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**Week 2 - Continuing the discussion**

by Joe Escobar - Sunday, October 14, 2012, 03:20 PM

After reading the NYT article and watching the second half of the AIM program, discuss specific examples of conflicting information you have encountered in the provided class sources (from the Herring book, PBS series, and AIM program). More importantly, which source gets your "vote", on that specific issue, as having the more correct/accurate/truthful interpretation or reinterpretation?

Sum of ratings: -

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**Context**

by Dustin McCowen - Tuesday, October 16, 2012, 11:57 PM

I think that John Corry makes a good point in his article for the NYT. Whether you side with the view of AIM or the PBS series, you still have to be open to new or different interpretations of history to really get the truth of what happened. Although AIM's stance still doesn't leave much to be interpreted, in my opinion, their argument was tremendously one sided and biased. AIM paints a picture of the PBS series vilifying American soldiers as drug addicts and racists (AIM historian Pike). I don't think that PBS does this quite as prevalently as AIM portrays, at least in the episodes that I have seen so far. They do show interviews with soldiers that speak of their experiences and how they began to see all Vietnamese as the Vietcong because they were hard to disconnect from each other, which is bound to happen in any war that is fought so closely to population of civilians, and not unique to Vietnam. Soldiers in the PBs video speak about raiding those villages with different sentiment. PBS does not insinuate that all the soldiers there were killing innocent people, but rather suggest that in a time of war each individual did what the Soldiers in the PBs video speak about raiding those villages with different sentiment. PBS does not insinuate that all the soldiers there were killing innocent people, but rather suggest that in a time of war each individual did what they had to do, whether that was always morally right I think was left up to us to determine from those interviews.

The AIM Video also portrayed journalist in Vietnam at the time as basically being communist or, helping the north with "propaganda" due to the information that they were sending back to the states (AIM). When journalists begin to question the official stance of our government on the war with things such as the strategic hamlets, Diem's government, and official military progress that was being reported at home, our Embassy reacted with distaste (Herring 110). Although, this reporting may have fueled uneasiness at home it is something that I believe to be extremely important, because it forced the powers to be to be held accountable for their political policies and decisions.

I believe that the PBS series does a much better giving us our own opportunities to make an informed decision than the obviously politically motivated AIM rebuttal does. I would rather make my own decisions, than to be given a one sided argument or opinion by a special interest group, especially if those viewpoints correlate with other sources.

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**Re: Context**

by Evelyn Deutscher - Sunday, October 21, 2012, 03:33 PM

I definitely agree with your point that people need to be open to other points of view. I think if we fail to look at other views then we would get caught in just one side and eventually become kind of biased what we think happened because how we perceive the events as being right would color new information we learned. However I do think that while you should be open you do have to take information with a grain of salt because the source or information may not have all the information. I also think that the media coverage of Vietnam could of fueled uneasiness at home, but I think that AIM's videos portrayal was a little of journalists was a little ridiculous. People can disagree with policies it doesn't make them communist. However ultimately despite what media says people do ultimately have to make their decisions. I do like your point that it held the major powers accountable for their policies and decisions because without that I think things could of gotten more out of control. In addition it is always good to question things because it keeps information or actions from becoming to one

Sum of ratings:1 (1) [Show parent](#) | [Edit](#) | [Split](#) | [Delete](#) | [Reply](#)**Re: Context**

by Mario Scalisi - Sunday, October 21, 2012, 11:43 PM

I agree with you that to get a truer representation of anything you need multiple viewpoints. Without a good idea of the whole picture, how can a person form an informed opinion of anything. I've said before that the Appy book fits this for me. The Herring book does good too, in my opinion, of giving a more fact based account of events. Facts from what comes across as unbiased for the most part. I think the written word is a stronger source for reliable information as the sources used for the writing should be fairly easy to verify. The crappy part for me is i'm a visual learner so i like having video's or movies to watch. Being able to have images while getting the info from dialog helps me retain stuff more (and I need all the help with that I can get),

Sum of ratings:1 (1) [Show parent](#) | [Edit](#) | [Split](#) | [Delete](#) | [Reply](#)**One-sided sources**

by Michelle Srstka - Wednesday, October 17, 2012, 09:01 PM

There were two points in the Accuracy in Media video that struck me. The first was when the narrator, Charlton Heston, says that the PBS series portrayed Ho Chi Minh as a nationalist rather than a communist. (AIM video) Herring portrays the issue as more complicated than nationalist versus communist. Herring acknowledges that Ho Chi Minh was a communist, but also says that "U.S. diplomats in Vietnam could find no evidence of direct Soviet contact with the Vietminh and stressed that regardless of ideology, Ho had established himself as the "symbol of nationalism and the struggle for freedom to the overwhelming majority of the population"" (Herring 13) The PBS series also acknowledges that Ho Chi Minh was a communist, but contrasts that with the idea of him as a nationalist. (PBS series) I think the problem is that the AIM video only portrays one point of view, whereas the PBS series' "...great strength was that it offered room for many points of view." (Corry) On this issue, I would tend to side with Herring and the PBS series. Different people viewed Ho Chi Minh in different ways, and I would rather be presented with all the information and make my own decision. A source that only presents one way of looking at things is most likely biased in some way.

Another thing I found interesting was when they talked about how, according to Charlton Heston "...the media shape what we think." (AIM video) The example used is the Tet Offensive. Reed Irvine says that "...it was portrayed by our media as a defeat for our side, even though it was actually a very outstanding military victory. The Vietcong suffered horrendous losses from which they never really fully recovered. They were beaten back in every case." (AIM video) I had never heard the Tet Offensive described in this way, so even though we are not quite there yet in the Herring book I looked up what he had to say. Again, Herring portrays things as more complicated than the one-sided AIM video. Herring says "...from a short-term tactical standpoint Westmoreland was correct: Tet represented a defeat for the enemy." (Herring 225) He also observes that the Vietcong came away with a psychological victory. "To the extent that the North Vietnamese designed the Tet Offensive to influence the United States, they succeeded..." (Herring 232) Talking about the psychological victory, Herring says that "The Tet Offensive left Washington in a state of "troubled confusion and uncertainty." Westmoreland insisted that the attacks had been repulsed and that there was no need to fear a major setback, and administration officials publicly echoed his statements. Johnson and his advisers were shocked by suddenness and magnitude of the offensive, however, and intelligence estimates were much more pessimistic than Westmoreland was. Many officials feared that Tet was only the opening phase of a larger Communist offensive." (Herring 233) Again, Herring gets my "vote" on the issue. The AIM video portrays the Tet Offensive from one point of view- that is was a victory because the Vietcong suffered horrendous losses. Herring looks at the bigger picture, examining how Tet affected the United States in the war. Again, I would rather get my information from a source that presents all sides of an issue and lets me draw my own conclusions.

Sum of ratings:3 (1) [Show parent](#) | [Edit](#) | [Split](#) | [Delete](#) | [Reply](#)**Re: The various perceptions of the war.**

by Kerry McCurdy - Wednesday, October 17, 2012, 09:13 PM

It's so hard to know what the exact truth of Vietnam was, everyone involved in the war had their own perception of how things were. I do believe that there were many points of view of Vietnam because each person took parts of what they had experienced and then the media put it together with what someone else had experienced, thus coming up with many different viewpoints of how things actually were on both sides of the conflict. As stated in (Herring Pg. 178), "despite the extensive damage inflicted on North Vietnam, the bombing did not achieve its goals." There seems to be a lot of egos in play when it comes to those who decided it was a good idea to send our troops to war.

General Westmoreland seems to have been one of those individuals when he states that he wanted to locate and eliminate NLF and North Vietnamese regular units. He then says that "he was not motivated by any Napoleonic impulse to maneuver units and

hark to the sound of cannon," but search and destroy," (Pg. 179) as his strategy came to be called, and which did reflect traditional U.S. Army doctrine. The reason that the war escalated so much between the years of 1965 and 1967 was because General Westmoreland wanted to have a lot of people on the ground even though he did not have the sufficient forces to do so, this decision cost many, many lives.

The PBS series seems to have made Vietnam into a reality show without the truth. It seems to be a commercialized version of the truth. John McCain was a prisoner of war for 6 years or more and I'm sure went through more hell than anyone could ever imagine, and then there is Jane Fonda who has been criticized for years for her involvement in Vietnam and being friendly with the enemy. When he says that "she didn't help anyone by doing what she did," he might need to realize that her perception about how the North Vietnamese were might and will differ greatly from his opinion of them because they shared two totally different experiences. There is no one right answer and Vietnam seems to have had more confusion as to what went on there more than any other war before it or since.

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Re: The various perceptions of the war.

by Richard Atwood - Wednesday, October 17, 2012, 10:25 PM

I believe what you are saying about the PBS series, But not a reality show without the truth, The PBS series has some truths It may be onesided as a whole but not all of it is a lie, I Also believe The John McCain and other POW stories should have been told .From what I have heard about The Hanoi Hilton is was Hell, Thats why i think the more sources you have the better picture of the war emerges, The whole thing was a total mess, The way in which our own election (PBS video 2) caused great changes in the war is what supprises me the most.

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Re: The various perceptions of the war.

by Kerry McCurdy - Sunday, October 21, 2012, 04:58 PM

Hi Richard,

I guess I was just trying to say that all television seems to do is commercialize and glamorize most things that are broadcast, they make it into a story that sounds the most profitable to them at the time. It seems that as long as they get their ratings they are happy. I really think that you are right when you say that John McCain and the other men that were held as POWS should have had their stories told much sooner. It's really sad to me that the truth seems to only come out so many years later. The Vietnam War seems to be the one major war in my lifetime that had a series of no military organization as well as people that were not qualified to make those important decisions. I have always felt that if there had been more proper organization in the higher ranks that 58,000 people would not have died. I feel that we should not have been involved in the conflict to begin with. The United States has a knack for policing everyone else in the world when what they really should be doing is trying to fix all of the problems in this country.

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Re: The various perceptions of the war.

by Mario Scalisi - Sunday, October 21, 2012, 11:58 PM

Kerry,

I dont know if I agree with "commercialize and glamorize", but I do think that tv media relies on ratings so has a tendency to sensationalize things. Also, there is the potential for reinterpreting events.

I really just wanted to say that I agree with the end of your post. I'm tired of my country policing other countries. I don't think it's our place and i don't like that it brought grief to our back door (9/11).

It's taken our country a long time to heal from Vietnam and for some it's still ongoing. I can't even speak on how it's been for the Vietnamese. It was a very unfortunate series of events, blunders, egos, and ridiculous blind following of a flawed premise.

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Re: The various perceptions of the war.

by Michelle Srstka - Saturday, October 20, 2012, 07:17 PM

Hi Kerry,

I think you made a great point when you said that everyone involved in the war had their own perception of how things were. There were so many different groups of people involved- the Americans, the South Vietnamese (both on the side of the Americans and on the side of the North), the North Vietnamese, and the French to name a few. Each had their own agenda and their own reasons for fighting the war, their own experiences in the war, and their own interactions with the other groups involved. It is a lot to sort through. Usually you try to uncover the truth about what happened, but in a case like this there are several versions of the truth. I think you are right to say that there is not one right answer.

Thanks for your post.

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Re: The various perceptions of the war.

by Kerry McCurdy - Sunday, October 21, 2012, 05:04 PM

Hi Michelle,

I think we can all agree that there were more than a few versions of what actually happened in the Vietnam War. I was really surprised to hear that the French were involved with this war because usually they are trying to avoid any involvement with the wars that go on around the world. I had always been under the impression that the French would not be involved in any conflict or war that did not affect them directly.

Thank you for your comments.

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Re: The various perceptions of the war.

by Evelyn Deutscher - Sunday, October 21, 2012, 03:33 PM

I agree with your point that its hard to know the exact truth about Vietnam because everyone involved in the war has their own perception of things. For even when my grandpa and I were discussing the first forum and how I would respond to it he said that there kind of isn't a way to fully judge out conflicting information because its someone's viewpoint and you either believe it or not. I do kind of agree with that because ultimately you will choose the facts you believe as it kind of suits your opinion of the war. I'm not saying that you won't say that certain events didn't happen, but say like it you choose to believe AIM's videos or PBS videos of Vietnam. I also think time is another factor to what people decide to believe about any history. Take Robert McNamara he helped fight the war, but only later on did he admit "that the war was wrong and that it was a tragic mistake," (Appy 152). Which goes to show that the time of reflection can at least kind of change your believes or actions, for McNamara might of believed the war was wrong when he was involved, but we not admit until another point in time. However I do disagree about you said about PBS' Vietnam videos as being a reality show with out the truth, but I do kind of agree with it being a commercialized version of the truth. I don't agree that it was a reality show with out the truth because it has plenty of facts that are backed by our Herring textbook. I do think that PBS could seem like a commercialized version of the truth because it does contain quite a different amount of viewpoints which can kind of crowd out from it having one clear voice, but at the same time that keeps the PBS videos from being overly biased. It might also seem commercialized because that can't show all the horrendous actions of war because it is for the mass public. I don't think that being commercialized is necessarily a bad thing because PBS does seem to present fairly accurate, neutral facts about the Vietnam war to the mass public in society.

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I agree more with the herring book and PBS

by Richard Atwood - Wednesday, October 17, 2012, 09:06 PM

After watching both the videos and reading the herring book Most of the conflicting information regarding the south Vietnams fighting force as a bunch of cowards and that the American fighting force where all drug addicts as stated in the (PBS series, Dale Ernharths account of his tour) I might have a bias myself but I have not met anyone myself who was a " fighting soldier " not a commander that does not have a drug or alcohol problem. The (AIM Video) John Cares point was well made that the suffering he faced was not portrayed, but for the must part, The Herring book to me gets my vote

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**Analysis of Conflict**

by Evelyn Deutscher - Wednesday, October 17, 2012, 11:19 PM

There were two major points of conflicting information between the AIM video and previous information we have learned. The first began with the AIM video saying that PBS videos painted “Vietnamese revolutionaries, as nationalistic and hard working, while south vietnam as passive, puppets, corrupt and weak willed,” (Nguyen Ngoc Bich AIM). The conflict isn’t necessarily with in the words, but the way that they didn’t believe that the South Vietnamese government was all the qualities they said, more specifically that the South Vietnamese government wasn’t corrupt. While our Herring textbook shows at least two instances of corruption with the South Vietnamese government. The first is that in response to the Buddhist crisis “Diem sought to discredit the Buddhist protest[s] by claiming that the pagodas had been turned into bordellos where obscene photographs had been discovered and virgins were being despoiled” (Herring 119). The second is that there was “reports that Nhu was making overtures to Hanoi” (Herring 117). Each of these events show at least some measure of corruption in the South Vietnamese government at that time. For one having a government attempt to silence resistance in any instance typically indicates some type of authoritarian government, which I don’t think are known for the honesty or incorruptibility. The second examples indicates Nhu or the South Vietnamese government was being duplicitous in the actions of the time, since one of their missions was to fight against communism, but here Nhu was possibly making a deal with the communists.

The second piece of conflicting information that AIM presented was that “Ho Chi Minh had plans for all of Indochina,” (Charlton Heston AIM). I have seen no indication during my learning of the Vietnam War to validate such a claim. In fact Herring writes that Ho Chi Minh’s political organization had “a broad platform stressing independence and ‘democratic’ reforms” (Herring 5). This platform was further backed by that fact that “for the Vietminh, unification of their country represented ... [a] fulfillment of the centuries-old dream” (Herring 8). Each of these quotes go to show that the goal of Ho Chi Minh was not to dominate all of Indochina, but a deep desire to free his country. AIM claiming this idea of Ho Chi Minh was essentially reciting the “domino theory,” for it was these thoughts that founded the theory. Merely spouting this information as AIM has, seems terribly one sided and inaccurate.

Overall I would again choose to side with our textbooks and PBS videos as more accurate sources to learn the historical facts. I would choose these options for learning the facts because these sources seem to present evidence along with their claims while AIM does not seem to provide evidence. The second reason why I would chose the textbooks and PBS is because of AIM’s rather wild and one-sided use of language. For instance Douglas Pike in the AIM video said the PBS video treated the “South Vietnamese with contempt [an] almost racist [view], almost like non people, never had one single word of kindness.” In my viewing of PBS I don’t see them painting one side more desirable or undesirable than the other, they take a more neutral stance. They may present good words or views towards one side, but that is spoken through the individual people they interview, not the program. In the words of our New York Times article I think PBS and are textbooks are more historically accurate sources because it seems AIM is “one part of the political culture [that] wants to lock out another,” (Corry 1).

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by Matthew Menigoz - Sunday, October 21, 2012, 10:05 AM

I think AIM is a bad source of information period. Everything they do conflicts with either PBS or other sources of information we have been using. There sole purpose is to take away everything that PBS tried to show to the American people. When you read about Minh in our book(Herring) it shows that he doesn't want to be a communist power, but to lead his people to prosperity. He was a leader among his people and wanted his people to be free. Why would AIM take a strike at something thats suppose to be good and make sense. Both the Herring and Appy book talk about how vietnam leaders never wanted to particapate in the war nor did they want all those people to die(Appy 43). Why would an organization, whos purpose as a business is to compare and contrast the media and make sure they put out prevelent and correct information, portray such bad things. This was a hard time for both vietnam and the American people and their intentions and bringing down PBS doesn't show them having any purpose. I think staying away from AIM and sticking to books and what they provide is the best way to retain important historical information. I totally agree with you Evelyn

Sum of ratings: (1) [Show parent](#) | [Edit](#) | [Split](#) | [Delete](#) | [Reply](#)**Re: Analysis of Conflict**

by Dustin McCowen - Sunday, October 21, 2012, 08:54 PM

I agree with you that the view point of AIM was extremely one sided and narrow. I took the video to be more political propaganda than something that was meant to inform the public of any inaccuracies in the PBS series. I found it interesting that AIM criticized the PBS series so deeply for their portrayal of the South Vietnamese’s weak government and Diem’s ability to run it, when in fact the United States had its doubts from early on, even after the United States had some influence in getting Diem appointed. AIM claims that the PBS series also portrays the south as the United States puppet government (which I don’t think it really does to much extent), but the Herring book does support this to some extent during the years of 1954-1955 when the French demanded that Diem be replaced, Dulles reacts by upholding Donald Heaths assertion, “that there is no one to take his place who would serve US interest better” (Herring, 62). Without the United States and Dulles

support Diem may have been overthrown by many of the coups that he faced in those early years of appointment. Although the United States may not have been in direct control of the South Vietnam Government, with more than a one billion dollars of aid from 1955 to 1961 (Herring, 69), I would say we were more than just allies.

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Subjectivity

by Justin Wease - Wednesday, October 17, 2012, 11:17 PM

The P.B.S series on Vietnam proves to be the most truthful interpretation of what occurred during the War. I am certainly entertained by what the A.I.M reinterpretation had to say and the information presented against the P.B.S version, but the most convincing source remains to be P.B.S. Every source is indeed matched very equally in terms of over-all importance. Like pieces of a whole, the varied personal accounts, rebuttals, and re-rebuttals serve to paint only a vague image in the minds of some of the adults that were not present in existence and merely learning about the occurrence in a classroom.

In Corry's NY Times article from 1985, the author refers to the controversy:

"Say right off, meanwhile, that it is not a particularly effective rebuttal, even if it

is narrated by Charlton Heston. It is a polemic, interested mostly in its own point

of view."

Despite the subjectivity contained within Corry's article it became reassuring to read that some of the same feelings that I felt were present during the A.I.M production were felt by human beings from long ago in 1985 when the film was first released. The hiring of a celebrity for narration and incessant verbal attack against P.B.S cause one to believe that such a film is produced for the unique purpose of becoming propaganda, more politely as information of a misleading nature. The Corry article ends, summing up the general idea that the A.I.M group and their supporters:

"..are expressing their opinion on what are essentially political

questions."

Opinions are and should never be the basis for historical record.

Sum of ratings:2 (1)

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I'll Make My Own Decisions...thank you

by Natasha Haynes - Wednesday, October 17, 2012, 11:22 PM

Let me just be incredibly dramatic and say thank you to John Corry for hitting this thing right on point! He writes, "In 1983, this critic called the Vietnam series 'a landmark in television journalism,' a judgment I still hold. Its great strength was that it offered room for many points of view." (NYT). He is of course referring to the PBS movie. We continue to see, in the second part of the AIM video, the main focus revolving around how PBS supposedly inaccurately reported and illustrated this war. A man by the name of Harry Summers explains how the PBS video lacks to deliver that one of the reasons people began to protest the war was because they were having second thoughts about fleeing from it. They supposedly needed justification for what they had done. He brings up the instances of American men fleeing to Canada (AIM). The AIM video seems to only be aware of their viewpoint, and leave no room for any others. The AIM video might have a point about how wrong it was to portray that the majority of the veterans got such a bad rap upon returning State side, however AIM fails to see that the bad rap and emotional instability of the soldiers ever existed. Instead they bring in a veteran by the name of William Jayne who makes it seem as if all is completely fine and dandy with returning soldiers. Herring even states, "The great majority adjusted, although sometimes with difficulty, but many veterans experienced problems with drugs and alcohol, joblessness, and broken homes. Many also suffered from post-traumatic stress disorder.." (Herring 348). He is giving us both sides of the spectrum here.

If it wasn't apparent earlier what side I stand on, it would of course be on which ever side PBS is, where I believe John Corry would also be. With PBS, sure there might be some information that isn't covered, but the material is presented in such a way that encourages you to argue it, whereas the AIM video makes us believe that there is no room what so ever to do so.

Sum of ratings:1 (1)

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**Re: I'll Make My Own Decisions...thank you**

by Natasha Haynes - Saturday, October 20, 2012, 05:35 PM

I cannot believe how I just completely missed the real concept of the New York Times article. Corry does address the fact that he does not agree with the way AIM goes about addressing the material. He writes in regards to the AIM video, "that it is not a particularly effective rebuttal, even if it is narrated by Charlton Heston. It is a polemic, interested mostly in its own point of view" (NYT). However, he is not just detesting AIM, he is detesting the way in which television goes about broadcasting and illustrating viewpoints alone. He points out that, sure AIM quite obviously holds very strong opinions and makes sure to elaborate on them, but so does PBS if you open your eyes and recognize other people's viewpoints. Everyone seems to believe, whether they think the material is bias or not, that their opinion is the only valid one. So how can we truly go about delivering material when everybody truly believes in their own story as correct? This is why he also addresses the "rewriting of history". He makes a jaw dropping yet obvious point. How can we mediate these indifference's yet illustrate them both clearly?

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by Evelyn Deutscher - Sunday, October 21, 2012, 03:32 PM

Hi Natasha,

I think you made some interesting points and questions in your writing. I also think it is interesting to judge information just not on the information it is putting out, but how the information is being told. I do agree that everyone does seem to believe their opinion is the only valid one, but I also think that people will edit information in their mind to further validate that point. Such as when I watching a political debate with my mom's boyfriend. He only managed to hear information that aligned with his views of a certain candidate and when we discussed it he didn't hear any of the other argument really. Now he is a person that has very strong opinions and he won't see any other light which I think is a lot like AIM. I do think if AIM made their stance less about their agenda or at least less like this our opinion that their material would be more credible. I do think that it is really difficult to go about finding the truth in a material because everyone will believe their own truth. So they will filter the information and compose their side of the argument or belief about what happened, such as with AIM or PBS. When it comes to mediating these indifference's I really do think it comes down to looking very analytically at the information and not shutting anything out, but to still be skeptical. If someone is to present the information with these indifference's it would be to show all sides, but try and make it so the information does not lean to either side to much.

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by Mario Scalisi - Wednesday, October 17, 2012, 11:53 PM

I really don't care much for the AIM video. It just can't help but be one sided and letting its agenda show. It's whole point for existence is to tell us how inaccurately the PBS's series was and why. It's ultimately giving me its opinion. Some of the references made are from episodes of the PBS series I haven't seen yet. That being said, it does make some points.

Yes, I did feel that PBS portrayed Ho as more of a nationalist rather than a communist, but then again the Herring book hits on this too. *"Although a dedicated communist, Ho was no tool of Moscow, and while he was willing to accept help from the major communist powers-he was not prepared to subordinate Vietnamese independence for them."* (p.22) After reading and watching videos I feel that this is a good representation. He may have been a communist, but if someone else would have helped to oust the French he may have renounced that.

In another segment AIM says that PBS makes American soldiers out to be drug addicts, racial bigots, and indiscriminate killers. I think that that is an inaccurate assessment. There was a Private whose story I enjoyed about his change of thinking while there. How he went to be a hero and ended up feeling like the invading Red Coats of our revolution.

I really like the Herring book, as far as the materials given to me for class so far. I believe it is factually correct (he cites sources), gives next to no opinions, but offers a few what if's as food for thought. I feel it is a good all-around source for accurate information.

I also enjoy the PBS series. I think it gives a fairly wide view with viewpoints from both sides of the war.

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by Matthew Menigoz - Saturday, October 20, 2012, 08:41 PM



Mario,

The Aim video seems to be a controversy in itself. The PBS videos have been reviewed as some of the best information you can take from that brutal time. I also feel like they are one sided and have their agenda much like Newcasts such as Fox and CNN. They focus on the information that wasn't accurate in the PBS videos and say nothing about what it did show and how it reflected the war positively. I think that Aim is just as inaccurate because of the things they attack in PBS. Why would you follow up on saying American soldiers were druggies and were racist because there are stories in both books following along those lines. Between American and Vietnam there are talk about drugs and treatment among POV's. In both books have views from both sides of the war, when talking about those three subjects, but no program such as PBS portrays them out to be something they aren't. As I said in my take on what information we need to stick by I think the two books are the way to go. The facts and realistic feel from the stories given can't compete with battling Media's. When opinions get involved information gets flustered, so sticking to the real, solid evidence that is factual will lead you to the information you need.

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Re-read the NYTimes article please

by Joe Escobar - Thursday, October 18, 2012, 09:33 AM

Hello students, While I am enjoying the deeper analysis of the issues that you are discussing this week, I'm afraid that many of you have not addressed or comprehended the New York Times article well enough. The main point of the article involved some "brutal" criticisms of the PBS series and its producers. A number of you have ONLY noticed the sentences that the AIM series was a "biased polemic" or that the PBS series was "a landmark in television history". That is definitely a case of only picking a sentence that you like out of a source, but failing to address the actual point of the article. Please take another look. The New York Times is highly critical of PBS (a position I'm guessing many of you would not have guessed).

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Re: Re-read the NYTimes article please

by Dustin McCowen - Saturday, October 20, 2012, 11:40 AM

Please correct me if I am off on this, but this is how I interpreted John Corry's article in The New York Times. Corry is trying to bring to light the lack of checks and balances in our television media by saying, "It is important to address a persistent problem in television: How can the medium present grievances against itself? Print journalism has op-ed pages, letters to the editor and other devices for this. With few exceptions- ABC's "Viewpoint," for one- television has none" (Corry, NYT). He is not only being critical of AIM's one sided interpretation of the events that transpired in the Vietnam War, but also saying that the producers of the PBS series are guilty of the same misrepresentation their selves. He praises the "Inside Story," (a series that examines the press), for performing this "important service." He describes the producers of the PBS series as not "giving and inch" and confusing their series as "Holy Writ" (Corry, NYT). He is saying that both sides have valid points and but were unwilling to slant that view if it didn't fit into their interpretation.

Personally I think that it is naïve for any of us believe full heartedly what any media outlet portrays as fact. Everyone has an agenda, and is trying to target a certain demographic. I do believe though that the PBS series gives enough wiggle room for us to make our own informed opinion as long as you have some background information on the subject and are willing to utilize other sources.

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Re: Re-read the NYTimes article please

by Michelle Srstka - Saturday, October 20, 2012, 07:06 PM

Hi Dustin,

I agree with what you have to say about Corry's article. Both sides in this discussion (AIM and PBS) have their interpretations of Vietnam, and neither seems willing to concede any points to the other side.

I think that Corry's article brings us right back to the discussion last week. Most of us had something to say about comparing multiple sources in an attempt to uncover the truth. I think that so many people took issue with the AIM videos because it seems that they do not even try to hide their opinions or agenda. I agree that the PBS series leaves things more open to interpretation.

This is an interesting discussion, especially when applied to something as controversial as the Vietnam War. It is hard

to uncover the truth when there are so many sides to a story.

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Re: Re-read the NYTimes article please

by Richard Atwood - Saturday, October 20, 2012, 08:54 PM

I agree with your last statement, it's hard to uncover the truth when there are so many sides to a story, I my first post I expressed the same thing. That's why you need to use multiple sources and make your own choice of what you believe is the truth.

Sum of ratings:1 (1)

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Re: Re-read the NYTimes article please

by Matthew Menigoz - Sunday, October 21, 2012, 10:22 AM

I think your 100% correct! Whether it's a company focusing on a certain program like in this situation, or a News station like FOX. Every form of Media in the United States has an agenda. I've been behind scenes, first hand on the set of KVAL. They may not have the agenda as a corporation such as CNN, but they all come to the camera knowing exactly what they are going to say. The media targets exactly who they want to see their program or information. It's something that they do to earn the most money from viewers, used as an example in food or clothing products. They place ads that are catered to certain people at certain times of the day, that they think will do best. Every form of media uses that focus to bring light to their information. I think the PBS series is the Vietnam War at its best explanation. Everything might not be perfect or what everybody experienced during the war. But, as an overall point to what happened I believe it's factually outstanding compared to most media in our society today.

Sum of ratings:2 (1)

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Re: Re-read the NYTimes article please

by Kerry McCurdy - Sunday, October 21, 2012, 05:20 PM

Hi Matthew,

That is so true about the media, even to this day! They want you to see what they want you to see and usually it's their decision of what that will be. I agree that the PBS series seems to have the most believable explanations when it comes to what actually happened in the Vietnam War, although I don't know if any of us who weren't there will ever know for sure.

Sum of ratings:1 (1)

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Re: Re-read the NYTimes article please

by Mario Scalisi - Sunday, October 21, 2012, 11:29 PM

Dustin,

I don't think you misinterpreted anything with the New York Times article. Even without a teacher's prompt I think it's pretty clear that Corry doesn't choose a side in the controversy created between AIM and PBS. You got all the right quotes to illustrate that too, so I won't repeat them. Needless to say neither the AIM or PBS producers are free from, well I don't know if I'd call it hubris, but neither will give an inch on the information that they feel is truth. The point Corry makes about the medium of television not having an outlet for grievances is still a valid one, although with the changing of time, technology and the way information is able to be sent out instantly worldwide, the average Joe with an opinion and a webcam can raise issue with what he's seen on TV and have it broadcast for whatever reasons got his hackles raised to begin with.

We've spent so much time discussing sources and how to decide who to believe that I'm tired of the topic. As far as the PBS/AIM "controversy" goes, or any deciphering of differing viewpoints and conflicting information, it can come down to knowing the monster you're dealing with and sometimes deciding on the lesser of evils, so to speak.

Sum of ratings:2 (1)

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**That Source**

by Matthew Menigoz - Saturday, October 20, 2012, 08:27 PM

I think after reading through both Herring and the Appy book that those would be the source of information I would believe and take a lot from. After watching the second half of the AIM program I feel that if PBS and AIM have something against each other. The media provides so many different looks into what really happen and I think it's a battle of interest between both PBS and AIM like shown on the (Accuracy in Media part 1 and 2). They want you to see what is best for them and the best way they can make America look good. I think by looking at the information that you take from the book compared to what's on television there's a huge difference. There aren't that many books the feud every day like the media does. I think Appy's book is a good source because of the way it is written with stories from both sides behind it. It isn't focused in one way and one way only. It focuses on the stories and what really happened during this time period and there is no prejudice or favor. They compare and contrast within themselves and you as a reader can take away the views of what really happened. Instead of being focused on certain things at certain times like how the media would show you. As well as the NYT article that talks about what PBS was focused on and what they were going to show. There was so much controversy surrounding the realease of the PBS program and that's what they wanted. I think printed material is the way to really find good sources of information about this war. The media isn't a good source of correct information it's more of a sum up of information they would like to release. Like it showed on the (Accuracy in Media Part 2) film they were willing to cover an entire parade that was for something they didn't want to focus on as the media so it wasn't shown on television. It was the parade that nobody saw and it was because the media didn't want the people to see what people thought about the war.

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by Dustin McCowen - Sunday, October 21, 2012, 05:59 PM

I like the Appy book as well. I think that being able to read personal accounts of the war from different points of view makes the material easier to relate to and understand, and the short intros at the beginning do a good job at giving us the historical context that we need to know to interpret the stories. At the same time I know that peoples point of view become skewed because of their experiences and may not always be one hundred percent accurate. I tend to side with written information too, but even they are subject to bias as well. Every journalist has an editor and has to write within the scope of the organization they work for, but as Corry wrote "Print journalism has op-ed pages, letters to the editor and other devices for this" (NYT). So at least they are held more accountable than television and generally have less of an obligation to simply cater to their audience. Unfortunately I think there are too many people that do take what they hear from the media as truth.

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by Justin Wease - Sunday, October 21, 2012, 08:40 PM

Matthew,

I can see why you would choose the Appy or Herring book. I was thinking about productions while reading your post, and the cost associate with getting them made. It seems as if the printed text could be more reliable, in a sense, then its video cousin. The Appy book is especially useful as it combines many different stories and perspectives from Vietnam and seems to give one a general sense of being there even if you were born after the fact. Textual information is only more reliable "in a sense" because it is, I believe, much easier to write than to write/act/film. I suppose this means im kind of torn on the issue haha! Gathering as many sources as possible for the intended study is what is the most important, and these are great sources.

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by Mario Scalisi - Monday, October 22, 2012, 12:09 AM

Justin,

Read your comments and felt that you were pulling for video, but had to concede to the written word. It got me thinking. I'm a cinema buff and would love to see a multi-viewpoint production for vietnam. I loved the way they made two versions of pretty much the same movie a few years back. I believe it was WW2 and Iwo Jima. There was the film that was done from the American viewpoint and then there was a second film made from the Japanese view. I want to say Eastwood directed the Japanese sided flick. Granted I'm talking Hollywood film instead of TV documentary, but you can still be educated in the happenings of events by Hollywood. I always wanted to film documentaries for the big screen

when i was younger. Guess I should get to writing.

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(Week 2 - Continuing th...) Next >

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