of emotions, the clarification was ultimately a half-hearted attempt to placate remaining sponsors and the network, as it was shows that aspired to be credible talk programs such as *Politically Incorrect* that essentially gave an open platform to Clinton supporters, especially supporters from the entertainment industry, during the Lewinsky scandal and, therefore, helped the president he would later condemn keep his job.

The fact that there are now four editions of *Dateline NBC* on NBC is truly problematic for *Manufacturing Consent*'s argument that networks will not air programs that offend large corporate advertisers. After spending most of the 1980s trying and failing to launch a primetime public affairs program in the news magazine format, the first season of the first edition *Dateline NBC*, the program produced a story about the safety of the position of the gas tanks in the chassis of General Motors pick-up trucks. The centrepiece of the story was the fiery explosion of one of these trucks in a controlled simulation. After it aired, General Motors sued the program, alleging that producers added plastic explosives to the truck to make the explosion more dramatic. General Motors won and the program was forced to admit the mistake and apologize on air. According to the model laid out in *Manufacturing Consent*, *Dateline NBC*'s public apology should have also been, if not the last, one of its last instalments. Instead, it now airs four times a week with one of the most loyal audiences in the industry. General Motors' advertisements for its line of pick-up trucks even air on the program. *Dateline NBC* proves that occasionally offending large corporate advertisers is part of the cost of doing business and the economic sanction of offending advertisers can be overcome if the audience is behind the program. A loyal audience will allow a program to draw advertisers to replace the ones they lose, most likely the lost advertiser's competition.

There are several issues regarding advertising that *Manufacturing Consent* utterly fails to address regarding advertising. One such issue is the Federal Communications Commission regulation on public service advertising. By law, broadcasters must donate airtime to non-profit organizations. This has been an effective tool by citizens' organizations to get their messages to the public. Another issue is that while

Manufacturing Consent discusses paid advertising by corporations, it does address paid advertising by non-profit non-governmental organizations (NGOs). While it is unlikely that any NGOs will be a major sponsor of primetime program, they can still afford to advertise in primetime. Organizations like Amnesty International, Greenpeace, and the Sierra Club, have wealthy individual and corporate contributors. Amnesty International recently sponsored a concert at Wembley Stadium in London featuring Shania Twain, Radiohead, and Peter Gabriel to celebrate their twenty-fifth anniversary. Other NGOs are funded by the United Nations. The United Nations High Commission on Refugees recently began an advertising campaign highlighting successful refugees – including former US Secretary of State Madeline Albright – to celebrate its fiftieth anniversary. If non-profits and NGOs do not like the coverage they receive in the free coverage of the mass media, they can do what politicians have done since the inception of the printed word, by advertising and take their message directly to the people and, in doing so, do an end-run around the mass media.⁴⁸ Ultimately, media corporations do not care who actually buys the advertising time they sell.

The cost of delivering the mass media to a mass audience requires an internal subsidy to cover the cost of production. In doing so, the consumer can afford the product. In the case of the nineteenth century labour press in England, trade unions could cover the cost of production with the revenue that they received in the form of membership dues. Eventually, technological advances caused the cost of production of the labour press to be too expensive to subsidize with membership dues and it disappeared.

⁴⁸ Morris, Dick; 1999; P. 204

In the case of the mass media, the internal subsidy is advertising revenue. Advertising revenue accounts for most of the profits of the mass media with fees such as cover prices, subscription rates, cable fees, etc, accounting for covering the cost of distribution. The profit has been made before the product reaches the consumer, but only so long as the consumer actually buys the product. If the consumer is uninterested in the product, the newspaper, magazine, network, etc., will not be able to sell advertising space at a high enough rate to cover the cost and the product will disappear. *Manufacturing Consent* argues that advertisers have control over the product by selecting which programs they will sponsor and therefore deciding which products make it to the consumer. The problem with this formulation is that advertising rates are determined by systems that measure the number of viewers or readers. Advertisers advertise in media that will give them the most penetration of their demographic market. As the example of *Dateline NBC* and *Politically Incorrect* shows, a show that has a strong enough following or the right market niche can survive offending a sponsor or two. Even media that has sufficient sponsorship may fail to attract an audience or circulation and maintain its advertising rates and cease to produce. It is ultimately the consumer that decides what makes it to the market, and not the advertiser, because the collective decision of the consumer to buy into the product will decide the product's fate. Therefore, the arguments presented in *Manufacturing Consent* in the favour of the reliance of the mass media on advertising revenue acts as filter are inadequate as advertising revenue is dependent on consumer interest in the product or program and some products and programs have shown that they are popular enough that they can afford to offend a sponsor or two and remain in production.

The third filter is sourcing. *Manufacturing Consent* describes sourcing as the mass media concentrating their resources on locales that offer a steady supply of raw news for the media's daily appetite. The text cites government offices that offer regular press briefings and press conferences – such as the Pentagon, the White House, and the State Department – as examples of sourcing.⁴⁹ The problem with this filter, as *Manufacturing Consent* presents it, is that it, at least in part, belongs with the filter of advertising as an internal subsidy.

Manufacturing Consent presents sourcing as another internal subsidy for the mass media. In this case, though, sourcing subsidizes the content of the mass media. It cites a report from the *Air Force Times* demonstrating the public information outreach of just that respective branch of the United States armed services as including:

140 Newspapers, 690,000 copies per week
Airman magazine, monthly circulation 125,000
 34 radio and 17 TV stations, primarily overseas
 45,000 headquarters and unit news releases
 615,000 hometown news releases
 6,600 interviews with news media
 3,200 news conferences
 500 news media orientation flights
 50 meetings with editorial boards
 11,000 speeches⁵⁰

This is, of course, just one of the branches of the armed services and does not include the public information outreach conducted by the other three branches and the Department of Defence, itself. The argument that *Manufacturing Consent* takes from this information is that the state buys its way into the mass media by providing it with the news, itself.

In arguing the third filter, *Manufacturing Consent* also examines the role of “experts” in the mass media. In Table 1-4, the table highlights the use of experts on

⁴⁹ Chomsky, Herman; 1988, Pp. 18 & 19

⁵⁰ Ibid, P. 20; citing United States Air Force; 1979; “Fact Sheet: The United States Air Force Information Program” (March 1979); 1980; “News Releases: 600,000 in a Year” *Air Force Times*, April 28, 1980

terrorism and defence on the *McNeil – Lehrer News Hour*, during a period of January 14th, 1985, and January 27th, 1986. It shows that, excluding journalists, the majority of experts were either past or present government officials (54%).⁵¹

This table, though, also exposes the biases of *Manufacturing Consent*. The footnote at the bottom of the chart shows that it is not a survey of the number experts on terrorism and defence that have appeared on the *McNeil – Lehrer News Hour* in the more than 260 airings of the program between January 14th, 1985, and January 27th, 1986. It only covers appearances concerning the “Bulgarian Connection” (3), the shooting down of the Korean airliner KAL 007 (5), and terrorism, defence, and arms control (33), during the dates specified.⁵² Since the last issue – terrorism, defence, and arms control – is rather generic in scope, it is unclear if it overlaps the other two. If it does overlap and there are only thirty-three programs in question, the percentage of shows covered is no more than thirteen percent of the total airings of the *McNeil – Lehrer News Hour* during the year in question. If it does not overlap, then only sixteen percent of the total airings of the program are in question. One has to question if this is representative of other issues presented on the *McNeil – Lehrer News Hour* or the program in general.

Manufacturing Consent once again immerses itself into a “chicken or the egg” scenario. In its final paragraph on the third filter, *Manufacturing Consent* reserves a special category of “expert” for former radicals who have departed the radical left for the establishment: the “turncoat”.⁵³ *Manufacturing Consent* argues that the motives behind the conversion are strictly mercenary:

⁵¹ Ibid. P. 25

⁵² Ibid.

⁵³ Ibid. Pp. 24 & 25

The motives that cause these individuals to switch gods, from Stalin (or Mao) to Reagan and free enterprise, is varied, but for the establishment media the reason for the change is simply that the ex-radicals have finally seen the error of their ways. In a country whose citizenry values acknowledgement of sin and repentance, the turncoats are an important class of repentant sinners. It is interesting to observe how the former sinners, whose previous work was of little interest or an object of ridicule to the mass media, are suddenly elevated to prominence and become authentic experts.⁵⁴

The possibility that an intellectual who once advocated left-wing causes has moved to the right for reasons of principle is ridiculous. They are mercenaries, plain and simple. Apparently, ideology is unlike religion in that there can be no conversion to from one to another. That the Irving Kristols and Norman Podhoretzs and many other Jewish then-left-wing intellectuals entered the military during the Cold War and saw the effects of the policies of Stalin and Mao and “crossed over” is silly. That the left-wing of American politics during the late sixties and seventies moved so far left that many intellectuals found themselves now “neo-conservative” by comparison is likewise preposterous. These are traitors who have tired of toiling away in obscurity and have succumbed to the market’s constant appetite for criticism of “the other”.

The arguments in *Manufacturing Consent* for the fourth filter – flak – are thoroughly confusing. “Flak” is defined simply as “negative response to a media statement or program”⁵⁵. However, the arguments in support of this filter seem to operationalize flak as consisting of only those organizations and individuals that would disagree with *Manufacturing Consent*. As well, it tests the authors’ assertion from the preface of *Manufacturing Consent* that the propaganda model is not a “conspiracy theory”⁵⁶.

⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁵ Ibid. P. 26

⁵⁶ Ibid. P. xii

Manufacturing Consent argues that flak is an effective control mechanism because advertising revenue usually comes from the advertising of consumer products. Since all one has to do to get an advertisers attention is to organize a sizable amount of people to stop purchasing a product, consumer products are readily subject to boycotts.⁵⁷ While this author does not dispute this argument, *Manufacturing Consent* is unclear when an organized negative response to a media statement or program is legitimate dissent over questionable practices or mere flak.

Manufacturing Consent argues that the ability to produce flak is related to power. It can be direct in the forms of letters from the White House to the elite of the media. It can also be indirect through the corporate elite organizing constituency groups, such as shareholders, to take a particular action.⁵⁸

Where the authors of *Manufacturing Consent* bring the propaganda model to precipice of conspiracy theory, if not exceeding it, is in their description of organizations that they accuse of being the corporate community's flak generators.

Along with its other political investments of the 1970s and 1980s, the corporate community sponsored the growth of institutions such as the American Legal Foundation, the Capital Legal Foundation, the Media Institute, the Center for Media and Public Affairs, and Accuracy in Media (AIM). These may be regarded as institutions organized for the specific purpose of producing flak.⁵⁹

The evidence for such arguments is that the American Legal Foundation specializes in Fairness Doctrine complaints and libel suits to aid "media victims"; the Capital Legal Foundation was the Scaife vehicle for Westmorland's libel suit against CBS; the Media Institute underwrites works such as John Corry's exposé of the alleged left-wing bias of

⁵⁷ Ibid. P. 26

⁵⁸ Ibid

⁵⁹ Ibid. P. 27

the mass media, *TV News and the Dominant Culture*⁶⁰; the Center for Media and Public Affairs gets accolades from Patrick Buchanan, Faith Whittlessey, and Ronald Reagan; Accuracy in Media had at least eight separate oil companies in the 1980s.⁶¹

The evidence, and its deficiencies, say more about the authors than the organizations. The authors do not cite any cases supported the American Legal Foundation. They fail to mention that Westmorland lost his libel suit against CBS. Since the publication of *Manufacturing Consent*, Patrick Buchanan has left the Republican Party for the Reform Party and can no longer be considered a representative of the majority of American conservatives.⁶² Referring to Patrick Buchanan as a mainstream conservative in the years since the publication of *Manufacturing Consent* would be akin to referring to the authors of *Manufacturing Consent* as mainstream liberals. Other than receiving money from oil companies, there is no evidence presented that Accuracy In Media is a corporate flak machine. The authors do make the accusation: "The function of AIM is to harass the media and put pressure on them to follow the corporate agenda and a hard-line, right-wing foreign policy"⁶³. No specific actions are cited.

It further seems that only conservative and corporate organizations are generators of flak. The authors fail to mention the organization Fairness and Accuracy in Media which in the years since the publication of *Manufacturing Consent*, 1995 to be specific, issued a report citing conservative talk radio host Rush Limbaugh for several hundred incorrect statements of fact over the course of his nationally syndicated radio show. This

⁶⁰ Corry, John; 1986; *TV News and the Dominant Culture* (Washington: Media Institute)

⁶¹ Chomsky, Herman; 1988; p. 27

⁶² The Reform Party under Buchanan's leadership declined in support to 0.42% of the popular vote in the 2000 General Election, as opposed to the 15.9% of the popular vote that the party received under the leadership of H. Ross Perot. Federal Elections Commission; 2001; *2000 OFFICIAL PRESIDENTIAL GENERAL ELECTION RESULTS* (February 8, 2001) <http://www.fec.gov>

⁶³ Chomsky, Herman, 1988, P. 27

despite the fact the Limbaugh is not a journalist and *The Rush Limbaugh Show* is not news program. Ironically, the report was delivered by then ABC News Washington correspondent Cokie Roberts, who, the month previous, was censured by her employer for supposedly filing a report from Washington when she was in actually in New York – to attend a cocktail reception – reporting from in front of a “green screen” image of the White House. Fairness and Accuracy in Media published the report and marketed it as a humour book. It was a bestseller. Is this, though, not an example of a negative response to a media statement – or several hundred media statements – and therefore constitutes flak.

Missing from the arguments in favour of flak as a filter are the ethno-cultural organizations that are quick to mobilize when the media is critical of government policies treating some countries too softly. Ethno-cultural associations can provide an effective counterbalance to the alleged advocacy of “hard-line, right-wing foreign policy” by groups such as Accuracy in Media. Opposition by ethno-cultural associations in the province of Ontario, predominantly in its capital of Toronto, to the provisions in the 1999 treaty *The United Nations Convention on the Suppression of Terrorist Financing* lead the Liberal government of Jean Chrétien to not ratify this convention before calling a general federal election in 2000, despite playing an active role in its negotiation. The events of September 11, 2001, changed that and the ratification of said convention is included in the omnibus anti-terrorism measures of Bill C-36.

Also missing are the various other non-conservative, non-corporate, not-ethnic organizations, such as feminist organizations like the National Organization of Women in the United States and the National Action Committee on the Status of Women in Canada,

labour unions, academic associations, and environmental organizations. All of these groups can and often do provide effective counterbalances to the organizations above and limit their ability to sway the mass media to their cause.

Finally, and perhaps most importantly, the arguments for flak as a filter or control mechanism is missing any argument that actually showed that flak, or at least flak generated by the organizations labelled as flak generators, actually has a substantive effect on the deliver of news through the mass media. Where the arguments for the second filter, advertising, at least mentioned programs with speculative evidence that they did not make it to the programming schedule because of the their perceived anti-corporate subject matter, the arguments for flak contain no such argument that program “x” was cancelled because AIM, the Media Institute, or any other flak generator organized a letter writing campaign or any other campaign. The reason is that the people in the mass media have marginalized such as professional liberal haters and don’t take their work seriously. One potential flak generator that is not mentioned in *Manufacturing Consent*, the Media Research Center, sends out a monthly newsletter, and an annual compilation, of quotes from journalists to journalists, editors, anchors, etc. called *Notable Quotables* exposing liberal their liberal bias. They also publish a daily online version called *CyberAlert*. Former CBS correspondent Bernard Goldberg says of the work of the Media Research Center that it is easy to dismiss “because professional liberal bashers compile it.”⁶⁴ If the mass media do not actually change their behaviour in reaction to flak, then flak has no effect. If flak has no effect, it is not a filter.

⁶⁴ Goldberg; 2002; Pp. 179 – 181

With the sole inclusion of conservative corporate organizations and the system exclusion of corresponding, opposing left-wing organizations as generators of flak, one has to speculate if it is only flak when the critics of *Manufacturing Consent* generate it.

The fifth filter is the most problematic for the propaganda model. The fifth filter is the ideology of anticommunism. *Manufacturing Consent* argues that anticommunism is the control mechanism, the veritable glue that binds the four previous filters together.

It states:

Communism as the ultimate evil has always been the spectre haunting property owners, as it threatens the very root of their class position and superior status. The Soviet, Chinese, and Cuban Revolutions were traumas to Western elites, and the ongoing conflicts and the well-publicized abuses of Communist states have contributed to elevating opposition to communism to a first principle of Western ideology and politics...It therefore helps fragment the left and labour movements and serves as a political-control mechanism.⁶⁵

This statement is true insofar that the authors so called “Western ideology” is classic liberalism, with its emphasis on individual rights and freedoms. Communism, along with socialism and Marxism, is, itself, a political philosophy developed in Western Europe and exported globally. Therefore, *Manufacturing Consent’s* “Western ideology” is constructed by the authors to be liberalism and its economic variant, capitalism.

It should be noted that the authors use Communism in the generic sense. Communism, as espoused by its founder Karl Marx in *The Communist Manifesto*, would be the ultimate stage of human development. In industrialized society, Marx argued that the proletariat – the poor, working class – would radicalize as an affect of being disconnected from the means of production and revolt against the bourgeoisie – the middle-class factory owners – and form a dictatorship where the state would control the means of production. This stage would be known as socialism. Under socialism, the

⁶⁵ Ibid, P. 29

state would provide for all needs and would spread around the world. Once the socialist state became a global state, the machinery of the state, the dictatorship of the proletariat, would wither away and eventually disappear. In this stateless, governmentless, society, instead of toiling away in menial pursuits such as employment, man would engage in the higher pursuits such as philosophy. Communism is this final stage of human development.⁶⁶ It is not difficult to see why Marxist philosophy, with its promise of violent revolution and the loss of individual liberty, when put into communist practice would disturb those in liberal society. With World War II – era German fascism and Japanese imperialism defeated, it was an easy boogeyman to act as a civil religion.

The problem for *Manufacturing Consent* is simply that like German fascism and Japanese imperialism, the fear of communism spreading throughout the world is over. The Soviet Union has collapsed and has broken up into over a dozen states. The Bush administration's recent pull out of the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty notwithstanding, United States – Russian relations are at all time high. When the US military went on its highest state of alert since the Gulf War during the terrorist attacks on the World Trade Centre and the Pentagon on September 11, 2001, the Russian military maintained its alert status rather than raising it to a corresponding level as was the Cold War norm.

Without the “Evil Empire” of the Soviet Union gone, the dominoes on the revolutions mentioned above have fallen. Chinese communism has simple authoritarianism by another name. Mao is dead and with him were the Marxist/Maoist values of Cultural Revolution. With over a billion citizens and an underdeveloped

⁶⁶ Marx, Karl; Engels, Friedrich; 1888; *The Communist Manifesto*; Samuel Moore, trans; (London: Penguin Books) Pp. 79 – 106

industrial economy incapable of self-sufficiency, China is emerging as the world's largest import market. Earlier in the decade, it attempted through government agencies to purchase modern industrial equipment by buying faltering European and North America government-run, or crown, corporations such as Nova Scotia's Sydney Steel Corporation, only to realize why those governments were eager to offload them – unsustainability. It has, though, entered into the World Trade Organization and, by doing so, has accepted the principle of open, competitive markets. China's communist party has recognized the existence of entrepreneurs in Chinese political life. The Chinese government has allowed the party to allow “capitalists” to enter the party and is preparing to allow “religious believers” to enter. It has also signed two major human rights treaties: *The International Covenant of Civil and Political Rights* and *The International Covenant of Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights*. China has also signed an agreement with AOL Time Warner Inc. to allow that corporation to broadcast HBO, CNN, and other content in China. This means that China has relaxed its censorship laws on television, which it once regarded as a propaganda tool. The other side of the agreement is that AOL must include its Chinese-language channel CETV in its offerings in the southern province of Guangdong and must carry China's English language state broadcaster China Central TV-9 on its American cable systems in New York, Los Angeles, and Houston.⁶⁷ While these reforms are in their infancy, China has also been selected to host the 2008 Olympic Summer Games, with the sponsorship of multinational corporations that is included, so the progress China makes will be very visible.

⁶⁷ Joe McDonald; 2001; “AOL Signs Landmark Deal With China”; *Washington Post*; http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-srv/2001/1022/aponline124610_000.htm 10/23/01, 4:00 p.m

While Cuba's revolution remains very much institutionalized, it, like the present state of Chinese communism, is but an ideological façade for simple authoritarianism. The lack of subsidization from the Soviet Union in the forms of cash transfers and leases on the use of military facilities has led to a radical realignment of the Cuban economy. Pictures of Ché Guevara and Fidel Castro litter the island, but the Cuban Peso is not accepted at most businesses that cater to tourism, now Cuba's largest industry. The only money accepted in the tourism and service industry is the US dollar. Cuban refugees in Miami send the relatives they left behind US dollars so they will not be restricted to government-approved services. Cuban communism is so attractive that thousands of Cubans each year put their lives at risk and attempt to cross the 90-mile Gulf of Mexico to Florida in boats so decrepit and overcrowded that it is more likely to sink than arrive at its destination. If the US Coast Guard intercepts them, they will be sent to a refugee camp at the US naval base at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba.

Even the communist regimes in Southeast Asia that are not mentioned in the establishment of the propaganda are either in disarray or moving towards a more capitalist society. North Korea, despite its status as a "rogue state", has begun a dialogue with South Korea. North Korea is an example of the unsustainability of Marxist economics, as its centrally planned economy has decimated its agricultural industry and has exacerbated a decade-long drought. Free trade is being encouraged with Vietnam, with whom the US fought a long and bitter war. Proponents of such an agreement include Vietnam War veteran, and prisoner of war, Senator John McCain (Republican – Arizona). Communism in all its forms has become unsustainable. Its threat – if it was ever one – is over.

How much of a threat was it really? As unbelievable as it may seem, the fall of the Soviet Union came as a sudden surprise to many on both the left and the right. The fall of the Berlin Wall was a surprise even to East Germany's political masters in Moscow. In *The End of History and the Last Man*, Francis Fukuyama argues that communism was never a true threat to liberalism. History has ended insofar that history, as a dialectic of ideas, in liberalism reached a point in human political development where the realization of human freedom is accorded a place in external laws beyond any other goal – what we understand to be liberal democracy.⁶⁸ The failure of totalitarian / authoritarian rule of both the right and the left lay with the fact that legitimate authority was absent and when, in an authoritarian regime, there was a failure of policy there was no higher principle to which the regime could appeal.⁶⁹ The totalitarian regimes of the right of the twentieth century were ended through force of arms, crushed by World War

II. On authoritarian regimes of the left specifically:

Totalitarian governments of the Left sought to avoid these problems sought to avoid these problems by subordinating the whole of civil society to their control, including what their citizens were allowed to think. But such a system in its pure form could be maintained only through a terror that threatened the system's own rulers. Once that terror was relaxed, a long process of degeneration set in, during which the state lost control of certain key aspects of civil society. Most important was its loss of control over the belief system. And since the socialist formula for economic growth was defective, the state could not prevent its citizens from taking note of this fact and drawing their own conclusions.⁷⁰

Further, Fukuyama argues that those living in liberal democratic societies simply could not see an appeal in Soviet socialism because liberal democratic society provided in law most of the freedoms needed for man to meet his existential needs that a pure communist state would provide without the dictatorship and terror implicit in the Marxist model. For

⁶⁸ Fukuyama, Francis; 1992; *The End of History and the Last Man* (New York: Avon Books), P. 58

⁶⁹ Ibid. P. 39

⁷⁰ Ibid. P. 40

example, Noam Chomsky and Edward Herman wrote *Manufacturing Consent* in a liberal democracy. At the time, they were both employed at private universities (Herman has since retired and been named professor emeritus). It could be said that the American university is the most perverse of capitalist enterprises. The institutions accept large tuition fees from their customers, students, and allow them the privilege of attending lectures but the service provider, professors, ultimately do not actually owe their students anything but to award grades commensurate with the work done by the customer. Where liberal democracy tolerates and make allowances for dissent – it needs it survive – in a communist state, such as the Soviet Union, the only way a *Manufacturing Consent* could be written about how the Soviet media is structured and the authors not be arrested for dissent is publish it pseudonymously in another country. Even that could not guarantee a free thinker's survival.

Without a communist threat, is there a civil religion that could replace anticommunism as a control mechanism? *Manufacturing Consent's* anticommunism could be loosely interpreted as another theme that has been present in literature for centuries: fear of the other. David Cogswell argues that at first the new “other” would be Iraqi President Saddam Hussein and his regime. The decisive coalition victory of Operation: Desert Storm, though, has lead the media to portray Hussein as not much more than a recurring international nuisance, a regional problem rather than a permanent threat to international peace and security. Cogswell believes that the more reliable image for the media has been that of Islamic fundamentalists, Muslims, or Middle Easterners in general, who are portrayed as rabid extremists and terrorists as a general cultural trait.⁷¹

⁷¹ Cogswell, 1996; P. 97

Even in the post – 9/11 climate, this belief is simply not borne out to the actual material produced by the media. With the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, committed by real, not imagined, terrorists – Osama bin Laden and his Al Qaeda organization, with the sponsorship of the Taliban regime of Afghanistan – world leaders and opinion leaders have been careful to associate the acts of terrorism with specific individuals, organizations, and regimes. The media has not moved to demonize our Islamic fundamentalist allies, which includes bin Laden’s native Saudi Arabia and its Wahabi sect of Islam which bin Laden professes. Those who have expressed opinions in the extreme have either has been marginalized or their employment terminated, such as conservative Anne Coulter’s advocacy of the mass deportation of all Muslims in America who did not have full status as American citizens leading to her column being dropped from *National Review Online*. The constant appeals of world leaders for their citizens to not target Muslims, in general, for acts of revenge and hate crimes has lead one Canadian columnist to refer to such appeals as the “scolding of whitey”⁷² and the constant change of the names of the war – Operation: Enduring Freedom was originally called Operation: Infinite Justice but changed due to the Bush administration’s desire to not offend potential Muslim allies who believe that only God, Allah, can administer infinite justice – as well as spelling and terminology – Osama or Usama, Afghan or Afghani – as “the most sensitive war in history”⁷³. The author argued that since countries like the United States and Canada are open societies and multicultural, most Americans and Canadians

⁷² Steyn, 2001

⁷³ Ibid.

are intelligent enough to know that their neighbours did not fly an airplane into one of the World Trade Centre towers or the Pentagon and that all Muslims are not terrorists.⁷⁴

Even as the World Trade Centre fell, the American mass media were proving Cogswell and *Manufacturing Consent* wrong. CNN anchors interviewed their network's terrorism analyst Peter Bergen, author of *Holy War Inc.* about Osama bin Laden and Al Qaeda as well as one of a handful of western journalists to interview bin Laden, and asked his opinion of who committed the attack. His opinion was that if it was a terrorist organization that was committing the attack it could only be Al Qaeda. He explained his opinion noting that Al Qaeda had the financial resources of Osama bin Laden, a Saudi multimillionaire, and had proven that it could carry precision attacks such as blowing up American embassies in Nairobi, Kenya, and Dar El Salaam, Tanzania, within five minutes of each other; the attack on the USS Cole in the harbour of Port of Aden, Yemen; funding the first attack on the World Trade Centre in 1993; the fact that Al Qaeda was being sheltered by the Taliban regime in Afghanistan, as well as previous statements by bin Laden, himself, that soon they would attack "the heart of Satan".⁷⁵ Unmentioned were the failed attempt to attack LAX airport during Millennium celebrations and that an Al Qaeda operative was scheduled to be sentenced for this crime in a federal courthouse only blocks away from the attack on September 11th.

While Canadian commentators and scholars tell us that the Canadian media is less sensational, the best guess that Canadian Broadcasting Corporation Middle East Bureau Chief could come up with was that it was "Arab terrorists"⁷⁶ because "airplane hijackings

⁷⁴ Ibid.

⁷⁵ Bergen, Peter; 2001; CNN interview, September 11, 2001; 1:36 pm

⁷⁶ MacDonald, Neil; 2001; CBC Newsworld interview; September 11, 2001; 2:47 pm

were a hallmark of Arab terrorism”⁷⁷. Further, when questioned as to his opinion regarding the Taliban’s press statement that denied that Osama bin Laden was involved, he stated, “As the British would say, ‘They would say that’.”⁷⁸.

The speed of publication of the Internet allowed many columnists to continue to publish throughout the September 11th attack. Scripps Howard News Service columnist Derory Murdock published his regular contribution to *National Review Online*, the Internet version of the conservative magazine, at 4 p.m. on September 11th. In it, he argued that on the domestic front that American leaders and voters should resist the urge to embrace measures that will unreasonably infringe on freedoms in the long run. He states emphatically, “The Bill of Rights must not collapse with the Twin Towers.”⁷⁹

The coverage of the attack of September 11th and its aftermath is very telling about how the media portrays Muslims. According to the aforementioned Bernard Goldberg in his book *Bias*, on the day of the attack the people turned to television news, which he argues – as a liberal himself – is liberal biased, and saw:

They were fair and accurate, and the information they passed along to us wasn’t filtered through the usual liberal political and social sensibilities. They gave us the news on that day the way they should give us the news *all the time*, whether the story is about race or feminism or taxes or gay rights or anything else. *For a change, they gave it us straight.*⁸⁰

Members of the media who would be expected, in the heat of an attack, to urge extreme measures, instead urged restraint. Leaders have been especially active to prevent vigilantism against Muslims. Canadian journalists, watching the attack unfold from the comfort and safety of another country, were more sensational in their comments than

⁷⁷ Ibid

⁷⁸ Ibid

⁷⁹ Murdock; 2001

⁸⁰ Goldberg, 2002; P. 196

their American counterparts. While circumstantial or superficial evidence may show Cogswell correct that Arabs, terrorists, or Middle Easterners in general, were the “other” that replaced the Soviet Union as the control mechanism, but the direct evidence of the work of the mass media in the midst of a crisis, that may well prove to be the biggest live event in its history, proves it to be false. If Middle Easterners are the new “other”, Cogswell does not prove it.

Another possibility for an “other” to replace the civil religion of anticommunism is its opposite – procapitalism. In “The Propaganda Model Revisited”, *Manufacturing Consent* co-author Herman argues that with the collapse of the Soviet Union and global socialism as a viable alternative to liberal democracy and capitalism, if it was ever really such an alternative, the ideological force of the belief of the “miracle in the market” has only been strengthened and internalized.⁸¹ If this is so, it would be more accurate to refer to this as procapitalism rather than anticommunism as it is no longer defined by what it is opposition to by what it is in favour of. In this case, the anti-globalization activists that have disrupted meetings of the World Trade Organization, International Monetary Fund, World Bank, Organization of American States, G-7, and G-20, would be the “other” that the mass media could demonize. The problem, however, is that the anti-globalization movement is less a movement than a series of mass protests. The “movement” has no leadership, local organizations only take charge to ensure the proper permits are attained and local lawyers are available for the inevitable arrests. There is no internal consistency to the “movement”. Labour unions protest globalization because it means a loss of union jobs to the Third World. Environmental groups protest globalization because it means that polluting industries will move to countries with relaxed environmental regulations.

⁸¹ Herman; 1996; P. 6

On the domestic front, labour unions and environmental groups oppose each other on matters such as multilateral treaties on increased environmental regulations and environmental regulation, in general, as meeting short-term goals of such regulations typically mean reducing production and cutting workforce. Some of the organizations that appear at these events are not even opposed to globalization, itself, but want the benefits of globalization spread more evenly between the developed and developing world. If a seemingly well-developed, and armed, alternative to liberal democracy and capitalism such as Marxism cannot be sustained, a leaderless, rudderless, ad hoc roving protest community is more a sign of the vibrancy of liberal democracy and capitalism than its deficiencies. After all, liberal democracy protects their right to protest. We arrest our violent protesters, not shoot randomly into crowds.

The results of the model are dubious. The authors argue that the propaganda model represents the structure of the mass media and the function of the structure is to create concision and dichotomization. However, the authors do not actually test the model. They use the analytical framework of comparing two like atrocities from their previous works and attribute the dichotomization to the propaganda model. Ultimately, by employing an analytical framework that compares two like atrocities or catastrophes, the dichotomization the authors find in the mass media is their own.

Concerning concision, the authors fail to quantify how much information the media can carry to the public or should carry to the public in order that they be adequately informed as to the state of the world and their place in it. The authors allude to the popularity of the defunct labour press of eighteenth century England, but do not make it clear as to why the labour press of this era was popular, only that its demise was

as a result of not being able to keep up with the development of the commercial press. If the labour press is somehow a standard of content to which the mass media must be compared to, the authors simply do not make a case for it. Even if it is to be implied that the labour press is the standard, the scope of the information on the labour press presented is far too limited to be considered a workable example.⁸² The content of the labour press is simply not discussed. Without making the case that the mass media can and should transmit more information to the public, the authors cannot make the case that what is reaching the public is too devoid of real content to be considered valuable.

Before concluding this chapter, a final note regarding the issue of conspiracy theory is necessary. While the authors of *Manufacturing Consent* claim in the preface that the propaganda model is not a conspiracy theory⁸³, a claim that this author is prepared to take at face value, their recent actions may undermine such a claim. In the recent re-issue of *Manufacturing Consent*, with a new introduction, the cover features the letter “T” die-cut into the cover, superimposed over the “S” of *Manufacturing Consent*. While the title *Manufacturing Consent* seems to support something that is systematic and end-driven, the inferred title of *Manufacturing Content* suggests something that is deliberate and means-driven. It is rather strange that the authors would insulate their theory from the accusation of conspiracy theory in the content of the book only to open it up to the same by authorizing the publication of a new issue of the book with the cover that now graces it.

In this chapter, the propaganda model of *Manufacturing Consent* has been examined as to its logical cohesion. The five filters, and the arguments made in

⁸² Mcquail; 1999; Pp. 154 – 155

⁸³ Chomsky, Hermann; 1988; P. 1x

Manufacturing Consent in their favour have been examined as to their validity. Examination of the model had revealed the following. First, the arguments for the first filter – size of ownership of the media – only deal with the shrinking of ownership at the top and ignore the explosion of the size of media corporations that venture into new media such as cable television and the Internet. Without dealing with the effect of the reduction of ownership in the media in relation to the growth of the media corporations themselves, the arguments invalidate themselves. Second, the arguments for the second filter – advertising revenue as an internal subsidy – which state that programs cannot survive offending corporate sponsors. This ignores the nature of advertising sales. Experience has borne out that popular programs can survive offending, and losing, corporate sponsors as their competitors will approach to fill the gap. Third, the arguments in favour of the third filter – sourcing – show little about the effect of sourcing on the media as a whole and show more of the perspective of the authors. At best, the arguments in favour of sourcing show it that it could be a component of the previous filter, but not an independent one. Fourth, the arguments in favour of the fourth filter – flak – show that it is only flak if generated by corporations and their proxies – non-profit organizations that receive corporate donations. Apparently, it is not flak when academics generate negative responses to the media. Fifth, the arguments in favour of the fifth filter – anticommunism as a control mechanism – are ultimately fruitless as with the collapse of the “Evil Empire” of the Soviet Union the threat of communism and global socialism, if there ever was one, has left liberal democracy without an unbeatable, existential threat to act as a control mechanism. Therefore, the glue that holds the model together has worn off and the model has fallen apart. Finally, the concision and dichotomization that

are attributed as effects of the propaganda model are effects of the authors' choice of analytical framework, not the model. *Manufacturing Consent* sets out to establish a propaganda model and its effects on the news transmitted by the mass media. This chapter has shown it to be a failure. Further chapters will argue that information technology allows independent media to out-scoop large media companies and have significant impact on the national agenda, that owners actions are so obvious an influence on the direction of their companies that it is by no means as subtle or structural as the propaganda model proposes, and postulate an alternate theory on the structure of the media.

Chapter 3 – The Internet and the News: Bypassing the Model

In the original 1988 text of *Manufacturing Consent*, the words “Internet” and “World Wide Web” simply do not appear. In 1988, that might have been justifiable. The Internet was in its adolescence and the World Wide Web, as we understand in 2002, simply did not exist. In Herman’s 1996 revisit of the propaganda model and the new introduction within the 2002 edition of *Manufacturing Consent*, the Internet is dealt with only in the periphery and ultimately concluded to be another tool of the corporate elite to downsize the media and create global distribution systems, thus eliminating smaller entities.⁸⁴ This is in spite of their earlier testimonials that the Internet aided in bringing awareness to peasant uprisings in Mexico and Bolivia along with aiding in the organization of the opposition to the Multilateral Agreement on Investment and the protests that disrupted meetings of the World Trade Organization in Seattle and meetings of the International Monetary Fund and World Bank in Washington, D.C.⁸⁵ This chapter will explore the development of the Internet, its effect on the mass media, its effect on

⁸⁴ Herman; 1996; P. 6; and Chomsky; Herman; 2002; P. xvi

⁸⁵ Chomsky; Herman; 2002; P. xv – xvi

public policy and show that Chomsky and Herman are incorrect and that the popularization of the Internet makes it possible to not only bypass the corporate mass media and go directly to the people but to also to set the pace and agenda of the corporate mass media, thus invalidating the propaganda model.

If the Internet could be boiled down to a simple cliché, it would be the genie that escaped the bottle and has no desire to go back. That is insofar that the Internet in its basic form is the creation of the United States Department of Defense and is now used more by those who would oppose its creators than its creators itself. In the 1960s, at the height of the Cold War, the US Department of Defense wanted to develop a communication system that would withstand an attack – potentially nuclear – on the homeland. Essentially, the military wanted to preserve its domestic command and control structure along with computer records and logistical information if an electromagnetic pulse from a series of atomic detonations destroyed the surface phones. Since most bases at the time, especially the underground silos that housed the Air Force's intercontinental ballistic missiles, stored their computer systems underground and had back-up power sources, the computers would work even if the phones above were rendered non-operative. They developed a telecommunications network under the Defense Department's Advanced Research Projects Agency (APRA) that would be able to transmit information from one computer to another over telephone lines and redirect itself if a particular telephone line was busy or destroyed. APRAnet, as it was called, allowed computers at US military and government installations to communicate with each other and ensured their ability to sound warnings and manage counter-attack.⁸⁶

⁸⁶ Lubka; Holden; 2000; Pp. 31 & 32

Since the Cold War ended not with a bang, but with a whimper, Willie Lubka and Nancy Holden state APRAnet was ultimately not needed for the purpose of sounding warnings and managing counterattacks.⁸⁷ That may ultimately be naïve and oversimplified as the number of attack false alarms that were ruled as such by information transmitted by APRAnet as well as the number of simulated counterattacks conducted by APRAnet is not available for public consumption. What is ultimately important is that the United States Department of Defense, acting through the Advanced Projects Research Agency, laid the framework for what was to come and – contrary to the belief of a particular former Senator from Tennessee – essentially invented the Internet.

Since most of the scientists who worked under contract with the Department of Defense to develop APRAnet worked at universities and other research institutions, institutions that had government contracts were invited to join the network. The National Science Foundation (NSF) wanted to expand the network to include the whole scientific and educational community. In 1979, the NSF established the Computer Science Net (CSnet). APRAnet and CSnet combined in 1982 when the Department of Defense and the National Science Foundation established a pathway for direct communication between their networks. In 1990, the government dropped its restrictive membership rules and allowed any organization with the technology and desire to join the network. This led the private sector to start new utility companies such as Internet Service Providers (ISPs) that would sell access to the Internet to the public.⁸⁸

Along with the development of APRAnet and CSnet, several other inventions and innovations led to the development of the modern Internet. Innovations in processor

⁸⁷ Ibid

⁸⁸ Ibid; Pp. 32 & 33

technology that allowed smaller microchips to process more information led to smaller, more affordable computers and, therefore, more computers in the hands of the public. In the year 2000, the average computer has the same computing power as the computer system NASA employed to men on the moon. Xerox's invention of Graphical User Interface, first used in Apple's Macintosh computer and later Microsoft's Windows operating system, allowed computers to be user-friendlier at the level of the operator, thus further enhancing their penetration into the consumer market. The development of the European Laboratory of Particle Physics' (CERN) Tim Berners-Lee' Enquire hypertext program with its Uniform Resource Locators (URLs), or website addresses, allowed information that was on the Internet to be linked to other parts of the network, thus creating the World Wide Web. The development of the first GUI web browser, Mosaic, in 1992 finally brought the Internet to non-technical users.⁸⁹

Using the Internet is a relatively easy task in computer terms. If you are using the Internet to simply find information or use sites that allow you to purchase products on the network, just point and click on a hypertext link or enter a URL into the browser. Sometimes it is that simple and sometimes it is not. One of the complications of the development of Internet is that when the US government relaxed its membership rules and let everyone with the technology enter the network, it also lost its technological ability to act as central governing authority over the network. The Internet has no such central governing authority. The US government only controls its own networks. This is a boon for community advocacy groups and NGOs, as no central governing authority exists to say who can and who cannot be on the Internet.

⁸⁹ Ibid, Pp. 34 – 36

The complication is when it comes to some aspects of intellectual property, particularly with regards to names as URLs. Anyone can register anything as URL, regardless if they own it or not or if they intend to construct a site at that address or not. The most infamous example is <http://whitehouse.com>, a website of pornographic material, as opposed to <http://whitehouse.gov>, the actual White House. This is often referred to as “cyber-squatting”, individuals or businesses registering individual and corporate names as URLs and waiting for the owner of the name to come and offer money to get their name back. This often happens to people with famous names because they have the money to pay a squatter to go away. One celebrity, Arnold Schwarzeneger, had thirty-four common misspellings of his name registered as URLs to prevent cyber-squatting. As well, successful online businesses are usually targets of cyber-squatters, especially by international squatters. The highly successful online auction site, E-Bay (URL: <http://ebay.com>), paid an undisclosed sum to get the Canadian URL <http://ebay.ca> for their expansion into Canada. It had previously been registered to a numbered corporation in Prince Edward Island. Sometimes, a user is using someone’s name as a URL for less nefarious reasons, such as creating a fan club website or something similar. Such was the case when the musician Sting lost a court case to have the registrant of <http://sting.com> stripped of his registration. The person who registered the URL was using it for his website in tribute to the singer. The court decided that since the URL related to the content of the site and there was no intention to use it to re-sell it a profit, the musician had to pay the registrant fair market value to transfer the registration. The problem of cyber-squatting has become bad enough that international treaty has given the

United Nations World Intellectual Property Office (UNWIPO) the jurisdiction in hearing such disputes.

Despite the establishment of the UNWIPO, this complication is a boon for a new generation of protestors and community activists that authors of *Manufacturing Consent* lament are excluded from the mass media. Since anyone can register any domain name or website address as a URL, protest groups can register the names of corporations or organizations whose business practices they find abhorrent and establish their own sites. Hypothetically, if they want to protest the business practices of Talisman Energy in the Sudan, they could register <http://talismanenergy.com> or variations thereof with the -.org, -.net, -.info, -.edu, or -.biz suffixes. So long as the organization puts a disclaimer on the homepage that is not the official site of Talisman Energy, but a site protesting its business practices, and their accusations come from documented sources, they can be protected from prosecution and civil action under the constitutional protections of freedom of speech. If the aforementioned domain and its variations have been registered, they could go as far as registering the URL <http://talismanenergy.com>. During the primary season that serves as lead-in to the 2000 US Presidential election, political activists registered URLs <http://gwb2000.com>, <http://gore2000.com>, <http://mccain2000.com>, among others, and constructed websites to highlight criticisms of the candidates. By way of format, the sites were near carbon copies of the candidates' actual sites with subtle differences. The site <http://gwb2000.com> featured the official campaign photograph of Republican Party candidate George W. Bush with a white line under his left nostril, a not-so subtle reference to accusations that the candidate used to use cocaine. The site <http://gore2000.com> featured Democratic Party candidate Al Gore's photograph with a

helmet from the film *Tron*, supposedly the candidate's favourite film, digitally superimposed on the photograph. The content of the respective sites ranged from critiques of the candidates' platforms to collections of the factual errors, or lies, made in speeches and interviews. Since it was clearly marked that the sites were not the official sites of the candidates, there was no ground for legal action.

What is key to the issue of the Internet and the World Wide Web and their ability to avoid *Manufacturing Consent's* propaganda model is the issue of access. An online venture is the cheapest venture in the mass media. The distribution network – the web – has already been created at someone else's expense. If one is as most community activists tend to be and registered at a university, college, or any other educational facility, access to computers and the Internet is paid for with tuition. Many larger centres and libraries also have community access centres for the Internet. As stated earlier, if one wants to pay to use the Internet and establish a presence on the World Wide Web, it is, in relative terms, incredibly inexpensive. A high capacity computer typically retails for under two thousand dollars, Canadian. Rudimentary web page editing software is bundled into Internet browser software. Access to the Internet through an Internet Service Provider is between twenty and fifty dollars Canadian a month, depending if one uses a dial-up or high-speed broadband connection. Access packages from ISPs typically include 5 megabytes of personal web space. If one desires more space, Internet portals like Yahoo!/Geocities offer free web page hosting with limited functionality. One can always buy hosting from companies such as CVO.ca for between twenty to sixty dollars, depending on size in megabytes required and functionality. There is no other sector of the mass media that one can access with the same capability as large corporations with a

minimum first year investment of less than three thousand dollars and an ongoing operating cost of approximately one hundred dollars a month.

Even if an organization does not want to sell advertising on their site and forgo the propaganda model's second filter of an internal subsidy, the costs are low enough that a decent annual fundraising campaign could raise the sufficient funds. If for some reason an organization has an aversion to such campaigns, PayPal and Amazon.com⁹⁰ operate donation services that allow organizations to collect small voluntary donations from website visitors as secure online transactions. Ultimately, an organization or alternative voice that cannot get into the mass media through the Internet and World Wide Web is either not seriously trying to get on the web or trying seriously to not get on the web.

The truest test of how accessible the Internet and the World Wide Web are is how easily those that cannot afford to be very visible in public are highly visible in cyberspace. The most often heard complaint about the Internet and World Wide Web, at least from parents, is that they are hotbeds of activity for pornography and hatred. While pornography is obviously distasteful to most, it is, for the most part, legal. It is also popular enough that it has been credited with being the deciding factor in competing media formats. Remember Betavision and DIVX? Probably not. The reason these formats failed is, at least in part, because, while the mainstream media was waiting for the market to decide in which format to invest, the pornography industry invested in VHS video in the early 1980s and DVD in the late 1990s. The racist and hate material on the web is more problematic. According to the Simon Wiesenthal Center, on the day of the Oklahoma City bombing; April 16, 1994; there was one racist group on the World Wide Web. In the year 2000, there are over 1800 racist and hate sites promoting their

⁹⁰ Amazon.com; 1996

individual agendas.⁹¹ The tactics of such sites range from making colourful, graphics heavy games sites to attract children to the Klu Klux Klan to the National Alliance, under the direction of William Pierce, posting a false history page about Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. under the URL <http://mlkjr.com>.⁹² Until recently, hate had even found a niche among legitimate online enterprises such as E-Bay, where groups would buy and sell Nazi paraphernalia.

One trend that has recently become very prevalent on the Internet is “blogging”. “Blogging” involves establishing websites that essentially offer critical opinion on other sites news reports. What is interesting about blogging is that it uses all or almost all of the free, or low cost, services available for groups and individuals to get their opinions into the mass media through the Internet. Blogspot.com offers free hosting. The sites are mostly text with few graphics, allowing less powerful computers with lower bandwidth modems to access them easily. For the most part, the “bloggers” themselves are not full time journalists, although some are and make a living from the *Amazon.com Honor Jar* or PayPal’s donation service. Others are full-time academics, such as Instapundit.com’s Glenn Reynolds.⁹³ The *New York Observer* recently credited one blogger, Andrew Sullivan, with framing the debate on the current war on terrorism for the conservative wing of American politics (it attributed the same status to Christopher Hitchens on the left, for among other things marginalizing the followers of Noam Chomsky).

To put this into a less abstract perspective, this author would like to momentarily use some personal experience. While employed at the Atlantic Human Rights at St. Thomas University in Fredericton, New Brunswick, in the summer of 2001, this author

⁹¹ Wiesenhal Center, 2000; Pp. 1 & 2

⁹² Wiesenhal Center, 2001

⁹³ Reynolds; 2001

was tasked with managing an office that was conducting several major projects that had been falling apart due to incompetent support staff and inexperienced co-ordinators.

These projects included:

- The International Conference on the Church, Human Rights, and the Internet (July 28 – 31, 2001)
- The International Conference of Academic Human Rights Centres (August 1 & 2, 2001)
- Human Rights and Ecology Day Adventure (August 3, 2001)
- Summer Institute in Human Rights for Teachers: Teaching FOR and ABOUT Human Rights (August 13 – 17, 2001)
- Developing and launching a human rights Internet portal – <http://humanrightscentral.org> - for banquet of first conference with Fredericton based IT firm CrescentStudios.com (July 29, 2001)
- The International Conference of the International Human Rights Education Consortium (August 17 – 19, 2001)
- Research on Canada's immigration policies with regards to the handling of suspected war criminals for *60 Minutes II* (shelved, by us, after September 11th)

Despite the lack of funds in place – especially any large grants to subsidize travel for selected participants from developing countries – and only the appearance of something resembling a programme for the conferences, the three conferences already had an average of fifty registered participants each. The reason why the conferences had so many participants despite the lack of strong organization was that it was advertised over the Web on the Centre's university-based web page (that was designed on the edit function of Netscape 1.0), <http://www.stthomasu.ca/research/ahrc/AHRC.HTM>, and over human rights education listservs, massive e-mail distribution lists. For us, the Internet and World Wide Web allowed us to metaphorically box above our weight class and compete with larger conferences; such as the United Nations' World Conference Against Racism, Intolerance, and Related Xenophobia; for participants.

While it is true that the mass media corporations have rushed to get on the Internet in the last few years, they cannot necessarily rely on traditional customers to follow them to the World Wide Web. Most World Wide Web consumers are not necessarily looking for traditional content in Web format, either. As the authors of *Manufacturing Consent* argue, the point of the propaganda model is that the mass media is organized to support “special interests” in society and to suppress alternative voices. Thus far, this chapter has shown that the Internet and World Wide Web render that, at the very least, only half true. Due to the Internet and the World Wide Web, there is plenty of room in the mass media for alternative voices – voices that would be supported by the authors of *Manufacturing Consent* and those that only a few could support. The remainder of this chapter will concentrate on who the effects on the mass media due to advent of the Internet and World Wide Web as a tool of mass communication undermine what the author’s refer to as “special interests”.

As was stated in the previous chapter, the authors of *Manufacturing Consent* fail to qualify what actually consists “special interests”. From the examples of particular interests noted in the chapter establishing the propaganda model, one can infer that included in “special interests” are at the very least the military, corporations, and Republicans. Since the original text was written when the Republicans under Ronald Reagan were in control of the Executive branch and many of the listed Republicans were Reagan advisors, it would not be an overgeneralization to infer that the *Manufacturing Consent* definition of “special interest” included the Executive branch or the government, itself. Such a definition, though, would cover almost all sectors of employment in the United States and Canada with the exception of only unincorporated small businesses and

academia (which only applies in the United States since university charters in Canada are governed by particular provinces' statutes). Such a broad definition renders these interests hardly "special".

A better conceptualization and operationalization would be to term what *Manufacturing Consent* terms "special interests" as "power interests". "Power interests" are those interests that are either in positions of authority and power, those interests supporting the aforementioned, those seeking the aforementioned, or those merely seeking access to the aforementioned. This re-conceptualization is necessary to criticize the propaganda model on its merits and faults. If "special interests" remains conceptualized as is, there is simply nothing to criticize. To present every interest as "special" is to assert that no interest is special. If this is such, then the model does not even pass Karl Popper's falsifiability test and is mere astrology.

However, by re-conceptualizing "special interests" as "power interests", we have a particularization of interests as well as flexibility in what is "power interest" and what is a simple interest. For example, since the first publication of the *Manufacturing Consent*, control of the Executive branch has changed three times between two parties. Do the authors of *Manufacturing Consent* wish the reader to think that the Democratic Bill Clinton's administration was any less "special" than the Reagan administration? While the early Clinton administration openly clashed with the military interests, including the Joint Chiefs of Staff, on the issue of homosexual soldiers serving openly and its first Secretary of Defense, Les Aspin, did not last the administration's first full term, it was hardly less special. By some accounts, Bill Clinton had, in fact, largely been elected by neoconservatives frustrated with the Bush administration's foreign policy

failures, especially the failure to topple the Hussein regime of Iraq in Operation: Desert Storm and the Haitian refugee crisis caused by the coup d'état by Gen. Raoul Cedras. Even its open clash with entrenched military interests over the homosexual issue was a result of a new administration learning the ropes wanting to accomplish something while they were waiting to deliver something big, their economic stimulus bill, and needing to please the interests of some gay and lesbian fundraisers in California who had made the issue a prime solicitation point.⁹⁴

The above example serves to show why the *Manufacturing Consent* conceptualization of “special interest” needs to be altered for the purpose of analysis of the propaganda model. *Manufacturing Consent* creates a uniform “special interest” of just about everything that upon rudimentary examination is inherently contradictory. The conceptualization of “power interests” makes allowances for these contradictions.

The new introduction of *Manufacturing Consent* concedes that the Internet was instrumental in organizing protestors in shutting down the 1999 meeting of the World Trade Organization, but argues that the rapid invasion of corporate media has made the Internet into a global distribution system for corporate content.⁹⁵ However, this argument is made with their conceptualization of “special interest”. If one examines the consequences of the Internet in terms of power interests, one can see no sector of the mass media has undermined power interests in society more than the Internet and the World Wide Web. As stated previously, it provides independent media with the unprecedented opportunity to access niche markets that the corporate media do not serve and “box above their weight class”. It allows for the rapid distribution of information between

⁹⁴ Stephanopolous, 1999; Pp. 123 – 128

⁹⁵ Chomsky, Herman; 2000; Pp. xv & xvi

organizations through electronic mail (e-mail). The World Wide Web allows for people to collect news from international sources that they either would not be able to access in print format or not be able to afford (the New York Times costs a little over five dollars in most Canadian sectors). Most importantly, it provides journalists in the corporate media with an alternative venue for those stories that do not get past the pre-existing flaws in the propaganda model. After all, the impeachment saga of US President William Jefferson Clinton began as a story on website, rescued from *Newsweek's* trashcan.

There have generally been three types of mass media ventures on the Internet. The first type of venture could be termed shovel-ware sites. These sites feature exclusively content from existing mass media ventures, such as newspapers and magazines, which have been shovelled onto the World Wide Web. Examples of such websites are the websites for newspapers, like *The New York Times* (URL: <http://www.nytimes.com>) or the *National Post* (URL: <http://www.nationalpost.com>). These ventures typically make their funds from advertising revenues and online subscriptions sales of the original product. The second type of venture could be called community sites. These ventures are typically mostly or all original content. Some of these sites may require the user to subscribe to a free membership account. Others may have some free content, but may require a paid subscription for "premium" content. An example of these types of sites would be *Slate* (URL: <http://www.slate.msn.com>), *Townhall* (URL: <http://www.townhall.com>) and *Salon* (URL: <http://www.salon.com>). The third type of mass media venture on the World Wide Web is the hybrid. These sites feature a mixture of original and reprinted, or redistributed, content. Some of these sites include *National Review Online* (URL: <http://www.nationalreview.com>), *World Net*

Daily (URL: <http://www.worldnetdaily.com>), *World Tribune* (URL: <http://www.worldtribune.com>), *Arts & Letters Daily* (URL: <http://www.aldaily.com>) and the *Drudge Report* (URL: <http://www.drudgereport.com>). These ventures reprint content from their original source, or other ventures' original sources, and offer content exclusive to the World Wide Web. It was exclusive content on the *Drudge Report* that eventually led to the impeachment of a president for the only second time in the history of the United States.

Drudge Report is an excellent example of the effect of the accessibility of the Internet on the mass media. Matt Drudge, a former employee of the CBS Studios gift shop in Los Angeles, established the *Drudge Report* in 1994. It began in his North Hollywood apartment using a 486 Mhz computer from Radio Shack. He refers to his receptionist as AT&T 1876, voicemail.⁹⁶ He still runs it out of his apartment. For a brief time in 1999 he had moved, albeit temporarily, to television on the Fox News cable channel. Like his self-professed hero, Walter Winchell, he couldn't translate his success in one medium to television and his contract was terminated in November of that year. Like Winchell, though, he has successfully moved to radio, hosting an ABC radio networks syndicated Sunday night radio show that is heard throughout the United States.⁹⁷ He was contracted to provide his stories to America Online's Internet news service, a contract that was cancelled when Clinton aide Sidney Blumenthal filed a multi-million dollar defamation suit against both him and AOL. The back cover of his book,

⁹⁶ Drudge, 2001, Pp. 31 – 33

⁹⁷ Hall 2001; P. 134

Drudge Manifesto, contains only the following biographical line: “Matt Drudge is the only reporter ever to be sued by the White House.”⁹⁸

Drudge Report has been phenomenally successful at scooping traditional, or what Drudge generically calls Legacy Media, mass media sources for news. He gets news from eighteen wire services, plus contacts he made while working at CBS. He was inadvertently aided by the Clinton White House of whose junior staff was notorious for leaking information to the press to test public opinion on policy ideas. Case in point is the transcript of a July 1997, six months before Drudge broke the Lewinsky scandal, conversation with an anonymous Clinton White House staffer conducted over AOL Instant Message that serves as the basis for the books prologue. The staffer, identified under the username “Spinner98” messages Drudge to confirm if “Congressman Filner” was arrested overseas. Drudge states that there is nothing on his end other than an article on Filner and tobacco and bridges the “conversation” to the rumoured allegations of a White House volunteer, Kathleen Willey, that when she came to see the President about getting some paid work at the White House after her husband’s sudden death, she was groped by the President. At one point, Drudge baits the Spinner98 with the misidentified name Katherine Whilley. The staffer denies the story, but, in the course of doing so, he accidentally corrects the spelling of her name. In doing so, Spinner98 inadvertently confirmed the allegations and accidentally added that John Podesta, White House Chief of Staff, wondered if Michael Isikoff was still doing his *Newsweek* story on it.⁹⁹

In trying to get blackmail material on a Congressman, Spinner98 inadvertently confirmed to a reporter, Drudge, that someone was making allegations against his

⁹⁸ Drudge, 2001, from the dust jacket back flap.

⁹⁹ Ibid, Pp. 3 - 6

employer, the President of the United States, that could be interpreted as allegations of sexual assault *and* that the White House had convinced one of the main organs of the mass media to kill the story. Had Drudge wanted to, he could of done a quick update of his website with a story on the allegations crediting anonymous sources and included the part about *Newsweek* “spiking” the story (He later did this only to find out the story was spiked because Willey would not substantiate her claims to *Newsweek*, but she did substantiate them later after the Lewinsky scandal broke). He did it before, being the first to report, among other things, that Bob Dole was going to choose Jack Kemp as his running mate for the 1996 Presidential Election, that Connie Chung was going to be fired as the co-anchor of the CBS Evening News, and that NBC and Microsoft would combine forces to form the cable news network MSNBC.¹⁰⁰

This is how the Internet has changed journalism in the mass media. The news cycle, the number of times a story is repeated until it’s either updated or no longer newsworthy, has shrunk to the point where it is only as long the journalist can type the update. He received the Dole tip from a source in the campaign and the MSNBC tip from a segment producer on *Saturday Night Live* who overheard the news in the elevator at NBC’s New York headquarters. By producing exclusively for a World Wide Web audience, he can easily update a story immediately as more information becomes available or retract a story that did not pan out. There are no presses to stop, no footage to edit. He only needs to type, check his spelling, and load it to the webpage. As Drudge states, “You can take on the Big Boys between flushes.”¹⁰¹

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., P. 31

¹⁰¹ Ibid., P. 24

In *Online Journalism: A Critical Primer*, Jim Hall of Falmouth College refers to Drudge as a “muckraker and whistle-blower on the hypocrisies and abuses of the powerful”¹⁰² and “a throwback to the radical press which the citizen-journalist had immediate access to, and indeed often owned, the means of production.”¹⁰³ Hall alludes to a time like Revolutionary France where radical ideas like democracy and republicanism were promoted by the nouveau riche who owned their own press and could disseminate their thoughts directly to the literate middle classes. Hall states, “Drudge refuses to discriminate and moves to his next ‘exclusive’.”¹⁰⁴ In his guarded analysis of Drudge and examination of the compression of news cycles, he neglects the facts that Drudge does attempt to corroborate his stories like a traditional journalist and does not rush to the press, or the page in this case, with every piece of gossip to come from an anonymous source over AIM. In his *Drudge Manifesto*, Drudge details that the first piece of information that he received about US President Bill Clinton possibly having an affair was November 27, 1997. He received a confidential e-mail that the President was having an affair with a former intern. Instead of posting it, he discarded it, recalling, “The tip isn’t anything special, I decide. I’ve received so many, after all.”¹⁰⁵ Instead, that night, he scooped the mass media again, reporting that a big contributor to the Clinton presidential campaign who had been buried in Arlington National Cemetery had falsified his service record.¹⁰⁶

The story would remain discarded for months. It was only when the same source contacted him on January 17, 1998, the day Clinton was deposed in the discovery phase

¹⁰² Hall, 2001; P. 133

¹⁰³ Ibid

¹⁰⁴ Ibid.; P. 129

¹⁰⁵ Drudge, 2001; P. 52

¹⁰⁶ Ibid.

of a sexual harassment civil suit filed by a former State of Arkansas employee, Paula Jones. This time the writer convinced Drudge that not only did the President have an affair with a former intern; he had just lied about it under oath (an impeachable offence) in the deposition, and that David Isikoff of *Newsweek* had taped evidence from an informant – Linda Tripp – of the affair and was writing an article on it. Hours later, Larry Nichols, one of the original whistleblowers on the Clinton Whitewater land dealings, called Drudge to see if he knew anything about “the intern”. “The receptionist” took it. He called Isikoff in Washington, but it was already after midnight in that time zone and his wife, who answered the phone wouldn’t wake him. He called a book agent, Lucianne Goldberg, whom the original e-mail said knew everything. Goldberg not only revealed the intern’s name as Monica Lewinsky, but also that she had the intern’s resume, and that *Newsweek* had “spiked” – decided not to publish – the story.¹⁰⁷

Hall argues that *Newsweek* spiked the story due to editorial uncertainty about the provenance of the tapes and also at the request of the Special Prosecutor Kenneth Starr, who was investigating a variety of White House scandals associated with a business deal in the President’s home state of Arkansas.¹⁰⁸ It could have been spiked because oft-discussed liberal media bias that conservatives frequently lament. The reasons are rather inconsequential. Once *Drudge Report* published its article on the possible perjury of the President and the possible suborned perjury of the intern, *Newsweek* was forced by the mass interest in the story, and the embarrassment of being known to have spiked it, to publish a fuller version of the story on their website.¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁷ Ibid. Pp. 53 - 59

¹⁰⁸ Hall; 2001; P. 129

¹⁰⁹ Ibid

What followed was political and media firestorm that paralysed the United States government for over a year. When the House of Representatives Judiciary Committee released the Starr Report on August 10th, 1998, it was first released to the public through the Internet. Those that tuned into the live coverage on cable news channels saw the journalists reading the report from the Internet. In a subtle way, television surrendered. On December 15th, 1998, the House of Representatives impeached US President Bill Clinton, only the second impeachment since Andrew Johnson in 1867. The Senate trial phase of the impeachment process, though, did not result in the two-thirds majority vote to convict.

Despite the acquittal, the damage was done. Any major action undertaken during the scandal, often referred to as Monicagate or Zippergate, was seen as an attempt to shift the news off the scandal. It did not help that in mid-December, 1997, a film, *Wag the Dog*, was released to a limited number of theatres. It was about a spin-doctor (Robert DeNiro) who employs a Hollywood producer (Dustin Hoffman) to manipulate the news media to think that America is at war in Albania in order to cover up a an accusation of sexual assault against the President by a member of the fictional equivalent to the Brownies days before the election. After the scandal broke, the distributors sent it to wide release. Actions, such as simultaneously dispatching cruise missiles to an al Qaeda training camp in Afghanistan that the CIA originally built to train mujihadeen rebels during the Soviet occupation and the Al Shifa pharmaceutical plant in Somalia, were greeted with derision and a new catchphrase, “wag the dog”.¹¹⁰ At the same time, Slobodan Milosivec began a campaign of ethnic cleansing of ethnic Albanians in the southern Yugoslav province of Kosovo, and the Clinton administration would only send

¹¹⁰ Hitchens, 1999; P. 88

NATO observers. After the acquittal, any major Clinton action, whether it was the illegal war with Yugoslavia (in a year the country went from a movie about a fictional war with Albania to suppress coverage of a sex scandal to a real war over Albanians to make us forget a sex scandal) or Middle East peace talks, was an attempt to “write his legacy” or “secure his spot in the history books”, an attempt to be remembered for something other than Monica Lewinsky and her dress. Even his vice-president, Al Gore, who had begun campaigning for the Democratic nomination to succeed him, would not talk about the president or the scandal until mid-2000, after he had secured the nomination. Bill Clinton had become a lame duck president.

The consequences for the media of the rise of online journalism have yet to be fully realized, but some general consequences are beginning to appear. The first consequence is that the weekly news magazine has become moribund. With the rapid turnover of the Internet and cable news journalism, news is old by the time the morning newspaper gets to the stands. As stated in the previous chapter, the speed of Internet publication allowed online journalists to publish instantly as the September 11th attack unfolded. An even more recent example would be *New Republic*'s cover story of November 12, 2001, “Losing the War”, with a caricature of President George W. Bush under a Daisy Cutter bomb. The articles contained within criticized the administration for repeating the previous administration's mistakes and for having not already removed the Taliban from power.¹¹¹ Two days later, before many subscribers would have received their copies through the mail, the Afghan capital of Kabul fell to the Northern Alliance, effectively removing the Taliban from power in Afghanistan. With the advent of the Internet, by the time the morning newspaper arrives at the doorstep or on the stands, it is

¹¹¹ Kaplan, 2001; from the electronic edition.

old news. The institution of the weekly newsmagazine must be re-invigorated by concentrating more on in-depth analysis of current affairs than on current affairs in and of themselves.

A second consequence that has begun to appear is the issue of source and story confirmation. This is more of the effect of the Internet on the mass media than the Internet itself. Since an Internet based news venture can be updated in minutes, the operator can afford to wait longer in confirming sources and stories as once the story is confirmed the downtime in publishing is only as long as the operator takes typing and uploading it. As argued earlier, the traditional media have to produce a physical item – an audio- or videotape, a newspaper or magazine – to publish their news item. Advances in multimedia technology have made news production easier and faster, but nowhere near the turn around time of the Internet. If an Internet news source published a false rumour, committed libel or slander, the operator, if he or she is willing, can publish a retraction and apology in the same amount of time as the original slander. Matt Drudge did such when he published rumours that Clinton administration staff member Sydney Blumenthal had been accused of spousal abuse. When the rumours turned out to be false and had originated almost two decades ago while Blumenthal was a journalist with *Vanity Fair*, Drudge retracted the story on the website and apologized later that day in an interview with the *Washington Post*. In a move perceived to be an attempt by the Clinton administration to discover Drudge's sources, Blumenthal sued but later withdrew the suit and paid Drudge's legal costs when the presiding judge ruled that Drudge had the same first amendment protections as a traditional journalist in regards to the revelation of sources.

The traditional mass media is slower to react to accusations of libel and slander than they are in producing it. The reason for this is partly to maintain an image of professionalism. The mass media does report rumour as much, if not more so, than Internet journalism. Like Internet journalism, the mass media passes on rumour as “unspecified sources” because the journalists know the sources and trust them, even if they are wrong. No one will take the news media seriously if it is constantly apologizing to everyone it offends. Likewise, no source will come forward, even under condition of anonymity, if the mass media reverses its position on the sources’ validity every time it is contradicted. Often those that have been legitimately defamed must turn to the courts to seek redress. When two pipe bombs stored in backpack went off at Olympic Park in Atlanta, Georgia, killing one (the cameraman filming the wounded also died of a heart attack during the ensuing chaos) there were no immediate suspects. The traditional mass media, acting on leak from an anonymous source in the Federal Bureau of Investigation, zeroed in on a park security guard, Richard Jewell, as their suspect. The ensuing coverage followed the FBI as they searched Jewell’s home, uncovering nothing, and interviews with former co-workers, who apparently never liked the guy. After, a few weeks of press coverage and a year without leads, the FBI moved on to a suspect already on their Most Wanted List for bombing an Atlanta abortion clinic a year earlier, two abortion clinics and a lesbian nightclub afterwards, Eric Rudolph.¹¹² Before September 11th, Rudolph was number one on the FBI’s List to Osama bin Laden’s number two. After a Congressional inquiry into the FBI’s handling of the Olympic Park bombing and with no apologies forthcoming from the mass media, Jewell filed defamation of character suits against CNN, NBC, ABC, and CBS. All cases are on hold while negotiations for

¹¹² CNN, 2002

out of court settlements proceed. In fact, a recent edition of *CNN Presents* documenting the ongoing hunt for Eric Rudolph did not mention the name “Richard Jewell” while documenting the investigation of the Olympic Park bombing.¹¹³

Many of the elite eschew the *Drudge Report* for its “tabloid” style of journalism. Despite the aforementioned example of Richard Jewell and their attempts to keep up with the Internet during Monicagate, those that run the mass media officially despise reporting rumour. For those that don’t like the lowbrow *Drudge Report*, the seemingly limitless expanse of cyberspace offers alternatives. The *National Post*’s Robert Fulford recently highlighted one site, *Arts & Letters Daily*, which links, with synopses, articles that already available free online. It is run by Denis Dutton, professor of philosophy at the University of Canterbury in Christchurch, New Zealand. Says Fulford of the Internet, in general, and *Arts & Letters Daily*, in particular:

The Web has decentralized the control of ideas, as A&LD proves. A few years ago the exchange of opinions and theories had to be managed by people living in great metropolitan centres, the intellectual world’s version of imperialism. But with the web it can be done anywhere. The idea of Christchurch, New Zealand, as the thought-control centre of the universe has both charm and originality.¹¹⁴

A further observation of Fulford’s regards how the Internet is changing relationship between the audience and author. Fulford notes that since many newspaper and magazine articles on the World Wide Web now include the e-mail address of the author, the relationship between writer and reader has already intensified among those who read a particular publication on a regular basis. One only need double click on the e-mail address at the end of the article, write a message to the author, and click send. He notes that a site like *Arts & Letters Daily* adds an extra dimension. If one is included on

¹¹³ Ibid

¹¹⁴ Fulford; 2002;

such a site, you may learn about it by getting e-mail from someone in Helsinki or Johannesburg. In addition to his own experiences about being included on the site, he discusses the experience of *Post* colleague Jeannie Marshall when her piece on reading anxiety – the feeling that it's impossible to keep up with what we want to read or feel we should – was included on the site:

After A&LD included that piece, e-mails began pouring in into Marshall's computer from all over the world, maybe 100 in all. It was the perfect article for A&LD, whose entire audience likely suffers reading anxiety at least sometimes. She heard from university professors in England, a policeman in New York and a 14-year-old girl who was relieved to know that others shared her own uneasiness.¹¹⁵

The genie is out of the bottle. What was once a project of the military-industrial complex is now regularly employed to undermine the military-industrial complex. The Internet and the World Wide Web have thus far presented unlimited opportunities for grassroots and community organizations to access the mass media. No sector of the mass media is less cost prohibitive to enter into and maintain a presence in than the Internet and World Wide Web. For less than the cost of a recently used automobile, one can reach a global audience. The Internet has been the virtual meeting place for grassroots and community organizations to organize protests and demonstrations, some of which have resulted in interrupting the meetings of major multinational organizations like the World Trade Organization. The advent of the Internet and the World Wide Web has allowed small organizations and individuals to effectively compete against the large mass media corporations in the field of journalism. The open competitiveness of online journalism has resulted in stories previously spiked by the corporate media brought back to life by small, often one man, Internet-based journalist ventures. One such story resulted in only the second impeachment of a President of the United States. The Internet

¹¹⁵ Ibid.

does not exclude minority interests from the mass media. Its accessibility encourages their inclusion. The Internet and the World Wide Web does not support special interests, as the authors conceptualize it, in society. The open accessibility and competitiveness of the Internet and World Wide Web has actually openly undermined the authors' special interests. The Internet and the World Wide Web has allowed news stories that did not originally make it through the corporate mass media to be brought to public attention and has forced the corporate mass media to report stories that it had previously spiked. The Internet and the World Wide Web have eliminated the filters of the propaganda model.

Chapter 4 – Individuals Count: Owners are not that subtle

The idea that the mass media influences public opinion did not begin with the publication of *Manufacturing Consent*. It is an old idea. The title, in fact, comes from Walter Lippman's 1921 work, *Public Opinion*.¹¹⁶ Where *Manufacturing Consent* establishes new ground is in its political economy approach. This approach, however, concentrates on systems rather than individuals. In fact, in the establishment of the propaganda model, the only time individuals are mentioned is in association with organizations that generate flak – condemnation of organizations based on their neoconservative supporters more than their activities. As was described in the introductory chapter, ownership is a predominant part of the propaganda model, the first filter in particular. As argued in the second chapter, however, the issue of ownership is dealt with in an exclusively quantitative way. This chapter will examine ownership in the mass media through the owners in a qualitative fashion and show that the owners of the mass media, themselves, direct the mass media more so than a system of internalized policies.

¹¹⁶ Chomsky, Hermann; 1988; lix

Manufacturing Consent dismisses the issue of individuals and their biases as a factor in the shape of the news almost immediately. It argues that, as a group, the “powerful are able to fix the premises of discourse”¹¹⁷, and “to decide what the general populace is allowed to see, hear, and think”¹¹⁸. At the same time, they defend themselves strenuously from the potential accusation of conspiracy theory. They also reject any argument that the reporters in the mass media has a liberal bias explains, even in part, the content of the news:

Neoconservative critiques of the mass media commonly portray them as bastions of liberal, antiestablishment attacks on the system. They ignore the fact that the mass media are large business corporations controlled by wealthy individuals or other corporations, and that the members of what the neoconservatives describe as the “liberal culture” of the media are hired employees. They also disregard the fact that the members of this liberal culture generally accept the basic premises of the system and differ with other members of the establishment largely on the tactics appropriate to achieving common ends.¹¹⁹

In fact, the new introduction emphasizes that the propaganda model results in owners hiring journalists who are most like them.¹²⁰

These arguments, though, do not adequately deal with the arguments of active and former journalists such as admitted liberal Bernard Goldberg, who argues that the mass media is biased and on issues such as the AIDS “epidemic” and homelessness does the job of left-wing lobby organizations¹²¹ and failed to report on the rise of Islamic fundamentalist terrorism abroad while they linked the cause of terrorism in the wake of Oklahoma City to Republicans¹²².

¹¹⁷ Ibid

¹¹⁸ Ibid

¹¹⁹ Ibid, P. 332

¹²⁰ Ibid, xlix

¹²¹ Goldberg; 2002; Pp. 63 – 96

¹²² Ibid, Pp. 195 – 206

It also assumes that the wealthy individuals or the individuals that control the corporations that own the mass media actually hire the reporters. As was argued in the second chapter, the size of these corporations is now such that if the individual owners and the individuals in charge of the corporation that owns the media are individually hiring individual journalists that it is the exception rather than the rule. The mass media corporations are simply too large for owners to engage in mundane details such as hiring of reporters. For the most part, this duty is delegated to news directors, producers, publishers, and editors, the lowest levels of management in the overall corporate structure.

Even if who the owners of the media surround themselves with mattered, the authors of *Manufacturing Consent* task propaganda model with describing the mass media in structural terms based on the output of the media not who works for who. It is what the owners do with their corporations that matter.

The idea of owners directing their media and the concern of it are recurring themes in popular culture, especially, feature films. Two films, one classic and one recent, reflect the most common concerns of the mass media. The classic film, *Citizen Kane*, features a scene where the title character, the newspaper publisher Charles Foster Kane played by Orson Welles, fires his friend who started the newspaper with for comments he made while intoxicated. The friend became intoxicated because he needed hard liquor to bring himself to write a positive review of the awful Broadway musical that Kane had produced as a starring vehicle for his mistress. *Citizen Kane* represents the fear that the mass media will be used as, to use the terminology of *Manufacturing Consent*, propaganda for its other products, especially the substandard and dangerous

ones. A more recent film in this vein is the James Bond film *Tomorrow Never Dies*. In this film, the seventh instalment of the Bond series, the British secret agent has to thwart a media tycoon who is trying to start a war between Britain and China to overthrow the current regime in favour of a general who will give his corporation exclusive broadcast rights for mainland China for a century. *Tomorrow Never Dies* represents the concern that the mass media and trans-national corporations have become more powerful than the government.

In addition to being allegorical to the concern of the owners, these films also resemble the actions of the owners of their respective time to an eerie degree. *Citizen Kane* is a film about a journalist exploring the life of newspaper baron who dies in the beginning of the film – Charles Foster Kane played by writer, director Orson Welles in his first film. For a story about Kane's life, the journalist tracks down former friends of Kane to discover the meaning of the baron's dying words "rosebud". He discovers that Kane was born to a poor family and given up in a private adoption to a rich newspaper family. The journalist is told by former friend after former friend how Kane alienated himself from loved ones in his drive to seek acceptance. The journalist never discovers the meaning of "rosebud", but the audience does. The final shot of the film is a sweeping shot of Kane's possessions being destroyed because he has no heirs and no one could afford to purchase them. The shot ends focusing on a sled tossed on the fire with the word "rosebud" painted on it.¹²³

Citizen Kane is really a film about William Randolph Hearst, founder of the Hearst media empire. The original script that Welles co-authored with Herman Menkowitz was based on a draft script that Menkowitz had written about Hearst, his

¹²³ Welles, 1941

mistress, and his extravagant lifestyle. Like the fictional Kane, Hearst left his wife for a failed actress, used his newspapers to promote her career, and used all his wealth to build a modern palace – Hearst’s Shangri La to Kane’s Xanadu.

While the similarities between Kane and Hearst are incredible, they are incredible because they were intended to be incredibly similar. For the purpose of this chapter, it is the actions of William Randolph Hearst that are at issue. After viewing a rough cut of *Citizen Kane* that he received by bribing a worker at the production studio, RKO Pictures, he immediately had his papers write damning reviews of the film that would later be named by the American Film Institute as the best American picture ever. His efforts were complicated by the impending bankruptcy of his corporate empire. Not wanting the film to even make it to theatres, he allegedly decided to use his influence to convince the bosses of the other film studios make a joint offer to RKO Pictures to buy the film and shelve it. It was only a direct plea from Welles, himself, to the Board of Directors of RKO Pictures that prevented the sale from being approved. The film was released to mixed reviews, Hearst’s and everyone else’s, only modest box office returns, and failed to win the Best Picture Oscar. Still, several American and international critics associations would later be consider it the best film ever.¹²⁴

Tomorrow Never Dies probably has as much to do with espionage as *Star Wars* has to do with space exploration, but its parallels with real-life media moguls are worth exploring. While there was no corporation sponsored coup d’etat in China, News Corporation chairman and Chief Executive Officer Rupert Murdoch made gaining monopoly broadcast rights to the Chinese market for his corporation’s Star Vision television broadcaster a personal mission. News Corporation spent over two billion

¹²⁴ Epstein, Lennon; 1995

dollars in its bid for exclusive broadcast rights. He used speaking engagements to endorse China's "one child" policy – the population control program that has resulted in coerced abortions and forced sterilizations of millions of millions of women – and condemn the Falun Gong, a religious cult with anti-modernity beliefs that China has outlawed, and the nationalist government of Taiwan, which China regards as a renegade province. Even Murdoch's sons, all of whom are vice-presidents of News Corporation, have used public engagements to condemn the Falun Gong and Taiwanese nationalists. Some critics even believe that Murdoch's divorce and rapid remarriage to a Chinese woman was a move further New Corporation's bid in the eyes of Beijing.

Murdoch has a track record of personally directing his corporations to achieve his goals. He set a precedent of mixing his personal and corporate affairs when he acquired American citizenship to get around the United States' rules on foreign ownership of American corporations that would have limited his stake in the Fox television network to twenty percent. When the US Federal Communications Commission was preparing to investigate a controversial expansion of Fox television – thirteen CBS affiliates switched to Fox in the summer of 1995 – HarperCollins, News Corporations publishing house, offered US Speaker of the House of Representatives Newt Gingrich a 4.5 million dollar contract for two books.¹²⁵

Two actions show Murdoch's motives, when the Chinese objected to the British Broadcasting Corporations's coverage of the Tiannamen Square Massacre, Murdoch cancelled the contract between the BBC and Star TV. Second, publisher HarperCollins purchased the publication rights to the memoirs of Christopher Patten, Britain's last governor to Hong Kong before the 1997 handover to China, only to not publish the final

¹²⁵ Bell, 2001

draft, *East and West: China, Power, and the Future of Asia*. Some have accused News Corporation and Murdoch, in particular, of buying the rights to the memoir, an agreement which Murdoch's son negotiated, with no intention of ever publishing it. Patten took book to rival publisher Macmillan. The belief, at the time, was that the former governor's memoirs would have been very anti-Communist China and have angered Beijing whoever published it. In it, Patten argues that the West should refuse to kowtow to China, as there is no correlation to bending to Beijing and benefiting economically. By buying and shelving the memoirs, Murdoch is believed to have raised his level of influence with the Communist hierarchy. It, however, cost HarperCollins a senior editor, several authors, a lawsuit from Patten, lost sales, and a tarnished reputation.¹²⁶ It also earned Murdoch the nickname "whore of the East".¹²⁷

Rupert Murdoch was not alone in directing his particular corporation to achieve a personal goal, or this particular goal either. AOL Time-Warner was openly competing with Murdoch's News Corporation for broadcast rights to the Chinese market. Vice-President Ted Turner openly declared that China's "one child" policy was necessary and good. Chief Executive Officer Gerald R. Levin stated at a shareholders meeting that AOL Time-Warner was prepared to accept censorship to gain entry into the Chinese market. As stated in Chapter 2, AOL Time-Warner was ultimately successful in its bid to enter the Chinese market.¹²⁸ There has been no announcement on the status of News Corporation's bid. In a possible sign of the financial drain of the China bid on News Corporation, it recently pulled out of a bidding war over direct-to-home satellite television provider DirectTV with Echostar Communications.

¹²⁶ MacLeod, 1998

¹²⁷ Barnathan, 1998

¹²⁸ McDonald, 2001

While only capitalists could imagine competing to do business with a group of people that at least for a time sought their destruction, the overt acts of individual owners are not restricted to entering emerging markets. Early in her tenure as publisher of the *Washington Post*, Katherine Graham entered into a feud with senior officials in the Nixon Administration. It was Graham who gave *Post* editor-in-chief Ben Bradlee and the investigative team of Bob Woodward and Carl Bernstein the latitude to investigate connections between a 1972 break and enter in Democratic National Committee campaign headquarters in the Watergate hotel and the Nixon's Presidential re-election campaign. The ensuing scandal led Nixon to resign in 1974.

When it comes to owners directing their media corporations to achieve personal goals, Canada, with its relatively small population and smaller mass media, may allow for better examples. With a comparatively small mass media, there are fewer opportunities for journalists. Fewer opportunities mean fewer avenues for alternative employment if one does not want to obey the edicts of the employer. In fact, by observing recent developments in the Canadian mass media, Canada can serve as example of the positive aspects of a truly "mass" media. The mobility and employability of the journalist is one of the keys to the concept of journalistic independence. Theoretically, if a reporter has even the slightest following and is in a fight with management or feels that management is interfering with him, he can use the threat of moving to a competitor to his advantage. In a small media market like Canada, there are only very few journalists can do this. Robert Fulford moved his column from *The Globe and Mail* to the *National Post*. Tom Clarke left the CBC's Parliament bureau for CTV's London bureau. These are exceptions, though. Fulford is one of Canada's elite veteran journalists and probably one

of the few that can between companies with relative ease. CTV approached Clarke to fill a vacancy.

The *National Post* is one of the best examples of owners trying to use the influence of their corporate media to influence society and one of the best examples of their failure to achieve it. Launched in 1996, the *National Post* was intended to be the national flagship of Conrad Black's Southam/Hollinger newspaper chain. In truth, Southam/Hollinger did not have a daily newspaper in the lucrative Toronto market, but did have the, but that market was saturated by four well-entrenched daily newspapers and Southam/Hollinger's business paper, *the Financial Post*. The only way to enter the Toronto market was to merge any new paper with the *Financial Post* and make it a national newspaper differentiate the paper from the other Toronto dailies and compete directly with only newspaper – *The Globe & Mail*, then Canada's only national newspaper.

Regardless of the business reasons for starting a national newspaper, it was largely considered by media critics to be a new vehicle for a neo-conservative to promote his views. To the extent that Black hired conservatives as editors, publishers, and columnists, there is some merit to the accusation. However, William Thorsell, editor-in-chief of *The Globe and Mail*, had a well-documented friendship with Progressive Conservative Prime Minister Brian Mulroney, but that friendship did not stop the journalistic staff of *The Globe & Mail* from investigating accusations against the Mulroney government of conflict of interest and influence peddling. Black did, from time to time, use his newspapers to publish his personal political views. However, compared to the current owners, this was an infrequent occurrence that was usually in

response to attacks on him in competing media. In a recent column against the current ownership of *The National Post*, St. Mary's University Journalism professor and former columnist for Southam-owned *Halifax Daily News* credited Black's ownership of the chain for allowing its columnists to criticize editorial policy, business decisions, and, within some flexible limits, Black himself.¹²⁹

Despite Kimber's praise of the flexibility of the Black-owned Southam press, Black himself often authored occasional opinion pieces that would run in all Black-owned papers that attacked his critics and his friends' detractors. Such pieces would lead groups like the Council of Canadians to lobby for a Royal Commission on media ownership, not unlike the 1981 Davey Commission, to investigate the effects of concentrated media ownership.¹³⁰ Members of the editorial staff were culled from the ranks of the Progressive Conservative and Reform Parties. Editorial policy was notoriously anti-Liberal government. The *Post's* Andrew MacIntosh and the Southam-owned *Ottawa Citizen's* Lawrence Martin were the most vociferous investigators of Prime Minister Chretien's land dealings and the Human Resources Development Canada Jobs Canada scandal. Under Black's ownership, editorials on the state of the opposition were anti-Jean Charest, anti-Joe Clark, and anti-Progressive Conservative. *Post* publisher Peter White was on the steering committee of the United Alternative, the transition between the Reform Party and the Canadian Alliance, served as co-chair of the Canadian Alliance 2000 election campaign, and, until summer 2001, served as the head of the Canadian Alliance Fund, the party's fundraising arm. Some semi-regular commentators

¹²⁹ Kimber, 2002

¹³⁰ Barlow, 1996

in the *National Post*, like Joe Pedishillio, were Canadian Alliance candidates in the 2000 election.

There was nothing systemic or political economy about it. Black used his newspapers to attack the governing Liberals. In doing, so his papers uncovered several misdoings and, while not dislodging the government, served as a check on the government that a divided opposition was unable to perform.

The province of New Brunswick is a good example of the dangers of concentrated media ownership. The Irving Corporation owns all three English-language daily newspapers – *The Fredericton Daily Gleaner*, *the Saint John Telegraph Journal*, and *The Moncton Times & Transcript* – and has just purchased a minority stake in three independent English language weekly papers – *The Mirimachi Leader*, *the Woodstock Bugle*, and *the Kings County Record*. At one point, it even owned CHSJ Television – the New Brunswick English-language CBC affiliate – and MITV – a Maritime regional network, but has since sold the latter to CanWest and the former back to the CBC. Irving was founded by the late industrialist K.C. Irving who began in the petroleum industry, and branched into forestry, transportation, and newspapers. K.C. Irving, like most corporate leaders, was noteworthy as someone who always managed to be on the side of the government regardless of the party in power. That changed once his granddaughter married Paul Zed, Liberal activist and Member of Parliament for Fundy-Royal between 1993-97. The most evident act of this was the weekend before the 1997 election, when *Telegraph Journal* publisher Arthur Irving, K.C.'s son and Zed's father-in-law, wrote an attack on his own editors for their pro-Jean Charest stance that ran on the front page. Once again, owners base their decisions on their base interests.

In an editorial criticizing Council of Canadians president Maude Barlow and her aforementioned demand for a Royal Commission on media ownership, the *Telegraph Journal* stated, “And those, not incidentally, are those who oppose Mr. Black’s right-wing views. We can’t help but wonder how loudly they’d be complaining if newspapers were being bought by someone on the left.”¹³¹ The proof of this was when Black sold his *National Post*, along with the Southam/Hollinger press and the Canada.com Internet portal, to CanWest Global Communications, owned by the Asper family of Winnipeg. The Aspers are the polar opposite of Black and are highly connected to the governing Liberals. Family patriarch Israel Asper is a former leader of the Manitoba Liberal Party. At the time of the purchase, those that criticized Mr. Black’s concentration of ownership of the print media did not decry the purchase of Mr. Black’s Canadian newspapers by a television media corporation with ties to the government and had already stated positions that the government should privatize crown corporations, especially their competitor the CBC.

That changed when David Asper, chairman of the publications committee at CanWest Global Communications, wrote his now infamous “put up or shut up” commentary which ran in all Southam/Hollinger papers. Asper attacked his own journalists and Progressive Conservative Party leader Joe Clark for accusing Chretien of illegal land dealings without any evidence.¹³² The NDP demanded a public inquiry into media concentration. The government gave vague promises that the matter would be referred to the House of Commons Heritage Committee. *Ottawa Citizen* journalist

¹³¹ *Telegraph Journal*, 1996

¹³² Asper, 2001

Lawrence Martin wrote two pages on his investigation to counter Asper's claims, but they were not published.¹³³ Martin's contract expired months later and was not renewed.

The Asper letter was not an aberration. It has essentially become editorial policy. In December 2001, CanWest-owned Southam News began a policy of occasional national editorials, editorials written under the Southam News byline – in actuality Southam News Editor – in – Chief Murdoch Davis – that would run in all fourteen Southam newspapers. The argument from the owners is that it is owners' prerogative to determine editorial voice.¹³⁴ After the experience of Conrad Black, it is hard to argue with that. However, if one considers the March 2001 David Asper letter as a test case for national editorials, the consequences for journalists that contradict editorial policy have already been determined. A weaker argument on the part of owners and managers is that they want to draw Canadians from coast to coast into a national discourse.¹³⁵ This is a weak argument because Southam has a national newspaper as the chain's flagship, the aforementioned *National Post*. If they wanted to engage in a national discourse, aggressive marketing of the national newspaper would be sufficient.

Regardless of Southam's stated position that it would not limit other commentators, several events have unfolded that puts this into doubt. To protest the decision, reporters for the *Montreal Gazette* refused to sign their bylines. As stated earlier, *Halifax Daily News* columnist and director of the school of journalism at University of King's College Stephen Kimber quit his Southam paper column after his column on the management of CanWest and its national editorial policy was spiked by

¹³³ Zolf, 2001

¹³⁴ Davis, 2002

¹³⁵ Ibid

the local editor.¹³⁶ Peter Worthington, of Southam competitor *Toronto Sun*, had his syndicated column dropped from a Southam owned Windsor daily paper after criticizing the policy. Doug Cuthand, a native Canadian journalist and columnist for Southam daily papers in Saskatoon and Regina, resigned after a column where he admitted to a sympathetic point of view towards the Palestinians, stating, "... I see them as the Indians of the Middle East."¹³⁷

Murdoch Davis argues that many of these columns had false information and were poorly researched. Declining to run a poor column is not censorship. It is not censorship when a journalist chooses to quit, either.¹³⁸ Kimber was only a part-time writer. Worthington's columns already run in the Sun Media papers. Cuthand was a freelancer. Davis further argues that these editorial decisions were made locally and that Southam head office in Winnipeg did not find out about them until after they were made. The concern of Southam's critics, though, is that these decisions are being made locally to pre-empt action from head office. According to Peter Debarats, former dean of journalism at the University of Western Ontario and a former Ottawa bureau chief for Global TV, the Aspers and their subordinates should address this question, stating, "Repeating a stubborn defence of a simplified version of publisher's rights just confirms their critics worst fears."¹³⁹

Manufacturing Consent argues that the mass media is structured in a way that independent voices are suppressed and special interests are supported. The propaganda model is that structure. This chapter argues that it just is not that subtle. By examining

¹³⁶ Kimber, 2002

¹³⁷ as quoted in Desbarats, 2002

¹³⁸ Davis, 2002

¹³⁹ Desbarats, 2002

the action of owners of media corporations both local, national, and international, this chapter has shown that when the owners of the media have direct managerial control over their corporations, they act to further the interest of their owners not in some systematic, structural way. The inability of owners to effectively communicate their own policies in light of their actions, though, leaves the ground fertile to theories such as the propaganda model. This chapter, though shows that it is simply not that subtle.

Chapter Five – The *Federalist* Model

The regime of a nation is essential in the construction of its national media. For example, as stated earlier, only in a liberal-democratic regime could the authors write something as critical of fundamental institutions as *Manufacturing Consent* or have had the careers that they have had. The authors of *Manufacturing Consent* only allude to the connection between regime and media in that in the United States the Federal Communications Commission is a government agency that holds a monopoly on the licences for all television and radio broadcasters as well as a stage in the government approval process of sales and mergers of communications companies. The authors argue that this process ties the mass media and government together at the hip.¹⁴⁰ This is overly simplistic as it only encompasses the relationship between regulator and industry. It does not deal with the effect of a particular regime on a particular society. One cannot understand the United States of America, its politics, or those that report on them, without understanding the principles of the regime, in and of itself. By examining the principles of the American regime, as enumerated in the *Federalist Papers*, what the

¹⁴⁰ Chomsky, Herman; 1988, P. 9

authors of *Manufacturing Consent* term deficiencies in the mass media are actually intentional consequences of the regime rather than the media.

The *Federalist Papers* represent a unique body of work. They are a series of op-ed pieces published under the pseudonym “Publius” in regular intervals in New York City newspapers between October 27, 1787, and August 16, 1788 by the principle authors of the Federalist constitution of the United States of America: Alexander Hamilton, James Madison, and John Jay. The intended purpose of the *Federalist Papers* was to pressure New York governor George Clinton to ratify the Federalist Constitution.¹⁴¹ However, it serves a larger purpose of explaining American government and the vision of America held by its founders.

The founders of what is now the United States of America had two difficult tasks. First, they had to secure their independence by removing England as the colonial governing power. This was accomplished by sword and musket on the battlefield. Second, they had to incorporate thirteen politically and culturally separate colonies into one functional political unit. While the difficulty of either can only be measured in relative terms, they achieved the first task with one revolution. It took two constitutions to achieve the second task.

The first American constitution, The Articles of Confederation (1781), was a failure. It created a unicameral Congress, with no executive branch and no court system. The “President of the United States” was the representative elected by the Congress to lead its deliberations, essentially a large committee chair. Each state was entitled to between two and seven representatives in the Congress, but votes were cast by states.

¹⁴¹ Rossiter, 1961, Pp. viii & ix

State governments could replace representatives at anytime so long as no individual served three out of any six years.¹⁴²

Its flaws, though, were numerous. Congress could only request state financial contributions and military support, not require them. There was a gaping hole in the area of national regulation and commerce. Some provisions did limit the state's ability to control foreign commerce, but internal economic affairs were left almost entirely to the states. Finally, unanimous consent of the states was necessary to ratify any amendments to the Articles. Not surprisingly, there were no successful amendments.¹⁴³ The American Revolution had left the United States outside British Empire tariff system, which served to interrupt most trading patterns. To limit the unrest of bankruptcies and loan foreclosures and protect their manufacturers, states established their own tariffs, which only exacerbated the situation. Requests by the Congress to the states for funds were given a low priority. No state paid the full request; North Carolina never paid a cent. Without stable funds or the authority to act without first gaining the states' support, Congress became so dysfunctional that the President rarely presided.¹⁴⁴

A constitutional convention was convened in Philadelphia, then America's largest city, in September of 1787 to establish a new constitution. The result was a compromise between the rival proposals of the Virginia and New Jersey delegations that would be known as the Federalist Constitution. Unlike the Articles, it provided for an executive branch that, among other things, would be in charge of armed forces and federal courts. While a Bill of Rights would be ratified as ten amendments in 1791 and seventeen other

¹⁴² Waltman, 1993, P. 19

¹⁴³ Ibid. Pp 19 & 20

¹⁴⁴ Ibid. P. 20

amendments would be added between 1798 and 1992, the document drafted the on September 17, 1787, is fundamentally the constitution as it exists today.¹⁴⁵

The framers provided that once nine states had ratified the new constitution, the new government would begin. Most states ratified the new constitution immediately. The required nine states to ratify and to make the constitution to come into force was reached on June 21, 1788. These were, however, small states. New York and Virginia had yet to ratify, but they had both scheduled ratification conventions for late July of that year. A government without either state would be difficult; without either, it would be impossible.¹⁴⁶

The state of New York was an important battleground in the fight for ratification. By the late 1780s, New York had begun to claim a vital role in the affairs of the new republic. It had a growing population, a lively commerce, a pivotal position on the Atlantic seaboard, and New York City was then the seat of the government of the United States. It was also home to Governor George Clinton, anti-Federalist. How New York was won or lost would determine how the ratification campaigns would proceed in the other twelve states.

Alexander Hamilton gathered John Jay and James Madison as co-contributors to a series of op-ed pieces, eighty-five in all, in New York newspapers to convince New Yorkers, in general, and delegates to the eventual convention on ratification, in particular, on the merits of the Federalist Constitution. The New York papers were collected in two volumes and sent to Virginia to forward the cause of ratification in that state. Thomas Jefferson had given up his diplomatic post in Paris, a posting he felt was intended to get

¹⁴⁵ Ibid, Pp. 21 – 25

¹⁴⁶ Ibid, P. 25

him out of the country so he would not be at the Philadelphia convention, to lead the anti-Federalist forces in his home state together.¹⁴⁷

The content of the op-ed pieces, known collectively as the *Federalist Papers*, is a clear vision on not only the constitution they were intended to promote, but also on the society the framers intended to create with the regime established by the constitution. It is the insights into the latter, their vision of American society, that is pertinent to the propaganda model of *Manufacturing Consent*.

As stated earlier, under the old regime, one of the greatest problems was that it made the United States of America nothing more than the sum of what the states wanted it to be. Madison wrote in “Federalist 10”, “Among the numerous advantages of a well-constructed Union, none deserves to be more accurately developed than its tendency to break and control the violence of faction.”¹⁴⁸ By faction, Madison referred to a number of citizens, whether amounted to a majority or minority of the whole, who are united and actuated by a common impulse or passion, or of interest, adverse to the rights of other citizens, or to the permanent and aggregate interests of the community.¹⁴⁹ To Madison, the options to cure the problem of faction were to end faction, itself, by either removing its cause or giving everyone the same opinions, thoughts, and passions. He dismissed both. Removing the cause of faction would be to remove liberty, a cure worse than the actual problem. The second solution was dismissed as impractical, as so long as men have different abilities and experiences, their opinions will be different as well. To

¹⁴⁷ Rossiter; 1961; P. xiii

¹⁴⁸ Madison; 1787; P. 77

¹⁴⁹ Ibid, P. 78

Madison, the only practical solution was to control the effects of faction rather than faction itself.¹⁵⁰

The best way to control the effects was to construct a republican form of government, large enough that the interests of the few would be guarded against but not so large that its work would be unmanageable. Representatives would be chosen by a greater number of electors than in the previous system to lessen the chances that unworthy candidates would be elected. The government needed to be federal so that factious leaders could gain power in a particular state but not spread the malady to the whole of the Union.¹⁵¹

Madison elaborates on these principles in “Federalist 51”. In this Federalist, Madison argues that the organizing principle of the American republic and its three branches of government – executive, legislative, and judicial – is to create a multiplicity of interests. In Madison’s words, “Ambition must be made to counter ambition.”¹⁵² Interest is to counter interest, branch is to check and balance branch. This will be done between branches, by constructing them so that they have a substantive veto on each other’s work. The executive branch will be able to veto the work of the legislative branch. The legislative branch can deny funds for the work of the executive branch or reverse the veto, by a two-thirds majority in both its houses. The judicial branch can rule the work of the other two houses unconstitutional or unite with the legislative branch to remove the person in the executive branch. The legislative branch would be divided into two houses divided by size, length of term, and method of selection. The lower house would be the largest house with representatives of the people. It would be large enough

¹⁵⁰ Ibid, Pp. 78 – 80

¹⁵¹ Ibid, Pp. 82 – 84

¹⁵² Ibid, Pp. 322

to allow a diverse amount of interests to penetrate. The upper house would be the representatives of the states, with each state receiving an equal number. The interests of the states' representatives would counter the people's representatives. The more factional interests in the representation of the government the more interest would counter interest and local, factional issues would cede the agenda to national issues.¹⁵³

It was believed by Madison that the competition of private interests would achieve two goals. First, as stated earlier, it would relegate politicians solely motivated by private interests to state governments where they could be most effectively contained. Second, it would guard the interests of minority from the interests of the majority without specific rights being enumerated. In order to get the Federalist Constitution ratified in several states where opinion was mixed, the Federalists ceded to the wishes of opponents like Thomas Jefferson who wanted a Bill of Rights included with specific protections. The ten amendments that made up the Bill of Rights were submitted to the states for ratification in 1789 and ratified in 1791.¹⁵⁴

What is true inside government has become true in society at large. For factions to maintain themselves, they need support. Factions need continued support from the people they represent. Factions also need logistical support to maintain their public support. As the clichés go, the squeaky wheel gets the grease and a shark must swim or it will die. If factions do not continually illicit public support, they disappear.

In present day democracies, factions have taken the form of civil society. Civil society can be defined as the aggregate of non-governmental organizations and corporate or citizen interest groups. Sometimes civil society is sometimes referred to as special

¹⁵³ Ibid., Pp. 320 - 325

¹⁵⁴ Waltman; 1993; P. 25

interest groups, typically used as a pejorative to signal that their agenda is not representative of the people who elected the government. Some segments of civil society provide support to politicians that support their goals. Some try to influence politicians who have not made their minds up. Others try to influence politicians by influencing the public.

Like inside the representative branches of government, ambition is made to counter ambition outside the government, in civil society. Civil society is not a monolithic, homogenous entity. It is riddled with inherent contradictions. For every National Rifle Association, there is a Million Mom March. For every Christian Coalition, there is an American Civil Liberties Union. For every Association of Petroleum Producers, there is a Greenpeace. While some interests may from time to time have more influence with government representatives than their opposing interests, the pendulum eventually swings the other way.

The same is true with the mass media and Noam Chomsky says so. In the documentary of his work on the mass media, *Manufacturing Consent: Noam Chomsky and the Media*, Chomsky tells student journalists and community activists in Nanaimo, British Columbia:

Things are complex. It's not monolithic. The mass media are complicated institutions with internal contradictions.¹⁵⁵

Apparently, though, the mass media is not so complex that it can still be generalized into a model.

While it may be a lapse, it is correct. The mass media is riddled with inherent contradictions and competing interests. The government's interest and the media's

¹⁵⁵ Achbar, Wintonick; 1991; 01:40:57

interest frequently conflict. The media owner's interests and the journalist's interests often contradict, as well.

A rather famous case the clash of the interest of owners and journalist involves CBS' *60 Minutes*, when the program had produced a story on how tobacco companies had manipulated tar and nicotine levels to make their product more addictive. The centrepiece of the story was an interview with a whistler blower named Jeffrey Weigand, a retired tobacco company executive, who was willing to go on record with the news program. The interview created enough internal controversy at CBS that the legal department wanted the story dropped. At the time, CBS was negotiating a sale to White-Westinghouse and the legal department feared that a defamation lawsuit from Weigand's former company, regardless of merit, would scuttle the sale. The story aired with Weigand's face digitally masked and a lengthy introduction from journalist Mike Wallace explaining that the digital mask was to protect CBS from a potential lawsuit. The result was immediate. For the first time in its history, the journalistic integrity of *60 Minutes*, the most popular primetime newsmagazine, came into question. Critics attacked the show. It even became a plot line for an episode of the sitcom *Murphy Brown*. Public scrutiny and embarrassment forced *60 Minutes* to show the story again without the digital mask weeks later. It was even made into an Academy Award nominated film, *The Insider*, with actors Russell Crowe, Christopher Plummer, and Al Pacino.

The Insider episode can be seen one of two ways. One the hand, it seemingly proved Chomsky and Herman right. Even a program like *60 Minutes*, a program that should be popular enough to withstand offending sponsors and potential sponsors, capitulated to potential, not actual, threats from a corporation. However, this view would

be simplistic and incorrect. The capitulation to CBS management was only partial. The story aired with a digital mask, as opposed to not airing at all. A more accurate view would be that interests within the corporation clashed and that the interests of the journalists eventually triumphed. The whole incident was an embarrassment to CBS and *60 Minutes* for which the network and program has paid a public price. Before the release of *The Insider*, *60 Minutes* was regularly the highest rated program by Nielsen Research's rating system. Now, it rarely makes the top ten.

As discussed in the second chapter, the modern mass media corporation operates ventures as diverse as the corporation is large. If one goes back to that chapter's overview of the corporate structure of AOL Time Warner, Inc., one finds a corporation that essentially competes not only with other corporations, but also with itself.¹⁵⁶ The same could be said for its competitors, as well.

This brings this chapter back to the propaganda model. The authors' thesis is that the mass media serves to support and mobilize special interests. This chapter shows that it is in fact the very structure of the American regime that serves to support and mobilize special interests. This was an intentional act on the part of the people who constructed the regime in order to create a working government that promoted liberty rather than restricted it. The idea was to maximize special interests so they would cancel each other out. Since historical documents meant for public consumption, *The Federalist Papers*, clearly demonstrate this intention, one is left to wonder if *Manufacturing Consent* and its propaganda model is a critical examination of mass media or a criticism of America, itself. It would not be the first time or the last time for either author.

¹⁵⁶ Supra note ()

The government that the Federalists created was intended to channel the effects of faction, of ambition, of special interests. The framers of the constitution knew from the experience of the regime of the Articles of Confederation that faction in a poorly constructed regime would have the ability to destroy a regime. They realized, though, that the destruction of faction, itself, would be impossible to do in a regime that was intended to preserve and promote liberty. They constructed a regime that would allow the effects of faction to be controlled by a regime that pitted interest against interest. As America matured, the multiplicity of interests in government formally spread into the American society in the form of civil society. The multiplicity of interests exists between civil society and government, as well as within civil society itself. The modern mass media corporation is so large and so, by the word of one of the co-authors of *Manufacturing Consent*, riddle with inherent contradictions, the propaganda model is not an accurate model to describe the construction of the mass media. The explanation derived from the foundation materials, *The Federalist Papers*, provides more accuracy.

Chapter 6 – Conclusion

Manufacturing Consent was originally published in 1988 with a new edition, the same text with a new introduction, in 2001. The authors' intention is to establish a propaganda model to prove their long-held thesis that the mass media supports and mobilizes special interests in society that dominate state and private activity.¹⁵⁷ By critically examining the propaganda model on its merits; in light of events and technology developments since the publication of both editions; and in light of the origins of the regime that allows the mass media to exist.

Before summarizing the findings of the preceding chapters, some additional contextualization may be necessary. When Walter Cronkite retired from CBS News in 1981, handing the reins over to Dan Rather, it was in first place in the ratings. It is now routinely in fourth place, often beaten in major markets by reruns of *The Simpsons* and *Home Improvement*.¹⁵⁸ Network news, like all network programming, has seen its market share dwindle with increased competition from cable specialty channels and the

¹⁵⁷ Chomsky, Herman, 2001; lix

¹⁵⁸ Goldberg, 2002; P. 118

Internet. David Brooks writes that universities – particularly small, undergraduate universities in colleges with specializations in liberal arts, social sciences, and business – are experiencing record enrolments.¹⁵⁹ That means that more young people are exposed to ideas, including the propaganda models, which challenge mainstream beliefs. However, Brooks also points out that a record number of university aged students self-identify as “apolitical”, meaning they hold no preference on political issues, in study after study.¹⁶⁰ Less people are watching the news and, despite increasing exposure to the idea, less people believe the propaganda model. This is at least a *prima facie* case that the propaganda model is not accurate.

The second chapter examined several key structural aspects of the model itself. The framework and methodology employed to derive the propaganda model was found to be faulty. Measuring column inches of “like atrocities” and discovering that there is a difference between the atrocities “they” caused and the atrocities “we” caused is not sufficient grounds to prove much of anything. It limits analysis to the print media in an age when most get their news from television. It also ignores what is actually written. If such analysis resulted in a tie between our atrocity and their atrocity for length, or was within a margin of error, would the authors conclude that it was balanced coverage? By their stated method, they would have to do so.

Two other problems exist with this method. First, it dichotomizes the analysis, which dichotomizes the results. The argument of the authors is that the propaganda model results in dichotomization and concision of the news. Yet, they begin their

¹⁵⁹ Brooks, 2001

¹⁶⁰ Ibid

analysis by dichotomizing the analysis. The dichotomization happens before the model, not because of it.

Second, there is an issue of something that has been much discussed since September 11th, that issue is moral equivalency. The authors seem to take for granted the notion that atrocities are somehow comparable between each other. Is it necessary that atrocities be compared? Should they be compared? This is a difficult issue to address. Do the authors want to stimulate a discussion on why governments commit awful acts, or allow others to commit awful acts by wilful inaction? The authors dodge this issue by not comparing atrocities, but only quantifying the coverage of them to avoid the moral issues.

The second chapter also examined the individual filters of the model. The arguments for the first filter as the size of the media and the size of the ownership of the media, in both editions, do not deal with the issue of the relationship between the owners and the effective control they exert over their massive corporations. Since several mass media companies have merged since the original edition, the issue of the effective control a shrinking elite exerted by a growing corporate structure must be examined. The new introduction in the most recent edition cites the mergers, in and of themselves, as proof enough of the tightening of the model, but examination of these merged corporate structures shows corporations riddled with inherent conflicts and internal competition between subsidiaries. Mergers, in and of themselves, prove nothing.

The second filter, advertising as a licence to do business, is a straw man argument. While citing programs and stories that have been changed or dropped due to pressure, whether actual or anticipated, applied by sponsors, whether actual or potential,

the authors fail to cite any programs that have survived offending sponsors. There have, in fact, been several, some of which have used the publicity of lawsuits brought by corporate sponsors to increase their popularity. In its first season, *Dateline NBC* actually blew up a truck and reported that it was because of the side-mounted gas tanks. Instead of being pulled from the airwaves, the program has been “punished” by now having to produce four editions a week. Lawsuits are now factored into the cost of doing business in the mass media.

The arguments of third filter, sourcing, were rather nebulous. It was actually a repeat of the arguments for advertising as an internal subsidy, only this time it allowed the government a way to subsidize news by allowing its experts to give the official government line on a news story. It ignores the fact that when the government really wants to get its message out, it will purchase its own advertising time and space or, in extreme circumstances, demand it from the networks, using Federal Communications Commission regulations. Therefore, it is rather difficult for sourcing to be considered as a separate filter instead of merely a part of the previous one.

The arguments for the fourth filter, flak as a control mechanism, tests the authors position that the propaganda model is not a conspiracy theory. The only generators of “flak”, which they define as any negative reaction to the behaviour of the media that is meant to prevent said behaviour from re-occurring, that authors believe are worthy of noting are obvious neo-conservative, “professional liberal haters”¹⁶¹. Is it only flak when the rightwing of American politics does it? This also challenges their off-handed dismissal of the idea of a liberal media bias. If the media does not have a liberal slant, then why do the enforcers of official media doctrine have a neo-conservative slant? The

¹⁶¹ Goldberg, 2002

arguments ignore the myriad of organizations on the left of American, and Canadian, politics that do the same thing, and some times employ more disturbing tactics, as the organizations mentioned in the text.

The fifth filter, anticommunism, is outdated. Communist dictatorships around the world have either collapsed or have been exposed as the terrorist states they are. Subsequent attempts by academics to replace the fear of communism as a civil religion with the fear of terrorism, Islamic fundamentalism, or even the anti-globalization movement have not met with any measurable success. While the aftermath of the September 11th terrorist attacks may have sown fear of first two into the public, the modern American state has quickly responded by adapting to limit the ability of both to commit such acts again and by finding the organization responsible and ending them.

The third chapter dealt with the advances in information technology, particularly the Internet and the World Wide Web, and how it has affected the mass media. While it was unmentioned in the first edition, the new introduction mentions in two paragraphs. When one considers how it has revolutionized access to the mass media for the community groups the authors argue are systemically excluded, how it has influenced the how the news medium works, and has saved several major stories that would otherwise have been spiked. Despite the fact that the Internet was used to organize demonstrations that effectively interrupted World Trade Organization and World Bank meetings in Seattle, has sped up the news cycle leaving traditional media flat footed in the competition to scoop each other, and revived a story that the corporate media spiked that eventually a president was impeached over, that corporations have become present on the Internet is reason enough to dismiss its value.

The fourth chapter examined the issue of effective control of owners over their media corporations. While only cursory in style, the analysis showed that, indeed, owners were capable of exerting effective control over their mass media when they wanted to achieve specific ends, such as getting broadcast rights in foreign countries. As a general rule, however, day – to – day functions of running the corporation are left to the aggregate of lower levels of management within subsidiaries, reporting back to the parent corporation but, for the most part, somewhat autonomous within the corporation. The fourth chapter also showed that a truly “mass” media is good for the independence of journalists as it allows them opportunities to move within the industry if the owners interfere too much. Competition, in a way, acts like a union. It protects employees from employers, insomuch that it provides an escape, and thus acts as a control mechanism on the acts of employers. Canada, however, with its small population and comparatively small media corporations, does not have a truly “mass” media and does not have the protections for journalists that the American media has for theirs. As such, owners can interfere more readily in the Canadian media. However, when ownership does interfere in their news media companies, it is nowhere near as subtle or systematic as *Manufacturing Consent* would suggest

The fifth chapter looked at the propaganda model in light of the foundations of the American regime, particularly *The Federalist Papers*. *The Federalist Papers* were one of the first attempts to “manufacture consent” in that they were a series of opinion pieces that had the intention of convincing delegates to 1788 constitutional conventions in New York and Virginia to adopt the constitution drafted in Philadelphia the previous year. They provide a precise account of just what the framers of the constitution of the United

States intended. They intended to not suppress independent, special interests but to encourage so many that they would suppress each other. To suppress interests would actually have been worse than the problem they attempted to solve. Two centuries later, we find that this multiplicity of interests is the defining structural feature of the United States government, society, and the mass media. The fifth chapter shows that the mass media does not mobilize special interests, as the authors' thesis states, the constitution does.

This work has highlighted the flaws of the propaganda model. The methodology in creating the model, itself, is flawed. The model is fraught with internal contradictions and obsolete filters. It is further outdated by the development of information technology, the effects of which allow news to bypass the model altogether and news organizations operated over apartments in Hollywood to bring down presidents. Owners are too obvious in their actions and motives to be part of a subtle, systemic process or structure. Ultimately, their thesis is wrong. The mass media does not mobilize special interests, the Federalist Constitution of the United States of America does. The propaganda model does not support the beliefs of the authors.

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