2007

Photojournalistic Manipulations of Reality: The Power Over Knowledge

Valerie Friedman

Colby College

Follow this and additional works at: https://digitalcommons.colby.edu/honorstheses

Part of the Journalism Studies Commons, Mass Communication Commons, Social and Cultural Anthropology Commons, and the Social Influence and Political Communication Commons

Colby College theses are protected by copyright. They may be viewed or downloaded from this site for the purposes of research and scholarship. Reproduction or distribution for commercial purposes is prohibited without written permission of the author.

Recommended Citation


https://digitalcommons.colby.edu/honorstheses/552

This Honors Thesis (Open Access) is brought to you for free and open access by the Student Research at Digital Commons @ Colby. It has been accepted for inclusion in Honors Theses by an authorized administrator of Digital Commons @ Colby.
Photojournalistic Manipulations of Reality: The Power Over Knowledge

An Anthropological Study of How the Journalistic Media Asserts its Control Over Students at Colby College

Written by
Valerie Friedman

Anthropology Honors Project
Project Advisor: Jeffrey Anderson
Major Advisor: Mary Beth Mills
May, 2007
Acknowledgments

This paper would have been possible without the support of my friends and family. First, I would like to thank my project advisor Jeffrey Anderson for the guidance given to keep me on track with my project, and for helping to compile all of my information into a logical, organized product. To Mary Beth Mills, who has kept me on track with this project and has given me helpful feedback along the journey. To Catherine Besteman, whose enthusiasm and interest in my project has reminded me that all of the work really was worthwhile. A very special thank you to my Mom and Dad, who were constantly supportive and helpful in offering to edit and revise my paper until 4 a.m. To the students who helped contribute to my fieldwork, this paper would not have been possible without you. And to all of my friends who supported me and kept me sane, I love you all!
## TABLE OF CONTENTS

**Objectives** ................................................................. 1

**Survey of Photojournalistic Manipulations** ............................................. 4
  Composition ........................................................................ 7
  Use of Light ........................................................................ 9
  Lenses .............................................................................. 12
  Decisive versus Random Moments .................................................. 14
  Filters ............................................................................... 15
  Shutter Speed ...................................................................... 16
  Color versus Black and White .................................................... 16
  Digital versus Film ................................................................ 18

**Different Types of News Media** ............................................................. 21
  Newspapers ......................................................................... 21
  Magazines .......................................................................... 23
  The Radio .......................................................................... 26
  Television News Broadcasts ....................................................... 28
  The Internet: The New York Times ............................................... 31

**Background Research** ................................................................. 35

**Process** ........................................................................... 40
  Introduction to Fieldwork .......................................................... 41
  The Images ........................................................................... 41

**Observations** ........................................................................ 53
  Methods of Fieldwork ................................................................. 53
  Interview #1 ........................................................................... 55
  Interview #2 ...................................................................... 59
  Focus Group .......................................................................... 65
  Questionnaires ..................................................................... 71

**Analysis** ........................................................................... 77
  The Influence of Power on Knowledge ......................................... 77
  Globalization: The Forces Affecting How Images are Read .............. 82

**Reclaiming the Right to Information** ...................................................... 91
  The Rise of Blogging ................................................................. 91

**Final Reflections** ................................................................. 100

**Conclusion** ......................................................................... 102

**Appendix A** .................................................................... 106

**Appendix B** .................................................................... 116

**Bibliography**
OBJECTIVES

This project is an anthropological study on how students at Colby College interpret photojournalistic images and news media. Using extensive literature, I strove to find a better understanding of how news agencies and the media control the flow and availability of information. Through fieldwork and numerous research methods, I wanted to understand how students formed relationships with images and news stories they encountered.

This paper shows how the media and images people see in the news controls the minds and ideas of the public. Newspapers, magazines, the radio, internet sites, television broadcasts, and other forms of news media are primary sources of knowledge that people rely on to obtain a context for the world they live in. Their ideas and perceptions of most worldly knowledge derive from what the media publishes through their news sources. Objectivity poses a challenge for news publications, for a human mind is behind every article written and every photograph captured. Because of this subjectivity in the news, students are obtaining their supposed truthful knowledge from an opinionated source. Because the media is the primary source of information, students are unable to disprove one news story with evidence by another news source.

This paper begins with a survey of different types of photojournalistic manipulations. Images are manipulated in different ways in order to convey specific messages and ideas. Many news sources use images to tell news stories or enhance news articles. The different choices that photographers make when capturing an image are modes of managing how a story is told to the public.

The next chapter will describe the different types of news media. It is important to look at the primary sources of the news, for they all operate differently to provide information to the public. While they function differently, all of their objectives to provide the news to the public
are the same. Looking at how newspapers, magazines, the radio, television news broadcasts, and the internet all operate to provide the news, it is interesting to see how all the modes of journalism differ in their approach to control the thoughts and ideas of their audiences.

This paper then describes my anthropological fieldwork, starting with the background research done on this topic. It is important to understand the sources that provided the information I used. Most of the sources I gathered information from used anthropological methods of gathering the facts stated, and I used the sources to enhance my paper, rather than to provide the foundation of what I am arguing. This chapter goes on to describe my own methods of collecting information.

The following chapter describes my observations through the fieldwork I ran. As a case study, I observed how specific students interpreted images taken from the Israeli-Lebanese conflict from the summer of 2006. The paper describes my fieldwork methods of conducting interviews and focus group discussions with individual students to understand their relationships with the media and specific images from this event. It then illustrates the findings from questionnaires I handed out to students asking them to describe their habits regarding where they obtain their news information, and how they feel about the world of journalism.

The paper then dives into a discussion of how the students are manipulated in their views of the world and their perceptions of what they see in the news by the media. Many of the students I spoke with felt that their thoughts were controlled by the media, and this chapter gives background information to support a theoretical look into how the media controls the public through the use of images and their news articles.

The next section of the paper describes how images are globalized through both the nature of images circulating the globe, and the internet that provides fast and efficient travels of
information. The different processes involved in image and news article-production all affect how an image is read and interpreted.

The next chapter is a description of how the public is able to reclaim their rights to free information. While most news sources use specific news agencies to provide information, the internet has given people the agency to spread information widely to the public without having to go through large corporations that may have their own self-interest controlling the stories they publish. This chapter describes how students and other people in the country use the internet to break free of the societal role they had been forced to play by the media.

In this paper, I hope to show how the media tries to assert its power over the public by controlling how people read their images and words. It may seem like the public is powerless against the large corporations that monitor what is being released to the public and how it is being interpreted. However, the research I have conducted will show that there is a greater awareness of the subjectivity of the media, and specific steps are being taken to give the control of the media back to the public.
A SURVEY OF PHOTOJOURNALISTIC MANIPULATIONS

News agencies around the world regularly use visual images to give their stories greater credibility, clarity, and impact. By presenting visual evidence to support their reports, news agencies have increased their believability. Since its development in the mid-nineteenth century, photography has been a means of communication, with various photographic techniques used to create images that conveyed the photographers’ intended messages. Over the past several years, enhanced digital photographic technology has dramatically increased the ability to manipulate visual images. In areas of extreme political tension, this new technology has led photojournalists and their editors to manipulate reality for their audiences.

Long before digital technology, photographers developed many techniques to control the images they produced. Most of these techniques are still commonly accepted, and perhaps sometimes unavoidable, photographic techniques. Photographers choose their subjects, set the scene in front of the camera’s lens, move their subjects to enhance the scene, and add props to evoke meaning or emotion. They also frame their images, deciding what to include and what to exclude from view. Photographers remove, obscure, and de-emphasize certain objects or people within a scene, making others more prominent.

Photographers use and enhance lighting that will create a desired ambiance. They use lighting to emphasize certain parts of a scene and de-emphasize others, to flatter a person, or make them appear grotesque. The lighting of a scene may also spark a sense of emotion within the viewers. Photographers also select the camera’s vantage to capture a scene from a specific angle of view. They are able to adjust their message by choosing whether to shoot a scene from the front, side, bottom, or back of the subject. While none of these photographic techniques can
directly manipulate a story, they are but a few of the ways in which photographers can manipulate images to create desired emotional and moral responses in the viewers.

Not only do photographers have the power to manipulate images, but their editors are able to distort reality within the pictures as well. Adobe Photoshop is a commercially popular computer program, used by almost 20 million people worldwide. Its users can remove dust marks, correct red eye, and adjust other imperfections in a photograph. They can also use the same technology to edit an image by digitally “correcting” any part of a photograph. The technology allows a photo editor to delete unwanted subjects, enhance the color, add more effects to a scene, crop a scene to condense the image, and fully distort the actual image to create an entirely new photograph.

Digital cameras have now become the tools of choice for professional photojournalists. These allow photographers to capture and delete an image of a moment in time with equal speed and ease. Similarly, photo editors can replace an original image with a manipulated one with the click of a button. Deleting the original photograph then removes all evidence that it ever existed.

Image manipulation also occurs as a photograph makes its journey from being an idea in someone’s head to being a published product that is consumed by the public. Photojournalists travel to chosen locations with the intent of capturing an event, a person, or another news-related image that will eventually accompany a newspaper, magazine, or online article. Typically, a publisher will establish the idea for an article before selecting a specific photographer for the job. After receiving the engagement, the photographer will develop his or her own idea of the type of image the publication is seeking. Based on his or her subjective judgment, the photographer then chooses a precise moment in time to capture the scene. That choice will often determine the literal perspective of the image, meaning what is happening at that specific moment shown in the
frame, and the political perspective of the image. Photographs can tell stories about political agendas by (dis)proving events that affect the ideas of the readers.

The placement and visual arrangement of an image in a publication also has a manipulative effect. Photographs may appear on the front page, the back page, or anywhere in between. On most websites of newspapers or magazines, featured articles or major headlines are what show up on the screen first. These are the articles that people are first introduced to, which give these stories more importance and priority over others. In magazines, one central image typically monopolizes the cover, with the remaining images linked to articles inside the publication. Larger images are usually paired with news stories deemed more important or extreme. Within the publication, the size and location of an image conveys the relative importance of the story. In some newspapers, the photographs that are featured on the front page of an issue are printed in color, while the other images on the inside of the paper are printed in black and white.

To give context to an image, a caption may appear under, over, or next to the photograph. The caption may identify the photographer, the location where the photographer captured the image, or a brief explanation about the subject of the photograph. Captions explain the image to establish a connection between the photograph and the article.

Newspapers, magazines, and online articles are the three primary written news sources available in America, and most readers believe that the published information is valid and truthful. Yet, the photographs they publish are now subject to alteration and manipulation more extensively, and more often, than ever before. The objective of this thesis is show that photojournalistic and news media have the power to shape the way students view the world. It provides an understanding into why students gather information from such subjective media.
This thesis does not intend to discredit photojournalism, as it is vital for readers to receive information regarding world events visually. The concept of image manipulating does not imply any pre-judgment or negative implication. Every photographer manipulates the photograph he or she is taking by deciding which subject to photograph, where to stand, how to hold the camera, and when to press the shutter button. As used in this paper, the term “manipulation” describes only the process of altering an image of an objective reality.

Obtaining profit and revenue is the primary goal of news sources, so they need to make the public want to buy their product instead of another. In order to do this, a news source must appeal to a mass audience to sway them into favoring their product. Photographers use this desire for an entertaining and attention-grabbing photograph to help determine the specific choices they will make when taking a picture while on assignment. It is important to understand the different types of manipulations photographers may use because 1) the photographers may not be aware of the ways their decisions made on assignment may affect the photographs taken, and 2) the public may not be aware of the types of manipulations that have occurred in the photographs they deem valid and journalistically objective. The following functions and controls of photography are all ways that images are manipulated by the photographer. While there are many more manipulations that can occur, the following are a few that the photographer himself controls.

Composition

There are five main elements of photographic composition: Framing, lines, shapes, form, and texture. These are all ways of arranging and organizing your scene or subject when taking a photograph. Each of these elements can be used to create certain effects in images, as well as to help create a photograph that photojournalists would want published in print. These types of
images are not only powerful and able to grab a viewer’s attention, but they also must succeed in drawing in a large audience who would want to buy the news source.

Framing refers to what the photographer includes in a photograph. Photographers can use the concept of framing to emphasize the edges of a picture. When a person looks at the world before them, they can see everything in front of them, as well as objects and details included in their peripheral vision. When a person chooses to capture a scene using a camera, the range of vision changes dramatically. Lenses distort the light coming into the camera body, and they each differ in how much light they let in to hit the film or record on a digital disk. When a person looks into the camera viewfinder, they are only able to capture a specific amount of the scene in front of them. It is up to the photographer to decide what to include and what to leave out of images. In some cases, the editors of news sources cut down the original frame established by the photographer. The resulting image is published, and the image’s meaning can change because of the edited scene. Not everything in a picture has to be included in the “final version” of an image, and editors can edit out damaged parts of film. This technique is known as cropping, and it can even change a horizontally oriented photograph into a vertical image (or vice versa).

Lines are the changes in tonal value in an image. They can lead the viewer’s eyes through the image or out of the frame, depending on where the lines are highlighted and located within the composition. Different types of lines may spark different feelings in the viewer that would make them read and interpret the images in a specific way. A vertical line symbolized strength and an active subject. Horizontal lines, like the horizon, emphasize the stillness and stability of an image. Diagonal lines are dynamic and can create feelings of tension in an image. Lines can both link different elements in a photograph together, or they can create visual
movement from one subject to another. Photographers are able to change the orientation of the lines in the photograph just by tilting the camera a certain way.

Shapes refer to the outline of subjects in a photograph. The repetition of shapes creates patterns in the frame, and this can create a sense of movement. In some case, the repetition of shapes becomes so overpowering to its viewers that it becomes the central focus of the image. A photographer has to consider the balance of shapes in a photograph so as not to overwhelm the viewer.

Form refers to a sense of volume in an image. Like shapes, they need to be balanced throughout the frame. They can help create a third-dimensional quality to a photograph. This is important when capturing journalistic images that aim to stress the scientific and realistic qualities of the composition.

The last compositional element is texture. This is directly related to highlights in an image, and how light hits objects. Soft light will make objects in a photograph appear smoother and foggier, while harsh light and side lighting will emphasize the harsh textures of subjects in the frame. Texture can also create a sense of repetition, just like shapes and lines.

Use of Light

Photographs have the choice of using different types of light in each photograph. There are two types of lighting that affect “light quality:” Harsh lighting and Soft lighting. Harsh lighting comes from a direct light source like a flashlight or light bulb. Soft lighting occurs when light is diffused, as when clouds or the densities in the atmosphere reflect light. In many case, a photograph uses a flash on his or her camera to create a specific lighting condition that will
affect how a photograph is read. This harsh lighting makes objects stand out, and colors appear more vivid, while lines and the texture in the frame become well-defined.

There are three directions of light that all change the composition dramatically. Side-lighting refers to the direction of light in relation to the subject, not the camera. When light hits the subject from the left, right, top, or bottom, it emphasizes texture and creates harsh shadows. This type of lighting is very dramatic, and increases the appearance of shapes in the frame.

Image has been resized

The second type of lighting is Frontal lighting, which is when the light source hits the subject from the front. Photographers use this type of lighting when a flash on a camera goes off, and it creates a flat image with less volume and depth.

---

1 Photograph taken from the Website: http://www.eugenewei.com/ntweblog/archives/cat_businesseconomics.html
Image resized at lower resolution

Back lighting occurs when light hits an object from behind. This type of lighting situation enhances the appearance of shapes and forms in the composition. In many cases if the light source is hidden from the camera, a halo appears around the subject blocking the light. Because the light source is directed towards the back of the subject, no light hits the part of the subject that faces the camera. Those areas on the subject are dark, while the surrounding atmosphere in the image is illuminated. This type of light is, too, very dramatic, and is used by photographers deliberately to make a shape or form stick out in the composition.

2 Photograph taken from the Website: http://www.paguk.com/artoflighting2.htm
3 Photograph taken from the Website: http://zimmer.csufresno.edu/~candace/design3.htm
Lenses

The lens on a camera focuses the light coming into the camera body. There are three main controls of the lens: Aperture, Focus, and Angle of View. Aperture controls the amount of light coming through the lens. It has partial control over the “depth of field,” which refers to the range of distance in a picture that is in focus. Larger Depths of Fields have more of the space between the camera and objects far away from the photographer in focus. Smaller Depths of fields allow only a small portion of the image to be clear and in focus, while the rest of the frame is blurry.

The aperture is also affected by the focus distance (distance photographer is from the subject), focal length (size of the lens), and the amount of light in the scene. When it is sunny out, less light has to hit the film in the camera in order to make a picture. Because of the film’s sensitivity to light, the photographer usually gets a large depth of field on days where there is a lot of light because of the aperture settings that the photographer will be required to use in order to expose the film correctly. This is helpful when a photographer wants to emphasize the whole scene in a photograph, for each detail will be clear and in focus.

Some photographers may choose to use a telephoto lens, which allows photographers to zoom in on scenes from a larger distance away. Many photographs taken from sporting events showing a specific player on a large field or court were used with this type of lens. Wide-angle lenses make objects closest to the camera stick out more, causing the backgrounds to diminish into a blur and allowing the closer objects to pop out at the viewers. Macro-lenses are sometimes used for assignments like medical photography or nature images, allowing photographers to make very small objects appear larger than life. By choosing any one of these types of lenses, the photographer is setting up the camera to take a specific type of picture.
Clockwise from the Top Left: A football catch is captured using a telephoto lens; A photograph taken with a 50mm lens; A photograph taken from the same spot, using a wide-angle lens; A series of four photographs, where the two images on the left were taken with a normal lens, and the corresponding images on the right were taken using a macro lens.

All camera lenses distort the light and change what is really in front of the camera. Using each different type of lens, the photographer always has to choose what to show in each picture. He or she has to decide which lens will enable each specific image to be taken depending in the lighting conditions, distance from the subject, and affects desired with the images. Perhaps they want to show a close-up of a person’s facial expression, or they want to include numerous buildings in a scene depicting destruction after an attack. The choice of camera lens will affect what types of photographs are possible to take.

Decisive versus Random Moments

---

4 Photograph taken from the Website: http://www.popularmechanics.com/outdoors/sports/1283226.html?page=3
5 Photograph taken from the Website: http://www.bangkoksite.com/DigitalCamera/SonyH5/Comparison2.htm
6 Photograph taken from the Website: http://shop.brando.com.hk/image/
Photographers have the power to choose when to take a photograph to document an event, person, place, object, or concept. There are two main types of moments to capture on film. The first is called the “decisive moment,” which refers to capturing a specific moment in time when history is being made. A photographer may take this type of photograph for an assignment when he or she is given a specific concept, event, or historical moment to document. These images tend to show a recognized story that has a specific context with which people are familiar. Examples of “decisive moments” caught on film are images taken of the World Trade Center being hit by commercial planes during the September 11 attack in 2001. Photographs documenting that event represent a specific moment in history and are not likely to be mistaken as documentation of a different event.

The second type of moment to document with a camera is called the “random moment.” These types of images represent “that instant which could be any time and, therefore, can be every time.” (Lutz 1993: 59) These images can still carry an emotional stigma with them. Images capturing a “random moment” can be used to represent more than one event or concept, which distinguishes these images from those capturing “decisive moments.” A photograph depicting starving children in Somalia may have been taken on a specific day when a photographer was on assignment, but it could be used days, weeks, months, and even years later to explain the hunger and disease plaguing Somalis.

Photographers may use different techniques to create one of these two types of moments captured on film. They can set-up a scene to try to create a preconceived idea that they want to portray with their photographs. They can wait for an anticipated moment or climax during an event, such as documenting a winning touchdown, to help capture a mood or feeling. They may take hundreds or thousands of “snapshots,” but only have one or a select few images used for the
finished assignment. A photographer may react to the events taking place around them, making
the resulting photographs direct reactions to a sporadic moment witnessed. These decisions give
the photographer greater agency into what resulting photographs are meant to tell the viewers.

People can take photographs with the sole intention of providing a snapshot of a scene, person, or object. Many journalistic media associations will try to publish photographs that are multi-dimensional, not just pretty pictures. As one editor from National Geographic said about these types of images, “They are like onions… with many layers that can be peeled back. Though they provide information, they also have an aesthetic dimension that communicates feelings and emotions.” (Lutz 1993: 58)

Filters

Camera lens filters are used for different reasons. They protect the lenses from dust and other particles, for the glass on a lens is very delicate and prone to scratches. Certain filters are polarized, reducing the glare of an image by changing the angle of the light coming into the camera. This allows the photographer to see through water, glass, windows, and other reflective surfaces. Filters distort images in different ways. Some filters change the tonal value of an image, making reds seem darker than, say, green tones if using a red filter. These types of filters block certain colors, but let the color of the filter come through to the film, making those hues vivid.

Shutter Speed
One of the functions of the camera is Shutter Speed. This controls how fast the camera shutter opens and closes, affecting not only how much light is able to hit the film, but also the quality of motion that is captured. Faster shutter speeds can only be used when there is enough light to let in to the camera to produce an image. However, when a photographer captures motion on film with the faster shutters, the motion can be stopped, and the subject will be clear and crisp. A slower shutter speed lets the light in through the lens longer. If motion were being recorded onto film, it would appear blurred, and movement would be shown on the film.

On the left is an image of an apple hit by a bullet, taken using a fast shutter speed; on the right is an image of water taken with a slower shutter speed.

**Color versus Black and White**

The different types of films used and prices made affect how people read into the images. Both color photographs and black and white prints can be powerful, weak, attention grabbing, and memorable. Neither type of print is better or worse than the other. However, many newspapers and magazines use color images differently than black and white photographs.

I spoke to many different Colby College students, and asked a few of them how they felt about the use of color in newspapers and magazines. One student said that in newspapers she preferred color images to black and white ones, for they caught her attention first. I asked another student whether color or black and white photographs caught her attention more, and she

---

7 Photograph taken from the Website: http://www.linuxkungfu.org/images/fun/bullet-apple-s.jpg  
8 Photograph taken from the Website: http://taivasalla.net/2005/04/050417_2133_photos_eng.html
replied, “I don’t know, sometimes black and white can be more dramatic.” (Canton, November 16, 2006, personal communication) Later, when that same student was commenting on specific images shown to her, she analyzed one photograph saying, “I don’t think it’s as dramatic because the smoke isn’t as dark. It’s not as vivid in the colors.” This discrepancy drew my attention, for the same student found both the lack of color in photographs vivid color in photographs to be powerful and dramatic. This student felt that dull colors make certain images appear less dramatic and powerful.

Color photography inevitably changes the nature of representation. Color tends to dominate the photograph, often at the expense of line and movement. It affects the mood of the image in ways that may either reinforce or contradict the shape and placement of objects. Because of its high impact, color frequently becomes a consideration in choosing what subject to photograph or selecting among subjects already photographed. (Lutz 1993: 31)

Photographers have to be very aware of the type of film they choose to use, for color film can create an entirely new image that makes certain objects in a picture stand out because of their vivid hues. The emphasis on an image tends to be on the objects or subjects in the frame that catch, grab, and hold onto the attention of the viewer.

Magazines and newspapers use color images in different ways. In magazines, most of the images are printed in color, and usually on good, glossy paper that brings out the vivid objects in a scene. When mainstream magazines print images in black and white, it is usually a deliberate attempt to make a statement or enhance the quality of a photograph. Catherine Lutz describes the use of color in the National Geographic magazines, saying:

The use of color photography also highlighted the magazine’s similarity to museum exhibits—with their highly framed, aestheticized tidbits of traditional culture—rather than to starker news reportage or scientific documentation. Like museum exhibits (as well as catalogs and department stores), the Geographic laid out the wonders of the world for curious readers. (Lutz 1993: 32)
Newspapers use color in more select ways than magazines. Most newspapers, like the New York Times, print the front-page photographs in color. These images can be large or small, but they are mostly all printed using color ink. The subsequent pages in a newspaper are printed in black ink only. The photographs are not in color, even if they are stories that are continued from a front-page article. The only colors printed on the inside of these newspapers are from advertisements and entertainment reviews.

**Digital versus Film**

Digital cameras have created a completely different way of capturing journalistic scenes. The use of digital technology not only enables more photographs to be stored at a time on a memory chip, but it also changes how photographers are able to document and preserve time. Digital photographs can be deleted and erased from memory just as fast as they are captured. The quality of digital photographs can vary depending on the type of camera and memory chip used by the photographer. The use of digital technology makes it simple to distribute images quickly to a mass audience without the fear of damaging film or maintaining hard-copy photographs. Digital cameras also allow the photographer to see the image they just captured immediately, giving them the chance to re-take the photograph if they feel their earlier attempts were not successful. Film cameras do not have this feature, for the photographer has to have the film developed before being able to view the frames they captured.

Digital cameras can give photographers more freedom to travel around to different locations to get the shots they need. They do not have to worry about carrying multiple film canisters around with them because an internal memory chip can store all the images taken. This makes the picture-taking process faster and smoother, without having the constant interruptions
of repeatedly loading the film. Digital cameras also tend to be quieter when taking a picture, for the shutter does not make such a loud clicking noise.

While studying abroad in Australia in 2005, I interviewed an Australian woman named Jane Button who was doing her masters thesis on the politics of photography. She discussed the ways that digital photography is changing the face of photojournalism and photography. She felt that people do not usually think to look at the deeper contexts of an image they may see in the media.

The notion of identity or community becomes more volatile because you are not seeing things face to face, seeing how an image comes to find itself in its context, and where it comes from. It finds itself on its screen or in the paper, or on the gallery website. Wherever it is, it is a fractured form of community. I think the image is being fractured as much as it’s bringing people together; at the same time creating these new forms of virtual community…All we lose are you and your relationship to whatever it is you are photographing or photographed…the type of intimacy or distance, or connection you form with the photograph…. I think community changes in that the photograph used to be an image on paper, used to be a material format. Now it can be seen on screen or it could be deleted. Like memory. The idea of memory. Nostalgia. So when you come to find that moment of going through your grandma’s archives or at home and seeing images that related to the past, we’re not going to have that with the digital. So it is a loss of community at the same time. (Button, November 23, 2006, personal communication)

Jane Button sees the progression into digital technology as a way to both allow people to come together to form “virtual communities,” and to be able to share images on the computer at a faster rate. However, Button believes that digital cameras take away from the personal aspect of photography, since images can be created, shared, and destroyed with a simple click of a button.

When photographers use film cameras, they have to trust that they have focused the image correctly and have chosen the correct shutter speed and aperture settings to capture a good
Film cameras require more time to prep each frame taken because film cameras do not have an unlimited amount of memory space to store images. The photographers have to base the possibilities of what they are able to photograph on the amounts and types of film they have with them while on assignment. Once a photograph is taken and recorded on film, the image is there permanently. Unless the film is ruined or destroyed, that moment is documented permanently. An infinite number of photographs can be printed with a film negative, but the integrity of the image is determined by the state of the film. It has to be well preserved to protect it from scratches, rips, tears, or other damaging factors. The development of film and prints is a completely different process from printing digital images. Film cameras require the photographer to spend time with the images they take.

All forms of visual news media use these different types of controls and manipulations to create “affective” news stories through their images. Each form of media differs in how they use such manipulations, and some (like radio news broadcasts) do not use images at all. It is important to get a better idea of how the different news sources use their resources to understand how they manipulate the public using resources that are form-specific.
DIFFERENT TYPES OF NEWS MEDIA

Students gather knowledge from many different sources of news information. Some may be purely visual, while others require the audience to listen to a broadcast and rely on the words of the newscaster to obtain the story. It is important to understand all of the modes of information publishing in order to understand how the media as a whole has the ability to capture the audience and draw them in to hear what the news agencies have to say. Students at Colby relate to different types of media, and it is interesting to see how, and why, students choose certain news media over others.

Newspapers

Newspapers differ in other forms of news media in several ways. First, these publications are mass-produced to millions of readers each day. Second, the newspapers are generally distributed daily or weekly, giving what news agencies like to advertise as up-to-date news coverage. Third, newspapers in schools like Colby College are available for free and easily accessible to the students. Students at Colby do not have to pay for the newspapers they read while at school, so long as they are able to obtain a copy of a paper before they run out.

The mass production of newspapers means that more people are able to receive the publications at a lower cost of production. The publications are usually printed on “newsprint,” which is a lightweight material that can easily be recycled. Most newspapers cater to an audience that shares similar interests in topics like a specific geographic region, political view, or topic of news coverage. This affects how the newspapers circulate. People tend to buy and read specific newspapers that contain the types of articles they want to read. If a person wanted to read a newspaper with articles concerning business and financial news, they could pick up a copy
of the Wall Street Journal and have all of that news contained in the one publication. If a person wanted to read a newspaper that centers on news from the Boston area, they may pick up a copy of the Boston Globe, for the articles in this paper include news stories specific to this particular city.

Many students at Colby use newspapers as the source of their news information. One student explained that she relied mostly on this form of media because of the available nature of the newspapers around the campus. She said, “I think the newspaper is the most accessible thing. Like, when you are in a rush, you grab a newspaper.” Currently, there are four newspapers available to students in every dorm and dining hall: The New York Times, The Boston Globe, The Financial Times, and USA Today. There are also many more newspapers available to the students at the college library.

In a survey handed out to students electronically, I asked them what form of media they felt was most valid in reporting objective news. The students, all anonymous females, who answered that they relied mostly on newspapers were asked in the questionnaire why they felt newspapers were the most valid. The following are a few responses:

Newspapers not only give you the news, but they also allow for editorial opinions and a range of writers and sources give more varying viewpoints than really short sound bites on television broadcasts, or biased opinionated talk radio. (19, female)

I think it depends on what newspaper it is, but I think that in general, newspapers have less of an agenda than many TV programs or magazines. Magazines usually have a special focus, like you are always going to get the business perspective from the Wall Street Journal, or the economic perspective from The Economist, so there is a greater likelihood that magazines will be biased. (21, female)

I trust it more than other sources and I feel that even if one author is opinionated, there are enough different authors to balance it out. I feel that in magazines, TV news, and radio shows, there is more possibility for biased reporting. This is not
always the case at all, but in general, I feel that large newspapers are the most objective (not looking at editorials). (20, female)

Newspapers [have the] most information available, discerning readers who read multiple papers are able to get an accurate picture of the news. (22, female)

All of the students who responded to the question had mentioned that newspapers were valid because of the wide-range of writers, newspaper topics, and newspapers that were able to balance each other out to get a truthful view of the news. The first student felt that editorial opinions added to the validity of information found in newspapers. Meanwhile, the third student felt that editorials took away from the objective quality of the news source. This discrepancy was very interesting, for what one student feels is an important quality of the media may be very thing that another student dislikes. There are so many different attitudes towards the varying news sources, which shows perhaps why the news sources may rely on certain visual effects to draw in a larger audience.

Magazines

National Geographic’s Role in Photojournalism

Magazines, like newspapers, have multiple writers and perspectives published in a single volume or edition. Magazines tend to be published weekly, monthly, or annually. The high-quality paper that the magazines use to print the articles and stories makes it more expensive to print, which results in the publication of less editions.

I spoke with a nineteen-year old female student who said that she is drawn to magazine articles that are most shocking or graphic. At both Colby and while at home, she mainly reads
Time Magazine to gather information. No other student with whom I spoke claimed to receive a large portion of his or her news information from magazines.

There are many different types of magazines in circulation around the United States. Some magazine topics include: Politics; the Arts; Cultural Studies; Sciences; History; Sports; Business; Entertainment; Health; Hobby and Interest; Food; Pornography; and Electronics. Magazines seem less centered around appealing to people of a specific geographical region. Rather, they seem to try to target the interest of people associated with specific genders, ages, or political affiliations. People from all over the country may read, and even subscribe to, the same magazines even if their geographic location differs greatly. The content of the magazines draws the different readers in. While there are hundreds of magazines that publish journalistic articles, I chose to focus on how National Geographic operates in the world of photojournalism.

According to a study done in 1993, an estimated thirty-seven million people worldwide read at least one issue of National Geographic magazine. National Geographic is not only a subscription magazine, but it is also used in different schools for aid in learning about “exotic” locations from all over the world, natural history, and culture. According to Catherine Lutz and Jane Collins, authors of the book Reading National Geographic, “[The magazine’s] prestige value affords it a place on coffee tables; its high-quality printing and binding and its reputation as a valuable reference tool mean that it is rarely thrown away, more frequently finding its way into attics and secondhand bookstores.” (Lutz 1993:3)

I used Lutz’s book as the source of most of my information about this magazine. The ideas and facts given in Reading National Geographic were collected using anthropological methods of gathering information. The authors interviewed numerous people from this magazine to get an “insider look” at National Geographic and the National Geographic Society.
While I was unable to interview people from within the magazine myself, I feel that Lutz and Collins have used legitimate methods for collecting data.

The National Geographic Society, located in Washington, D.C., produces the National Geographic magazine. In Lutz’s book, she and Collins argue:

…That while the messages contained in National Geographic photos are highly specific in terms of the world view they encode—that of the white, educated, middle class—they speak to, and draw into their vision, a far larger group, extending from highly educated professionals and managers through white-collar clericals and technicians into the working class and lower ranks of the service sector. The magazine claims to articulate a national vision, addressing the concerns and curiosity of all U.S. citizens. (Lutz 1993: 6)

National Geographic Magazine is published to cater to a wide variety of customers. Its contents attract the interest of people from different economic, social, religious, and political backgrounds. It does this by making its pictures a hybrid of art photography and photojournalism, publishing images that are expressive, educational, and powerful, blending the boundary between entertainment and science.

Despite the fact that these photographic statements about human nature have clearly been commissioned by way of the charge to photographers, and the story as conceptualized by the Planning Council and picture editor, they are packaged and offered to readers as truths found in the field. (Lutz: 62-63)

Many readers take what they see in National Geographic for truth because of the scientific quality of the journal. This makes the magazine very similar to a travel magazine that shows the truth about the world. To many readers, the dramatic quality of the photographs and depictions of the “exotic,” stand out more than the historical significance of the photographs. This makes National Geographic photographs appear similar to those a person would find on a postcard or taken by tourists.
Because tourism is so popular and because it is considered a particularly “reliable” way to understand realities, it is not surprising that these magazines’ [Time, Life, and National Geographic] articles and photo-essays are often, in effect, tourist trips with the editors, reporters and photographers acting as tour guides. (Lutz 1993: 32)

National Geographic photographers know that they must use all different types of compositional elements to try to attract readers to the magazine. Because of this desire to draw in more revenue from people subscribing to the magazine, the photographic quality in the magazine is superb, and is always printed using vivid colors on the nice paper. Perhaps these attention-grabbing images and qualities of each issue have made people reluctant to throw out old National Geographic magazines. In addition, each issue is not only well-made and small enough to be distinguished in size and able to take up less room in a bag on top of a table, but the bright yellow signature cover makes the magazine stand out on a shelf. The magazine is renowned and highly thought of, and this causes collectors to continue subscriptions of, what some see, as a low-cost, weekly encyclopedia. Because of this, readers are likely to not only take what the writers and journalists say as fact and truth, but readers are also likely to repeatedly read this publication as a source of information about the world.

The Radio

Radio news broadcasts are an important media to understand in the context of how students obtain their news. While the radio is a non-visual medium, it is just as important to understand why students may prefer this form of news broadcasts to other visual forms of news.

Through a survey, I asked students if, and why, they felt the radio is the most valid form of objective media in reporting the news. One student replied:
Specifically NPR does a good job of presenting objective information through their programs. They aim to present speakers with various views on issues and vary their shows as well. Indeed, I do not believe that it is the actual radio medium that does a good job presenting objective news, it is specifically the NPR program – newspapers, magazines, and the other media sources do not have such objectively aimed counterparts. (19, female)

Another student said:

Public radio, like NPR is funded by the state. Newspapers, magazines and television channels are owned by major corporations that could be biased. Internet sites are not always checked for accuracy. (21, female)

I found it very interesting that the only two people who felt that the radio was the most objective form of news both spoke only about NPR (National Public Radio) in their responses.

NPR is a producer and distributor of non-commercial news, talk, and entertainment programming. It is a non-profit organization, and each week about 26 million Americans listen to NPR broadcasts. There are more than 800 radio stations produced by NPR around the country, and each of these stations gives both local and global news broadcasts. (NPR 2007) The first student who responded to the questionnaire felt that the news becomes more objective due to the varying opinions discussed by multiple speakers on the radio shows. The second quoted student liked the fact that the state is the main source of funding for NPR, rather than by larger corporations who have control over what broadcasters say to the public. These students both felt that newspapers, magazines, the internet, and television broadcasts were biased, whether by passing through too many hands before being published, or by not being checked for accuracy before being released to the public. While many students like having images and words in front of them when obtaining their news, it seems that the students who were consciously aware of the validity of information published by the media were bigger fans of using the radio for news
stories and broadcasts. Visual aids are not always needed when telling a news story, and some of the students do need images to obtain knowledge about current affairs. This is significant, for the students who listened to the news on the radio were doing so because they were most concerned with the validity of information broadcasted this way.

**Television News Broadcasts**

Television news broadcasts constantly run on air through multiple television stations, providing many different news stories to people at home. Either news stories have video segments showing a news story, or they have a news correspondent or news anchor who reads a news clip to a camera. In many cases, a photograph appears on the television screen to accompany the story read to the viewers. Different news channels and programs report the news in various, unique ways, but most main television news broadcasts are not only focused around certain topics, but they are also centered around journalists, reporters, or news anchors narrating a story about whatever news story is being covered. While different news shows may be topic-specific, sometimes the actual television broadcasting stations are known to cover different types of news stories. It is important to see the types of news broadcasted through television in order to understand why viewers are attracted to this form of media.

ESPN specializes in news about sports games and highlights. Casual conversations with students lead me to believe that male students are more likely to watch ESPN than their female counterparts, because of their interest in the subject matter of the broadcasts and the headline news segments. Comedy Central presents pop cultural news through shows like The Daily Show with Jon Stewart and the Colbert Report. These satirical talk shows present the public a comedic, lighter side to current events, while still making a statement about where the hosts and
the television station stand politically. Students felt attracted by this aspect of Comedy Central’s programs, and watched these shows with the knowledge that the news segments are skewed and biased.

I spoke with many students about television news broadcasts, and discussed the issues surrounding the subjectivity of their news stories. One student explained why she preferred the news on the television to other forms of news media, saying, “It seems like [the news] is coming in live. It’s less of a chance to go over and change things, like in newspapers. Like, breaking news, I don’t think that that’s fake.” (Canton, November 16, 2006, personal communication) I then asked the same student whether she felt her political affiliation affected what news she obtained, and she replied, “Well, isn’t FOX like republican? I don’t really care though. I just watch anything. And if I see something that I know is biased I’m just like ‘you’re an idiot.’ I watch the Colbert report, and John Stewart. That’s where I get some my news, which is obviously biased… at night my parents always watch the news, so I watch the news. And my dad watches Steven Colbert on TiVo, and I watch it with him.” This student was aware that the media she obtained was subjective, yet she felt she could tell when a television newscast, or a newspaper article, was biased. She did not seem to have a problem with the biased nature of news broadcasts, for she felt in control of the information she was receiving from these news segments. She also believed that the video clips or photomontages during news broadcasts were helpful in showing the “truth” about the events described in a news story.

This student was not the only one who mentioned FOX News during an interview with me, or when filling out a questionnaire. Another student spoke about the validity of television news broadcasts:
People have ideas about what they want to have captured before they go in. I mean, if you think of FOX news, they obviously are a little skewed. I feel that media for a lot of reporting is propaganda…. my parents really only watch FOX news… (Laughs) yeah, they watch it everyday. And, I think they know that it’s biased and doesn’t show any…you know… like, the O’Reilly Factor, that has a strong Republican, or Conservative arguing a point, there will be a weak liberal arguing the other side of it. And once you notice it, or once you know it’s happening, that’s all you look for. So, I guess the same thing could be true for pictures too. But it’s harder to tell if you are not there what’s real and what’s not real. (Grossman, November 16, 2006, personal communication)

This student was aware of the biased nature of talk shows and television shows discussing political, social, and other such issues. She explained that once she noticed the subjectivity during a journalistic segment, that aspect of the news coverage was all she would look for during the broadcast, and remember after the broadcast.

Both students, in their separate interviews, mentioned their parents and the news that they watch when talking about television news broadcasts. They each made it clear that they watch the news on the television more when they are home. They associated the discussion of television news with their parents’ news watching habits. They did not necessarily watch the same programs as their parents, but they were aware of how their parents interacted with the television news. This reference back to their parents shows how the viewing habits of the students can be related to how they respond to the viewing habits of their parents.

In a survey handed out, no students said that they mostly receive their news from television news broadcasts, and no students said that they felt television news broadcasts were the most valid form of objective media in reporting the news. It seems that the objective nature of reporting and presenting television news stories does not attract as many of the students I surveyed as I had expected before conducting the fieldwork. The biased nature of the reporting stood out in the minds of the students as a reason why this form of media was not deemed valid.
The fact that Colby students are living in the context of a college student in Maine may affect why students were more likely to watch television news broadcasts at home than at school. Time available to watch television news could factor into reasons why this form of media was not embraced by the students I spoke with.

The Internet

The New York Times

The internet is a relatively new form of communication that allows for fast, globalized sharing of information. One type of internet site that many students at Colby use to gather information is a website affiliated with a newspaper or magazine that the students would read. The New York Times website is a great example of such a site, and it is an interesting case study in how major news corporations use the internet to spread information and attract readers and future subscribers.

The New York Times website is an interesting hybrid of the digital capabilities of internet sites and the newspaper with which it is affiliated. Established in 1996, the website gives readers access to its news stories via the World Wide Web. In 2005 the company made the decision to give its readers limited access to the paper, and allowed people to only see the archives if they paid a fee. There is a feature of the New York Times website called TimesSelect. Users have to buy this feature. It gives “exclusive access” to Op-Ed and news columnists on the website, and it allows users to access to the online archives of the newspaper. The articles on the New York Times website are not available to all users first thing in the morning. However, people who have TimesSelect accounts are able to gain early access to the newspaper online.
The easy access and simple organized navigation through the website make it easier for people to find their way to, and through, the website. Readers are automatically directed to the main page of the internet site when they type into the internet search engine: www.nytimes.com, www.newyorktimes.com, www.nytimes.com, www.newyorktimes.org, newyorktimes.com, or www.thenewyorktimes.com. Such a variety of URLs allow people to inaccurately enter the name of a website, yet still be directed to the site’s main page.

The headlines of the daily newspaper are displayed at the top of the main webpage early each morning. The site shows frequent updates throughout the day with articles known as “breaking news” coverage reports that gradually replace the original headlines at the top of the page. Of the headlines featured on the top of the page, only one or two large, main photographs are shown on the homepage. These photographs draw more attention to the news stories that accompany them. The headlines shown throughout the day are updated news stories that are not always featured in the newspaper. As new headlines appear over time, the daily newspaper headlines are gradually replaced and move toward the bottom of the homepage.

In the daily newspapers, articles are categorized by specific topics. They are located either on the Front Page, or in one of the following newspaper sections: International, National Report, Obituaries, Editorials, Op-Ed and Letters, The Metro Section, Business Day, Sports, or The Arts. The articles on the Front Page are thought to be the most attention grabbing and are given special consideration. Newspapers want to draw in more readers, and therefore more profit, by appealing to the public with a unique and intriguing front page. This is to make the readers want to buy their product over another.

The New York Times website operates differently, for the stories that are seen as “Front Page”-worthy are mixed together with the rest of the news stories from that days’ publication.
They are categorized by topic, and a story can be found in the following sections on the website: World, U.S., Washington, N.Y./Region, Science, Health, Education, Real Estate, Business, Technology, Sports, Travel, Dining & Wine, Home & Garden, Fashion & Style, Automobiles, Opinion, Arts, Movies, Theater, Books, Week in Review, and Magazine. There is a broader range of categories that the stories can fall into, and this makes it easier for online viewers to navigate through the articles that interest them. There is a link on the New York Times homepage that allows users to view that day’s newspaper as it was printed on paper, but this feature seems to be secondary to the main site that is dominated by more updated news coverage stories. The website draws in more viewers and a larger audience by making the site easier to navigate through, and filled with up-to-date articles that make readers visit the site numerous times to get updated information throughout the day.

Many students at Colby use the internet to obtain their news. One student, who spoke about why she relied on the internet for information, said, “Multiple news sites portray views on different sides of issues, allowing the reader to compare in order to find a middle ground of truth.” (Female, 22 years old) This student felt it was the broad range of websites that enabled her to validate the information she received by checking with multiple websites to see if there was continuity between the stories being told. The “middle ground of truth” is a very interesting concept, for the student feels that truth can be found with a compromise between what multiple sources say is fact. Another student, a nineteen year-old female, answered that same question almost verbatim, saying, “There are more places where the information can be found. Also, you can get many different views of the same story. More reliable.” These two students liked how many different sides to a story can be published on the internet, reminding them that there is
always subjectivity behind each news story. They both found the internet to be a good source for finding truth in subjectivity.
BACKGROUND RESEARCH

Work on this project began with finding and reading much of the available literature on the politics of photography, journalism, and the creation of meaning through visual means. It was crucial to gather as much background information as possible to understand how photographers and photographic editors are able to manipulate what their viewers see using both technology and their own personal subjectivity. The methods used by the media to direct the eyes of their viewers and to evoke in them particular emotional reactions and thought responses has always been an area of great interest.

*Life Photographers: What They Saw* is a fascinating collection of interviews with photojournalists that appeared in Life Magazine during the time when it was still a weekly publication. The interviews provided excellent insight into the types of experiences that the photographers had while on assignment for the publication. They revealed that many of the photographers were aware of the types of images the editors expected to capture, even before the photographers received the assignments and went out into the field to document their story.

Editors chose the photographers based not only on their experience behind the camera, but also on their style of photography. For example, most of the assignments requiring portrait photographs for Life Magazine were given to Martha Holmes, for her talent for taking portraits was well known. She perfected a technique that allowed her to tweak the angles of a shot and combined this with her mastery of lighting manipulations to flatter her subjects and create illusions to make asymmetrical facial features seem more even and less noticeable. (Loengard 1998: 210) Photographers who specialize in a certain type of photography or photographic technique can expect to be hired for assignments that would allow them to showcase their talents and abilities.
Most of the photographers in this book made a point of distinguishing their work for the magazine from “Art,” and from straight journalism. The term “photojournalism” implies something different from straight news coverage, and, in the opinion of many of the photographers, the products are not works of art, but rather functional products that contain meaning. When asked whether they considered themselves journalists, some of the replies were:

Andreas Feininger: “A photojournalist. It means a person who tries to show other people something interesting. It is always based on something real. It is not like an abstract painting, which just exists in the painter’s mind.” (Loengard: 160)

John Florea: “A photojournalist is basically an editor, he’s a writer, he’s a cameraman.” (Loengard: 170)

David E. Scherman: “My concept of photojournalism is that it’s pictorialism with a meaning. If you were lucky enough to get the exact instant of a guy being shot. You couldn’t beat that. But if you didn’t get the picture at the exact instant, you kept the meaning in mind and you faked the picture, or reframed it…. I was enough of a journalist to realize that you invent a good picture.” (Loengard: 115)

These responses, and others, increased my interest in learning the extent to which photographers are able to influence the messages projected to the public. In the book Reading National Geographic, Lutz and Collins explain the roles of photography in National Geographic Magazine.

The notion of a story told in pictures is crucial to the photographic process at National Geographic. One picture editor said outright, ‘This is not travelogue, it is not journalism, it is not an art magazine, it is storytelling.’…Photographers are encouraged to be creative in illustrating ideas. They are expected to have a sense of scene, a feel for the unusual and interesting, a sense of drama, and ability to appeal to the sense; but they are expected to use these capacities in service of the charge they are given. (Lutz 1993: 56)
Convinced that diversity is crucial to holding an audience, editors seek to achieve an appropriate mix of serious and light material, negative and positive topics, short and long pieces, and strive for a balanced representation of political views and appropriate amounts of coverage of world areas. (Lutz: 65)

There was a tremendous flexibility to be had by manipulating the boundaries between science and entertainment. Editors concerned with market imperatives could justify photographs that glorified the exotic and ritualistic aspects of primitive societies or that sensationalized head-hunting, cannibalism, mutilation, or tattoo, on the grounds that they were picturesque or otherwise piqued interest. Presented in a magazine that claimed to present ‘true facts’ in a judicious manner, these images were given a scholarly veneer, and the readers were given reinforcement for old prejudices. Editors tended to choose photographs that were likely to appeal to an American audience; these were then fed back to the reading public as examples of the latest, brightest scientific knowledge. (Lutz: 24)

Photographers have tremendous knowledge of their subject. But knowledge is not driving everything. The photographer reacts based on this knowledge, but doesn’t go out to illustrate it. (Lutz: 58)

The photographers at National Geographic use their own judgment to capture journalistic images. However, they have to work within the context of the National Geographic Society and its morals and ethics. Profit and balance are key factors in deciding how National Geographic images should function.

The Politics of Representation: Writing Practices in Biography, Photography, and Policy Analysis by Michael J. Shapiro heavily influenced the direction of this project. He believes that the caption accompanying an image helps people create the meaning of an image within the context of the publication it is found in. His rationale is that photojournalistic images “. . . are contextualized differently, for the signifying force of the news photograph tends to be function of the captioning and accompanying journalistic text, not of its place in a photographic sequence.” (Shapiro 1988: 129) Publications use photographs for aesthetic purposes and help to explain the
captions, rather than to explain the story. Of nine students asked whether they felt captions are necessary to accompany an image in news sources, seven replied yes.

Shapiro explains how people should interpret images by stating, “When we interrogate photographs from the point of view of how they speak/think politically, it is necessary to think of them as discursive practices situated within the general economy of societal practices.” (Shapiro 1988: 129) Photographs are complex creations that are created in one specific context, but read within the contexts of both the reader and the publication. Shapiro discussed Roland Barthes, who felt that the reading of photographs is governed by “the set of social codes with which the photograph and viewer interact…Photography can be subversive; it can awaken thought when the images suggest a meaning different from the literal one.” (Shapiro: 128) While this book did an excellent job of explaining how meaning is created from images, it does not give any evidence that the claims made in the book were based on actual interviews or fieldwork. My project included observing the reactions of Colby College students when viewing manipulated photojournalistic images, as well as asking the students directly what they felt about the media. The students’ reactions help lead to a better understanding of how and why they form certain meanings from reading the images.

A collection of essays, Fields of Vision: Essays in Film Studies, Visual Anthropology, and Photography, addresses the ways in which film media represents culture to tell a story and to reveal “truths.” Chapter Six contains an essay written by Bernd Hüppauf, titled, “Modernism and the Photographic Representation of War and Destruction.” This essay provided valuable insight into photography in times of war, and the issues faced by the photographers who are required to balance the need to create a meaningful and powerful image with the objectivity needed to portray reality. Hüppauf (1995) points out that photographers who create
representations of modern warfare “are faced with a structural dilemma: their moral commitment more often than not is linked to a visual code that clashes with aesthetic requirements of visualizing a reality that has become highly abstract,” (Hüppauf 1995: 96). The question he raises about newspaper photographs taken during times of conflict is whether they more accurately portray the image of an actual event or the image generated by the photographer’s need to create a visually aesthetic work of art.

Initial predictions for this project were that it would reinforce my beliefs about how people are negatively manipulated to see the world in a specific way by the power of the images. Hüppauf’s (1995) essay forced a reexamination of that expectation, as a new appreciation developed for the difficult task faced by photojournalists. Their editors expect to receive images that will sell newspapers and magazines and that will convince the reader of the story. At the same time, the photographers must convey a moral photograph that will give their readers a perspective of the news that is as close to reality as the newspaper deems sufficient.

The first part of my fieldwork examines the reaction of Colby College students to images taken during a time of conflict that photographers and editors manipulated to make the images more powerful and compelling. This case study reveals how members of the Colby College student body interact with the images. The following pages examine their opinions on the nature of manipulated images.
PROCESS

Having only two semesters to work on this project, the subjects were limited to Colby College students. The reaction of a very small number of students does not allow me to generalize about the entire student population at Colby. Since time restriction allowed no alternatives, I designed the interview and data collection processes to make each student’s own reflections and responses separate and unique. The testimonies of each student are individual viewpoints that allow me to see the different ways that the media controls students.

Before beginning the fieldwork, I read several pieces of literature on the politics of photography, seeing, and the media to gain a better understand of photojournalism and its critiques. The literature included:

Between the Eyes: Essays on Photography and Politics, by David Levi Strauss;
Ways of Seeing, by John Berger;
Politics of the Media, by Ian Ward; and
The Troubles of Journalism: A Critical Look at What’s Right and Wrong with the Press, by William A. Hachten.

While much of this literature was very interesting and helpful, the authors did not use anthropological methods for gathering their data. Most of the literature seemed to be based upon assumptions and were meant to be read as critiques of different functions of photojournalism. Conducting the fieldwork for this project presented me the opportunity to observe, first-hand, the impact of manipulated images on the subjects. It also allowed me to use anthropological methods of gathering, interpreting, and analyzing information to research a subject I am very interested. I wanted to provide a better understanding of the photojournalistic process without creating a large, generalized statement meant to discredit the world of photojournalism.
Introduction to Fieldwork

The fieldwork began by narrowing the countless potential images to show students to four pictures, plus three related photographs that prove the deliberate manipulation of the images. The only images considered were those that had been intentionally altered, deliberately staged, or misprinted. The design of the fieldwork would allow the subjects to view the photographs and then observe their interaction with the different types of images they were seeing. The information gathered included the subjects’ reactions, whether they noticed the alterations in the images, and the processes that the students used to create meaning from the images. The next step would involve evaluating the effectiveness of newspapers, magazines, and online news sources in achieving their intent to express a certain message within the images. Knowing the specific intent of a photographer or editor might be impossible. However, it is possible to understand the mission of those who had the power to disseminate the “news” to the public by studying the available literature, including the guidelines and regulations published by the news sources themselves.

The Images

Choosing the images was a daunting task. Because of the massive quantity of news photographs, only those published within the last ten years were considered. Focusing on the more recent photographs also made it more likely that the subjects would be familiar with the images or with the events depicted. That familiarity would allow them to create more contexts for the images, rather than requiring them to create meaning from a photograph depicting a completely unknown event or subject.
Recent photographs are more likely to have been created or manipulated by digital equipment. Digital photography and affordable professional-grade photo-editing software have become commonplace for journalistic photographers and editors. Digital photographic technology has taken over the consumer and professional market, resulting in dramatic reductions in the production of 35mm film and equipment over the past several years.

Limiting the photographs to those published within the last 10 years proved to helpful, but was still too broad a category, as the volume of available images remained unmanageable. The books *Fields of Vision* (1995) and *Journalism after September 11* (2002) both made me think more about photographs of conflict, and they led to the decision to limit the photographs to those with a common theme. The books established three types of photographs typically published during times of international conflict:

1. Those intended to shock the viewer;
2. Those intended to calm the viewer; and
3. Those intended to convince the viewer to see one “side” as right while they are in a state of emotional trauma.

In the chapter titled, “Photography, Journalism, and Trauma” in *Journalism after September 11*, Barbie Zelizer states:

> The well-worn adage of “seeing is believing” seems to work particularly well in times of trauma… Photography is well-suited to take individuals and collectives on the journey to a post-traumatic space. The frozen images of the still photographic visual record are a helpful way of mobilizing a collective’s post-traumatic response. (Zelizer 2002: 49)

Zelizer’s comments present an excellent way of thinking about headline images. In the author’s opinion, pictures of war, conflict, and tragedy give us a way of remembering the past and looking to the future for change. Because of the information presented in these books, the
images were further narrowed to those taken in times of conflict and war. These types of images seemed to be the ones that would be most likely to spark emotion within the students because of their shock value and moral subject matter. My own fascination with images of conflict and war was already heightened by personal experience with the media and the realization that images of war are very different from any other type of photographs.

The next step was to narrow the images to one specific time of conflict, with the finalists being the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks and the 2006 conflict along the Lebanese border between Israel and Hezbollah. The students’ probable familiarity with the events of September 11 meant that they would already know about the context of the images before reading the captions. The objective of the fieldwork was to observe how the subjects analyzed unknown images, so that they could use their own tools and contexts to create meaning.

While the Israeli-Hezbollah conflict made the headlines throughout the United States, general awareness and emotional attachment of the conflict seemed to be lower than for the September 11 attacks. The international boundaries make the conflict less personal for American students. Therefore, all of the images chosen were photographs taken in Lebanon during the Israeli-Hezbollah conflict. The four images selected were all manipulated, but each in a different way. Three additional images would be shown, to help the students see the manipulation. All of the photographs appear on the Zombie Times website, titled, “The Reuters Photo Scandal,” (2006) but the images appear on several other websites as well. Each of the students viewed the photographs described below:
Photographs 1A and 1B

Image has been resized

Photograph 1A, above, depicts a scene of Beirut after Israeli warplanes attacked the city. Billows of black smoke pour out of the city, completely overwhelming the scene. Photograph 1A was published by the New York Times over a caption that read: “Smoke billows from burning buildings destroyed during an overnight Israeli air raid on Beirut’s suburbs August 5, 2006. Many buildings were flattened during the attack. REUTERS/Adnan Hajj

Photograph taken from the website: <http://www.zombietime.com/reuters_photo_fraud/>
Photograph 1B, above, is the original version of Photograph 1A, before any digital alteration. Photograph 1B also depicts a scene of Beirut after Israeli warplanes attacked the city, but with considerably less smoke over the city. The color of the smoke is much lighter than in the published version of the picture. A comparison of the two images easily exposes the digital alteration. By digital manipulation, a single plume of smoke rising from a building was made darker and copied onto the image to make the smoke appear much more extensive and sinister than in the original. The digital alteration also duplicated a building in the original photograph, so the same building appears twice in Photograph 1A.

When asked to explain why the published image was so different from the original, Hajj claimed that the image was distorted inadvertently while he was removing dust marks from the original photograph with Adobe Photoshop. Reuters fired Hajj for producing fraudulent images. These two images demonstrate the level of control that photographers and editors use in digitally manipulating images.

---

10 Photograph taken from the website: <http://www.zombietime.com/reuters_photo_fraud/>
Photograph 2A, above, published July 22, 2006, is a vertically oriented portrayal of a woman, anguished by the destruction of her home, presumably behind her, in an Israeli attack. The caption read, “A Lebanese woman wails after looking at the wreckage of her apartment, in a building that was demolished by the Israeli attacks in southern Beirut July 22, 2006. REUTERS/Issam Kobeisi.”

11 Photograph taken from the website: <http://www.zombietime.com/reuters_photo_fraud/>
Photograph 2B, above, is very similar to 2A, but was published 14 days later. This image was taken by Hussein Mallas, an Associated Press photographer. It also depicts a woman mourning the loss of her home. It was accompanied by a caption that read, "A Lebanese woman reacts at the destruction after she came to inspect her house in the suburbs of Beirut, Lebanon, Saturday, Aug. 5, 2006, after Israeli warplanes repeatedly bombed the area overnight."

When viewed separately, each image tells a story of Israeli attacks destroying a woman's home. When viewed together, it is obvious that the same woman appears as the subject of both photographs; she bears the same facial scars and is dressed identically in both images. The captions mislead viewers into believing that the photographs depict two separate women, each losing their home at different times. It is certain, therefore, that at least one of the captions is a fabrication, unless this Lebanese woman owned two homes, which were each destroyed on separate occasions. These photographs illustrate the ability to use the same image repeatedly, in different contexts, to illustrate and prove fabricated events.

---

12 Photograph taken from the website: <http://www.zombietime.com/reuters_photo_fraud/>
Photograph 3A, above, published on the New York Times online website, was taken by New York Times photographer, Tyler Hicks. It depicts people in Lebanon helping to recover bodies from the wreckage caused by Israeli attacks. In this photograph, a man is pulling a limp body from the middle of the rubble and debris. The caption reads, "The mayor of Tyre said that in the worst hit areas, bodies were still buried under the rubble, and he appealed to the Israelis to allow government authorities time to pull them out." Taken together, the caption and picture leave the clear impression that the limp body is one of the "bodies still buried under the rubble," having been killed by the Israeli attack.

13 Photograph taken from the website: <http://www.zombietime.com/reuters_photo_fraud/>
Photograph 3B, above, was also published on the New York Times online website, and was taken by the same photographer and published in the same photo-essay. In this image, a few men appear among the rubble, with one of the men wearing a green hat and gesturing toward the debris. The caption reads, “Tuesday night’s strike, which wounded 12 people, had been the third in that part of Tyre.”

Upon closer investigations, it is now clear that the limp body being pulled from the rubble in Picture 3A is the same man in the green hat appearing in Picture 3B. While both images were published at the same time and in the same context, it is interesting that the man in the hat could be portrayed as being rescued in one picture and as a rescuer in the other. Once the obvious manipulation became exposed to the public, the New York Times issued a correction to the caption of the first image, saying:

14 Photograph taken from the website: <http://www.zombietime.com/reuters_photo_fraud/>
A picture caption with an audio slide show on July 27 about an Israeli attack on a building in Tyre, Lebanon, imprecisely described the situation in the picture. The man pictured, who had been seen in previous images appearing to assist with the rescue effort, was injured during that rescue effort, not during the initial attack, and was not killed. (Zombietime.com)

Based on the New York Times admission, these photographs illustrate the power of fabricated captions to mislead the viewer. Still unanswered is the possibility that both of these photographs were deliberately staged. The message in Photograph 3A is that the limp body that the rescuers are pulling from the rubble is one of the dead bodies still buried under the rubble. It is probable that the photographer was a part of the ruse. It is also possible that the man portraying the dead man and his rescuers manipulated the scene without the photographer’s knowledge. Either way, the images have been manipulated to prove the truthfulness of the story.
Photograph 4, above, is a picture of a Minnie Mouse doll taken among the debris in Lebanon. While the photographer remains anonymous, the purpose of the photograph may have been to enrage the viewer by showing the effects of an Israeli attack on Hezbollah. The picture depicts an area of horrible destruction, with everything fragmented, broken, in muddled shades of brown and gray. The only object in the photograph that has any vivid color in the frame is the Minnie Mouse doll, strategically placed, face-up, in the center of the foreground. The aim of this photograph seems to be suggestive of child deaths or injuries during this event.

15 Photograph taken from the website: <http://www.zombietime.com/reuters_photo_fraud/>
While not conclusive, the Minnie Mouse doll is clean and in perfect condition, but sits atop a mound of destruction and dust-covered rubble. It seems highly improbable that the doll just happened to land in that position on its own, waiting for the photographer to arrive.

Two other photographs (See Appendix AP1 and AP2), taken by an Associated Press photographer, appeared along side the image of the Minnie Mouse Doll on a website titled “AP Captures Hezbollah Setting up Photo Shoot for Reuters.” Those photographs, though not shared with the students, also tend to discredit the truthfulness of Photograph 4. In Photograph AP1, a man is opening a briefcase full of children’s toys, as he stands among the rubble. In the other photograph, Photograph AP2, the same man is walking through the rubble toward the camera, while holding the Minnie Mouse doll and another children’s doll in his hands. I did not show the two images in the appendix to the students during their interviews. By creating a context for Photograph 4 that was inconclusive, I would have been manipulating the students’ observations and emotional responses. All of the other manipulations have been proven by the media and by specialists to be real. The crop placement speculation of the Minnie Mouse doll is not a proven fact, so it would be hypocritical of me to state such claims as fact.

The series of photographs leads to the obvious conclusion that the man brought the toys to the rubble and deliberately placed the doll in front of the camera. Unfortunately, since the order of the images is unknown, it is impossible to verify that conclusively. It is possible that Photograph 4 was captured, and then the man in Photograph AP2 picked the Minnie Mouse doll up and placed it in the briefcase shown in Photograph AP1. The website also shows that an AP photographer was exposing a Reuters hoax, indicating clear competition between the different news agencies, which is also a reason why the “obvious” crop placement could be a false claim assumed by the viewers because of the expected order of images.
OBSERVATIONS

Methods of Fieldwork

Deciding how to conduct the fieldwork was difficult. The original plan was to create focus groups to discuss the images that the group would view on a slide projector. It was very difficult to gather students together for the hour needed, at any particular time and place. After much effort, one miniature focus group was formed, comprised of two students. During that focus group, the students were able to interact with me and with each other about their ideas and interpretation of the images presented to them. Another original idea for a fieldwork method was to incorporate free listing, to allow the subjects to write down all of their reactions to the photographs. However, I realized that free-listing was not going to be as helpful a method as I initially predicted, for people would not be able to explain their reasoning for certain interpretations. I wanted people to discuss their responses to questions and images to help gain a better understanding of how the students created meaning. The discussions and interview sessions made these discourses more available and possible.

To continue the needed fieldwork, it was necessary to interview students individually at a time and place of their choosing. By conducting individual interviews, each subject enjoyed the freedom to express their unique relationships with the photojournalistic images. All responses during the formal interviews, including the miniature focus group, were recorded electronically. The fieldwork also included numerous informal discussions with students on the politics of photojournalism. While not electronically recorded, several trends emerged in the responses received during the informal discussions. These trends also appeared during the formal interviews. The informal conversations helped to identify the types of discourse that would
make the students feel comfortable discussing the subject matter. To select the most effective interview style, several were tested in discussions with students and faculty members.

Before the interview process began, I wrote down questions that I felt were important to ask or to mention to the students. The initial list of twenty-five questions was cut and pruned down to ten specific refined ones. The decision to use prepared questions as an aide was to avoid making the interview overly formal and to keep the conversation moving in a more clear and logical manner. Limiting the number of questions allowed me to be more focused on the students' responses and demeanor. It also encouraged the students to think for themselves as the conversation flowed into a natural and free discourse. The questions were used as a sense of security in case the interview was at a standstill.

Recording the interviews allowed me to gather information without making the task of taking notes to compromise my ability to listen and observe. I was able to truly listen to the students and respond to them, without being distracted by constantly writing down responses. As precautionary measures, I tested the Dictaphone multiple times to make sure that it worked, and kept a few extra tapes on hand incase the interviews lasted longer than anticipated. The students picked the time and a place to conduct the interviews, so that they felt more comfortable and less distracted by what was going on around them.

Later, during second semester, I sent out a questionnaire to about fifty people asking them questions about why they each thought certain forms of news media were more effective than others, and gave the students time and space to explain their responses.
Interview #1

The first interview was conducted on November 16, 2006 at 1:15 p.m. The student and I met in “The Street” under Miller Library. I spoke with a female senior who was already familiar with the topic of my project. In order to protect the privacy of this student, I will refer to her by the fictitious name of Cindy Grossman. The interview began as I asked Cindy questions about what grabs her attention when first approaching a newspaper or magazine. She said:

I guess I notice the picture that it has on the cover, and more so than the titles of the articles or the main headlines…often times I’m drawn to [magazines] that have a sort of scandalous picture on the front of it…In newspapers, I usually focus more on the picture if it’s graphic, I guess. Like pictures from Iraq. (Grossman, November 16, 2006, personal communication)

For Cindy, images catch her attention because of the emotional ties that she has to the subject matter or the image being shown. The interview went on:

Valerie Friedman: So, in reporting the news, what do you think is the most valid form of media?

Cindy Grossman: Valid form of the media… how so? I mean, I think media in itself is…not objective whatsoever. People have ideas about what they want to have captured before they go in. I mean, if you think of FOX news, they obviously are a little skewed. I feel that media for a lot of reporting is propaganda.

VF: So does that affect the way you view the media?

CG: Oh definitely. I mean, if you compare what we are presented with what people in that scenario are presented with news, or how they actually live, it’s very different. I mean even politicians who go to Iraq to see the destruction, they just go to hotels, and it’s not as if they actually… go in. That in itself causes the skew in perception that might not even be meaningful.

VF: If you were to see a newspaper and notice that a picture is biased or that you notice that something is wrong or digitally enhanced, would you do anything about it?
CG: No… I don’t think that we usually go out of our way to see that… to see how it could be biased. I mean, if we are only presented with one view of how things are, it’s hard to think that might be worse, or not as bad, or however it might be. (Grossman, personal communication)

Cindy was very aware of how subjective photojournalism and the media are. She had her own opinions about how an image may be false or biased, but when she was asked whether she would do anything about an obviously fraudulent image, she responded that people do not go out of their way to see how an image could be biased. This is a good example of how hegemony is present in the power over knowledge. When talking about the world of photography and journalism as a whole, she was able to see the biased nature of it. However, she felt that when put in the position of being able to question a specific photograph she did not feel like she would be able to see that same biased nature.

After we discussed the politics of the media, I showed her Photograph 1A. She was already familiar with the image and knew how it had been manipulated by Adnan Hajj. After discussing the image briefly, we moved on.

The next image I showed Cindy was Photograph 4. When I asked for her reactions to this image, she said:

So, lets just say that I saw this in a magazine…I would sort of see a family being destructed, because you see all the rubble, and the chair, and the doll, and its sort of like we are breaking apart families, kicking them out. (Grossman, personal communication)

When interpreting the photograph, Cindy created a story in her head about a family being torn apart. She used the word “we” to describe the force that is “breaking apart families,” which makes it seem as if she felt some guilt about what was happening in the scene. She used “them” as the word to describe the people who were affected by the conflict, and noticeably separated
herself from the people who were being “kicked out.” The choice of words showed how Cindy felt about the parties involved in the conflict, and she was emotionally affected through feelings of guilt and sympathy for the victims.

The second image that I showed Cindy was Photograph 2A. This discussion followed:

CG: Well, first of all, she’s not looking at the building… do they say that she was crying because of her apartment? Also, I doubt that she would actually be able to be there if it just happened.

VF: The caption says that this photograph was published July 22, 2006. And this photograph (Photograph 2B) was published by Associated Press, which is another news agency, and the caption says, “A Lebanese woman reacts at the destruction after she came to inspect her house in the suburbs of Beirut, Lebanon, Saturday, Aug. 5, 2006, after Israeli warplanes repeatedly bombed the area overnight.”

CG: But it’s the same person! I can’t tell if it’s in the same place or not, but that’s funny…. So it’s pretty staged.

VF: So how does this make you feel about--

CG: Umm… I mean, it makes me see even more how people change the images that we are exposed to making us feel a certain way or get a certain message across… I think it is important that people realize how much influence the media has over how we think about things. … I mean, it’s amusing to see the differences between what the photos actually look like or like repeat photos. But at the same time, how many photos do I look at where I don’t recognize that? (Grossman, personal communication)

Upon seeing Photographs 2A and 2B together, Cindy felt that the images were clearly manipulated, and seeing them side-by-side helped strengthen her criticisms of the media.

When asking, “Do they say that she was crying because of her apartment,” Cindy was referring back to the caption to try to validate what she was already thinking in her head. She wanted to know whether her own analysis of the image was the same or different from what the actual publication said. This was just one way that she was trying to create meaning from the
image in front of her. She believed that the publication’s explanation is the authoritative word about what the “true” meaning was, and was checking the accuracy of her own responses by comparing them to the “actual” description.

During this interview, I found that our conversation about photojournalism before showing the pictures had made the actual interpretations of the images harder for her to create independently. She told me that she would have liked to have been shown the photographs first, and then later discuss the politics of the media, so that her responses to questions about the images were not tainted by the earlier discussion. Sequence affects meaning in interviews, so it was important for me to be aware that responses to questions I asked were going to be products of the way the interview was given.
Interview #2

My second interview was with another senior female, who I will refer to in this paper as Laura Canton, and was conducted on November 16, 2006 at 7:15 p.m. in the Senior Apartments. She decided to have the discussion conducted in her dorm room, which made the interview less formal and more relaxed. The student was able to make connections between the subjects in some of the pictures I showed her to images and objects she saw in her room. Because of the critiques from the first interview, I decided to show Laura the pictures first, and then proceed with the rest of the discussions.

To begin, I asked Laura a few questions to help make her feel comfortable with the topic and me. The questions I asked her were simple and to the point.

Valerie Friedman: When you first glance at a newspaper or magazine, what are you drawn to first?

Laura Canton: What do I first glance at? The front-page picture. Cause the picture may interest you, so then you want to read the article if you are interested. And then the sports section. Or, like the headlines at the top of the front page. And if it has to do with sports. And the weather on the top right.

VF: Do you think that, since the headlines are in bold print, or… are there certain words that catch your attention?

LC: Not really specific words, but just the fact that they are on the front page is what’s important. It’s usually bold and big. Like that right there (points to a poster on her wall that is of the front page of the Boston Globe, showing the headline of the Red Sox winning the World Series). (Canton, November 16, 2006, personal communication)

The objects that seemed to jump out at her were images or words that were bold and to the point. Laura was the only female student who mentioned how important the sports headlines and the weather announcements were. These two sections of the newspaper were the ones that
personally affected her. They contain “objective” facts that have no real perspective and provide her with daily updates about issues that are the most personally relevant in her life. While she did not say that the sports news or weather updates were more important to her than other types of news stories, it is interesting that she emphasized those two parts of the newspaper.

I proceeded to show her the image of Photograph 1A:

VF: This is an image taken of Beirut… so what are your first reactions?
LC: I don’t know, it shows bombing or something? I’m Lebanese. I’m not prejudiced. It’s pretty dramatic. When first glancing at it, I thought about the Twin Towers. And that recent fire in New York.
VF: Ok, how about this picture? (Shows Photograph 1B)
LC: I don’t think it’s as dramatic because the smoke isn’t as dark. It’s not as vivid in the colors. (Canton, personal communication)

Laura student did not seem to react much when comparing the two images of Beirut. While she noticed the differences in the photographs, she did not make any further reactions to seeing this type of manipulation. However, when first viewing the published photograph, she immediately associated the events in the photograph to memories of events that she knew more about. She said that she first thought about the Twin Towers at the World Trade Center, making it clear that the images of the Towers were ingrained in her memory. When seeing this photograph from Beirut, she associated the images with one another because of the visual similarities.

When I showed Laura the image of the woman mourning her home on July 22 2006 (Photograph 2A), her reaction was very interesting. She referred to the poster on her bedroom wall of the front page of the Boston Globe from the day that the Red Sox won the World Series. Laura immediately associated the image of the Lebanese woman with another image displayed
on the bottom of the poster. The image showed a woman with a similar expression of agony on
her face. Laura’s initial reaction was to say “It’s like the same picture!” and she pointed to the
image on the poster where the caption read, “Two suicide attacks killed 56 in Iraq. Kurdish
women waited outside of hospital in Irbil for information about relatives.” The image of the
woman in Iraq tells a completely different story than the one about the woman in Lebanon.
Laura’s initial response, however, was to compare the similarities between the two women. To
her, both women exhibited body language that indicated they had shared similar emotional
trauma. When I asked her about her initial reactions to the image of the Lebanese woman, she
said, “It’s not as… I don’t know… for some reason I don’t think it is as dramatic. I mean, I
think it’s just the way that the camera is situated…” (Canton, personal communication) Her
reactions were toward the drama of the scene more than anything else was. This was what she
was attracted to when it came to images. The vertical image did not seem to capture enough of
the event to affect Laura emotionally.

I then showed Laura the Photograph 2B, to see whether she would read the image in the
same way.

LC: It’s the same person…Is it the way it’s printed out? Is that why the colors
aren’t vivid? Or is that how it looked? I like that first one better because you see
what she is crying about…

VF: So if you were to see these two images two weeks apart, what would you
think? Like, would you think they were believable?

LC: I don’t know. I mean, see this is why I do not like them that much, because
they don’t look that believable. But I mean, the first one looks more believable
because you see what she is crying about. This is like her initial shot, as if they
just got her as it happened.

VF: How about the fact that the caption read that this occurred August 5th?

LC: Are you sure it’s the same lady?
VF: Yeah, there were people who did an in-depth comparison, and they saw a noticeable scar on the woman’s’ face and it was seen in both pictures. Also, the woman’s clothing is the same.

LC: Well, was that like an updated picture? I mean, they could have used the one… I mean, this could be true, but it was just from a while ago. Or, do you know what the story was?

VF: Well, that one said that there was a bomb from Israeli warplanes that dropped August 5. And the other one said that she was wailing because her apartment was destroyed from Israeli attacks on July 22.

LC: Oh… so I guess it’s fake! Or they could have just used the… I mean, the action could have been real, but then they couldn’t go back to take another picture…

VF: So, the event could have actually taken place…

LC: Yeah, although it does look kind of staged. But I don’t know why a Lebanese woman would be like “let me act for these pictures.” Although, she doesn’t really look Lebanese… (Canton, personal communication)

Not only did Laura respond to the vivid colors in the photograph, but she also referred back to the captions to help her form a context for the image.

It seemed that Laura was trying to defend the images and their validity when evidence was showing their false nature. When I told her that it was the same woman in both photographs, she insisted on making sure that this statement was 100% true. When she came to terms with the fact that it was the same woman, she still felt that the story told in the second image was fact, even if the image was not a true portrayal of the actual event. Laura mentioned that the photographers might not have been able to go back to the scene to take a picture after the event on August 5 occurred, so they used an earlier photograph to accompany a more recent news story.

When looking more closely at the image, Laura began to suspect that it was staged. Then, after thinking about the woman in the picture and considering the woman’s character,
Laura then said that she did not think a Lebanese woman would have posed for an image like that. She was implying that she did not believe that it would really be logical for a woman from Lebanon to stage a photograph. She continued saying “Although, she doesn’t really look Lebanese,” which was her way of validating the possibility that the image was staged. She seemed more comfortable thinking that it was a non-Lebanese woman in the staged photograph, rather than it being a Lebanese woman who was posing in front of the camera.

When I showed Laura Photograph 4 of the Minnie Mouse doll, the first words out of her mouth were “Minnie Mouse! (Laugh)… I don’t get it! What was the caption?” (Canton, personal communication) A teddy bear owner herself (her own stuffed bear was by her side), Laura’s eyes were just drawn to the toy in the picture. However, she felt that the image was lacking, and once again immediately asked for the caption of the picture. She needed more contexts to the picture in order to gather meaning from it. She continued, “Makes me think of a little kid! Like a little kid’s toy…although look, it’s the only thing in color! And just the way that its place there! I mean, why isn’t it trapped underneath anything else? And there is no other kids stuff there.” The toy sparked a feeling of nostalgia, and Laura immediately thought of a child. She then realized that the toy was the only object in vivid color in the photograph, which emphasized its role as the central object of attention in the frame. She said that if she were to see this published on the front page of the New York Times she would laugh. When I asked her about the placement of the toy, she said, “Well, I mean if I threw any stuffed toy in the air, it would just land in a random spot, in a random pose, like this (threw her stuffed bear in the air and let it fall).” The student was using her own form of visual expression to explain to me how unrealistic the Minnie Mouse doll was in the photograph, and how out of place it was. She used her own stuffed bear to make a connection to the toy in the photograph.
When I asked Laura what form of communication she felt was most valid in reporting the news, she replied, “I would have to say the news on TV. Just because it seems like it’s coming in live. It’s like less of a chance to go over and change things, like in newspapers. Like, breaking news, I don’t think that that’s fake.” (Canton, personal communication) This may have been why she said that the news stories and weather reports were what drew her to newspapers. They are the more objective features of news sources. When I asked her whether she thought that photographs were strong enough to convey a message on their own or tell a story about what is happening in an event, she replied:

I think that you need captions. I mean, when I see a picture, I think “ooh, that’s a cool picture” or “ohh, that’s an interesting picture”…and then I have to look at the captions, and then maybe ill read the article. But I think that it is the picture that first draws my attention to it. But it doesn’t always explain the context of the story. I don’t think I’d have enough knowledge about what’s going on to see a picture and really understand everything… (Canton, personal communication)
Focus Group

I decided to put together a focus group so that I could see how other people discussed photojournalistic images among each other. While I tried to find as many people as I could to be subjects in my study, only two people were able to come to the discussion session on November 17, 2006. I decided to begin the session by showing the students only one image from each pair or set of manipulated photographs. I did not give the images any context, did not read the captions that accompanied them, and tried to give the students enough time to really think and interpret what they were being shown. The focus group setting allowed the students to work off one another and discuss the topics openly and freely in a discussion setting. I went through each photograph, showed them the original unaltered images, read the captions, and told them about all of the background I knew about each photograph after they interpreted the images on their own.

The two people that I spoke with were very different from each other. One was a freshman girl from France, who I will refer to as Francis Bentley, and the other was a sophomore girl from Hawaii, who I will refer to as Hanna O’Brien. They both are rowers on the crew team at Colby College, so they already knew each other and felt comfortable with one another, which allowed them to discuss many issues openly.

The first image that I showed the two students was Photograph 1A. Francis’s first reaction was that the image was “scary,” and reminded her of a “visualization of industrialization” (Bentley, November 17, 2006, personal communication) Hanna said, “I don’t know, it just kind of…brings back visions of 9/11. Cause, it’s a city… or what I portray to be a city… I mean, maybe its not… it could be negative, but it could just be like a huge cloud of smoke from a fire…” (O’Brien, November 17, 2006, personal communication) These were two
completely different interpretations of the same image. While both had a negative connotation, Hanna, the American student associated the image with the Terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center, while Francis, the student from France, felt a tie to images of industry and pollution. These two different ideas may have been influenced by their different home countries, as well as their familiarity with the subject matter.

When I showed the image of the Minnie Mouse doll, the two students had similar reactions. While Francis first thought the image depicted a possible earthquake, she then said that the doll makes the photograph seem “more human.” Hanna said that the pictures are “more real” when you see the Minnie Mouse doll. She felt that “it brings you closer to home because you think of children.” Francis added:

Like over there you see some objects, like the chair and some things, but when you see the Minnie Mouse, you see that there was a child who… a child who had this, and who cared about it. But it could also be something else, like, not an earthquake… not a bomb, but… like when a country is in war. (Bentley, personal communication)

Like the previous students, these two girls associated the doll with a child or a family that was destroyed by a conflict. As Francis started to think more and more about the image, her process of analysis led her from thinking about an earthquake to thinking about a war-like situation.

The next image that I showed the two students was the photograph of the woman whose home was destroyed on July 22. Hanna said that she thought of depression and anguish when seeing the image, while Francis said that the woman in the photograph “looks like someone who lost everything… And, as a result, she doesn’t really know what to do. The only thing she could do was have this reaction. Like, right now at this moment. Because maybe her building was
destroyed, and her entire life was too.” (Bentley, personal communication) Francis interpreted the photograph by creating a story to give the image a context. The story that she told was very elaborate, and she felt an emotional attachment to the type of meaning created from the facial expression of the woman.

I then showed the students Photograph 3A, of the man being pulled out of the rubble in Tyre. Francis thought that she would have to read the article before trying to make any judgment about the photograph. She said:

I would think that it has a stronger impact because we can actually see, but… if I could only read the article and be able to understand and be able to imagine what’s going on without actually having to see the picture, I would rather do that. But unfortunately I think I need pictures also with the article to see. (Bentley, personal communication)

Hanna added that she felt photographs draw more emotion when they are graphic. While the graphic nature of the image drew some attention and interest, the students felt that they were not given enough contexts from the photograph itself to approach the image from an analytical point of view.

I then read the caption to Photograph 3A, and asked the students if that changed how they felt about the image. Francis said, “It seemed pretty obvious that it was in the Middle East,” while Hanna had more of an emotional response to the caption. She was angered by the fact, stated in the caption, that the Israeli officials did not give the Lebanese people time to “pull out dead bodies… I mean, think about the families. They probably don’t even know that they were there or that they were missing someone…Part of me is kind of disgusted by the actions.” (O’Brien, personal communication) The image of the supposed lifeless body sparked something
within the student, and the caption of the photograph obviously made her sympathize for the victims in the scene, and felt angered and disgusted at the perpetrators of the attack.

I proceeded to show the students Photograph 3B from the same series of photographs that showed the man in the green hat pointing at the rubble. I told them that it was proven that the man in the hat was the same man trapped under the wreckage. Hanna suddenly turned on the man in the image, and said, “Maybe in one picture he is the antagonist, and in the other he’s the protagonist. Like in one picture, you kind of feel sorry, and in the other picture you are just like “oh, maybe he brought it onto himself.” (O’Brien, personal communication) Just as quickly as she made a judgment call on the Israeli government, she turned on the man who was portrayed as the lifeless body in Photograph 3A.

The students reacted very interestingly when told about the possibility that these photographers were staged:

Francis Bentley: The thing is that we will never be able to know, and we will never be able to prove it. That’s for everything, like in newspaper articles and photos. The only thing we can do is trust. You know, looking at the picture, it’s kind of like, I don’t know, maybe he fell, maybe he didn’t. As readers and people looking at the picture, we have no way of knowing... We still have an idea of the context, because it’s probably not all staged, like everything going around isn’t staged, like the destroyed building.

Hanna O’Brien: I think if you just have the picture without any text, I feel like there is a whole other story. Like, you can see this picture from a whole bunch of other perspectives. And like, when we first got it, we were like, we wouldn’t have thought that they were both on the same side, or that they were both trying to help people. At first I thought that maybe he was a victim of the cause…. I mean he is a victim of the cause, but he wasn’t actually… it was more as if he was in the wrong place at the wrong time, as opposed to “oh, I’m there to help”… (Bentley and O’Brien, personal communication)
When I showed the second image of the woman mourning her home in Lebanon, and read the captions from both images, the students had very similar reactions as to how the captions changed their perspectives.

FB: We are totally manipulated by like pictures and the text… not just the pictures. And, just seeing those two pictures, one after the other, at first, before you even told us the caption, I thought she was the same woman. But I wasn’t sure. But then you read the caption and I thought maybe it’s not, but maybe like a lot of people are in this situation and stuff. But, I still think that a lot of people were in this situation, although it was the same woman.

HO: I think it’s interesting that her reaction and the dates, because I would have never correlated the two… If I had to choose the order, it would have been this picture first. (Pointed to Photograph 2B).

FB: Maybe the pictures were taken at the same time. Like, this one was taken, then this one… but then maybe they were just published in different articles? That’s what I would think.

VF: Do you think it’s bad that the photographers used pretty much the same scene to convey two different events: one happening July 22 and the other on August 5? Do you think it takes away from the story? Or do you think its still accurately describes what happened?

FB: Yeah, because its still reveals what happens. But it takes away its validity… And then we can ask ourselves, was it staged? Was it an immediate reaction? Or did the photographer ask the woman to show this look on her face?

VF: But you guys wouldn’t have really been second guessing this unless I told you about it?

FB: Yeah

HO: Yeah (Bentley and O’Brien, personal communication)

Both of the students felt that there was some form of manipulation present in the image. Francis seemed to give more credit to the images and photographers. She explained that, although the woman depicted may not have lost her home twice, there were still many people in Lebanon who did lose their homes in the attacks on both occasions. The woman was almost an icon of the event, rather than a subject in a documentation of the actual moment being described. The students did not feel that they would have seen these details had I not explained them.
After we discussed the rest of the images, I then asked the students about their own personal relationships with the news media, and asked what form of media they relied on to receive their news. Francis said that she read the New York Times to get the news about American events, but read a newspaper from France to get international news. She said that this was what she was used to, and she felt that the French newspapers approached the news in a way that was different, yet familiar to her. She said that she would read the titles of the articles, and then read the articles of stories that would concern her the most personally. She did not feel that she only read articles that contained pictures, but that if a picture accompanied a story, that would be what she would be drawn to first.

The student from Hawaii had a very similar response. She said that she was required to read the New York Times about once a week for a class she was taking. She also went online every day on her own, to read a news source from her home state in order to be in touch with her local hometown news. Like Francis, Hanna said that she was intrigued by the title of an article or story, but that the pictures were what drew her in to the article. If she found a picture interesting, then she would go on to read the caption of the photograph. If the caption interested her, then she would read the article.
**Questionnaires**

The questionnaires were meant to collect information from more students within a short time period. I sent the questionnaire out to about fifty students electronically, and gave them the option of either printing the questions and their responses out or sending me the completed questionnaire electronically. I sent the questionnaires to both male and female students, but of the fifty students who received the questionnaire, only nine students (all female) responded and filled them out. Four of the students were nineteen years old, one student was twenty, three were twenty-one, and one student was twenty-two years old. They live in all different parts of the country, and have varying views about the media.

The questionnaires helped me to find out how students differed in their opinions about the media. In choosing the questions to ask students, I wanted to stay as neutral as possible to eliminate my own input into the responses to the questions. A copy of the questionnaire can be found in the appendix of this paper.

One of the questions I asked was “How many hours a week do you spend receiving the news through media?” Eight students answered 1-3 hours per week, and one student answered 4-6 hours per week. Five students said that they receive most of their news information from newspapers; two students said that they receive most of the news from television broadcasts; three responded that they receive their news from Internet sites, and one student wrote in that she receives most of her news by word of mouth. Some students answered with more than one response. These results, as well as other figures found from the questionnaires, can be seen below.
What type of news story are you most likely to be attracted to?

- Political Stories
- Local Stories
- International News
- War/Conflict Stories
- Arts/Entertainment
- Sports Headlines

How many hours a week do you spend receiving the news?

- Zero Hours
- 1-3 Hours
- 4-6 Hours
- 7 or More Hours
- Other

What is your age?

- 18
- 19
- 20
- 21
- 22

Where do you feel you receive most of your news from?

- Newspapers
- Magazines
- Television Broadcasts
- Internet Sites
- Radio
- Other

Which do you think is the most valid form of objective media in reporting the news?

- Newspapers
- Magazines
- Television Broadcasts
- Internet Sites
- Radio
- Other

16 Response to “Other”: “Word of mouth”
How do you feel about the quality of information available to the public?

- Gives Subjective, Opinionated, and Limited Views
- Gives Adequate View; Nothing to Compare it to
- Gives Great View in Objective and Straightforward Way
- Other

Do your parents obtain their news from the same sources as you?

- Yes
- No
- I Do Not Know

Do you feel that images/photographs are useful when reading/watching a news story?

- Yes
- No
- I Do Not Know

Do you feel that captions are necessary to accompany photographs in news sources?

- Yes
- No
- I Do Not Know

Do headlines on a newspaper, magazine, or news broadcast capture your attention?

- Yes
- No
- I Do Not

17 Response to “Other”: “May give adequate view of the news, but it may be subjective and opinionated and should be substantiated.”
Do you feel that newspapers do a good job of making information available to the public?

- Yes
- No
- I Do Not Know

Do you feel that magazines do a good job of making information available to the public?

- Yes
- No
- I Do Not Know

Do you feel that Television Broadcasts do a good job of making information available to the public?

- Yes
- No
- I Do Not Know

Do you feel that the Internet does a good job of making information available to the public?

- Yes
- No
- I Do Not Know

Do you feel that the radio broadcasts do a good job of making information available to the public?

- Yes
- No
- I Do Not Know
So what do all of these numbers mean? There was a very wide variety of responses between the different students. All of the students felt that newspapers did a good job of making news available to the public. However, it seemed that many of the students had some type of criticism towards the way newspapers were one-sided and opinionated. While five people explained that they receive most of their news from newspapers, six people felt that it was the most valid form of media.

Two students felt that the radio was the most valid form of news media. However, none of the students replied that they received most of their news from radio broadcasts. This may be a result of being at Colby College throughout the year, and the availability of the newspapers seems to override any other news media as the avenue of information for the students.

At the end of the questionnaire, I gave the students space to add any addition comments that were provoked by the questions they were asked to answer. The following are a few of the responses of students, explaining how they feel the students at Colby interact with the news:

Even though Colby provides a variety of news sources to read, I feel like most college students (like myself) aren’t very engaged with the news and what is going on in the world, because you have to take time out of your day to read the newspaper or watch the news, and this is generally time that students don’t really have. I find that I read more news at home because we always have the newspaper at the breakfast table, so I sit down and browse through it while I eat. At school however, unless I’m eating alone, I don’t generally do that. (Female, 21 years old)

I think that Colby provides enough sources, but students do not take advantage of them. (Female, 22 years old)

I believe that too often the media portrays only the information they want us to hear about, and that there is a potential that a lot of important information goes unsaid. It seems as though nowadays the politics of what is being show in the media in terms of news is biased by what the particular station wishes to convey,
as each person will attempt to sway their audience to their individual view instead of giving purely unbiased information. (Female, 19 years old)

Of the five students who claimed that they read newspapers more than any other news source, one student said that she was attracted to stories that are graphic and shocking. Two students said that they are attracted to stories that are accompanied by images, and four students said that they are most attracted to stories that they have prior knowledge about. The news stories that they already have a context for are the stories that they feel draw them in.

Two students said that they get most of their news from television broadcasts. One of the students said that she was attracted to the stories that she had prior knowledge about; the other student said that she responded more to the shocking and graphic stories. One of the students said that at Colby, she watches NBC news, but at home, she watches CNN. The other student said that she only watches television news broadcasts at home (ABC News), and another student mentioned that she watches the local news channel when at home with her family.

Three students felt that the internet was the main source of their news information. Of them, one student said that she was attracted to the free access of information, while the other two said that they were likely to visit a website that is affiliated with another major news source like a newspaper or magazine that they trust. At both Colby and while at home, two students said they visited these types of websites, two students said that they visit blogging websites, and one student said she used Facebook.com to receive the news at Colby. This shows the wide range of news media sites that students at Colby utilize.
ANALYSIS

The Influence of Power on Knowledge

After analyzing all of the pictures, the students seemed to be more critical of photojournalistic images than before:

HO: I mean, it’s kind of scary how technology is advancing so that we can do that kind of thing, and the fact that, especially photographers for huge newspapers like the New York Times, the Globe, how many people that’s impacting just from a single photograph. And I feel like a vast majority of our country is affected greatly more when you present a visual presentation as opposed to just the story because it creates in image as opposed to you having to do it yourself…And I think that you are more easily persuaded when you see something in front of you, as opposed to, just kind of pulling it out of the clouds, or something…

FB: I wouldn’t have doubted the picture, I would have looked at it and then looked at the text and been like, or would have thought, “oh, that’s what is happening”. But now I’m like asking questions about the pictures, like “is this a real picture? Or is it like a photographer who is doing copy and paste on his pictures?”

VF: So how do you feel about the control newspapers have over the captions people write? Do you feel that t differs from newspaper to newspaper? Like, how much validity they have?

FB: I think they all know how to manipulate the readers. I mean, their first aim is to be bought before, to be like profitable, so they can choose what to put in, and what’s going to look like the most appealing part for the readers, and what will affect most of the readers, and so they have to choose their pictures very carefully…. I think that although I’m used to relying on the newspaper, I know that I have to think, like when I read an article I have to trust what the journalist would think. But I have to be careful; to know that a lot of it is deformed, or they emphasize a lot on something that was not a big deal and some of the stuff is more important than others. (Bentley and O’Brien, November 17, 2006, personal communication)
After the students spent time with the images, they all expressed appreciation for opening their eyes to an issue they never knew existed, or never knew to be so common in the mainstream media. It seemed that the experience had made the students much more aware of the ways photographers and editors manipulated images that the students had just accepted without question. I asked each of the students what they would do if they believed an image was fraudulent or had been altered. All of the students said that they would do nothing, because they did not feel that they would be able to determine whether an image had been manipulated.

The students are not only reliant upon the media for their source of news information, but they are also made into consumers; not only a consumer of the literal publications, but also a consumer of the ideologies expressed by the news sources. Knowledge and power go hand in hand. People who read the papers and magazines become products of what they read, and the perspectives of the news they receive. The media sources and news agencies use their power of influence to control the knowledge spread to the public.

The students I spoke with used previously known information to help make sense of the images that were shown to them. For example, when Laura was analyzing the images of the Lebanese woman who lost her home, she expressed her view about what she thought Lebanese people looked like. Since the student was of Lebanese descent, it was not only her perception of how Lebanese women looked from the news, but also from her own experiences of having lived interactions with people from Lebanon. Her life experiences caused her to have certain unique preconceptions about how Lebanese women behaved. Laura said that she did not believe a Lebanese woman would purposefully pose for a picture like the one shown to her. Because of her beliefs, the student therefore seemed to fight harder to explain why she thought the image was a valid representation of the event that occurred. She expressed her belief that the only way
the image could be false would be if the woman in the photograph were not Lebanese. (Canton, personal communication)

Another example of how a student used prior knowledge to bring meaning to an image was with one of the students from the focus group. When Hanna was comparing the same two images of the Lebanese woman, she commented on one of them, saying that she felt that it did not seem as dramatic. She said:

I think that [image] shows a lot more about what happened. As opposed to this [image], where there’s debris, but it’s not like an actual… I don’t know. The debris’s there. I guess I can assume that it is part of her house, her building, but it’s kind of like where they live. I have these preconceived notions that it kind of already looks like that. As opposed to that [image] where it looks like something was actually destroyed. (O’Brien, November 17, 2006, personal communication)

Hanna felt that the destruction in the background in one of the photographs made the image more powerful, because it looked more obvious that the woman was in the middle of a ruined. She felt that the other image, which still showed debris in the background, looked more “normal” for an area that she felt always looked worn down and in a poor state. The images that she had seen from the media in the past had led her to believe that places like Lebanon always looked that way. The image that had more meaning for Hanna was the one that exaggerated the destruction, so that the context of the image was made more obvious to her. Later, Hanna had made a comment about the possibility of a Lebanese woman having more than one home destroyed by the Israeli attacks saying, “Yeah, I’m not sure if people over there can afford two homes…” The student had preconceived notions about what places like Lebanon looked like, and these ideas had affected how she interpreted the images and assessed the amount of damage done to the area.
The knowledge that the students used to analyze the images was not innately a part of their thought process. All of their ideas had been molded and shaped in their minds by outside influences like media images and educational knowledge. In the book *Doing Visual Ethnography*, Sarah Pink said, “the purpose of analysis is not to translate ‘visual evidence’ into verbal knowledge, but to explore the relationship between visual and other (including verbal) knowledge.” (Pink 2001: 96) I feel that this is very important in understanding photojournalistic images and how people create meaning from them. The quote describes what the students were doing when analyzing the photographs. They were finding a relationship between what they already knew and what they were being shown for the first time.

Since all of the people I spoke with were students, their roles and status within the social, economic, and political situations at Colby may have influenced how they felt about their authority over the images they saw. The four years that students spend at college are, according to many people, the times when people start to become more independent and confident in understanding who they are as individuals and what ideologies form their thought process. It is also a time when people are constantly being reminded of their institutional roles as students, serving the purpose at college as being the learner, obtaining knowledge and skills that will eventually be applied in adulthood. This may have been one of the reasons why none of the students felt they were capable of exposing “fake” photojournalistic images. I asked Hanna whether learning about the manipulations of news photographs would cause her to look at newspapers in a different way. She responded, “I just think it's hard to if you don’t know what you are looking for. Then, like, I wouldn’t have been able to tell you that that was cut and pasted because I am not an expert in photography.” (O’Brien, personal communication) Because she was not an “expert” in photography, Hanna felt that she has no authority over the images that are
shown to her, and she is therefore inferior in knowledge to the people who take and publish the photographs. Jane Button, the graduate student from Australia, draws on this idea of whether people are actively trying to look more into the contexts of the images they see in the media, or if they just make sense of the images by using their own experiences and beliefs to understand what they are seeing.

The key question is “do people specifically try to see?” I mean, do you think they try to see what the photographer intended? Or do they bring their own meaning and own perceptions to the photograph and give it in the process? And I think that this is one key points that [John] Berger touches on is the loss of context. Loss of the original moment of telling, when the photograph was taken, is so often taken for granted...People can always alter the original meaning so much more through the touch of a mouse or distributing it in quite a different context...It completely changed the meaning. Completely mutated. (Button, November 23, 2005, personal communication)

When people interpret an image or news story, the context they create manipulates the meaning and makes it a relative analysis. An image can mean something completely different to one person than to another. When editors, photographers, and news agencies create the contexts for the viewer, they room for alternative interpretations is smaller. Viewers use all of the knowledge available to make sense of what information is provided, and do not even think to consider alternative contexts.
Globalization Analysis: The Forces Affecting How Images are Read

One of the major ways that editors, photographers, and news agencies control what people think and see is through global forces. One way that I was able to see the effects of globalization through the images was to look at the journey that an image went through in its lifetime. From starting as a concept to reaching people’s doorsteps, photojournalistic images pass through many hands and critiques before becoming a finished product. Within this metaphorical global flow of an object, numerous globalized forces affect the meanings and implications of photojournalistic images.

I read a few books that included interviews and personal stories about certain news photographers sharing their professional experiences. From these readings, it seemed that most images taken for news publications are thought out even before the photographers go out in the field. The editors, article writers, or other members of the staff from a news agency come up with an idea for a story. From there, a photographer is sometimes assigned to the article so that they can document the story visually. At times, the photographers are also paired with a journalist, and they work together when on assignment to determine what will be shown to the viewer.

Once the photographer is chosen, he or she will then go to the site of interest and think about what to capture through their camera. Most of the photographers in the book Life Photographers: What They Saw (1998) felt that luck played a very large part in capturing a good image. However, what is considered a “good image” differs from person to person. One commonality between all the possible definitions of a “good image” seems to be that the image not only tells a story, but also is relevant to the article that is written along with it. Sometimes, the photographers already know beforehand what type of shot they want to capture. They will
wait for a critical moment to capture an event, or they will set the scene to make it appear as they imagine the finished product would appear. To create an image that will be published and receive critical acclaim for its perfection, photographers make choices about the position of the camera, the lighting, the subject matter, and the moment being captured. This idea of the “perfect photograph” is also a globalized concept, for it is an ideal that only exists because of a type of unspoken hierarchy of images and visual portrayals of “reality.” Ideas about what images are worthy of being published in a magazine or newspaper are created through a long history of photographic analysis and critique, which have helped determine a standard for all images worthy of publication. A final characteristic of what journalists call a “good image” is one that attracts readers and brings in revenue. Profit is the main goal of most commercial news media, and when competing with other companies or news agencies, all that matters is to put out information and images that make the public favor and buy their product.

In photojournalistic images of international conflicts, a photographer from America can be sent to a place like Israel or Iraq to take pictures for their employers and publications back home. When this occurs, the photographer not only brings along his or her own subjectivity when choosing what moments are important to capture, but he or she is also influenced by a form of cross-cultural comparison. This comparison, which may or may not be a conscious process, makes a specific person, event, place, or thing seem to stand out to the photographer because of its significance or importance relative to everything around it. This, in turn, causes the photographer to capture images of these subjects. If there were two different photojournalists document ing Beirut after it was hit by an Israeli air raid, one from America and one from Lebanon, the resulting images would be very different. The perspectives and choice of subject
matter would differ in importance for each person taking the pictures based on their own personal differences.

Many photographers who have their work published in major news publications work for news agencies like Reuters and the Associated Press. The Associated Press, an American-based news agency, is the largest and oldest news organization in the world, serving as a source of news, photos, graphics, audio and video. The agency’s mission “is to be the essential global news network, providing distinctive news services of the highest quality, reliability, and objectivity with reports that are accurate, balanced, and informed. AP operates as a not-for-profit cooperative with more than 4,000 employees working in more than 240 worldwide bureaus. AP is owned by its 1,500 U.S. daily newspaper members…It has the industry's most sophisticated digital photo network, a 24-hour continuously updated online news service, a state-of-the-art television news service and one of the largest radio networks in the United States. It also has a commercial digital photo archive, a photo library housing more than 10 million images and provides advertising management services…On any given day, more than half the world's population sees news from AP.” (Reuters 2007) As of February of 2007, the Associated Press provided information in five different languages to 121 countries. The information was distributed through 5,000 radio and television outlets and 1,700 U.S. daily, weekly, non-English and college newspapers.

Reuters, a London-based news agency, has approximately 16,900 staff in 94 countries, with 2,400 editorial staff, journalists, photographers and camera operators in 131 countries. As the Reuters website explains, “Although we are best known as the world's largest international multimedia news agency, more than 90% of our revenue derives from our financial services business. Some 330,000 financial market professionals working in the equities, fixed income,
foreign exchange, money, commodities and energy markets around the world use Reuters products. They rely on Reuters services to provide them with the information and tools they need to help them be more productive.” (Reuters 2007)

These two agencies, along with many others like Agence France-Presse, BBC, and Inter Press Service, employ journalists and, in many cases, photographers, who are hired to document a news story. The agencies then sell the resulting images and articles to different newspapers, magazines, online sources, and other types of news media sources. Because of this, an image published in the New York Times may not have been taken by a New York Times photographer, but rather by a person from another country working for a specific news agency like Reuters or the Associated Press.

American publications have access to images from all over the world, and the perspectives of the published images are combination of the influence of the photographer, the news agency that they work for, and the final publication source. All three parties have the ability to give the image different meanings and dimensions that all help create the final product. The process of buying and selling photographs allows one image to be shown in various publications all over the world. An image can be used twice, in two different contexts, by two different publications, or it can even be used multiple times by the same publication over an extended period.

The hierarchy of images helps editors determine which photographs are worthy of publication. A photographer may go on assignment and take twenty rolls of film, only to have one or two images used for a story. The editors and publishers use their knowledge about what it takes to sell an idea or a product, and choose images that will intrigue and attract customers to the news source. News agencies like Reuters and the Associated Press try to appeal to their
clients (mainstream newspapers, magazines, or online websites) who, if satisfied with the images that are available, will buy the photographs from them to use for their stories.

Sometimes, ethics and morals help determine what images are acceptable for publication. The selection of images can be comparable to a type of censorship enforced by the editors and publishers. They can decide whether an image is too risky, scandalous, or inappropriate for their publication. The book National Geographic: 100 Best Unpublished Pictures shows images that National Geographic photographers took on assignment, but were unable to be published because of various reasons. One specific example of this was when a photographer named C. C. Lockwood was shooting for an assignment called “Trouble in Bayou Country” in 1979. He followed a couple in Louisiana who had rebuilt an old slave house on a barge in a swamp. He took a photograph of the couple lying on a bed that was on ropes hanging from the ceiling. This is what he said about the image:

> When I was telling Geographic folks about the story, they just loved this couple; this photo was going to open the story. Then someone asked, “How long have they been married?” And I said, “They’re not.” The editor pulled the picture. I guess it was the times. He didn’t want an unmarried couple sitting there in bed. It was kind of shocking to me that he would take it out for that reason. (Lockwood 2004: 26)

It seemed obvious that the image of the couple was popular at National Geographic at the time, but the magazine did not publish it because it showed an unmarried couple in an intimate setting. Magazines, newspapers, and other news sources avoid taboo subjects and issues so that the majority of people do not get offended or hurt by an image. Most publications are quick to protect the integrity of their products, and therefore follow certain codes of ethics that do not allow harmful or supposed immoral images to be exposed to the public.
The National Geographic Society is a tax-exempt organization that has published stories which seemed be in “the best interest” of the Society members.

Just as the society took advantage of its ambiguous status somewhere between science and entertainment, it took advantage of its connections to government… It retained its status as a private, tax-exempt organization that was relatively unconstrained by government… By the 1980s, six presidents had contributed articles to the magazine: Theodore Roosevelt, William Howard Taft, Calvin Coolidge, Herbert Hoover, Dwight Eisenhower, and Lyndon Johnson. Members of the Board of Trustees have included former first ladies, chief justices, the chair of the Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System, the chief of staff of the United States Air Force, the assistant secretary of the Navy, a rear admiral in the Coast and Geodetic Survey, the deputy administrator of NASA, and officials of the National Park Service. Given its nonprofit status, the society was able to enlist the aid of government officials who could not have supported private commercial enterprises and to cultivate connections to industry and finance. (Lutz 1993: 34)

The amount of “powerful” political leaders who had historically been associated with the magazine is incredible, for these were, and still are, the people who have the control over what the magazine puts out and makes available to the public. The people behind the scenes of the magazine control what messages are being published, and it is perhaps for this reason that certain preconceptions have been formed through the media. “Generally speaking, National Geographic helped white, upwardly mobile Americans to locate themselves in a changing world, to come to terms with their whiteness and relative privilege, and to deal with anxieties about their class position, both national and international.” (Lutz: 38) The magazine’s main priorities seem to lie not just in pleasing the board members, but also in appealing to the largest possible consumer population. Without profit, the Society would not last very long. The production firms want to everything they can to prevent offending anyone involved in the Society or the consumers.
Because of this, objectivity seems to be a key goal in order to avoid making false claims that may backfire.

Catherine Lutz described the process of choosing photographs to publish in the National Geographic Magazine.

Simple ‘auteur’ theories of photographic images are inadequate to account for the complex sets of pressures and expectations that confront the individual photographer in an institutional environment such as National Geographic and the complicated processes through which their photographs are transformed through editing, layout, captioning, printing, and—now—computer enhancement…. On one side is socialization to the organization and the explicit instructions picture editors give photographers before they depart for the field. On the other is the photo selection process—thirty to forty photos selected out of a set of thousands—and the myriad manipulations of the photograph once it’s chosen. (Lutz 1993: 51-52)

After the publications select few images for the articles, a journalist or writer will usually create a story or article to accompany the images. “Everyone in the photographic division insists that a writer is not ‘assigned’ a photographer to illustrate the piece. The story is built, they say, on the strength of the pictures, and the pictures must tell a story in their own right… there may be little contact between writer and photographer, but the photographer works closely with the picture editor to develop the ideas that emerge…” (Lutz: 55) In writing the stories, the journalists are not only explaining the pictures, but they are creating a specific context for the image. The articles and stories written are not only products of the writer’s own mind and imagination, but also products of the publication’s ethics, values, and ideologies.

Captions are also created to help give the photographs more contexts; they are written to explain what an image is about, and to give a small amount of background information to an image so that the readers and consumers are all meant to read the images in the same ways (though they do not always succeed). In our interview, Hanna said, “I think if you just have the
picture without any text, I feel like there is a whole other story. Like, you can see this picture from a whole bunch of other perspectives.” (O’Brien, November 17, 2006, personal communication) For this specific student, captions help avoid a type of confusion that may occur when trying to make sense of an image without any context. The texts help make the event being documented clearer and easier to read.

After journalists finish writing the articles that accompany the photographs, the editors then start to work on the layout of the publication. Photographers and editors crop, digitally enhance, and manipulate the photographs to fit a specific story, and these changes create a more dramatic or “effective” image for the context that it is placed. The tools used to make these changes are globalized entities; people create new technologies each day to help perfect images.

Editors then go over the articles to check the validity of facts, and may cut down the article to fit a specific space restriction if it is too long. The editors are also in charge of the layout of the publications. When people place an image in a certain area on a page or in a publication, the meaning of the image can change. People may read these images differently because of their location and layout properties. Larger images are usually meant to stress a more “important” story, and the same feeling goes for photographs placed on the cover of magazines, or the front pages of newspapers. These images tend to catch the attention of the consumers, so they also tend to be the images that show more dramatic or intense subjects and scenes. Having the best cover story or headline is a way that newspapers and magazines try to compete with other publications. Ultimately, selling the most products and making the most money is the goal of the media sources, and so they have to attract the most customers to their product.

After the publications are finished in their design, the product is then finalized, printed, and mass-produced. The consumers can have the sources sent to them because of daily, weekly,
monthly, or yearly subscriptions, or they go out and buy the publications on their own. Publishing newspapers, magazines, and online articles is a quick and easy way for consumers to receive information. It is no longer necessary to pursue a product actively; since the product is delivered to you. Since many newspapers and magazines have electronic sources or articles, a Colby student is able to read an online newspaper source from her hometown thousands of miles away. In the same ways, any person in the United States has access to photojournalistic information from all over the world via newspapers, magazines, television broadcasts, and online resources. Information is globalized through these images, and the images are globalized through the processes of mass production and electronic networking.
RECLAIMING THE RIGHT TO INFORMATION

Many people say that knowledge is power. Knowledge is spread through the media and through modes of communication throughout the world. Many large companies and business monopolize the journalism industry, controlling what news is released to the public and how the news is relayed through the media. The photographs that are released in magazines, newspapers, television broadcasts, and the internet have to go through multiple hands before they reach the public’s domain. Images are re-touched, cropped, “enhanced,” manipulated, and assessed by editors and managers before being selected for publication. The public has little say in what they are being exposed to when they buy or subscribe to a newspaper. The students I spoke with are reliant on the media to not only stay “in the loop” and know what is happening in the world, but also to assess their own ideas and opinions about other people and events that are going on around them. Different types of media create certain methods of swaying its readers and viewers into seeing the world in a way that the more “powerful” people in charge of the media are able to control.

Students at Colby, as well as other people all over the country, are finding new ways to control the flow of information from person to person. One major contribution to giving the public sphere more power over knowledge is the introduction of blogs and blogging sites over the internet.

The Rise of Blogging

According to the New York Times, its mission is to “Enhance society by creating, collecting, and distributing high quality news, information, and entertainment.” (New York Times Website 2007) Many Americans use this source, as well as other newspapers, magazines, TV broadcasts, and other forms of media, to obtain their news information. In the mid-1990s,
the internet began changing the way news information traveled from person to person. With fast and seemingly open modes of information travel, people now utilize the internet not only to receive information, but also to pass along their own ideas, opinions, and knowledge in a free and open way.

One major addition to the internet has been blogs. According to Wikipedia.com, a blog is “a user-generated website where entries are made in journal style and displayed in a reverse chronological order.” Blogs are a way for people to discuss particular subjects of interest openly. They allow others to respond and comment on each blog entry. Some blogs are used as personal online diaries. “A typical blog combines text, images, and links to other blogs, web pages, and other media related to its topic. The ability for readers to leave comments in an interactive format is an important part of most early blogs. Most blogs are primarily textual although some focus on photographs (photoblog), sketchblog, videos (vlog), or audio (podcasting), and are part of a wider network of social media.” (Wikipedia 2007) Blogs have opened up the world of free flows of information, and more and more people each day use blogs to give and receive information about the news.

Some types of blogging sites are in the form of journals and diaries. A few examples are LiveJournal, WordPress, DreamHost, and Xanga. By November of 2006, the “blog search engine Technorati was tracking nearly 60 million blogs,” (Wikipedia) and in 1999 Google purchased the site blogger.com. By 2001, political blogs gained popularity and allowed the spread of politicized information over the internet. Some of the major political blogs are AndrewSullivan.com, Politics1.com, Political Wire, Instapundit, Little Green Footballs, and the Daily Howler. The sites all allow public users to comment on the blogs, but the articles and blog entries are normally only written by one person who creates and maintains the site. The people
who publish these major blogs have risen in power because of their fan following, and their ability to get more and more people to read what they have to say. In January 2005, Fortune magazine listed eight loggers that business people "could not ignore": Peter Rojas, Xeni Jardin, Ben Trott, Mena Trott, Jonathan Schwartz, Jason Goldman, Robert Scoble, and Jason Calacanis. (Wikipedia) These bloggers do not belong to Fortune 500 companies; they are just normal people who have something to say, and have found people who were willing to listen and comment on their public posts.

Blogging has become a way for the average American to communicate with other people without being forced to do so in a face-to-face setting. From speaking with many different students on campus, I found that some of the main websites visited, and used, on a regular basis by the students at Colby were Facebook, MySpace, and LiveJournal. These are all social networking sites that allow people to spread information and images, as well as communicate to other people who register on the sites.

Facebook.com, the seventh most visited website in the United States as of February 2007, was originally created for university students, faculty, and staff to communicate with one another, but it has recently expanded to include any person who registers for an account. It is currently the largest site for photographs, for each registered user can upload images into an album on the site. Users can monitor who is allowed to view the images due in part to recent privacy setting controls added to the site. According to Chris Hughes, the spokesperson for Facebook, people spend an average of 18 minutes a day on Facebook. (Wikipedia 2007) Users can decide to create a profile for themselves, listing their contact details, courses they are taking, various interests, and a profile picture for everyone to see. Students are also able to join “groups” on the site. These groups allow people with common interests to show publicly what
clubs or group identities they belong to. Being a member of a group enables a person to post on
the groups site to discuss any topic related to the group. On July 25, 2006, iTunes (a music
program that allows users to buy music online and create playlists) “began offering a promotion
where members of the Apple Students group would receive a free 25 song sampler each week
until September 30… The idea behind the promotion was to make students more familiar and
enthusiastic with each service as fall classes approach.” (Wikipedia). The Facebook group called
“Barack Obama (One Million Strong for Barack)” was encouraging more and more people to
join the group to show their support for Barack in the up-coming presidential election. The
group site lists links to photographs of Obama, videos of speeches made by Obama, as well as to
other links describing his campaign information. The “discussion board” on the site allows
group members to discuss up-coming events to help publicize the campaign, as well as
discussions over commentary concerning Barack. There are many political, social, religious, and
other such Facebook groups that people can join, and these allow open forums for members to
discuss issues that they want to express to members of the group.

On August 22, 2006, Facebook created a feature called “Facebook notes” that “allows
users to import a blog from Xanga, LiveJournal, Blogger, and other blogging services.”
(Wikipedia 2007) Another feature of the site is the ability for people to “friend” one another,
where you can only see the profiles of the people who have accepted your “friend request.”
Friends are able to post on what is known as the “wall,” where they can type in entries to spread
information or just converse about any topic at all. The Facebook “walls” are another way for
students to discuss issues openly.

MySpace is a very similar webpage to Facebook, but it is extended to a wider network of
users. As of February of 2007, it was the third most popular website in the United States. On
average, about 230,000 people register to the site each day. Users are given a profile that they can fill out with personal information, and they are given space for a blog where they can discuss any topic they would like. Users can upload images onto the site, and can share them with whomever they want. There is a feature on MySpace called “Bulletins” which are posts that are displayed on a ‘bulletin board’ for everyone on a MySpace user’s friends list to see. “Bulletins can be useful for notifying an entire, but usually a portion of the friends list… Some users choose to use Bulletins as a service for delivering chain messages about politics, religion, or anything else. Bulletins are deleted after ten days.” (Wikipedia 2007)

MySpace allows people to post any type of content that they would like. Musicians are now even creating MySpace sites to post their songs and gain popularity through people becoming “friends” with bands, and having those people then share the music with other friends. On June 27, 2006, the user agreement read:

MySpace.com does not claim any ownership rights in the text, files, images, photos, video, sounds, musical works, works of authorship, or any other materials (collectively, ‘Content’) that you post to the MySpace Services. After posting your Content to the MySpace Services, you continue to retain all ownership rights in such Content, and you continue to have the right to use your Content in any way you choose. (Wikipedia 2007)

LiveJournal is a virtual community where users can keep an online blog, journal, or diary. The entries can individually be set up as public (where any person can read the entry), “friends only” (where only people who are friends with the user can see the entry), or private (where the entry is more of a diary note, meant only for the writer to see). The user can also restrict who is able to comment on each journal post or blog. There are many other online communities like this one, and they all differ slightly in style and features.
The computer world has given people the agency to say what they want to say while still maintaining a form of anonymity. While many people use blogs for private purposes to converse with friends and family, these online journals can be used for business purposes as well. Companies can use blogs for PR and advertising for marketing strategies, where they are referred to as “Corporate blogs.” According to Wikipedia.com, bloggers were behind *Time* magazine naming their 2006 Person of the Year as "You." (Wikipedia 2007) The December 2006 issue of *Time* Magazine contained its headline story titled “Time’s Person of the Year: You.” Lev Grossman, the author of the article, wrote:

The new Web is a very different thing. It’s a tool for bringing together the small contributions of millions of people and making them matter. Silicon Valley consultants call it Web 2.0, as if it were a new version of some old software. But it’s really a revolution… America loves its solitary geniuses… Car companies are running open design contests. Reuters is carrying blog postings alongside its regular news feed. Microsoft is working overtime to fend off user-created Linux. We’re looking at an explosion of productivity and innovation, and it’s just getting started, as millions of minds that would otherwise have drowned in obscurity get backhauled into the global intellectual economy. (Time Magazine 2006)

Just like Reuters’ addition of blogs posted next to the main news stories, the Associated Press has started a new project called *asap*. This project is “aimed at creating multimedia content for 18 to 34-year olds.” (Browning, March 6, 2007, personal communication) This department has a new feature called “Assignment: You,” which allows a normal, everyday person to assign an *asap* news reporter a story. The description for this feature says that a person should think of a story to be covered (“one you’ve never seen pursued by the mainstream media”), send the idea in to the Associated Press agency, and then the selection process will begin as *asap*’s editing staff chooses one idea as a winner. After an entry is chosen, the *asap* staff chooses a reporter who will “write an article revealing the winning idea and then do some
hard-nosed reporting to produce the story you’ve always wanted to see.” When the idea becomes published and shown to the world, the person who sent in that idea also becomes announced to the public as they are told to describe what it is they are “hoping to learn from our reporting. And when we put out the story, we’ll come back to get your reaction to the results.” The website makes is clear that stories that have been covered before will not be chosen by the editors.

There are two key points to make about this feature of the asap department. First is the active shift towards appealing to a specific audience. Asap is aimed toward targeting a specific age group to get them to become readers and consumers of the news agency. The voice that is used on the website is geared towards capturing the audience’s interest. When describing different types of stories that could be covered for the news story, the website mentions the examples of researching “hip hop DJ’s,” “an up-and-coming band,” “an Olympic athlete,” and “a video game designer.” These examples are topics of interest to a specific age group.

The second key point is that the Associated Press is trying to improve its approval amongst its audience. While only a select few ideas will be chosen and developed into a news story, asap made it clear that it wants the winner to be as involved in the process as much as he or she can. The winner does not choose the writer, photographer, or video or voice recorder. The news agency, which has more knowledge about the profession, is in charge of these details. However, asap will follow up with the winner after the story is publicized to see how he or she feels about the process and result of this project. The Associated Press is showing its desire to gain more feedback from its readers. While it is inconclusive whether changes will actually be made if they are addressed by the public, the Associated Press is at least giving the public a chance to have their voices expressed if not given full consideration.
Many other news websites that are associated with newspapers, magazines, television news broadcasts, radio shows, and other forms of media allow the public to comment on news stories, and to give commentary on certain topics posted on the sites. For example, the New York Times website has a blogging section that features topics of discussion on fashion, the 2008 presidential election, technology, sports, food and wine, and even a blog called “The Public Editor’s Journal” that “responds to complaints and comments from the public and monitors the paper's journalistic practices.” (New York Times Website 2007)

The Boston Globe’s online website has a blogging section as well, but most of the blog topics are geared towards Massachusetts and Boston-area topics that have to do with topics like sports, travel, skiing, local news, and Boston jobs. The Wall Street Journal website has a blogging section that deals with topics like law and business, market news, taxes, and even has a blog called “The Juggle”, which is about the “choices and trade-offs people make as they juggle work and family.” (Wall Street Journal Online 2007) Different types of newspapers attract readers from all kinds of backgrounds, yet the readers all share common interests in the type of information published in the journals. Because of this, the blogs associated with the different newspapers are geared towards the readers who would most likely be reading the papers on a daily basis.

The website Wikipedia.com “is a multilingual, web-based, free content encyclopedia project. Wikipedia is written collaboratively by volunteers from all around the world. With rare exceptions, its articles can be edited by anyone with access to the Internet, simply by clicking the edit this page link.” (Wikipedia 2007) Students, as well as other people throughout the world with access to the computer, use Wikipedia as a source of free information. Any person is able to go onto the site and edit, update, or create entries that they wish to contribute. Many people
use this site as an online encyclopedia to help them research topics of interest. However, the freedom for people to edit the articles makes the source somewhat less reliable, for it is difficult to check the entries for validity and fact-based updates.

Because of the easy manipulations, the site employs a team of editors to help maintain the articles that are published through the web. These editors not only look for grammatical errors, but they also have the right to delete changes made that are caught as being hoaxes. There is software known as MediaWiki that reverses editorial mistakes, as well. Because the articles can be updated constantly by any person who wishes to contribute to this source, newer articles tend to be less validated by the editors. However, information is constantly updated, giving the site a similar feel to the “breaking news coverage” of television news broadcasts and online newspaper sites. Most of the entries on Wikipedia also contain links to more web pages, which help provide further information on the subject people are researching.

These, and many other avenues that the internet allows into the world of free information exchange, give most people the power to discuss and question news stories, share common ideas, and spread information freely. The notion of “free information” may be misleading, however, for many internet sites associated with larger corporations like the New York Times still have many rules and restrictions for its users that do not allow complete freedom with words, ideas, and images. Certain blog entries are chosen to be displayed for the public to read, but they usually have to abide by a set of boundaries that the commentators are restricted by. However, blogs are opening doors for people to feel comfortable speaking their minds and questioning what they read and see.
FINAL REFLECTIONS

There are a few issues in my fieldwork that I feel I should mention. Individuals are able to create meaning from images is countless ways, and each person is unique in how they read a photograph. I was unable to interview as many people as I would have liked, for I do not find it beneficial to generalize about how the Colby population responds to photojournalistic images based solely the testimonies of thirteen students. Another issue to address is the fact that all of the students with whom I spoke were female. While I tried contacting a few male students by e-mail asking them to fill out questionnaires or sit down for an interview session, I received no responses. This may have skewed by analysis, for all of the students found that their emotional connections to the images helped create meaning from them. Male students might have different modes of analysis to help them analyze and interpret the same photojournalistic images.

During the first semester, I focused on how people created meaning from images from the Israeli-Hezbollah conflict. My project was not based on this event alone. It presented a case study to contrast the ways in which news sources and consumers use different types of images that portray similar events.

Connecting my project to Globalization has helped uncover new dimensions of my project, and it has proven to be a crucial addition to my fieldwork. I do not want my paper to be read as a major critique of photojournalism and the world of news media. People have the right to express freely a view of what is happening in the world. All news stories are expressed from a single point of view. This project will show how the perspectives of the photographers, editors, and publishers all affect how people read into images that are commonly accepted as straight sources of the news. People have the right to knowledge, and have the right to use that knowledge as they want. To feel confident about taking a stand and, thereby, have an impact on
the methods used to create messages through photojournalistic images, the public must be given adequate information to draw their own conclusions.
CONCLUSION

I discovered many contradictions through this project. The first is the use of the internet for the benefit of both the public and the news sources. Both parties use this medium as a way to try to control the flows of information. While students at Colby are able to use the internet to gain multiple perspectives of news stories and to spread information from person to person, the media sources use the internet to spread their control to a wider audience.

While it may seem like the public’s ability to post and spread news and images may seem liberating, are the images posted by a student any different than an image posted by a professional photojournalist? No matter who is taking a photograph, the images are going to be showing a manipulated view of reality. What this paper has shown me is not that photojournalistic manipulations should be eliminated, but rather that these images become harmful to the public whenever subjective claims are passed as truths. People need to be educated and made aware of the types of manipulations played out by the media in order for them to have the necessary tools to question and assess the validity of what they are fed by the news media. Objectivity may seem like the ultimate goal for journalists to reach, but I am unsure whether it is ever going to be truly possible to convey a story about an event when it is being told from one perspective.

Another contradiction that I came by in my study was the goals claimed by the different news sources. For commercial news media sources, profit and revenue seem to trump any other decision made by the companies. Most people create contexts about the world using the information they are fed through the media. Their perceptions about different cultures and events are heavily influenced by what has been relayed to them by the media. Since the media’s ultimate goal is to draw readers in and make them want to buy their product over their
competition’s, they have to resort to using forms of manipulation to create “successful” photographs. The public is relying on the media for their view of the world through manipulated images and news stories.

A third contradiction is that images can not only be used to serve political purposes, but to also be used for resistance and social change. Depending on how images are used and the contexts created for the images, meaning can shift. The public is using the resources available to reclaim the right to knowledge and free information, and this possession of power shifts the role of the media.

A fourth contradiction is that news agencies control news information, yet they are also useful in validating facts that they publish. On a website like Wikipedia.com, people are able to edit all articles they want to contribute to the free flow of information. However, because this website is used by many as an online encyclopedia, the website needs to edit and control the information coming in because of the easily manipulated and tainted information that can be false and pure-opinionated claims. Without people checking for facts, can we really trust the information people receive through the media?

The final contradiction is about the role of photography and the nature of the craft. Many people think that photography is the most realistic form of visual expression. The light that is let in through the camera lens is the same light that hits the film to create an image. What you see through a lens is what shows up in the picture. Unlike painting and other forms of visual expression, photography can present a snapshot of a scene with the use of light. However, this paper has shown the ways that photography manipulates reality. Photography is not only a medium that can make a photographer strive to obtain objectivity, but it is also a medium that reveals the subjective nature of photography.
Different types of news agencies operate in unique ways to retain power over the public. They do this by swaying how people think and perceive the world. They appeal to the public in their own ways, and photojournalism has found itself caught in the contradictions of entertainment and objective storytelling. The students from this study show how they interpret such images, and they have adopted certain news-obtaining strategies to try and reclaim their abilities to receive the truth. The ability to understand and obtain awareness about the subjective qualities of the journalism trade is the first step in allowing people to break free from the forces of information control. Nothing can be done to alleviate the power control until people are allotted the tools to fully interpret what is shown to them through the news. I do not believe that the goal of the news media and journalistic news sources should be objectivity. Through the fieldwork conducted, it is clear that the ultimate change needs to be the spread of knowledge about the subjectivity of news information. Through the internet, awareness of the control of information is being publicized, making the first step towards the availability of truth.
APPENDIX A

Photographs taken from the website:
http://www.tampabayprimer.org/index.cfm?action=articles&drill=viewArt&art=1443
APPENDIX B
Sample Questionnaire

1. What is your age? __________________________

2. Please circle one: Male Female

3. Where do you live in the world when not at Colby? __________________________

For the following questions, please circle the answer that best fits:

4. How many hours a week do you spend receiving the news through the media?
   a) I never receive the news
   b) 1-3 hours
   c) 4-6 hours
   d) 7 or more hours
   e) other __________________________

5. Where do you feel you receive most of your news information from?
   a) Newspapers
   b) Magazines
   c) Television Broadcasts
   d) Internet Sites
   e) Radio
   f) other __________________________

If you answered A) Newspapers, please answer questions 6-8.

If you answered B) Magazines, please answer questions 9-11

If you answered C) Television Broadcasts, please answer questions 12-14

If you answered D) Internet Sites, please answer questions 15-17

If you answered E) Radio, please answer questions 18-20
6. What attracts you to the stories you read in Newspapers?
   
   a) I read all articles
   
   b) I am attracted to stories that have images that accompany them
   
   c) I am attracted to stories that I have prior knowledge about
   
   d) I am attracted to stories that are political in nature
   
   e) I am attracted to stories that are most graphic or shocking
   
   f) other ____________________________

7. While at Colby, which newspaper do you rely on most for your news source?

   a) The New York Times
   
   b) The Boston Globe
   
   c) The Wall Street Journal
   
   d) A local newspaper from the Waterville or New England Area
   
   e) A newspaper from your home town, state, or country
   
   f) other ____________________________

8. While back at home, which newspaper do you rely on most for your news source?

   a) The New York Times
   
   b) The Boston Globe
   
   c) The Wall Street Journal
   
   d) A local newspaper from the Waterville or New England Area
   
   e) A newspaper from your home town, state, or country
   
   f) other ____________________________

Please Skip Down to Question 21
9. If you receive most of your news from magazines, what attracts you to the stories you read?

a) I read all articles
b) I am attracted to stories that have images that accompany them
c) I am attracted to stories that I have prior knowledge about
d) I am attracted to stories that are political in nature
e) I am attracted to stories that are most graphic or shocking
f) other ________________________________

10. While at Colby, what magazines do you read to gather your news information?

a) Newsweek
b) National Geographic
c) Time Magazine
d) People
e) Other ________________________________

11. While at home, what magazines do you read to gather your news information?

a) Newsweek
b) National Geographic
c) Time Magazine
d) People
e) Other ________________________________

Please Skip Down to Question 21
12. What attracts you to the Television Broadcasts that you watch?
   a) I watch the full programs regardless of subject matter
   b) I am attracted to broadcasts that have live coverage
   c) I am attracted to broadcasts that cover stories I have prior knowledge about
   d) I am attracted to broadcasts that are political in nature
   e) I am attracted to broadcasts that are shocking or graphic
   f) other ________________________________

13. At Colby, what Televisions Broadcasts do you watch most to obtain the news?
   a) FOX News
   b) CNN News
   c) ABC News
   d) NBC News
   e) The Colbert Report
   f) other ________________________________

14. At home, what Television Broadcasts do you watch most to obtain the news?
   a) FOX News
   b) CNN News
   c) ABC News
   d) NBC News
   e) The Colbert Report
   f) other ________________________________

Please Skip Down to Question 21
15. What attracts you to the Internet Sites that you visit to receive the news?
   a) Free access to information
   b) The layout of the Webpage
   c) The Websites affiliation with another news source (i.e. a newspaper or magazine)
   d) The amount of visual imagery accompanying the articles
   e) The availability of peer-to-peer communication within a website
   f) Other ________________________________

16. At Colby, what websites do you visit to obtain the news?
   a) Websites affiliated with popular TV Broadcasts, newspapers, magazines, etc.
   b) Blogging sites
   c) Facebook.com
   d) MySpace.com
   e) YouTube.com
   f) Other ________________________________

17. At Home, what websites do you visit to obtain the news?
   a) Websites affiliated with popular TV Broadcasts, newspapers, magazines, etc.
   b) Blogging sites
   c) Facebook.com
   d) MySpace.com
   e) YouTube.com
   f) Other ________________________________

Please Skip Down to Question 21
18. What is it about radio news broadcasts that attracts you to this form of media over others?

   a) I am attracted to radio shows because of the constant streaming of information
   b) I am attracted to radio shows because they leave something to the imagination
   c) I am attracted to radio shows because they are easily accessible
   d) I am attracted to radio shows because they allow listeners to call in with responses
   e) I am attracted to radio news shows because of the broadcasting personalities
   f) Other ______________________________________________________

19. At Colby, what radio shows do you listen to for your information source?

   a) NPR (National Public Radio)
   b) Colby College’s radio broadcasting
   c) Howard Stern
   d) Whatever station I happen to turn to first
   e) Other ______________________________________________________

20. At home, what radio shows do you listen to for your information source?

   a) NPR (National Public Radio)
   b) Colby College’s radio broadcasting
   c) Howard Stern
   d) Whatever station I happen to turn to first
   e) Other ______________________________________________________
21. What type of news story are you most likely to be attracted to?
   a) Political stories
   b) Local stories
   c) International News
   d) War/Conflict stories
   e) Arts/Entertainment
   f) Sports headlines

22. Do your parents obtain their news from the same sources as you?
   a) Yes
   b) No
   c) I do not know

23. Do you feel that images/photographs are useful when reading/watching a news story?
   a) Yes
   b) No
   c) I do not know

24. Do you feel that captions are necessary to accompany photographs in news sources?
   a) Yes
   b) No
   c) I do not know

25. Do headlines on a newspaper, magazine, or news broadcast capture your attention?
   a) Yes
   b) No
   c) I do not know
26. Do you feel that newspapers do a good job of making information available to the public?
   a) Yes
   b) No
   c) I do not know

27. Do you feel that magazines do a good job of making information available to the public?
   a) Yes
   b) No
   c) I do not know

28. Do you feel that Television Broadcasts do a good job of making information available to the public?
   a) Yes
   b) No
   c) I do not know

29. Do you feel that the Internet does a good job of making information available to the public?
   a) Yes
   b) No
   c) I do not know

30. Do you feel that radio broadcasts do a good job of making information available to the public?
   a) Yes
   b) No
   c) I do not know
31. How do you feel about the quality of information received through the media?
   a) The media only gives me a limited view of the news that is subjective and opinionated
   b) The media gives me an adequate view of the news, and I have nothing to compare it to
   c) The media gives me a great view of the news in an objective and straight-forward way
   d) Other ______________________________

32. Which do you think is the most valid form of objective media in reporting the news?
   a) Newspapers
   b) Magazines
   c) Television Broadcasts
   d) Internet Sites
   e) Radio
   f) Other ______________________________

33. In response to your answer of Question 32, why do you feel this form of media is most objective?
   ________________________________________________________________
   ________________________________________________________________
   ________________________________________________________________

34. Do you feel Colby does a good job of providing its students with a sufficient amount of available news sources?
   a) Yes
   b) No
   c) I do not know
Please feel free to add any additional commentary about your thoughts on the media and its influence in your life in the space provided:

______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________

______________________________________________________________________________

I may be using some direct quotes from this questionnaire in my thesis. All responses will be anonymous. Please feel free to provide a pseudonym if you would like:

______________________________________________________________________________
BIBLIOGRAPHY


Browning, Eliza. 2007, March 6. “asap.” Interview (E-mail).


