

Making Holes, Not Wholes:
Patriotic War Propaganda in Relation to Global Mass Extinction

By Richard Kahn

Abstract:

Following September 11, 2001, the American government and corporate media have promoted “novelty” as a *topos* by which citizens should understand current events: America’s New War arises to meet the challenge of a political situation in which “things will never be the same.” This paper examines this claim of historical discontinuity through the application of both Douglas Kellner’s critical approach of “diagnostic media critique” and Noam Chomsky and Edward S. Herman’s “propaganda model,” and thereby finds that the American corporate media’s representation of the war legitimates specific national interests through the lack of proper context. Drawing upon Herbert Marcuse’s notion of war as an inhuman activity that seeks to annihilate the very context that would allow for human understanding to emerge, an analysis is undertaken that reveals that the ideology behind America’s New War is itself anti-contextual, and so, inhuman. Countering this ideology, a theory of human practice, as necessarily embedded in a process of socio-political contextualization, is promoted. Further, it is noted that this quality of “embeddedness” means that the process of contextualization is itself an “ecological” practice. Therefore, to complete

the paper's diagnostic critique, America's New War is contextualized by the current global ecological crisis, referred to by Richard Leakey as the "Sixth Extinction." The war, it is found, is typical of a capitalist ideology that not only fails to accurately report the ongoing ecological catastrophe, but is in fact its primary cause. Finally, the role of the Internet, as a globalizing-contextualizing media, is examined and promoted as a possible sphere for housing the future of progressive politics.

Introduction: What's So New about "New"?

What is so new about America's New War? Surely, post-September 11, things have changed. Terrorism, more than just an occasional buzzword (and problem of the Middle East), has become a political reality in the United States and throughout the globe. The economy has slumped and only after hundreds of thousands of corporate "lay-offs" and savage Department of Treasury reductions of the national interest rate is Alan Greenspan ready to posit that the recession *might* be over and that capital profits are set to return. While the average American is no doubt feeling less secure financially than he/she was this time last year, and is probably feeling less secure generally, American pride appears to be soaring at record levels. President Bush has called for Americans to "come together" to combat evil and, with hardship evident at the level of the average citizen, Americans have been quick to identify with a nation both proud and

prosperous, courageous and conquering. Finally, utilizing the recent trend toward rampant nationalism and patriotism as a legitimation for instituting its right-wing agenda, the Bush administration has lobbied for record increases in the military/industrial budget, unprecedented decreases in civil rights, as well as for the revival of political issues that prior to September 11 had been considered "dead."¹

But while this war has produced a wealth of cultural and political novelties worthy of critical explication, one of the greater ironies of this "new" event is the degree to which much of the production of the war itself is not new at all. As Noam Chomsky has asserted, America's "fight against terrorism" should be understood as a continuation of modern American diplomatic strategy over "the great prize" of Middle Eastern oil and geographical position.² Further, continuities of style exist between America's New War and the nation's other recent interventions abroad. Thus, that the present war's actual production involves the combined use of mass propaganda for the cause, the reactionary control of freedom by the government, and a mixture of catastrophic weaponry ranging from pre-modern to hi-tech all mark this New War as simply the "latest" in a series.³ In a manner typical of post-World War II conflict, America's New War advances under the rubric of moral rhetoric – it is about "good" versus "evil" and "a fight for freedom" – when the reality of the war is that as an event of political economy it involves a wealth of competing, global interests. In the

attempt to court domestic public approval for the actions undertaken by these interests, actions often involving such “collateral damage” as the murder of civilians abroad and the destruction of the environment, the U.S. media has been asked to present convincing war images that represent evidence of both American military superiority and technological advancement, as well as images that support the claim of humane American conduct in the region. As with the recent wars in the Persian Gulf and Kosovo, images of hi-tech weaponry have attempted to persuade American audiences that while casualties may be necessary, the U.S. military attempts to practice “zero casualty” war.⁴ Ideally, it has been touted, the only victims of such war will be the justly punished enemy combatants. Of course, the fact is that America’s New War has involved a high number of civilian casualties.⁵

Thus, the U.S.-involved wars of the last fifty-odd years can be conceived of as mis-categorized – in fact, each was merely a battle within one on-going war, whose true objective is American-led world hegemony and nothing less. It is a misnomer, then, to accept the current party line that “things will never be the same” at the level of a theoretical critique of socio-political structures, for if we are dealing with one great American war of a fifty-year span, then things have never been more generally ubiquitous. Current events do not unfold now without context. Contrary to the standard line, America’s New War demands historical contextualization and an

analysis of how it remains continuous with pre-September 11 events. In doing so, contrary to the propaganda line of “things never being the same,” we find that post-September 11 American identity continues to be shaped by the wars to which it is ever subjected. Again, this cycle of warfare does not represent a series of distinct American political engagements, but rather the ongoing threat and destruction of specific peoples and ecologies in the name of advancing U.S. global interests.

Of course, this is not the popular conception. It is not a part of the present mythology that is at work within the media and current political dialogue. And this is dangerous, for the sort of a-historical, anti-contextual news and information now trumpeted as “conventional wisdom” alludes to a sort of mass-amnesia on the part of the public. This great forgetting robs the masses of their ability to maintain a proper relationship to their situation and thus to themselves. Further, to follow R. Buckminster Fuller, in as much as humanity is the chosen steward for the “Spaceship Earth” that it now inhabits, an a-historical attitude also dangerously robs the “protectorate of the Earth” of its chosen guardians, with deleterious consequences for all.⁶ Finally, dangers both social and political are also implicated – how, after all, has everyone managed to form such a strange opinion of their current moment (or anti-moment)? How has everyone come so quickly to believe that there has been an historic rupture and that from now on the future shall be divorced radically from the past? Certainly, it has required a huge

publicity machine. How else could the terms of national debate be sown so clearly and simply in the space of but a few short months? Are we, then, implicating the government in a war conspiracy? Are we to find that it is not protecting and serving our interests? Just how does our current situation reflect the nature of the parties involved?

An investigation is required into the contextualization process (or rather, the failure to meaningfully establish one) surrounding America's New War; and I would like to argue that this paper's investigation itself embodies the type of contextualizing process that is most typical of being human. To be "human" occurs within our search for the "human," and so humanity is best conceived of as a process by which we connect that which we already know to that which we desire to understand. "Humanity," then, emerges from our very attempt to ground ourselves within the context of the situations that we come to find ourselves within. Further, such a process can be thought "ecological" – following the Greek "ecos," to house – human situations are always "housed" within the larger situations by which they are then interpreted. To contextualize, then, is to humanize by relating the act of the individual (speech or otherwise) to the social domains by which it is encompassed.

It is exactly this form of contextualization that I find to be significantly lacking in discourse surrounding our current war. Therefore, I will begin this paper with an attempt to document the reasons for, and the results of, this

“lack.” Then, after demonstrating that America’s New War coverage reproduces the values of its producers, I will go on to diagnostically critique the war’s ideological base. Thereby, I hope to re-situate the current war discourse within a larger humanistic/ecological sphere that can provide the necessary context to raise serious questions surrounding the politics of representation as well as the manner in which these politics affect present ecological understanding. Finally, it is hoped that by challenging the nature of inhuman production at the level of the system of production, a social alternative is produced – a foundation for a human politics grounded in a diversity of global representations and practices.

Corporate and State Hegemony in the Face of a Democratic Media: Big Business-as-Usual vs. the “New” Internet

Presently, there are at least two theaters of war, one involving troops and weaponry, another involving words and images. That most of the globe has knowledge of the former only as the result of the latter is to say that this war has reproduced itself as a media war – that it is being constructed and evaluated both directly in the media itself and as an extension of the information provided therein.

In itself, there is nothing in this that is especially new. The institutions of the mainstream, corporate media have always considered American war to be a headline item and have covered it as such. Whether on the front

page of a variety of print tabloids, as the subject of cinema newsreels, as the live exclusive of breaking television newscasts, or the buzz of syndicated radio programs, American war is a coveted media topic which guarantees an audience ready to buy "a hook." In fact, among the key political roles the mainstream media have played historically are propagandists for the state cause. Pictures of Uncle Sam and the U.S. flag rising over the marines in Iwo Jima come readily to mind. Yet, it should be noted that, more contemporarily, the mainstream media have also rejected state concerns, advancing (if not always a purely critical view) a corporate interest that is not always congruent with state propaganda.⁷ When they choose to do so, and the closing of the Vietnam war is perhaps the penultimate example, the media can serve as powerful agents both for and upon public opinion, with the result that purely state interests are often modified and/or curtailed.

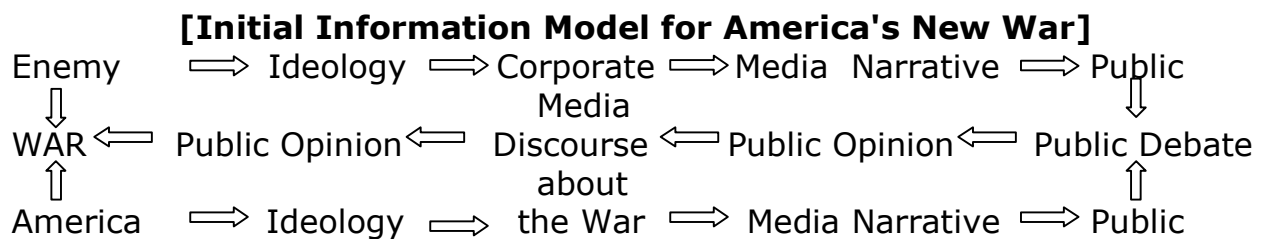
Most recently, in campaigns such as the Gulf War and Kosovo, the Internet has also become a powerful media venue for disseminating information about the ongoing conflict. Supplementing the number of perspectives offered by other corporate media outlets, which can be (and have been) reduced to the pure propaganda level of one mainstream view of pro-war and pro-Presidential posturing, the Internet must be considered a progressive force for the contextualization of war. Consistent with recent trends, America's New War has developed significantly as an Internet war, with a large citizenry appealing to a growing wealth of global information

about the event to be found therein.⁸ But, again, even though this latest use of the Internet as a source of human struggle may be its most “adult” moment yet, the service provided by the Net during America’s New War is not itself particularly new.

What is new about this war is the unique media configuration that seeks to represent it: a compliant (i.e. propagandistic), traditional and mainstream, corporate media versus a non-compliant, progressive media such as the Internet.⁹ During the Gulf War, for instance, while many media outlets acted as puppets for the War Department and Bush Administration (e.g. Schwarzkopf’s infamous “There goes the luckiest man in Iraq” briefings), cable stations such as CNN also offered on-the-ground coverage and targeted journalistic criticism. Reporting occurred along the front, and relatively sensitive information was broadcast to a mass-audience in real time. Thus, as Douglas Kellner postulates, the traditional news media were at least partially a “contested terrain” wherein competing interests were represented (albeit minimally).¹⁰ While there was initial hope that the traditional news media could be even better positioned *vis a vis* the government during America’s New War, months later this can no longer be maintained. Without now saying that there is absolutely no space for critical opposition within these media, the general message promoted by these media is clear: *Get whoever is responsible at any cost.* In this, America’s

New War should be considered as differing in kind from other recent wars, making those wars seem democratic by comparison.

America's New War began with the media positioned between the competing ideological claims of the war's opponents and the return of those claims as understood by a media-saturated public. The mainstream, corporate media itself took positions that either apologetically reproduced or critically contested the ideology it was covering, and the traditional, corporate media were a somewhat "contested terrain" because they at once attempted to mediate the needs of 1) competing state powers who were providing ideological discourse about the war and 2) an audience that found in the media its own foundational war discourse. A naive model of this process could be mapped as follows:



The media, with very little direct outlet to the actualities of the New War, became decipherers of competing ideologies, and even at their most critical, they remained constituted as propagandistic information producers.

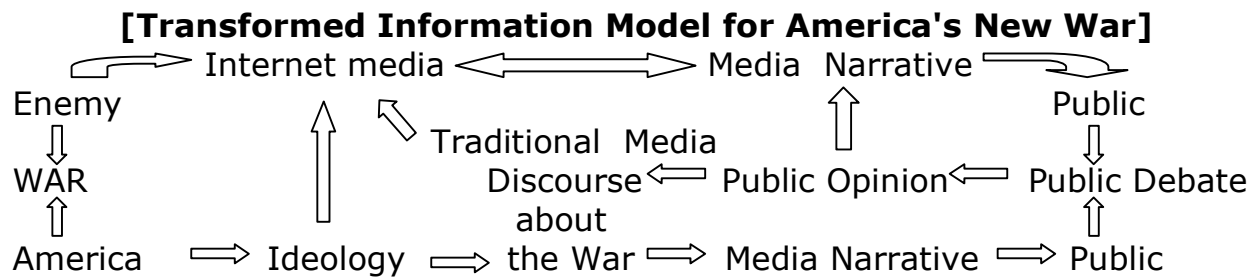
Noam Chomsky and Edward S. Herman, in Manufacturing Consent, present the New York Times as media-typical in its conflation of "All the

News that's Fit to Print" with "All the News that is Corporately Feasible to Print."¹¹ In so doing, they argue, the mainstream, corporate media act as propagandists for American corporate ideology because news that challenges this ideological powerbase is either mis-represented or ignored. Another way to formulate this is to say that corporate media present hegemonic control over American popular discourse – they can choose to frame this discourse as contested and oppositional or not.

This was mostly true of how America's New War began. Thus, by applying the Chomsky/Herman model to the Initial Information Model that I have mapped here, we can infer that as the New War quickly dominated media discourse, the state ideologues who produced the war themselves held hegemonic control but were dependent upon the traditional, corporate media to articulate and cement that control. That the corporate media, beyond the Internet, began the war vaguely critical meant that the media were contesting this information arrangement and its resulting dependence upon the warring ideologies involved. Thus, the media placed early pressure upon the Bush administration. They did make an attempt to critically report the claims being made by Osama Bin Laden and the Taliban, and, in general, attempts were made by the media to station reporters within the developing "red zone" of unfolding military action and to raise critical questions at Pentagon news briefings.

Recognizing that their ideological aims were not receiving *carte blanche* translation by many mainstream, corporate media outlets, the Bush administration undertook a series of political and propagandistic measures to attempt to limit the media space of contested terrain. Quickly, statements by Bin Laden, the Taliban, and Al Jazeera Network (the mostly free Arab media) were suggested as dangerous to the war effort and targeted for prohibition. On the military front, as with the Gulf War previously (Kellner, 1992), reporters were banned from freely covering developing situations and were instead put inside targeted areas that were framed for controlled coverage.

These administrative tactics were important because they essentially shifted the ideological terrain of the war – that which was directing the production of the event in the public’s mind – from being one of contestation to an ideology that was unilaterally “American.” Capitalizing on their media gains, the Bush administration followed up with a blitzkrieg of propagandistic sound-bite speeches, American flag portrayals, appeals to the American spirit, and legal initiatives that hinted that those who would seek to contest the present ideological hegemony were un-American and should not be allowed to do so. Consequently, a shift in the traditional media spheres occurred. This transformation in ideological agenda might be mapped as follows:



To describe this model, we note that within corporate media culture, which already tended toward being discursively myopic, the new central obsession with the complete American ideological articulation of the war produced a startlingly narrow hegemony over the public domain it served. The resulting situation left those in charge of the American war effort genuinely free to conduct their affairs unchecked, with the general assurance that the corporate media would reproduce their discourse of war -- it being the sole power discourse available to represent.

Now, I would argue that corporate media outlets such as national television, radio, or newsprint need not be simply identified as the co-conspirators of a consciously ideological war propaganda campaign upon the public but for one reason: the Internet. For while the government has consciously aimed at pacifying the current corporate media configuration, this New War involves a litany of media beyond the government's control.¹² The Internet, herein conceived of as a "global" communication network, is engaged in the critical task of attempting to socially contextualize and historically interpret unfolding events. Web pages, list-servs, and "blogs"

are presenting a variety of international opinion, academic critique and large-scale democratic debate in a manner found lacking amidst America's corporate media giants. That millions of U.S. Internet subscribers are accessing, comparing, contrasting, and sowing a wider debate about news stories found solely through the Internet must surely not be news to the editorial heads of the corporate media. Thus, the fact that the highly contested and popular space of the Internet is barely reflected in the comparatively narrow discourse of mass television, radio and print media is stunning evidence for an anti-democratic marriage between big government and corporate business in the production of America's New War. That the government's response to this Internet activity has not been to valorize it and defend it as a progressive tool for democratic debate, but rather to attempt to compromise it through the establishment of classified security offices and legislation such as the properly named "USA Patriot Act," serves only to underscore the devious attempt to combat the freedom of information in the name of "Freedom."

Propaganda: Text Without Context, the Anti-Ecology of Corporate Media's News War Coverage

The current desperate global ecological situation serves profoundly to expose the governmentally-inspired, media-produced propaganda campaign that I have just described. Unconcerned with contextualizing its "breaking

news" broadcast of present-minded information, what we might consider a sort of "journalistic anti-ecology," the corporate media mindset is replicated at the larger level of its general global worldview. Thus, one can quickly and easily amass information such as the following headlines from the Internet (even from corporate media websites!):

World Facing Greatest Extinction Risk Since Dinosaurs
Disappeared (BBC)

The Sixth Extinction (American Museum of Natural History)
Mammals, Fish, Birds, Amphibians, Reptiles Suffering Major
Declines (Worldwatch)

The Current Mass Extinction (Scientific American)

Forests Face Global Extinction (United Nations)¹³

But this information is not meaningfully represented by the larger traditional media venues or in discourse surrounding evolving government policy. At best, it is presented haphazardly and quickly as a fragment, an occasional side-note amidst the more general stream of news that is guaranteed to sow a capital audience that will remain uncritical of the politics involved. The following story profoundly illuminates such irresponsible, anti-ecological media behavior.¹⁴

On October 11, 2001, the prestigious journal Nature published "Catastrophic Shifts In Ecosystems" an article declaring that an international consortium of scientists have now found that many of the Earth's

ecosystems are poised for imminent collapse.¹⁵ The authors find, consonant with prevailing models, that the data that has been gathered points to a mass-undermining of global ecosystems such that even relatively minor catalyzing events (e.g. flood, fire, drought) will produce permanent environmental transformation. This disproves past theories that have conservatively suggested that ecosystems endure and repopulate themselves, even following an environmental disaster. On the contrary, the present ecological situation finds global ecologies everywhere at the brink of a revolutionary extinction, awaiting only the necessary system shock to produce widespread environmental breakdown and social chaos.

To place the news of Sept. 11 in the context of Oct. 11 reveals an alarming (and potentially deadly) fascination that the mainstream, corporate media have with "live" news that's "fit to print." While the terrorist tragedy serves as evidence for the idea that the media will center upon discourses of disaster, the current environmental tragedy is evidence that unless the disaster is compellingly immediate (e.g. all American cattle suddenly dying, all waters suddenly undrinkable, etc.), it does not warrant profound coverage and dissemination. But the Trade Center disaster itself serves as a symbol that a catalyzing event can create catastrophic devastation. How much more devastating, then, is the complete fragmentation of our very ecological base?

The critical theorist Herbert Marcuse connected the military mindset up with the sort of dichotomous consciousness that separates subject from object, and human from nature.¹⁶ As America's New War continues to develop into a totalizing, goal-less, military exercise, and as the media coverage continues to gravitate towards valorizing it through hegemonic war discourse (i.e. that the war *is* the goal), the conclusions of Marcuse ring especially true. In this sense, we might extend Marcuse's thought by saying that war unfolds as a text divorced from its context – or that war is nothing else but the attempt to annihilate its context altogether. But again, when the context of war is exactly the environment in which it is embedded, and when this environment demands biodiversity in order to ensure survival, how else are we to understand a war upon diversity except as an act that is essentially eco-cidal?¹⁷

Against this type of pathological dualism, I would like to argue for that which has been forgotten in all the news surrounding the construction of the new America, post-September 11. I say that only a human-kind that is disrespectful of the Earth, that is disrespectful of "nature" in its complete disavowal of the same, would be so arrogant as to make such easy global war on itself as is presently the case. There is not now any ontological consideration of the environment – not by the United States, who choose to attack fiercely and toxically into a highly endangered and critical Afghani

habitat, or by the Afghanis, who take the concept of zoo all too literally, treating theirs as both a torture ground for species and farm for the hungry.

America's New War has presented a picture of the failure to understand the necessity of imminent global extinction on all sides. Afghanistan, a country once rich with rare flora and fauna, has seen a dangerous reduction of species in the region's decades of warfare.¹⁸ This has been dangerously combined with a desertification of the landscape that was triggered by the type of sustained drought that is now typical of global warming processes.¹⁹ Yet, while Afghanistan embodies a mushrooming environmental disaster, American-led war forces have willingly and crucially escalated the region's ecological collapse.

Famously, of course, this is the tale told by all modern American global military interventions. In charting the move from the "messy" nuclear holocaust of World War II and the drawn-out, explosive ground war of the Vietnam era to the "clean" and "clinical" technowar that characterizes American military philosophy since the Gulf conflict, Steven Best and Douglas Kellner have exposed the reality behind such evolutionary state rhetoric.²⁰ In The Persian Gulf TV War, Kellner investigates in even greater detail the American government's (and media's) complicity in what amounts to one of the greatest combined acts of "environmental terrorism" ever produced.²¹ More recently, in Yugoslavia, the combined use of chemical, biological, and radiological weapons created a regional toxicity that has been

called “unique in world history.”²² Operation Enduring Freedom now continues this long and highly problematic lineage of anti-ecological behavior.

The recent battle involving the surrounding and slaughter of enemy forces in the mountains beyond Kabul, code named “Operation Anaconda,” is emblematic of the conflict at large. The name was happily arrived at by the military, drawing upon the image of the giant South American water snake – that it surrounds and constricts its victims to death. Of course, what the military (and media) conveniently forgot to note is that it is the very intervention of excessive western capitalism that is destroying the habitat of this snake at a record pace, driving it and other rain-forest species to “endangered” status and extinction.²³ Also missing from the military’s understanding is that the water-starved land into which they dropped up to 15 bombs per minute for days, some of which were “thermobaric” weapons designed to cause “bunker busting” damage deep underground (or in caves), was missing exactly that critical element (i.e. water) that would allow an anaconda to survive.²⁴ Again, once we reckon that it is exactly this type of widespread drought that is symptomatic of the rise of dangerous atmospheric levels of industrial “greenhouse” gases, a greater irony is revealed in the choice of name for the U.S. operation. For not only is the United States one of the leading producers of these drought-producing gases, but President Bush himself only recently affirmed his decision to act

as a rogue-state and back America out of the universally ratified Kyoto protocol on global warming. Fearing that it would be taxing upon the U.S. economy, he has instead proposed a neo-liberal, market-based reform that expects corporations to self-regulate their industrial emissions in a sustainable manner. This widely criticized U.S. rejection of the global warming treaty has already provoked neighboring Canada to consider rejecting the Kyoto protocol itself!²⁵

As American-led operations continue in the mountains of Afghanistan, it is true that the short-term degradation of the land appears to provide no immediate threat to the military forces themselves. Sadly, the same can not be said for the people who had lived in the Afghani Hindu Kush mountain villages during the recent earthquakes there. The large earthquakes, that have led to the death of well over 1000 people, cannot be directly attributed to either U.S. or Afghani bombing campaigns within the mountain range proper, but it would be a mistake to pretend that there is no relation between the war on terror and the ensuing environmental terrorism. As the USGS National Earthquake Information Center itself suggests, it is known that earthquake activity can be generated due to human activities within areas that are otherwise tectonically normal.²⁶ Yet, the Hindu Kush range, already a highly seismic and sensitive region, is being additionally destabilized by the daily bombardments of war mixed with the environmental effects of both global and regional pollution. Thus, only a month prior to the

earthquake, the United Nations University forecast an increase in natural disasters throughout the Hindu Kush if the noted human de-stabilization of the region is not ended.²⁷ It is with great distress, then, that recent information has the Pentagon, along with the Bush administration, seeking to increase the development of even larger, deeper penetrating thermobaric bombs, as well as the creation of sub-kiloton nuclear devices and that this occurs as President Bush threatens to expand America's New War throughout the "axis of evil."²⁸

Clearly, little or no thought is (or has been) given by those involved in promoting and advancing this war to the greater environmental context in which the war develops – either that the welfare of the planet is instrumental to human welfare or that it may have rights of its own. In this respect, the shocking picture of the blind, one-eyed Kabul lion, Marjan, who was beaten, starved, and attacked with an Afghani grenade serves aptly (and heroically in his tragedy) as a symbol of the "new" under-represented ecological reality.²⁹ It is exactly this sort of systematic under-representation of the real that has always allowed for war in all of its myriad forms, and against which we must now fight.³⁰ But the fight for more accurate media representation, in itself, may not be enough. For while Western money and relief quickly flooded into the Kabul Zoo upon broadcast of Marjan's story, it was only a short time later that this courageous animal, whom had survived two decades of war, finally collapsed.³¹

Thus, I would argue that while present media discourse is certainly disinformative, it is only a larger system based on pathological human relations that would dare to propagate the ideology of under-representation in the hegemonic fashion that now passes for accurate news. Terribly, the critique of capitalist reality must not stop at the boundaries of inhuman media and governmental institutions. For it is they who inform and represent the public-at-large, a public whose social space thus becomes centered upon its own discourse of war. The attempt to create a vacuous (and evacuating) space for human communication, then, must be taken as a general symptom (and cause) of the present war. From this, it may be concluded that unless a widespread critical, ecological discourse can be evolved that is capable of recognizing the greater war unfolding – that which pits humanity against the very planet itself – the legacy of this current terror cannot end but terribly.

In Conclusion: The Story Behind the Story

I have tried in this paper to exhibit what I find most startlingly obvious -- the attempt made by the government and the traditional, corporate media to construct America's New War within popular discourse so as to legitimate the Bush administration's and Pentagon's war-related policies. I began by critiquing the claims to novelty surrounding the war and by pointing out that, while the post-September 11 world is in important respects

discontinuous with the past, we fail to comprehend the event's complicated meaning without stressing its historical continuity. Thus, everything is not altogether "new" and while I would agree that our present situation is potentially "apocalyptic," perhaps the most important thing being now *revealed* is that what is really occurring to both the Earth and global polity is not being generally revealed. Again, however, while this particular practice on the part of the government and corporate media, embedded as they are in the current global situation, must bring with it a set of new responsibilities, it has been my thesis that we citizens have little chance of producing responsible answers to the questions now at hand if we do not interpret these questions broadly in a global context. That is, behind my analysis is a concern, not with globalization *per se*, but with the very globe itself! Or, in other words, it has been my argument that to be a proper citizen of the nation-state (America or otherwise) means contextualizing the state of the nation by embedding it within the state of the planet as a whole.

This manner of contextualization, I argued, can be thought of as "ecological" – it seeks to find the meaning of the part by relating it to the whole. Interestingly, when the information surrounding America's New War was examined, I found that it resulted from an ideological practice that was "anti-ecological," with the result that what was delivered as "information" was instead merely "propaganda." Drawing upon the Chomsky/Herman propaganda model, then, I attempted to re-configure it so as to capture the

war within the War – the battle between the narrowly ideological proclamations of the corporate media and the broad, democratic discourse of the Internet.

In other words, what is at stake now – what America's New War symbolizes perfectly at the level of its production – is the corporate media's failure to contextualize its own information, which results in the under-representation of the real. That is, in the effort to promote a coherent political agenda, one that is both clear and reasonable, government and large corporate power must under-represent that which would re-present their own political agendas as irrational and deserving of critique. Their own anti-ecological behavior, then, points directly to that which stands in contradiction to their story of war and capital. It is the story behind the story, our ecological foundation itself.

As citizens, we stand perilously close to losing the ability to understand our global situation, and with the loss of this understanding we also lose planetary control. But we are the chosen stewards of this Earth – we clearly dictate the terms of its future and hence the meaning of its past. Therefore, beyond the duties we may have to family, state, or nation must come the broader moral responsibility we now have to protect that which exists but which we do not see, that which is unclear in the scheme of things as presented to us. We must reach out behind the veil and connect it to that which we find there. This must be done, not because that which exists

beyond propaganda is “true,” but rather because it is in the very act of *connecting* itself that human voice emerges and truth is established.

¹ “Bush Initiatives Build on First Year’s Work” at:

<http://cnn.com/2002/ALLPOLITICS/03/03/congress.energy.ap/index.html>.

² Audio speech of Chomsky on the Middle East available at:

<http://www.gseis.ucla.edu/faculty/kellner/ed270/audio/hopkins.mp3>.

³ See Douglas Kellner, *The Persian Gulf TV War* (Westview Press, 1992), Stephen Best and Douglas Kellner, *The Postmodern Adventure* (Guilford Press, 2001), pp. 57-99.

⁴ On “zero casualties” in Gulf War and Kosovo, see A.P.V. Rogers, “Zero-casualty warfare” *,International Review of the Red Cross*, No. 837, p.165-181, at:

<http://www.icrc.org/ihrceng.nsf/4dc394db5b54f3fa4125673900241f2f/a40e40685a14ea20412568d30036955c?OpenDocument>.

As this policy relates to America’s New War see Vernon Loeb, “Military Effort Won’t Be Void of Casualties”, *Washington Post*, 3/26/01, at:

http://www.google.com/search?q=cache:5c2obgQlPrMC:www.contracostatimes.com/news/attack/stories/wcasualties_20010926.htm+zero+casualty+afghanistan&hl=en&ie=ISO-8859-1.

⁵ See Douglas Kellner’s book length account of the war online at:

<http://www.gseis.ucla.edu/faculty/kellner/papers/sept11kell.htm>.

⁶ R. Buckminster Fuller, *Operation Manual for Spaceship Earth*. Penguin Books, New York, 1971.

⁷ Douglas Kellner, *Media Culture: Cultural Studies, Identity and Politics Between the Modern and the Postmodern*. Routledge Press, 1995.

⁸ It is true that immediately following the attack upon America, many large news organizations (CNN, MSNBC, etc.) seemed unprepared to handle the consumer volume that turned to their websites in the hopes of becoming better informed about America’s New War, but stories that portrayed the Internet in general as being crippled by the increase in

bandwidth appear to be inaccurate. Further, as the war has evolved the entirety of the Internet has played an impressive role in documenting and promoting a wide variety of related causes quite efficiently.

⁹ I take the idea of a battle between traditional media and the Internet seriously as a fight to define the relations by which we experience these media as users. Thus, we should note the recent colonization of the Internet by the corporate media and the attempt by corporate capital to define the Internet's future in general (e.g., see Bill Gates, The Road Ahead, Penguin Books, New York, 1996). On the other hand, as I note later in the paper, the Internet is also transforming the manner in which corporate media deliver information and thus, interestingly, they tend to provide better news via the computer than by television, newspaper or radio.

¹⁰ Douglas Kellner, Media Culture: Cultural Studies, Identity and Politics Between the Modern and the Postmodern. Routledge Press, 1995.

¹¹ Noam Chomsky and Edward S. Herman, Manufacturing Consent: The Political Economy of the Mass Media, Pantheon Books, 1988.

¹² Though, importantly, legislation such as the "Patriot Act" seems set on attempting to do exactly this, e.g. see: <http://www.aclu.org/congress/l110101a.html> and Sharon Lerner, "Haste Could Lay Waste to Liberty: Slowing the Ashcroft Act", The Village Voice at: <http://www.villagevoice.com/issues/0139/lerner.php>.

¹³ A much larger list, including these, can be found assembled online at: <http://www.well.com/user/davidu/extinction.html#18171>.

¹⁴ I follow Sean Kelly and David Ulansey's "The Events of 9/11: A Planetary Distress Call" at: <http://pcc.ciis.edu/ulanseykellywtc.html>. However, my purpose is different and I draw different conclusions.

¹⁵ "Catastrophic Shifts in Ecosystems", Martin Scheffer, Steve Carpenter, Jonathan A. Foley, Carl Folke, and Brian Walker, Nature, #413, pg. 591-596, October 11, 2001.

¹⁶ See Douglas Kellner's "Marcuse, Liberation, and Radical Ecology", available at:

<http://www.gseis.ucla.edu/faculty/kellner/Illumina Folder/kell11.htm>

¹⁷ Paul R. Ehrlich and Simon A. Levin, "Biodiversity: What It Is and Why We Need It" in The Biodiversity Crisis: Losing What Counts, ed., Michael J. Novacek, American Museum of Natural History, New York, 2001.

¹⁸ Joseph B. Verrengia, Associated Press, "U.N. Planning Environmental Assessment of War-ravaged Afghan Landscape" at: http://www.enn.com/news/wire-stories/2002/02/02062002/ap_46318.asp

¹⁹ Edward O. Wilson, The Future of Life, pp. 67-68, Alfred A. Knopf, New York, 2002.

²⁰ For "technowar" as logical consequence of WWII that threatens planetary survival, see Steven Best and Douglas Kellner, The Postmodern Adventure: Science, Technology, and Cultural Studies at the Third Millennium, pp.57-93, Guilford Press, New York, 2001.

²¹ On the environmental catastrophe of the Gulf War oil slick, see Douglas Kellner, The Persian Gulf TV War, pp. 215-227, Westview Press, Boulder, 1992. On large-scale "environmental holocaust" of the war, see pp. 410-414.

²² Ruth Yarrow, "The Continuing War in Yugoslavia: Environmental Effects" in Peacework Magazine at <http://www.afsc.org/pwork/0999/0912.htm>.

²³ On the rate of Amazonian rain-forest destruction: Thomas Lovejoy, Senior Advisor to the World Bank, talk on NPR's Science Friday program, 2/15/2002 at: http://search1.npr.org/opt/collections/torched/totn/data_totn/seg_138068.htm. We should also note that the name "Anaconda" represents a large American trans-national corporation (Anaconda and Kennecott) famous for assisting with the overthrow of democratically elected Allende and the U.S. establishment of Pinochet in Chile, at: <http://www.terraincognita.50megs.com/neoliberal.html>.

²⁴ On the rate of bombs during the operation see: Kathy Gannon, "US Pummels Afghan Mountains," Associated Press, at:

http://story.news.yahoo.com/news?tmpl=story&u=/ap/20020305/ap_on_re_as/afghan_fighting_88.

²⁵ Jeremy Hainsworth, "Canada Debates Kyoto Protocol", Associated Press, 3/16/02 at: http://story.news.yahoo.com/news?tmpl=story&u=/ap/20020316/ap_on_re_ca/canada_kyoto_dilemma_4.

²⁶ See the Hindu Kush region earthquake bulletin and related site information at: <http://neic.usgs.gov/neis/bulletin/020303120820.html>.

²⁷ Christopher Doering, "Alps, Hindu Kush world's most threatened mountains", Reuters, 1/29/02 at: http://www.enn.com/news/wire-stories/2002/01/01292002/reu_hindu_46255.asp.

²⁸ On thermobaric devices and their use in Afghanistan, see: <http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/systems/munitions/blu-118.htm>. On the need to create additional nuclear (and related) devices see Robert Burns, "Pentagon: US Needs New Nuclear Arms" , Associated Press, 3/14/02 at: http://story.news.yahoo.com/news?tmpl=story&u=/ap/20020314/ap_on_go_ca_st_pe/nuclear_policy_1

²⁹ This picture of Marjan and the general story of the Kabul Zoo can be read at: http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/english/world/south_asia/newsid_1666000/1666987.stm .

³⁰ Charlene Spretnak, The Resurgence of the Real: Body, Nature and Place in a Hypermodern World. Routledge Press, New York, 1999.

³¹ Marjan's death, much like the earthquakes of the Hindu Kush, cannot be directly attributed to any particular act of violence. But it is far from unfair to highlight the general stress put upon zoo animals by the onset of war. For instance, past stories from the war in Kosovo told of animals beginning unearthly moaning about one hour prior to the inception of bombing until around one hour after it abated. Other stories included mass-abortions, cannibalism, starvation, and general distress. Famously, that war's big cat, Prince, a Bengal

tiger, could not be stopped from gnawing off his own feet due to the heightened stress, see: <http://www.cnn.com/WORLD/europe/9905/29/belgrade.zoo/>. In this sense, it must be asserted that Marjan's death is attributable to escalated fighting in the region.