



American Psychopathy

by

John Steppling

on

[Wrong Kind Of Green](#)



Not only are we not going to have wars between major powers in this era of fascist upsurge (of course, as will be discussed, we shall have other wars), but, by the same token, this fascist upsurge will not burn out through any cataclysmic war. What we are likely to see is a lingering fascism of less murderous intensity, which, when in power, does not necessarily do away with all the forms of bourgeois democracy, does not necessarily physically annihilate the opposition, and may even allow itself to get voted out of power occasionally. But since its successor government, as long as it remains within the confines of the neoliberal strategy, will also be incapable of alleviating the crisis, the fascist elements are likely to return to power as well. And whether the fascist elements are in or out of power, they will remain a potent force working toward the fascification of the society and the polity, even while promoting corporate interests within a regime of globalization of finance, and hence permanently maintaining the "partnership between big business and fascist upstarts.

- Utsa Patnaik and Prabhat Patnaik (Monthly Review, July 1st, 2019)



"The poor shall inherit the earth or there will be no earth left to inherit."

- John Bellemy Foster (Monthly Review, 2019)

"The people want wholesome dread. They want to fear something. They want someone to frighten them and make them shudderingly submissive."

- Ernst Rohm (Hitler's chief of the SA)

There seems to be two branches of what I see as a drive toward global domination, global hegemony, by the ruling class. One is the Trump phenomenon and the narratives and political actions that accompany his presidency (often in the background). Second is the new ruling corporate control of environmentalism.

I quote Cory Morningstar a lot and that is with good reason. Its nearly impossible to pull quotes from her work because there are too many choices. Read the entirety of it.

There is a lot to read and it might be useful to start at the end, with the most recent material, and work backwards. But I will return to this. The linkage between Trump's cartoon presidency and the corporate takeover of environmentalism is anchored in recognizing the magic thinking involved, but more, to stop and recognize that the manufacturing of narratives here is really about a manufacturing of obedience to authority. Especially in our post modern (sic) epoch, "institutional authority". And to see that Trump is only carrying out policy sanctioned and supported by the ruling class (and perfectly amenable to the DNC). Now one need look no further than Hollywood to see the outlines of narrative change. The rehabilitation of fascism is everywhere. In everything. The normalizing of fascist style helps normalize and make coherent the presidency of Don Trump.

Much has been written about the CIA and Department of Defense infiltration of Hollywood. There are numerous obvious storytelling staples; the problems in any global situation are the result of a few bad apples or rogue agents. It is never that the institution is corrupt or intentionally causing death and suffering.

The content of film and television is directly, regularly, and secretly determined by the US government, led by the CIA and Pentagon. More visible since the 1980s is what we identify as a distinct genre: "national security cinema" - namely, those films that follow self-serving official histories and exalt in the righteousness of US foreign policy. () National security entertainment promotes violent, self-regarding, American-centric solutions to international problems based on twisted readings of history. However, even those products that don't meet such a lamentable yardstick are still to some degree designed to recruit personnel and, in doing so, must adhere to the desired self-image of the national security state.

- Matthew Alford, Tom Secker (National Security Cinema - Government Control in Hollywood)

There is a constant pro war slant to nearly all films that even indirectly touch on U.S. politics and/or the government. The first given is that war is inevitable and when involving the U.S. military it is a necessary and beneficent activity. There is a tacit and often openly direct support and praise of mass surveillance - even on ordinary citizens or citizens of friendly nations. The world is depicted as if threat existed on every corner and such trifles as torture or political manipulations are both routine and absolutely crucial to keep you, the viewer, safe. The message is always that new dangers are unprecedented and unique. Civil liberties are treated with the same contempt Obama showed for them. The exaggeration of threat, in fact, runs through nearly everything in mass media. There is also an exaggeration of the abilities of the surveillance industry (one aspect of the new magical thinking).

But the really pernicious aspect of government influence in media comes in more subtle forms.

The most prominent of which is the normalizing of not just illegal military or CIA activity, but the normalizing of and encouragement to fawn before authority, to trust said authority, and to feel OK about one's own attraction to those knee high Nazi jack boots, or the shiny nickel plated Sig Sauer 9mm the hero is fondling. So routine is the seduction of the audience with technologies of violence that it passes without comment. Directors and DPs automatically default to having the camera caress the gun, tank, rifle, or uniform. This extends to domestic U.S. police forces, too. It is allowable to show sadistic cops on occasion because sadism itself is acceptable, and even sort of sexy. It is allowable to show the U.S. interfering in the political elections of foreign sovereign states because any nation not the United States (and U.K.) will benefit from said interference. And here another branch of this propaganda should be noted (which will segue nicely back to Trump and environmentalism) and that is white supremacism. The single constant in narratives from Hollywood is that of American exceptionalism. And really, the examples are just too numerous to list. The ideological footprint of ruling class values is indelible and unchanging. Wealth is a virtue and the rich are responsible, and when they are not they are punished by others in the 1%. Just like the new corporate environmentalism, the message is, let the ruling class decide.

The values of the ruling classes in the U.S. and U.K. are always evident if one only looks. (So much has changed since those emigre German Jewish directors fled to Hollywood in the 40s). And of course lip service is, to a degree, paid to fairness and equality, but never to any idea of economic equality or social influence. That is the province of the very rich and aristocratic. Which is why I find it so curious that many of the left (pseudo or soft left) don't even blink when those with honorifics before their name, with royal titles, issue proclamations about climate change or overpopulation or new Green corporate solutions. These are always white people, mind you. I mean African Kings don't count. Tribal elders don't count. The British aristocracy are very big on preserving their privileges at game preserves and France remains a colonial administrator in its former African holdings (see Uranium mining). But more than that, of course, the ruling class is the face of the new environmentalism. Unless its an Asperger's fifteen year old who increasingly (and painfully) appears in distress and cognitive confusion. This is not an attack on Greta, that attack is being carried out by the white billionaire faces of western capital. But I will be accused of attacking her, and that in itself is an aspect of how the new propaganda works.

Which reminds me, where are all the black (African or otherwise) climate experts? The only one, really, is Warren Washington. The new Green feels very white. Facing monumental problems of pollution, both on land and perhaps especially in oceans, people have retreated to very non political positions that are either a kind of Hollywood disaster apocalypse fantasy, or new age smart phone Gaia anthropomorphism. I wrote before about the demand that everyone submit to the consensus- - meaning not that the earth is getting warmer or even why, but the moral hand wringing and outrage at those not submitting. The demand is that one join in the outrage and alarmism. The very term "denialism" suggests the typical bourgeois response to anything disruptive of their privilege. The constant outpouring of articles, in mainstream glossy magazines (and their cyber equivalents) and news outlets are always framed a certain way. A recent social media post by Keith Harmon Snow on a lay out in National Geographic laid it out this way..

With help from National Geographic and Proctor and Gamble (P&G), you can save the world. ACTIVATE. Be a good Global Citizen.

This is corporate greenwashing and corporate capitalism steering or creating "social justice" movements that will serve capitalism, while expropriating true social justice and true social justice movements, and thereby diffusing and destroying any valid legitimate meaningful POTENTIAL social movements. P&G is a nasty chemical/pharmaceutical/medical industrial giant responsible for Toxic carcinogenic products, price-fixing, palm oil monoculture plantations, child slavery, media propaganda, testing on animals, false advertising and massive pollution and other forms of destruction of the environment. Did you know that P&G produced the first home radio and TV serials, and because P&G was known for manufacturing detergents, these became known as "Soap operas"?

This is racist white supremacist whitewashing. Using images of smiling indigenous people, in full (airbrushed) color, in their natural or unnatural environments, for malicious



propaganda purposes. Propaganda = perception management. National Geographic is a racist corporate platform that cannot ever be trusted. (Pretty pictures, though; though generally and almost always decontextualized).

The entire thrust of the new corporate and billionaire backed projects on climate action are there to preserve a hierarchical status quo. It is to rescue Capitalism itself. And the implications of much of it are near genocidal. I think it is not an accident that the grave problems of industrial pollution (just think the waste sites for cyber technology) are relatively forgotten in these narratives from the ruling class. Those waste sites are in the poorest countries on earth, they are not outside Bethesda, Maryland or in Connecticut. And these new marketing campaigns, employing massive guilt inducing techniques of persuasion, have created a fairly safe and morally superior niche psychic space for the haute bourgeoisie to look down on the problems that their class created and attribute them to either the poor, or just the anodyne "everyone".

The term 6th Mass Extinction gets a lot of usage. Its a marketers dream, actually. In fact the first time I heard that term I thought, wow, that is gonna have traction. If you just said oh, we're all going to die off in a half century you would not garner this kind of following. But give it a kind of pseudo brand, specify it, make it special - not just extinction, but SIXTH mass extinction....and the white boogie class will fall over themselves salivating. Its pure seduction. Its like a kind of generalized identification with something bigger than you. Even though its also a sort of pessimism selfie. It sounds smarty pants to say, too. Oh we're in the SIXTH mass extinction don't you know.

There is almost no dialogue about this stuff. There are proclamations. Public life is carried out by proclamation and twitter. Meanwhile the U.S. election season has arrived. And never before, perhaps, has the Democratic Party put on such a pathetic show. Joe Biden can barely speak. Its senile gibberish half the time. The other front runner - and clearly now the candidate of western capital, is Elizabeth Warren. Im wondering how those rimless spectacles will play west of the Rockies. Not well ...which is fine because the Democrats don't want to win this one. This is Trump time. For only a man mentored at the feet of Roy Cohn could so effortlessly usher in the theatrical presentation of full blown fascism to America. Trump normalizes old school fascism. Everything can be blamed on Trump. And that is what the ruling class wants, you see. If Biden has an embolism and Warren turns out to be just too bookish (appearing) then there is always the black cop, Kamala Harris (whose future is likely as a federal DA) or Bernie. Except Bernie doesn't want the nomination. That's not his gig. The loud mouthed and utterly opportunistic shill will be what he always was, a ballot bag man for the more telegenic DNC candidates of choice. There is also the potential for a late comer to the DRC party. Too early for AOC (who may be, actually, too dumb for national electoral politics. And that bar has been set very low. Think Dan Quayle) and Chelsea (Clinton not Manning, although...), but its not impossible to think someone out there might provide better optics than Biden or Warren.

The debates themselves are so idiotic, so inane and nearly literally infantile, that it is hard to gain a clear picture of what the public thinks they are watching. But then the sub-literacy of America is stunning to behold. And perhaps the loss of even the most basic moral coherency among the bourgeoisie is resulting in the stultifying character of the Spectacle these days. The sordid and unsettling saga of cheerleader and killer (er...corpse abuser) Skyler Richardson is sort of the avatar for this era. A society that produces a Skyler Richardson ...and one that cannot find the means to deal with her crimes...is a terribly sick place. But then this is also the era of drone assassination on order of the President (Obama) which took the life of a teenage citizen of the U.S. This is the era in which Julian Assange is driven toward complete physical and mental collapse by the state, for releasing the truth to the public while Mike Pompeo brags about lying. An era of wanton wholesale lying at the state level (think the former Yugoslavia, Rwanda, Syria, Venezuela, North Korea, Iran). Wholesale lying of a kind that the public is now utterly inured to -a lying that is expected and anticipated. A persistent assault of lies and distortions that have all but eroded the very idea of the truth. But then this an era in which transparent visible stupidity is more asset than detriment. And the problem is that crimes and viciousness of those in power ...both in the U.K. and U.S. is just not answered. The Grenfell Tower fire is another avatar of class violence today. Boris Johnson (Kipling admirer and open OPEN overt racist) now is the head of state for Great Britain. But he is the shadow



of Trump. A pale homunculus version of the Donald. And the hair. I mean, the hair?

But the vast militarism of the U.S. and its proxies is polluting enormous areas of earth, killing sea mammals and indoctrinating hundreds of thousands of ill educated poor kids to the joys of shooting Arab families, the pleasures of torture, and career building bullying seems to have exceeded all limits of rationality. A military system that teaches hate and racism and xenophobia. A system that tolerates (at the very least) rape. A military that gets something like 5 billion dollars a day to play with. And all those democrats on stage this week, ALL of them signed off on more militarism.

Someone said to me this week, when I mentioned Bernie's attack on Maduro and Chavez, 'well, he has to say that, he's trying to win an election'. He **HAS** to say it. He is forced to lie. They have a gun to his dog's head. Or, more likely, that bellowing fool probably believes it. Why does anyone like Bernie? Honestly, I get Liz Warren. The college educated white liberal finds their mirror ideal image in Warren. I get Biden even. He is familiar. And shit, Reagan was senile and barely able to actually speak in complete sentences and yet he was labeled 'the great communicator'. So senility has its charms for America it seems. But Bernie is so nakedly disingenuous and mendacious. I don't get it.

Transformations in the economic base of the system and its accompanying class structures have changed the conditions for the exercise of power. Political domination is now expressed through a new-style "political class" and a media clergy, both dedicated exclusively to serving the abstract capitalism of generalized monopolies. The ideology of the "individual as king" and the illusions of the "movement" that wants to transform the world, even "change life"(!) - without posing the question of workers and peoples seizing power-only reinforce capital's new methods of exercising power.

- Samir Amin (Monthly Review, July 2019)

The above paragraph is a useful description of contemporary capitalism and a cogent comment on the various new green deals or extinction rebellions etc. And set against the surreal comedy of the U.S. election season, the new Corporate environmentalists are paving the way for normalizing a global state of emergency. If one thinks back just a bit, the Boston Marathon bombing was the front edge for testing how compliant the population might be when their city is being shut down. Totally compliant was the answer. And this is going to be the tactic. Declare a state of emergency that is for your own good.

The sober images of Thunberg, as depicted and shared by the Climate Group, and the media at large, are very much intentional as outlined in the document "Leading the Public into Emergency Mode: A New Strategy for the Climate Movement" published by The Climate Mobilization:

The way we respond to threats - by entering emergency mode or by remaining in normal mode - is highly contagious. Imagine the fire alarm goes off in an office building. How seriously should you take it? How do you know if it is a drill or a real fire? Those questions will be predominantly answered by the actions and communications of the people around you, particularly people designated as leaders. If they are chatting and taking their time exiting the building, you will assume that this is a drill. If people are moving with haste, faces stern and focused, communicating with urgency and gravity, you will assume there is real danger and exit as quickly as possible.

- Cory Morningstar (ibid)

Just the title, We Mean Business. None of this, of course, has anything to do with saving life and protecting the planet. None has anything to do with a radical de-militarizing of the Imperialist states. Nobody is suggesting the rich change the way they live. You poor folks, well, yeah, you might have to change a little (and oh, live in a FEMA camp, but not forever....we don't think). Allow me to just



pick one bio here, from Morningstar's work, to illustrate the fascist ideology of those driving so much of this new marketed environmentalism. Executive secretary of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) from 2010 to 2016, is the very privileged Christina Figueres, late of Georgetown and the London School of Economics, an anthropologist and economist who presided over the UN climate negotiations that culminated in the 2015 Paris Agreement.

Although meticulous in detail, Figueres biography on her personal website neglects to disclose her royal connection to Costa Rica. On Figueres' lengthy Wikipedia entry, it is disclosed, in a single sentence, that her father, José Figueres Ferrer, served as President of Costa Rica on three separate occasions. In August 1953, the Guatemalan Communist paper, Octubre, characterized the new president of Costa Rica, José "Don Pepe" Figueres, as an "unconditional servant of American imperialism" and the latest "United Fruit Company President." Both pro-American and anti-communist, José Figueres supported the 1954 Guatemalan coup d'état overthrowing Jacobo Árbenz Guzmán, President of Guatemala from 1951 to 1954. [Further reading: Resistance and Accommodation: The United States and the Nationalism of José Figueres, 1953-1957.]

Figueres' mother, Karen Olsen Beck, served as Costa Rican Ambassador to Israel in 1982 and was a member of the Costa Rica Legislative Assembly.

Figueres' brother José María Figueres also served as President of Costa Rica from 1994 to 1998. In 2013, he co-founded the Global Ocean Commission, an initiative funded by the Pew Charitable Trust, the Adessium Foundation in the Netherlands, and U.S. philanthropic group Oceans 5. Former Greenpeace adviser Simon Reddy would serve as the commission's executive secretary. [Source] María Figueres serves as chair to the Global Ocean Commission (since rebranded to Mission Ocean) with David Miliband (recently featured on the Global Optimism podcast series), and Trevor Manuel (one of South Africa's longest serving Ministers of Finance, now Minister in the Presidency and head of the National Planning Commission). The original members of the Global Ocean Commission remain unchanged in 2019 with one member having deceased. Members include John Podesta (chair of the Center for American Progress and a former White House chief of staff and member of the ClimateWorks board of directors), Sri Mulyani Indrawati (managing director and chief operating officer of the World Bank Group), Pascal Lamy (former director-general of the World Trade Organisation) and other high profile individuals. María Figueres is also the co-founder of Ocean Unite. This is important, as the oceans are set to be privatized under the "New Deal For Nature" scheme.

- Cory Morningstar (ibid)

Again, anti communism, and all the usual fingerprints of U.S. imperial foreign policy. Its like six degrees of fascist separation. And yet I guarantee you will read her quotes in any number of articles on climate change and green new deals. For again, the template has always been, let the ruling class decide.

Figueres is also a "distinguished member" of Conservation International - along with chairman for Northrop Grumman, and Al Gore, and oh, a former Walmart chairman. Not to mention Figueres married Konrad Von Ritter of the World Bank. But yeah, I'm sure Greta knew all this when she accepted the invite.

Infantile and intoxicated with an almost masochistic love of authority. That is the average American today. The problem with the new (sic) environmentalism is that it is driven by western interests, and the narrative shaped by western interests. There is more than just a residual racism involved, it is there at the very most basic level. The narratives that are shaping today's generation are largely the products of Langely and the DoD, and increasingly they feature a nostalgic rehabilitation of fascist style (at first) and now content. Fascism is becoming fashionable. Its cool. And the fascism of Trump is a bit like the McGuffin of this master narrative. Trump's cartoon twitter fascism is decried while legitimate fascist principles are being more inextricably and quietly baked into daily life.



The U.S. Imperialist state knows a global crises is coming. And probably the most acute area will be water. When there is a clear unanimity among global capitalists, one should see this as a symptom - and distrust the narrative. Whatever the exact degree of environmental harm due specifically to climate change, there is the undeniable desperation among the ruling elite. And an undeniable crises of pollution. If royalty and billionaires are flocking to exploit the Greta phenomenon (and to help shape that narrative), one should be highly suspicious of the solutions and strategies being offered. The fact that militarism and the packaging industry are relatively ignored in the presentation of the new green movement suggests more suspicion. Instead of *everyone* not using straws or single use plastic bags, how about just stop producing them.

The ruling class today has doubled down on smearing communism and socialism. The manufacturing of new kitsch demonized bios of Mao or Ho Chi Minh or Thomas Sankara... or even the Black Panthers suggests fear. Substitute Ocasio-Cortez for real socialism, call Bernie a socialist, too, and then pretend much of the new faux left (infiltrated by crack pot LaRouche-ites and various forms of libertarianism) is oppositional and argue with it - the better to disappear real socialist literature (see Google and Facebook censorship). Praise the most innocuous apolitical philosophy (or just the Nazi metaphysics of Heidegger) of post structuralism while, again, disappearing the work of Marx or Lenin and discredit an Adorno or a Gramsci. Or, make sure such work is taken out of context. And in fine arts applaud identity based banality and then disappear the working class voice. And then keep prescribing mind numbing drugs. Reduce public education to simple training in compliance. And keep praising those in uniform. Always.

"Thus madness reappears in the very posture which pretends to fight it."

- Guy Debord (*Society of the Spectacle*)

Despite this opposition, neoliberal capitalism cannot ward off the challenge it is facing for long. It has no vision for reinventing itself. Interestingly, in the period after the First World War, when capitalism was on the verge of sinking into a crisis, the idea of state intervention as a way of its revival had already been mooted, though its coming into vogue only occurred at the end of the Second World War. Today, neoliberal capitalism does not even have an idea of how it can recover and revitalize itself. And weapons like domestic fascism in the third world and direct imperialist intervention cannot for long save it from the anger of the masses that is building up against it.

- Utsa Patnaik and Prabhat Patnaik (*ibid*)

I keep reading about how unprecedented was Hurricane Dorian. Well, no. The legendary Galveston hurricane of 1900 remains the single greatest natural made tragedy in U.S. History. (and the second greatest was The Okeechobee Hurricane of 1928, and then Hurricane Katrina and Hurricane Maria along with the The Chenière Caminada Hurricane of 1893). The environmental crises is real. The marketing of it is not necessary. Why then does it exist.

Once upon a time they wrote songs about human tragedies. Dylan might be the last songwriter to address tragedy.

As Sam Collins wrote on the youtube video of Sin Killer Griffin's recording of Wasn't it a Mighty Storm, a song about the Galveston tragedy... courtesy of John Lomax...

"there were many songs. But the one that has endured, deservedly, is called "Wasn't That a Mighty Storm" - which, from what we know, began life as a spiritual in the black church.

At least the church seems to be the first place it surfaced into public view. Back in those days, almost every major public event inspired songs, which spread like text messages spread today, so the precise origin of songs is often hard to pin down.



But "Wasn't That a Mighty Storm" fit perfectly into the black spiritual tradition - a tale of hardship and trouble and the sometimes inscrutable hand of God with which we troubled sinners in this hard mortal world simply had to live.

Part of it went like this:

Galveston had a seawall

To keep the water down,

But the high tide from the ocean

Washed water over the town.

Wasn't that a mighty storm!

Oh, wasn't that a mighty storm with water!

Wasn't that a mighty storm

That blew all the people away!

Their trumpets gave them warning,

"You'd better leave this place."

They never thought of leaving

Till death looked them in the face.

Death like a cruel master,

As the wind began to blow,

Rode out on a train of horses.

Death calls, you gotta go.

It was not a happy song. But then, it was not a happy event - and topical songs of the early 20th century thrived on unhappy events. There were literally hundreds of songs about the sinking of the Titanic, dozens about the killer Mississippi floods of 1927.

The song was apparently first recorded in 1934 by Library of Congress folk song collector John Lomax on a visit to Darrington State Farm, a prison in Sandy Point, Tex.

Lomax's recording was by a preacher named Sin-Killer Griffin, with the prison inmates serving as his congregation.

Sin-Killer was a well-known preacher, with a mesmerizing delivery and full confidence in the name he had given himself. Death was a subject on which he preached frequently.

Relatively little is known about his life, which makes it all the more intriguing that back in 1889, in Denton, Tex., a "Sin-Killer Griffin" tried to organize black Americans to invade Africa. There is some evidence this was the same Sin-Killer Griffin who resurfaced before John Lomax 45 years later, though we have no way of knowing for sure."