FEARMONGERING IN THE POST-INDUSTRIAL WEST

GOING THROUGH THE MOTIONS:
FEARMONGERING IN THE POST-INDUSTRIAL WEST

Buse Ilgaz

And you may find yourself living in a shotgun shack

And you may find yourself in another part of the world

And you may find yourself behind the wheel of a large automobile

And you may find yourself in a beautiful house, with a beautiful wife

And you may ask yourself, "Well, how did I get here?"

Letting the days go by, let the water hold me down

Letting the days go by, water flowing underground

Into the blue again, after the money's gone

Once in a lifetime, water flowing underground

And you may ask yourself, "How do I work this?"

And you may ask yourself, "Where is that large automobile?"

And you may tell yourself, "This is not my beautiful house"

And you may tell yourself, "This is not my beautiful wife"

Letting the days go by, let the water hold me down

Letting the days go by, water , flowing underground

Into the blue again, after the money's gone

Once in a lifetime, water flowing underground

Same as it ever was, same as it ever was

Same as it ever was, same as it ever was

Same as it ever was, same as it ever was

Same as it ever was, same as it ever was

Water dissolving and water removing

There is water at the bottom of the ocean

Under the water, carry the water

Remove the water from the bottom of the ocean

Water dissolving and water removing

Letting the days go by, let the water hold me down

Letting the days go by, water flowing underground

Into the blue again, into the silent water

Under the rocks and stones, there is waterunderground

Letting the days go by, let the water hold me down

Leting the days go by, water flowing underground

Into the blue again, after the money's gone

Once in a lifetime, water flowing underground

You may ask yourself, "What is that beautiful house?"

You may ask yourself, "Where does that highway go to?"

And you may ask yourself, "Am I right, am I wrong?"

And you may say to yourself, "My God, what have I done?"

Letting the days go by, let the water hold me down

Letting the days go by, water flowing underground

Letting the days go by, let the water hold me down

Letting the days go by, water flowing underground

Into the blue again, after the money's gone

Once in a lifetime, water flowing underground

Same as it ever was, same as it ever was

Same as it ever was, look where my hand was

Songfacts®

"Once in a Lifetime" by Talking Heads deals with the futility of not being happy with the things you have. Like trying to remove the water at the bottom of the ocean, there's no way to stop life from moving on. The forces of nature (like the ocean) keep you moving almost without your conscious effort—like a ventriloquist moving a puppet.

Talking Head's David Byrne shed some light on his lyrical inspiration in Time Out:

"Most of the words in 'Once in a Lifetime' come from evangelists I recorded off the radio while taking notes and picking up phrases I thought were interesting directions. Maybe I'm fascinated with the middle class because it seems so different from my life, so distant from what I do.I can't imagine living like that."

Some of these evangelist recordings also made their way into a 1981 album called My Life in the Bush of Ghosts, by David Byrneand Brian Eno.

4 5

Introduction

"you may live to see man-made horrors beyond your comprehension." (1)

The old Madison Square Garden was hosting the first Electrical Exhibition in 1898. Nikola Tesla astounded the audience as he controlled an iron boat floating in a large tank of water in the center of the arena with a remote control that sent out radio waves. The audience was reminded of an unfortunate event earlier that year: the warship USS Maine exploded while still docked in Havana Harbor and quickly sank. An admiral observing Tesla's demonstration saw the watercraft as a potential weapon.
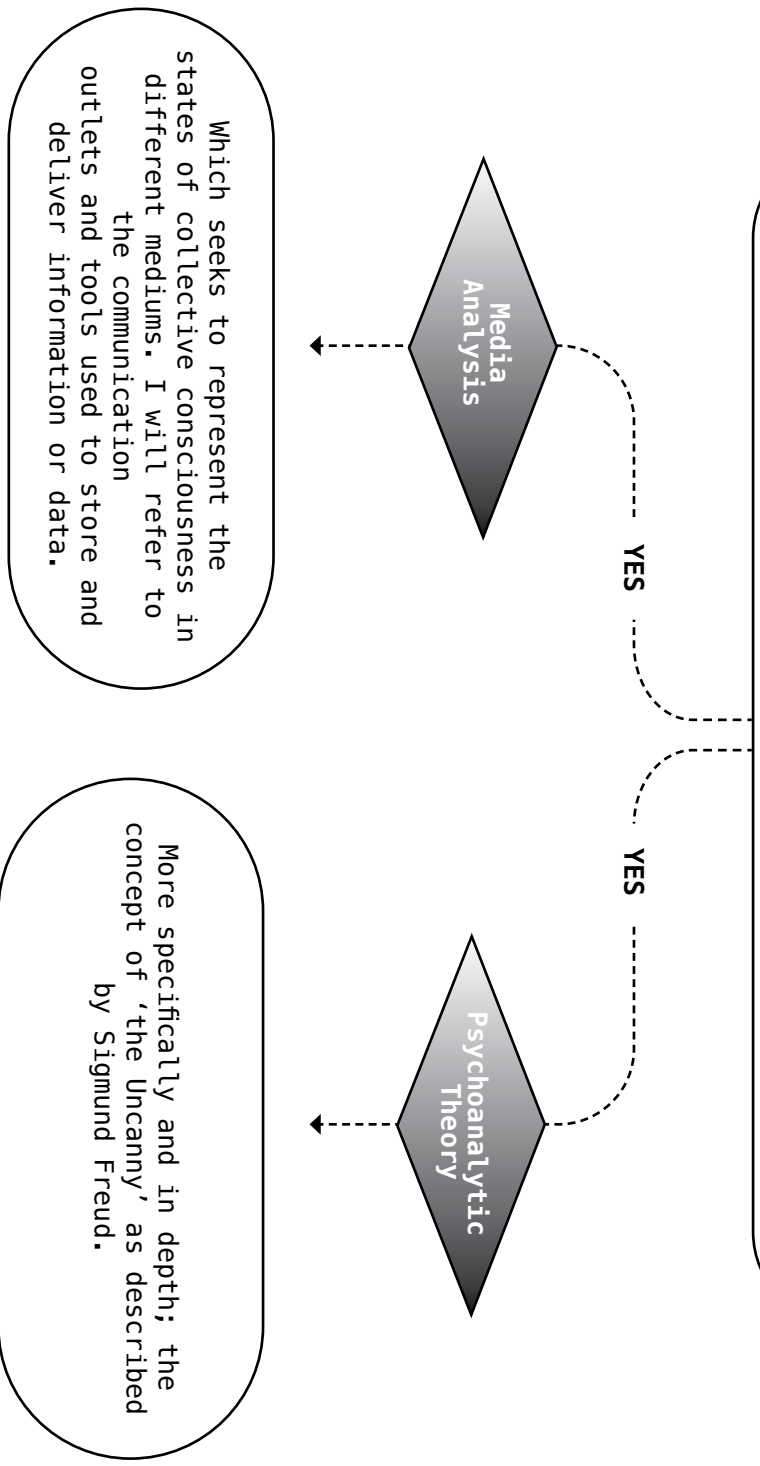
"Why, with your radio boat—loaded with dynamite—we would have any enemy navy in the world at the bottom in no time," exclaimed the admiral.

6 7

Subject

This thesis aims to find ways to comprehend so-called "man-made horrors." I intend to synthesize a means of communicating the current conditions of life, specifically of the postindustrial, globalized man of the West—a person who is surrounded, aroused, and led on by a core feeling:

fear.

8 9

The format research follows two routes of investigation that are complementary:

YES

Media Analysis

Which seeks to represent the states of collective consciousness in different mediums. I will refer to the communication outlets and tools used to store and deliver information or data.

YES

Psychoanalytic Theory

More specifically and in depth; the concept of 'the Uncanny' as described by Sigmund Freud.

media /ˈmiːdɪə/ noun 1. the main means of mass communication (broadcasting, publishing, and the internet) regarded collectively. (2)

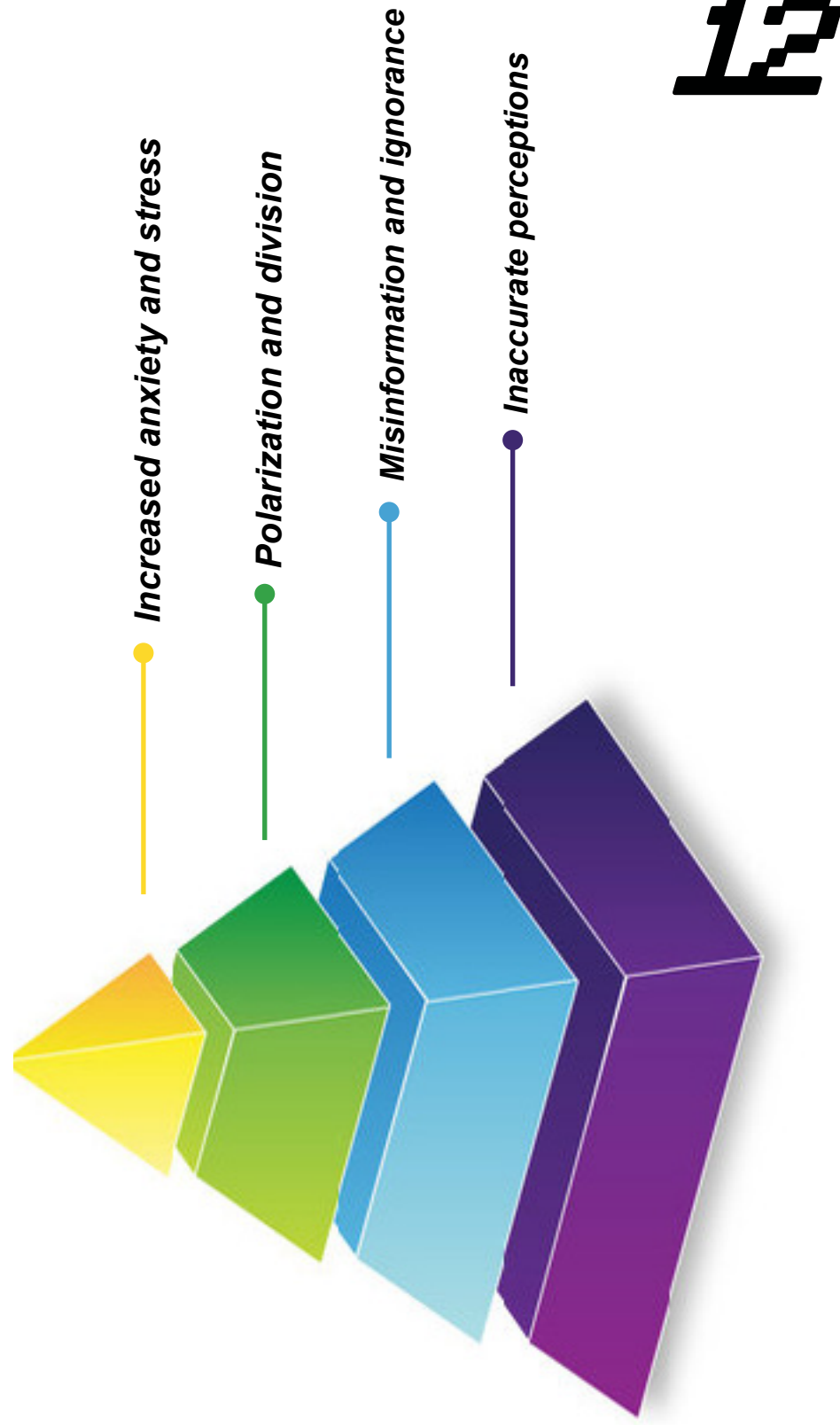I will analyze specific examples/pieces of mediums to illustrate aspects of our current reality.

The times we are living in right now are scary and, worse, incomprehensible. We are dealing with a big "nothingness" that has taken over everything. Everything contains this underlying emotion of fear, and it shows. This fear, to me, seems like both a cause and a symptom.

I will take on the subject of the uncanny, which refers to a feeling of fear caused by something familiar yet strange, or something that should be hidden but is revealed. It involves a sense of uncertainty and ambiguity as well as a blurring of the boundaries between what is real and what is not. I will occasionally refer to psychoanalytical theory as a means of dealing with the unconscious mind. With these dual research methods, my findings will shed light on the workings of the spectacles of our society.

By doing so, I will examine how we feel fear today and how what stirs this feeling in us can change and become subject to manipulation according to the contract of truth and reality we have agreed to. The presence of this mechanism is felt in different ways.

As the words of Nicola Tesla suggest, while one part is about horrors, the other part is concerned with comprehension itself. Perception is what moves this mechanism forward. Participation of the viewer is necessary, even crucial, for this fear-control equilibrium. This "fear factor" can be analyzed, manipulated, simulated, and, ultimately, profited on. Profit of any kind is, of course, enough of a reason to validate any action in the global Western world"?, so it should not surprise us to see how and where it has been put to work.

The Impact of Fearmongering

Increased anxiety and stress

Polarization and division

Misinformation and ignorance

Inaccurate perceptions

13

FEAR MON GER ING

/fɪəmʌŋgərɪŋ/ n.
1. the action of deliberately arousing public fear or alarm about a particular issue. (3)

BE ALERT!
(Is someone trying to scare you?)

The **format** is a text-based collage. Quotes and references make up half of the paper. Paraphrasing, packaging, and repeating "in what way" they connect to the main idea would be tiresome and boring for both me and the reader, so I let the authors words speak for themselves and only intervene when necessary to illustrate a point.

AIM

I aim to understand how fear can potentially be used as an instrument, a driving force, and lubricator in the big social machine. We will illustrate the power and the outcomes of invoking this strong emotion within a person, and groups of people, and what this invocation says about human nature. We will observe manifestations of this power across many different formats and cases.

I attempt to set up a system within this text that will serve as an arena in which we will look at our live. To best understand my point, it is recommended that readers momentarily let go of their predispositions, especially regarding how things are supposed to be related to each other.

Method

According to Carl Jung, archetypes refer to a universal, inherited idea, pattern of thought, or image that is present in all human beings' collective unconscious. Basic universal truths in humanity can be understood in the collective unconscious through symbolism. They are the basis of many of the common themes and symbols appearing in stories, myths, and dreams across different cultures and societies. (4)

Fiction, therefore, serves as a scientific medium, reflecting our reality and collective conscious-ness. Stories are reflections of our desires, fears, and habits, making fiction a mirror of our shared experiences.

We must not dismiss fiction as a make-believe dimension that exists in a vacuum separate from our reality. Instead, we should reflect upon fiction and its relations to our lived experience. We can, and probably should, draw parallels between fiction, media, and our day-to-day lives.

Some media stand on their own without needing interpretation. When combined, they can create powerful impressions. I will be referring to a range of subjects, using culture and its artifacts as a looking glass. The aim is to use media as a revelatory agent: a way to observe patterns that reflect human nature. Stories, religious texts, proverbs, jokes, movies, TV shows, songs, road signs, products, clothes—everything created by humans contains within itself a common logic.

Media, however, is not merely a symptom of human nature. It is a covert force that defines human nature as well. That is why it is one of the main and most obvious tools for fearmongering.
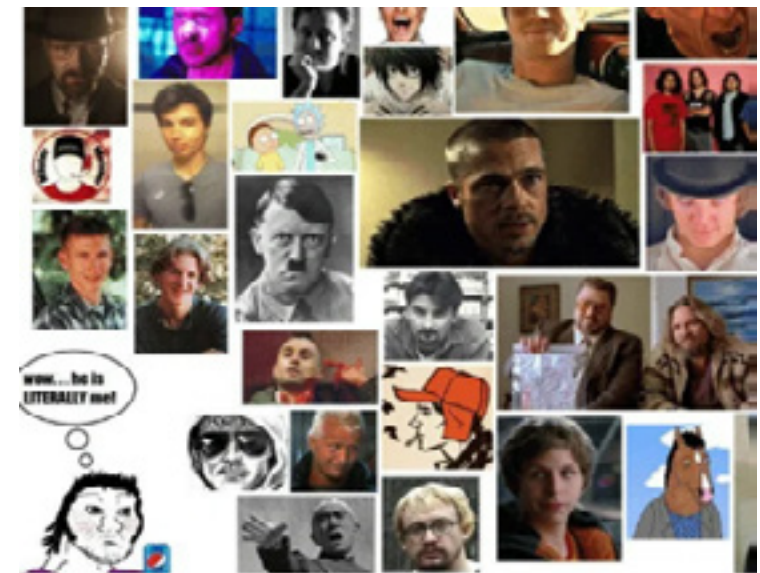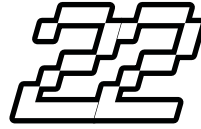
No form of communication is inherently superior. I condemn the intellectual hierarchy between mediums and subjects. It would be a terrible mistake to view mainstream intellectual language as authoritative when conveying ideas. If we look past the established image of the merit, importance, and "depth" of a piece of information, we can have a wider range of referential points to draw conclusions from. Following this logic, overused tropes, low-culture clichés, and Jungian archetypes can be considered to all hold the same validity in understanding human psychology.

18

Wow... he is LITERALLY me!

"Wow..."

"Wow..SHe's literally me!"

My Bone to Pick with Fact-Checkers

the fear and anxiety that overwhelm us could be linked back to this realization.
One should look no further than the format of our language itself to observe how the means of communicating our surroundings affect our experience. Media theorist Marshall McLuhan examines the invention of writing and how it transformed the very ways in which humans think. According to him, with the adoption of written mediums as a means of communication, we have become increasingly reliant on our eyes. The alphabet has made our mode of thought linear (6).

We rely on "c-o-n-n-e-c-t-e-d" points to make up meaning.

At many points during this text's research and conceptualization, I came to conclusions that immediately led me to their exact opposites. It was like being in a hall of mirrors, with reflections endlessly bouncing off of each other. At first glance, it was all very contradictory and unclear. As humans, our intellect forces us to unconsciously seek out clear, coherent, and logical concepts. A logical statement is one that we can follow and assess from a fixed point of view and a linear series of connected points. In Adventures in Ideas, A. N. Whitehead stated that our dependence on clarity is based on sheer superstition: "It is important to remember that our insistence on hard-headed clarity issues from sentimental feeling ... Our reasonings grasp on straws for premises and float on gossamers for deductions" (5).

Our understanding of logic has betrayed us, and our reliance on cold,

hard facts has left us astray. Clinging to the false gods of science, we walk blindly into the eternal unknown and say, "We know." What we are taught to believe is logical, what we take home as truth, has little to do with what is true.

It is difficult for us to perceive, understand, or communicate the nuanced, ever-changing, and paradoxical side of things. Thus, we choose to ignore it and turn to what we can easily see, grasp, and share. However, our ignorance or suppression of instinct does not free us from it. The unconscious recognition of patterns is a nonstop process. The importance we place on the logical and scientific way of looking at and explaining the world makes "intuition" invalid. We cope with and hang onto "facts." When going about our day-to-day lives, however, we all have moments where we realize that maybe this goes against the principles of life and of nature itself. Perhaps

We pay more attention to spatial concepts and believe in what we can see.

This is why someone can serve us the "truth" packaged in the most logical and trustworthy manner using seemingly connected points, and we would, without question, believe it. This depends on some factors such as our critical thinking and the importance we give to authority, merit, and expertise. We are always reminded to trust the science and listen to the experts. Those in authority could serve us information that we might not even think twice before believing. Maintaining a trustworthy reputation is a powerful tactic for spreading disinformation and, ultimately, gaining control.
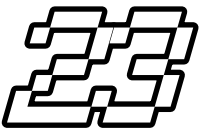
Fear is a response to a perceived threat or danger. It is an emotion that causes changes in one's physiology and produces behavioral reactions. In human beings, fear may arise in response to a certain stimulus in the present, or in expectation of a future threat. The fear response, which is the effect of the perception of danger, leads to either confrontation or escape—known as the fight-or-flight-response. If the fear is extreme, another possible response could also be freezing. The fight, flight, or freeze response is the sum of the physiological changes in the body that fear causes:

Faster heart rate and breathing, constricted blood vessels, tense muscles, hair follicles contracting, goosebumps, sweat, higher blood sugar, alertness, butterflies in the stomach, dizziness, shortness of breath, nausea, numbness. (8)

These series of changes make your consciousness feel the emotion of fear. This is the primitive mechanism that helps an organism survive by either running away or fighting the danger that lies ahead. In us humans, fear is controlled through the cognition and learning process. Through this process, fear is assessed as rational and appropriate, or irrational and inappropriate. An inappropriate extreme of fear is a "phobia." Fear is the sibling of anxiety, which is due to future threats that seem beyond one's control.

Fear has been preserved throughout evolution and is essential for a species' survival. Survival is ensured by triggering appropriate behavioral responses against danger. Individuals' fears are not solely dependent on their nature but are also shaped by their social relations and culture, which guide their understanding of when and how much fear they should feel.

A child, through osmosis, is conditioned to the fears of their environment. This conditioning does not stop. We learn through experience and deduction, and through cognitive distillation, what we should be afraid of. What are the things we should avoid to survive?

There is no point in disputing the fact that fear is essential to self-preservation. However, where does this delicate mechanism belong today? The dangers our ancestors had faced for some 200,000 years resulted in their evolution, but it also hardwired fear into our core.

Our fear of nature has diminished and today, survival for the average person is easier. Now that a human's most basic needs (food, water, air, shelter, belonging, entertainment) can be met without too much difficulty, what stimuli can activate the ancient fear response? When fear is not directed towards an actual threat, it can be very dangerous and debilitating.

"There are more things, Lucilius, likely to frighten us than there are to crush us; we suffer more often in imagination than in reality... We shall consider later whether these evils derive their power from their own strength, or from our own weakness."

Letter 13 of 124 from Seneca to Lucilious, On Groundless Fear (7)

25
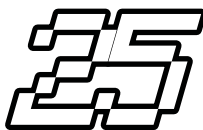
"Innumerable confusions ؟ and a profound feeling of despair inevitably emerge in periods of great 👁 technological 🔫 and cultural transitions . . . Our 'Age of Anxiety' is the result of trying to do today's job with yesterday's tools, and concepts."

(McLuhan and Fiore 1967) (6)

"For the upper middle class in the USA, things are often, materially very comfortable. There's often a great sadness and emptiness. It's difficult to think about and come up with answers in the abstract."

*("David Foster Wallace Unedited Interview (2003)" 2018) (9)*

Ted Kaczynski, also known as the Unabomber, argued in his manifesto, "Industrial Society and Its Future," that modern technological society's comforts and conveniences, particularly those provided by industrial and technological advancements, have a detrimental effect on individuals and society as a whole. He contended that the increasing reliance on technology, industrialization, and modern comforts leads to a loss of individual freedom and autonomy.

Kaczynski's perspective was rooted in the belief that technological advancements and an industrial society lead to increased fear among individuals as they become subject to systems of control, feeling powerless and manipulated by forces beyond their agency.

Kaczynski's views are controversial and his actions, which included a bombing campaign that killed three people and injured many others, were widely and rightfully condemned. This, however, does not change the fact that his manifesto offers a crystal-clear description of the causes and effects of today's fears and anxieties.

. . . which is now held in FBI's storage.
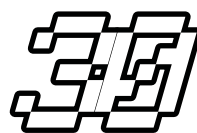
Ted Kaczynski posing next to his cabin.

32   33

"We point out that modern man is alienated from his fellow men, from himself, and from nature. He has been transformed into a commodity, experiences his life in a shallow, empty manner, and has no sense of belonging to a community. He is atomized, lacks objective standards, and has the sense of being incapable of influencing the course of his own life." (10)

Politicians and corporations are well aware of the connection between the human will to live and fear, and they are guilty of manipulating circumstances to incite fear and guide the masses toward the results they desire.

In The Intellectual Adventures of Ancient Man (11), Henry Frankfort describes the restless state of Egypt between 1800 and 1600 BC. Following countless threats and attacks from vagabonds, a fear psychosis was engendered. This was a neuropathic awareness of danger similar to that which has characterized Europe in modern times. As a result of a common desire for security, the Egyptian people grew into a self-conscious nation, motivated by patriotic fervor and prioritizing the country's interests before their own. The highest echelons of the state strived to maintain a unified Egypt. There were perils on the distant horizon that could be invoked to hold the community together because unity was to the advantage of certain central powers. The same tactic can be seen in use in different contexts today.

White House Chief of Staff Andy Card hurries over and whispers to President George W. Bush, "America is under attack."

On Tuesday morning, Bush was visiting a classroom in Sarasota, Florida. The children were reading out the words their teacher was pointing at on the board. The footage is blurry and the audio is muddy, but we can still pick up on the words "kite, hit, steel, plane, must."(12)

"In the report Rebuilding America's Defenses in 2000, the Project for the New American Century think tank wrote that their plans could not be implemented without 'a catalysing catastrophic event – a sort of new Pearl Harbor'. The PNAC's objectives are achieving a ubiquitous military presence through a technologically revolutionized military, preventing the emergence of a competing superpower, and waging preventive wars against any power that might threaten American interests. The best catalyst for the PNAC program is fear. The American political scientist Benjamin Barber has since given the new America and the new imperial world order a particularly apt name: 'fear's empire.' Bush Jr.'s 'war on terrorism' is intended to bring about nothing less than a state of emergency, within America as well as on a planetary scale – within America through the curtailment of civil rights (Patriot Act), media manipulations, outright lies or censorship, outside America through the obliteration of the whole post-war system of international law, symbolized by the United Nations."

—*A Short Archaeology of the New Fear, Lieven De Cauter*

Nine days after the September 11 attacks, President George W. Bush
addressed the American people and declared ***"freedom at war with fear."*** He continued, "This is not,
however, just America's fight. And what is at stake is not just America's freedom. This is the world's fight. This is civilization's fight. This is the fight of all who
believe in progress and pluralism, tolerance, and freedom" (13).

Through the usage of visual imagery and uniting language, Bush gained the authority to dominate public opinion of September 11 and the appropriate response to it. This event would set the tone for the new century. The state of emergency, the very fear George W. Bush claims to be perpetuated by al-Qaeda, had been established on a global scale.

The 9/11 attacks generated a unique political unity that seems almost impossible today, according to Larry Sabato, director of the University of Virginia's Center for Politics:

"Less than a year before, George W. Bush had been elected despite losing the popular vote, a controversial election that became even more controversial with the recount [and Supreme Court decision]," Sabato said. "There were still a lot of hard feelings, but 9/11 in many ways reunited the American people." Bush went from losing the popular vote to having a 91% approval rating, "almost unheard-of" (14) (15).

If we parse the earlier quote from George W. Bush's post-9/11 speech, we can reveal the process of creating a state of urgency:

**(1)
Set up a duality: Freedom vs. fear
(essentially good vs. evil).**

⬇

**(2)
Establish necessities: Convince the target that there is something they want or need. The necessities here are presented to be progress, pluralism, tolerance, and freedom.**

⬇
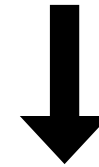
**(3)
Suggest that these necessities and values are at stake. Present the threat and the enemy terrorism and fear. Exploit the audience members by making them afraid of losing their so-called freedoms.**

⬇
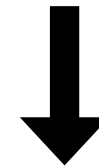
**(4)
Claim that the person making this statement is able to protect the audience from the threat if the audience follows instructions and comes together to fight the same cause: terrorism.**

Perpetuating fear in the public consciousness, uniting them against a common threat, and promising them safety are methods that have been used far too many times. Depending on the narrative, the context of the threat, and the suggested road to safety, it is possible to make people agree to terms and conditions they normally would not agree with. When fear, whether it is real 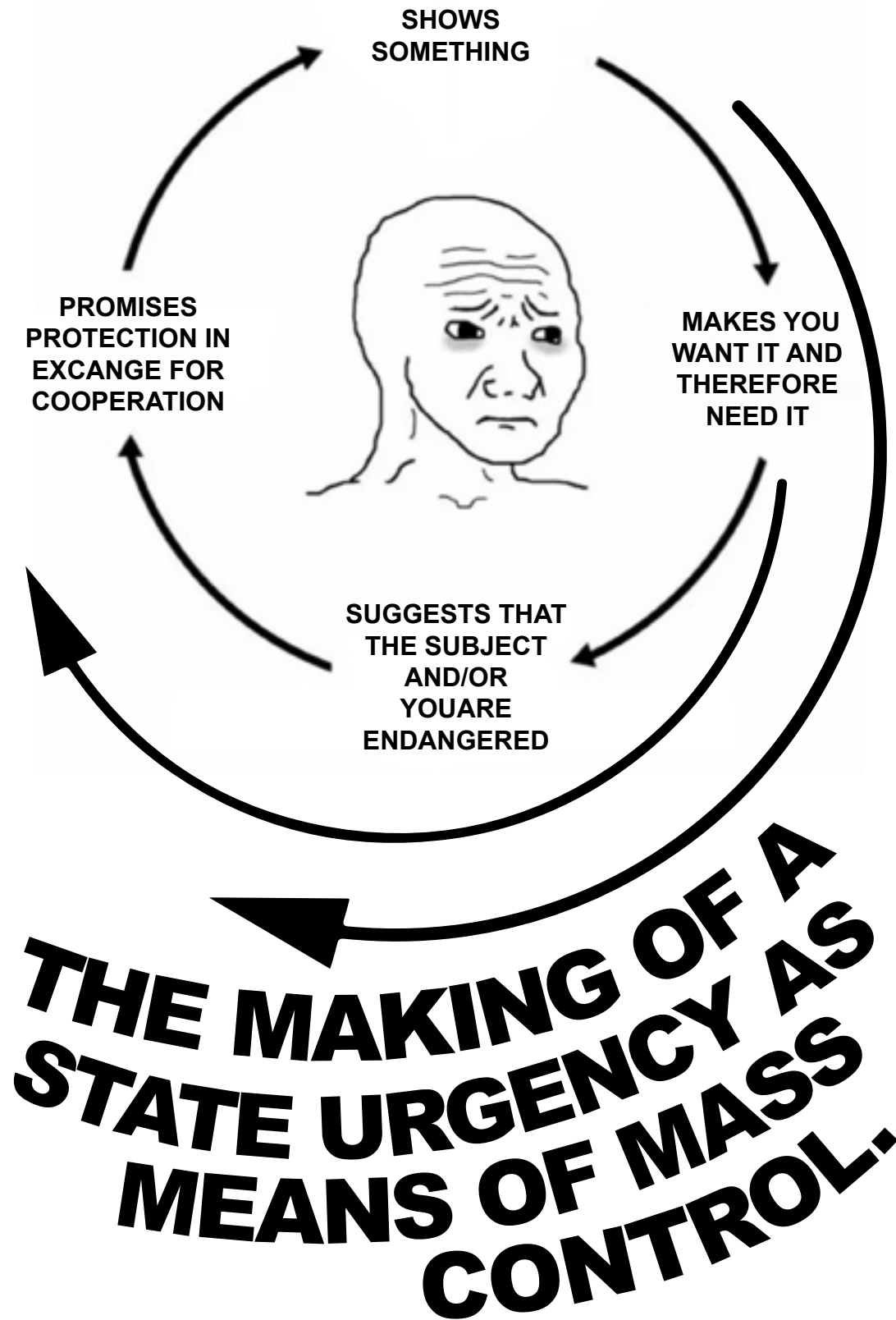or imaginary, grips someone, their rational and higher cognitive capacities shut down, making them susceptible to manipulation. According to Mencken (2017),

"The whole aim of practical politics is to keep the populace alarmed (and hence clamorous to be led to safety) by an endless series of hobgoblins, most of them imaginary."

This positioning of fear is, however, not limited to the state. Any group can use this positioning to target another group, with the aim of controlling and/or profiting off the latter.

SHOWS SOMETHING

MAKES YOU WANT IT AND THEREFORE NEED IT

SUGGESTS THAT THE SUBJECT AND/OR YOU ARE ENDANGERED

PROMISES PROTECTION IN EXCANGE FOR COOPERATION

THE MAKING OF A STATE URGENCY AS MEANS OF MASS CONTROL.

World Domination

World domination is a thing of the not-so-distant past. Tyrants are dead, and all that is left of them is their simplistic caricature: carrying big boy guns and missiles and gaining control through bloodshed and land occupation. In our age of information, information's producers and distributors are the new dictators. He who controls meaning rules the world. Due to our outdated descriptions of concepts related to ruling and control, it is a real challenge to see this recent power shift. The change is happening on a much less physical plane and is going undetected.

Did you know? That the 1954 animated classic, Animal Farm, was financed by the CIA as a propaganda tool to fight communism during the Cold War?(17)(18)

Yes   No
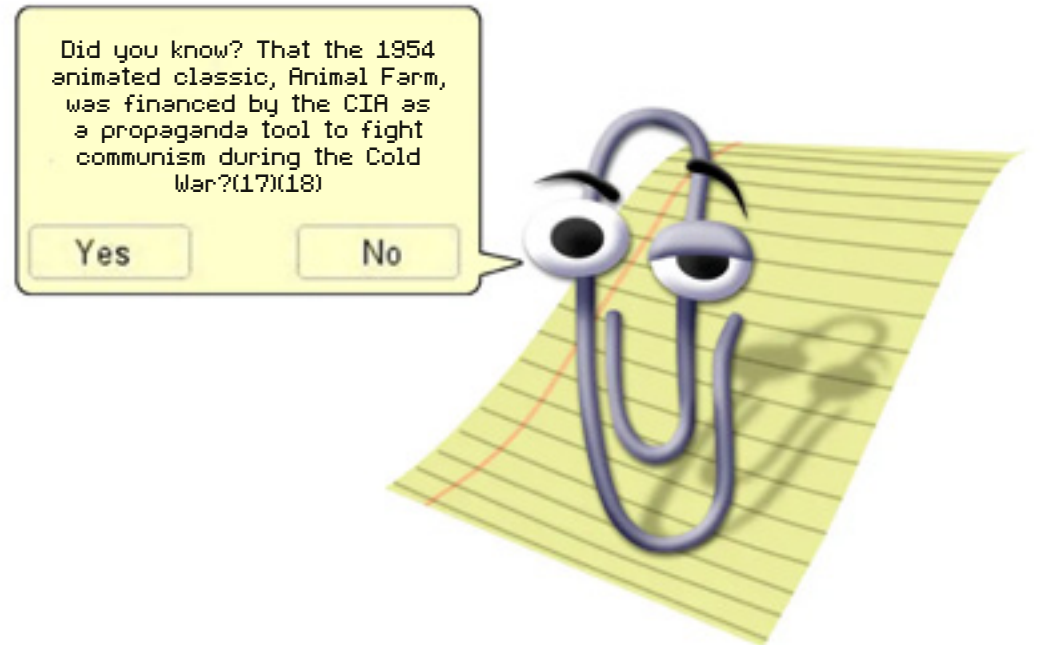
Fear of the Unknown

What scares us? If we go through a catalog of horror stories and characters, we may quickly find an obvious answer: beings and things we do not understand. Fantasy horror author H. P. Lovecraft, who has had an immeasurable influence on the horror genre, inspiring authors like Stephen King and Neil Gaiman, uses this fact by occasionally placing his creatures beyond the realm of the fathomable. In his story, "The Unnamable," the title is described in the closing passage:

"It was everywhere — a gelatin — a slime; a vapor; — yet it had shapes, a thousand shapes of horror beyond all memory. There were eyes — and a blemish. It was the pit — the maelstrom — the ultimate abomination. Carter, it was the unnamable!" (19)

This kind of fear is not what I deal with in the current paper. Instead, I focus on another kind of fear, one that is put into motion by things that are not unfamiliar to us but that we have carried with us since our earliest days. What is it about these old, familiar things that, under the right circumstances, make us feel fear? Sigmund Freud addresses this question in his 1919 paper "The Uncanny." A hundred years later, his connections and observations are as relevant as ever.
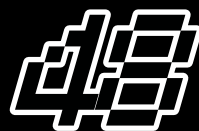
The Uncanny

The word for uncanny in German, Freud's native language, is *"unheimlich"*; its literal definition is *"not of the home."* Roughly, it means *"not familiar."* This translation seems to correspond with the fear of something that is not familiar and yet is familiar to us. In other words, there are things that we know but not cognizant of. However, Freud also pays attention to the fact that "unheimlich" has, in some cases, been used to describe something hidden inside the home that was never meant to come to light. Therefore, the word *"unheimlich"* has a second definition: *"something hidden in the home."*

This is odd because it suggests that the meanings of "unheimlich" and "heimlich"—uncanny and canny—overlap. These are seemingly words that mean the opposite of themselves. Words that have two opposite meanings are called contranyms. They are also known as Janus words for the ancient Roman god with two faces looking in opposite directions. A classic example of a contranym is the word "dust" when used as a verb. "To dust" means "to wipe the dust from" and "to sprinkle with a powder or dust." "Uncanny" thus means itself and its opposite. To solve this paradox, Freud, through his general theory of the self, asks what might be hidden within us that scares us when it comes to light. His works have to do with the changes that happen in our minds while moving from childhood to adulthood.

He suggests that the self we once were as a child remains within us, concealed within our new rational, adult self.

Sometimes, parts of this hidden old self, leak out.

"Nowadays we no longer believe (in childish fantasies), we have surmounted such ways of thought, but we do not feel quite sure of our new set of beliefs, and the old ones still exist within us ready to seize upon any confirmation."

-Sigmund Freud
The Uncanny (1919) (20)

Thus, the uncanny is related to beliefs of our childish selves, repressed or hidden as we become adults. We repress these beliefs because they are wrong, and adults are not supposed to be wrong. Adults are supposed to be rational and have proper attitudes about the world. In the eyes of the adolescent, in the process of maturation, certain things need to be left behind. Of course, we never truly leave them behind. The uncanny feeling arises when these things come back into our consciousness. During these moments, we briefly consider the possibility of our child-self having a better understanding of the world than our all-grown-up-self. For Freud, the uncanny can be explained as the fear that our child-self was right all along. This fear is felt in situations in which our childish fantasies and fears seem more real and truer than the adult worldview we have adopted. This makes the distinction between the familiar things that terrify us and the familiar things that do not more understandable.

We do not watch a cartoon expecting the story to adhere to the rules of reality. In the realist setting of horror, when something comes to life, it is terrifying. The uncanny requires realism. Freud reminds us that fairy tales are not uncanny because they are part of a genre that does not ask us to believe that what we are witnessing is reality. In this sense, when we engage with a story, we keep in mind its setting and ground rules.

Before the uncanny can operate, however, the story has to pretend to move in the world of common reality.

Regarding storytelling's intricacies, Freud (1919) explains that "the situation is altered as soon as the writer pretends to move in the world of common reality . . . He takes advantage, as it were of our supposedly surmounted superstitious-ness; he deceives us into thinking that he is giving us the sober truth, and then after all oversteps the bounds of possibility."

We can formulate an explanation for conspiracy theories' effect and allure. Conspiracy theories often invoke feelings of the uncanny because they present alternative explanations for events or phenomena that challenge mainstream narratives or e stablished truths. They often involve hidden forces, secret agendas, or covert operations, creating a sense of unease or paranoia among those who subscribe to them.

Moreover, conspiracy theories often suggest that there are forces at work behind the scenes,manipulating events in ways that are not immediately apparent to the general public. This ambiguity and uncertainty can contribute to conspiracy theories' uncanny nature by blurring the boundaries between reality and fiction and truth and falsehood.

Conspiracy theories may present elaborate narratives that weave together disparate pieces of information or draw connections between seemingly unrelated events. The blurring of boundaries can further contribute to conspiracy theories' uncanny nature by challenging our perceptions of what is real and what is imagined. This process is partly responsible for the paranoia and mass psychosis that plague people, who have no way to avoid today's endless stream of information.

Some theorists and researchers have suggested that the CIA might have orchestrated the popularization of the term "conspiracy theories" to undermine and discredit alternative narratives or ideas that contradicted official explanations. The term "conspiracy theory" has been in use since the late 19th century, primarily in legal contexts referring to the concept of conspiracy. Its modern usage, particularly in the context of dismissing certain ideas or explanations, gained prominence during the mid-20th century, especially in regard to political events such as the Cold War and the assassinations of political figures such as President John F. Kennedy.

It is essential to critically evaluate claims like these and consider the available evidence before accepting them as fact. Unfortunately, one of the many challenges we face nowadays is the inability to rely on so-called concrete "evidence" and "facts."

WHY ARE YOU SCARED?

ISN'T THIS WHAT YOU WANTED?

The Detective: One Who Brings Hidden Things to Light

I have already discussed the possibility of viewing tropes in TV shows and movies the same way we view the psychoanalytical theory of archetypes. Operating in different areas, both serve a somewhat similar purpose.

In psychoanalytical terms, the detective archetype embodies the universal quest for truth and the confrontation of hidden aspects of the psyche or of society. Serving as a symbolic representation of "the seeker," the detective delves into the depths of the unconscious to uncover repressed truths and expose human nature's darker aspects. Through their investigations, the detective embarks on a heroic quest to restore order and integrate unconscious elements into consciousness, aligning with the psychoanalytical concept of individuation. The detective also symbolizes the psyche's rational and logical faculties, juxtaposed against the chaos and irrationality often associated with the unconscious mind, as they seek to impose structure and meaning onto the mysteries they encounter.

Agents Mulder and Scully face constant threats and endangerment from their higher-ups because of their relentless pursuit of truths that challenge established narratives and powerful interests. Their investigations into paranormal phenomena and government conspiracies put them at odds with factions within the government and intelligence agencies, leading to obstruction, surveillance, intimidation, and even acts of violence aimed at suppressing their findings and preserving secret agendas. Throughout the series, the detectives navigate a treacherous landscape where their careers, safety, and lives are constantly at risk as they confront the forces that seek to silence them and maintain control over sensitive information (21).

Agent Dale Cooper faces punishment and retaliation from his agency, the FBI, for uncovering truths that challenge established narratives and powerful interests. His investigations into the murder of Laura Palmer and the town's dark secrets lead him to confront corrupt officials and supernatural forces, resulting in obstruction, surveillance, manipulation, and threats to his safety (22).

A conspiracy theorist might subconsciously interpret the trope of a detective getting in trouble for seeking and revealing hidden truths as threatening in several ways, often reflecting their worldviews and suspicions about authority and power structures. This trope could reinforce the conspiracy theorist's sense of paranoia and distrust of authority. They may interpret the trope as a subtle message intended to dissuade individuals from questioning official narratives or seeking out alternative explanations for events. The detective's plight may serve as a cautionary tale, reinforcing the idea that those who delve too deeply into hidden truths will face dire consequences.

Therefore, the media, a tool in the mechanism of fear, uses this archetype to incite fear. Through conditioning, it implies that the revelation of certain truths is dangerous. The affirmation of consequences to control behavior can be observed in reoccurring themes and stories in the media.

48

Rust Cohle's pursuit of truth brings him into conflict with powerful figures within law enforcement and other institutions. While investigating the Dora Lange murder case, Cohle uncovers evidence of corruption and collusion among fellow officers and influential individuals involved in criminal activity. As he delves deeper into the case, Cohle faces resistance from his superiors, who are more concerned with preserving the status quo thanexposing the truth. This resistance takes various forms, including reprimands, threats to his career, and physical violence. (23)
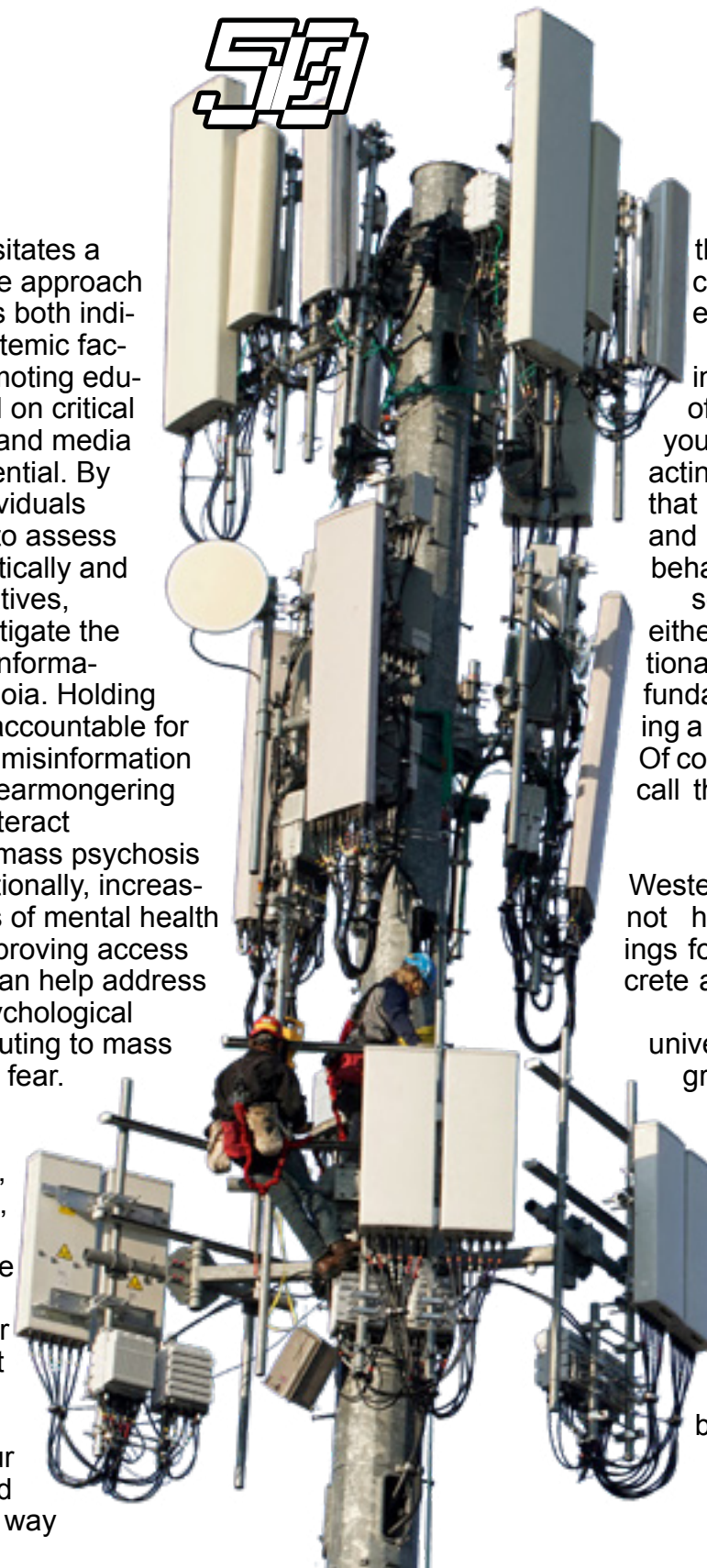
Conclusion: Where Do We Go from Here?

A thesis requires a conclusion and, ideally, a suggestion for or solution to the problems the author has been discussing. However, I am unable to offer a solution to this increasingly alarming state of mass psychosis and fear in postindustrial Western society. I believe that, as a society, we have reached a point of no return. Major social change (for the better) seems out of reach for at least the next 10 years. I believe there needs to be great infrastructural collapse before any such change can happen. Our brains and modes of communication are hardwired to keep us from being able to pin down the real problems we face.

It is crucial to realize that the road toward freedom and change, contrary to popular belief, needs to be paved by individual effort rather than a collective one. Perhaps a revolution, as we know it and as it has been presented to us through popular media, is an unattainable fantasy designed to keep us spending time and effort towards the wrong end goal.

Overcoming challenges such as mass psychosis and fear in a post industrial Western society necessitates a comprehensive approach that addresses both individual and systemic factors.First, promoting education focused on critical thinking skills and media literacy is essential. By equipping individuals with the tools to assess information critically and question narratives, society can mitigate the spread of misinformation and paranoia. Holding media outletsaccountable for disseminating misinformation or promoting fearmongering can help counteract the spread of mass psychosis and fear. Additionally, increasing awareness of mental health issues and improving access to resources can help address underlying psychological factors contributing to mass psychosis and fear.

The most important lesson, at least for me, is to pick your battles. Realize what is within and out of your control. Do not take things personally. Do not design your personality and self-worth in a way that is reliant on social constructs and causes. Being mindful of your emotions when interacting with the rest of the world can help you see how you are reacting to the information that is being fed to you and how it can affect your behavior. Distancing yourself from these factors, either physically or emotionally, would be the most fundamental step in creating a life that is worth living. Of course, one might easily call this being neutralized, or apolitical.

Especially within the Western academic sphere, not having extreme feelings for and not taking concrete action for a cause are frowned upon. In my university and social group, it can be seen as the biggest sin. I reject this attitude and refuse to be forced to waste my time and effort on things I have no control over. I refuse to play revolutionary to fit in and make myself believe that "I'm worthy because I care."

We are officially in an era of postanarchism anarchy. There is no freedom to be attained. The greatest shift in our perception as a whole would not be to see freedom as an end goal, but to acknowledge that we are already free and in control. I would like to finish this text by introducing Hakim Bey and his book TAZ: Temporary Autonomous Zones. Peter Lamborn Wilson, also known by his pseudonym Hakim Bey, is an American political writer, essayist, and anarchist thinker. He is best known for his contributions to the fields of anarchism, neo-tribalism, and countercultural movements. Wilson's writings often explore themes such as autonomy, temporary autonomous zones, pirate utopias, and the intersection of spirituality and politics. In TAZ, he discusses the concept of creating temporary spaces of liberation and autonomy in opposition to centralized power structures. Wilson's work has had a profound impact on postmodern anarchist thought and has inspired various movements and subcultures seeking alternatives to mainstream society. According to Wilson,

"Everything in nature is perfectly real including consciousness, there's absolutely nothing to worry about. Not only have the chains of the Law been broken, they never existed; demons never guarded the stars, the Empire never got started, Eros never grew a beard.

No, listen, what happened was this: they lied to you, sold you ideas of good & evil, gave you distrust of your body & shame for your prophethood of chaos, invented words of disgust for your molecular love, mesmerized you with inattention, bored you with civilization & all its usurious emotions.

There is no becoming, no revolution, no struggle, no path; already you're the monarch of your own skin — your inviolable freedom waits to be completed only by the love of other monarchs: a politics of dream, urgent as the blueness of sky" (24).

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Bey, Hakim. T.A.Z.: The Temporary Autonomous Zone. Brooklyn, NY: Autonomedia, 2003.

Bush, George W. "Address to a Joint Session of Congress and the American People." National Archives and Records Administration, September 20, 2001, https://georgewbush-whitehouse.archives.gov/news/releases/2001/09/20010920-8.html.

Byrne, Caroline. "Squealers & Spies: Cocktails, Galas & Secrets of the CIA-Backed Film Animal Farm." SPYSCAPE, n.d., https://spyscape.com/article/squealers-spies-behind-the-scenes-of-the-cia-backed-movie-animal-farm#:~:text=CIA%20spies%20secretly%20funded%20the,their%20anti%2Dcommunist%20agenda%20worldwide.

Cauter, Lieven De. "A Short Archaeology of the New Fear." Open!, April 7, 2004, https://onlineopen.org/a-short-archaeology-of-the-new-fear.
"David Foster Wallace Unedited Interview (2003)." YouTube, December 25, 2018, https://youtu.be/iGLzWdT7vGc?si=fPXLJjQKH1huOS--.

"Fearmonger." Merriam-Webster, n.d., https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/fearmonger.

"Media." Merriam-Webster, n.d., https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/media.

Frankfort, Henry. The Intellectual Adventures of Ancient Man. Chicago, IL: The Univ. of ChicagoPress, 1946.

Freud, Sigmund, and James Strachey. The Uncanny, 1919.

Halas, John, and Jay Batchelor. Animal Farm. Great Britain: Associated British Pathé Ltd., 1955.

Holdsworth, Dick. "Ahead of His Time." Esquire 28, no. 4, 1947.

Jung, C. G., Violet S. De Laszlo, Cary F. Baynes, and R. F. C Hull. Psyche and Symbol: A Selection from the Writings of C.G. Jung. Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1958.

Kaczynski, Ted. The Unabomber Manifesto: Industrial Society and Its Future. Berkeley, CA: JolleyRoger Press, 1996.

Lovecraft, H. P., Roberto Barzini, and David Cade. The Unnamable. London: Tales of Orpheus Productions, 2006.

McLuhan, Marshall, and Quentin Fiore. "The Medium is the Massage: An Inventory of Effects," 1967, https://web.mit.edu/allanmc/www/mcluhan.mediummessage.pdf. Mencken,

H. L. In Defense of Women. New Delhi, India: Rohit Publications, 2017.

Newman, Caroline. "What 9/11 Changed: Reflecting on the Cultural Legacy of the Attacks, 20 Years On." UVA Today, July 30, 2021, https://news.virginia.edu/content/what-911-changed-reflecting-cultural-legacy-attacks-20-years.

Sabato, Larry J. "Sabato's Crystal Ball." Sabatos Crystal Ball, July 22, 2004, https://centerforpolitics.org/crystalball/articles/ljs2004072201/.

Seneca, Lucius Annaeus. Moral Letters to Lucilius. Monee, IL, 2015.

"Sept. 11, 2001: President George W. Bush Learns about Terror Attacks at Sarasota School."YouTube, September 9, 2022. https://youtu.be/KBQEy6zs0mg?si=2y0-3_MHN7fVwGvR.

Steimer, Thierry. "The Biology of Fear- and Anxiety-Related Behaviors." Dialogues in Clinical Neuroscience, September 2002, https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3181681/.

Whitehead, A. N. Adventures in Ideas. New York: Free Press, 1933.