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The Reality of Imaginationland: America's
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HONORS THESIS ABSTRACT

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ABSTRACT (100-200 WORDS): What I am arguing is that people’s inability to distinguish between the truth and a lie, is influenced by a number of factors such as lack of education, political fatigue, and the fact that likeable people are able to distort the truth. A major factor is news coverage itself. The constant repetition of lies transforms them into truths. Finally, a large group of people who no longer trust media reports has its roots in two developments. On one hand, the media appears to be one sided and partisan and on the other hand, facts do not seem to matter anymore. These are not new developments and the roots of this occurrence today can be traced back
to the administration of president George W. Bush and are still prevalent with the Trump administration today.
# Table of Contents

Introduction .................................................................................................................. 3

1. President Bush and “Weapons of Mass Destruction” ............................................. 10
   1.1 The Push to Find Weapons of Mass Destruction and Its Outcome ............... 10
   1.2 The Twenty-Four Hour News Coverage Effect ............................................. 12

2. President Obama’s Benghazi “Cover Up” and Iran Deal ...................................... 14
   2.1 The Benghazi Incident .................................................................................. 14
   2.2 The Iran Deal ............................................................................................... 17

3. The 2016 Presidential Election and President Trump’s War on the Media ........... 19
   3.1 Emergence of Fake News ............................................................................. 19
   3.2 The Campaign Trail ..................................................................................... 21
   3.3 The Outcome of the 2016 Presidential Election ......................................... 23
   3.4 Climate Change ............................................................................................ 24

Conclusion .................................................................................................................... 25

Bibliography .................................................................................................................. 27
Introduction

My high school teacher did not like it when his students believed they could not be manipulated. As a result, he would tell his classes the story of “Hanky Fendelhesy.” He fibbed that Fendelhesy was the shortest United States’ president to ever hold office and was widely unknown because of his brief time in office before his “unfortunate” death. Excited to tell their peers and parents about this newly discovered president, my teacher soon broke the news that everything he said was made up. This was my teacher’s way of stressing the importance of taking everything with a grain of salt. Today with news reporting in a multitude of media outlets, people in the United States are taking more than just a grain of salt with what is being reported to them as a result of their lack of faith in media and the emergence of fake news.

Although the lack of trust in the media and the existence of fake news are not recent phenomena, its prevalence in today’s society is alarming. It makes it difficult for people to distinguish between fact and fiction. What is a fact? According to the Oxford English Dictionary, a fact is “That which is known (or firmly believed) to be real or true; what has actually happened or is the case; truth attested by direct observation or authentic testimony; reality.”¹ What a fact is and its validity has been discussed among journalists and historians along with the possible consequences of a society’s distrust in reported facts. For instance, Mikhail Lossel of the New Yorker said “This is what constant, 

permanent exposure to alternative reality does: it deafens and deadens you.”

A society that distrusts facts, like some people in the United States, could suffer the same consequences as the citizens of the Soviet Union. Mary Norris of the New Yorker stated, “Alternate facts would refer to two facts in rotation with each other. They would still be facts. “Alternative facts” do not share that quality. They do not have actual existence. Alternative facts are delusions.”

Showing that there is no alternative universe that exists, it is simply a falsehood to make up something that has happened.

The topic that I will be writing about is how the definition and the legitimacy of a fact started to be questioned in the United States by its citizens as a result of mass media outlets since the start of the year 2000 by comparing different media outlets and their different approaches to how they cover “news.” Media outlets, both domestic and foreign, will be used to explore the distrust of credible facts presented by media. The prime motive of what will be discussed here is to look at the development of different attitudes towards what constitutes a fact and how that can have a direct impact on a certain media outlet’s viewer. I will also be discussing how people in the United States have a tough time distinguishing fact from opinion for themselves in today’s world. Although there are other factors that contribute to society’s dismantling in understanding of what an actual fact is, the main purpose here is to focus on different media coverage throughout the twenty-first century.

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Although few historians look into this problem, journalists, political scientists, and scientists are searching for explanations as to why people are losing trust in media. Edwin Emery, a journalistic historian, makes the argument that journalists and historians both in good faith have an obligation to report what they find as truth and not mince words for purposes not related to the truth. He relates historians to the press by saying, “historians have an obligation to be fair in dealing with historical material, with points of view help by their subjects, and with various perspectives on history. Their goal must be first a search for truth about people and events of the past, rather than ideological dogmatism. They should not set out with a viewpoint and then simply marshal facts to fit it.”

Journalists have been recently discussing a concept known as “gotcha questions” and their relevance in relation to facts. For example, Patrick A. Stewart of the New York Times said, “The gotcha questions — the Republican candidates define that term very loosely to include challenges on experience, policy positions and the ability to do elementary (but not Common Core) arithmetic — are in the mind of the beholder. More accurately, they are often in the excuses of the unprepared or poorly performing candidate.” While Erik Wemple of The Washington Post said in relation to Donald Trump that, “Here’s a non-gotcha question: When did gotcha questions get such a bad reputation?...Hewitt’s questions, whatever their characterization, embarrassed Trump. So he did what he commonly does to media types who decline to flatter him. He stated his

superiority.”⁶ These are two examples from two journalists who both argue the importance of gotcha questions and how they are important to keeping facts relevant in the eyes of an audience.

Even scientists such as Andrew Norton of the International Institute for Environmental Development discuss the importance of facts in relation to preserving the environment by saying,

“There has always been a strain of politics that backs fossil fuels, connected to the powerful interest groups concerned…Populist nationalism therefore tends to reject the science of climate change however strong the evidence (just to give one small piece of this – the five hottest years ever recorded since the global temperature record began in the mid-19th century have been 2011 to 2015). However, in the end any country that seeks to isolate itself will lose out. If President Trump follows through on his stated intention to turn his country away from climate action, isolation from the developing global green economy could lock the US into technologies that will be increasingly redundant and fossil fuel energy that will be increasingly expensive in relation to renewable alternatives.”⁷

Norton is making the argument that denying climate change is not a fact issue, but it is a political issue. So although the facts are at president Trump’s disposal, he is denying them for partisan purposes and for his supporters, he is given not necessarily credibility, but praise from some people.

George Saunders of the New Yorker thinks that energy is a key element to blinding the public from facts. For example, he says,

“It’s considered an indication of authenticity that he doesn’t generally speak from a teleprompter but just wings it. (In fact, he brings to the

podium a few pages of handwritten bullet points, to which he periodically refers as he, mostly, wings it.) He wings it because winging it serves his purpose. He is not trying to persuade, detail, or prove: he is trying to thrill, agitate, be liked, be loved, here and now. He is trying to make energy.”

Saunders is making the claim that Trump to his supporters is not necessarily trying to display the truth, but create energy for his supporters to feed off of. So they may simply just believe him, even if he is not telling the truth.

Sean Hannity of Fox News often praises Donald Trump on his show and alleges the mainstream media to have a liberal bias against Donald Trump by saying, “Many of the news organizations and advertisers are interconnected that it all amounts to a corrupt swamp.”

John Stossel of the Chicago Sun Times believes the media is failing the American people since he says, “We live longer than ever. Crime is down. But Americans are fearful and pessimistic because what they read and see on TV makes them believe life’s getting worse. When the media do that, they are indeed enemies of the people.” What he is saying is although fake news is out there, such as made up news articles that people believe that they receive from Facebook, the mainstream media is fake news when they cover the Trump administration constantly, they are giving out falsehoods to the media to be put on the news, and the mainstream media by partaking in it in by being their

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messengers and this is a significant problem because the Trump administration is constantly giving out falsehoods, which people are always being exposed to.

Although most journalists, historians, and people in academia credit mainstream media’s reporting on facts, there is a wide gap of opposition from United States citizens. Moving forward, I am going to try to answer a group of questions that are connected with one another and that has not been studied before such as: how has media shaped the opinions of its viewers? Are there certain media outlets that are not affiliated with a party that can be considered partisan at the same time? However, the overall question I am going to try to decipher is what is the process that has occurred that has led not only to people’s distrust in media, but the distrust in facts from opinions from credible sources and the inability to distinguish “fake” from real news or fact from opinion?

The sources that are going to be explored going forward are going to be from a multitude of mass media outlets including Fox News, The New York Times, The Washington Post, The Daily Show, CNN, and many more. In some cases they could be used as secondary sources, but for the purpose of the argument to be made going forward, they will be mostly used as primary sources to tell the narrative of the development of the media and people’s trust in it since president George W. Bush’s tenure as president.

There are multiple reasons why there is distrust in the media’s reporting of facts that are discredited by the public. For instance people’s inability to distinguish between the truth and a lie is influenced by a number of factors such as lack of education, political fatigue, and the fact that likeable people are able to distort the truth. A major factor is news coverage itself. The constant repetition of lies transforms them into truths. Finally, a large group of people who no longer trust media reports has its roots in two
developments. On one hand, the media appears to be one sided and partisan and on the other hand, facts do not seem to matter anymore. These are not new developments and the roots of these occurrences today can be traced back to the administration of president George W. Bush.

In the first section, I will be discussing president George W. Bush’s administrations push for “weapons of mass destruction.” By examining how the media used their “intelligence” to try and fulfill the administration’s wishes. Then I will examine how this led to an invasion in the Middle East that people started to question if it is morally the right thing to do and the sense of skepticism that came with it, especially with the emergence of the twenty-four-hour news cycle.

In the second section, I will be looking at president Barack Obama and the situation that unfolded in Benghazi as well as the Iran Deal. For instance, how people started to speculate that the situation in Benghazi was a “cover up” and conspired to be one. Also, how after the Iran deal was made by the Obama administration, people started to conspire that Obama was being “too lenient” because of his “Muslim heritage.”

Finally in the third section, I will explore the Trump campaign and the beginning of the Trump administration when it took office. I will also discuss the emergence of fake news and how that affected people’s perception on what is real and what is fake news. Then I will shed light on the trump campaign and the energy it brought to some of the American people, especially Trump supporters. Then I will explore the outcome of the election and the correlation of who voted for Trump and how that affected the election’s outcome. Finally, I will discuss president Trump’s climate change initiatives and the reasoning behind it.
1. President Bush and “Weapons of Mass Destruction”

The push to Find Weapons of Mass Destruction and Its Outcome

After the attack on September 11th, 2001, there was a feeling of hatred that sparked in the United States and people wanted justification for the attack that killed thousands. A result of this catastrophic event people were trying to figure out who was to blame and in 2002, the United States claimed to have “intelligence” that Saddam Hussein was developing weapons of mass destruction by having former vice president Dick Cheney say, “He's had years to get good at it and we know he has been absolutely devoted to trying to acquire nuclear weapons. And we believe he has, in fact, reconstituted nuclear weapons.”

This in fact was not the case, but the result of the false intelligence was an invasion of Iraq that took place in 2003. This occurred after the United States did not listen to the United Nations intelligence and decided to go with their intelligence instead. Consequently, no weapons of mass destruction were found and the United States were stuck in a quagmire in Iraq. President Bush went on to say that the decision was the

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right one since Hussein was captured, killed, and no longer was in power and he would have made the same decision again if he could.\textsuperscript{13}

This lead to a lot of skepticism in the United States and people were curious to why the United States invaded Iraq to go after a red herring. On this topic, Glenn Kessler says,

“The intelligence community’s assessments on Iraq’s WMD stockpiles and programs turned out to be woefully wrong, largely because analysts believed that Iraq had kept on a path of building its programs… But at the same time, Bush administration officials often hyped the intelligence that supported their policy goals – while ignoring or playing down dissents or caveats from within the intelligence community. The intelligence was used for political purposes, to build public support for a war that might have been launched no matter what intelligence analysts had said about the prospect of finding WMDs in Iraq.”\textsuperscript{14}

What Kessler says is very accurate because although the intelligence was “there,” however, the Bush administration pushed for weapons of mass destruction from its intelligence for political intensions rather than logistical reasons. For these reasons, this can lead to a sense of skepticism among United States’ citizens for two reasons. First, it is hard to believe what the United States’ government and in particularly the Bush administration would say that could be trusted since weapons of mass destruction were never found. Second, citizens should have the right to be skeptical of what is being reported to them since the media were responsible for feeding the Bush administration “intelligence” such as former New York Times reporter Judith Miller, who reported her


“intelligence” on a story that was on the cover of the *New York Times* and backed up what the administration was pushing for.\(^\text{15}\) Hence this shows the media has to take responsibility for the falsified information to push a narrative that does not exist just as the Bush administration did.

**The Twenty-Four Hour News Coverage Effect**

By 1997, *CNN, MSNBC*, and *Fox News* launched their networks and this sparked what is known as the twenty-four-hour news cycle. This meant on these channels that there was going to be news coverage twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week. *CNN* is usually reporting stories and always attempts to get perspectives on both the right and left of the political spectrum. *MSNBC* has been known for being more left leaning on the political spectrum of reporting and *Fox News* is notorious for being a right leaning news organization.

For these twenty-four news networks and their coverage with politics aside, it could deem both positive and negative impacts for society. On one hand, if something catastrophic happens such as nine-eleven, people could tune into these networks and get updates within minutes. Just like how Jon Stewart said, “The networks were built for 9/11. A twenty-four hour news network with that kind of manpower is really built for one thing, and that is a catastrophe on an inhumane scale.”\(^\text{16}\) This is true because news can be obtained in a variety of ways and the reason people may want to tune into the twenty-


\(^{16}\) Chris Smith, *The Daily Show (The Book): An Oral History as Told By Jon Stewart, the Correspondents, Staff and Guest.* (New York, New York, 2016), 80-81.
four-hour news channels is to get news instantly on something that is developing, otherwise news can be obtained in a variety of different ways such as local news channels, newspapers, and social media.

However the problem with the twenty-four-hour news cycle is trying to constantly bring in ratings. The problem with this is it can lead reporting away from what should actually ought to be reported and instead these news organizations are forced to either report entertaining or controversial stories because if they follow this approach, they get more ratings and the more ratings they obtain, the more money these news outlets intake. This concept is what Neil Postman argues in his book, *Amusing Ourselves To Death*, and Postman sheds light on how even back in the 1980’s, reporters and producers reported stories that would bring in viewers rather then what could potentially be a more important story for the public to know.\(^{17}\) So in essence, part of the problem lies with the United States’ citizens because they are more inclined to be entertained rather then be informed. So if people would rather tune in to channels to be informed, that could potentially solve a huge problem with the twenty-four-hour news cycle channels by making people more educated on what is going on in the world rather than focusing on the entertainment aspect.

The final problem with the twenty-four-hour news cycle channels aside from entertainment is the audience they are trying to reach. Since *Fox News* attempts to appeal to viewers who are right leaning on the political spectrum and *MSNBC* attempt to appeal to viewers who are left leaning on the political spectrum, this raises a problem since these channels’ viewers are going to tune into these channels not just for news, but to hear

repercussive political ideological information reflecting their political views. This concept can lead to people obtaining partisan news coverage and become misinformed by not thinking from all perspectives. Therefore people who view these channels may become more closed-minded thinkers and not think situations developing in the news more rationally. With CNN the problem lies differently since they try to have discussion on issues from people on both the left and the right of the political spectrum and this can be consequential ironically since issues such as climate change can appear to be a two sided issue, when in reality there is an overwhelming majority of scientists who believe climate change is happening and is real.\(^{18}\) So if CNN and other mass media outlets cover issues where there should not be a debate essentially, this can lead to people being more informed on straight forward issues instead of thinking they have to choose a side because the side they might end up choosing, will most likely be the political party they are affiliated with. If this could be fixed, people potentially could no longer question important issue that ought to not be questioned.

2. President Obama’s Benghazi “Cover Up” and Iran Deal

The Benghazi Attack

On September 11, 2012 there was an organized attack on the United States’ diplomatic mission at a CIA compound in Benghazi, Libya where Islamist militants

killed four Americans. One of the Americans that were killed was ambassador J. Christopher Stevens and this was the first time since 1979 that a U.S. Ambassador was killed. The result of this catastrophic event, lead to constant news coverage, especially from mass media outlets such as *Fox News*. For 2016 presidential candidate and former Secretary of State Hilary Clinton, this event would come to haunt her for the result of the 2016 presidential election.

Since the event at Benghazi took place, there have been over eight congressional investigations conducted by the state department and on particularly Hillary Clinton, and six of the eight committees were led by a majority of Republicans. After these investigations, Hilary Clinton has been found of no wrong doing so far, but the state department or either the White house has been criticized for negligence and should have done their duties better to prevent the attack from happening.

With the attack, came scrutiny from the mass media on how this whole situation was handled by the White House and the State Department and one of the most critical networks of the administrations handling of the Benghazi incident was *Fox News*. In a two-week study done by *MediaMatters for America*, they concluded that:

*Fox News has devoted roughly three hours to promoting the release of Michael Bay's 13 Hours: The Secret Soldiers of Benghazi, a movie about the 2012 attacks on diplomatic facilities in Libya, praising the film, repeatedly characterizing the movie as a threat to Hillary Clinton's*

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presidential campaign, and hyping several debunked myths about the Benghazi terror attacks. More than half of the network’s 32 segments focused on falsehoods about the State Department and Obama administration’s responses to the attacks, and nearly 60 percent of the segments linked the movie to Clinton’s 2016 bid for the White House.21

This is important to examine for a few reasons for the fact it is not just a movie promotion. First, although it is Fox News’ right to be critical of the Obama administration, for a network whose motto is “fair and balance,” it appears on the outside looking in that the coverage is one sided. Second, in the same study they linked the Benghazi scandal to Clinton’s campaign in over sixty percent of the segments, which shows they are only focusing on one story for partisan reasons. Third, the fact that they are focused on falsehoods about the attack shows they are not interested in reporting the facts, but instead they are interested in damaging Hilary Clinton’s presidential campaign and this puts a negative connotation to her campaign as well, especially to people who watch Fox News. On the flip side, since the mass media was not covering Benghazi as extensively as Fox News, it may appear that conservative learning citizens would be more critical of the other mass media outlets because their failure to cover the Benghazi incident as extensively could seem more partisan, which in essence is not true since mass media outlets have an obligation to cover stories with precision, but at the same time with consistency as well as to make time for other stories so the public is not just focused on only one story in the news at a time.

The Iran Deal

Another event that unfolded during the Obama administration that drove extensive criticism, especially from the right, was the Iran Deal. Over eighteen months, there were negotiations between the United States and other allied countries of the United States negotiating with Iran to try and prevent the nation from developing a nuclear weapon for the fear that it could get into the wrong hands such as Middle Eastern terrorists groups. On April 2nd, 2015, there was a conference in Switzerland that confirmed a deal that has been made that would prevent Iran from developing a nuclear weapon according to John Kerry, the European Union’s foreign policy chief Federica Mogherini, and the Iranian foreign minister Mohammad Javad Zarif.22

Criticism for the deal has come from the right saying there needs to be more harder sanctions than what was negotiated. Other criticisms are that Iran is the enemy and it is a metaphorical slap in the face to the United States’ ally in the Middle East Israel. Finally, critics claim the deal gives Iran power and leverage in the Middle East through these negotiations that they did not have prior to the deal.23

The Obama administration took heavy criticism when they sent over 400 million dollars in cash to Iran the same day the Iran deal took place. According to the administration, the intent of the money being sent was for Iran to release four American

soldiers. Obama was criticized from people such as former senator Mark Kirk and now president Donald Trump on the deal by saying it sets a bad precedent for the United States when negotiating with terrorists and terrorists can use the money for worse intentions that could cost more than four American lives.24

One of the problems this event sparked from the right according to Fox News columnists Fred Fleitz, he says, “the Iran nuclear agreement is national security fraud. It will not stop or slow Iran’s pursuit of nuclear weapons…That’s what led to a disastrous agreement that will may do enormous damage to international security for decades to come.”25 An allegation that Americans from the right say about Obama is his Muslim heritage where over fifty-four percent of Trump supporters believe Obama is a Muslim.26 Hence this can lead to an allegation that Obama made this deal to be easy on Iran because of his “Muslim heritage.” Trump also alleged Obama for not being born in the United States either; when Obama has already released his birth certificate as well. People whom believe this misconception are having a negative impact on society for a number of reasons. First off, there are an abundance of people who will take Trump at his word without looking up the facts and this is very dangerous since the fact is that Obama was born in the United States and is not a Muslim because Obama provides evidence that he was born in the United States by releasing his birth certificate, and proves he is not a

Muslim because he was baptized in a Christian church, while on the contrary Trump provides no evidence. So if people believe a person who provides no evidence over someone who does, that can be dangerous since they could be subject to manipulation from false accusations and lose touch with reality in the realm of what is true and what is false.

3. The 2016 Presidential Election and President Trump’s War on the Media

The Emergence of “Fake News”

One cause of citizens of the United States’ distrust in facts is the concept that some citizens believe fake news. There are two types of fake news: satiric shows who pretend to be news shows and made up news articles put out on social media and all over the internet that make up false stories where there is no validation to the story itself. The type of fake news that is causing people to distrust facts is the second one, made up news stories. For instance, during the 2016 presidential election in the United States according to the pew research center, 64% of adults in the United States said made-up news has caused a great deal of confusion of the basic facts of current events and 24% said made up news has caused some confusion about basic facts of current events. Hence this study shows an important root cause to American citizens distrust in facts because these

made-up news stories are causing a great deal of confusion to the point where some people have a tough time validating fact from fiction.

President Trump has a different version of what fake news is. If any form of media is critical to what Trump or anyone in his administration says deems to challenge their validity, it is therefore “fake news.” For instance, on Trump’s inauguration day, Sean Spicer, president Trump’s press secretary said, “this was the largest audience to ever witness the inauguration period both in person and around the globe.” With no credible evidence to back up this statement, Kellyanne Conway, counselor to the President went on Meet The Press and told Chuck Todd that Spicer used “alternative facts.” This shows how President Trump and his administration are dismantling evidence on what the mass media is reporting. So if Trump and his administration are debunking what is being reported by the mass media, the mass media may appear to be considered partisan to some. However, this is not the case since the mass media’s reporting with the usage of evidence to backup their claim on Trump’s inauguration numbers are simply not partisan, they are what is the truth because Trump or anyone in his administration fail to provide evidence on their claims.

The 2016 Campaign Trail

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The concept of the media’s “unfair” coverage of the Trump administration can be traced back to the Republican primary debate with “gotcha questions.” According to Kylie Mohr, “‘Gotcha’ journalism is what politicians frequently accuse reporters of when doing their jobs of trying to uncover information.”31 Where after the CNBC debate, the Republican National Convention did not conduct another debate through NBC networks again for the primary election cycle since

“While debates are meant to include tough questions and contrast candidates' visions and policies for the future of America, CNBC's moderators engaged in a series of 'gotcha' questions, petty and mean-spirited in tone, and designed to embarrass our candidates. What took place Wednesday night was not an attempt to give the American people a greater understanding of our candidates' policies and ideas.”32

This shows that tough questions to expose candidate’s flaws are deemed unfair even though the media is supposed to be a check on politicians, which in itself, is a contradiction.

Ever since President Trump’s announcement for declaring that he was running for president of the United States, his campaign rallies have derived from emotion rather than logic and this notion is what his followers have bought into. For instance, on the day of his presidential announcement, Trump said, “When Mexico sends its people, they're not sending their best. They're not sending you….They're sending people that have lots of problems, and they're bringing those problems with us. They're bringing drugs. They're
bringing crime. They're rapists. And some, I assume, are good people." Trump did the same thing when he proposed his first Muslim ban in the United States in December of 2015. Rather than use evidence to support his claims of these proposed policies to his supporters, he did not share any because President Trump is using both Mexicans and Muslims as a scapegoat for people’s problems the same way other authoritarian figures have done in the past.

A major problem about Trump’s remarks on the campaign trail, are not the remarks themselves, but how they are covered by the mass media. Just as Trump said about the unemployment rate after winning the New Hampshire primary, “Don't believe those phony numbers when you hear 4.9 and 5 percent unemployment…The number's probably 28, 29, as high as 35. In fact, I even heard recently 42 percent.” Places such as the Bureau of Labor Statistics deemed that statement to be false using evidence, but mass media outlets covered the statement like there had to be a debate to the subject. When making a debate on a statement that is false, this causes confusion to a viewer of any mass media outlet since a story may be covered like there are two sides to a statement, when in fact there is just only one side, the truth.

The Outcome of the 2016 Presidential Election

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A problem with people’s trust in media was a result of the 2016 presidential election itself. According to the Pew Research Center, “Relying largely on opinion polls, election forecasters put Clinton’s chance of winning at anywhere from 70% to as high as 99%, and pegged her as the heavy favorite to win a number of states such as Pennsylvania and Wisconsin that in the end were taken by Trump.” A significant problem with this is that going to the election, the consensus across most mainstream media polling was that Hilary Clinton was going to win the 2016 presidential election, when in fact she lost by 77 electoral votes, which gives people a bit of skepticism among people’s trust in media, especially by people who supported Trump and although this could have been a fluke, this gives Trump a portion of credibility when he says not to trust what the media reports.

However a key component in examining Trump’s presidential victory is looking at who voted for him. Looking at the education level of people who voted for Trump, “In the 2016 election, a wide gap in presidential preferences emerged between those with and without a college degree. College graduates backed Clinton by a 9-point margin (52%-43%), while those without a college degree backed Trump 52%-44%. This is by far the widest gap in support among college graduates and non-college graduates in exit polls dating back to 1980.”

This research shows the significance of how college educated people favored Hilary and opposed Trump and even though not all people who were college educated voted for

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Trump, this shows how uneducated people might have been exposed to Trump’s “reality” and bought into it.

**Climate Change**

Ever since President Trump took office, he has taken a lot of initiatives on climate change. Trump back in 2012 tweeted, "The concept of global warming was created by and for the Chinese in order to make U.S. manufacturing non-competitive." Trump in a presidential debate denied tweeting that, but the tweet is still on his twitter page, however, since being president, Trump has had

“Executive actions will follow the White House’s release last week of a proposed budget that would eliminate climate change research and prevention programs across the federal government and slash the Environmental Protection Agency’s budget by 31 percent, more than any other agency. Mr. Trump also announced last week that he had ordered Scott Pruitt, the E.P.A. administrator, to revise the agency’s stringent standards on planet-warming tailpipe pollution from vehicles, another of Mr. Obama’s key climate change policies.”

Even though over 97% of scientists believe climate change is real, Trump’s actions prove he thinks otherwise, which is very important because citizens are supposed to believe what the scientific community is reporting, is supposed to be fact, but with Trump’s

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opinion, it raises a spark of skepticism for his followers who would rather believe Trump than the scientists.  

Conclusion

There are a multitude of ways that the media fails the public in its coverage, but at the same time as citizens we need to look at the underline causes of why media reports the material they chose to report. If we are more inclined to be informed rather than be entertained, that can change news coverage itself for the better because if we do not do this, then people who are less educated and do not obtain the proper tools to interpret and process information, they are more inclined to be misinformed. Unfortunately, the less educated a society is, the more their government can potentially get away with a variety of things with their citizens. So it is vitally important for the United States to not go down this slippery slope and address education issues.

Another problem is the twenty-four-hour news cycle and that helps lead to political fatigue with its constant coverage. For instance, the media in the United States covers presidential elections for about a year and a half, while other nations like the United Kingdom only have their prime minister and parliamentary election season for a few months. If elections seasons whether its presidential or local elections were shorter, people might be more inclined to pay attention if election coverage was not always being thrown in their faces. For example, mass media outlets are already reporting who might

and who might not run for president in 2020 for the Democratic Party and the United States has not even gone a year without a presidential election.

With this “Trumpism” going on in today’s society, it can be easy to get lost in which is actually going on in the world today. People seem to judge him off his business record rather than what he is doing or will do politically and I think that is extremely dangerous because his business record has major flaws. Also he will not release his tax returns probably since he is covering up the fact that he has not paid his taxes and these traits are dangerous to have as a president of the United States since it seems like Trump is in it to take advantage of the system for him and his friends as president, the same way he did as a wealthy business man.

However, I do not think the media is failing us as a whole. I believe there are an abundance of outlets for people to get their news such as the New York Times, The Washington Post, PBS, BBC, and many more. If people felt more inclined to tune in to these channels or subscribe to certain newspapers, I think the United States could potentially be a different place for the better. My personal favorite form of media is comedic news such as Last Week Tonight With John Oliver, The Daily Show, and Full Frontal with Samantha Bee since these shows are informative, while at the same they are entertaining. These shows also help me figure out what is going on in the world because I think as much as the world can seem like a depressing place, sometimes it is just better to laugh about it and mock the people who are attempting in worsen our world.

As a society as a whole from tracing the development of media coverage and people’s faith in it, I think society has taken some steps forward and some steps back. I think society developed for the worse as a result of the emergence of the social media
because people can post anything they want about anyone and it can be tough for some people to distinguish who is telling the truth. At the same time, I think society has taken some strides forward where technology has developed tremendously over the years where we are able to fact check anything that is said and a fact, in my opinion, is anything that is said that can be backed up with evidence without other evidence disputing it.

Hopefully going forward, society in the United States can utilize its tools and not be shunned for doing so, while at the same time not be criticized for doing what is the right thing to do.