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# BBC News: Defining Britishness in the Early Twenty-First Century

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**BBC NEWS: DEFINING BRITISHNESS IN THE EARLY TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY**

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## **ABSTRACT**

### **BBC NEWS: DEFINING BRITISHNESS IN THE EARLY TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY**

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According to the BBC's 2006 Royal Charter, the BBC situations itself rhetorically within the notions of 'public value' and its commitment to, among other things, "d) representing the UK, its nations, regions and communities; e) bringing the UK to the world and the world to the UK [...]"(2-3). In order to achieve these goals, the BBC must define that which it represents particularly when dealing with the news. While BBC News claims to be impartial, rhetorically, impartiality is impossible when committing to the pursuit of definition and representation. In defining "Britishness," BBC News must negotiate Britain's global position as post-colonial, or neo-colonial, and European, as well as the heterogeneous nature of Britain.

This dissertation will demonstrate a model for exploring the motives of the BBC News' output using three case studies: a news report on the 2005 London transit bombings; a report on the 2006 Mumbai transit bombings; and a news report related to the 2014 Scottish Independence Referendum. The motives of the BBC must be examined, particularly because of the BBC's unique connection to the British government. Analyzing BBC News productions through the lenses of Stuart Hall's Encoding and Decoding model, as well as Kenneth Burkes' Dramatist model, gives scholars the opportunity to analyze the choices made by the BBC. By exploring how these choices fit into a modification of Herman and Chomsky's Propaganda Model, scholars can gain a greater understanding of the motivations of the BBC's construction of Britishness

from its heterogeneous audiences as well as how the corporation constructs the national good as a public value.

The outcome of the Brexit referendum demonstrates that despite a projection of united Britishness, Britain is a heterogeneous space comprising of a multitude of performances of Britishness. As the United Kingdom undergoes shifts in foreign and intra-national relations, how the BBC reports on related topics will be of importance in performing new versions of Britishness. How the BBC attempts to homogenize Britishness will allow scholars to consider the motives of both the BBC and the desires of the government.

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

#### **Performance, Product, or Propaganda?**

The summer of 2013 brought a handful of reports from Britain's newspaper *The Telegraph* detailing various scandals, investigations, and reports on bias involving the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC). On August 11, Hayley Dixon detailed a study demonstrating statistical evidence for left wing bias in the BBC ("BBC is Biased Towards Left"). However nearly two weeks before this information was reviewed, Graeme Archer of *The Telegraph* suggested that not only is bias prevalent in BBC reporting, it ought to be embraced. He suggested that neutrality is impossible, and viewers would better learn about issues by the BBC dealing with these biases with "transparency." He concluded with the assertion that the BBC likely holds on to the idea of neutrality and impartial reporting as a way to stay publicly funded ("Of Course the People at the BBC are Biased").

Indeed, these sorts of accusations are not news to the BBC or to any news organization. Aside from the usual letter writing campaigns to both the BBC and outside agencies, websites exist specifically to warn of the suggested biases of the BBC and to discuss each supposed infraction of impartiality. Such sites include the blog and discussion boards *BiasedBBC.org* ("Exposing the Broadcasting Bias"), dating back to at least 2003, and the *StopTheBBC* network of blog posts and social network channels (stopthebbc.blogspot.com). Forums such as these mainly address the topic of a perceived left-of-center political bias within the news content of the corporation. These participatory movements are culturally significant because they demonstrate the 'usual' critique that media consumers are used to hearing, both in the UK and abroad. More importantly, the proliferation of these conversations demonstrates how other important issues of

bias are ignored. In some senses, these forums and conversations actually provide a certain safety for the BBC—so long as its audiences are invested in the decades old left vs. right argument, more complex questions remain undebated, such as how the BBC defines Britishness itself, and how different political goals may bias these definitions. While these ideological debates of “bias” continue to rage, the concept of more concerning types of biases that are ingrained in cultural norms that the BBC helps to create and reinforce are ignored.

The BBC’s official documentation of their mission is of great importance in establishing how the BBC sees itself as a part of its cultural landscape. According to the BBC’s 2006 *Broadcasting: Copy of the Royal Charter for the Continuance of the British Broadcasting Corporation*, the BBC situates itself rhetorically within the notions of ‘public value’ and its commitment to "a) sustaining citizenship and civil society; b) promoting education and learning; c) stimulating creativity and cultural excellence; d) representing the UK, its nations, regions and communities; e) bringing the UK to the world and the world to the UK [...]"(2-3). While each of these ambitions seem to come standard for an organization constructing itself as a ‘public value,’ questions of definition arise when considering the prospect of representation in a heterogeneous society such as the UK. Likewise, it is the noble aspiration of ‘representation’ that necessitates an investigation of the BBC’s purported neutrality that would have implications for the definitions the BBC ascribes to in both its documents and programming. Indeed, the seemingly simple act of ordaining itself with this responsibility intrinsically links it rhetorically to both the needs of the state and of the audience. It also implies that there are natural and uncoded ways of representing Britishness and otherness. Burke’s concepts of definition demonstrate that the act of defining is paradoxical in that it also defines what the defined is not. Because definition happens in context, “that which supports or underlies a thing would be part of the thing’s context. And a

thing's context, being outside or beyond the thing, would become something the thing is not" (1314). These tensions between what Burke describes as the "intrinsic and extrinsic substance" can inform the reader on the motivation of the agent of definition (1314). It is precisely because of Burke's exploration of identification and definition that we must examine the BBC's mission statement about representation. There is no way to remain neutral, unbiased, or removed from the process of definition, especially when defining something as emotionally and politically loaded as nationalism and what it means to be a national. Despite this, the BBC's mission statement gives the corporation the authority to do just that as the charter supports its mission of serving the public. The BBC, as a venerable public institution, must be challenged as to how it decides upon what Britishness is and who Britons are. By defining its audience, the BBC reshapes its reporting and prescribes how its audience should receive the news and respond and interact with it. Because this loaded information affects how individuals participate civically and understand the world locally and globally, the corporation should not wield unexamined power in setting these parameters.

This project will explore the relationship of British nationalism and the ethos of a globalized, European, post-colonial era of BBC News reporting and British identity. Throughout the history of the BBC, BBC News has been looked upon as an authority of reporting both within the bounds of the UK and across the globe. Their recent multi-media approach attempts to cater this wide range of audiences, and the discourses with which they approach these audiences vary according to the cultural connections established or hoping to be established. However, the BBC's existence as an agent of public value with a unique connection to the government suggests that negotiating with biases of national interest and public interest must be inherent in the day-to-day business of creating products for its consumers. This situation is not entirely

unique given the history of the BBC World Service which will be discussed further in this document.

The BBC's document *Building Public Value* (2004) elaborates upon how the BBC sees itself as a public value and service. Likewise, the document demonstrates the corporation's understanding of social capital:

This shared experience may itself represent a significant public value – the communal glue which some call social capital. But that is only one of many potential wider benefits. A programme may make me more likely to vote, or to look at my neighbour in a new, more positive light. It may encourage both of us to spruce up our houses and improve our neighbourhood. A programme I turn to for pure relaxation may unexpectedly teach me something of real value. In a national emergency, the right broadcast information might save my life. (6)

This document demonstrates a picture of a very self-aware BBC, describes its idealist scenario of a public servant, and appeals to its audiences to help protect its founding principles: Universality, Fairness and Equity, and Accountability (7). This is not the only appeal to the public in the document. This document, released before the renewal of the corporation's current royal charter of 2007, indicates that audience subject groups will be polled and considered in order to evaluate public good (26), and that as a public good, the BBC aims to increase inclusion of different ethnic and minority groups, as well as participation by the public in general (9). The document proclaims that the corporation seeks to bring understanding between different groups through commonalities and representation (14). However, the document frequently mentions a type of shared culture, particularly in its stated goal: "We will seek to bring our shared historical and cultural heritage alive for a modern audience," which then goes on to discuss programs related to

Dunkirk and the D-Day invasion (70). Despite acknowledging the heterogeneous nature of British culture, the corporation uses terms such as “our shared historical and cultural heritage” in its public literature. The mixed messages that the document raises, therefore, leave the critical reader to question how the BBC is defining, producing, and forming this “shared” cultural history as well as to question whether the BBC’s goal is to create homogeneity through hegemonic discourse. The modes through which the BBC defines its shared culture, as well as the modes through which it encodes ideals of culture, provide adequate reasoning for an investigation of how these values are constructed and mediated through the production of the news. The BBC has demonstrated that it is interested in encoding and sharing British culture with its audiences; yet, the audiences it imagines are questionable. Therefore, the role of the BBC in constructing these imagined communities should be considered as the corporation continues to shape national culture through its news broadcasts. This role is not only important to how Britons see their own culture, but to how they define outside cultures and others.

Internet posters, think tanks, and journalists discuss issues of leftwing/rightwing bias within the institution of the BBC. However, a larger question remains unqueried. The question remains as to how any “raw” content may be constructed and received as ideologically impartial while also being heralded as constructed for the benefit of the public viewership. It is imperative to consider how such content represents this viewership, British nationality, and the world at large, because the institution must make judgments in definition on many levels in order to fulfill its goal of public value. As these types of cultural biases may be more invisible to an “in” culture, it is important to consider how the BBC represents, mirrors, and helps to create these biases and points of view because of the corporation’s considerable influence in the feedback loop of cultural creation. Sadly, these issues seem neglected in the public discourse of the BBC,

save for the suggestion of a commenter on ourBeeb, a forum begun by *The Guardian's* Dan Hancox as a part of *OpenDemocracy.net*. Hancox asserts the need for the forum by suggesting that because the Director General of the BBC is about to step down, it is time for the public to evaluate the BBC. Specifically, he says:

At a critical point in the history of the BBC, this is a vital new forum for discussing what our Beeb should look like, and how it should adapt to the challenges of the twenty-first century. (“Welcome to ourBeeb”)

While other outlets have faced questioning along these lines, the BBC has largely been shielded from this type of commentary, perhaps due to the cultural ethos it holds as a national institution. Hancox’s opening post in 2012 suggests a list of questions to ask the BBC in order to hold it accountable as a modern institution. Hancox concludes the inaugural post by asking: “But most of all we want contributions from you: it’s your Beeb. What do you want from it?” (“Welcome to ourBeeb”). User Kevrenor suggests adding another question: “5. How can the BBC reflect and represent the various nations and communities and their local unique cultures and needs, rather than centralised Westminster Government and British unionist politics?” (“Welcome to ourBeeb”). This question matters for two important reasons: it reflects the skepticism that some Britons feel as to how the BBC is able to represent Britain and its people, and it demonstrates skepticism with how the corporation can do this rather than representing what the British government and the union of the United Kingdom needs it to do. The fact that this question remains unanswered by the BBC reflects the complexity of the organization’s set up and demonstrates some recognition to the validity of the question. Kevrenor’s suggestion to add this question to the list of considerations demonstrates how important it is for viewers to understand the connection and question how the BBC aligns itself in the face of its somewhat contradictory

mission statement. This suggestion evokes a need for examination as well as distrust for the ability of the corporation to hold true to its mission of representation even at its most basic level.

These blogs and networks of discussion make an important point: the BBC is not alone in constructing culture and British identity. If the field of rhetoric is concerned with the modes and means through which messages, signs, and signals are conveyed, interpreted, and relayed, it must be understood that institutions such as the BBC do not act alone in encoding these nationalist messages. The BBC, with its political and cultural ideologies at work, is a part of what Althusser refers to as the Ideological State Apparatus (ISA) (80). Althusser argues that though there is “one (Repressive) State Apparatus, there is a *plurality* of Ideological State Apparatuses” (80). Althusser argues that the ideological and “even symbolic” ISAs aid the elites of the Repressive State Apparatus by providing them with the means to also “act” through these ideologies (81). Thus, the ideological concerns of the BBC can be seen as an entity both outside of the Repressive State Apparatus as well as a part of its sphere of influence.

As Bizzel and Hertzburg suggest, the modern era of rhetoric emerged when these questions of truth, society, language and authority were reintroduced to the field by Nietzsche. Arguing that truth is “a social arrangement” (13) the producers of this so-called truth “construct the world they wish to believe in, using a language that is far from objective and neutral” (14). Rather, Nietzsche argues that language “is always partial, value laden and intentional” (14). Burke’s work is grounded in the belief that “Discourse [...] seeks to motivate people in some way”; therefore, again, all language is rhetorical (14). Finally, Foucault connects these ideas to authority arguing that discourse “is part of the network of knowledge and power, shaped by disciplines and institutions with their complex interactions and motivations” (15). Importantly, Foucault recognizes the cycletic nature of discourse and power: institutions create the means of

discourse through their own authority and then use the discourse itself as a way to maintain and exercise their authority (15).

These theorists demonstrate how modern and post-modern rhetoric concerns itself with examining the power relationships between language and institutional authority. In particular, they show how institutions in the construction of culture are constantly *imagining and reimagining* culture, the very culture which gives them the authority to do so. Althusser affirms this type of relationship in his insistence that “an ideology always exists in an apparatus” and that an “ideology = an imagined relation to real relations” (82).

Stuart Hall demonstrates that the media cannot consistently be “unilaterally reproducing without contradiction, the hegemonic ideology” (“The ‘Structured Communication’ of Events” 13). This inability, he stresses, does not equal a reproduction of “perfect plurality” (14). Rather, the media’s process of encoding, with all its moving parts, peoples, and symbols are still hegemonic. Hall argues, “Despite the requirements of ‘objectivity’, ‘balance’, ‘impartiality’ etc, the media remain oriented within the framework of power: they are part of a political and social system which is structured in dominance” (14).

In fact, Hall uses the BBC as an example: the BBC channels are required “to give equal time to the viewpoints of the two major political parties on any topic which is controversial” (14). Hall demonstrates that this requirement does not produce plurality or a democratic selection of all viewpoints: rather, the debate between both parties is still structured within the framework of the British party system and nestled within established British law (14). Thus even this so-called balance is part of the hegemonic structure.

Thus, the BBC is free to imagine its relationship to the people of Britain in defining Britishness because of its own ideology. Its ideology endows the corporation with that purpose.



In relation to the BBC, this purpose should not be confused with a complete lack of input by the audience. The audiences of these institutions still participate in the performance and production of the corporation's cultural products and are still needed to support the institution by means of investment in the cultures they reflect/produce. In this case, the audience of the BBC first must retain loyalty to the BBC and its mission for the BBC to remain active. Were these citizens to refuse en masse to pay the licensing fee which the BBC uses for its operation, the BBC would have a difficult time continuing, remembering of course that it is the Repressive State Apparatus (80) that grants the BBC charters and monies. Thus, it is of foremost importance that the audience sees the BBC's cultural products as valuable to everyday life.

Both passive and active forms of participation are important in these cases. The passive form of accepting value leads to the active participation of paying the licensing fee. The passive form of accepting the BBC's claim of impartiality and fair representation leads to an active reinforcement of the values that the BBC produces and prescribes as British/not-British. Active participation that contributes to this culture building is not only limited to reinforcing established values, but also to challenging them through letter writing, social media, and other forms of communicative complaint. Delueze describes this type of performance as an aspect of a society of control: a society distinct from one of enclosures: "*Enclosures* are like molds, distinct castings, but controls are a *modulation*, like a self-deforming cast that will constantly change from one moment to the other," (4). This type of active involvement, by both the BBC and its viewers, are an aspect of modulation that reinforce cultural values while providing the illusion of modifying them. The illusion is broken when individuals and communities act in a way contrary to the values the BBC prescribes as 'British' yet define themselves as being a part of the national culture. These individual and communal acts challenge the status quo of the BBC and provide

communities with opportunities to negotiate differences in the discourse of identity politics and to form their own decisions. These decisions in turn influence the BBC, which must to some degree retain its audience to maintain its budget.

This project aims to elucidate the dangers of unexamined public media and to illuminate modes through which the neo-liberal construction of British identity is played out in both cultural and socio-political discussions in the 21<sup>st</sup> century through modes of a control society (Delueze 4). This study will attempt to deconstruct the ideas of objectivity behind common cultural myths about ethos and news reporting, as well as to open a specific discussion about how nationalism and post-colonial interest affects the rhetorical and discursive processes of how communities are imagined, constructed, and discussed in the communities of post-imperial powers. It will focus on the specific case studies of reports of the London bombings of 2005, the Mumbai bombings of 2006, and the Scottish referendum for independence in 2014. These case studies have been selected to highlight specific moments during which Britishness is defined: when Britain is attacked on its own soil due to ideology-based violence; when a former colony with significant ties to the UK is attacked on its own soil due to ideology-based violence; and when Britishness itself is 'at risk' due to the possible severance of part of the United Kingdom, otherwise, the union.

This dissertation will attempt to recognize the plurality of readings of the news by individuals involved in different cultural situations in conjunction with the problems raised with the corporation's assumed goal of serving the public good. The international reputation of the BBC demands that a critical eye be taken towards its practices of representation; therefore, this study will use the aforementioned case studies to examine:

- How "the public" audience is imagined in the UK

- How both home and foreign nationality is represented
- How Britishness is constructed and performed, overtly and by omission.

It is important to consider these elements of the BBC's construction of nationality for many reasons. First, the way its audiences perform as British citizens, citizens of Europe, citizens of a former empire, and citizens of the modern world, affect how individual members engage in civic participation. This relationship affects not only how potential leaders vie for their loyalties, but also how they represent constituents. These constructions also lead to creating mediascapes of other parts of the world which affect not only how Britons perform their own Britishness and how Britishness is perceived from abroad, but also how the British understand the rest of the world in comparison. This allows for the potential for abuse through essentializing other cultures by, as per Burke's definition (1314), defining these cultures specifically against how Britishness is defined. Finally, the fact that bias and essentialization exists in the BBC does not mean that all of the work of the corporation is inherently bad, corrupt, or to be avoided. Rather, it is through accepting and understanding the BBC's paradoxical mission that audience members can make critical decisions on how to engage with or act on the material presented by the corporation. It is through examining how the BBC's motives operate through its process of definition (Burke 1314) that the motives of the BBC overall can be interrogated.

Finally, I will consider the negotiations of these modes of readings in a post-colonial and globalizing state and consider the broader implications of these case studies. I will use these analyses to reimagine Hermann and Chomsky's Propaganda Model (*Manufacturing Consent*) for use with the BBC's news media in particular. This model is particularly helpful in considering the BBC's news output as Britain leaves the EU and moves on to a new stage in conceiving Britishness, a concept fraught with exposed tensions and fragmentations after the Brexit vote of

2016. During this period of transition, indeed during any period of transition, the state has an interest in how the people within it operate in tandem with its own institutional concerns.

### **Methodology**

As Linda Colley points out in her *Britons*, British national identity has never been fully cemented as a set of values, rather it has consisted as a set of values diametrically opposed to an established other (368). British media must negotiate a similar type of fear as the final filter. This fear is not of 'the other,' too complicated in this age of post-colonialism and European alliances, but the fear of loss of identity. Rather than fearing the other, the post-modern era produces a fear of the fragmentation of self-identity. With a shifting national identity traditionally built in opposition to the 'other,' the crisis of British identity can be interpreted to occur through the fear of the 'other' becoming part of one's own identity. Through immigration, integration, and diversification, the colonial era image of 'the good colonial' has been replaced with that of the integrated 'other.' Modern Britain, within itself, includes a multitude of races, religions, and ethnicities. As Colley demonstrates, British identity was very concerned at one point in time with Protestantism, generally in contrast to the Catholicism of the French and other European entities (*Britons*18). In more modern times, Colley argues that, "the factors that provided for the forging of a British nation in the past have largely ceased to operate. Protestantism, that once vital element, has now a limited influence on British culture, as indeed has Christianity itself" (382-383). This increasingly secular society then, still stands in contrast to the growing number of practicing Muslims, Hindus, and people of other faith expressions in Britain. The fear of the other becoming a part of the self is not only expressed through self-crisis, but also through the fear of immigration, the fear of change, and the fear of losing perceived traditional values. Indeed, Colley argues that the hesitation of the British to fully integrate into modern Europe and

the “apparent insularity” of Britain within Europe is due to a crisis in what British identity means today (383). However, these concepts are transmitted and/or recognized through culture and the media, they none-the-less can lead to shifts in opinions of policy, foreign and domestic, by both voters and officials alike. As the state manifests its needs through the media, it becomes essential for viewers and scholars to recognize how the media is constructing the messages it sends. The fear of the fragmentation or loss of Britishness is a post-modern fear that plays into how the media acts in order to preserve identity.

The idea of the post-modern fragmented identity demonstrated by Jameson (500-501) is important to the consideration of the construction and imagining of Britishness. Additionally, it is Jameson’s description of the escalators in the Bonaventure Hotel which offers a distinct metaphor for the way the media creates, or recreates, the illusion of a straight narrative path within this crisis of identity. Jameson states that, “The escalators and elevators here henceforth replace movement but also and above all designate themselves as new reflective signs and emblems of movement proper” (510). While the BBC’s prescribed unity within Britishness operates within this sense of loss, it simultaneously paves over fragmentation, operating as a replacement for what was straightforwardly known about Britishness prior to this post-modern fear. Likewise, the BBC’s narratives of Britishness, like the escalators of the Bonaventure, “become the allegorical signifier of that old promenade we are no longer able to take on our own” (510). Jameson’s allegory demonstrates what he calls “the auto-referentiality of all modern culture, which tends to turn upon itself and designate its own cultural production as content” (510). This auto-referentiality is an apt description of the BBC and the modes through which the BBC produces Britishness as well as presents it as content. But this post-modern production

aptly addresses the fear and loss identity which directly affects the rhetoric of the news inevitably cycled through the paradigms I will use to interrogate the case studies.

Within each case study, this dissertation will analyze segments according to various models such as Stuart Hall's model of Encoding and Decoding (163). I will use Hall's model to explore the encoded messages in each case study and how these encodings help to inform the reader, scholar, and audiences of the BBC's vision of Britishness. I will also explore possible readings from the dominant, negotiated, and oppositional positions of the audience. I will use these encoding and decoding positions to inform further analysis.

In each case analysis I will use Hermann and Chomsky's Propaganda Model (*Manufacturing Consent*), as applicable to the BBC, to develop a platform from which to explore motive. Because the original Propaganda Model is heavily dependent on commercial concerns, I will address how the BBC differs from the American media the model was originally constructed for. Additionally, the BBC remains intrinsically entangled with the British state. It is of importance to consider the connection of the British state to BBC media because unlike the original model, the state does not involve itself with the media in the same way. While Hermann and Chomsky argue that American broadcasters are not so 'independent' because state interests have a controlling say in their operations in more covert ways (1-2), the BBC's active condition of continued existence relies on its connection with the state even while the corporation attempts to maintain a myth of independence. This condition changes the way in which the filters of the original Propaganda Model function, though each filter remains of importance in considering how the BBC constructs nationalism and represents the British people and government.

The first filter of the Propaganda Model is concerned with, "the size, concentrated ownership, owner wealth, and profit orientation of the dominant mass media firms" (2). The

original Propaganda Model assumes a purely commercial ownership model for the mass media conglomerations involved. The BBC's conditions of ownership are far more complex. While the BBC remains a public institution of "public value" and supposedly separate from editorial control by the government, this public institution is supported by a license fee, and its charter for existence and editorial control is reliant on renewal through the government and by the crown. The BBC also retains a commercial arm which produces and promotes content outside of the UK. An examination of the case studies will explore how the BBC and its cultural goals are not so removed from the government in terms of ownership and that this ownership model should invite skepticism in relation to assumptions of the corporation's objectivity.

Further, the BBC insists that the BBC belongs to the people of the UK because of its commitment to public service as well as because of the license fee. Instituting such digital spaces such as "Have Your Say" on the BBC News website are cues which rhetorically bolster the idea of viewer ownership through active participation. This appeal to audience ownership contributes to the sense of investment the BBC must instill in its audience to get them to continue to literally invest in the license fee scheme. BBC Worldwide and BBC Global, while separate from the non-commercial arm of the domestic BBC, are commercial in nature. While these properties may not directly benefit the domestic arm of the BBC in a financial way, it cannot be denied that they promote overall brand reach and aid in making contacts to be discussed in relation to the third filter.

The second filter of the propaganda model is "advertising as the primary income source of the mass media" (2). The BBC is primarily funded by a mandatory license fee paid by television owners in the UK. In discussing this filter, I will investigate the connection between the government, who sets the license fee, and the connection to the separate commercial arm of

BBC Worldwide. These investigations will allow for a discussion of how income, made through people represented by the service, can be compared to income made through a connection to a perceived audience of consumer advertisements. In this dissertation I will also investigate how nationalism is constructed as a consumable product. This interrogation will aid in constructing how the mission of the BBC manifests more broadly. All of these questions bring forth an inevitable connection to the BBC's audiences and interrogate the meaning of these audiences' investment in services.

The domestic arm of the BBC is funded primarily by the BBC licensing fee. Parliament is responsible for allowing or setting the fee. The main difference between the commercial and the publicly funded is that the BBC relies on its reputation in order for people to tolerate paying the fee. The BBC relies heavily on a cultural advertising that may not be involve direct monetary expenses, but is essential to keeping their monetary flow. The corporation must prove itself essential, not only in 'public value' to its viewers who pay a fee to keep access, but also to the government and regulators who set the fee and occasionally challenge the amount of the fee or if the fee is even necessary. This double-edged sword means that the BBC must present itself in a good light to two sometimes disparate masters. The most problematic aspect of the BBC's public value mission is the question of who decides what the public needs as well as how the value is determined. In some cases, the BBC Trust, an arm of the BBC itself, is responsible for regulating and resolving certain BBC quality issues such as accusations of bias. Other cases rely on the BBC "selling" the most current charter to receive approval to continue operation under the crown as well as the Ministry of Culture, Media, and Sport. While the BBC does not appeal directly to advertisers, the BBC must sell its ideas, ideals, and value to both the public and the government. Without the approval of the public, support for the licensing fee would decrease. This is ever



important now that digital technology has created so many alternate forms of access to programming. A committed and reliable audience must be invested in the BBC and see its services as an inherent value in order to continue to pay license fees.

The third filter of the Propaganda Model is concerned with “the reliance of the media on information provided by government, business, and ‘experts’ funded and approved by these primary sources and agents of power” (2). This filter will be discussed in terms of how it corresponds with Hermann and Chomsky’s original explanation, but also how it is expanded. An important site of sourcing through the BBC includes its World Service arm, which has existed since the early parts of the last century. Britain’s special relationship with its former colonies and protectorate nations are also important to consider in terms of sourcing. The British Commonwealth, which still serves as an economic and social tie between former colonies and the UK, is an important framework for sourcing and for access to news and governments. In other cases, this former colonial influence can be a barrier to entry. Britain’s place in Europe is also an important consideration. The BBC’s third filter must be understood as being heavily influenced by post-Imperial relations of the UK as well as Britain’s place in modern Europe. These connections render the corporation as inevitably tied to UK government and policy.

The next filter, is “flak” as a means of disciplining the media” (2). Unlike commercial media, as a public institution the BBC must at least attempt to have transparency in regard to complaints received to its complaints division. The BBC Trust has an established board to look into complaints, and reports are issued on a regular basis (“Complaints”). These complaint structures, which can address the legality of the corporation itself as well as programming issues, exist in addition to the usual forms of complaint and expression seen in commercial systems. Alternative media, such as the anti-BBC websites discussed earlier in this chapter, also provide a

space for flak. While the BBC has many channels through which flak is dispersed, participatory culture allows for a different type of response. The way the BBC controls or works with this participatory culture is important in considering how the BBC manages their audience in regard to flak. It is important to recognize that flak can have more than repercussions of credibility for the BBC; rather, it can have broad legal and institutional repercussions in regard to its charter. While websites like Stop the BBC are one form of flak—the Conservative government and, historically, Margaret Thatcher have been known to be sources of flak for the BBC as well. This again speaks to the line the BBC must walk between public acceptance and government acceptance.

Finally, the filter of ““anti-communism” as a national religion and control mechanism” (2) will be investigated, as the fear of loss of identity. Hermann and Chomsky’s filter of anti-communism held more weight, when it was first written, toward the end of the cold war. Rather than the fear of a faceless system of Communism suppressing individuality and self-identity, British media must negotiate a different type fear as the final filter. Though various updates to the anti-communist model such as the War on Terror may be more convincing in discussing the media structures of the original model, this is not appropriate for the BBC and the culture of the UK, England in particular. Using the case studies selected, in addition to other literature on the subject, this dissertation will argue that this fifth filter is instead fueled by a postmodern fear of a lack of British identity, and at times specifically English identity, as well as perceived cultural and economic decline.

This dissertation will also explore how Hermann and Chomsky’s concern with the media’s creation of “worthy and unworthy victims” (37) manifests in these case studies and possibly in the BBC’s news creation at large. If the BBC must define and represent Britishness

as part of its public service mission, we must explore not only how these concepts of fear manifest through the representation of Britishness, but also how the corporation attempts to deal with these fears in order to create a unified idea of Britishness in a heterogeneous society. Working through perceptions of ‘motive’ allows for a deeper exploration of how the post-modern fear of identity loss is worked through in order to recreate the Propaganda Model for the unique situation of Britishness and public value media.

It is at this juncture I will explore motivation through Kenneth Burke’s Dramatist model (“A Grammar of Motives”). Burke’s Dramatist model provides an excellent mode through which to isolate the action of each case study, who has acted in or performed these actions, what means they have used to perform the action, the scene in which the action took place, the means through which it was accomplished, and the purpose the agent has in performing these actions (1301). The agents and positions of events and participants, as per Burke’s model, will be used as a baseline for further discussion, particularly when considering Hall’s Encoding and Decoding process. I will explore these case studies to suggest possible ‘motives’ of the encoded messages, and discuss these motives through various cultural and historical lenses. This task will contribute to an interdisciplinary understanding of cultural participation. To analyze these elements, an *imagined* primary audience for the BBC will be extrapolated and compared to a more broadly realized selection of *actual* audiences as per Benedict Anderson’s understanding of “imagined communities” (*Imagined Communities* 1983). These audience profiles will serve as a means to discuss how Burke’s dramatic pentad is constructed for the imaginary audiences, as well as how actual audiences, from various positions in Hall’s Encoding and Decoding model (171-173), can reconstruct this pentad. These readings will also be deconstructed in relation to the conclusions and assumptions that are meant to be understood by the variety of audience members served by

the “public service” mission of the BBC. Through this dissertation, I will discuss these potential readings in terms of supporting and propagating British nationalism with the intention of adding to the body of knowledge regarding how cultural institutions such as the BBC help to create and reinforce culture. I will explain this further in the next chapter.

Finally, I will argue that Appadurai’s mediascapes (43) are an intentional byproduct of BBC news which help to fuel negotiated and renegotiated examinations of what modern Britishness looks like as well as how the world looks in comparison. By imagining the British and English communities and presenting these imaginings to its viewership, the BBC is able to reform and restructure the ideals of Britishness that rallied so many colonial conquests in the past. While looking outside to the world, examples that are more or less foreign to the construction of the BBC’s Britishness may prove ‘unworthy.’ Looking inside to the UK itself, ‘unworthy’ victims may appear as outside of the BBC’s construction of domestic ideals of Britishness. Considering the motives and modes through which the BBC constructs and reconstructs British culture is both necessary and kairotic. As Britain’s exit from the European Union continues to reinforce the tensions between various parts of Britain, and the refugee crisis continues to press on in Europe, the BBC should be held accountable for its relationship to the government and investigated for how its role in the cultural creation of nationalism is influential in the grander scheme of British, European, and worldwide politics.

### **Case Summaries**

In order to realize a new Propaganda Model, I will concern this dissertation with the analysis of the case studies involved.

In the London news broadcast (“77 London Bombings”) segments include cell phone footage from the immediate aftermath of the attack, interviews with witnesses of the attack,

reports from the BBC reporter, and footage of the aftermath of the attacks. The main aspect that I will explore in this case study is how Britishness is encoded through the way the attack is described by the witnesses interviewed as well as how the event itself is constructed by the news. I will discuss the connection to state concerns about terrorism, security, and nationalism through this exploration by investigating motive through the lenses of Burke, Herman, and Chomsky.

The second case study I will present is a BBC News report concerning the 7/11 bombings of 2006 in Mumbai (“Scores Dead in Mumbai”). The broadcast includes segments of pre-recorded footage from the area after the event, voice-over narrative reporting, and in-studio reporting. Again, encoding is the important aspect that I will focus on in this case study, specifically how Britishness is encoded by negation by the corporation. I will discuss motive again through the lenses of Burke, Herman, and Chomsky.

The Scottish Referendum case study, unlike the other two studies, includes more than one piece for analysis. In this chapter, I will examine the unedited recording of a ‘live’ press conference regarding the Scottish independence referendum shown by the BBC (“Ultimate Smackdown”). This piece contains both questions by a BBC reporter as well as the responses given by Alex Salmond, the former First Minister of Scotland—both important aspects of this segment. I will also examine a BBC news segment about the conference shown later in the day which caused controversy due to the way the report was edited (“Nick Robinsons Blackout”). Also, unlike the other case studies, I will focus on aspects of decoding in this case study. Again, I will discuss motive through the lenses of Burke, Herman, and Chomsky, and explore how state motives are enacted through the BBC.

Finally, I will examine the possible motives for the BBC in creating these news segments. This discussion will take into account the types of readings made possible through the elements

of these news packages and will hegemonic understanding of these productions rely on a common agreement of “Britishness.” I will also discuss how these news segments both construct and reinforce a mediascape of Britain, to both insiders and to the world, as well as how this mediascape protects and projects the stated goals of the BBC and its public service mission. This will allow broadcasters, scholars, and audiences, to better understand how their triangulation helps to build and reinforce cultural expectations, norms, and deviance.

While the BBC has devoted multiple full and complete news segments to both terrorist tragedies and has given much coverage on all of its platforms to the Scottish referendum, these case studies were chosen with a purpose. Both the Mumbai and London segment were chosen with immediacy in mind—while more time, knowledge and resources likely evolved the shape of reporting on these tragedies, my intent was to examine a pair of news segments from the day of each attack. The immediacy and lack of concrete leads in investigating the events lends itself to a more “raw” report, focusing less on investigation than later reports would do and more on describing what happened and how. It was my hope that these early reports would demonstrate a media response to these events that was, in a sense, more reactionary. The immediate reaction to these events I hoped would be more reflective of underlying approaches to dealing with terror that are primarily concerned with the nations needs immediately after the event occurs rather than the needs to see procedural justice take place over the course of time. The case study of Alex Salmond’s press conference reporting was chosen as it was the most prominent example across various mediums demonstrating a sense of bias by audiences of the BBC’s reporting on the referendum.

## CHAPTER II

### LITERATURE REVIEW

#### **A Brief History of the BBC**

The history of the BBC helps justify the need for critically examining how the BBC performs, produces, and reproduces Britishness in many ways. First, as the BBC has historically demonstrated itself to be manipulated and used by the government to serve the government's needs in the past, viewers should not assume that the corporation has ever been free of these influences. This inherent connection must be understood when considering how truly independent the production of BBC's news truly is. The BBC's history also demonstrates how the changing of governments has had an effect on the BBC by way of critiquing its content and biases as well as changing the conditions under which the BBC operates in opening the field for other television competition. A closer look at this history also allows for the possibility of comprehending a lack of objectivity on the part of the BBC News, and recognizing its role in governance and empire. Through its construction of British nationalism during the war, as well as its early support and governance by the government, the BBC has always operated, at least in part, as a tool of propaganda for both creating and disseminating productions of "Britishness."

In 1974's *Television*, Raymond Williams pointed out that the BBC's nature is inherently complicated. Its independent nature is still, while technically separate from the government, a function of governmental appointeeism and therefore still connected to the parliamentary machine (33-34). It is not surprising then, that the BBC held such a large role in establishing and maintaining a cultural consciousness of "Britishness," as it was able to be manipulated by the government from its early history. Despite claims of editorial control, the BBC is still inherently an extension of government interests as Williams claimed in 1974, and his framework can help

us to better understand the history of the BBC and how this history founds the basis for investigating the modern BBC. The corporation's history plays an important part in understanding the cultural history of the BBC's ethos as constructed by the public and in the way the BBC constructs its own history—as well as its present.

As with all television, the BBC fosters an illusion of direct and equal participation, as though the BBC does not have a hierarchical position over its audiences (Williams 48). This illusion is important to the longevity of the BBC in performing nationalism and in keeping the social capital invested in it by the people of Britain. In *Media Nations* Sabina Mihelj describes how connections between family structure and nationalism are “deeply engrained,” and that the Queen of England's first Christmas broadcast on the BBC in 1957 was an effective tool at “bridging the divide between public and private spheres (119-120). Mihelj describes the Queen's message to the BBC viewership as “temporarily suspending the hierarchies of power and privilege that inevitably set her own family life miles apart from the everyday life and concerns of the average British family” (120) and personalizing the political ideas of nationalism. In addition to this personalization, perhaps most importantly, the BBC demonstrates an attempt to render the medium of this type of transmission invisible; this traditional Christmas greeting encourages the illusion of direct participation and a direct relationship with the Queen herself.

Additionally, Niki Strange demonstrates how digital practices have redefined viewer participation through programs like *Great Britons* and *A Picture of Britain* (139-140). Programs like this may use crowd-sourced images from participating audiences and votes from viewers to define what it means to be a great Briton and what a picture of Britain looks like, but ultimately these decisions still remain in the hands of the BBC's gatekeepers. While true democratic participation may be an illusion, the BBC is aware that the audience must be invested in the idea



of participation of civil discourse through the public value provided by the institution. Likewise, in order to maintain its position as above partisanship and politics, the BBC must downplay its links to the government as much as possible.

The historical conditions under which the BBC has operated as a public servant are essential points of discussion which must be addressed in order to develop an understanding of the present state of the BBC. While many 'histories' of the BBC and BBC News can be found, perhaps the most interesting of them is the one constructed by the BBC itself. The BBC News website chronicles its own history, and that history is worth examining as it demonstrates how the BBC constructs its own sense of self as an organization, as well as its own place in the British national consciousness. It is also fraught with inconsistencies that on one hand reinforce the notion of the BBC's role as a public servant yet ultimately undermine it by problematizing the corporation's connection with the government of the United Kingdom.

While the BBC has a long history of being known as a non-commercial and politically independent entity, commercial and political concerns played a large role in its early development. Indeed, there were other commercial and political concerns which determined other elements of their early broadcasts. According to the BBC, sales of home radios, for example, influenced the proliferation of providing content for listening, and from 1922 until 1926, news-broadcasts before seven in the evening were banned as to not undermine newspaper sales. The BBC bowed to government pressure in the late 1920s to report only what the government approved of regarding the widespread national strikes ("About BBC News"). These decisions suggest again that the early BBC was not without motivation and not above political influence, but it was also compliant in the commercial aims that silenced daytime news broadcasting for several years. Each of these items clearly demonstrates that the BBC's

beginnings could not be considered as impartial or objective: rather, they resigned to become political and commercial tools and allies.

When the BBC was granted a charter in 1927 that allowed it to become “the British Broadcasting Company” and to collect its own news, there was still a restriction that it had to obey: the government did not allow broadcasting on “controversial topics” (“About BBC News”). However, “In March 1928 the government agreed that - while the BBC could still not express an editorial opinion - it was now free to broadcast on "matters of political, industrial or religious controversy" (“About BBC News”). The early history of the BBC then, is founded on a sense of preservation rather than objectivity. Because the corporation was not initially allowed by the government to comment on certain topics at all, when the BBC was first allowed the relative freedom to begin to comment on those topics, it may have been misunderstood as actual freedom. Rather, the government was still in the position to allow or disallow certain topics to be broadcast on as well as to dictate to the BBC whether or not they could give an opinion. While to some these early beginnings may denote a sense of objectivity, the pure subjectivity of being a tool of the government to maintain a status quo with its audience is enough to suggest that the subjectivity of the BBC is more insidious and underlying.

The BBC’s own account of its history suggests a struggle with the government on what sorts of freedom it should be allowed up until the eve of the war. The website history describes the period before the Second World War as an uncomfortable time for both the BBC and the government. While the government, namely the Ministry of Information, had an interest in what was to be broadcast to the listening public, the BBC had an obvious interest in editorial freedom. However, “vigilants” from the government were present in the newsroom, putting the radio news operators between the corporation and the government (“About BBC News”). Eventually

the ministry appointed a “director of radio,” which the BBC’s history describes dully as being “followed by an outcry” (“About BBC News”). The history then goes on to discuss the range of services, in a variety of languages to a variety of “target audiences” that the BBC was broadcasting to after the war had started (“About BBC News”).

It is clear then, that by wartime, the BBC was quite conscious of its audiences, and already imagining them as it created, edited, and broadcast the news. The inclusion of government oversight during the time of war ensured that the BBC would be an effective means of informing and controlling these audiences, both local and global, as listeners tuned in for regular broadcasts. While these broadcasts arguably boosted morale, informed citizens, and brought communities together, ultimately the BBC’s position as an outlet under government control once again questions the nature of public service and questions whether the public or the government is meant to be the master served. However, as bad news appeared in the broadcasts, the BBC explains that tensions increased:

The BBC had made no attempt to hide any bad news - of which there was plenty in the early days of 1940. The Admiralty was soon accusing it of "unrelieved pessimism" over its reports of Britain's losses at sea. Churchill became the prime minister of a national government in May 1940 - and described the BBC as "the enemy within the gates, doing more harm than good". (“About BBC News”)

Here, the BBC’s website begins to frame the history of the BBC in a way that suggests a metaphorical battle was being fought as real battles were fought on the front lines. This association raises cultural ideas of fighting oppression, even while reinforcing the cultural stereotypes of the BBC during wartime as the voice of a nation, democracy, and freedom.

Information on the early history of the BBC gives an interesting insight into the corporation and its public service mission as well as its early struggles with the British government. In its early days, the BBC established through this process of prewar negotiation that it was not impartial. Rather, its public service mission placed it firmly within the camp of serving its listenership and license payers: the people of Britain, who were, in fact, a people at war.

The struggle between these mounting tensions is demonstrated through Paddy Scannell's assessment of the early BBC. In "The BBC and Foreign Affairs: 1935-1939" (1984), Scannell gives a clear view of the institutions' guidelines and internal struggles through the period before the war. Importantly, Scannell observes that the BBC, "was unique since the mass of the people believed the BBC could speak for the government and yet was independent of it" (16). Overall, his article demonstrates how the BBC saw itself by its imagined public and how it perceived its influence in the time leading up to the war. Scannell's early information about the BBC fleshes out both the long running myth of impartiality of the BBC and highlights very real early struggles with the government and public based on content and programming.

Scannell details how the foreign office also recognized this potential of the BBC and their relationship to their audiences. As they hoped to manipulate the information and presentation of information of the BBC news broadcasts, there was much government struggle (16). As the BBC had capitulated to the government in regard to the reports of the strikes in the 1920s ("About BBC News"), the Foreign Office and the government hoped to continue to manipulate the BBC in the prelude to war (Scannell 5-6). Unfortunately, due to pressures and an inability to come to solutions which pleased everyone, a "conspiracy of silence" was developed within the BBC which John Coatman, head of news at the time, later regretted (16). Scannell points out that the

management within the BBC knew for some time that Britain would go to war, yet this understanding was never passed on to the listenership (16).

After this, according to Scannell, in the immediate prelude to war, the BBC attempted a series of “reformations” intended to recommit themselves to serving the public good of their listenership with war imminent and ease their relationship with the government:

It was resolved that the BBC (1) neither could nor should adopt an ‘editorial policy’ of its own; (2) should endeavour to ventilate informed opinion even though critical of the government, balanced with the official view; (3) should anticipate events as far as possible and try to give listeners the necessary background information before matters became so critical that there was opposition to their being treated at all; (4) should, during a crisis, broadcast more topical material (this, Nicolls said, would be met to a considerable extent by the current plan to establish BBC correspondents in European capitals); (5) should treat current events more regularly and in greater detail than at present, possibly by a general extension of news. (18)

To avoid a biased commentary, the BBC broadcast selections of speeches, sans commentary, given by foreign fascist leaders. In some ways, this sudden shift backfired and caused other media, such as the *Times*, to turn against the BBC with accusations of bias selecting the most aggravating selections of these speeches broadcast to make listeners afraid (18). Along with this, the BBC began to prep its listenership for war by encouraging registration for national service (23-24). That the BBC would begin pushing its listenership towards enlistment is a fine example of political lines crossing into the BBC’s goal of serving British citizens. This move both provided the listenership with an opinion that war was eminent and that they were needed to

serve their country, yet avoided providing an actual editorial commentary about the possibility of war which was disallowed by the government.

The BBC's own history and the history written by Scannell are significantly different and help to demonstrate the importance of interrogating the BBC as an institution. The BBC's own account places the BBC as a victim of sorts to the will of the government. While it details how the government was involved within the BBC, the BBC's account still asserts that the BBC was in control and independent, even when events show clearly that it was not. Scannell's more rich history demonstrates how and where the BBC was complicit as well as ambitious in negotiating with government restrictions. The BBC's history of itself maintains a vision of its early self as editorially independent, while Scannell demonstrates how and where this was simply not the case.

Like Scannell, Georgina Born's analysis of the early BBC also clearly demonstrates how the corporation failed to wrest editorial control fully from the British government. She writes that initially the cooperation had interest in reporting on social issues and offering "independent insight," but because of governmental pressures and an upcoming charter renewal, the BBC overall backed down on these principals. Born argues:

The same result was evident in the BBC's failure, despite internal advocacy, to take an independent stance from the government in the later 1930s by preparing the public for war—a failure that caused widespread dismay within the BBC and which the then ex-head of News criticized as a 'conspiracy of silence'. (33)

Again, the BBC is demonstrated as being heavily influenced by government forces, and though the BBC was not pleased about it, the evidence paints the picture of a non-independent corporation. As this website history shows a BBC in denial about its early history, we as scholars

and viewers should wonder if these BBC historians are in denial over this past, and if so, are they in denial of the modern BBC's relationship with the government? Further, if the BBC creates its own propaganda to set its own history in a way that is more palatable to an audience expecting editorial freedom and neutrality, is its current claim to independence and impartiality also exaggerated?

Born's in depth exploration of the BBC helps to detail the corporation's workings in more recent times. Though much of Born's earlier history mirrors and references Scannell's work, her writing on the more modern history of the corporation is uniquely detailed and explored (33). Born demonstrates how the culture within the BBC changed greatly with the introduction of ITV into the television landscape in 1955 (37). However, the introduction of initial competition within the broadcasting market is of less interest to this dissertation than the introduction of more independent broadcasters in the late 1970s and early 1980s. Born elucidates how this next development of the British television was problematic to the Annan Committee established in 1974 to usher in the next era of British programming (43). Born shows that by the early 1980's BBC1 and BBC2 held 50% of the television audiences, while ITV held the other half (43). The committee argued that a space needed to be created for independently produced content and called for a creation of a new channel. The committee summarized:

At present, so it is argued, the broadcasters have become an unelected elite, more interest in preserving their own organization in tact than in enriching the nation's culture. Dedicated to the outworn concepts of balance and impartiality, how can the broadcaster reflect the multitude of opinions in pluralist society? (qtd. in Born 43).

Born describes this critique of the BBC and ITV ‘duopoly’ as the inheritance of the Conservative party taking charge in 1979 (43). The argument, as Born suggests, that the BBC and ITV domination needed to be broken was of interest to both leftist interest groups as well as to those in the industry already who felt “politically and ideologically constrained” in the roles they occupied at the time (43). The resulting alliance in favor of independent production and broadcasting thus emerged with both commercial and political interest (44). Ultimately the way in which British production and broadcasting shifted was a result of the creation of Channel 4. Channel 4 was conceived to allow as space for independent productions that could both help to diversify the products, ideas, and opinions available to viewers as well as to allow for a broadening of commercial interests in production as opposed to the perception of the content dictatorship of a few BBC and ITV directors. The breakup of the BBC/ITV duopoly suggest an inherent cultural agreement within the powers involved with that idea that neither the BBC, ITV, nor the two put together, could fulfill the interests of serving the interests of the multitudes.

In the past two decades, the BBC has weathered storms such as the “digital turnover” of Britain, in which all television transmission switched to all digital content, as well as continued political and public arguments regarding license fees. It has faced reported calls for bias, particularly on its treatment of the Iraq war of the early aughts (see Jaber and Baumann), as well as the 2007 charter renewal process. This 2007 charter, and the papers surrounding its creation, are frequently referenced in this dissertation.

During the production of this dissertation, the BBC has begun making preparations for the BBC Charter Renewal due in 2017. As with the previous renewal, which replaced the Board of Governors with the BBC Trust (“The BBC Charter Renewal”), changes in both the language used to describe the corporation and its objectives, as well as in its processes of production and



operations, are likely. The new charter will also be influenced by several highly publicized scandals regarding the BBC in recent years such as the case of Jimmy Saville, a long time high profile employee of the BBC who allegedly used his position spanning decades to sexually abuse children. Though the BBC itself produced a program exploring this subject, it was never broadcast. After rival ITV produced its own documentary on the topic, this lapse by the BBC became known. George Entwistle, the director general in charge of the BBC at the time the investigations into Saville began, was questioned by the branch of government responsible for the BBC's charter about why this program was cancelled and subsequently buried. His controversial oversight during this scandal, in addition to falsely connecting an individual to a different sex abuse case, led to his resignation. Abuses, cover-ups and scandal continue to play a role in how critics of the institution see its role in the fabric of the UK. Additionally, as Rebecca Ratcliffe of *The Guardian* reports, the Conservative party continues to accuse the BBC of bias in the 2015 elections. Ratcliffe also reminds her readers that well-known critic of the BBC Whittingdale is the new Culture Secretary, a key position in the Charter renewal process. Ahead of the process Whittingdale is questioning the impartiality of the BBC as well as the BBC Trust. Ratcliffe quotes Whittingdale:

Whether or not the present governance is the right way of dealing with it- the fact that questions of impartiality are judged by the BBC Trust- that is an area which I want to think about, because all the other broadcasters have an external regulator looking at the impartiality question. It's part of the bigger question of the way in which the BBC is governed. (Ratcliffe)

Though changes may come about that negate or problematize some of the observations made in this dissertation, this dissertation, as well as the case studies presented herein, constitutes a place

in the historicization of the BBC rather than as a foothold in the present documentation and politics. The BBC, as an institution, will continue to shape and evolve based on internal and external pressures.

### **A Global Audience**

Although this dissertation does not focus on the arm of the BBC known as the World Service, the World Service predates the BBC on television and in Digital Media and therefore can be viewed as part of the history of BBC's modern world news. The historical modes through which the BBC has operated the World Service elucidate certain values within the BBC Corporation regarding the selections of their audiences and choices that the BBC makes in regard to how they imagine these audiences. Choices made in the case studies described below reflect a long institutional history of broadcasting that support British political interests, revise or ignore Britain's colonial past, support a western agenda, or acknowledge forms of bias only by suggesting that certain broadcasting markets are for niche audiences. Because the BBC has a long history of making such choices and working with its audiences, the World Service history is important context in acknowledging how the BBC imagines its audiences within its other corporate arms today.

In their article, "Many Voices, One BBC World Service? The 2008 US Elections, Gatekeeping and Trans-editing," Tom Cheesman and Arnd-Michael Nohl demonstrate that "[w]hile the BBC's corporate aim is to provide a univocal service across its multilingual output, this aim is in tension with widely differing journalistic norms, and differing assumptions about audience knowledge and needs, in each of the World Services language departments" (217). The authors demonstrate throughout the article that the BBC imagines their audiences and provides content as they see appropriate for those audiences. Their main research questions are related,

asking: “does the BBC WS speak with one or many voices?” and “how do editorial and translation decision-making processes work?” (218).

Cheesman and Nohl go on to discuss how the World Service engages in gatekeeping and trans-editing, and processes of ‘globalizing’ and ‘(re)localizing’ news in relation to the institutional context of BBC WS” (218). Cheesman and Nohl’s case study demonstrates how ‘foreignization’ and ‘domestication’ by the World Service completes this cycle to attempt to make news understandable and relatable to their assumed audiences (219). The case also demonstrates the differences in relaying the same story through different languages in the World Service and shows that the choices for each audience render each story rather differently than the next—even though they come from the same source material (222-223). Cheesman and Nohl provide the copy of statements given of one particular report prior to translation to demonstrate the differences between the translated reports:

The Tamil and Turkish services created shorter versions, relying mainly on strategies of deletion, whereas the Arabic and Persian services created lengthy, detailed versions, using multiple strategies of deletion, addition, re-ordering, etc. To ‘tease’ readers with concrete allusions implies that they are expected to be interested in detailed information (e.g. on Rahm Emanuel). This corresponds to a text which is longer overall, and contains more detailed information. On the other hand, there are country- or language-specific habits of writing and reading news; for example, in Turkey, it is common to introduce a report by referring to the general topic, not to specific events. (224)

Importantly, this study demonstrates the clear way in which trans-editing and gatekeeping are intentional tools used by the World Service in order to accommodate these imagined audiences and create imagined communities.

Likewise, Kamenko Bulić highlights the “aesthetic alchemy of sounding impartial” in a study of Serbian BBC World Service listeners (“The Aesthetic Alchemy”). Politically, Bulić argues that as these Balkan audiences came from cultures rich with storytelling traditions, the narratives of BBC reporting were more important than the perception of impartiality, particularly during the socialist days of Yugoslavia (185). The BBC’s adherence to such narratives, of course, indicates a study of the population or knowledge of their audience. The most interesting aspect of this case, however, is the political aspect of language naming that took place. Prior to the Yugoslav state, the BBC named their language service ‘Yugoslav,’ despite the fact that the home language was known as either Serbian or Croatian depending on the background of the speaker (184). Bulić suggests that the BBC’s political naming of the language supported the theory of a unified state, and its subsequent break of language formats, into Serbian and Croatian in the 90s reflected the importance of naming to the warring factions (186). This example of language naming alone demonstrates that while the BBC may consider itself to be acting impartially in its reporting of the news, its acts can be quite political in nature. Its choice in the socialist era of Yugoslavia to highlight narrative and to “strike the right balance” (185) indicates an inherent bias to balance western and eastern political goals against its Yugoslav format.

Since 2003, the BBC World Service in Arabic evoked a mixed reaction from Middle Eastern listeners. Michael Jaber and Gerd Baumann suggest, “the ‘West vs. Islam’ polarization took its toll on the BBC. During the 2003 Iraq War, the BBC admitted to only catering to a limited niche market in most Arab countries (BBC, 2004: 22–7)” (175). As local alternatives

emerged, regards for the BBC's impartiality and subjectivity decreased (175). Anecdotal reviews sent in by audiences as early as 2001 suggested a lack of trust in transposition:

You have bored us with the expressions such as Unbiased, Subjective ... etc. etc.  
I find this not to be true. What exactly do you mean by Excessive Force in Palestine? ... Why do you refer to Chechnya fighters as rebels when everyone in the Muslim world refers to them as Mujahideen? (Anon., Morocco, 13 March 2001) (179)

Despite listener reactions such as these, the BBC PULSE survey, presented on BBC's Arabic website, demonstrated that over half of comments received were positive, though many demonstrated both positive and negative factors in conjunction (180). Importantly:

Among the positive feedbacks, some 25 percent praised the BBC's impartiality; among the negative feedbacks, some 40 percent critiqued it on the same criteria, almost all of these suspecting a general bias or cultural incompetence of the BBC vis-a-vis Arab politics and culture. (180)

The BBC's self-recognized shift to a "niche audience" is demonstrative of a corporation that cherry picks an audience rather than one that is capable of the type of impartiality they suggest in their corporate literature. There is a sense that BBC's Arabic services are tainted by western influence and nationalism. The BBC's former heyday as a main informer during Britain's close ties with the Middle East through corporate and physical colonization has drawn to a close, and thus its audience must be chosen carefully to reach those who still see it of value.

Finally, Sharika Thiranagama, encourages "a more subtle understanding of how impartiality works" (155). To support this suggestion, she points out historical differences in format and content between former colonial countries. Her article centrally concerns the BBC

World Service broadcasts in Sri Lanka both before and during the civil war. She argues that the way in which the British valued language and culture as imperial rulers continues to play a part in how the World Service serves these audiences. Thiranagama writes, “The British, the third and final of Sri Lanka’s European colonial rulers, perceived Sri Lanka’s socially and religiously heterogeneous populations to be the result of empirical differences of race” (156-157). She demonstrates that Tamil language and Sinhala language broadcasts were available to the public of Sri Lanka, but while Tamil language broadcasts were meant for both Indian audiences and Sri Lankan audiences and reported more on the outside world, Sinhala broadcasts were more “aspirational”: they offered insight into British culture and focused on social movement all at a strange time when social and political uprisings were imminent (157). Sinhala broadcast were for a time halted, and the Tamil station throughout the 1980s highlighted the culture of Tamil while the civil war dominated the island (157). In 1990, Sinhala service was restored as a news station (159).

Thiranagama writes that even though India was no longer interested in BBC productions, the continued service in Tamil was considered necessary:

In BBC Tamil Services, news production increasingly shifted towards Sri Lanka as South Indian listenership began to fall after the media revolution in India.

Three of BBC Tamil service’s Indian journalists confided in me that India with its functioning democracy, large spectrum of news media and stable political situation ‘did not need the BBC’. It was Sri Lanka they said with its worsening situation and censored news media that ‘needed’ the BBC’s intervention. (160)

In the case of the Sinhala broadcast, journalists “publicized suffering” and were frustrated by official versions of news gathered from government gatekeepers (159). Though from the same

corporation, the broadcaster served each audience differently because of the way they were entrenched in the cultural landscape of each side of the war (161).

In cases like Sri Lanka, many of the social and political divisions that caused the war were a direct result of colonialism (156-157). Colonialism by its nature has had a large impact on former colonies, and thus it is important to continue to consider the BBC's role in cultural production in those spaces. Not only can the BBC promote certain cultural values over others, such as colonial aspirationism, it can help to perpetuate imbalances in societies where it has influence by providing different services and appealing to different audiences. This is true in Britain as well, and the heterogeneous society of Britain can also be affected by similar concerns.

The previous cases demonstrate a history of the BBC imagining audiences not necessarily for the sake of serving their public needs, but to further political and economic needs of Britain and the corporation itself. The history of selection identified here historicizes the space in which the BBC operates today and how viewers should understand where the modern iterations of the BBC grow from. The institutional history of how audiences are imagined and represented is problematic both in how the BBC imagines the needs of the audiences as well as how the BBC selects what will be broadcast to these audiences and how. Additionally, the BBC's impact in terms of language naming should not be discounted in considering that while the BBC claims to be apolitical, this act of naming a language is representative of other choices that are inherently political. The BBC has a history of political value and bias associated with the selection and representation of audiences and how their needs are imagined. This history should not be ignored in the present day.

## Theoretical Foreground

This section of the literature review will establish the primary models through which I will examine the case studies and demonstrate how these models, and by relation this dissertation, fit into an established body of literature. I focus on Stuart Hall's Encoding and Decoding model, and Edward S. Herman and Noam Chomsky's Propaganda Model in this dissertation, both of which come from a Marxist lineage. Additionally, I use Kenneth Burke's rhetorical studies theories, in particular his Dramatist model. By demonstrating how the models that I use are related to one another, as well as how they diverge, I hope to establish to the reader the value of each of the models. How each of these theorists view culture and the transmission of these cultural values will be examined in this literature review and demonstrated to be of importance to the dissertation study.

In "The Ruling Class and the Ruling Ideas," Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels wrote: "The class that has the means of material production at its disposal, consequently also controls the means of mental production, so that the ideas of those who lack the means of mental production are on the whole subject to it" (9). Their cultural critique, that cultural thought, idea, and hegemony is created by those with the economic means to mass produce it, was the impetus for structural Marxism out of which The Frankfurt School grew. By the 1940's, Max Horkheimer and Theodor W. Adorno, of the Frankfurt School, produced "The Cultural Industry: Enlightenment as Mass Deception" (1944). This work, significant for its time, argued that cultural forms of entertainment were simply other products for consumption, produced not as art, but as commodities for profit, with the aim of pacifying the masses. Horkheimer and Adorno begin by addressing a common perception of the time:



The sociological view that the loss of support from objective religion and the disintegration of the last precapitalist residues, in conjunction with technical and social differentiation and specialization have given rise to cultural chaos is refuted by daily experience. Culture today is infecting everything with sameness. (41)

Indeed, the argument of this piece elucidates how Horkheimer and Adorno not only see all of culture becoming the same, but the ways through which this sameness is perpetuated even though buildings and cityscapes (41). They argue that the “The conspicuous unity of the macrocosm and microcosm confronts human beings with a model of their culture: the false identity of universal and particular” (41-42). Likewise, “standards of value” in terms of cultural consumption of products such as films or automobiles do not play an importance in differentiating cultural, rather serve to add to the delusion of choice (43).

Horkheimer and Adorno’s illustration can provide a window into understanding why state producers in general spend time encoding particular aspects of culture for specific audiences. However, Horkheimer and Adorno, like Marx and Engels, constructed a dichotomy of cultural consumers in which many were assumed unable to parse or critique cultural productions. These gaps left room for study which are explored by the next generation of cultural studies theorists.

The New Left and Birmingham School of Cultural Studies grew also from the same Marxist roots, but sought to engage with critical ideas of how subjects and audiences of media are a part of the function and creation of cultural media. Raymond Williams of the New Left movement and Stuart Hall, the founder of the Birmingham School, developed new ways of interrogating the relationship between culture and hegemony, opening the conversation about

how media's influence also incorporates and co-opts audiences as part of the process of cultural production.

In *Culture and Society* (1958) Raymond Williams asserts that over time the meanings of several important words such as culture, and others related to it, have shifted since the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century (xi). The words William's chooses to interrogate are industry, democracy, class, art, and culture. Williams argues that the while the meanings of these words shift, these shifts demonstrate our value judgments about: "our common life: about our social, political and economic institutions: about the purposes which these institutions are designed to embody; and about the relations to these institutions and purposes of our activities in learning, education, and the arts" (xi).

Williams argues, "There is in fact a general pattern of change in these words, and this can be used as a special kind of map by which it is possible to look again at those wider changes in life and thought to which the changes in language evidently refer" (xi). While Williams lists several of the meanings through which "culture" was associated with throughout this period, he ultimately aims to show that culture is abstract but, also in the modern day, associated with different evolving meanings of industry, democracy, class and art (xvi). He argues that this association has brought the meaning of culture to a place where 'culture' can be judged in accordance with these other concepts, in relation to moral, intellectual and industrial concerns. Williams summarizes the change: "Where culture meant a state or habit of the mind, or the body of intellectual and moral activities, it means now, also, a whole way of life (xvi-xvii).

Williams' work demonstrates that changing social conditions affect the way we perceive 'culture' as well as what 'culture' even means. Conditions such as class and democracy provide certain hegemonic leverage to establish what valuable aspects of culture are and what are not

within the heterogeneous space of the Public. Williams' reading of culture establishes the parameters that cultural consumers play a part in establishing what moral and ethical cultural values are prioritized over others, even while hegemony still exists. In regards to this dissertation, while broadcasting hegemony from the BBC still exists, the BBC's audience must still consent to the way the BBC represents Britishness in order for the BBC to sustain its position.

Raymond Williams' views on culture build on the Marxist tradition and provides a bridge between these ideas and more recent ideas of cultural investigation that deal with participation. In order to explore these values within the BBC case studies in this dissertation, we must consider the pluralities of what cultural value means for the various audiences of the BBC. These values should be explored in order to disassemble the idea of homogeneity and to give validity to the fact that any particular audience will be heterogeneous and embrace a wide variety of values and viewpoints as individuals. This multiplicity guarantees a multitude of positions from which messages from news broadcasters can be decoded.

### **Encoding and Decoding**

Similarly, Stuart Hall critiques the traditional linear method of viewing mass communication for failing to recognize the processes of mass communication as a very complex series of events. Rather, Hall contends that it is more useful to think of mass communication as a linked series of moments: production, circulation, distribution/consumption, and reproduction (163). In this text, the productions of the BBC will be interrogated using Hall's Encoding/Decoding Model. Hall maintains that "sign-vehicles" are organized within the discourse of mass communication and operate as a "product" (163). The production and circulation of these sign vehicles, however, do not guarantee the meaning which will be derived

from the audience. If the audience does not find any meaning in the product, however, it cannot be consumed as a product is meant to be (163-164). Each condition of the circuit must be completed in order to maintain this discursive process. While Hall admits that the transmitted production is privileged and laden with encoded signs that are meant to be decoded, he stresses that no form in the discursive labor process can precisely dictate how these messages will be decoded, nor how they will be reproduced. Hall also states that “‘use’ cannot be understood in simple behavioural terms” (165). He suggests that it is possible to identify three positions from which televisual decodings can arrive. The dominant hegemonic position, Hall explains is “the ideal-typical case of ‘perfectly transparent communication’ --- or as close as we are likely to come to it” (171). The encoding of material, in this case, takes into account “dominant culture and code” and therefore those who are privileged to be a part of this dominant cultural space can decode the codes as the encoder meant them to be decoded (171). By contrast Hall writes that the negotiated position is where the dominant hegemonic reading is understood by the message receivers, even as they negotiate their understanding of it through their own experiences (172). Hall suggests that in this position “‘misunderstandings’ arise from contradictions between dominant encoding and negotiated decoding” (172). This position allows for the message’s receivers to understand the encoding of the hegemonic producer of the message as well as the space to negotiate their personal understanding of the message. Finally, the oppositional position is the space in which a person receives a hegemonic message but decodes it in a way that rejects the original encoding and embraces an opposing point of view instead (173). To Hall, these readings are dependent on the cultural and ideological investments and placements of the audiences that decode and reencode these messages. These cultural and ideological encodings

can be examined by a further model which determines who benefits from the forming of the BBC's hegemonic discourse and why it is produced.

### **The Propaganda Model**

Noam Chomsky and Edward S. Herman's work *Manufacturing Consent* also functions as an extension of Marxist study, specifically The Frankfurt School, by engaging with outgrowths of Horkheimer and Adorno's fears of ideas of cultural deception. Their Propaganda Model in particular aims to examine the ownership and means of production of the news as it relates to the needs of the state. Herman and Chomsky's Propaganda Model allows for a five-filtered approach, discussed at length in the Introduction of this dissertation, of what hegemonic messages are broadcast by the media and how events broadcast on are constructed.

The Propaganda Model is a helpful mode of considering a kairotic element in the rhetoric of the BBC case studies discussed in this dissertation. Others, such as writer Alex Doherty (2009), have attempted to codify the workings of the BBC in direct 1:1 alignment with Chomsky and Herman's Propaganda Model without the benefit of adjustment for the different situations that the US Media and the BBC are situated in. I argue that this line of direct comparison is unhelpful for two reasons: 1) the cold-war era model which situates the American media in Herman and Chomsky's work does not culturally align with the goals and motives of the British media, and 2) while the BBC is not a wholly non-profit organization, the financial paradigm under which the BBC does produce content is vastly different from the directly commercial paradigm of US media. Therefore, while the Propaganda Model can be extraordinarily helpful in examining the rhetorical construction of the BBC News, several adjustments need to be made in order to make it relevant to the BBC's situation, both culturally and financially. Doherty's argument focuses more on a traditional Frankfurt School reading on the BBC through the

Propaganda Model. However, in order to better parse the differences between Herman and Chomsky's article of study, the US Cold War media, examining the BBC with their model requires a cultural studies approach which takes into account specific aspects of encoding and decoding which are related to the socio-historic situation of the BBC and Britain.

First, unlike in Doherty's direct comparison, the BBC needs to be placed in a post-colonial and (currently) European Britain, rather than the Cold War America of the original model. The political and social circumstances between the two periods of time and the two nations' circumstances vary too greatly to fail to take into account how cultural discourse shapes the needs of the British state specifically. Next, an adjustment must be made for determining who stands to gain, politically and financially, under the BBC financial paradigm. Likewise, where Herman and Chomsky discuss "worthy and unworthy victims" (37), there is an opportunity for evaluating these ideas of victimhood from the re-globalizing British perspective. This discussion, of course, predates itself upon the BBC having an "ideal" of nationalism through which it strives to represent its public. Finally, the model should not be assumed to play out like a clean mathematical equation where one element added to another element can yield a predictable result as Doherty suggests. As discussed in the introduction, the original model's filters deal with ownership, advertising, the origin of media sources, flak, and anti-communism (2). In this case, the limits of the model are that it assumes a situation where advertising plays a role in funding the media producers and a cold war fear of Communism is a driving factor. The model will be modified as per the introduction for use in this dissertation's discussions on the provided case studies herein.

This Propaganda Model is most useful in the interrogation of the BBC news case studies in this dissertation in interrogating the findings of the other models used, such as how Hall's

Encoding and Decoding model affects BBC production and reception. Reading the BBC and its products as directly correlative to American media producers and products invalidates Hall's work which indicates that these media products are products of particular culturally situated corporations, therefore the readings of their products may vary, even when a hegemonic code exists and there is a preferred reading. Investigating how the cultural values of British institutions such as the BBC and the British Government benefit from encoding certain hegemonic values of Britishness into the news allows us to further examine the connection between the state and media production.

### **Rhetorical Modes**

Thomas Rosteck makes a strong case for how cultural studies and rhetorical studies can work together and are not so separated as has been claimed. He argues specifically that Hall's Encoding and Decoding model was a catalyst for a different type of audience based study through cultural studies in the realms rhetorical studies once occupied alone (51). Rosteck writes:

Indeed, this is the insight that a rhetorical cultural study offers: that every discourse is an action upon an audience, that it occurs within a specific material context, and that it reproduces this context in its structures and in its assumptions about what "discourse" is and what "audiences" are. (54)

This sewing together of cultural studies and rhetorical studies is valuable because both areas are concerned with similar aspects of production and reception, and the two can indeed work together.

While the cultural studies models involved in this dissertation are largely based on Marxist philosophies, Kenneth Burke's rhetorical work finds itself more in the line of idealist philosophy. His ideas are clearly derived from the Enlightenment era throwbacks to Socratic and

Plutonic thought. Early critic Francis Fergusson acknowledges this suggesting that Burke's explanation of the "Grammar of Motives" "shows how similar Mr. Burke's point of view is to that of Kant in *The Critique of Good Reason*" (Fergusson 325). In particular, Kenneth Burke's "Grammar of Motives" (1298) helps to analyze the action of what cultural producers are sending as their messages, and how to ascribe meaning to the encodings of these cultural producers.

Burke's line of cultural questioning creates a different framework to examine the products and institutes of cultural production. His Grammar is an excellent tool for delving into western cultural productions which already rely heavily on Greco-Romantic notions of philosophy as well as the Enlightenment resurgence of these ideals. Burke's Dramatist model provides a framework through which to break down hegemonic messages to investigate how semiotic construction delineates purpose and meaning. Barry Brummett justifies this type of method of critique in *Rhetoric and Popular Culture*. Brummett argues "Since we cannot engage big social issues in their entirety, we must use textual, discursive means to approach the subject" (229). Brummett argues that this approach helps to analyze events that might otherwise be personalized unproductively because it focuses on "textual, linguistic, and discursive mechanisms of personalization" (229). While issues of social importance, in this case the defining of nationalist attributes, can rarely be taken completely out of the realm of the personal, the dramatist approach can help to contextualize analysis in a meaningful framework.

In order to dissect how motive and purpose play a role in ascribing meaning in hegemonic encoding, Burke's Dramatist model provides a framework to explore the BBC's role in the rhetorical construction of semiotics. The dramatistic elements Burke describes also rely on the construction of signs and signifiers. In "A Grammar of Motives" Burke asserts:



In a rounded statement about motives, you must have some word that names the act (names what took place, in thought or deed), and another that names the scene (the background of the act, the situation in which it occurred): also, you must indicate what person or kind of person (agent) performed the act, what the means or instruments he used (agency), and the purpose. Men may violently disagree about the purposes behind a given act, or about the character of the person who did it, or how he did it, or in what kind of situation he acted; or they may even insist upon totally different words to name the act itself. But be that as it may, any complete statement about motives will offer some kind of answer to these given questions: what was done (act), when or where it was done (scene), who did it (agent), how he did it (agency) and why (purpose). (1298)

Burke's model demonstrates that all situations with a motivation behind them can be broken down into a series of particular elements: the dramatic pentad. The pentad is comprised of the act itself, the agent which does the action, the scene in which the act took place and where the agent acted, and the agency, or the tools the agent uses to perform the action. Burke asserts that while purpose is a part of the pentad as well, it is the space in which most disagreement can occur. In analyzing a message, Burke's pentad can help to understand the purpose and motivation behind how a corporation like the BBC encodes its broadcast segments. For example, there are many ways in which to frame a particular news segment, not just by the language used, but by defining what action is taking place and who is performing the action. The lenses through which these aspects are viewed can greatly change the message presented. This model also allows for the scholar to see where the BBC places particular stresses through their coverage. Consequently, scholars and viewers can get a better idea of the BBC's motives.

Therefore, Burke's pentad can be helpful in discussing the motives of the rhetoric of an institution by isolating the parts of these messages for easier discussion. Burke's framework also works well with Williams' discussion of culture, as well as with Hall's work on encoding and decoding. The cultural and ideological issues that Williams and Hall discuss fit into Burke's assertion that, in accordance with motive, "men may violently disagree" about various aspects of the dramatic pentad (1298). The words that Burke describes are needed to define the framework of motive and can be construed as signifiers or encodings in the cultural and communicative frameworks of Hall and Williams. According to Burke's work on Terminology, these words must function as definitions that both select and reflect reality (1341). Burke's terministic screens provide an ideal-centered approach to considerations of traditional Marxist concepts of ideology.

We can explore how these frameworks apply to the BBC by considering both the BBC's understanding of itself as an institution, as well its own understanding its role as a broadcaster through its viewership. Both the institution and the viewer play an important role in defining the modes and means of the BBC's productions. Burke's model, however, is not the only model which should be helpful in considering the possible readings of the case studies.

### **The Social Science Connection**

Benedict Anderson, historical and political scientist, owes his own modes of cultural critic also to the Marxist tradition. On Anderson's death in 2015, *New Republic's* obituary by Jeet Heer quoted Anderson: "The cultural products of nationalism—poetry, prose fiction, music, plastic arts—show this love very clearly in thousands of different forms and styles." It was, then, the means and modes through which nationalism creates and trades, and sustains (or does not sustain) itself on cultural capital that captivated Anderson. Anderson discusses this phenomenon

in his book *Imagined Communities*. His perspectives can be used in order to consider how the BBC performs Britishness and how audiences decode these performances.

Anderson suggests that nations are imagined as limited, sovereign, and finally as communities. He writes of a nation:

Finally, it is imagined as a community, because, regardless of the actual inequality and exploitation that may prevail in each, the national is always conceived as a deep, horizontal comradeship. Ultimately it is this fraternity that makes it possible, over the past two centuries, for so many millions of people, not so much to kill, as willing to die for such limited imaginings (7).

For Anderson, imagined communities are based around the cultural perceptions of shared values, beliefs, and cultural history— regardless of whether or not these perceptions are ultimately as shared as the imagined community infers them to be. These imagined communities are essential for the BBC to consider in constructing its imagined audience as well as in defining itself as a public service.

Arjun Appadurai builds on Anderson's concept of imagined communities, suggesting that the media is responsible for creating landscapes that comprise "imagined worlds," or: "the multiple worlds that are constituted by the historically situated imaginations of personas and groups spread around the globe" (41). Appadurai argues that much of the media that is constructed and received throughout the globalized world creates and supports these "mediascapes" and "ideascapes" and distributes these productions to their audiences. He states:

Mediascapes, whether produced by private or state interests, tend to be image-centered, narrative based accounts of strips of reality, and what they offer to those who experience and transform them is a series of elements (such as characters,

plots and textual forms) out of which scripts can be formed of imagined lives, their own as well as those of others living in other places. These scripts can and do get disaggregated into complex sets of metaphors by which people live (Lakoff and Johnson 1980) as they help to constitute narratives of the other and protonarratives of possible lives, fantasies that could become prolegomena to the desire for acquisition and movement. (43)

Appadurai's argument demonstrates how media can be a catalyst for re-initiating imperial impulses, and in the case of the BBC news, Appadurai's work serves to support concerns for how these "strips of reality" of the world, not just of Britain, are constructed to an imagined British audience.

The work of Anderson and Appadurai allows for a reading of how Britishness is encoded, or performed, by the BBC. While the corporation ascribes the values they encode upon their audiences, their encodings influence how their audiences decode meaning from their broadcasts. Through the mediascapes chosen to represent Britain, Scotland, and India, the BBC not only performs a sense of what Britishness is but also how non-Britishness should be valued.

## **Conclusion**

In this dissertation I will develop a model through which scholars and viewers can look to consider what the motivation is for the BBC to make certain choices in its programming, particularly when related to issues that help to forge nationalism, national unity, and national preservation. In this literature review I have provided evidence which demonstrates the BBC's relation to the government throughout its history and the corporation's ability to select audiences for certain content, and to settle for less than unbiased news in niche markets. I have also provided a framework for how this study of motives will take place.

As the United Kingdom undergoes shifts in foreign and intra-national relations, through the Brexit vote and another possible Scottish independence referendum, how the BBC reports on related topics will be of importance in performing new versions of Britishness. The social split caused by the Brexit referendum outcome clearly demonstrates that despite a projection of united Britishness, Britain is a heterogeneous space in which a multitude of performances of Britishness exist at once. How the BBC attempts to homogenize, or otherwise select and prescribe one audience, will allow scholars and viewers to consider the motives of both the BBC and the desires of the government in the coming social upheavals.

### CHAPTER III

#### THE 2005 LONDON BOMBINGS

On July 7, 2005, four suicide bombers attacked three London trains, at 8:50 in the morning, and one London bus an hour later. 39 were killed and there were 700 injuries from these events. This major attack on the Western capital, followed shortly by another attempted bombing, caused then Prime Minister Tony Blair to announce, “Let no one be in doubt. The rules of the game have changed” (Cobain). It also led to the Terrorism Act 2006 which journalist Ian Cobain describes as “controversial” and as leading to other types of heightened, and often questionable, anti-terrorism tactics. However, even after “allegations of British collusion in torture” and the arrest of several suspects, there were no convictions of additional terrorists privy to the 7/7 plot (Cobain). The bombings and their aftermath clearly influenced how British counter-terrorism methods would be established in the early 21<sup>st</sup> century.

In this case study, I will examine how the BBC reported immediately on these events through a news report with elements such as video footage gathered after the attack, survivor footage, interviews of witnesses and victims, and voice over reporting. In this report, many rhetorical choices align to reveal certain assumptions about the views of the institution of the BBC, how they represent the people of London, and how they represent the events that happened in London on 7/7. Times of national tragedy highlight the difference between ‘us and them’ in a way that most reporting cannot do. Is the news meant to provide a comfortable stable version of ‘us’ by reinforcing certain social and cultural values, or is the news meant to complicate that image to try and gain a broader picture of nationalism and in this case Britishness? While any news broadcast can be of help in discussing the construction of imagined communities and imagined audiences, studying terrorist events allows for a more pointed case analysis. This is

because the attacks themselves can be construed as an attack on the political body from which the constructed nationalism derives, thus giving a different impetus for broadcasters to produce content that is aligned with certain cultural and institutional goals. The past interest, interference, and construction of events to walk the fine line of the nebulous concept of public good demand that present scholarship and rhetorical studies continue to investigate the relationship between public service providers like the BBC and the governments which they reside under.

In his seminal *Mythologies* (1957), Roland Barthes describes how myths grow and become acceptable versions of reality through cultural creation and repetition. Likewise, Friedrich Nietzsche defines truth as, “A movable host of metaphors, metonymies, and; anthropomorphisms: in short, a sum of human relations which have been poetically and rhetorically intensified, transferred, and embellished, and which, after long usage, seem to a people to be fixed, canonical, and binding” (Wilkinson 107). These philosophical considerations of ‘truth’ provide an interesting lens to consider the construction of Britishness. Benedict Anderson’s theory of nations as imagined does not by any means suggest that people within nations do not share values, but it does give credence to the idea that people within imagined nations must put stock into a series of shared understandings. Various historic events and cultural fixations from earlier times have been woven into the fabric of what it means to perform Britishness. These fixations include national interpretations of events as they happened, but also incorporate various mythologies to explain Britishness in a way that cannot be explained through history books.

In the case of Britain, as Ascherson points out, Arthurian legends and other old tales were often used in the past to connect Britain to mythological glory of old (9-10). Likewise, the belief in these connections led to a belief that certain actions, such as conquest, should be taken in

order to follow tradition or reclaim those old glories. Andrew Wawn suggests that the other myth largely repeated through the mythology of national origin, of the British relation to the Vikings of yore, is also largely based on myth. He demonstrates instead that the modern conception of the Vikings was indeed a construction of British Victorians (3). Wawn suggests that the dramatic rise in interest in Britain's Norse and Icelandic neighbors -- their histories, their left-behind remains, their sagas-- became a steady source of interest by both populists and scholars alike (5-6). But he demonstrates that most of the connection between the two peoples was imagined through this popular obsession. While Victorian enthusiasts went so far as to attempt to trace lineage of the British monarchy to these new Nordic heroes, Wawn suggests that the most real cultural interactions that the British had with the Norsemen had more to do with trade and "stockfish" (9). "Though there had been travel to, and trade with, Iceland since the early thirteenth-century days when Icelandic sagas were being recorded on vellum," Wawn explains, "it took many centuries for Viking- and saga-age visions to earn their place in the minds of northbound travelers from Britain" (9). These perpetuated cultural myths, however loosely based on actual histories, serve a revisionist purpose in imagining a providence for these imagined shared values and lend them ethos as 'truth'.

But more modern myths about Britain continue to proliferate, as they do within all nations, and over time these myths take on dynamics of their own. The very real sense of war time desperation, perseverance, and eventual triumph in the first half of the century have helped to cultivate the idea of a shared British culture that is characterized by resilience, a stiff upper lip, and calmness in the face of the unknown. As demonstrated by the BBC's 2004 *Building Public Value*, these widely shared cultural values, at least to some British people, make up a large foundation of what it means to have the character of Britishness, which again lends ethos to these



characteristics. However, these values cannot be assumed to be part of a mythical fabric of homogeneously nationalist expression. In fact, these shared values cannot even be attributed as originating during the world wars, as they were also foundational values touted as the values of the British Empire and the colonization mission. Likewise, as I discussed in the Introduction, even while recognizing the modern understanding of problematic empire building, the idea that the sun never set on the British Empire (as well as the loss of that empire) still plays a seesawing role in the national consciousness.

These mythologies create a dynamic similar to Burke's philosophies of dramatism and definition ("A Grammar of Motives"). As Burke demonstrates that defining a thing gives that thing a purpose or an agency (1312), defining Britishness as part of a tradition of empire building and conquest (as per how the Vikings are imagined in this case) dictates that these actions should therefore be a part of British life as well. The establishment of these mythological agents, revered by society, likewise gives values to their real or imaged acts—in this case of both nobility, righteousness, and conquest. The purposes and motives of these mythological persons are conveniently removed enough from modern day life as to have their stories redefined and retold through more modern lenses, such as the Vikings by way of Victorian England. Therefore, defining Britain as a part of a particular myth, in terms of dramatism, prescribes action. Colley gives her readers an idea of the purposes involved in earlier myth creation in Britain, but does Britain still have reason to define itself by myth building? If so, it is worth asking how the BBC helps to create these myths, not just through its news, but also through the rest of its public value productions.

The British vote to leave the European Union, popularly known as the Brexit referendum, occurred during the production of this dissertation. The timeliness of this vote and the social and

economic changes that may follow make it incredibly kairotic to consider how the media shapes and performs nationalism, national identity, Britishness and 'otherness'. There currently are many unknowns, but it is possible, due to the voting blocks of No vs. Yes voters, that historians and sociologists in the future may change some of their views about British and English nationalism and how the people themselves represent it. It is possible also to view the Brexit decision as a break from southern Europe who, mythologically, are not as closely related to British nationalism as Northern Europe. While Northern Ireland and Scotland largely voted to stay in the union, a majority of the English and the Welsh voted to leave the union. Previous assertions have suggested that English nationalism is often entwined and not altogether separate from British nationalism unlike Scottish, Welsh and Northern Irish nationalism (Colley); however, this situation may demonstrate that English nationalism has changed, or that it has always existed in its own form, unrecognized by the polls which predicted that Britain would vote to stay in the EU. If the media has been involved in these modes of constructing and performing nationalism more overtly through the Brexit vote, its involvement does have historical relevance which must be examined. The referendum results exposed not only what some have termed an Un-United Kingdom, but also the possibility that English nationalism, separate from British nationalism, is indeed more complicated than many have previously assumed. This complication suggests that the BBC must carefully negotiate with its imagined audiences in how it performs Britishness and how it encodes the cultural values of Britishness, especially in cases dealing with perceived actions against Britishness itself.

Understanding the precedent set by the BBC and other media outlets reporting on terrorism in the past can help to shed light on the way the BBC reports on issues that challenge Britishness and nationalism today. In fact, the way media across the globe and the political

ramifications of this type of reporting have already led to broader discussions and study.

According to John David Viera, in 1986 the United States outlet NBC Nightly News broadcast an interview with the Palestine Liberation Front's Abul Abbas, indicted for hijacking and other crimes. During the interview, "Abbas described President Reagan as enemy "number one" and vowed import terrorism to the U.S. by attacking Americans in their own country" (28). Critics panned NBC for allowing this on their network. Likewise, The US State Department "Stressed that since liberal governments agree that a new mode of terrorism has emerged which depends on media exposure, there may be times when the public good is best served through "non-exposure" by the press (Dowling 14; Laquer 57; Weimann 21)" (28). This type of terrorism, acknowledged as "new" in the 1980s has not dissipated, and thus the critiques and interest in how these events were reported on by the BBC and others in the 1980s continues to be relevant today.

In the case of the BBC, the British government had a particular interest in how the corporation was portraying terrorist attacks by the IRA in the 1970s and 1980s. Viera argues that, "non-exposure" "has long been espoused by the British government," and demonstrates that when the BBC produced a documentary on Northern Ireland including an interview with an IRA leader, the conservative government of the UK had it banned by the BBC Board of Governors (28). This ban resulted in a journalist strike by employees of the BBC who were joined in sympathy by employees from competitor ITV (Viera 28). Viera, citing Leigh and Lashmar, asserts that the entire situation "culminated with the revelation that the British security service, MI5, had been secretly approving the hiring and firing of BBC staff for years" (28). This incident makes a clear demonstration of BBC influence by the government, as well as the government's overt attempts (and successes!) to control output of the corporation.

Thus the concept of how public service is provided by the media is brought to the forefront in those historic discussions of terrorism built for prime time television. If the media is in fact caught in what Viera calls “a difficult moral and political position” (31) on reporting on terrorism, then the BBC reflects this crisis as a public service broadcaster when struggling to negotiate the double bind of both informing the public about terrorist events and how best to aid in preventing these events from occurring. These competing concepts demonstrate that while there is legitimate fear in not reporting information to the public that the public should know, there is fear that “media exposure fuels terrorism” (31). These considerations by broadcasters, governments, and scholars of the past continue to shape how these events are reported on and constructed in more current media situations.

Daniel Dayan and Elihu Katz’s 1992 *Media Events* provides a basis from which to begin an exploration of the reporting of a terror event. This baseline of this will allow us to contextualize the reporting of the 7/7 bombing as an established performative medium. Dayn and Katz limit their definition of a media event strictly: “They include epic contests of politics and sports, charismatic missions, and the rites of passage of the great--- what we call Contests, Conquests, and Coronations” (1). Subsequent scholars, however, have renegotiated Dayan and Katz’s original definition by providing alternative subsets of events that can also prescribe how each subset event should be reported on. Simon Cottle, for example, defines a set of “Mediatized Rituals” which he argues are “performative media enactments in which solidarities are summoned and the moral ideas of the ‘social good’ are unleashed and exert agency in the public life of societies” (412). The report on the 7/7 bombings as mediated through the public service mission of the BBC fits well into this category. Specifically, the reporting of terrorist events fits into what Cottle refers to as “media disasters” (421). The BBC, however, inverts Cottle’s model

in a way which the “performative media enactment” (412) solidifies Britishness not through disaster but through survival.

### **Keeping Calm and Carrying On**

Burke’s Dramatic Pentad (1298) demonstrates that narratives take the shape of dramas in which several factors can clearly be identified. First, an act is executed by an agent, sometimes aided by a coagent. These agents, or perpetrators of the act in question, are often countered by counteragents, or those who work against them (1298). The scene is the place in which the act occurs and where the agents and coagents play out their narratives. The agency is the means through which the agents and coagents carry out the act, while the purpose is the reason in which the act is done in the first place (1298). I will use Burke’s Dramatic Pentad as a lens to examine how BBC News has constructed one of the narratives of the 7/7 bombings in London and to provide a basis for questioning the motives of the corporation in doing so.

According to Cottle’s model, media disasters are usually constructed where “the media often assumes of a position of enhanced importance as the publics seek reassurance and governments appear to have been caught off guard and unprepared” (421). Cottle describes a reporting space where “institutions and authorities are rendered politically vulnerable by the tragedy” and the public can air grievances with these institutions that they ordinarily could not (421). Cottle’s version of media disasters then places the disaster as the Burkean act around which the rest of the narrative is constructed. However, in this case study, the BBC inverts this model. The agents are not terrorists and the act is not the act of terror, rather the BBC’s segment positions the act of survival as central to the report.

The recording sample of this case study was uploaded to YouTube and is a copy of a BBC broadcast on the day of the 7/7 attack (“77 London Bombings”). The original news footage

is from BBC News, and was broadcast on the day of the actual attack. The content of the video first shows some footage of the aftermath of the attack itself taken from a cell phone user at the scene, then goes on to show various interviews with those at the scene and footage of the aftermath of the blast and the resulting investigations. The footage clearly shows the recognizable parts of London that were affected so that the viewers can get a clear sense of the positioning of the bombings. The segment includes information recorded long enough after the attack to update the viewers on what is being done and how people of London are reacting to the event.

The video begins with cell phone footage of the aftermath of a bomb explosion in London. This metanarrative is an important way to begin this news package because it sets the tone for the rest of the package. Within the metanarrative, the audience is given the cues to identify subconsciously what the act is and who the agents are. This establishment of agency is integral to the Dramatist model because it defines, inherently, those with the power and in control of whatever the act may be. This part of the paradigm establishes without question how the overall narrative will be shaped.

In the cell phone video footage, people run away from the scene, while the camera holder moves towards it. Police are attempting to keep people away from a particular area of wreckage where an injured person lies. Other bystanders are attempting to help the injured person, while the sounds of an ambulance come closer to the scene. Even while the holder of the cell phone is a victim of the attack, the point of view from the moving victim tells the narrative of survival. Though chaos is surrounding the survivor, he or she is still in a position of power to tell his or her own story through the medium of the phone video. The video shows not only destruction, but importantly the movements of first responders, 'good Samaritan' bystanders, and the reassuring

sound of an ambulance siren showing additional official help is on the way. The drama within this metanarrative shows the agents and coagents as people who have agency, care for each other, document and investigate, and perform all of these acts within an organized society. The uniforms of the police as well as the official sound of the siren are symbols of the coagency of the organized, non-chaotic state, despite the scene of destruction. These symbols represent a state which can take care of its people, which I will further discuss later in this chapter.

In this segment, the presumptive agents in Cottle's model would likely be the terrorists and the act would be shown to be the act of terror itself; however, here the BBC shifts this construction to empower Britishness. This way of constructing the narrative clearly addresses the concerns of the state in reporting on terrorism that works with the theme of non-exposure (Viera 28). Neither the terrorists themselves nor their motives are highlighted. They are not given agency. The British people in general are portrayed as the agents; they survive to tell tales, they investigate, they cordon off the scene, and they help tend to the victims of the attack. While the information provided continues to be about the terrorist attack, the paradigm of the terrorism story is shifted so that the terrorists are the counteragents. This places Britishness in a key position of power despite the events of the day and is important in achieving a public service goal that both defines Britishness as resilient, pragmatic, and resourceful and portrays those values to viewers at home and abroad. It also serves as a sense of reassurance. But if this is the goal, worthy or not, it is hardly apolitical in motive.

The act the audience is presented with is not the act of a terrorist bombing, rather, it is the act of survival and the signals of the resiliency of both British people and the British state. The actions of those interviewed and those moving about in the visuals, as well as the visual elements of the aftermath of the bombing, are exactly that—happening after the attack. These visual

elements demonstrate the capability and control of the coagents of the state of Britain as law enforcement officials and emergency service providers go about their work proficiently. The men interviewed are represented as survivors and helpers, agents to this narrative of British resilience.

### **The Mediated Narrative**

Burke's Dramatic Pentad is again an excellent tool to examine how the mediated narrative of the BBC constructs the act which occurred on 7/7 –survival—and the agents within the narrative. The pentad provides a lens which allows the pieces of the puzzle framing the narrative to be placed in order to get a better idea of the full picture of what the BBC is hoping to achieve within this narrative in a broader sense. However, in order to use this model, we must look at the construction of the news segment. The main methods that the BBC employs to achieve this terrorist narrative inversion is through constructing the scene of the terrorist event and through personal interviews. These interviews are of the agents and coagents of this narrative, otherwise, the survivors.

As soon as the video described above begins, the reporter, Fergal Keane, begins a voice over in a serious and somber tone. It is important in this case, rhetorically, to note that Keane is an Irish newscaster with an Irish accent. The voiceover: “This is London, 9:47 on a midsummer morning. The terrified voices are those of morning commuters. Some of them terribly wounded. These images captured by a passer-by, moments after the explosion”

Elsewhere in the report the video of emergency vehicles and a cordoned off area with one of the destroyed buses in the background. The voice over of Keane returns in this section:

The terrorists struck one of the city's most reassuring everyday symbols, A London bus. The number 30 from Hackney to Marble Arch. Those sitting upstairs



took the full force of the devastating blast. Shards of metal, the blood of the wounded, blasted onto nearby buildings. Shrapnel scaring the headquarters of the British Medical Association, cars abandoned in the panic stricken aftermath. What many remember is the extraordinary noise of the blast rising above the noise of rush hour. (“77 London Bombings”)

As the voice over continues, the video continues to show policemen and other authorities conducting their work in the aftermath of the blast around the wreckage and charred and bloody walls of the British Medical Association. Cars are shown abandoned on the streets, while sirens are still heard in the background. Three men are interviewed, as described above, who will be of importance later in this analysis. The focus then goes back to emergency responders working at the crime scene running in yellow jackets bringing a gurney, blankets, and other related materials. Additional voice overs by Keane include remarks on taking care of the wounded.

Finally, we see the agent from the BBC, Fergal Keane, at the scene. He gives an update on the situation. The video then cuts to Keane walking with a man of South Asian descent who is dressed in business casual clothing with the addition of a jacket. He is identified as Dr. Khan, one of the doctors who was at the scene. Keane’s voice over returns to explain the situation that Khan found himself in and to preface the doctor’s remarks. The video then cuts to Khan speaking to Keane and telling him of his experience of the day.

The report concludes with the voiceover of Keane, “The attack on bus number 30 was an act of terror with one aim: to strike at the familiar, the routine, at what is secure in a cities life. Fergal Keane, BBC News, Tavistock square” (“77 London Bombings”).

First, it is important to recognize how the BBC mediates this space and gives itself agency before it provides it to others. In a Burkean sense, the scene is constructed in a way that

supports the narrative of survival, even while there is some chaotic footage in the beginning, and Keane mentions fear from some of the residents of Britain. The scene is largely constructed to demonstrate not chaos but control. While the wreckage of the bus is briefly shown, the still standing, and barely scarred British Medical Association building is shown as well. Coagents: the state, the police, emergency responders, are all shown diligently and calmly doing their jobs. The scene is largely constructed to demonstrate that the people of Britain, agents and coagents, remain in charge, and that even though they may have experienced terror today, those terrorists will not wrest away the control or conviction of the British state to survive in the face of peril. Even while allowing space for others to speak, the BBC maintains control of the message through the construction of the scene but also through the modes in which the survivors, or agents, are interviewed.

While there is no way of knowing how many interviews the BBC recorded that day at the scene, the BBC made a deliberate choice to either use particular individuals recorded or to interview them specifically. The deliberate choice of these particular individuals highlighted in the news segment can help us to examine how the BBC uses them to help construct the “public sphere.” Bennett, Pickard, Iozzi, Schroeder, Lagos, and Caswell suggest that the “mediated public spheres” can be discussed through the lens of Habermas’ 1989 paradigm that has been refined through the work of Bennett, Ferey, Gamson, Gerhards and Rucht in 2002 (438). This paradigm consists of three categories meant to interrogate how a media outlet portrays the public sphere. The first category questions access: who has it and who is able to be a part of the conversation within the media? The second category deals with recognition: How much time and space is allotted for different people who do have access and how are those people identified? The third category deals with responsiveness: does conversation occur between people with

access with differing points of view? Bennett et. al. go on to argue that, “it is possible to read Habermas (1989) as both an indictment of modern media as instruments of elite control and a more subtle analysis of the media as social gatekeepers managing the interactions among elites and broader publics” (438).

In the context of the 7/7 bombing coverage here, access is given first to white British males who were either directly or indirectly affected by the attack. Likewise, a white American male is also given access. These three interviews, however, do not allow any of the three to be identified or recognized nor do they allow these people to converse. In fact, the BBC does not even engage in a visible on screen dialogue with these interviewees; their statements must function in conversation with each other in order to provide and uphold the recognized narrative. Viewers are left to see the connections between these agents and coagents themselves and to imagine their own space between them. A certain type of Britishness: reserved, male, and white, or a certain type of ally, American, male, white and empathetic are given access to describe the conditions of the event. While the public is given a space to speak, it is only a certain kind of public. This ordinary public, upon meeting the conditions of some definition of public and ordinary, is only allowed so much space within this mediated public sphere.

Two other interviewees are given access: a white British doctor and a British doctor of South Asian descent. Both doctors interviewed are recognized by their profession. The white British doctor gets a similar treatment to the other British men: he is not a part of a further conversation. Still, he is given more space as a member of the public sphere as he is given ethos to speak on the matter through his professional identification. The British doctor of Asian descent is the only interviewee who appears with an agent of the BBC, but, as will be described below, his level of access is illusory.

In her article “Constructing the Public at the Royal Wedding,” Marina Dekavalla explains how members of the public were used by both ITV and the BBC to build legitimacy to the importance of the British royal wedding of Prince William to Kate Middleton and to create an illusion of a homogeneous crowd and reaction to the event. Like Cottle, Dekavalla believes in the expansions of the definition of media events, but she questions whether media events matter to audiences. This question is at the heart of her study of the public in this circumstance. She relays Couldry’s 2003 proposition that rather than arguing the relative power of media events to the public, it is more important to analyze “how the media present themselves as giving audiences access to the supposed centre of authority and power in society and how they articulate and discuss this center” (298). This exploration is extremely relevant to our mediated narrative where the public is centered through the use of interviews. Dekavalla refers to these interviews as “vox-pops” (299).

Dekavalla argues that “it is not very common for vox-pops to make substantial contributions to public debate” and that while the average person on the street is interviewed they tend to speak about “personal experiences and emotions as consumers” and therefore “construct an account of citizenry where the public is passive, does not play an active role in society, but simply consumes and reflects on its experience of products and services” (299). The use of vox-pops then, are a handy tool of the media to construct homogeneity and an illusion of consensus among viewership. Dekavalla goes on to argue that the people who are included in the selection of pop-vox interviews are “part of the unifying construction of the event,” demonstrating that as center of the media event, this constructed public is representative of all public sentiment (300).

The use of vox-pop interviews in the 7/7 broadcast fits well into this argument. Dekavalla demonstrates that the vox-pops included in her own study are restricted by the way the interviewer constructs his or her questions before asking individuals for input (306). Though the 7/7 interviewer is not seen and we do not hear or know the questions asked, the limitations placed by access and discourse provide the same effect of gatekeeping what personal feelings can be represented or allowed in the broadcast. Likewise, the same points of view are reflected by each person providing a vox-pop. By centering this event upon the interviewees, the 7/7 news broadcast shows a clear attempt by the BBC to limit the message, construct a specific audience, and appeal through centering to construct public sentiment, just as in Dekavalla's example.

The use of vox-pops and on-the-street reporting demonstrates an implied desire to be a direct part of, rather than a descriptor or definer of, the British people. However, in the case of a mediated interview and the power given to the broadcaster in this situation, the imagined centering of the audience may be more illusory than real, as Dekavalla describes. Dekavalla's lens can be of use in examining the remarks of the 7/7 agents of survival. The first four men who are interviewed who were interviewed are shown as agents or in one case a coagent of this survival narrative; however, it is important to note the agency of the unseen interviewer first. Whatever the unseen interviewer says or does before the interviewees speak is an important mediation of the narrative. The audience is unaware of what the interviewer has said or what prompts he or she might have given those interviewed. This unseen institutional agent is helping to create the narrative with unseen scripting. Likewise, the agents interviewed relate their own narratives which are provided without their own particular context or agenda to inform it. Isolated as sound bites, the BBC is free to use the narratives of these agents as they wish in order to create their own institutional narrative. The results are "agents" presented as having agency in

the narrative of survival, yet have only the limited narrative agency that the institution of the BBC allows through mediation. This method allows the BBC to reaffirm its own power of mediation.

The first three interviews are of these narrative agents. All of them are male, white, British, and dressed similarly. The first two appear as the type of people in a professional business casual working environment. None of them seem to be particularly dressed up or dressed down. Their appearances strike a fairly average assessment of working people-- the typology of the expected makeup of the bus and the people in surrounding metropolitan areas. These men embody the average Briton riding the bus, productively going to work, and going about their own business. They are relatable to an audience because, and although they are not class neutral (impossible in Britain), their urban white Britishness fits an expectation of normalized productive citizenry. The third interviewee, identified as a medical professional, allows for a narrative agent to have a position of authority and to represent the professionalism of the situation as it is/was handled. While there is no way of knowing how many people were initially interviewed, the BBC made the conscious decision to include these interviews or to interview these particular individuals, which is a deliberate act.

The first interviewee is a victim of the bus attack who managed to escape the wreckage. He states, "Uhm, I probably saw maybe 20 people lying on the floor, uhm, not moving. Uhm, and then lots of people like myself, so..." ("77 London Bombings"). While he speaks few words before trailing off, much is expressed in his demeanor, attitude, tone, and word choice. He speaks calmly but with intensity. While the gravity of the situation is carried through his expression of it, he seems to neither embellish nor downplay the situation. The second interview is also with a British man who was in a building adjacent to the blast:

I looked out my window, uhm, and there were people screaming that the front of the building had all the glass had been blown in, looked out another window which was facing the bus and there was a lot of smoke, some bodies and uhm, and uhm, the roof had been torn off the bus. So I only looked for a couple of seconds and then everyone started screaming and we got out as quickly as we could. (“77 London Bombings”)

This interviewees’ demeanor and tone is similar to the first’s, and both agents’ narratives serve the purpose of reinforcing the ‘keep calm and carry on’ motif so popularly associated with Britishness. While this ‘stiff upper lip’ characterization of Britishness embodies a set of complications of its own, it reflects a certain segment of the populations’ views of the values of both reserve and pride. The BBC, as the major agent of this narrative, is able to use both of these witnesses’ interviews to show the witnesses themselves as agents of these values, and to reinforce the expectation of Britishness through events such as this terrorist attack.

The third interview speaks much to the same interpretation of ‘Britishness’ in tone and demeanor, though there is a note of more sobriety involved. Dr. Andrew Dearden gives a professional’s assessment rather than that of a bystander. Dearden states: “I mean I worked in casualty for six months, but this is like having six months of casualty in three hours. Uhm, every injury you could think of, every serious injury I’ve ever seen over a long period of time you saw within a few hours” (“77 London Bombings”). This professional’s assessment is important in building this sense of Britishness as it shows that even those who are knowledgeable about what happened medically to the injured and dead are capable of displaying a sense of calm and rationalism.

The fourth interview, who can be assigned as a coagent, is of an American. The American does not say much, but unlike the men previously interviewed, he has a clear emotional reaction in tone and demeanor when interviewed. Unlike the British interviewees, he is dressed casually. While his tone is grave, he seems to search for words to properly describe the experience. There are emotions shown facially and vocally of both surprise as well as for emphasis. Rather than matter-of-factly describing the blast, he uses words and emotion in order to try and paint a more descriptive image of the event. He describes the attack: “Uh, it uh, was probably one of the worst noises I ever heard, in my life, it, it, you just, your gut drops when you hear it, it was the loudest boom ever. It, it literally sounded like two trains colliding” (“77 London Bombings”). While not quite sensationalizing the terrorist event, he describes the terror in more of a dramatic detail than his British counterparts.

Dr. Mohib Khan’s interview, however, is a complex encoding of Britishness. In one of the few parts of the news package where the BBC reporter appears in person, Khan is the only interviewee to appear in the context of being interviewed. Still it is not direct. The pair are seen walking in Tavistock Square area and, Keane reports in a voice over, “Tonight one of the doctors who’d struggled to help the injured came back to the scene. Haunted forever, he told me, by the image of a young woman dying in a colleagues’ arms” (“77 London Bombings”). The visual then cuts to a video of Khan speaking directly, “Uh, I’ve seen so many dead people and and uh, but this is something—and then I thought what ordinary people were thinking when I can feel the—the after effect on this carnage. What ordinary people, lay people will, will feel about that” (“77 London Bombings”). Reading Khan’s testimony is also about reading symbols and demonstrates how encoding symbolism is an essential function the BBC uses to construct narrative, in this case of “a good Immigrant,” which will be discussed in the next section.



The major coagents in this news package include both the elements of the state: police, ambulance, emergency service, and the like, as described in how the BBC sets the Burkean scene of the reports narrative. However, the American as well as the British doctor of South Asian descent also function as coagents. While the emergency services and other services of the state demonstrate the ability of a developed nation to help the injured, investigate the premises, and find and punish the terrorists, the American and the British-Asian doctor Khan allow for a still different performance of coagency, two different pillars to help maintain and support Britishness in the face of terror.

While it is difficult to know with certainty how the British overall regard Americans, popular sources like The Yafa Show's video on "What are the American Stereotypes" can give hints to how the general British public sees Americans. While participants in the video described stereotypes of Americans as fat, loud, overeaters, many positive traits were also noted. Several participants highlighted an American trait as speaking one's mind, contrary to the British stereotype of reserve. This attribute was mainly described as positive. They also described Americans as not being afraid to show emotion ("What are the American Stereotypes?"). Likewise, Toni Hargis of the BBC America Blog *Anglophenia* cites Ricky Gervais' assertion that Americans "don't hide their hopes and dreams" ("In Quotes: What do British"). These examples indicate the British perception that Americans are neither afraid of expressing emotion nor of speaking from the heart. Therefore, this turn of the BBC's narrative can be seen as presenting a different allowance for expression within the broadcast. The use of the American, speaking in more stereotypically "American" way allows for the BBC to use its agency to convey and validate a different type of response while not attributing it to Britishness or a British response.

As a coagent, however, his presence and response is an important reassurance of allyship and comradery while helping to reinforce Britishness by what it is not.

While Khan seems to be given the most access and recognition, the responsiveness of his position is mostly illusory. For the first time we see one of our interviewees with the BBC representative, in this case Fergal Keane, the voice of this news report. Khan's access seems to be greater than the others interviewed as he walks with Keane. As they walk together, however, Keane does not speak with Khan as part of the mediated narrative. Rather, he provides voice over. Like the first doctor, Khan is given ethos through the recognition of his profession and he seems to be given the most amount of space out of those interviewed to share his story. Despite the fact that he walks with Keane in the video, and that the video of the narrative shows the two conversing, a conversation between the two never actually occurs on screen. Through this deviation from actual conversation, the viewer may expect to hear demonstrates a clear power differential between the BBC, which retains the power to edit and narrate this segment however it likes, and Khan, who has no personal agency in how his testimony will be constructed. As such, Khan's testimony is the same as that of the other interviewees. His words do not converse with anyone on screen. However, Keane, in voice over form, does respond in some ways to Khan's words, it is not discursive, and Khan has no space to respond in kind.

Overall, the choice of who gains access in this situation was overwhelmingly white, middle class, and British. The lack of discourse, both between the BBC and those interviewed, as well as between differing ideas or experiences, shows the BBC tightly gatekeeping how this event is portrayed. The illusion of participation exists here in this imagined public sample, even the idea of a diverse sample might be suggested as Khan is given the most illusory access within the sample. The illusion of Khan's highest level of access lends to the idea of a diverse sample of

participants allowed in the public discourse, but his construction as a ‘good immigrant’ also provides parameters for the narrative and how the gatekeepers of the BBC construct it.

Selection of scene, the access and illusions of access given to those interviewed, the invisible constraints from interviewers’ questions, and BBC gatekeeping overall, help to create a sense of Britishness in the face of terror within this narrative. The complications of how Britishness is constructed by this narrative, however, provide a space of friction. The report *Citizenship and Belonging: What is Britishness?* from the Commission for Racial Equality gives some insight into how British people of different races understand the performative values of Britishness. The values of pride and reserve, for example, often popularly portrayed as common and admirable British traits, were mainly only viewed that way by white English. In regards to the value of “reserve” the survey found, “It was sometimes seen in a negative light, as when British people were described as being hypocritical or reluctant to discuss what they really thought, as having a ‘stiff upper lip’ and being cold” (26). Instead, “Ethnic minority participants often contrasted the warmth and friendliness they saw as characterising their own communities with the colder and less effusive interpersonal relations they associated with white British culture” (26). Likewise, the trait of “Pride” was viewed as positive by white Britons. While Scots and Welsh participants responded negatively to these traits, Britons who were considered racial minorities saw these values as being associated with British Imperialism and conquest. One response reads: “They think they are more superior, like they still rule the world [...] There is that bit about arrogance, that being patronising to other people, that’s my experience, particularly of London and the Southeast” (27). The split between how different Britons view differing traits of the British is a significant indicator that the BBC must negotiate carefully with how

Britishness is represented and how they mediate their narratives to frame who belongs and who does not.

### **Encoding the British Reaction**

After considering how these agents and coagents fit into the Burkean model, placing them into Hall's encoding/decoding model (1298) can help to interrogate the BBC's purpose and reception. The agents and coagents must be considered as symbols for they act as stand-ins for victims, ordinary citizens, visitors, allies and the viewers themselves. As Hall asserts, there are no natural symbols (167); these symbols may translate differently in meaning between audience members from where the BBC encodes them with meaning to where the viewer's decode meaning from them. In the 7/7 broadcast, we must consider that the use of buses and places of importance act as symbols as do the interviewer and the specific people interviewed. First, I will discuss institutional and naturalized symbols of Britishness used in the 7/7 news segment. I will then discuss the encoding of the agents and coagents involved in the news segment.

British culture provides many symbols that have been naturalized as visual or intuitional modes through which to represent 'Britishness.' Indeed, the BBC as an institution is one. Other such symbols include Big Ben, The London Eye, and metonymically "The Crown." Institutions such as the National Health, the Common Law system, and the Monarchy are represented by visual cues of historic buildings, castles, and monuments. In this news segment, two such national symbols are included: the red double decker London bus and the imposing building which houses the British Medical Association. The way in which these symbols are incorporated by the BBC, both through their discussion of the terrorist attack as well as by the camera angles and scenes of the aftermath they choose to show, creates an important push and pull of cultural icon vs. cultural institution. Both of these symbols can be seen to represent both the society as

lived through as an individual (social, individual needs) such as the London bus, or as the social as lived through as a part of inclusive group membership: British medicine. Both of these elements are equally important in this segment, but the inclusive group membership symbol of medicine, the NHS, the structure of civil society through which Britain helps to collect its membership together under, is intensely important in how its symbol is portrayed. That the BMA building was marked by the disaster--- but not brought down by the disaster--- shows the symbolism of both the state and the state's ability to maintain strength. While Britain may be damaged superficially, through symbols such as the red London Bus, the state, as symbolized by the BMA will remain strong and steady as ever.

Again, the most prominent symbols in the report comes in the form of the agents involved. The first is encoded in the form of BBC news reporter Fergal Keane. Keane is from Dublin, and with his distinctive Irish accent he has been a prominent correspondent from throughout the 1990s at the BBC ("It's Like a Fear"). There are three major ways to consider the way the BBC meant to encode the reporter as symbol: first, as the regularly scheduled reporter; second, as a special selection based on reputation; or third, chosen specifically for being Irish. In the first case, Keane is a regularly scheduled reporter for the time in which the report occurred. He is the reporter for this segment because he is the regular person for this beat and time period of broadcast. In the second case, Keane is selected intentionally because of his reputation, because of the time he has spent with the BBC, or because of his experience reporting on war, violence, and terror in other situations.

In the third case, Keane is on a special assignment, selected particularly in part because of his accent. Each of these modes of selection would suggest a different type of encoding from the BBC and prescribe a different type of hegemonic decoding. The dominant hegemonic viewer

may operate on a conscious or subconscious level in considering Keane's Irishness.

Subconsciously, the familiarity of Irishness as a part of Britishness may ease concerns of 'otherness' and reassure an audience that Britain has faced terrorism before—from its neighboring island— and now those tensions and that violence is over. On a conscious level, a dominant hegemonic viewer may connect to thoughts of either personal or retold stories of IRA violence in London in past times and realize that the BBC, a British institution, quite freely included the Irish (such as Keane) as part of its structure. This recognition of British-Irishness relations may remind the viewer that violence and tensions with 'otherness' existed before, and it was not only resolved, but resolved in a way that strengthened the union.

The second prominent symbol in the report takes the form of first subjects interviewed: The Man on the Bus and the Nearby Man. As discussed in previous sections, these men are encoded as typical British men with values the BBC casts as aspirationally British. The Man on the Bus is encoded as an ideal—an ideal of how a British person, or specifically a man, should react in the given circumstances. The Nearby Man's demeanor is much the same as The Man on the Bus. In his interview, he describes the scene as he saw it from a nearby building, including smoke, bodies, and people screaming. He tells the BBC that "we got out as quickly as we could" ("77 London Bombings") but again, does not show fear or panic or much emotion: rather he comes across as very matter-of-fact. Both present the sensible behavior of being both observant of trouble and getting away from harm quickly but without panic. Again, this presents a cultural viable encoding of Britishness under pressure.

The case of the American is an excellent example of how encoding exists in multiple layers by taking an already encoded symbol, in this case "American," and using it to instill more meaning in an encoded message. In cases such as this, the initial coding must first be examined

on order to discuss the coding of the symbol within the message. As demonstrated by the aforementioned examples of *Anglophenia* and The Yafa Show, Americans are largely expected by the British to have emotional reactions. This may be received in a way that is set against the British value of 'reserve' discussed in the previous section. This value, like British perceived values likewise can be read as positive or negative. The underlying point is that the American emotional expectation is 'other' and particularly not aligned with British expectations as portrayed by the white British interview subjects. But Americans are also British allies in the war on terror. The voice over of the Fergal Keane suggests that, "there isn't just a sense of shock here, but one of continuing fear" ("77 London Bombing"). The BBC video may not show the audience this reaction in the British interviewed, but in acknowledging an emotional reaction to the bombings through the American interview, the BBC legitimizes this point of view, even while 'othering' it. To some, this interview may be encoded with a sense of a typical American exaggerating a situation, or as a typical American who expresses himself and what he sees around him with a lack of reservation. This acknowledgment of a different type of reaction, although from a 'non-British' point of view, helps the BBC to extend the parameters of acceptable responses to the attack and to mediate negotiated readings. While certain readings may not be acceptable in terms of Britishness, there is an acceptable way to negotiate a position that is outside of Britishness but still within the category that stands WITH the British point of view. In turn, this minimizes the amount of controversy an oppositional viewer may be able to raise as more than one point of view is legitimized through the illusion of heterogeneity.

Encoded also in this interview, through that emotional reaction, is a sense that although 'othered,' the American is not completely out of place. As both a partner in the War on Terror and having developed a close knit sense of allyship after the World Trade Center attack in 2011,

the American interview seems to encode as well the idea that Britain is not alone in preserving itself against terrorism. While we have discussed how the inclusion of the American can help to moderate negotiated and oppositional readings of this particular broadcast, it can outwardly have the same effect on redirecting negotiated and oppositional positions to the participation of the UK in the war on terror itself. By encoding the American as an ally and friend, viewers are thereby being asked to support his people as well. This encoding demonstrates a regard for the British state to keep the public on board with its political positioning in the war on terror with the US. Again, the duality of decoding that which is 'American' can affect how that is decoded. Admiration for and disgust by America's actions since September 11, 2001, conflicting feelings about American neo-liberalism and the current administration, and varying feelings of trust in the British/American partnership exist in the British population as much as anywhere else. Further, the feelings associated with having American support in the face of terror should vary accordingly. The American is but one point of the triangulation between how "others" can access an acceptable space between Britishness.

While both doctors interviewed are encoded as symbols of trusted professionals, Dr. Andrew Dearden is most clearly encoded as English-British, homegrown, a product of his environment through his success and as part of the British National Health system. He is another agent of pride to many in British society. It is Dr. Khan's interview, however, which stands out as most complex. Khan is interviewed and is identified at the time as working at Huddersfield General Hospital. According to a 2001 Guardian Article, Mohib Khan (as his name appears outside of the BBC broadcast) was "chairman of a BMA sub-committee representing nearly 10,000 non-consultant career grade doctors" and though he earned his medical degrees in India, on par with British standards, faced much difficulty in his British career due to institutional



racism within the profession. Khan, in his article, demonstrates a desire to help others to overcome racism in the profession (Carvell). The Huddersfield Daily Examiner reports on Khan's work at the scene in 2005 and gives more of a background of his credentials: Khan was at the British Medical Association building for a meeting as the chair of staff and associates specialists committee ("Hero Amidst the Carnage").

These elements of Khan's background are relevant to this analysis for several reasons. He is not only a respected figure in the British medical world, but his relevance ethnically once again allows for a different emotional reaction to be both validated and not necessarily seen as 'traditionally' British. He demonstrates an important aspect of the vision of a heterogeneous Britain: assimilation and contribution to the British way of life. Khan's testimony presents a fascinating view of Britishness through the lens of BBC reporting as he functions as both agent and coagent, as both British and Other depending on the perspective of the viewer. Elizabeth Poole recognizes the effect of how the media treated British Muslims post 9/11:

The uncertainties caused by this global upheaval have resulted in boundary making within national contexts excluding minority populations who have in turn invested in cultural religious identifications. Although simplifying various processes and excluding other sociological contributory factors these specific conditions have seen, at a local level, an "integrationist" agenda gather momentum with Muslim immigration blamed for the demise of collective identities. Global projects aimed at US hegemony and the extension of global capitalism have been further aided by the need to manage violent terrorism. 9/11 consolidated this. (51)

Poole asserts that post-9/11 media in Britain took the leverage of political power in order to force an agenda of integration (51). Thus, by the time of the 7/7 bombings, the BBC is already implicated in a 4-year pattern of reinforcing the idea that integration and assimilation are the only acceptable options for British Muslims. To be different or to fail to integrate makes one a threat. While Khan, as interviewee is never identified as a British Muslim, his name and race signal the possibility to audiences. The use of his interview plays into these concepts of integration and supports the idea of the good immigrant. As an agent of survival in the terrorist attack, he is one of the multi-facets of British culture: British, assimilated as mentioned above, and contributing positively to British society. To other readership positions, Khan is a coagent: a 'good immigrant.' If taking into account the anger that some segments of western populations take out upon those they perceive to be the enemy, Khan is a reminder that not all of the 'other' is against the British way of life. By negation, however, his inclusion also defines the negative example of the type of British Muslims who may have been responsible for the attack. While each readership position embodies a very different space for the reader to be occupying, the overall role of Khan remains the same in either reading: his interview supports compassion, survival, and helping one another survive through this British crisis. This news segment has skillfully transformed Khan from an individual in a particular time in a particular place to a symbol of Britishness: the type of Britishness that is exemplified by those who appear to be the 'other' take on all the traits of proper homegrown Britishness.

The strategies that the BBC uses in encoding in this news segment are no doubt decoded by audiences in a multitude of ways. As discussed previously in this chapter, the values ascribed to the British by the British are contentious values. Some viewers may need to negotiate with how they feel about these values in order to process what is being reported on. This examination

leads to questions about how negotiated audiences feel not just about the event that occurred, but also these values of Britishness, how these values fit or do not fit with their own understanding of Britishness, and even how these portrayals of nationalism may or may not contribute to domestic strife such as violence and terrorism. The BBC, however, has mediated this event in a way that attempts to limit the oppositional reading by appearing to represent diversity, ethos, and a down-to-earth public reading of the event. Even though we have established the illusory nature of these encodings, the various ‘diverse’ interviewees, the American and Dr. Khan show how acceptable “others” can participate as well, blurring the line between there being a variance of acceptable responses to terror and the variance of how Britishness is allowed to be participated in or between.

The BBC’s encoding of purpose in this report through Hall’s lenses of encoding/decoding applied to Burke’s thoughts on motive suggest the BBC’s motive in this news segment was to reassure the public in the wake of crisis, to present an image of unity along with various triangulations for viewers to tap into accessing that unity themselves, and to project the idea of a state in control of a terrible situation. If the purpose of the terrorists as actors was to disrupt the way of life in Britain, to cause a shift in the sense of safety in Britishness or the state itself, or disrupt Western views of self-agency and resilience, the BBC’s inversion of the traditional model of terrorist reporting denies the possibility of that success. Through giving the agency of survival to the people of London rather than the mantle of victimhood, the BBC fulfills its public service role by supporting the people of Britain with information, but it is also able to fulfill a purpose to the state: to aid in keeping the public calm, support agency of the state in time of crisis, and bolster the public’s confidence in state institutions.

## **The Propaganda Model**

According to Herman and Chomsky's model, media narratives are constructed in a way that ultimately benefits the state because the media itself is reliant on the state for both existence and proliferation (2). While their propaganda model relies on the construct of advertising and commercialism, this model equally applies to the BBC in terms of monies taken in outside of the public service quarters of BBC, such as within BBC World Wide, as well as through cultural capital. As the BBC delineates itself as a public service outlet and charges itself with doing right by the British people, it cannot fairly claim to be an apolitical entity; though its charters argue that it has editorial independence from the government, the government must approve the BBC's charters and is tasked with regulating the BBC license fee levied on its viewership. As mentioned in the introduction, the BBC functions as part of what Althusser refers to as the Ideological State Apparatus (81). Herman and Chomsky's model can help readers to understand the narrative of the British as survivors in this segment because of how this presentation directly benefits the British government in time of crisis. The ascribed attitudes of Britishness in this broadcast are valuable to the state in many ways. Most obviously, by portraying the British response as calm, the BBC maintains that the country is in control and not vulnerable. But aside from portrayals of Britishness, the government is served in other ways. For example, the specific inclusion of the American subject interviewed in the broadcast suggesting allyship and understanding between the US and the UK promotes the "special relationship" between the countries, allies in the war on terror. Likewise, the inclusion of Dr. Khan aids the government by constructing a 'good immigrant' image for minority viewers to take note of to emulate if they do not want to be in the category of outsiders or potential threats. This idea of the 'good immigrant' archetype of course

perpetuates the idea that Britishness is a civilizing force; therefore, this BBC encoding allows for the idea that those that fall outside of this model are unworthy and uncivilized.

Viewers decoding the hegemonic reading of the British as actors in the Dramatist model are centrally important to the British government because the understanding of a nation in control is incredibly important in civil control of a population after an event of terrorist nature. A populace that is not confident in their government and social structures during a time of urgency is a second emergency providing not only further opportunities to outside threats, but also to inside threats. Bennett, Pickard, Iozzi, Schroeder, Lagos, and Caswell argue that mediatized disasters intentionally offer the populace a space for this type of debate and concern (422). However, by closing the spaces between acceptable and unacceptable performances of ‘otherness’ and mediating potential oppositional viewings, the BBC has closed these spaces for debate. Mitigating the possibilities of debate on the subject of state terror is demonstrative of the BBC applying itself as a public servant. Shutting out debate allows the BBC to provide the public with a sense of control and calm and can be claimed as serving the public good through reassurance. Likewise, a populace that is calm and reassured serves the “needs” of a government who may rather not be attacked in a second wave by criticism of the populace. Further, if the destabilization of society and culture is the goal of terrorists, then a breakdown in confidence in the state will give them the satisfaction of some sort of success against the state, which again, would be unsatisfactory to the government and possibly demoralizing to the populace. The BBC’s encoding of the British people as those with initiative and agency is paramount to changing the story of a successful terrorist attack to instead an unsuccessful attack against a way of life; this narrative may not serve the long term needs of the people in a democratic environment, but it does serve the needs of a government in time of crisis.

Shutting out the debate on acceptable behavior, however, opens the space for the acknowledgement of unacceptable behavior. Britishness is clearly encoded in this case study, as well as the tangential performances coded as acceptably aligned with Britishness from those who may be perceived as ‘other.’ These encodings, by negation, clearly recognize an encoding of ‘other’ that is not acceptable. By demonstrating how British Muslims, for example, can adequately perform Britishness, the BBC leaves open the space for audiences to establish the characteristics of a possible terrorist. The defining of acceptable behaviors suggests that all behaviors outside of these parameters are suspect.

As Maria Sobolewska and Sundas Ali point out in their article “Who Speaks for British Muslims? The Role of the Press in the Creation and Reporting of Muslim Public Opinion Polls in the Aftermath of London Bombings in July 2005” this event presented the first opportunity for Britain to come to terms with how it relates with British Muslims since 1988<sup>1</sup> (676). They refer to Herman and Chomsky when suggesting that most studies related to these types of questions interrogate how “elite sources” are used to construct these polls and to shape results to the message the media wants to present. Their work, however, also points to how statistics are obscured relating to who and how many people actually responded to the polls (677). They point to the way media framing and poll construction are simply another part of problematic Islamic representation in the UK media:

The focus on difficulties in integration and cultural difference is especially damaging for the public view of Muslims in Britain because it generalises from cultural differences to difficulties of integrating with the wider society. From

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<sup>1</sup> In 1988, Iran’s Ayatollah Khomeini issued a fatwa on Salman Rushdie, calling for Muslims of good faith to kill the author of controversial book *The Satanic Verses*. British authorities put him under police protection. The book, the fatwa, and British involvement were all subject to controversy.

there, a link is being drawn between lack of integration – alienation – and the threat of terrorism.” (679)

Sobolewska and Ali describe a critical time after the attacks where much polling was done of the Muslim population of Britain to, purportedly, better understand and relate with the population. They point out that similar polling was done after 9/11. Although the media was unaware at the time of this broadcast that the terrorist attack was of the homegrown variety, the conditions under which this homegrown terror arose happened after these 9/11 polls and within the frame of the UK supporting the war on terror with the US. Thus, gauging how the Muslim population within the UK felt about their place in British life was essential to establishing a good relationship with this population rather than establish a climate of fear and suspicion. But Sobolewska and Ali point out:

[T]hese polls offer far from a straightforward picture of what Muslims think. With most of the questions asked in these polls determined by the media (who commissioned most of them and then reported the results), one has to ask to what extent did the British public see a picture of Muslim public opinion, and to what extent was it the media reflecting their own preferred narrative to create headlines and sell their newspapers? (676)

These questions expose the problematic nature of these polls in that they are constructed not to gauge true opinions, but to perform a narrative of the media that has already been established.

This problem relates to Hermann and Chomsky’s argument that the Propaganda Model allows for the state, through the media, to designate ‘worthy victims’ from ‘unworthy victims’ (38). In some cases, as discussed in the previous chapter, similar events can happen in different places while only some victims are constructed as worthy of audience concern. In this model

where Britain is constructed as a survivor and a model of agency, Britishness, and those performing close to Britishness are constructed as worthy. Whenever victimhood is displayed it calls into question whether that victim is worthy or unworthy. This broadcast, by negation also constructs the unworthy inhabitants of Britain, those who do not perform Britishness as prescribed, and opens space for the broad suspicion of where homegrown terrorists emerge.

### **Conclusion**

Historians such as Ascherson demonstrate how early mythological associations with Arthurian legend cemented the idea of cultural Britishness as glorious and mystical (9-10); others, such as Wawn, show the roots of British conquest with an exaggerated closeness with the conquering Viking races (9). Taken together and played out in various cultural iterations through the centuries, these mythologies create an association of “Britishness” that has both might and right: mythical, almost godlike right as a civilization and culture to hold its values over others and the might to share and spread the values of this cultural civilization with others. They also endow the nation, or as per Althusser the Repressive State Apparatus, with the right to police the hegemonic structures which police this culture. Whether that policing takes the form of civil law and change or of conquest is irrelevant as both modes are mythologized as a right of British might. In fact, the right and might of the spread of ‘Britishness’ may even be argued to be a part of ‘Britishness’ itself and culturally necessary to complete the mythological circular logic. Indeed, Burke’s model of dramatism would support the idea that Britishness, through these mythological definitions, prescribes these actions and imbues them with purpose. Because the BBC functions as a modern mode through which nationalism and citizenship continue to be mythologized, it is relevant to discuss the ways in which the corporation does so and how this process connects with both the BBC’s public service mission and the needs of the state. In the



case study of the 7/7 bombings, the mythologies of Britishness play out through the way in which British symbols such as the British Medical Association Building and the London bus are attacked, yet the British values of staying calm and going about ones' business are reinforced and encoded as still existing and unharmed.

Recent political developments such as the 2016 Brexit vote have demonstrated that the understanding of "Britishness" within Britain is not homogenous and is poorly understood. Recent histories within Britain, such as the 7/7 bombings of 2005 however, can help shed light onto the understanding of Britishness as perpetuated through the BBC as a public service entity. The rhetorical choices of the BBC help to elucidate how a common theme of Britishness struggles when faced with presenting either an inclusive Britain or a diverse view of Britain. In the 7/7 bombing broadcast, the BBC attempts to ease this struggle by presenting 'others' as both normalized 'good immigrants' or as allies to Britishness. In this way, the BBC can incorporate ideas of non-heterogeneous Britishness into existing mythologies and understandings of Britishness. These good Samaritans and foreign bystanders become a part of the fabric of survivorship within this narrative.

The BBC's use of non-exposure allows the information of the attack to be broadcast as part of their public service provision, but also serves the public and the government's needs by projecting a sense of stability and agency to the public. In terms of Herman and Chomsky's Propaganda Model, this inversion serves the state and also relegates those outside of the corporation's construction of Britishness to unworthy status, status reserved for the possible homegrown terrorist.

The cultural frameworks of how Britishness is expressed are performed throughout daily life in Britain as well as throughout the media. The BBC embraces many of these values and

perpetuates them under the guise of serving the public good. Likewise, the BBC takes other established mediated narratives, such as that of the good immigrant, and pushes the political agenda of integration through the narrative of survival. The way in which the BBC serves the needs of the state in this case study demonstrate how the BBC must be closely watched as the new era of Britishness emerges as a state outside of the European Union. How Britishness is performed and reestablished in these new parameters could have social consequences outside of what may be expected by either the corporation or the public.

The modes through which Britishness is triangulated and can become inclusive of outside 'others' is also of interest in this chapter and will play a part in the next chapter discussing the BBC's construction of the 7/11 bombings of Mumbai. As non-Britishness is constructed by negation in this case study, it is Britishness which is constructed in the Mumbai case study by negation. Both case studies demonstrate attempts by the corporation to identify Britishness, to triangulate how Britishness may be performed adequately enough by 'others,' and to prescribe what a worthy victim looks like to the British state.

## CHAPTER IV

### THE MUMBAI BOMBINGS OF 2006

The case study in this chapter concerns a news report which takes place on July 11, 2006 on the transit bombings of Mumbai, India, otherwise known as the 7/11 bombing. Seven explosives were detonated in various areas of the city during rush hour. This attack left 189 dead and scores more injured. The discussion of this case study will involve several elements. First, the news segment will be broken into several selections for analysis. These segments will include footage from the area, voice over narrative reporting, and studio reporting. To analyze these elements, an imagined primary audience for the BBC will be extrapolated and compared to a more broadly realized selection of actual audiences. These audience profiles will serve as a means to discuss how Stuart Hall's encoding/decoding model can be applied to theorize how audience members will receive or decode content from the BBC. It can also be used to suggest how the BBC may be encoding certain elements of social and political critique.

I will discuss Propaganda Model in order to examine various possibilities about the needs of the British State in regard to how BBC viewers perceive and understand events in India as a former colony and what ideologies the BBC is supporting and upholding through these encodings. These questions must be asked especially in the cases where mediascapes of foreign nations are concerned, as the BBC creates them for their audience of Britons for "public value." What is constructed about these other nations, particularly nations that were once Britain's colonies, is input for the audience to learn about them and thereby to construct their views of Britishness around these constructions of "otherness." It is important to explore the contrast in how the terror narrative is constructed by the BBC in London since the paradigm is shifted between the two—the terrorists are constructed as the agents in the Mumbai model, whereas they

are not the agents in the British model. How does this affect the difference in how Britain is receiving information about India? How does this influence exactly what the BBC is encoding for its UK viewers?

A discussion of motives, drawn from Burke's pentad, will elucidate the possible reasons for how the BBC represents this event. This discussion will focus on how the BBC helps to perpetuate colonial and post-colonial issues, but also reinvents new issues through their use of mediascapes and imagined audiences. What conclusions and assumptions are meant to be understood by the variety of audience served by the "public service" mission of the BBC will be discussed in terms of supporting and propagating British nationalism.

### **Imperialism and India**

Modern Britain owes much of its cultural landscape to the influence of immigrants from the Indian subcontinent, but before that influence came to Britain, British cultural influence was first impressed on India. If, as we discussed in the last chapter, "Britishness" is a concept that has been broadly woven by myth, this practice can be seen in establishing its right of rule in India as well. In *Dominance without Hegemony*, Ranajit Guha describes how early Britons of influence largely imagined how rule and law were established in India. The British constructed Indian histories around British expectations of law and order; Guha argues:

This had the effect of conferring a sense of spurious continuity on what was a total rupture brought about by the intervention of a European power in the structure of landed property in South Asia. The illusion of continuity was reinforced further by global histories which drew copiously on medieval chronicles in order to situate the British dominion in a line of conquests that had

begun with the Turko-Afghans and within a tradition that allowed the conquerors to extract tribute from the conquered. (2)

By mythologizing the history of India, British imperialists were able to situate their own mission and purposes into the narrative of India's history in order to legitimize foreign rule and presence. Constructing one version of the history of India in order to situate British rule and using that construction as an established history led to the creation of standards for text-books and manuals for use in India (196). Written by both Indian and British authors, these texts reconstituted the same myths over and over again for consumption, although Guha suggests some may have been written that way "under duress" (196-197). It wasn't until the 1880s that Ranjanikanta Gupta and Akshaykumar Maitreya broke this model and "steered indigenous historiography in a genuinely healthy, skeptical direction" (197).

Through considering how Imperial Britain and British stakeholders constructed the story of historical India as well as the modes through which Britain could build its narrative present and future in India, we can see the importance in developing a critical eye towards how the BBC continues in this process. Indeed, Gayatri Spivak's pivotal question "Can the Subaltern Speak?" is evoked as easily in considering how the narrative of Indian events are situated. Spivak demonstrates how European histories construct the "colonial subject as Other" (24). Invoking Foucault, Spivak interrogates how one "narrative of reality was established as the normative one" (25). Spivak suggests that by admitting that imperialist histories and understandings were instead "subjugated knowledge" these questions could be explored (25). In the case of the BBC then, how then does the BBC speak *for* the people of India?

History under colonial rule is not the only history subject to subjectivity. In discussing India, the role the British Empire played in increasing already tense relations between the Hindu

and Islamic populations in India is often left out. Radha Kumar demonstrates these tensions as a familiar instance of the failure of partitions in his 1997 article “The Troubled History of Partition.” Kumar’s article lays forth the outcomes of several notable partitions throughout 20<sup>th</sup> century history in order to demonstrate possible outcomes for the Bosnian partition discussed at the time by the Dayton Commission. Kumar argues that the models of partition some look towards with hope for Bosnia (here: Czechoslovakia) are less like the Bosnian example and more like the examples where ethnic peoples are not already grouped together neatly (26). Prior to the end of Imperial rule, Pakistan was also a part of the Indian nation, and Kumar argues that the British partition played a large part in establishing the long running antagonisms between these countries. He suggests that even though partition may be enacted because of existing tensions, the act of partition has generally made tensions worse, particularly in India:

India’s political leadership agreed to partition the country before the spread of large-scale conflict; the 1947 partition agreement between the Indian National Congress and the Muslim League was intended partly to prevent the spread of communal riots from Bengal in eastern India to northwestern India, which was also to be divided. But the riots that followed in 1947-48 left more than a million people dead in six months and displaced upwards of 15 million.” (26)

Kumar suggests that the Indian partition was not based on “a desire for peace and self-determination” but a result of the British wanting to leave India as soon as possible (26). He argues, “The recognition of irreconcilable nationhoods followed as a consequence-- it would be easier to withdraw quickly if the aims of the ethnic leaders were fulfilled by territorial grants” (26). Instances such as the partition of India demonstrate that the needs of the Britain were

foremost in the deconstruction of the empire, often leading to heightened strife in the lands of these previously occupied nations.

Historically then, the British Empire is at least partly implicated when looking at the tensions of modern Islamic movements in places where the British Empire once influenced geopolitics. Of course, an analysis of these case studies cannot by any means determine an overall justification for assuming that all broadcast materials from the BBC adhere to the same problematic structures and possible biases established by their predecessors. However, these case studies can help both the broadcasters, writers, reporters, and the public to be aware of ideologies being supported through the rhetorical structuring of news presentations and to monitor what social movements these colonial ideologies lend themselves to.

This segment in our India case study, “Scores Dead in Mumbai,” is relatively short, especially as compared with the report on the 7/7 bombings of the last chapter. While only clocking in at one minute and six seconds, this report is rich for analysis. Karishma Vaswani, the BBC correspondent for India, leads the report. It begins with a voice over segment where Vaswani speaks over video gathered from the aftermath of the bombings. Throughout this entire first segment, the din of the crowd can be heard under Vaswani’s reporting.

The footage begins with a large crowd of people around the explosion scene crowding and talking loudly. The camera then shifts to the image of inside a blown-out train carriage with unidentified people inside touching the side of the car and looking almost at the camera. The visual returns to the crowds outside the train, with the train behind them. The camera then pans around showing more of the destruction. People are shown rushing by holding stretchers with the injured, destruction in the background. Crowds still stand around, but mostly they get out of the way of stretcher bearers.

The visual changes to an image of Vaswani standing in front of a full-sized screen showing now a dark sky. In this segment she speaks directly to the camera. The video behind her shows four or five people in various uniforms are inspecting the wreckage. At this video change, the din of the crowd disappears. A number of people who seem to be investigators move around the scene.

Then Vaswani disappears, and her voice over begins again when the camera changes to a different viewpoint of investigators behind a cordon with the wreckage of the train behind them. The visual cuts again to yet another angle view of some investigators working around the wreckage of a train. The view then changes again to an overhead shot showing the length of a bomb-damaged train, while lights in the distance show a smoky haze surrounding the area. The investigators are still in the frame.

The most important visual change happens 54 seconds into the 66 second broadcast: here the scene changes to lines of people walking in front of a train being patted down quickly by an official looking person. It seems somewhat matter-of-fact and swift. This is the first segment of video where there is no wreckage or destruction seen in the frame. The camera changes to a police dog standing next to uniformed legs, then changes to inside of a busy station with police intermixed with travelers.

The news segment the BBC broadcast on July 11, 2006 is very different than the way in which the segment was put together for the London July 7, 2005 terror attack. While both attacks are similar, the modes through which each event is constructed socially through the lens of the BBC are very different. As in previous chapters, Burke's Dramatist model (1298) can provide a way to break down these constructions and provide a starting point through which to examine how the Encoding and Decoding model (163) works through the BBC's production and the



reception of its audiences. Finally, the ways through which the BBC's audiences decode the news broadcast about this event can be viewed through the lens of Arjun Appadurai's mediascapes (35). In this case study, the mediascapes within the broadcast are much more integral to both the narrative and the decoding. Appadurai describes mediascapes, "whether produced by private or state interests" to be "image-centered, narrative-based accounts of strips of reality, and what they offer to those who experience and transform them is a series of elements (such as characters, plots, and textual forms) out of which scripts can be formed of imagined lives" (35). Appadurai reminds his readers that these "strips of reality" are not only responsible for complicating how audiences understand fictive vs. real life complexities of global living, but are also created subject to the wills of stakeholders in presenting various realities to specific audiences (35). Thus, the mediascapes of this case study are imperative to further analysis of Herman and Chomsky's Propaganda model, which will help create possible motives for how and why the BBC constructs mediascapes of India the way it does.

The BBC faces a complex challenge of representation in this case. We must also take into account that a certain percentage of British Indians will be in the audience in the UK; in 2011 in England and Wales alone, 7.5% of the population identified as Asian/British Asian ("Ethnicity in England and Wales 2011" 3). The children and grandchildren of Indian immigrants will also be a part of this audience presenting an even more unique challenge for representation. There are, of course, other audiences to consider: that of other immigrants (of former colonies or otherwise), that of continued generations of immigrants to the UK, white and otherwise, and that of the white majority of British with unique groups within.

## **Burke and Mumbai**

Unlike the broadcast of the 7/7 bombings discussed in the last chapter, the 7/11 bombing story is structured in a traditional way where the act focused on is that of terrorism and the agents are the terrorists. Certain elements that I will uncover in other sections, however, point to the implication that the coagents in the 7/7 case are constructed as the Indian government. This will be discussed more below, but the conditions under which the bombing happened—in a space where other such terrorist events have happened before, where crowding is a norm of public transport creating a space where maximum casualties are possible— are connected with a sense of cultural norms. These cultural norms are accepted by the state; therefore, they implicate the state as coagents of terror rather than counteragents in this construction.

Likewise, the agency of this attack, the means through which the agents act, are bombing materials, but also the scene in which it takes place. The cultural scene of crowding and the necessity of public transportation in such a large city actually are a part of the terrorists' modes through which they injure as many people as possible.

According to Burke's concepts of definition (1340), the modes through which Indianness and the cultural aspects of India are defined in this broadcast also define what Indianness is not. In this case study, the juxtaposition of how the 7/7 bombings in London were constructed demonstrate even more vividly how Indianness and Britishness are defined by the BBC as oppositional. While the government of Britain is part of the counteragency according to Burke's Dramatist model in the 7/7 bombing broadcast, the government of India is constructed as a coagent of terror. The very construction in defining the act that takes place in Mumbai and the rest of the Dramatist model around it, sets Indianness in opposition to Britishness. The BBC

helps to contextualize terror as ‘otherness,’ a thing that is a product of other cultures, but not conceived as a part of that which is British.

### **Hall’s Symbols and Models**

As discussed in previous chapters, Hall’s methods of breaking down how symbols are both encoded and decoded by producers and audiences is helpful in considering how the BBC’s produces its images of India and how its British viewers may understand India by these means. First, as all encoding and decoding must begin, it must be acknowledged there are no natural symbols (167). Therefore, symbols, as words, pictures, scenes or scenarios, are stand-ins for messages. These messages are encoded within them and then decoded. As Hall makes clear, each of these encodings can be decoded by audiences in the way that the producers intended (hegemonic), with an understanding of how the producers intended the audience decode it, though the audience may agree with only parts of the intended message or none at all (negotiated), or in a way that is completely opposed or against the meaning the encoders intended (oppositional) (171-173). Symbols then, in Hall’s sense, make up the encoding of what Appadurai calls the mediascape (35) of Mumbai in this news segment. We can isolate the most prominent symbols used in the segment in order to analyze them for potential readings and reverse build the segment for an overall reading. These symbols include, but are not limited to: BBC anchorwoman Karishma Vaswani, language and accent, the Mumbai train, and the crowding of space.

The first symbol to consider is the use of accent and language. Through Hall’s lens, regional accent and language use is very much a symbol in the BBC. While the social hierarchy of language use is not natural, it is in fact naturalized through the BBC’s propagation of certain linguistic codes. This coding of language however, is not unique to the BBC, and can be seen

throughout Britain as part of social hierarchy. Since its early days, the BBC has been considered a paragon of linguistic virtue for its use of Received Pronunciation meant to convey authority and also to demonstrate a “standard” of ideal British English use (Mugglestone). Since the inception of the BBC, “BBC English” has been a well-known term inside Britain for the type of English used by BBC broadcasters that denoted education and class. Lynda Mugglestone provides an enlightening commentary on the established standards of English in the early days of the BBC through examination of the BBC’s records and letters. Mugglestone describes John Reith and other founding BBC frontrunners as believing that the BBC had the opportunity to become a teacher to the masses, using only what the BBC deemed a proper pronunciation and accent. Those masses would have the opportunity to better their language through “beneficial emulation” (201). Indeed, the early BBC founders saw the insistence on using this type of language as a form of democracy (203). Mugglestone explains their belief in terms of national access to this “proper” language:

The national access which was thereby also provided to the elite speech styles of Received Pronunciation (RP) which had hitherto been described only by means of the laborious notation of pronouncing dictionaries or in attending lessons in elocution (see Mugglestone 2007). [...] this was indeed ‘BBC English’ as it came to be known and recognised over the succeeding decades. (203)

This early emphasis on language and a lack of regionality has persisted through the years, and though there are many modern exceptions, such as Fergal Keane and Karishma Vaswani, they stand out enough through the tradition to be commented on in regard to how close their delivery is to the BBC’s norm as well as to the socio-political reasons in making exceptions to this corporate cultural norm. As the use of Fergal Keane in the 7/7 attack reports is a signpost to the

relationship between Ireland and Britain, the voice of Karishma Vaswani is also a signpost to the relationship between India and Britain. These national relationships as signposts are not based on an inherent truth or particular policies. Instead, the BBC uses these signals as modes through which their audience should consider these relationships and to use their conclusions about these relationships to inform their viewing of the material at hand.

In the Mumbai studio, Vaswani clearly speaks with an accent much closer to “BBC English” than a regional variation. While Vaswani displays Asian-ness and ‘otherness’ by ethnicity, her language is inclusive of the British ‘we.’ This demonstrates that the anchor is speaking not necessarily to the Indian audience or even specifically the British Indian audience foremost, but the BBC’s imagined audience of British-English speakers, in a variation of English esteemed by the organization. While certain aural and visual rhetorical cues can be read through this news broadcast, it is important to recognize that in no way does this discussion attempt to minimize the contributions of the correspondent. According to the BBC, Karishma Vaswani “was the first Mumbai-based business correspondent to report for BBC World News” (“Karishma Vaswani”), which deserves to be recognized in its own right as an important step for both Vaswani and the BBC in inclusivity and embracing a more diverse landscape. That said, the language of the BBC has still not strayed far from that of its founders’ original intent. This is interesting in and of itself in relation to those founders’ goals: as a symbol of an ideal immigrant or successful ‘other,’ Vaswani has become a model for the type of English language which the BBC hoped to provide to all.

This use of language also signifies an important shift in how race and ethnicity can be negotiated with by the BBC to include ‘otherness’ into Britishness through the use of approved social language. That is, race is not the sole marker of Britishness. However, the idea of ‘the

good immigrant' is startlingly is extremely problematic in terms of representation. In 2017, Nikesh Shukla authored of *The Good Immigrant*, a collection of essays from British men and women of color (Sommers). In his article and interview with Shukla, Jack Sommers explains, "Its title refers to what one of the contributors once said - that Britons from immigrant diasporas must prove themselves before society stops deeming them bad" ("Brexit Could Have"). Likewise, in the *Guardian's* video "Our Obsession with Good Immigrants Breeds Intolerance," Shukla demonstrates how an ethnic minority can become a "good immigrant" in Britain: "Win a televised baking competition, get gold in the Olympics, write a Christmas number 1, don't say that you've experienced casual racism." He goes on to argue that the lengths to which immigrants must go to achieve good immigrant status are so extreme that "normal" immigrants who can't measure up to these extraordinary feats are thus reduced. Vaswani's inclusion then in the BBC Mumbai is demonstrative of this good immigrant model through her expression of Britishness in dress, speech, and composure, even if she herself is not actually a British immigrant.

To certain other audiences, however, Vaswani may consciously or subconsciously demonstrate what India 'might have been'—thus massaging the old nostalgia for imperialism, demonstrating why it was "necessary" and providing examples to verify this to this belief. Vaswani stands out against the Indians represented in the report by projecting a calm and reassuring posture and tone, demonstrative of "traditional" BBC values. She does not fit with the images of Indianness appearing on the screen, yet, she stands out within the ranks of the BBC racially and ethnically that her presence in the Mumbai office is accepted. In western garb with a polished accent, Vaswani is not 'othered'; rather, she is included in that which is British, while others who look similar are 'othered' through violence and disorganization. This 'otherness' is

represented through other signs in developing nations by crowds of people and specifically in India by crowded trains.

The west, including Britain, has been saturated with images of the full and chaotic train bursting with people in India. In an opinion piece about British rail for Britain's *Guardian*, Nish Kumar writes, "Schoolmates used to ask me about Indian trains. I can now confirm that Britain's are worse." This example demonstrates the cultural perception of Indian trains in Britain, learned often through Mediascapes. This is the naturalized, though not natural symbol which is perpetuated through the media about Indian trains.

However, it is crowds in general that seem to dominate western mediascapes of India, not just on crowded trains. While elements of certain parts of the Indian living situation such as overcrowding and overpopulation may not be untrue, a mediascape, as a selected "strip of reality" (Appadurai 35) inherently forces a different lens to an element of reality. As a part of a selected element of what shall be seen and unseen, as selected repeatedly in western media, it's important to understand that mediascapes, even though they contain elements of truth within them, allow for broad strips to be painted across societies and for many liberties to be taken in overgeneralizing a nation, its people, and its culture. Mediascapes and the elements that are contained within them are not created to bring understanding or to elaborate on culture or people, they merely exist to package culture for consumption.

While mediascapes may have a certain element of truth engrained somewhere in them, it is the repetition, perpetuation, and cultural ideology of 'otherness' that becomes embedded in them that transforms momentary and situational truths into imagined realities and imagined truths. Likewise, these symbols do not exist without cultural judgment. The media relies on its audience to recognize these symbols of 'otherness' in order to survive just as they feed viewers

of mediascapes the images to form these judgments. In this self-perpetuating cycle, one can consider the seamliness of perceived ‘Britishness’—calmness, order, queuing— and contrast that with the image of the Indian crowd and the Indian train. These images perpetuate otherness by suggesting chaos, impatience, and a lack of order as cultural values of India.

### **The Propaganda Model**

As discussed in other chapters, the Propaganda Model is made up of five main filters, one of which has been updated to reflect more recent situations of nationalist identity crises in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. These filters can help to suggest motive from the BBC’s rhetorical choices concerning the Mumbai Bombings and provide the viewer with a better understanding of what exactly public service means to the upper echelons of the BBC when taken in tandem with an understanding of its relation to the government of the UK. The filters of the case study I discuss here are the first filter, the fourth, and the fifth.

The first filter of the model is concerned with the “Size, ownership, and profit orientation of the mass media” (3). Ownership is intentionally simplified by the BBC’s own hand through its claims of public service and ownership by the public it serves. The licensing fee, which funds the BBC’s home/public service arm is used to justify the idea of that ownership in addition to the guise of providing the public with a service that no commercial service could do. As a friendly public servant, the BBC situates itself as publically owned, yet the means through which the BBC exists and is able to set and collect that license fee reside with the government. The BBC must operate by royal charter, a process which must reoccur every 10 years in order to reestablish exactly what the BBC does for the public and exactly how it allocates its resources. While this process may project transparency, the BBC’s own literature and rhetoric disregard the major importance of the British government in this process. When a ministry in the government



is responsible for ensuring that a service is provided in a way approved by the government, approves the amount and means by which fees can be collected to provide the services, and prescribes actual law about this service fee to the public, the government must be realized as a part owner in this enterprise. In addition to this, the BBC's production houses, and its other profit-oriented arms also reach into the offerings available in the UK. While this dissertation focuses on BBC News, we must not forget that BBC News is available worldwide through cable and satellite networks, and its productions, drama, documentary, comedy, and other products, are sold all over the world via broadcast rights and as home entertainment. Thus, not only is the BBC large and far reaching, it cannot be regarded truly as a non-profit enterprise. The corporation as a whole is a profit-making organization; its stakeholders then are varied, and the corporation is not impartial to the market nor to its government backers and naysayers. In terms of this case study then, it must be asked: what do these government stakeholders stand to gain from how the BBC presents problems such as terrorism in India? In the neo-liberal, post-colonial, war-on-terror world, the government benefits from the BBC showing terrorism in other countries as being a foreign occurrence. Choosing mediascapes which highlight the idea of foreignness, which show these acts as happening far away from Britain and in very different circumstances, presents a reassurance that the society and government of Britain is more capable than others. Further, by presenting this act in a former colonial country, the BBC is able to demonstrate a superiority of Britishness—for what occurs in a former colony happens in the absence of Britishness. I discuss the advantages of this use of mediascapes to the state of Britain in the next section. In this case study, terror is shown as distinctly foreign, happening in the absence of Britishness, and in a space with what is portrayed as an ineffective government.

The portrayal of an ineffective India does not come without consequence, however. The fourth filter is “Flak and the Enforcers,” which Herman and Chomsky describe as “negative responses to a media statement of program” (26). They describe these responses in terms of “letters, telegrams, phone calls, petitions, lawsuits, speeches, and bills before Congress, and other modes of complaint, threat, and punitive action,” (26). That said, in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, common forms of flak include a multitude of similar punitive actions through social media outlets such as *Twitter*, *Facebook*, *YouTube* and others—all with the capability of going viral. Hermann and Chomsky also demonstrate how flak is created by especially powerful research institutes, corporate and/or partisan, and how these producers of flak are the watchdogs of how the media portrays their own special interests (26-28). In a report such as this report on India, there is likely to be flak in the form of complaints from groups concerned about representation or possibly length as the report is quite sparse on details. Indeed, India and the BBC have a somewhat fraught relationship already according to Suzanne Franks and Arthur J. Pais. Franks argues that in the 1970s and 1980s Indian officials kept a very close eye on what the BBC reported and how they reported on India (208). She claims that this was because of both the Indian government’s interest as well as the interest of Indian people in the UK who were part of the diaspora and cared about how India was represented (208-209). Both Suzanne Franks and Arthur J. Pais mention that the BBC was actually shut down by the Indian government twice in the 1970s in India when the government was not happy with how the BBC’s programming (Franks 210; “Anger in India”).

Pais goes on to demonstrate that when cable television brought the BBC and the US based Cable News Network (CNN) into India later, the Indian government blamed these international media outlets for inciting violence, in one case after a mosque was destroyed a

political group. Pais suggests that in contrast to the international outlets, the Indian equivalent, Doordarshan, was highly regulated and even delayed reporting on some events, Indira Gandhi's assassination included, in order to try and manipulate their audiences. Pais reports that an anonymous Indian official asserted that even though the Indian news had a larger audience share in general, "during a national crisis, more people flock to BBC and CNN than Doordarshan" ("Anger in India"). Paul R. Brass goes a step further to implicate the Indian officials as beneficiaries of continued violence (9). Brass argues that although certain parts of India have faced significant danger and social discord from sectarianism, in certain locales the government relies on Indian people to have certain fears and feelings about sectarianism. Brass asserts that this is because these emotional responses are what keep certain people in power as they project themselves to be the people who can and will do something about the problems (9). These government officials then, have an interest in playing up sectarian violence and manipulating the fears of audiences in order to retain their votes and confidences (9). This type of manipulation clearly shows the propaganda model at work in its own form in India and through its Indian and Western news broadcasts there.

While Franks, Pais, and Brass's accounts of the manipulation of the Indian media, sentiments on foreign medias in India, and the attempts to control how the BBC reports on India may be read as oppositional to each other, these arguments build into one example of the BBC acting in accordance with its own propaganda model as well as the propaganda model of India. While the BBC reports on India, the government and the Indian viewers may give the BBC flak in order to attempt to control what it broadcasts. While this strategy may influence the BBC's broadcast choices due to governmental pressure from India, the BBC's post-colonial point of view is also best served. Thus, the BBC may be spared flak in these cases. Otherwise, flak may

be given to the BBC in order to deflect the fact that the government does have an interest in the people knowing about certain issues that the state media of India may be reluctant to show.

While the BBC has its own role to play in educating how Britishness and ‘otherness’ is performed to its own viewers, this role often is interwoven with the role the corporation plays in other nations in upholding particular political points of view. How the BBC encodes ‘otherness’ to Britons is not separate from how the BBC encodes Indianness within these same broadcasts. While the decoding points of view may be very different, the Propaganda Model is still at work in seeing this view of Indianness from both external and internal lenses. These BBC encodings can be of use not just to establish Britishness through negation, but also serve to reinforce fears of sectarianism and violence which can retain the authority of certain Indian officials while simultaneously allowing these officials someone else to blame for the dissemination of information.

Hermann and Chomsky’s final filter is “Anticommunism as a control mechanism” (29). As discussed in the introduction, Anticommunism is no longer the ideology that threatens “ultimate evil” and “helps mobilize the populace against an enemy” (29). Herman and Chomsky argue that “when anticommunist fever is aroused, the demand for more serious evidence in support of claims of “communist” abuses is suspended, and charlatans can thrive as evidential sources” (30). While this certainly fits the modes through which many accusations have been met as terrorists, Islamists, or potential threats in the post-9/11 years, it can be better argued that the major fear for concerning Britain in 2016 is a threat to Britishness—the threat of the “other” becoming that which was British.

## Embodiment

Appadurai argues that overall, “ethnic projects are increasingly defined by these three characteristics of the culture of the modern nation-state” (157). He suggests:

As states lose their monopoly over the idea of nation, it is understandable that all sorts of groups will tend to use the logic of the nation to capture some or all of the state, or some or all of their entitlements from the state. This logic finds its maximum power to mobilize where the body meets the state, that is, in those projects that we call ethnic and often misrecognize as atavistic. (157)

The characteristics described here do more than provide a basis for identifying that which is British against that which is not. As a heterogeneous Britain struggles to find common ground among its citizenry, this “logic” can be used, as Appadurai suggests, to reinforce ideas of Britishness as naturally occurring, but also that ideas of ‘otherness’ are preclusions to full representation within the state. Appadurai suggests that “modern ethnic movements (culturalisms) can be tied to the crisis of the nation-state through a series of interesting links” (157). Thus, these links are integral to this current study in identifying how the Propaganda Model can be connected to representation in the reporting of ‘otherness’ in the news of the BBC as will be discussed below. As the BBC defines Indianness against Britishness in the case study, this ‘othering’ allows for a white Britain to delegitimize the struggle of representation for British Indians in particular, and racial others in general.

In responding to Appadurai’s point, the legitimacy of the British state of rule must be based on a foundation of “tradition and natural affinity” (157); legitimacy must appeal to the idea of a national character that is historically recognizable and relevant. Thus, the modern British state must in some way negotiate, straightforwardly or otherwise, with its colonial past to

demonstrate how this historical background contributes to or otherwise lends itself to the building of a set of traits upon which the imagined character of a nation can be built from. Philip Murphy, of the University of London, demonstrates the modern difficulties of Britain as a member of the commonwealth from various attempts to lead as well as to take background status in order to relate better with other commonwealth nations: mostly former colonies (2011). As governments in both Britain and abroad change, so too do the desires of these governments in regard to the commonwealth, as well as the attitudes towards it (2011). These relations help to shape, and indeed are shaped, by media influences.

Audiences must remember how the construct of modern Britain is being negotiated when considering a juxtaposition of their nation against another. In the Mumbai Bombing case study, a justification of Imperialism is as integral to the very concept of Britishness and vital to how the report will be built and how the mediascapes will be selected. The BBC's public service commitment to the people of Britain and to constructing Britishness dictates that this underlying approval of Imperial Britain must be the building block upon which a juxtaposition will take place.

It may seem curious to the reader why a juxtaposition or a comparison must be inherent in the reporting to begin with, but through the BBC's mission to bring the world to Britain (*Broadcasting: A Copy of the Royal Charter*), the BBC must recognize an imagined audience. In doing so, it must rely on its construction of Britishness in order to imagine this audience: a construction which already demonstrates an assumed dichotomy of Britishness and 'otherness.' The world is constructed as in opposition to Britain even in the BBC's mission concept. Thus, this imagined British audience with its imagined characteristics and prescribed needs must be built on an ideal of Britain and a concept of Britishness, but the culture of 'other' must be framed

in opposition to it. The prescribed ‘other’ in this case study is India, and the construction of this news report obviously contributes to what it means, at least to the BBC, to be Indian and to be a part of modern India.

According to Appadurai, “the specific projects of the modern nation-state [...] have tied concrete bodily practices (speech, cleanliness, movement, health) to *large-scale* group identities, thus increasing the potential scope of embodied experiences of group affinity” (157). In this case study, the bodily practices of social movement, crowding, individual bodily movements and tolerance of closeness, the tolerance of noise and the other aspects of the mediascape of imagined Mumbai are presented as a cultural ‘other’ to the social conditions of British transport, tolerance of public closeness, and ideas of public order. Crowding, closeness, and noise such as that displayed in the India video are not commonly associated with British transport, thereby the BBC sets up a dichotomy of expectation and ‘civilized’ movement of people that defines both Britishness and that of the ‘other.’ By attaching these values and this opposition to the idea of British public order, the BBC is able to utilize the mediascape to reinforce cultural ideas of the large-scale identity of Indianness as well as Britishness.

The third point Appadurai makes is that regardless of whether a state is democratic or not, “the language of rights and entitlement more generally has become inextricably linked to these large-scale identities” (157). Even while the BBC is presenting this “otherness” in India rather than in Britain, the reinforcement of these cultural differences has repercussions to the generations of British-Indians living in Britain. The cultural identity of this group is reduced not just to that which is unBritish, but that which is chaotic and dangerous, as the conditions of embodiment described in the report itself are part of the agency through which terrorists took advantage of the Indian state. This sense of ‘otherness’ can also be applied to ‘others’ within

Britain. As demonstrated in the last chapter, the potential for homegrown terror is constructed as against the performance of Britishness as prescribed by the BBC.

In these ways, the BBC's public service mission colludes closely with the needs of the British state. First, the BBC segment helps to reinforce the legitimacy of the current rule by presenting a false dichotomy of an alternative. Second, the characterization of Indianness serves to, however unsubtly, justify the prior colonization of India, for the conditions shown in the mediascapes of the report exist in the absence of Britishness. Through applying the practices of movement within the mediascapes of the Mumbai bombing report to the large-scale identity of Indianness, India is presented as backward compared to the movement practices common in Britain. Thus, as the movement practices of India lead to mass chaos and destruction in a terror attack, these movement practices are dangerous and India would be better off were they more orderly, more like the British. The dichotomy of chaos versus a very British sense of order also is applied to the scores of British-Indians in Britain. Additionally, by presenting Indianness as unBritish, the message that British Indians must become more British is clearly sent over other notions of Britain changing for that population. Here the BBC serves effectively as a tool of the state and demonstrates the Propaganda Model effectively.

### **Worthy and Unworthy Victims**

If Hermann and Chomsky's Propaganda Model is assumed to be at work in this situation, the question must be asked what the government of Britain stands to gain from this particular news story and the construction of dramatic narrative within. These mediascapes may be carefully chosen, or perhaps more problematically, this mediascape is the accepted mediascape that is simply the norm the news corporation defers to when breaking news occurs. It is through taking the possible readings of the drama through different negotiated positions that projecting



the possible gains to the British government might be constructing, even abroad, a consideration of who is “us” and who is “them.”

First it is important to consider the rhetorical importance the BBC places on the British people as being central to the world. The BBC’s stated goal of “bringing the UK to the world and the world to the UK” (*Broadcasting: A Copy of the Royal Charter*) can be read as having a colonial ring. The colonial era and nostalgias of it bring to mind visions of maps where Europe is central and where ‘civilization’ is also central. Constructing the idea that Britain, and therefore British values, are meant to be brought to the world inherently supports a type of new and mediated colonial experience. This mediated colonization features the BBC bringing its ‘civilized’ news service, as well as the British point of view, to those who ‘need’ it. If the viewing public understands their mediated position to be central, as per the BBC’s public service mission, then it may well be understood that ‘the world,’ as it is ‘brought to Britain’ is full of the ‘other’ and the mediascapes previously mentioned are central to contextualizing how Britain relates to each particular ‘other’ socially and culturally.

In the case of India, encoding it as a backward, chaotic, and uncontrolled place where violence is prone to happen and the bad guys are likely to go free is beneficial in many ways to the central authorities of Britain. First, for the British descended from the island itself, or in some cases born into a democratic or republican situation, the hegemonic reading provides a moral authority of white British democracy. It also allows for a contrast of what the audience sees as clearly British and what they see as ‘other,’ allowing them to sort out the ‘good’ ‘others’ from the ‘bad.’ The ‘good immigrant’ trope refers to a well assimilated non-white Briton, or in other cases a white immigrant born in the Eastern Bloc, who can be assumed to be included in the

moral authority of proper Britishness. Karishma Vaswani, seen in the BBC newsroom, also provides them with an example of “the good immigrant” for all the reasons stated above.

Second, for hegemonic readers who are categorized as ‘the other,’ these mediascapes may help to cement the ideas of moving close to the British culture and distancing themselves from their home culture. It may artificially color their views of where they have come from to a point where assimilation for themselves, or pushing their children towards assimilation is not just considered good for socialization and acceptance, but again, a moral improvement.

Finally, oppositional readers who may be characterized as ‘other’ may out themselves as a constructed social enemy, rejecting the implied values of Britishness. Oppositional others present a social leverage point through which the government and the media can point out ‘bad’ immigrants and call for particular types of immigration patterns based on those already in the country. Indeed, the terrorists themselves are implicitly constructed as oppositional others. Oppositional readers falling into an accepted pattern of established white-Britishness in particular would obviously not face the same social ramifications, but other labels may be attached to them for political leverage and gain. The characterization of India in the Mumbai bombing segment is good for the government of Britain in that it allows for social pressure to build in encouraging immigrants and their children to become socialized as British and to assimilate into the British culture. It helps to construct the invisible mural of acceptable immigrants vs. unacceptable immigrants, which in turn helps to shape the public’s views on immigration, their fellow Britons, and their voting habits. Further, if the Mumbai report casts some British-Indians as oppositional viewers, then this construction helps to legitimize institutional racism as well as personal prejudices of the public against them.

The physical rhetoric of the reporter in Mumbai is also significant. At no point is Vaswani seen to be on the ground or in the field where the event took place. She remains removed: either speaking over prerecorded video or speaking in the studio. This physical removal is interesting to consider when thinking in terms of who the BBC is painting as ‘us’ and ‘them.’ Standing alone, in contrast with the crowds in the report, Vaswani represents a British sense of order against Indian chaos. With her acceptable BBC accent, it is established that Vaswani is one of US. Like Dr. Khan in the last chapter, she is being cast as acceptably British. Khan as a symbol embracing inclusive Britishness is an integral part of the London scene of helping, aid, and survival. Vaswani in the Mumbai example, for the same reasons, is not presented physically a part of the tragedy unfolding in Mumbai. This is but one way in which the BBC demonstrates the difference between worthy and unworthy victims in Mumbai.

### **Conclusion**

As viewers and scholars we must ask what the BBC hopes to accomplish with creating a mediascape of India for these particular audiences. In the example of the London bombings, the subsequent coverage implied togetherness of spirit to unite these audiences to their chosen or inherited homeland or nation. The reinforcing of perceived cultural values of “Britishness” can be clearly seen as a result of the BBC providing ‘public value’ through portraying these values, however constructed, as a mode of public solace and domestic control. With the example of India, however, the role of the BBC’s representation mission is vastly changed.

The BBC and Britain benefit from showing India in this way. For one, terror is shown as a natural occurrence, not naturalized. The history of animosities and terror in India is isolated from its origins and obscures British colonial involvement and responsibility, including the examples of terrorism and perpetuated violence in previous British states subject to partition

such as India, Ireland, and Palestine (see Radka Kumar). There is a danger to the continued status quo of Britain if the educated people of the country more clearly understood and or empathized with this perpetuation of violence. Colonialism and foreign influence have played a role in similar sectarian violence throughout the world.

Additionally, audiences and scholars must pose the question of how this depiction of terrorism in India, especially concerning its isolation from historicity, affects the perception of worthy or unworthy victimhood. In one sense, there is an ability to easily read a 'worthy victim' in India. By demonstrating that India is a place where people are helpless against the forces of terrorism which are simply a normal part of society, the BBC creates the ability to read India as an unfortunate nation where others take advantage of their lack of ability to protect themselves. Like an underdog, good liberal westerners should feel sorry for the people of India. In another sense, unworthy victimhood can be read as well. From the arrangement of victimhood displayed in this broadcast, it is possible to see India as a place that does not do enough for its own people, does not properly police its state, its government is not strong enough to protect against terror, etc. The attacks in Britain are presented not as a failure of the government, but as incursions upon a calm and rational society. In comparison, the presentation of the Mumbai attacks casts Indian society as the opposite: chaotic and unorganized. The people of Mumbai are not only the unwitting victims of terrorism but of a state that has let them down. What both of these scenarios have in common is that either reading paints India as an incapable nation-state. In post-empire terms the reading is simple: Indian independence has been a failure.

## CHAPTER V

### THE SCOTTISH INDEPENDENCE REFERENDUM

In this case study, I will examine an interaction at a press conference between Alex Salmond, the First Minister of Scotland at the time, and Nick Robinson of the BBC. Because the BBC is publicly funded and for the benefit of the British people, the BBC considers its owners to be the license payers (*Broadcasting: A Copy of the Royal Charter*). In order to view these license payers as owners in accordance with both the BBC and Herman and Chomsky's Propaganda Model, the license payers must inherently gain value from their ownership. While the BBC may consider value to be their broadcast services, the Propaganda Model suggests that these services must inherently benefit the public at large, or in the case of the BBC, the construction of nationalism (Britishness for British people). While the BBC's type of ownership may seem to be more direct than corporate ownership, this model is just as fraught with bias. The BBC's ownership does not simply indicate that the BBC must educate the license payers; rather, the BBC owes the license payers directly for their payment for services. What then does the BBC owe its license payers in regard to reporting on the Scottish Independence referendum? In order to answer this question, I will begin to suggest meaning from the experiences of the audience. First, I acknowledge that in the myriad of shades between the positions that meaning can be understood, the main positions of decoding a message, according to Hall, are from a dominant hegemonic position, a negotiated position, and an oppositional position (171-173). After acknowledging these positions, I will explore the purposes for these encoding choices through Burke's Dramatist model (1298). Finally, I will use Herman and Chomsky's Propaganda Model (2) to interrogate meaning and motive from the BBC. The most important pillars of the model to this case study are the first and the third. First, we must identify the stakeholders and who

“owns” or controls the capital used to produce the news. Second, we must identify the sources of the information used to create the news. What are their motives and how do they feed in to the production and meaning derived from it?

Scottish independence has been of interest to the Scots for a long time, likely longer than some scholars imagine. Ann Piccard suggests that Scottish independence is of importance to satisfying the social justice ills of the past. Citing the highland clearances of 1700s, she suggests that in order to atone for the injustice done to highlanders as a result of the clearances, Scottish independence must be granted by the union. However, Piccard suggests that it is not the true descendants of the historic injustice done to the highlanders who are invited to make the 2014 decision. She argues that simply living in Scotland is not enough to vote on whether Scotland should be independent or not (352-353). Piccard focuses her questions on who the real victims of the union were and how justice can be done to their descendants. Other views on how the union began and how the union affected the people of Scotland vary.

In his article “Britishness: A Scottish Invention,” Ian Bradley demonstrates how leading Scottish thinkers as well as the Scottish public were the leaders in pushing a shared “Britishness” in the unification of Scotland as a part of Britain. John Major was the author of the influential *History of Greater Britain* in 1521. Bradley demonstrates how Major, “one of the first modern historians of Britain,” blazed the trail for Scottish reformers and Scottish Protestants, calling for Scotland to join with England united against the perceived “tyranny of the major Catholic powers in Europe, Spain and France” (3). Bradley also stresses David Hume’s assertions which went so far as to suggest that England and Scotland should enforce intermarriage between their peoples and establish colonies on either side of the border to encourage people to mix. According to Bradley, Hume also made the suggestion that those who called themselves either Scottish or

English, rather than British, should be fined. As mentioned before, the “Scottish enlightenment” in the 18th century brought about even more fervent support for Britishness by Scottish intellectuals, and their “hybrid or hyphenated identity” was seen as the way in which they “expressed their conviction that it was as part of Britain that Scotland had its best chance of thriving and improving” (3).

Part of the means of “improving” Scottishness can be seen in the rise of the Elocution movement that leaned towards standardization and order, particularly of language. The words and writings of enlightenment era Scottish intelligencia and politicians demonstrate a strong support of unionism and the modes through which upper and middle class Scots fetishized Britishness. Thomas Sheridan, one of the leading thinkers of this era, was not English, but Irish (Bizzell and Herzberg 802). His insistence towards standardizing language within the British Isles had much to do with the political drawing together of the union. The study and understanding of how language should inform or be informed by logic and reason and the questions how these two ideas worked in tandem, was something heavily discussed in the United Kingdom during the enlightenment. Not least of these questions was the question of style and performance, both of which found themselves scrutinized through the elocution movement (803). Thus, the elocution movement at least in part moved toward bringing together the different parts of the union in these terms as well: accents, pronunciations, and performance. Scottish political and social elites as well as intellectuals at the forefront of social changes, including those involving language, and already had more in common with Westminster in these regards than with much of Scotland. It should come as no surprise then that many Scots would feel that something may have been lost in terms of Scottish identity at the time of unification, even while the sentiment may not be completely understood by those over the southern borders.

Thus, historian Linda Colley maintains that the most important uniting effect of the English and the Scottish in particular was not the accumulation of uniting forces between them, but instead the perception of similarity through perception of ‘otherness.’ While the English and the Scottish maintained many differences between each other, with a common “other” such as China, their similarities rather than their differences were highlighted. Common enemies such as France also served to heighten the sense of likeness and strengthened the concept of a united ‘Britishness’ (*Britons* 18).

Colley points out that although by the time of the Acts of Union, the Scottish and the English had many connections both institutional and commercial, “a thoroughgoing political union between Scotland and the rest of Britain had by no means been a foregone conclusion, and even the Act of Union only partially achieved it” (*Britons* 12). The Act mitigated the British political fear of a Roman Catholic leader of Scotland being brought to the throne after the death of the queen (12). In fact, the shared religion of the two countries eventually helped to cement the union further against the threat of outside ‘others,’ especially of European Catholics (18). However, while many advantages were brought to the forefront, and while many politicians and philosophers supported and promoted the union through public talks and publication, some Scots still favored preserving their independent state, as well as English subjects who opposed to losing their sense of England and becoming what they saw as something else entirely: British (13). While Colley asserts that the union mattered little to most Scots at its inception, “the wealthy or ambitious minority [...] were torn between anger at the loss of Scotland’s ancient independence and a natural desire for a wider stage than their homeland could afford them” (12). Colley argues that while “It is sometimes supposed that the Act of Union was a piece of cultural and political imperialism foisted on the hapless Scots by their stronger southern neighbor,” many



English instead saw the union as “a blatant affront to older identities. They bitterly disapproved of ‘English’ and ‘England’ giving way to ‘British’ and ‘Great Britain’ (13). As time went on and first the French and then the colonies were ‘othered’ through war and religion, Colley affirms that it was shared Protestantism that drew Britons together and sustained a shared “sense of British national identity” to thrive, even while other cultural elements kept each country in the union separate (18).

In his 2009 “When Was Britain?: Scotland at the Tipping Point,” Neal Ascherson claims that the 1688 Act was extremely unpopular because the shared monarch still considered England more heavily when making decisions that would guide both nations (6-7). Scotland was then faced with the decision of becoming fully independent again or a full member of a union with England. Ascherson states that this is what happened:

The second course was chosen by the Scottish Parliament, against strong popular opposition which demanded the first one. The subsequent Union of 1707 abolished Scotland’s independence and the Scottish Parliament. The legislature of the new “Great Britain” or United Kingdom would be at Westminster in London – essentially the existing English Parliament with the addition of a minority of Scottish MPs and representative peers in the House of Lords. But although the Union ended Scottish independence, it guaranteed the survival and autonomy of three enormously important institutions: the Scottish legal system (closer to Roman-Dutch law than to English common law), the established Presbyterian Church of Scotland, and the Scottish educational structure. All three were able to preserve much of the Scottish sense of separateness and distinct identity. (6-7)

These conditions allowed for the Scottish to maintain existing social elements such as how to conduct legal, educational, and religious business in Scotland. On the other hand, the dissolution of Scottish parliament greatly reduced the amount of local rule in the shift from independence to rule from Westminster. Therefore, these conditions allowed a certain amount of independence for Scotland while cementing the benefits of union as a part of Britain proper. What is perhaps most interesting about both acts is how each is described from a nationalist point of view.

Ascherson claims that there are two ways of understanding the Act of Union: the British way, which he also calls the “English” way, and the “Scottish” way (7). The British, or English way, maintains that the act is an act of parliament, which formally could only be undone by another such parliamentary act. Ascherson maintains that the Scottish way of viewing the act was to be understood more as a treaty, and more like the “contractual constitutional tradition in Scotland” (7). The major difference here is the relative difficulty of undoing said agreement.

Ascherson’s suggestion is supported by the rise in nationalist parties throughout the 20th and 21st centuries and the eventual popularity of the devolution movement and restoration of Scottish parliament. While some of the differences in how Scotland and England saw their union may have been more easily sidelined in the past, it is these differences that made the call for independence possible in 2014. While Ascherson’s article is somewhat dated, with Ascherson citing Alex Salmond’s early call for an independence referendum before 2011 (8), Ascherson offers compelling reasons for the independence movement as well as the modern distance between Scotland and England.

In addition to the uniting force of Protestantism, Ascherson adds a new element. While Ascherson agrees with Colley that Protestantism was a driving force in cementing unification (3), Ascherson also argues that acceptance of Britain as an expansion of English borders was also

accepted through the British crown's acceptance of Arthurian and Celtic myths. Accepting and expanding on these legends allowed for the acceptance that other spaces and places belonged naturally to England, or Britain, and created arguments for expansion and colonization (9-10).

Both the uniting myths that contribute to the importance of Scotland as part of the union as well as the historical misunderstandings of what the union should be based on demonstrate the lengths to which nationalist thought has encompassed Scottish integration as an integral part of the union. Thus, the idea of Scottish independence is jarring to how the union has come to be represented historically. While these notions may be outdated now, the history under which Scottishness and Britishness coexist must be understood in considering modern attitudes. Aside from myths and despite misunderstandings in the building of the acts of union, the importance of Scotland to the union was once very much an important Scottish social investment, protecting Scottish values from outsiders. The historic underpinnings of Scotland's relationship to the rest of Britain demonstrate how the Scottish Independence referendum of 2014 was an event uniquely challenging to the idea of Britishness and British Nationalism.

If nation states are to be considered as "imagined communities" (7) as Anderson suggests, it must be remembered that the imagined boundaries and borders of these nations are constantly in states of flux. However, turmoil brought from within imagined nations provides a different perspective of how nationalism is constructed through societal institutions, and the rhetoric used to discuss such turmoil is integral to how these institutions attempt to define and preserve what the national ought to be, particularly when challenged. This turmoil can take the form of violence, but it can also come as the result of long awaited political action, or as a force for separation from political unions. For example, the Scottish Independence referendum of 2014 was an event uniquely challenging to the idea of Britishness and British nationalism from the

more southern perspective. It is the union of the nations within Britain that forms Britain, and without Scotland, the union and thus perceptions of Britain itself is challenged.

### **Modern Scottish/British Identity**

Modern perceptions of what it means to be Scottish, to be British, or to be both Scottish and British are not what they used to be, despite the political and social predilections in the past which brought about such a close marriage. Not only have modern perceptions of what it means to be each of these things changed, but the relevance of associating with one, the other, or both, has also shifted. Because the BBC is invested in both Britishness and public service to the British, it is of vital importance that consideration of these definitions be given while undertaking the task of interrogating the BBC's rhetoric on the topic. What "Britishness" and "Scottishness" is to the institution of the BBC, for example, may no longer fit the parameters of the audiences' definitions; alternately, the definitions of the BBC may stand in the way of impartiality on the subject inherently. That is to say, if the BBC benefits from a particular understanding of Britishness, or the government relies on the BBC to reinforce a particular way of understanding the subject, the BBC may not be judged to be accurate and unbiased.

In Colley's conclusions in *Britons*, she describes Sir David Wilkie's historical painting "Chelsea Pensioners Reading the Gazette of the Battle of Waterloo" (374-375). Painted in 1822, this painting depicts an assortment of people: soldiers, pensioners, civilians, children, and people rich and poor, gathered around the Gazette in a show of unity at the news from the battlefield. Colley uses the description of the painting in part to show that many believed Britain to be a product of shared common enemies and victories at war, part of her own argument if not the sum (376). The concept of shared Britishness is the subject, as Colley demonstrates, "Explicit in this strictly imaginary scene is the existence of a mass British patriotism transcending the boundaries

of class, ethnicity, occupation, sex and age” (374). While Wilkie’s work indeed helps to wrap up many of Colley’s points of Britishness, there is yet one interesting aspect that Colley does not explore that is quite relevant. Though the people in Wilkie’s painting may be reacting to news of victory at war, the medium through which this information is transmitted is extremely important. Centrally placed, the Gazette is the agent that brings people together in the painting, and thus demonstrates not only the importance of mass media, but also the huge part that mass media plays in helping to construct identities, in this case national identity. Generally, print media at the time was coming into its own, as a mode of mass communication to various audiences.

James Curran’s work traces a history of British media in a mainstream media history, rather than in what he calls the “technological determinist” method of study (135). He argues that media historians of a liberal nature generally see the exponential rise in British newspapers after 1695 as a catalyst for the spread of democracy (136). Wilkie’s 1822 painting came into being before Curran suggests most media scholars argue that Britain’s press became free—that was not until halfway through the 19<sup>th</sup> century (136). Curran cites Bob Harris’ claim that the press “was a major force behind the increasingly public nature of much politics’ in the eighteenth century” (136). While Curran ultimately aims to suggest that a liberal view of the democratization of the newspaper is more optimistic than realistic, Wilkie’s work does support the idea of both accessibility of political information as well as a unifying, perhaps even homogenizing and nationalist effect on the people who share the same media access. In this context, the future possibilities of the BBC do not look so out of place in the British media tradition.

This semi-fictional news page is a white square at the center of the painting. Like the BBC itself, it attempts to appeal to vastly different elements of British society. It brings them together to inform them about news which it constructs as important to all of these British

people, despite their differences. Finally, it serves as the hearth around which these varied Britons gather to share identity and construct identity. It is worth remembering this as I examine the BBC playing a similar role in modern British culture. It is impossible to understand contemporary Britishness without examining the role the mass media plays as a co-creator of it.

### **The BBC and Scotland**

The BBC functions like the painting in modern Britain, and likewise attempts to define Britishness when the understanding of what exactly Britishness is in flux. As the BBC attempts to shape and reshape “Britishness,” while remaining itself a central part of the definition, we must first consider how the BBC defines and delineates Britishness in terms of its separation of powers and broadcasting charters and second, how the BBC allows those charters to represent themselves and each other.

Bradley asserts that “John Reith almost single-handedly constructed one of the great modern institutional embodiments of Britishness, the BBC” (4). Reith, a Scotsman himself, “made sure that the BBC expressed Britain to itself and to the world in all its variety by establishing separate services for Scotland, Wales, Northern Ireland, and the English regions, which both opened out of the national UK output and also contributed to it their own distinctive accents and cultures” (4). Reith was also responsible for the “quasi-religious significance” that the BBC instilled upon “royal and national occasions” (4). While Bradley demonstrates Reith’s belief in the Scottish as an integral part of Britishness, there is no indication that that determination to include other regions and cultures spread far beyond Reith or extended to his later English-British counterparts. The lack of similar consideration is evidenced by the attitudes the BBC held for Scotland in the 1990s.

According to Born, the management of BBC News produced a booklet in the mid-90s for news staff “reminding them why ‘Scotland is different,’ outlining such core elements of that difference as the legal and education systems, and exhorting them to signal this in their journalism. The rhetoric of the 1995 booklet betrays an effortful condescension” (Born 393). When in 1998, BBC Scotland proposed a Scottish television news to air at 6pm to replace the mainstay UK news, it changed the tone of the Scottish conversation within the BBC. While BBC Scotland argued that the process of devolving power back to Scotland and the reformation of the Scottish parliament meant that Scottish news should be more tailored to the local, the BBC governors instead doubled down on the idea that the BBC must represent “the whole of the UK to the whole of the UK” (394). The governor’s decision seems contrary to the discussion in 1995, where Born demonstrates the thinking behind the ‘Scotland is Different’ leaflet, defended by Tony Hall:

‘All our network journalists are familiar with the simple fact that Scotland is different. This leaflet reminds us of some of the many ways in which that is true. Whenever we broadcast a network programme we speak to all parts of the United Kingdom. Sometimes our stories will be relevant to the entire nation, and sometimes only to one or other of the home countries. Audiences can easily be alienated if they feel we don’t even recognize when what we are saying does not apply to them. Hence this guide.’ (qtd. in Born 394)

The corporation’s lack of cohesiveness in following through with allowing Scotland to both be different and to produce programming of local interest is a clear indication of BBC interest in maintaining a conception of a unified UK. Drawing the line of program production at the evening news is a clear indication that while Scotland may be trusted to provide entertainment

and educational programming that incidentally may also be of interest to the rest of the UK, devolution of the local news is a step too far for the BBC. The line in the sand regarding local news broadcasts suggests that were the BBC to allow Scotland to produce its own nightly news broadcast, the legitimacy of news production may lend to the political belief of a cultural center point of Scottishness outside the realm of Britishness. That suggestion undermines the sentiment of any concept of British homogeneity, particularly as Scotland was beginning a new era with renewed parliamentary rights.

### **The BBC and the Referendum**

Writing in 2006, John Curtice reminds readers that England is the only country in the union without its own home rule and continues to be ruled by UK and not England proper. In the wake of Scotland's decision to devolve parliamentary rights, Curtice uses his article to discuss older arguments that devolution would either lead to a stronger or weaker union between the countries. Through this discussion, Curtice attempts to see which of these situations will come to fruition because of Scottish devolution (95). He invokes Thatcher and Dayell to describe how many thought devolution of other nations would contribute to "fragmentation" of the union of the UK countries and that "Asymmetrical devolution" would be the end of the Kingdom. He summarizes Thatcher's (1998) fears:

Indeed for many critics of the scheme that is precisely how it was regarded. The new distinctive national political institutions in Scotland and Wales would become powerful symbols of separate Scottish and Welsh national identities, thereby undermining the common British national identity to which all in the United Kingdom could adhere. (96)



Specifically, Curtice suggests this outcome of devolution seems to have come to pass for many people studying the effects of devolution. Likewise, he sums Dalyell's fear that as Westminster's influence fades from day life in a devolved state, independence movements would be fueled (96). Curtice concludes that in these circumstances, the union would fall apart as negative reactions from other Britons, ruled by a parliament with members from devolved nations, who would feel underrepresented nationally as well as underserved by public spending (96).

Curtice, however, also cites the work of Davies and Macintosh to show that many people believed that without devolution, nations within the union would have been more likely to splinter and argue for independence, once again creating a justification for "further devolution" (96). Curtice writes that these such advocates agreed that some nationalists would take devolution as a movement towards full independence, but the other point of view was also important to consider:

[T]hat political institutions that were closer to the populations they served would be more sensitive to those populations' particular needs and circumstances, thereby making the process of government both more effective and more accountable, which outcome would help strengthen public support for the Union. This latter argument also provided a justification for the eventual extension of devolution to the regions of England, a development that could help avoid the possibility of an English "backlash" against the "privileges" granted to Scotland and Wales (Department for Transport, Local Government and the Regions 2002). (96)

The point made by Curtice, Davies and Macintosh is also of merit considering the further extension of devolution to the English regions as well, some of which have been arguing for the

own distinctive needs separate from that of the union for decades. Curtice elucidates these two points of view from those who studied the possible effects of devolution before the independence referendum in Scotland and provides not only a political justification for either point of view, but also demonstrates how nationalism need not be the undoing of the Union. Though his work is somewhat outdated, these positions still occupied the minds of voters in the referendum as well as those with unionist leanings outside of Scotland. This fear of British fragmentation still contributes to fears when Scottish independence is at the forefront of a political conversation—fears which the No campaign latched on to firmly in their argument against independence in the 2014 referendum.

According to “Timeline - History of Scotland's Bids for Independence” compiled by the London bureau of Reuters and edited by Gareth Jones, the referendum of 2014 was predicated by a number of things. First and foremost, the Scottish National Party, the party of Alex Salmond who led the movement for Independence, was founded in 1934, although there was not an SNP member in parliament until 1945. In 1973, a commission founded to evaluate the future of the nations within the UK made the recommendation that both Wales and Scotland have their own devolved assemblies. In 1979, a bid for a devolved Scottish assembly failed to pass with the public, and as the SNP’s popularity waned, it wasn’t until the poll tax of 1989 that the public’s interest in the independence movement was rekindled. In 1997, a new referendum was held to establish a parliament in Scotland. The 1997 referendum however, passed, and the new parliament came in to being in 1998. It wasn’t until 2011 that Scotland had a majority government, and under first minister Alex Salmond’s lead the movement toward the 2014 referendum of Scottish independence began (Reuters). The question posed in the referendum simply asked if Scotland should be an independent country, “Yes or No?” Both sides of the

debate spent much time and money developing reasons for answering simply Yes or No. The rhetorical implication of the simple yes or no question, as well as the Yes and No campaigns seemed to indicate that really the answer was simple, and in that case much time or effort need not be extended in examining the question further. The No campaign focused much on the idea of uncertainty of an independent state, whereas the Yes campaign focused on a sense of Scottish pride. These two different approaches sought to appeal to completely different emotional elements of the people of Scotland. Where No campaigners didn't even always seek to undermine the feelings of nationalism, they instead focused on undermining the practicality of following through with these feelings.

Scholars such as Bradley note that the No campaign has not appealed to “a shared sense of Britishness” (3). He cites the 2011 census as recording the majority of people living in Scotland describing themselves as “Scottish only and fewer than 20 per cent as Scottish and British” (3). Like Colley, Bradley suggests that the fall of the British Empire, as well as the faltering of industry and a lack of united religious belief has led to Scots identifying as Scottish rather than British (4). Bradley argues that the decrease in inhabitants of Scotland identifying as “British” is a sign of the “obsolescence of what was a largely Scottish invention”: that Britishness itself is a result of the Reformation in the 16th century as well as the Act of Union in 1707 (3).

This obsolescence and the reasons Bradley cites for it provided the perfect backdrop for a sharp division of opinions among Britons in the 2014 referendum for Scottish independence. BBC coverage of the referendum vote overall allowed a unique space to observe nations within the Kingdom defining and redefining how and where “Britishness” and the concept thereof intersected with their lives, politics, and self-identities. One event in particular, a press

conference with Alex Salmond, Scottish first minister, attracted wide controversy when the full conference was edited for subsequent evening broadcasts. The BBC's editing choices were called into question by supporters of an independent Scotland. In the broadcast of the full press conference, a BBC reporter, Nick Robinson, is shown to pose two related questions to Salmond. The first minister spent several minutes responding to Robinson's question. After this, Robinson argues with a confused Salmond that Salmond did not answer his question. Salmond expresses that he has answered the question and tries to move on. Robinson interrupts again asking for an answer, but it is clear that Salmond believes he has answered the question and is confused that Robinson has not realized that ("Ultimate Smackdown"). When an edited news segment on the conference hit the airwaves later that day, it showed Robinson asking only the second of his two questions with a voice over by Robinson stating that the minister did not answer the question posed ("Nick Robinsons Blackout"). I will discuss this case more fully in the second part of the chapter.

Many believed that the edits demonstrated a clear bias from the BBC against Scottish Independence. Likewise, the BBC was seen as not just a purveyor of news, but as an instrument of Westminster. In March of 2015, Auslan Cramb of *The Telegraph* reported on Salmond's comments regarding his upcoming book. Of the BBC, the Minister said:

"In the last stages they sent up their London heavies to replay all the stories hanging about the referendum over the previous months. [...] Broadcasters are supposed to remain impartial. You don't achieve balance by presenting Armageddon from one side and letting the other side reply about why the earth is not going to shatter into fragments. It's not balance to allow one side to reply to ridiculous allegations." (qtd. In Cramb).

Cramb further adds that Salmond understood that that much of the media would have a biased against independence, but the unexpected part, for him, was the “implicit bias, the imperial bias of the broadcasters.” Salmond echoes the belief many have about what journalism should look like as well as what the BBC should look like. What is most interesting here is the use of terminology in both the broadcasting house itself and in Salmond’s choice of words. Salmond talks about “imperial bias,” arguing that the BBC was taking a role specifically not just pro-Union, but pro-Empire—even as the empire is in decline. Being biased against the idea of the union breaking up is one thing, but presenting the BBC as an agent of empire is another accusation entirely.

### **Burkean Action**

In his “Language as Symbolic Action,” Kenneth Burke argues that language is not a reflection of reality, rather, language is the way in which we select and acknowledge what aspect of reality we wish to focus on. He argues, “Even if any given terminology is a *reflection* of reality, by its very nature as a terminology it must be a *selection* of reality; and to this extent it must function also as a *deflection* of reality” (1341). He goes on to explain that these uses of terminologies function as a terministic screen, which “direct the *attention*” (1351). Salmond’s use of the term “imperial bias” then functions as a terministic screen; it functions as a way to draw attention to a perception of the imperial relationship between Scotland and Westminster. Likewise, the imperial characterization develops different screens for the terms “Scottishness” and “Britishness.” The terministic screens involved in thinking about concepts of Britishness and Scottishness are essential to consider when looking at the rhetoric of both the secession campaign (“Yes”) as well as the Better Together campaign (“No”). Far from being a simple matter, these screens not only indicate a complexity in self-identification and belonging, but also

in matters of political inclusion. The BBC by nature should be inclusive of Britain as a whole, and though many have debated its usefulness at doing so, Scotland, at the time of the referendum was still a part of Britain. The question was whether or not it would remain so. However, by suggesting ‘imperial bias’, rather than any other type of bias such as bias against independence, etc., Salmond highlights the idea of conquest and imperialism rather than a cohesive union of Britain.

### **Encoding and Decoding Alex Salmond’s Response**

As Hall has posited, there is no such thing as a natural symbol (167) because the business of news, editing, bias and complaints often relies on a common understanding of what symbols and language as symbols mean. These symbols include the language used when addressing an audience as well as the language and editing practices used in relaying messages through the media. There is no one way in which the information provided, or the way that it was provided, can be received by the audience through either the full press conference or the BBC report about the press conference. In this section, I will delve more into the two reports of the Salmond press conference through the lens of Hall’s Encoding and Decoding model.

Before considering how any evaluation of motive can be made, we must realize that Nick Robinson, the BBC political reporter, plays a different position in the drama of each telling of the press conference narrative. Robinson is also a Burkean co-agent within the narrative of the actual press conference. He helps to create the act which is later reported on. Editing his involvement in the second telling of the drama therefore leaves out important context of the action over all. As a reporter at the press conference, Robinson is within a space which Salmond’s encoded message must be decoded by audience participants including Robinson himself. The expectations of

Robinson, as well as the rest of the press and audience members in the room, influence which position of decoding in which they will find themselves.

During the press conference, Robinson asks a question of Salmond. Here, Hall's Encoding and Decoding model can help to understand how Robinson, Salmond, and the audience present react to each other. It is clear from the reactions of audience members that many decode Salmond's message from the Dominant or Hegemonic perspective. First, the audience applauds when Salmond suggests that Robinson's question demonstrates impropriety on behalf of the BBC that should be investigated. Salmond's suggestion is repeated twice as Robinson continues to shout his objections while other reporters attempt to ask questions, pressing Salmond to speak more as Salmond tries to move on. Each time Salmond's suggestion of BBC impropriety is greeted by approval from the audience members in the forms of applause. This suggests that Salmond's message is being decoded in a way that is favorable to him as an encoder. The audience in the room seem to be on the same page as Salmond, the encoder, and are understanding his message in the way that it seems that it is meant to be understood. Salmond himself does not seem to understand why Robinson insists, later in the conference, that he is not answering the question that was posed to him. As far as Salmond is concerned, as well as those in the room decoding his speech from a dominant/hegemonic position, the question has been answered and Nick Robinson is being unduly aggressive. Salmond has a tone of incredulousness when addressing Robinson's objections and seems genuinely confused as to what Robinson is not understanding from his speech.

By contrast, Robinson outwardly displays that he is decoding Salmond's message from an oppositional position. He repeatedly interrupts Salmond and other reporters to demand that Salmond answer his questions. Through this Salmond repeatedly explains how he is in the

process of doing so or has already done so. While there is room to argue that Robinson is approaching Salmond's response from a negotiated position—understanding that he has answered the question, just not how Robinson would have liked it to be answered—and making an issue of it for personal or professional reasons, it is not possible to determine Robinson's motive for certain without reading Robinson's mind. Both positions are possible, and both have implications for the motive which drives Robinson in the creation of the edited segment from the BBC. While the BBC as a corporation is a part of an ideology, the members of its staff are also products of the state. Their own motivations in tandem with that of the corporation create additional complications in regard to how propaganda can be constructed and encoded.

Robinson's edited clip for broadcast, on the other hand, paints a very different scene than what unfolded after he asked his two questions at the press conference. The edited segment shows Robinson only asking the second part of the question: why the people of Scotland should trust Salmond over those in the financial industry. He then simply states in a voice over Salmond never answered the question. If, at the conference itself, Robinson was decoding Salmond's response from an oppositional position, then one could argue that, to Robinson, Salmond did not answer the question. However, in the retelling / editing of the press conference happenings, Robinson's perspective becomes a new encoded message. Robinson's new encoding comes not just from the content of the press conference and the conversation between him and Salmond, but also from the personal perceptions and decoding of Robinson himself.

As presented by the BBC, Robinson's declaration that Salmond did not answer the question posed is meant to be received as truth entirely by an audience decoding the message from a dominant/hegemonic position, but the assumption about the audience may or may not be accurate to begin with. There are numerous ways in which this encoding may have been received



and decoded. Likewise, of course, there is the possibility that the BBC accepted these edits not as a matter of producing a particular hegemonic message, but rather to draw ratings or to present the referendum in a more sensationalist way. Even hegemonic decoders members of the edited broadcast may have their perspectives influenced by various other factors. The dominant/hegemonic audience group may or may not have seen the original press conference, or felt instead they would rather wait for the highlights on the BBC later that day. While the BBC maintains that aspects of Salmond's longer answer to Robinson were included in broadcast in compilation with many other things he said, these other items were not packaged to demonstrate that they were a part of Salmond's answer to Robinson's line of questioning ("BBC News at Six and Ten"). While it is possible that the BBC simply assumed that the edited version made contained all of the information their viewers would want, this assumption does not change the underlying fact that the dramatic narrative was drastically changed in this edited version.

The strong oppositional reading of Robinson's edited piece almost requires the audience to have seen the longer edit of the press conference. The oppositional position in this case has room for the wide variety of BBC skeptics to weigh in. Pro-independence BBC skeptics, not even exposed to the original message, might well watch this edit and assume that the BBC is manipulating the message or outright lying, even with no specific evidence from this particular situation. Other BBC skeptics may feel the same. In this digital era of course, it is not particularly difficult for viewers to go back and find the unedited version of events; however, it is not presented at hand thus inserting at least a small barrier for those interested in the topic but not particularly invested. For those who watched the press conference, or watch it later, those decoding the edit from an oppositional point of view did not understand how Salmond did not answer the question. They strongly questioned the BBC News edit.

These examples of encoding and decoding fit nicely into Hall's scheme of how institutions may encode a meaning from a dominant/hegemonic point of view yet are unable to control how these messages are understood, or decoded by their audience members (171). The other possibility exists, however: that Nick Robinson did indeed decode Salmond's speech from a negotiated position (Hall 172), but deliberately re-encoded it as though he were at an oppositional position (Hall 173). In other words, it is possible that Nick Robinson understood how Salmond was answering both of his questions, yet found a negotiated way to claim that the question was not answered. This type of intentional repositioning would demonstrate an adept way of manipulating information toward one angle, or at least introducing doubt to an audience who had already seen the original material. Such manipulation would allow for the real encoder of information, at the top most level, to be appeased according to its institutional goals. Ultimately, we as audience members or scholars cannot answer this question, which is why understanding the nuances of reception, encoding and decoding is so relevant to situations where the broadcaster has wide clout and a high degree of public confidence. We can never be assured of institutional motive, nor the motives of individual actors; this is important to remember as consideration is given to the possibility of motive later in this chapter.

### **Propaganda and the Referendum**

One way of addressing these questions is through Herman and Chomsky's Propaganda Model. In 2013, the BBC announced that it had set a target to spend 8.61% of its television budget on Scottish broadcasting—an amount equal to the percentage of income made from Scotland license fees, by 2016 ("The BBC in Scotland"). This equal spending was not the case previous to this commitment. While the BBC in Britain is not commercial and does not receive advertising dollars as US News corporations do, the BBC has a different type of advertising in

play. As discussed in the introduction, the BBC must keep the source of its finances happy, just as corporate sponsors would need to be sated in other circumstances. In this case, the BBC needs more than money to continue its operations; it needs the continued support of the people of Britain to consider it a vital public service. Therefore, Herman and Chomsky's second filter does not emerge as a form of pleasing advertisers but rather as a form of pleasing the license payer. If 84% of license payers are outside of Scotland, it makes sense to consider whether the locational needs and expectations of the majority are being represented in how the news is selected and reported. In terms of the referendum, the rest of the union had nothing in particular to gain and much to lose from Scotland's independence. Oil reserves and missile stations make up only part of the loss the rest of the union would feel in terms of the economy and security of the Kingdom as a whole. But "Britishness" as discussed earlier, is entrenched in being a part of a whole—nationalism was at stake, not only for the Scots, but for many other Britons.

Salmond's own arguments of bias in relation to the Independence referendum as a movement are clearly based on an interpretation of the first of Hermann and Chomsky's filters. In response to Robinson's questioning during the press conference, Salmond suggests:

I think the people of Scotland have moved beyond these warnings and scaremongers. Particularly when there is clear evidence that while the prime minister was busy telling us what a wonderful nation we were, his business advisor was busy desperately trying to get any business he possibly could to say something negative about independence. I thought it was quite interesting yesterday, and I know this might be news to some of the metropolitan media, that the warnings which were released yesterday were actually a recycling of things from months ago. ("Ultimate Smackdown")

Salmond demonstrates his extrapolation that the BBC as an institution is a tool of the unionist government working on behalf of Westminster. Further, as Cramb reported in *The Telegraph*, Salmond expanded on his accusations in the press conference about the BBC being in league with an illegal leak of market information designed, in league with Westminster, to attack the viability of Scottish independence.

If Salmond is represented by the BBC as vague in his accusations, the London based paper *The Telegraph* represents Salmond instead as making quite confident statements. *The Telegraph* reports:

In extracts from his book published in the Sun on Sunday, Mr Salmond also names a civil servant, Robert Mackie, as the person that he claims “leaked” information to the BBC over the Royal Bank of Scotland’s plans to relocate its headquarters to England in the event of a Yes vote.

Mr Mackie was a press officer acting as head of Scottish referendum communications at the Treasury and the former first minister appeared keen to point out his link to Alistair Darling, leader of the Better Together campaign.

Mr Salmond wrote: "The Treasury official immediately responsible for the leak was Robert Mackie who is, coincidentally, the son of Catherine MacLeod - former special advisor to ex-chancellor Alistair Darling, leader of the No campaign.

"Mr Mackie's ultimate boss is Sir Nicholas Macpherson, the man who believed civil service impartiality did not apply to the referendum."

He added: "It's as dramatic and clear-cut a breach of confidence as you'll find in terms of potentially market sensitive information." (Cramb)

In Cramb's article, *The Telegraph* portrays Salmond not as a foil to the establishment; rather it lends him a certain benefit of credibility, even if hinting at a slight fervor with phrases like "appeared keen." *The Telegraph* article allows Salmond to demonstrate how he perceives the ownership and stakeholder models of the BBC as he connects the "leaker" of information from the banks to Better Together campaign and to the BBC. It allows Salmond the chance to point out where he perceives the bias in the information which the BBC is using to report on the referendum and which Nick Robinson uses in order to question Salmond on his trustworthiness. In allowing for Salmond to demonstrate his position, *The Telegraph* makes Robinson's perspective and the possibility of ulterior motives more available to the viewing public to consider.

However, if Cramb's article demonstrates an issue with the ownership model of the BBC perverting the course of reporting fairly on the referendum as Salmond suggests, we must consider how it coincides with the description of Herman and Chomsky's third filter. The third filter of the model is concerned with the sourcing of information. It demonstrates that where a news organization gets its information exposes where biases of powerful entities capable of providing information have their effect upon what is reported (22). In arguing his position, Salmond demonstrates the allegiances of politics, family, and power which preceded the leak of information to the BBC. These ties, he infers, are clear examples of primary sources that are already biased and intentionally used by the media in order to report on the referendum in a particular light. These sources, also highlighted by Robinson in his questioning of the First Minister in the case study, do not simply emerge as a way of convincing the viewership of a particular point of view; they also serve as a mode to change the conversation between politicians and the media. As Robinson uses these examples, he tries to force Salmond to

respond to them rather than to highlight his own message, his own sources, and his own information from the other side of the argument for Scottish independence. While Salmond seems to effectively deflect Robinson's strategy, the edited version recasts the events.

The BBC is in an interesting situation when it comes to Herman and Chomsky's next filter, "'flak' as a means of disciplining the media" (2). As mentioned in the introduction, the BBC has established its own special branch, the BBC Trust, dedicated to investigate accusations of bias and public complaint. Their response to the case of bias in the television reports following Salmond's press conference should be examined because of the very nature of this organization. As part of the BBC, how can the BBC Trust be tasked to police itself? In the case of the Scottish referendum, many accusations of bias, particularly in regard to this case study, were presented to The BBC Trust. These complaints were issued in regard to the edited story of the initial press conference. In the evening run of the news, Robinson's question was reduced to "Why should the people of Scotland trust you?", and Robinson suggested that Salmond never responded to the question. The BBC Trust responded with a statement in three parts. First:

The BBC's Political Editor Nick Robinson asked Scotland's First Minister Alex Salmond two questions at his press conference on Thursday 11th September. The first question centred on the tax implications of RBS moving its legal headquarters to London; the second on why voters should trust a politician rather than businessmen.

Nick Robinson's report showed the second question on trust, with a script line noting that Mr Salmond had not answered that point. ("BBC News at Six and Ten")

The Trust's claim, of course, takes into account only one aspect of the negotiated positions that could be read from the broadcast, that of the dominant/hegemonic position. The Trust's answer also relies on Robinson having noted in his report that Mr. Salmond "had not answered" the question about trust. A more thorough examination may have taken into account how Salmond may be perceived to have answered that question in much detail from the point of view of someone other than Robinson. The Trust goes on to state:

Mr Salmond's answer on tax was lengthy. Since it was not possible to use it in full in a short news report, a series of clips were included making his central points - the job implications of the re-location of RBS, the accusation that the Treasury broke rules by briefing market sensitive information and his request that the BBC should co-operate with an enquiry. In addition Nick Robinson's script pointed out that the First Minister said there would be no loss of tax revenue. ("BBC News at Six and Ten")

Here, the Trust argues that because Salmond's longer answer was presented in other spaces in the broadcast, if not in context of Robinson's questioning, that Salmond was well represented. However, the Trust's argument disregards the importance of context. Because much of the alternate readings of Salmond's answer to Robinson depend on the context in which Salmond gave his talk about tax revenue, removing the context from the discussion that took place at the press conference changes the way in which these readings can be decoded. Finally:

The BBC considers that the questions were valid and the overall report balanced and impartial, in line with our editorial guidelines. ("BBC News at Six and Ten")

From a rhetorical standpoint, the Trust's statement seems to send a distinct message. It claims that the edited version of Robinson's questioning and Salmond's answer was not important at all

in understanding the meaning or context of the information presented. However, the Trust's defense is clearly mounted from only one side of a positional reading of the edit. Though the BBC claims that other parts of the original response to Robinson's question were included in other aspects of the broadcast, and thus not unrepresented at all, the context and tone is being called into question, not simply the content of the broadcast itself. Also, the edited version is based on the oppositional position of Nick Robinson at the initial event. Once removed from its original context, the mediated position of Robinson is the nexus from which the new content is created.

In reaction, protests of the BBC erupted soon afterwards at BBC Scotland's headquarters where protestors rallied against a perceived bias in referendum reporting and called for the dismissal of Nick Robinson ("Scottish independence: Crowd protests against 'BBC bias'"). Several online bloggers and YouTube users were quick to demonstrate the differences between the initial back and forth of Robinson and Salmond and the BBC evening broadcast version. One such video demonstration is linked from Patrick McFadden of London's *Change.org* petition to remove Nick Robinson from the air, a petition which garnered 19,227 supporters ("Immediately suspend Nick Robinson, pending investigation, for breach of BBC Trust Charter, Article 44").

Despite the BBC's initial claim that no wrong doing was done, enough complaints on this issue escalated the issue to the Editorial Complaint Board for further examination. The ECU concluded:

Mr Robinson had put two questions to Mr Salmond, the first of which was about the possible consequences of RBS moving its headquarters to London. The second, referring to recent interventions from BP, Standard Life and John Lewis, was "Why should a Scottish voter believe you, a politician, against men who are



responsible for billions of pounds of profits?”. The report showed Mr Robinson putting the second question, after which he said “He didn’t answer but he did attack the reporting of those in what he called the metropolitan media”. Mr Salmond had in fact addressed the second question, but in terms which Mr Robinson judged did not amount to a real answer to its key points. Although the ECU understood the reasoning behind that judgement, it considered that viewers would have taken “He didn’t answer” to mean that Mr Salmond had said nothing, or at any rate nothing meaningful, by way of response, and that the impression the report gave was inaccurate in that respect. However, it found no grounds for believing the inaccuracy to have been intentional, and it considered that the report overall gave a duly impartial account of Mr Salmond’s main points. (“News (6.00pm & 10.00pm), BBC1”)

While the result from the ECU was slightly different, it never the less bore no consequences for the production staff and maintained that no intentional damage was done by the corporation.

These protests, videos, and blogs are another form of flak that stem from participatory culture, a culture which helped to fuel the referendum voters’ discussions and positions. Another form of flak regarding the referendum came directed from academia. John Robertson, Professor at the University of Western Scotland, has recently made several serious accusations against the BBC, not just regarding biased referendum reporting, but regarding institutional retaliation for his exposure of a perceived bias.

In 2015 first, Robertson released a book online entitled *Scotland’s Propaganda War: The Media and the 2014 Independence Referendum* regarding his research on the referendum coverage. Robertson’s self-published book demonstrates some interesting data regarding the

referendum reporting of the BBC. Robertson also channels Herman and Chomsky's model and demonstrates perhaps most importantly that the origin of the data reflected in the news was often from pro-union institutions or think tanks (22-23). Herman and Chomsky argue that where news organizations get their information from is an important way through which these sources as well as the media can contribute to slant and bias in a very subtle way. Robinson argues that because an independent Scotland would be detrimental to Westminster's interests, data obtained from sources related to the UK government as a whole would demonstrate the bias of the BBC. Thus, bias becomes an inherent part of BBC reporting because Westminster's data is used in BBC reports and analysis.

Robertson also discusses the rhetorical importance of framing in his critique of the BBC's methods. He argues that in many cases, Scottish independence supporters are put on the defensive by the BBC reporters who first present a negative independence external viewpoint and then ask the independence supporters to respond. Robinson argues that framing independence as a defense against these other viewpoints inherently inhibits guests from presenting a positive position (35-37).

Robertson's accusations of interference in his workplace by the BBC (7-9) require a lot more complex discussion. As thus far, these accusations seem unsubstantiated by anyone other than Robinson, it would be remiss to consider hearsay of a document unseen or unverified as actually existing. If Robertson's accusations are true, however, Herman and Chomsky would note that dissenters are marginalized by their model in order to "allow government and dominant private interests to get their message across to the public" (2). If a documented threat from the BBC on a scholar is legitimate, it would not only demonstrate a contribution to bias and stifling of oppositional voices, but it would clearly mark itself as a player, not just an observer, in the

discussion of bias against an independent Scotland. Such a threat would demonstrate the marginalizing ability of the BBC as well as the power of the corporation and its willingness to wield it. Such a move would be inherently political for the BBC, perhaps more so than through demonstrating a position in the referendum discussion. It would demonstrate a different type of intuitional fear of loss of control as per Althusser's Ideological State Apparatuses, apparatuses through which identity politics as per the state can be maintained (80).

The loss of identity discussed in Chapter One is the concern of the modification of Herman and Chomsky's fifth filter. In this case study, the full version of Salmond's answer to Robinson demonstrates an assurance of Scottishness and that Scottishness is viable. By positioning the BBC as an instrument of Westminster, Salmond sets the BBC up as against Scottishness and for the Union. Because Salmond is on the side of independent Scottishness, he naturally posits his assurances for Scottishness against Britishness. The BBC's edit of the press conference, however, posits the question and answer portion of the press conference as a completely different discussion, separate from that of Salmond and Robinson. The edited version simply shows Robinson asking why the Scottish voter should trust Salmond and then asserts that he had no answer to this question whatsoever. The manipulation of the original message can be seen as a demonstration to undermine the idea of Scottishness and the idea that it is a viable identity outside of Britishness. A reading that the BBC is undermining a separate Scottish identity suggestion is further cemented by Robinson's capping point, that after not answering the question, Salmond blamed British reporting for subverting the campaign. The broadcast edit then challenges the idea that Scottishness is viable outside of Britishness by suggesting that Scottish voters are being misled. The broadcast's reconstruction demonstrates why Scottish voters should

fear independence and a relinquishment of Britishness. It also reassures the British viewers outside of Scotland that their neighbors still have a need for their shared nationalism.

### **Conclusion**

The complex way in which Britishness is represented through the BBC's reporting on the Scottish Independence Referendum is important to remember as Scotland enters a new phase of dissatisfaction with the Union. As Nicola Sturgeon calls for a new referendum in the face of the UK leaving the European Union, the lessons learned from how the BBC addresses these issues will help the viewing public in breaking down the information they are given and determining what it means to them and how it applies to the situation at hand, how it is biased, how it serves or does not serve the state of the Union, Scotland, or the individual, and where the information is coming from that establishes the "facts" around the independence movement.

The BBC must be called to task if not because of an admitted bias from the organization itself, but from the sheer force of protestors online and in front of the Scottish headquarters who clearly had the impression of bias over the BBC's reporting on Salmond's press conference. Likewise, considering how the BBC constructs and reconstructs Salmond's conference is especially useful for discussion when looking at the attitudes with which individual Britons, from whatever country within the nation, regard the union of the British countries in general. The act of 'independence' from one viewpoint becomes a break, whereas to the other point of view, freedom from oversight. Understanding the differences in the rhetoric of the BBC's discussion on independence in general is essential in thinking about how each side frames the argument as well as how each side values, defines, and represents the idea of Britishness.

The way in which Scottishness and Britishness are encoded and discussed through the BBC, and the ways in which Scottish and/or English sources are considered to be viable or not,

demonstrate a multitude of readings on nationalisms within the union itself. Likewise, the reactions of the viewing public to perceived wrongs from the BBC clearly have caused divides in how the Scottish see the BBC as representing them as well as how BBC defines what is and what isn't British: or more to the point, who is and who isn't British. The worthiness of representation must be accounted for when negotiating with the meaning of BBC productions on future matters of Scottish national concern.

## CHAPTER VI

### TOWARDS THE FUTURE

As the Brexit referendum makes clear, the question of how the BBC performs and produces Britishness in the recent past is not a question relegated to the histories of the case studies presented in this dissertation. Rather, this investigation is increasingly timely. As of this writing, Teresa May has triggered Article 50, the EU mechanism for leaving the European Union, and preparing to lead Britain into its next phase separate from Europe. The sharp cultural divide that the referendum revealed has left many to wonder what exactly Britishness is, what exactly Englishness is, and in other circles, what Scottishness is in relation to Britishness, especially since Scotland voted largely against leaving the European Union in the first place. As Griff Witte suggests, the national identity crisis of Britain can only intensify through the demands of Nicola Sturgeon for a new independence referendum for Scotland and through the Brexit transition of the United Kingdom itself (“Nicola Sturgeon”). The strategies through which the BBC constructs national identity throughout this process will greatly affect the way in which the public in Britain perceives, adopts, and performs nationalism—British, Scottish, and English. The next evolution of British identity, as well as the continued struggle with negotiating exactly what that identity is, will usher in new variables for dealing with public and foreign policy, both within the union and without.

This identity crisis is evident in all three case studies examined in previous chapters. In the London bombing report, the BBC negotiates how non-white Britons perform Britishness against the backdrop of a terrorist attack by similar non-white aggressors. Though the BBC reports on the 7/7 bombing in London in a mode which highlights ideas of what Britishness is, the choice of these elements of Britishness is complicated. As the survey of Britishness shows,

even values such as resolve and pride, which correspond with the idea of the “stiff upper lip” complicate feelings of ‘otherness’ between Britons of different ethnicities (*Citizenship and Belonging* 26). In this case, does the BBC promote unity, or can this type of reporting backwardly lead to a different type of resentment within the home community? How does this appeal to British values that are largely seen as positive by white Britons and largely related to colonialism and coldness by Britons of color attempt to bring together or normalize these values for everyone? Likewise, how does the idea of homegrown terrorism vs. foreign terrorism complicate these attempts at imagining nationalism?

In the Mumbai report, the BBC uses a neo-colonial lens to define Britishness against what it is not, pitting a seemingly failed former colonial state against rejected British values rather than articulating the value sets of either nationalist ideal. Again, these values are appealing to an imagined audience, one that accepts the values of orderliness as ‘civilized’ for one. The lack of orderliness, then, on the part of the people of India becomes distinctly unBritish. Obviously, there are problems in associating this type of ‘otherness’ with other places in the world. These associations cast the rest of the world as uncivilized and chaotic, reinforce old colonial values, and cast doubt on the ability of former colonies to rule themselves. Also, by relegating the nations of origin of a good segment of the British population to second class status, the BBC grants white Britons an inherent in their origin over that of others. This could open a dangerous door to violent nationalist sentiment, if not simply a resentment based on perceived relative worth and shared resources. In fact, evidence of increased nationalism was seen during the Brexit decision.

Finally, if the BBC claims to address British people, then how it imagines these audiences and the assumptions it makes about them shows the BBC’s hand in how it performs

Britishness as part of the Ideological State Apparatus, despite the variety of individual voices and points-of-view involved in developing the BBC's encoding processes. If the actual audiences of the BBC perceive the Britishness is being denied to people like them, they feel isolated and unrepresented by the corporation. Scottish viewers unhappy with the way the first referendum was handled may be less likely to pay attention to how the BBC reports on the possibility of a new referendum and/or any reporting about it should there be one. These audiences have a working example of bias and have reason to believe that the BBC considers Britishness to be centered in Westminster. The BBC's public service mission in that case may serve the needs of a government in Westminster that does not want the union to break up, but how is it serving the public good? In matters of politics that stem from nationalism and representative issues, the BBC is implicitly a part of the political process in performing Britishness and, as some see it, relegating Scottishness to a non-issue.

The BBC, as a public arbiter of national identity awareness to Britain and the rest of the world, has undertaken an obligation to serve the public good. The problem, however, is that the public good cannot always be separated from the good of the nation overall. A corporation cannot serve the needs of the entire body of a country with a heterogeneous population with their own various needs as distinct individuals and cultural groups within the larger community. While BBC's programming overall may attempt to represent these different groups, the news itself, as a reflection, or as Appadurai may have it, a selected version of reality, cannot serve the needs of the multitudes (37). Therefore, the BBC must homogenize its audience, and by doing so, imagine an audience that is less diverse, flatter, and less divisive than any real national grouping could be. In turn, the projection of what these audiences should look like seeps into the national consciousness to give viewers an idea of what an insider, how 'one of us' behaves. This lends



itself to how individuals construct their own nationalism and their own Britishness—as well as how they view the Britishness of their fellow Britons.

Born raises a similar issue. In the epilogue of her *Uncertain Vision*, she deals with how the BBC is “Re-imagining the Nation”:

Here in the BBC World ad, a series of multicultural figures –black, white, Indian, Chinese, kids and adults –speak in each others’ voices, so that the wrong voice issues from each person. It’s eery, chaotic, disturbing. Then comes the punchline: ‘But the truth speaks with one voice’. Suddenly the multicultural figures speak with their own voice; tension is relaxed and ‘reality’ restored. The implication is clear and the message emotional and powerful: the BBC’s global services –and BBC World –speak truth, and it’s a truth that all can understand, whatever their colour, age or ethnicity. The BBC avows for itself a global role of truth speaking.  
(506)

Born asks, “Should the BBC use such Orwellian language?” and questions how it can assume such a position in the world. Specifically, she references Ulrich Beck’s 2003 assertion of Europe “turning into an open network with blurring boundaries, where outside is already inside” (507). She also warns that the BBC cannot achieve this position by “reimposing a homogeneity which has long since departed” while citing Stuart Hall’s 1993 call for British broadcasters’ role in “reimagining the nation” though providing a space for cultural diversity truly representative of the nation (507). Born argues that although the BBC itself has offered many failures, like failing to provide a space for Scottishness in the organization even while Scotland devolved its own parliamentary system (509), “it is adjusting fitfully to the new political and social geography” (510).

While Born questions how the BBC will respond to changing cultural forces thoughtfully, her 2004 history and analysis of the corporation as a whole do not anticipate the landscape the BBC now finds itself in 2017. Born's hopes and suggestions for the corporation's overall output might have grown more in terms of representation in programming (509), which is not the focus of this dissertation. However, if the case studies in this dissertation are indeed representative of BBC News' modern output and the direction in which it will continue to grow, both Born and Hall might question how the news itself has dealt with the heterogeneity of the nation while efficiently reinforcing homogeneity through the mediascapes they create. Born also references the influence of Europeaness within her discussion: in 2017, however, Europe is just as likely a space that may begin instead to help again define Britishness by negation rather than inclusion.

How then, might the BBC make such a claim through the advertisement Born describes? If Born here offers both practical suggestions and critiques of how the BBC attempts to do so, the case studies in this dissertation may be less optimistic. What is most important, however, is that, as Born suggests, the BBC was finding its way in a new landscape in 2004 (510). I can assert that the BBC is always in a new landscape: currently the newness of a Britain transitioning away from the EU. The BBC will not find an unchanging space in which to develop and will continue to negotiate with change. Unfortunately, in the spaces of the case studies presented in this dissertation, homogenization and othering have been techniques that the BBC continues to use to imagine Britishness.

Ordinarily, the BBC's attempts at homogenization would be problematic in terms of at least national unity, but when speaking on matters of terrorism, especially homegrown terrorism, this type of media manipulation may have the effect of creating another reality entirely. If the

national media attempts to construct a unified sense of Britishness to bring people together in the face of terrorism, in the face of the breakup of the European Union, or in the face of terrorism within a country that remains a close ally, then this artificial construction could indeed have the effect of unification. The equal and opposite reaction is the possibility of singling out “the other,” within Britain, specifically London, England; outside of Britain as in the case of Mumbai, India; and within Britain yet outside of England as well. Specifically, this definition of otherness can be used to signal possibilities for mistrust and to flag cultural ‘others’ as potential threats simply by not conforming to prescribed standards of Britishness. The constructions help to reaffirm who are the ‘worthy’ and ‘unworthy’ victims as per Herman and Chomsky’s definition (37), according to how closely they fit with Britishness or otherness. The process of defining Britishness by negation is both insidious and pernicious, not simply because it perpetuates dangerous notions of racial ‘otherness’ as threat, but also because it escalates. In the case of the Scottish referendum, for example, ‘otherness’ is constructed based on which opinion one has regarding the independence of Scotland regardless of race.

In future studies, the lenses used in this dissertation should be applied to the BBC with the same scrutiny applied to any other content producer, commercial or otherwise, when examining how Britishness is produced and performed. The recent outcry about “fake news” in the United States demonstrates that news is always political and is already following a construction to a particular goal. Outlets that have been deemed as “fake news” by various parties in the United States vary from fringe media outlets to mainstream cable outlets. In cases such as CNN and Fox News, these accusations are based largely on the particular political leanings of the outlets. These biases in some cases may seem clear, but on a broader scale these differing outlets are all part of the same system of news constructed according to the broader

political and global needs of the state. Given the understanding we have regarding the models discussed, it would be unwise for audiences or scholars to disregard how media events are produced to serve these needs.

Viewers must view content from the BBC asking what action is being reported on and who is given the agency of acting via the Dramatist model of Kenneth Burke. Establishing the action in a news piece specifically can help viewers understand what type of drama the BBC is producing. Likewise, understanding who is given agency and who is not will allow the viewer to see how Britishness is being performed or reproduced, by who and how. When the agency that usually assigned in similar circumstances to British media participants is not given to non-British counterparts, the viewer should ask how those counterparts relate to the concept of Britishness and how the BBC may be encoding Britishness by negation. Understanding how the BBC presents the action reported on can also help to consider the motives and the purpose in the corporation's actions. Burke's Dramatist model allows viewers to analyze the narrative which the BBC is telling to understand how each part of the drama produced helps to create specific meaning.

Also viewers must consciously accept the fact that they as audience members have a certain predilection to view the news in particular ways. These predilections can be viewed as the positions that Hall describes in his Encoding and Decoding model: hegemonic, negotiated, and oppositional (171-173). The position from which they decode meaning from any particular news piece can change between topics and times and therefore must be constantly reevaluated. While the BBC attempts to encode certain meanings to certain symbols, verbal and visual, the viewer may or may not accept these meanings as the BBC intends. First, the viewer should be savvy to the fact that the BBC has purpose in imbuing meaning into these symbols. Next, they should

attempt to understand what the BBC is trying to establish through the use of these meanings and symbols. Finally, they should take their previous knowledge on the topic, embracing and understanding their own biases, to negotiate how the BBC is producing content and what effect that meaning is meant to have on their audiences. Accepting the encoding of the BBC without question as a hegemonic viewer may be easy if the viewer is within the purview of the BBC's imagined audience. However, the hegemonic viewer would not be a responsible viewer without looking outside of his or her own identity, questioning the value of what the BBC has encoded, and questioning those encodings. Likewise, immediate opposition to the BBC's message from an oppositional position may not allow the viewer to gain much insight into the content produced. Again, the acceptance of personal bias and an attempt to understand what the BBC is trying to produce will place both of these types of viewers into the negotiated position: a position where one is able to evaluate what the BBC's message may be trying to say and then to negotiate that message with their own personal values and understandings.

Most importantly, the viewer must be fully aware that the BBC is not separate from the state of Britain. Herman and Chomsky's filters of the Propaganda Model are applicable outside of the US to a model like the BBC. The mission of serving the public cannot be fully differentiated from serving the needs of the state when the state is perceived to be in jeopardy. Likewise, while terrorist attacks may be a more obvious sign of attacks against the state, certain governments and government officials may see a threat to the state where others do not: through migration, lack of integration, religious preferences, race or ethnic origin, etc. As different sentiments about what threatens the British state gain traction and wane in the public mind, the BBC as well as other media outlets have the need to uphold and reinforce certain state objectives. Accordingly, it is important to ask which state agenda the BBC may be serving

through any particular news broadcast. Elements of propaganda arise in seemingly benign places through the strategic employment of interviews, symbols, and use of sources. In the example of the 7/7 bombings we can ask whether American allyship was brought to the forefront to subconsciously remind viewers of the special relationship and a debt of the US for supporting the War on Terror. In the case study of the Scottish Referendum, we can look to how the BBC sources its own correspondent's question for material and recasts the response in rebroadcasts. In the example of the Mumbai attack report, not a single Indian official is interviewed or referred to for information. Rather, the BBC Mumbai correspondent alone stands as the representative of authority. This BBC stand in for authority necessitates that the viewer takes the opportunity to ask how this substitution reinforces mediascapes of India and other former colonies. Likewise, how does it help both the BBC and the government in establishing how foreign content should be produced and how foreign policy should be produced?

Scholars should recognize how these models will affect the shaping of the new post-Brexit Britishness as well. The way that Britishness will be shaped by the BBC and in the national consciousness in the future is still uncertain. The exposure of the deep rifts between pro-EU Britons and so called "leavers" have demonstrated that however "pro-Europe" the BBC might have been accused of being, the illusion that that bias, or desire for homogeneity was a shared cultural value has been shattered. Looking to the future, scholars may consider how the BBC does or does not shift the modes through which it reports on the movement of leaving the EU and ask how Britishness and Britain are encoded through this process. Will the institution's hegemonic narrative place Britain as a hero of its Burkean drama or as a victim of populist whims? How will casting Britishness through Brexit and beyond serve the needs of the

government, the hand that feeds the BBC? How can the government benefit from how the BBC encodes this new drama of leaving the EU?

The ways that Britain and Britishness are encoded for British audiences in times of trial has been a factor in developing standing cultural myths about Britishness and lasting assumptions about national character. Likewise, the selection of how to reconcile and present Britain's colonial past through media such as the BBC says much about how nationalism and otherness are still perceived in Britain today. As Appadurai suggests that nations must deal with how to incorporate their colonial pasts in building an idea of nationalism and national identity, scholars can look toward how otherness continues to be encoded by the BBC, not just in former colonies, but from the refugee crises occurring in modern day, some of those refugees from places that were once in Britain's sphere of geopolitical influence. The modes through which these people and these movements of people are encoded, as well as politically decoded, can be used to examine how the states interest perpetuates or evolves the needs of the viewers to decode certain ideas and ideals through these televised movements.

Likewise, Appadurai's ideas of embodiment play a role in how groups of people are imagined en masse as 'other' through the encoding of the BBC. Aspects of embodiment by the BBC can expose what the government hopes for Britons to decode these people in movement as victims, threats, or people just like them. How the BBC encodes and embodies other European groups post-Brexit will also be telling of governmental interest.

The shape of these BBC "biases" can evolve between changes in national government as well as in spheres of national and international interests. Scholars can look to the BBC encodings to frame the imaginings of a national drama of defining Britishness to better develop how the roles of the BBC, the British government, and the British public influence each other. Examining

the modes through which the BBC functions as an Ideological State Apparatus can better inform the scholar/viewer as to the motives of the products and propaganda produced.

Because the new wave of nationalist construction, reproduction, and performance will inform integral new policies as Britain exits the EU, the public must be aware of how they understand Britishness and how they believe Britishness to inform moral and social constructs. The people of the UK, if educated only by the BBC and other media sources that have agendas for how their content is to be consumed, will be undervaluing their own unique positions as individuals to influence policy relying on interests of the state to form their opinions. The viewing public, as citizens, should accept the responsibility to parse media output in a responsible way. If it is at all in question that the BBC is serving the public good of encouraging informed citizens to actively participate in policy making, rather than to galvanize the public to support policy the government already has interest to enact, the public must be ever vigilant in evaluating the corporation's output. In questioning the role of the public service model of the BBC, we must ask what the public really needs from such an institution, whether their interests are the same or deviate from the interests of the state, and who the BBC really serves.



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### Previous Education

M.Ed. West Chester University, PA Secondary and Professional Education	Awarded 2008
M.A. West Chester University, PA English	Awarded 2008
B.A. King's College, PA Communications/English	Awarded 2003
Study Abroad University of New Hampshire Summer Program Cambridge University, England	Summer 2002

### Recent Employment

August 2015 – Present  
 Ph.D. Graduate Assistant for Social Entrepreneurship.  
 Office of Intercultural Relations. Old Dominion University. Norfolk, VA

May 2013 – Present  
 Writing Tutor, Tidewater Community College. Virginia Beach, VA

August 2012 – December 2015  
 Teaching Assistant/Adjunct English Instructor, Old Dominion University. Norfolk, VA

May 2010 – August 2011  
 Graduate Writing Assistant/Assistant Director, Writing Tutorial Services, Old Dominion University. Norfolk, VA

### Selected Professional Presentations

“The British Broadcasting Corporation: Stability and Change in Public Service”, Rhetoric Society of America National Conference. Atlanta, GA. 2016.

“The Imagined Self: The Politics of (Re)Writing the News”, The Conference on College Composition and Communication. Las Vegas, NV. 2013.

“BBC News and the Problem of Representation”, Popular & American Culture Association National Conference. Washington, D.C. 2013.

### Publication

“The Doctor’s Burden: Racial Superiority and Panoptic Privilege in New *Doctor Who*.”  
*Impossible Worlds, Impossible Things*, edited by Ross P. Garner, Melissa Beattie, and Una McCormack, Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2010.