

## Introduction

### *Media Spectacle and Politics in the Contemporary Era*

The Bush-Cheney years have been among the most contentious in modern U.S. history. The Bush-Cheney administration, seen as illegitimate by many who believe the 2000 election was stolen, veered hard to the right from the beginning, pursuing an agenda of massive tax breaks for the rich, deregulation in favor of the corporations that funded its campaign, and a right-wing social agenda in the interests of the conservative groups that make up its base. Before the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks, the administration's extremism was being contested and Bush's approval ratings were rapidly declining. After 9/11, the Republicans rallied Americans to their "war on terror," their curtailment of civil liberties and democracy in the USA Patriot Act, and their invasion of Iraq, which they claimed was part of the war on terror.

Once upon a time, Republicans stood for corporate fiscal responsibility and economic rationality. Yet the Bush-Cheney clique robs as much national treasure for its contributors as possible, eliminating regulations and rules that increase fairness and efficiency, and undoing social programs that benefit poor and working people. When Bush ran for president, he campaigned as a "compassionate conservative" and "a uniter, not a divider." Yet George W. Bush has proven to be one of the most divisive presidents in U.S. history, and has pursued extremist and hard-right policies that are neither compassionate nor conservative. Although conservatives at one time cherished the values of truth and accountability, Bushspeak involves systematic deceit, using the tactic of repeating a lie over and over again until the public believes it; despite manifestly failed policies and criminal fiscal irresponsibility, there have neither been apologies nor accountability, as I will demonstrate in the following chapters.

Following the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks, the aggression and militarism of the Bush-Cheney regime was brazen on the global scale. After military intelligence discerned that the Taliban in Afghanistan was harboring Al Qaeda, the Pentagon unleashed its military machine to destroy that fundamentalist Islamic regime. But since the Bush administration and Pentagon deployed a unilateralist, largely air-war strategy, which relied on the purchase of local warlords to fight on the ground, the leaders of the Taliban and Al Qaeda, including Osama bin Laden and Mullah Omar, got away. No matter. The Pentagon militarists and their White House allies had bigger targets in mind: Saddam Hussein and Iraq, which holds the second-largest reserve of oil in the world. Bush administration Treasury Secretary Paul O'Neill told Ron Suskind (2004) how George W. Bush was intent on invading Iraq from the beginning of his administration, and antiterrorism czar Richard Clarke (2004) documented how the pre-9/11 Bush administration paid little attention to the dangers of terrorism and was obsessed with attacking Iraq. The invasion of Iraq produced a vast bounty of contracts for the military-industrial sector, among which was the Carlyle Group, with whom George H. W. Bush and Bush family consigliere James Baker were involved. Contracts were also given to Halliburton, the corporation of which Dick Cheney was formerly CEO. Cheney pushed fiercely for the war on Iraq, and his corporate allies were well rewarded for his efforts, receiving multibillion-dollar no-bid contracts.

To get away with this banditry, Bush and Cheney needed a compliant populace. In the hysteria following the 9/11 terrorist attacks, they passed with the support of a compliant Congress the USA Patriot Act, through which they could suspend constitutional rights, imprisoning people without legal representation or trial, tapping phones, breaking into houses, and even summoning lists of books checked out in libraries. The administration devised a category of "enemy combatant" to allow them to arrest and throw in prison without due process anyone they deemed a threat to national security (Cole 2003). In their wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, the Bush administration and Pentagon put aside decades of military law, proclaimed the Geneva Conventions irrelevant, and allowed harsh interrogation procedures that created one of the biggest scandals in U.S. military history when the Abu Ghraib prison abuse pictures from Iraq circulated globally and other examples of U.S. abuse and torture of prisoners surfaced (Hersh 2004).

Many believe the United States is devolving into fascism under Bush and Cheney, but it is not the sort of "friendly fascism" that Bertram Gross described in 1982, for never has a more vicious bunch occupied the higher levels of government. Like Hitler and German fascists, the Bush-Cheney clique use the Big Lie to promote its policies, promote aggressive militarism in the quest for world hegemony, and relentlessly promote the economic interests of the corporations and groups that finance it.<sup>1</sup> To sell their program, Bush and Cheney have a media attack apparatus ready to smear anyone who dared to criticize their hard-right and militarist tactics. An ever-growing right-wing Republican media machine, ranging from the *Wall Street Journal* and the conservative press to the Rupert Murdoch-owned Fox TV, talk radio, and the extreme right sector on the Internet, all disseminate propaganda of a scope and virulence never before seen in U.S. history.<sup>2</sup> Expanding significantly since the 1980s, the Republican propaganda machine has cultivated a group of ideological storm troopers who loudly support Bush-Cheney policies and attack those who criticize them. These extremists are impervious to argument, ignore facts and analysis, and demonize as unpatriotic anyone who challenges Bush-Cheney policies. Groomed on Fox TV and right-wing talk radio, they verbally assault anyone who does not march in lockstep with the administration and wage ideological war against the heathens, liberals, feminists, gays and lesbians, and other dissenters. These ideological warriors allow no disparagement of Bush and Cheney and refuse civil dialogue, preferring denunciation and invective.

Although the mainstream corporate media are vilified as "liberal" by the right-wing attack machine, in fact, mainstream journalists are easily intimidated when the right-wing army e-mails, calls, writes, and harasses any corporate media source that goes too far in criticizing the Bush-Cheney regime. The mainstream corporate media are largely subservient to corporate interests, follow the sensation of the moment, and rarely engage in the sort of investigative journalism that was once the ideal and that now takes place largely in the alternative sphere.<sup>3</sup> Corporate media increasingly promote entertainment over news and information, like the tabloids framed by codes of media spectacle (Kellner 2003c). In general, the mainstream corporate media stand in the middle between hard-right conservative and liberal-progressive discourse and media, although during the Bush-Cheney era, as I show in this book, they have leaned toward support of conservatives and the Bush administration. Traditionally, during presidential elections, the mainstream media produce "fact checks" on political television advertisements.

During Election 2004, conservative campaign strategists obtained a memo by Mark Halperin, ABC's political director, which was leaked to the Drudge Report. Halperin wrote that "Kerry distorts, takes out of context, and [makes] mistakes all the time, but these are not central to his efforts to win. While both sides should be held accountable, that doesn't mean we reflexively and artificially hold both sides 'equally' accountable when the facts don't warrant that." In other words, Halperin implied that distortion was central to the Bush-Cheney campaign, but what little fact-checking the television networks did equally cited Bush and Kerry misstatements, and the corporate media failed to investigate the deliberate lies of the Bush-Cheney campaign, their appalling record in office, or the dire consequences of four more years of hard-right Republican misrule. As I shall demonstrate in this book, Halperin was right to suggest that while all political candidates spin and

misspeak, it was important to grasp the extremity of Bush-Cheney lies.

The right-wing attack apparatus, of course, interpreted Halperin's words as documenting "liberal bias" among the mainstream television networks, and fiercely attacked Halperin and anyone in the mainstream media deemed critical of the Bush-Cheney campaign or positively disposed toward the Kerry candidacy. The right-wing claim of a "liberal media" is absurd, for the mainstream media in the United States have tended to be largely uncritical of Reagan and the two Bush administrations, but were fiercely critical of Clinton and his administration. In particular, 24/7 cable news networks like Fox and the NBC cable networks over the past decade have strongly favored the Republicans and sharply criticized Democrats and "liberals" (Alterman 2003; Brock 2004). As the following chapters will show, during the Bush-Cheney administration, the corporate media tended to be lap dogs, failing to investigate in any depth the scandals of Bush and Cheney, their bogus claims about weapons of mass destruction in Iraq, and the destructive consequences of their domestic and foreign politics. Hence, although the media were *attacks dogs* during the Clinton era, they became *lap dogs* during the Bush-Cheney era and have largely abandoned their role as *watch dogs* investigating economic and political scandal and corruption in the public interest, thus aggravating a crisis of democracy in the United States.

In their coverage of Election 2004, as with previous elections, corporate media inordinately focused on polls and the election process itself, and inadequately focused on issues, the records of the candidates, and the potential consequences of their policies. "Debate" was often reduced to shouting matches, as on CNN's *Crossfire*, MSNBC's *Hardball*, or countless Fox TV programs. The highly charged clash of opposing party spin lines of the day helped to polarize the country and failed to illuminate the issues and differences between the candidates. And, as we will see in the following chapters, the few efforts of investigative journalists on the corporate television networks were highly flawed and grossly inadequate, pointing to a crisis of investigative journalism in the United States.

In reflecting on the concepts necessary to describe the 2004 election, I am reminded of some key tenets of the Frankfurt School. When this group of emigrants escaped from Hitler's Germany to the United States in the 1930s, they characterized fascism as, in part, a gangster clique (see Kellner 1989). In a similar critical spirit, I will frequently use the term "the Bush-Cheney Gang" to describe the dynamics of the Bush administration. While Mark Miller's "Bush and Co." (2004) captures the quasi-fascist corporate nature of the clique, I choose to use the gang metaphor since the Bush administration has systematically robbed the federal treasury to benefit the super-rich, to provide favors for his big corporate contributors, and to dismantle programs that largely benefit working people. In addition, the Bush administration has systematically violated international law and is generally seen in the world as a rogue regime regularly subverting diplomacy, global treaties and organizations, and the national security policies of the post-World War II period in favor of "preemptive war," aggressive unilateralism, and unrestrained militarism (see Chapters 2-4).

To help make sense of the 2004 election, I also make use of Frankfurt School categories of the culture industry, the authoritarian personality, one-dimensional thought, and the "dialectic of enlightenment." Throughout this book, I will focus on the role of the media and culture industry during the Bush-Cheney regime and how the Bush-Cheney campaign used and manipulated the media to advance their interests. Many of their supporters exhibit classic symptoms of authoritarian personalities, who think in binary categories of good and evil, project evil onto an Other, and believe only they are good or right. Such one-dimensional men and women are incapable of critical thought, reject critics of their object of faith and devotion (Bush!), and exhibit herd conformity as they mindlessly reproduce the political slogans of their group. Such empty sloganeering is symptomatic of a decline of individual thought, rationality, and critical reflection. Members of the right wing seem to revel in their conformist behavior, as when listeners of talk radio entertainer Rush Limbaugh call themselves "dittoheads" and repeat his lines of the day, however ill-documented and partisan. Exemplifying what Herbert Marcuse (1964) condemned as one-dimensional thought and behavior, Bush conservatives reproduce the slogans of their master and deify a president who has rarely had a thought of his own and reads and performs the scripts of his handlers.

As the Frankfurt School noted in the 1940s (Horkheimer and Adorno 1972 [1948]), a "dialectic of enlightenment" has been evident in the United States in recent years where culture has turned into its opposite for many, serving to manipulate and not nurture individuals. Critical thought has been replaced by faith in the lexicon of religious political extremists, and science and reason are defamed as secular, in a Talibanesque fundamentalism that refuses to question the authority of its leaders and scorns critical thought. Thus, an enlightenment culture that attempted to unify reason, thought, morality, politics, and art is fragmented and its critical components lost. As in Orwell's prescient novel *1984*, language is used by the Bush-Cheney regime to signify its opposite, as when the concept of the "liberation" of Iraq is used to describe an invasion and occupation, or the "Clear Skies Act" describes environmental deregulation leading to an increase of pollution. "Democracy" in Iraq signifies submission to rulers chosen by the Bush-Cheney Gang, and in the United States it is undercut by brazen violations of constitutional rights, not the least of which is rigging elections with unreliable voting machines purchased from Republican partisan corporations like Diebold, thus, in effect, privatizing and outsourcing voting (see Chapter 6 and the Conclusion).

It is clear that the right-wing forces that have operated during the past four years will continue to challenge the hope of U.S. democracy in the future. The Bush-Cheney Gang controls all of the higher institutions of the U.S. government, perpetuating a state apparatus dedicated to class warfare against the poor and dispossessed, and attempting to transfer as much wealth and power to the rich and the corporate classes as possible. They are dedicated to destroying the institutions of the New Deal and the War on Poverty developed from the 1930s through the 1990s and to undermining civil liberties and democratic institutions (once Bush joked that it would be easier if he were a dictator, as one of the opening epigraphs indicates). On the level of foreign policy, the Bush-Cheney Gang envisages using military power to create a new U.S. empire, which in the short term controls the world's oil and energy resources, and in the long term expands toward control of outer space (see Kellner 2003b). This cartel of hard-right conservatives is supported by a right-wing Republican attack apparatus that conveys Republican ideology and attacks Democrats, liberals, and progressives and that has helped construct a mass base for Bush-Cheney extremism, with support from religious right institutions such as churches and political organizations. Bush has managed to create almost a cult following, a surprising phenomenon during the 2004 election campaign that often had the look and feel of religious revivalism. Thus, part of the tragedy of the Bush years is that many individuals have been indoctrinated by right-wing media into believing the extremist ideology and the outright lies of the Bush-Cheney Gang.

This is not a pretty picture and on the liberal side, many were extremely dispirited and depressed after the 2004 election when an obviously unqualified presidential candidate with the worst political record in recent history was re-elected. However, legions of groups and individuals organized around diverse progressive issues and informed by a variety of alternative media produced record turnouts at the polls, unity against the Bush-Cheney Gang, and a remarkable set of cultural initiatives. Although the liberal and progressive side does not have the financial resources, institutions, or media that the Republican right has at its disposal, the battle is not yet over. An impressive number of people participated in the political struggle and have learned that they have to work harder and do better next time, yet meanwhile preserve their righteous anger at Bush-Cheney policies and corruption.

This text is engaged and partisan, and I readily admit to being partial toward democracy, social justice, accurate information, and good journalism. I am not a partisan for the Democratic Party, although the text is sharply critical of Bush, Cheney, and the Republicans, and

sympathetic to Kerry and the Democrats. My deepest sympathies, however, lie with the protest movements against the Bush administration's disastrous Iraq policy and against the Bush-Cheney campaign in Election 2004. I am a partisan for radical democracy and progressive social movements. Thus the focus in the Conclusion is how to promote more reliable and participatory democracy in the United States.

This book continues my efforts to develop a critical theory of contemporary media and society and their influence on U.S. politics. Like Antonio Gramsci, I see contemporary culture and society as a terrain of struggle, and accordingly interpret the media as one of the fields in which political and social struggle takes place in a contest of representations. *Media Spectacle and the Crisis of Democracy* draws upon my work of past years, such as *Television and the Crisis of Democracy* (1990a), which demonstrated how the rise of corporate conglomerate media provided powerful tools for conservative forces and how during the Reagan years the mainstream corporate media were skewed toward his agenda because they wanted deregulation to accomplish their mergers, tax breaks to increase their wealth, and maximum freedom to promote their agendas. I argued that this corporate consolidation undermined a democratic public sphere, and called for increased public broadcasting and alternative media to further U.S. democracy. The text also demonstrated how in the 1988 election, the television networks favored Bush over Dukakis and how the supposedly "liberal bias" of the mainstream corporate media was a myth (see also Alterman 2003). *Television and the Crisis of Democracy* was just published when the first Bush administration went to war against Iraq in 1991, allegedly to drive Saddam Hussein out of Kuwait. Another book published shortly thereafter, *The Persian Gulf TV War* (1992), showed how the mainstream corporate media provided a propaganda apparatus for the Pentagon and the first Bush administration military action against Iraq.

In 2001, my book *Grand Theft 2000* documented the stolen election and how, during the first months of his reign, Bush immediately paid back the corporations and groups who had supported him. His administration deregulated environmental and other restrictions on the oil, gas, timber, mining, and other industries; defunded women's rape crisis centers, family planning organizations, and other institutions opposed by the right because they promote feminism and pushed a social agenda pleasing to the religious right (see Flanders 2004; Hammer 2002). Bush continued this form of "cash and carry" governance, providing U.S. cabinet posts, ambassadorships, contracts, and other favors to his contributors, who in turn contributed more money to Bush and Cheney to fund more election cycles, in which victory would serve to produce more corporate giveaways. In addition, the Bush administration provided two trillion-dollar-plus tax cuts that significantly benefited the wealthiest Americans and simultaneously forced cutbacks in social welfare programs, at the same time producing the largest deficit in modern history, one that may take generations to repay.

After the stolen election of 2000, my work focused most intensely during the Bush-Cheney era on news and information media and in particular, the intersection between media and politics. In *Grand Theft 2000*, I demonstrated how the mainstream media were biased against Al Gore and in favor of George W. Bush (Kellner 2001). After 9/11 and the Afghanistan war, I published a book called *From 9/11 to Terror War: The Dangers of the Bush Legacy* (2003a), which showed once again how mainstream corporate media promoted the Bush agenda after 9/11 and into the Afghanistan war. The text discusses how the hysteria following the 9/11 terrorist attacks allowed the mainstream media to promote the unilateral military solutions advanced by the Bush administration and provided propaganda for Bush's rush to war against Iraq.

In 2003, I followed up these studies with a book called *Media Spectacle*, which demonstrated how the media continue to produce modes of entertainment, sports, news, and political information ever more beholden to spectacle. Indeed, in the past few years global politics have been shaped by spectacles of terror, war, and political conflict and upheaval, topics I address in this book by focusing on media spectacle and the crisis of democracy in the United States during the first years of a new millennium. Part of the problem with contemporary U.S., and indeed global, society is the overwhelming power of media spectacle disseminated from an ever-proliferating culture industry. Lost in the diversions of entertainment, individuals are becoming less informed and more misinformed by the increasingly tabloidized corporate media. Moreover, politics itself is falling prey to media spectacle, as the dominant parties run campaigns and govern through daily media events and major spectacles like party conventions or televised wars.

I focus in this text on the role of media spectacle in the Bush-Cheney era and the intensification of the crisis of democracy in the United States. Yet this text is not merely a polemic against the Bush administration and media, but depicts a highly conflicted country and media system and contrasts to the antidemocratic forces alternative media, honorable mainstream journalists, and progressive groups struggling for genuine democracy. Since the Bush-Cheney administration has been so divisive, there is an unparalleled amount of critical material conveniently collected in websites, databases, and blogs, made accessible through the Internet and Google and other search engines. Despite the large right-wing propaganda and attack apparatus, there are also decent journalists and commentators working in the mainstream media, along with an expanding print media and Internet cadre of investigative reporters and critical analysts voicing a broad range of political interpretation and opinion. Drawing on contemporary journalism easily available on the Internet and on reliable sources of alternative media, I use a variety of materials to analyze and critique the corporate media and the Bush administration. My findings point to a growing contradiction in the news and information system in the United States today and indeed globally between ever-restricted news, information, and opinion in the corporate media contrasted to expanding sources of news and opinion on the Internet. Never before has so much solid information, criticism, analysis, and interpretation been available, but despite this cornucopia, the mainstream media have been increasingly incompetent, easily intimidated, and mediocre in their performance.

Leading up to the election, there were a number of books and documentary films criticizing the lies of George W. Bush (Corn 2003) and every aspect of the Bush administration, from its foreign policy to its impact on the environment (Alterman, et al. 2004; Dean 2004; Ivins and Dubose 2004; Miller 2004; Moore 2003; Waldman 2004). In particular, David Corn (2003) published an excellent book, *The Lies of George W. Bush*, which copiously documented a lifetime of lies by Bush and his handlers about his life during his 2000 election campaign and its aftermath, and every aspect of his administration from tax policy to Iraq. I update the history of Bush-Cheney mendacity by laying bare the Big, Bold, and Brazen Lies of the group in Election 2004 (see Chapters 5 and 6). In a hard-hitting exposé generally overlooked by the mainstream media, *Fraud: The Strategy Behind the Bush Lies and Why the Media Didn't Tell You* (2004), Paul Waldman demonstrates the construction of a myth about the "Good Old Boy" DUBYA, his strategy of spin and lies, and how the media let Bush get away with an abundance of fraud and deception.

In addition, Ron Suskind's memoir of former Bush administration Treasury Secretary Paul O'Neill recounted how George W. Bush had no interest in economics and was obsessed by Iraq from the beginning of his administration, a point also made by former antiterrorism czar Richard Clarke (2004). Michael Moore's *Fahrenheit 9/11* and the Media Education Foundation's *Hijacking Catastrophe* (2004) sharply denounced George W. Bush and his economic and foreign policies, and a whole series of documentaries coproduced and distributed by Robert Greenwald took on the stolen election of 2000 (*Unprecedented*), the Iraq war (*Uncovered*), Fox TV (*Outfoxed*), and the USA Patriot Act (*Unconstitutional*). In this book, I draw upon these works and my own daily research from a variety of Internet, print, broadcast, and documentary sources that I cite in the extensive references to the text.

Chapter 1 recounts the theft of the election in 2000 and the bias of the corporate media for George W. Bush and against Al Gore. Chapter 2 focuses on Bush administration discourse and media strategies after 9/11 and how the U.S. corporate media promoted his "war on terror." Chapters 3 and 4 trace the road to Iraq, the key stages of the Iraq war, and the catastrophic aftermath. As I conclude the book in late 2004, the United States has invaded Fallujah and, reminiscent of its actions in Vietnam, is "destroying the city to save it," as insurgency erupts and appears to expand throughout Iraq. So although Iraq is still a Bush-produced disaster in the making, it should be instructive to see how it emerged to produce a daily spectacle of horror, undercutting the triumphant U.S. militarism the Bush-Cheney clique has been promoting.

Chapters 5 and 6 document the key events of Election 2004. I wrote my analysis of the election while it was unfolding, posted daily analyses and links in blogleft, gave a number of talks on the media and the election, wrote several articles, and continued to revise my analysis.<sup>4</sup> The Internet provides the possibility of participatory democracy, a wide range of news and opinion, and a lively public sphere, and thus is an important check against our increasingly arrogant, incompetent, and cowardly mainstream corporate media (see Kahn and Kellner 2003). Of course, sectors of the Internet also provide right-wing ideology and disinformation; one must always be careful in using Internet sources, dramatizing the need for media and information literacy (see Kellner 2000; 2004). Some news and information sites and commentators have proven their reliability over time, and I make use of these sources. My studies are “reality based” and use what I consider to be reliable media sources to criticize the bias and distortions of the corporate broadcasting networks and some mainstream journalists.

In late 2004, as I prepare my work for publication, a controversy whirls concerning whether once again there was election fraud and whether the new computerized voting machines are or are not reliable. I discuss the controversy in the Conclusion, point to the best sources for information about voting and the election, and argue that voting machines are just part of the crisis of democracy in the United States.<sup>5</sup> In addition to computerized voting causing election fraud, I argue that the entire Electoral College system is fatally flawed, that the system of winner-take-all state electoral tallying subverts popular sovereignty, and that the corporate media are strongly biased toward candidates who will pursue a conservative agenda. I suggest the need for reliable paper-trail voting technology and abolition of the Electoral College in favor of direct election of the president. I also advocate reforming the current vote-tallying system to divide electoral votes proportionately among the candidates as is done in Maine and Nebraska, rather than giving all of them to the candidate who supposedly has the most votes according to highly unreliable and suspicious methods of tabulation, as is now the case in most states.

In the past four years since the stolen 2000 election, U.S. democracy has been in its greatest crisis and in need of radical reform to strengthen and even preserve it. Thus the book concludes with some comments on the need to develop alternative media and a progressive vision to direct the struggles of the future, which will only intensify, if U.S. democracy is to be revitalized and even survive. On the domestic level, patriotism, moral values, and democracy need to be reclaimed from conservatives and a new democratic vision, similar to that of John Dewey and other progressives, should be grounded in strengthening citizen participation and civil rights as well as radically reforming voting procedures and the electoral system. It must be multicultural and rights-based, incorporating all of the minority groups, including gays and lesbians.

On a global level, a revitalization of democracy must strongly defend human rights and institutions like the United Nations. It must advocate the strengthening of global treaties like the Kyoto Accords on the environment, the International Criminal Court, and the various treaties to monitor and eliminate weapons of mass destruction and other dangerous weapons like land mines and depleted uranium munitions. In the Conclusion, I argue for a robust cosmopolitan multilateralism that seeks global solutions to problems ranging from terrorism to the environment and that is grounded in local, national, and global social movements for human rights, labor rights, and social justice.

Without an expanded and improved alternative media and an informed citizenry, democracy in the United States will continue to atrophy. Election 2004 saw a highly divided electorate and the emergence of powerful organizations, cultural initiatives, and voting efforts by both sides of the battle. But for democracy to work, there must be intelligent dialogue and debate and an informed and active citizenry, and, as this book will show, these preconditions for democracy are not evident in the United States today. Whether democracy will or will not survive depends on sustained attempts to develop alternative media and a participatory citizenry. If these studies contribute to these goals, they will be worth the time and trouble it took to produce them.

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#### Notes

1. There is an entire website that collects articles that document similarities between the Bush-Cheney administration and fascism; see <http://semiskimmed.net/bushhitler.html>.

2. The rise and growing influence of a right-wing Republican media propaganda and attack apparatus has been well documented in Alterman (2003); Brock (2004); Conason (2003); Miller (2004); and Waldman (2004). In this book, I update and expand my critique of right-wing and corporate media and show how they have relentlessly promoted the agenda of the Bush administration.

3. By corporate media,” I mean print, broadcasting, and digital media owned by big corporations like NBC/RCA/General Electric, Murdoch’s News Corporation, ABC/Disney, Viacom/CBS, and AOL/Time Warner. “Corporate media” advance the agendas of the organizations that own them and the politicians they support, who in turn pursue the interests of the media conglomerates in governmental institutions such as the Federal Communications Commission. The studies in this book will demonstrate a frightening decline in the standards of journalism within the corporate media during the past years. On the corporate media and how growing consolidation has produced a crisis of democracy see Herman and Chomsky (1988); Kellner (1990, 1992); and McChesny (1997, 2000, 2004).

4. See blogleft for my daily commentary at <http://www.gseis.ucla.edu/courses/ed253a/blogger.php> and my home page, especially the Interventions file that contains many of my talks of the past years: <http://www.gseis.ucla.edu/faculty/kellner/kellnerhtml.html>.

5. See the Conclusion and the following sources, which are tracing problems with computerized and other methods of voting in Election 2004 and possibilities of election fraud: <http://www.efji.org/Voting/Voting-1.htm>; <http://www.openvotingconsortium.org>; <http://www.demos-usa.org>; <http://www.verifiedvoting.org>; and <http://www.blackboxvoting.org>.