

Empire and the Lies of the Corporate Media: Are we Living in a Fool's Paradise?

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Theme: [Media Disinformation](#)

Global Research, December 21, 2011

williambowles.info 21 December 2011

Well 2011 has been nothing if not eventful but frankly, in spite of all the #Occupy this and #Occupy that, it's not been a good year for us progressives or the planet. The Empire acts with increasing, not decreasing impunity, desperate now to try and keep ahead of events lest events take control of it.

Are we living in a fool's paradise?

A question keeps nagging at me: Are all of us, including the left, reacting to an entirely engineered reality, fed to us via an all-embracing media? We get blown this way and that, all of it being determined by whatever 'event' the globalized media decides to feed us with. Then, just as 'mysteriously', the 'event' disappears to be replaced by yet another 'event'.

The old Anarchist cry of 'Do not adjust your mind, there's a fault in reality' takes on an entirely new kind of import given the power of the media to determine what's 'real' for us.

What this means is that the media effectively acts as an *agent provocateur* for the state and big business as it decides for us what is actually going on in the world. In turn, progressives make decisions based not on what needs to be done, but as a reaction to the 'news' in a weird political version of the [Heisenberg Effect](#).

Press coverage of the Summer Riots is a perfect example of this process in action whereby the media, by focusing solely on the violence and destruction, not only transformed it into a 'riot without a cause' but in doing so actually incited even more violence and destruction, just as ASBOs (Anti-Social Behaviour Orders) are worn as 'badges of honour' by alienated youth who actually go out of their way to get one (or two).

Aside from anything else it demonstrates just how out-of-touch the political elite is with the reality of life as it is really lived by a goodly chunk of the population; the so-called underclass.

Life as supplied to us is now an endless succession of 'crises' or public spectacles (the lines between the two often blur):

'Ground-to-air missiles 'may protect' London 2012 games' — [BBC News](#), 14 November 2011.

In fact, the very nature of BBC's headlines headlines betray the essence of how to report the 'news' as a succession of dramas to be played out, not in the real world that you and I live in

but in the world created by a globalized, corporate media machine.

'Crises' are played out in the TV equivalent of 'flaming' (shooting off at the mouth without thinking). Dictators come and go... All but the dramatic essence is removed and along with it real meaning disappears. This is the triumph of television, the ability to be able to cut and paste reality in its entirety.

And the question, what of life outside the media-supplied 'reality' has been brought home to me by MSM's coverage of the #Occupy 'movement'. The left debates its relevance and its potential endlessly but within the confines of a media-supplied reality. All that's solid melts into air, or in this case bits and bytes.

The #Occupy movement exists for as long as it grabs the headlines and for said headlines to work, an element of violence is an absolutely necessary ingredient for it to become 'news'. But once the 'confrontations' are gone and the 'struggle' safely removed to the controllable environment of the High Court, the story is no longer 'newsworthy' except as a footnote to '2011 - Year of Occupations'.

We are now literally, passive observers of our own funerals in a world of total media saturation and control. A world of endless tragedy but at a distance, mediated by an unseen hand and fed to us pretty much like an out-of-control soap opera, where events break and at first reporting is chaotic and normally wrong but as soon as the MSM has gotten hold of the 'right script' then 'reasons', 'causes' and 'solutions' can then be inserted for each unfolding, dramatic episode.

Gaddafi's tortured, broken and abused body presented to us as the rightful end to a 'weirdo celebrity', a victim of his own success and failure. First courted then betrayed, an epic worthy of a plot by Shakespeare.

The 'story' can then be handled as *spectacle* and for as long as it remains *spectacle* it's a product that can be safely and *passively* consumed. In this sense the #Occupy movement has also become a victim of its own success. It plays out its life not in the real world but in that other reality, *that the rest of us live in*, the one supplied by the corporate media machine.

In turn this determines our relationship with it or lack of one. The media for example talks of how occupations or strikes affect the public, as if by some miraculous process, the occupiers or strikers are no longer part of the 'public'. They've been relocated to media-land to live lives as ephemeral as the photons they are made of.

It's for this reason that the question of the role of class in the proceedings rarely if ever figures in media-land, for if it were to explore the role of class with as much zeal as it explores the 'role' of violence, it would have to redefine its use of the word 'public' let alone violence. It would also have to reveal which side of the class divide it's actually on.

If it's true, and I think it is, that it's working people who are paying the price for the crimes of the 1%, the ones who own the capital that (just about) makes capitalism work, then it's a question of a struggle between two classes; those who own capital and those who don't.

Currently the media represents the interests of the 1% of the 'public' that imposes *its* reality on the proceedings as if it's ours. A reality in which certain fundamentals are a 'given', for

example, the rule of private capital, the primacy of the state to act with impunity in all things in order to 'protect our national interest'. In a phrase, the preservation of the existing order and way of doing things.

Even the tools that we now have including blogs, social networking and instantaneous video have proved to be very powerful tools of propaganda for the Empire. Tools that have been turned against us as is the case with Libya and now Syria.

The BBC's use of video from cellphones—mostly unattributed and revealing nothing about what is actually going on in Syria—have become the staple diet of the BBC's alleged news coverage of Syria, claiming that they're not allowed into the country.

And 'bloggers' are now a regular feature of MSM coverage, which is fine except that only a couple of years ago, the MSM was ranting on about how 'blogging' was going to be the death of 'professional' journalism. If only...

But no more, the MSM realized that 'reality' video was the perfect tool of propaganda, as it *appears* that it's 'the people' speaking. The BBC is merely *relaying* 'reality' to its public and in the process it accrues the *authenticity* needed to make it believable. To make it credible.

And in doing so, the MSM has jettisoned the last remnants of what it chooses to call 'impartial and objective' journalism.

The drama and (hidden) tragedy of the destruction of Libya was played out for us as if it were *cinéma vérité*, all grainy footage and hand-held cameras swinging about wildly all over the place, inter-cut with BBC propagandists masquerading as news men standing in front of a weapon of death boasting to the viewer of its *awesome* fire power.

As the Empire acts with increasing impunity, so too does the media. The Media and the Empire in total lockstep.

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