RECENT CONSTRUCTIONS OF MASCULINITY
AND THE EMOTIONALLY EXPRESSIVE MEN
OF JANE AUSTEN FILM ADAPTATIONS,
1995 TO 2005

- AND -

THE IRAQ WAR’S EMBEDDED MEDIA PROGRAM:
MEDIA MANAGEMENT AND MANIPULATION

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Karen Tankard
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APPROVAL

Name: Karen Tankard
Degree: Master of Arts in Liberal Studies
Title of Thesis: Recent Constructions of Masculinity and the Emotionally Expressive Men of Jane Austen Film Adaptations, 1995 to 2005

-AND-

Title of Thesis: The Iraq War's Embedded Media Program: Media Management and Manipulation

Examining Committee:

Chair: Jack Martin
Professor, Department of Psychology and Graduate Liberal Studies

June Sturrock
Professor Emerita, Department of English and Graduate Liberal Studies

Michael Fellman
Professor Emeritus, Department of History and Graduate Liberal Studies

Patricia Gruben
Associate Professor, School for the Contemporary Arts

Date Defended/Approved: March 19, 2008
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ABSTRACT

Essay 1: Recent Constructions of Masculinity and the Emotionally Expressive Men of Jane Austen Film Adaptations, 1995 to 2005 examines the reconstructions filmmakers have performed on male characters in five Jane Austen motion picture and miniseries adaptations. It contrasts these representations with the characters in Austen’s source novels and in earlier adaptations produced for British television. The essay also considers the role of male compassion, nurturing and egalitarianism in the recent adaptations.

Keywords: Jane Austen; English Fiction – Film and Video Adaptations; masculinity
Subject Terms: Austen, Jane, 1775-1817 – Film and Video Adaptations

Essay 2: The Iraq War’s Embedded Media Program: Media Management and Manipulation examines the US rationale for journalist embedding at the start of the 2003 Iraq War and the effect on journalists’ reportage. Researchers found embedded journalists tended to produce material that was contextually deficient and pro-military when compared with the reportage of non-embedded journalists. Possible explanations include social penetration, patriotism and the financial interests of US media corporations.

Keywords: Iraq War 2003; mass media; US media; US military
Subject Terms: Iraq War, 2003 Mass Media and the War
DEDICATION

For K
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RECENT CONSTRUCTIONS OF MASCULINITY
AND THE EMOTIONALLY EXPRESSIVE MEN
OF JANE AUSTEN FILM ADAPTATIONS, 1995 TO 2005
Introduction

It is a rare phenomenon when a television actor's performance can seemingly captivate an entire nation, or at least the nation's women. Yet this was the overwhelming response to British actor Colin Firth in his portrayal of Mr. Darcy in the British Broadcasting Corporation's 1995 television miniseries adaptation of Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice*. Firth was the subject of numerous newspaper and magazine articles, which offered accounts on everything from his popular appeal to his costume breeches (Hopkins 111). The venerable *Guardian* even got into the act, reporting that Firth's attractiveness to women had spurred an unusual form of Austen-mania called 'Mr. Darcy Parties', where groups of women would gather to replay videotapes of Firth's famous dive scene at Pemberley (Looser 160), a scene which features the handsome actor clothed in a torso-hugging wet dress shirt. Firth's popularity undoubtedly helped the final episode of the series attract a whopping forty percent of the United Kingdom's total television viewing audience (MacDonald and MacDonald 264). When the series aired in the United States 3.7 million households tuned in (Thomas qtd. in Parrill 142).

While the frenzied female response to Colin Firth may have been unique, other motion picture and miniseries versions of Jane Austen's novels have similarly enjoyed popular and critical success and earned millions of dollars. The Ang Lee/Emma Thompson motion picture adaptation of Austen's *Sense and Sensibility* had gross sales exceeding $100 million (USD) (Fergus 88), with
Thompson winning the Academy Award for Best Adapted Screenplay. More recently, the Joe Wright/Deborah Moggach adaptation of *Pride and Prejudice* garnered four Academy Award nominations, including one for best actress, and had sales grossing more than $116 million (USD) worldwide (*The Numbers*).

The monetary success and popular appeal of Jane Austen adaptations produced since 1995 has been accounted for in different ways. Douglas McGrath, the director/screenwriter of Miramax's 1996 motion picture version of *Emma*, makes a case for nostalgic escapism. He contends that the heritage aspects of Austen adaptations, which depict a slower-paced and simpler existence, offer modern audiences a respite from the harshness of life in big American cities (qtd. in Parrill 6). Timothy Corrigan (36) argues that adaptations of literary classics satisfy a longing for traditional national values amid a contemporary climate of political violence and social multiculturalism. Ellen Moody (8) points to the alluring locations in the English countryside, the casting of famous and appealing actors and well financed publicity campaigns.

Another credible argument for the popularity of these adaptations, and one with which I agree, lies in the wholesale reconstructions performed on some of Austen's reticent male characters, reconstructions that Cheryl Nixon (23) characterises as the 'fleshing out' of romance heroes. Bearing in mind that women are the predominant consumers of Jane Austen adaptations (Troost and Greenfield 5), the makers of these motion pictures and miniseries have tailored their adaptations with romantic escapism in mind, whereby women spectators can live vicariously through an Austen heroine whose destiny is to couple with a
handsome, caring and emotionally expressive hero who fits her modern ideal of a man. In order to achieve this result, adaptation-makers have replaced Austen’s taciturn men with emotionally expressive ones.

Firth’s Mr. Darcy is a case in point; his love for Elizabeth Bennet is given emotional and physical display in a series of fabricated scenes that do not appear in Austen’s novel. Devoney Looser (170-1) characterises this modern Mr. Darcy and some of the other reconfigured heroes as ‘new men’, for whom masculinity includes the tasks of care giving, rescuing damsels in distress and caring for children. Decidedly and anachronistically modern men, they exhibit compassion, caring and egalitarianism, traits that Michael Kimmel (334) characterises as new masculine virtues. This caring modern man has not been formulated expressly for Jane Austen adaptations produced since the mid-1990s. Rather, his genesis appears to have come about in a type of Hollywood motion picture, to be discussed later, that emerged around 1991; a variety featuring men who experience life-altering events that cause them to be reborn as “opened-up sensitive guys” (Pfeil 37). This essay will focus on the various reconstructions directors and screenwriters have performed on male characters in five Jane Austen film and miniseries adaptations produced since 1995. I will observe the way male emotional expression is presented in Ang Lee/Emma Thompson’s 1995 Sense and Sensibility, Simon Langton/Andrew Davies’s 1995 Pride and Prejudice, Roger Michell/Nick Dear’s 1995 Persuasion, Patricia Rozema’s 1999 Mansfield Park, and Joe Wright/Deborah Moggach’s 2005 Pride and Prejudice. Additionally, I will contrast the male characters in these versions with their
counterparts in Austen's source novels and in miniseries adaptations produced for British television in the 1970s and 1980s. Finally, I will discuss why male character reconstructions continue to be replicated in Jane Austen motion picture and miniseries adaptations, and how commercial necessity appears to be the motivating force behind the character renovations.

**Masculinity and Jane Austen**

As humans we will play numerous roles during our lives, each imbued with social meaning. A role is constituted by specific behavioural rules that govern how the role-player is expected to act, think, feel and communicate. In other words, roles help to order the social world. Gender roles are comprised of conventions that serve dual functions, guiding males and females in what is sanctioned social conduct and restricting behaviour that is considered taboo (Gilbert and Scher qtd. in Mahalik et al. 417). Gendered role-playing has existed for thousands of years, but these conventions are fluid and can change over time and differ by cultural group. In his 1976 examination of contemporary western masculinity, Robert Brannon (qtd. in Kimmel 282) identifies four laws of manliness that form the rules to which western men must adhere if they wish to enjoy the esteem of their male peers. The rules are ‘no sissy stuff’, ‘be a big wheel’, ‘be a sturdy oak’ and ‘give ‘em hell’. The first, ‘no sissy stuff’, demands that men refrain from engaging in behaviour that other men associate with women, behaviour that includes child rearing and poetry reading (Alexander 537). A man who is a ‘big wheel’ wields power to achieve success and prosperity. To be a ‘sturdy oak’ is to be emotionally stable and to avoid public
display of emotions, such as crying or speaking of personal feelings. Finally, a man who 'gives 'em hell' is bold, brave and uncompromising. Michael Kimmel (334), in his analysis of masculinity two decades later, proffers a slightly different set of markers for prescriptive male behaviour in the 1990s. It is an amalgam of some of the traditional traits Brannon describes combined with what Kimmel has identified as modern masculine virtues. In considering what manhood has meant traditionally, Kimmel's inventory includes strength, a sense of purpose, controlled aggressiveness, self-reliance and dependability. More recently, he observes, men have added the new virtues of compassion, nurturing and egalitarianism to their behavioural repertoire. These modern masculine traits are precisely what we are seeing depicted in the male characters in Jane Austen motion picture and miniseries adaptations produced since 1995. The filmic addendum of modern masculine traits and emotional expression represent a 180-degree turn for some of Austen's men.

A survey of the attributes of Austen's male characters would not straightforwardly isolate her ideal of masculinity. Her men are comprised of varied traits and behaviours, some are considerate and confident, while others are reticent, egocentric, arrogant and silly. Of all of Austen's works, Claudia Johnson (Equivocal 199) sees Emma as being the novel most involved with ideas of gender role propriety and transgressions and George Knightley as the character most critical of contraventions. Mr. Knightley is seemingly Austen's most virtuous male character, a man who possesses the abundance of positive qualities we might expect from someone with the word 'knight' in his surname.
Mr. Knightley is a “sensible man” (Austen 58) with a “cheerful manner” (58), who “will fetch your great coat and open the garden door for you” (95), a “good friend and advisor” (95), “a man that every body looks up to” (109), and someone who will do anything “good-natured, useful, considerate, or benevolent” (215). Mr. Knightley’s censure of other men’s behaviour and their qualities suggests he also views himself to be the epitome of masculinity against whom all others should be judged. Johnson (*Equivocal* 200) observes that Mr. Knightley is especially contemptuous of men who exhibit feminized behaviour, such as Frank Churchill who obtains hairdressing services in London and who displays delicate, woman-like handwriting and excessive wordiness when expressing gratitude. Mr. Elton is another target; Mr. Knightley contends he resorts to insincere sentimentality to curry favour with the town’s women. It is tempting to accuse Mr. Knightley of practicing a double standard by showing gentlemanly patience for the novel’s most apparent exemplar of sensibility and masculine/feminine transgression, Mr. Woodhouse. The Woodhouse patriarch is represented as an aged man-child who is self absorbed, indulged and sentimental and whose personality traits are most closely linked with some of Austen’s women characters, such as his own hypochondriac daughter Isabella, *Persuasion*’s malingering Mary Musgrove and *Mansfield Park*’s idle Lady Bertram. Additionally, Woodhouse, who is seen to prefer the company of women and especially Mrs. Bates and Mrs. Goddard, yearns for a quiet domestic life sequestered in his house, the traditional realm of women.

Sensibility, according to James-Cavan, is somewhat impervious to
definition, but “seeks to incorporate reason and feeling, according each equal status, and inspire the sensible person with benevolent feelings which may or may not result in action” (13). Sensibility became linked to both radical and reactionary responses to the French Revolution (15), but would ultimately become synonymous with controversial author Mary Wollstonecraft and her “unconventional behaviour” (16). This behaviour, which William Godwin attempted to defend in his memoirs to his late wife, consisted of suicide attempts and having a child out of wedlock. Despite the responses to sensibility, Johnson (Equivocal 198) contends that old style, sentimental gentlemen, such as Mr. Woodhouse, were able to hold power because they were beloved for their defence of the cherished, albeit archaic, ways of the past. It is on this basis that Mr. Knightley accepts Mr. Woodhouse, although he himself would never replicate the old man’s behaviour and does not tolerate feminized conduct in younger men, such as Frank Churchill and Mr. Elton, who do not share Mr. Woodhouse’s ties to bygone times.

By representing various dimensions of manliness, from Mr. Woodhouse’s sentimentality to Frank Churchill’s narcissism to Mr. Knightley’s benevolent rather than gallant manliness, Austen, according to Johnson (Equivocal 199), seeks to redefine masculinity in Emma, by representing Mr. Knightley as the ideal. While he possesses many positive qualities, Mr. Knightley’s criticism of men who do not measure up to his definition of manliness suggests he is unsettled by differing masculine modes of being, as if he desires to fix himself as the definitive male type. Mr. Knightley’s uneasiness about other men may be the symptom of a
larger phenomenon and reflective of the profound social change that was occurring around the time *Emma* was being composed, a period that saw the erosion of Mr. Knightley’s brand of inherited-based status in favour of ranking for prosperous self made men, such Mr. Cole and Mr. Weston. By socializing with the newly prosperous families of the community, and moving into Mr. Woodhouse’s domain upon his marriage to Emma, Mr. Knightley reveals he is socially progressive and accepting of change, but only up to a point. He holds fast to the social mores around class and marriage, for example, when he sanctions and encourages Harriet Smith’s union with farmer Robert Martin. Mr. Knightley’s unease about what constitutes masculinity may in fact reflect his tension about the broader social change that is happening concurrently. It is not that he rejects all change, but rather he esteems the stability that comes from knowing that some things are set and certain.

Whatever constitutes ideal masculinity in *Emma*, Mr. Knightley does share one particular trait with other Austen heroes, a disinclination to express emotions in public. Mr. Knightley might be best characterised as a historic exemplar of Brannon’s ‘sturdy oak’ rule of manhood, which instructs men to refrain from public displays of sentiment. His emotional restraint is apparent in a short extract of a dialogue conducted with Emma. Noteworthy is Austen’s word choice for each character; she has Mr. Knightley rationalize while Emma expresses her feelings. When Mr. Knightley accuses Emma of “abusing the reason you have” [my emphasis], Emma retorts, “that is the feeling of you all” (99). Another example of Mr. Knightley’s emotional restraint is plain in his rather passionless
declaration of love for Emma:

I could not think about you so much without doating (sic) on you, faults and all; and by dint of fancying so many errors, have been in love with you ever since you were thirteen at least. (389)

Edward Ferrars is equally cool in his admission of love for Elinor Dashwood in Sense and Sensibility. As a matter of fact, Austen does not even allow the reticent Edward to verbalize his feelings; instead the omniscient narrator is given the job of describing Edward’s demeanour. We are told he is “more than commonly joyful. He had more than the ordinary triumph of accepted love to swell his heart and raise his spirits” (314). Austen’s Mr. Knightley and Edward are a far cry from Wright/Moggach’s 21-century Mr. Darcy who stammers out the heartfelt words, “I love, I love, I love you” to Elizabeth Bennet in the 2005 motion picture adaptation of Pride and Prejudice. The modern Mr. Darcy’s verbal stumbling and dishevelled appearance betray his emotional condition. He is a romantic man determined to communicate his feelings of love, even if it means forsaking propriety by abandoning his gentlemanly attire and the customary male emotional self-control. Mr. Darcy’s words of passion, absent in Austen’s novel, typify the romance terminology that has been written into recent Austen motion picture and miniseries adaptations.

There have long been films aimed at diverse audiences, but nowadays we see a more pronounced and more directed form of gender targeting, presumably to help a film realize its maximum commercial potential by appealing to specific demographics. This gendering makes it possible for a multiplicity of masculine traits to be displayed in motion pictures. But much of popular culture, films
especially, remain sated with examples of Brannon’s brand of masculinity. The ‘sturdy oak’ paradigm continues to be represented in the films of Jean-Claude Van Damme, Vin Diesel, Bruce Willis and other male action heroes. Action films, with their predominately male audiences, almost always feature central male characters that exemplify Brannon’s laws of manhood, whereas motion picture adaptations of Jane Austen novels, aimed at female audiences, are free to present emotionally expressive men who display the more modern masculine traits of compassion, nurturing and egalitarianism that Kimmel describes (334). Since masculinity is “largely a homosocial enactment” (Kimmel 7), we would expect to see the action movies that are marketed to men feature male characters that display what men consider normative male behaviour. Similarly, films aimed at women, such as the recent Austen adaptations, are tailored to address areas of female desire and subjectivity, through, among other things, the representation of male emotional expression. While some men would typify these reconstructed male characters as ‘sissies’, their opinions are immaterial since it is to women that these adaptations are being marketed.

Jane Austen film adaptations released in the mid-1990s and beyond did not pioneer male emotional expression in their heroes. Rather, we might look at them as the progeny of the films Regarding Henry, The Doctor, The Fisher King and City Slickers, motion pictures released in 1991 in what Fred Pfeil has dubbed, “The Year of Living Sensitively” (37). Sharing similar “thematic agendas” (Pfeil 37), the 1991 films present an emotionally repressed man who undergoes a painful life altering experience, to be reborn as an “opened-up sensitive guy”
(Pfeil 37). In *Regarding Henry*, a film with total gross sales in the United States of $43-million (LdsFilm), an ambitious New York lawyer is transformed into a sensitive man after a gunshot renders him temporarily helpless and dependent on others. Once the embodiment of Brannon's four laws of masculinity, Henry goes through a metamorphosis, emerging from his ordeal a caring man who gladly abandons his high-powered career in favour of loving family life. In *The Doctor*, the hero is a celebrated, gifted, and egotistical surgeon who treats patients with callous disregard. Then he is transformed by a cancer diagnosis. By forming relationships with other suffering cancer patients, and experiencing cruelty at the hands of insensitive doctors, the hero becomes a kinder, more compassionate medical practitioner and a loving spouse. The motion picture grossed $38-million (LdsFilm) in the United States, about $3-million less than *The Fisher King*, a motion picture that charts the transformation of a cynical, suicidal radio talk show host who learns compassion and forgiveness after he befriends a homeless man. The most commercially successful motion picture of the sensitive man variety released in 1991 is *City Slickers*, with more than $124-million in total sales in the United States alone (LdsFilm). Depicting three New Yorkers in the throes of a mid-life crisis who embark on a gruelling New Mexico cattle drive, the friends learn to express their feelings, and come to appreciate their lives and loved ones, after they successfully triumph over a myriad of physical and psychological challenges. Commonly, these four motion pictures privilege the newly reconstructed emotionally expressive man by representing him as more contented than his former self. It is the expression of male
emotionality that connects the sensitive men of the 1991 films with the Jane
Austen adaptations of the mid-1990s and later which feature male heroes who
display qualities of compassion, nurturing and egalitarianism.

The Compassionate Man

Just as the protagonist in *The Doctor* is transformed into a more openly
caring and considerate person, some of Austen’s male characters have
undergone a similar transformation in the adaptation process. All of her heroes
show compassion, but not always overtly. *Pride and Prejudice*’s Mr. Darcy, for
every example, clandestinely saves Elizabeth Bennet and her family from disgrace by
persuading Lydia and Wickham to marry. *Emma*’s Mr. Knightley shows kindness
and consideration towards Jane Fairfax and Miss Bates by sending them apples,
and offering the use of his carriage to convey them to the Coles’s party. But in
keeping with the propriety of the day, Mr. Knightley does not publicize the latter
act of compassion; rather it is exposed by Mrs. Weston. Conversely, public
displays of male compassion feature prominently in several of the recent Jane
Austen adaptations. One example is Tom Bertram of Rozema’s motion picture
adaptation of *Mansfield Park*. Bertram is represented as a man whose
compassion for others functions as his prime behavioural motivator. Rozema has
reconstructed Tom into a man whose feelings of sympathy are so profound they
endanger his life; he is a far cry from the novel’s idle, selfish, debt-ridden and
spoiled young man. Rozema’s Tom is a tortured soul who drinks to excess to
mask his intense mental anguish. We quickly learn the objects of his compassion
are the long suffering slaves who work under abject conditions at his father’s
Antiguan sugar plantation and whose labours support the Bertram’s comfortable lifestyle at Mansfield Park. Tom’s first public display of compassion for the slaves is revealed when he returns prematurely from a trip to the West Indies to discover his family members enjoying a garden party. His disdain for their merriment is observed in this remark that the Antiguans are “paying for this party” (Rozema 45). Later in the film, Rozema uses Tom again to display vividly how some Antiguans are paying with their lives. The motive for Tom’s early return is presumably to escape the horror of witnessing the slaves’ wretched lives on the plantation and possibly to evade participating in their suppression. These justifications differ from Austen’s novel, which explains Tom’s return to England as having been caused by “duties to call him earlier home” (Austen 137).

Rozema delves more deeply and plainly into the source of Tom’s emotional anguish in a fabricated scene that shows Fanny accidentally discovering and scrutinizing a well-worn sketchbook of Tom’s, which contains drawings of slaves being tortured and raped. One drawing (the illustrations are the work of William Blake) described in Rozema’s final shooting script, depicts “[d]etail of severely chafed wrists”, with a text that reads “Oronooko’s Wrists” (Rozema 128). Another drawing shows a “[b]unch of young white boys raping a black girl” with text that reads “Our neighbours” (128). A third sketch reveals a “[c]lose-up on slave’s face...hanging with his hands and feet tied behind him. He’s hanging from a meat hook”. The text reads “Equiano’s Last Day” (128). Fanny also observes the drawing of a “[b]uilding out alone in a field” with the text “Slave Prison” (128) and a number of sketches that feature images of Sir
Thomas Bertram brandishing a whip. Finally, we see the most disturbing sketch of all depicting a sex act that is about to be performed on the Bertram patriarch by “a slave woman on her knees in front of him, undoing his trousers” (128). Together, these illustrations not only reveal the deplorable and ghastly conditions of Sir Thomas' hegemonic rule, but also help us comprehend the motive for Tom’s public expressions of compassion for the plantation workers. While Rozema makes slavery one of the key subject matters of her adaptation, Austen’s novel makes only a single reference to West Indies slaves, a reference supplied by Fanny and Edmund.

Whereas Rozema uses Tom to propound a blatant statement on the dreadfulness of imperialism in general and slavery in particular, Edward Said stresses the immense importance Austen, in her “casual references to Antigua” (93), allocates to the Bertram’s overseas interests to the lifestyle of Mansfield Park and to the Bertram’s familial structure. Said notes that two interconnected outside forces controlled by Sir Thomas, the wealth producing West Indies holdings and the morally courageous dependent relative Fanny Price, ultimately provide the Bertram family members with the comfort and reform they need (91-92). In other words, he argues that in *Mansfield Park*, Austen is delivering a commentary on the vital role of the colony in sustaining the empire.

In a twist on the re-birthing theme of the sensitive man films of 1991, Tom is cured of his emotional turbulence in Rozema’s adaptation when he is felled by a life threatening illness. His sickness has a reforming effect by causing a metamorphosis in his morally corrupt, slave-driving father, Sir Thomas. At the
end of Rozema's motion picture, we learn that Sir Thomas has abandoned his
West Indies sugar plantation in favour of new prospects in tobacco. We are left
with the impression he has similarly abandoned his harsh labour practices.
Rozema bases Tom's 'deathbed' scene on an event in Austen's novel where the
reckless young man falls ill after weeks of riotous behaviour with undesirable
friends. In the novel, the episode serves as a plot device to precipitate the return
of Fanny to Mansfield Park from Portsmouth and to develop her relationship with
Edmund.

Tom Bertram is not the only reconstructed male character to display
compassion in Rozema's adaptation of *Mansfield Park*. The director/screenwriter
also transforms Henry Crawford, the charming villain of Austen's novel, into a
caring landlord. This occurs in a short fabricated scene where Henry and Mr.
Price converse about Henry's offer to relocate the Price family to a dwelling he
owns in Norfolk from the family's cramped, dark and squalid living quarters in
Portsmouth. When Mr. Price expresses concern that such an arrangement would
displace Henry's existing tenants, Henry assures Mr. Price the residents will be
"well cared for" (Rozema 112). With this scene Rozema means to demonstrate
the expanse of Henry's compassion, for both the obviously destitute Price family
and for his tenants. It is based on an episode in Austen's novel where Henry tries
to enhance his flagging credibility with Fanny by revealing to her family that he
has made himself amiable to his tenants by making their acquaintance. In
Rozema's Henry, we see a man who is seemingly beginning to change under
Fanny's influence, and we are left with an entirely different impression of his
sincerity and the authenticity of his offer to the Price family.

Compassion also has been added to a reconstructed male character in Wright/Moggach’s version of Pride and Prejudice. Mr. Bennet has been reconstituted as a kind and considerate man, demonstrating two traits his character lacks in Austen’s novel. One example of the filmic Mr. Bennet’s newborn compassion is displayed in one of the novel’s most famous scenes, where Mary embarrasses herself and the entire Bennet family with a musical performance that features off-key singing and abysmal piano playing. Cognizant of the offence Mary is giving, Wright/Moggach’s Mr. Bennet moves briskly through a throng of fashionable young people gathered around the piano, and in a gentle voice encourages Mary to curtail her performance with the words, “you’ve delighted us long enough. Let the other young ladies have a turn.” Later, he discovers the distressed Mary holed up and weeping in a secluded section of the house, and in another show of compassion not sourced from Austen’s novel, he tenderly embraces his daughter. Langton/Davies’s miniseries adaptation of Pride and Prejudice has Mr. Bennet display coldness towards Mary. In this version, when Mary’s performance causes horrified looks on the faces of partygoers, Mr. Bennet is first seen hanging his head in embarrassment. Next, he tersely urges Mary to curtail her performance with the words, “you do extremely well child. You’ve delighted us long enough. Let the other young ladies have time to exhibit.” The obviously humiliated Mary is next seen fleeing the room, her head cast down. This adapted scene more closely mirrors Austen’s novel where Mr. Bennet’s proposal for Mary to halt her public performance is made “aloud” and
carried out in a way that causes Elizabeth to feel sorry for Mary, and "sorry for her father’s speech" (Austen 132). The Coke/Weldon 1979 miniseries adaptation for the BBC is a marked contrast from the novel and both the 1995 and 2005 adaptations. In the 1979 version, Mrs. Bennet terminates Mary's offensive musical performance, as Mr. Bennet is not even present at the party where the recital occurs. In the adaptations produced since 1995, we can conclude that public displays of compassion have been appended to the male characters because this is what film and television audiences want to see.

**The Nurturing Family Man**

The 1991 motion picture *Regarding Henry* introduces us to a man who comes to privilege family life ahead of a high-powered New York law career. Similarly, by the final scenes of *City Slickers*, the lead male character arrives at the conclusion that loved ones ought to be cherished and appreciated above all else. Pleasure in family life is another thematic addition reflected in several of the recent Jane Austen motion picture and miniseries adaptations. One example is Wright/Moggach’s adaptation of *Pride and Prejudice*, which presents Mrs. Bennet as a sensible mother and Mr. Bennet as a nurturing father. He is a noticeable contrast to his literary counterpart who is a neglectful parent living in a self-imposed exile in his private study with limited interaction with his wife and daughters. The character is described by Austen's narrator as "so odd a mix of quick parts, sarcastic humour, reserve, and caprice" (Austen 45), traits which Wright/Moggach have excised from their patriarch. The filmic Mr. Bennet
seemingly adores his wife; the pair is shown together in bed gazing into each other’s eyes and whispering excitedly about Jane’s upcoming nuptials to Mr. Bingley. Wright/Moggach’s father also displays affection for his offspring, as demonstrated in his show of compassion for the musically challenged Mary, whereas Austen’s Mr. Bennet refers to his daughters as “silly and ignorant” (Austen 45). Additionally, the film’s patriarch is an active participant in the family’s domestic life; instead of sequestering himself in his library, he is often seen carrying books, plants and other objects around the house and engaging in the minutiae of family life. He seemingly becomes one of the women in several scenes when he adopts behaviour identical to his daughters and wife. Flanked by family members, we see him eavesdrop on two private conversations, Elizabeth’s brusque exchange with the angry Lady Catherine De Bourgh and Mr. Bingley’s marriage proposal to Jane. No such conduct is observed in either Austen’s novel or the two television miniseries adaptations of Pride and Prejudice. Both the Coke/Weldon adaptation and the Langton/Davies version feature a Mr. Bennet who retains the character traits of the novel’s distant, inattentive patriarch.

Parental nurturing is also heavily featured in Lee/Thompson’s motion picture adaptation of Sense and Sensibility, where two aloof male characters have been transformed into nurturers. One of them is the novel’s shy, awkward Edward Ferrars, whom Lee/Thompson reconstruct as a sensitive, caring twentieth century father figure to the young fatherless Margaret Dashwood. Even before they are formally introduced, Edward bonds with Margaret when he shields the girl from her family after discovering the child hidden beneath a table
at Norland, the Dashwood’s estate. By allowing Margaret an interlude of privacy and secrecy, Edward displays a keen awareness of the child’s needs. It is exactly the kind of attentiveness we would expect from a parental figure. Thompson encourages the relationship in her screenplay by instructing the actors playing Edward and Margaret in the fabricated scene to “smile at each other, a connection made” (Thompson 44). Their union is further strengthened when the pair is observed engaging in swordplay on the lawn, where the pseudo father figure Edward appears to be teaching the child the finer points of sword fighting. Edward comes to consider himself more than just an affable playmate for Margaret, telling Elinor he takes pleasure in the child’s company. As their connection evolves, Thompson places Edward at the centre of Margaret’s world; he is the most important male figure in her life in the absence of her father. When she learns the family will be relocating to Barton Cottage in Devonshire, Margaret offers only one remark, which is to urge Edward to visit. Edward is again the subject the next time the child speaks when she informs her family that Edward has promised to deliver their atlas to the new house. Lee/Thompson’s nurturing, child-friendly Edward has no counterpart in either Austen’s novel or Bennett/Lett’s 1981 miniseries adaptation for the BBC. At no point in the novel do Edward and Margaret interact or speak with each other during the period both reside at Norland. In Bennett/Lett’s adaptation, the character of Margaret has been eliminated altogether.

Edward Ferrars has company in the parenting department in Lee/Thompson’s adaptation. They have also transformed Colonel Brandon into a
nurturer who demonstrates friendliness towards young Margaret. In fabricated
dialogue, the curious Margaret is seen probing the colonel about his travels to
the exotic East Indies. Thompson’s screenplay directs the actor playing Brandon
to please the child by replying to her questions in a playful way that reveals he
“knows what Margaret wants to hear” (Thompson 72). Leaning towards the child
as if to whisper a secret in her ear, he tells Margaret, “the air is full of spices”
(Thompson 72). Brandon’s success at pleasing the child is confirmed by the
smile that lights up her face.

A similar fondness for pleasing children, featured in Michell/Dear’s motion
picture adaptation of Austen’s *Persuasion*, is delivered in a fabricated scene
based on a scant reference in the novel. What Michell/Dear dramatise is
Austen’s narrator’s observation that Admiral Croft paid “good natured notice”
(Austen 46) to the Musgrove boys. Dear’s screenplay directs the boys to run to
the admiral, jump on him and shout for his attention. The admiral says to them,
“'[s]o, you want to sail on the high seas, do you, my lads? Well, you’ll have to
learn to go up and down with the swell, like this!’ (Dear 22). Immediately, both
boys are on his lap being bumped up and down, and “[t]hey squeal in delight”
(Dear 22). Michell/Dear’s child friendly Admiral Croft has no parallel in
Baker/Mitchell’s 1971 television miniseries adaptation of *Persuasion* for
Granada/ITV, where Croft and the Musgrove children do not appear jointly in any
scenes. Croft and the other child friendly family men are recent creations that
have more in common with the family-oriented sensitive men of motion pictures
made in the 1990s than with any characters in Austen’s novels.
All of Jane Austen’s novels critique the constraints and privileges conferred by one’s place on the social hierarchy of nineteenth century England. Austen’s era was a time of change, where issues such as male authority and women’s status were subjects of debate. Austen explores these themes, especially the idea of social mobility, in *Persuasion*. The narrative contrasts the rising social fortunes of those with newly acquired wealth against the decline of the old moneyed. *Persuasion’s* Captain Frederick Wentworth exemplifies the rising social fortunes. A navy man, lacking family connections and wealth, and who Austen’s narrator initially characterises as having “nothing but himself to recommend him” (Austen 26-7), Wentworth’s social status improves when he amasses a fortune during wartime. Where Austen’s novel ultimately accords Wentworth equal footing with the gentry, Michell/Dear’s motion picture version of *Persuasion* reconstructs Wentworth to recognize women’s equality. This value is expressed subtly in the motion picture’s fictitious final scene where Wentworth’s new wife, Anne Elliott, is projected as the nearest-ranking person onboard a vessel under Wentworth’s command. Presented without dialogue as a sequence of images, the scene opens with a shot of a contented Anne sitting alone in her cramped but cosy living quarters. A ray of sunshine beams in through a tiny porthole window adding radiance and warmth to the room. Next, Anne is seen walking on the deck to join Wentworth, who is surveying the open ocean through a sailor’s telescope. A medium camera shot frames the pair standing side by side, taking up equal space in the frame. Next, is a close-up shot of Wentworth’s
face smiling in Anne's direction, followed by a close-up shot of Anne smiling back at him. The sequence ends with a wide camera shot of the happy couple, still standing side by side on deck, against a larger view of the ship in the background. Tara Ghoshal Wallace (139-140) suggests Wentworth is barely aware of his wife's presence in a scene that underscores Anne's irrelevance in the film's final image. To the contrary, Wentworth's smile to his wife represents his acceptance of Anne's place beside him; Anne's return smile denotes her acknowledgment of the arrangement. Beyond that, the scene's final image, featuring the pair framed within the wider view of the ship, suggests they exist in a state of mutuality as if to say, this is our world and we willingly stand alongside each other as equals. The suggestive scene is a complete fabrication without origin in either Austen's novel or Mitchell/Baker's miniseries adaptation. Austen makes no mention of Anne's position aboard a ship under her husband's command, saying only that Anne “gloried in being a sailor's wife” (Austen 236). The television miniseries has its finale, not at sea, but at a party in Bath.

The Michell/Dear adaptation of Persuasion also delicately enacts egalitarianism in the way it downplays a key scene from the novel, which has Wentworth questioning whether women belong aboard ships. Perhaps more than any other scene adapted from an Austen novel, this one has the risk of portraying a hero, in this case Wentworth, in a way that could suggest a sexist interpretation to a contemporary audience. Austen's novel presents Wentworth as a man with a strong aversion to housing women aboard a vessel because the accommodations cannot be made suitable. Bluntly and unequivocally, he states,
“I hate to hear of women on board, or to see them on board; and no ship, under my command, shall ever convey a family of ladies anywhere, if I can help it” (Austen 64). The dialogue is somewhat toned down in Mitchell/Baker’s miniseries adaptation, which features a smirking Captain Wentworth appear to speak in jest when he remarks, “I would never willingly allow any ladies on board any ship of mine except for a ball and a few hours visit…It is simply that I feel it is not possible, whatever one’s efforts and for all one’s sacrifices, to make the accommodations on board suitable for women.” Michell/Dear’s remake adds further distance from the original speech by having Wentworth’s brother-in-law, Admiral Croft, deliver the line that reveals Wentworth’s objection to having women aboard his ship. Dear’s final shooting script calls for Wentworth to appear “unsettled” (Dear 33) and then explain, “It’s from no lack of gallantry towards women…rather the reverse. It’s impossible to make the accommodation on board suitable for a party of ladies” (33). Michell/Dear’s selection of the word ‘gallantry’ allows Wentworth’s seemingly gender-exclusionary attitude to be moderated by allowing it to be framed as a question of good manners rather than sexism. Moreover, the explanation offered by Michell/Dear’s Wentworth does not include a restatement of the objection to having women aboard ships, as in both the 1971 miniseries adaptation and Austen’s novel. If there is any doubt about Wentworth’s attitude towards women and their place aboard ships, we have only to look to the motion picture’s final scene for confirmation that he embraces the idea of equality.

Male approval of egalitarianism is also a feature of Rozema’s motion
picture adaptation of *Mansfield Park*. In one case, Edmund Bertram offers a spirited defence of Antiguan ‘mulattos’ in reaction to derogatory remarks made by his father. Flanked by family members who have gathered to hear his tales of the West Indies, Sir Thomas observes, “two mulattos will never have children. They are the mule-kind in that respect” (Rozema 59). Edmund swiftly, but respectfully, counters with “[e]xcuse me, Father, for contradicting you, but that is nonsense—you cannot say such things” (Rozema 60). Edmund’s reaction can be read as both the censure of a father some might characterise as bigoted, and as a challenge to the racist patriarchal values that permit the hegemonic domination of one group by another. Conversely, Austen’s novel makes one scant reference to slavery in a conversation between Edmund and Fanny, where Fanny mentions having asked Sir Thomas “about the slave trade” (Austen 214).

The equality argument is also highlighted in Edmund’s support of Fanny’s fiction writing, a career aspiration that he actively promotes during an era when it would be inconceivable for a woman of the Bertram’s social stratum to earn and retain her own money. Edmund’s encouragement of Fanny is observed throughout the motion picture, beginning in Fanny’s childhood where Edmund is seen marvelling at her creative talents. In one fragment of fabricated dialogue, Edmund even boasts of Fanny’s remarkable writing talents to his father, whose fervent desire it is to see Fanny married and sustained by someone else, a desire to which Edmund appears oblivious. Instead, the egalitarian Edmund imagines Fanny a successful author, and in one of the film’s closing scenes he and Fanny, now a couple, are heard discussing the publishing deal he has
arranged. A publisher, he reports, is “willing to publish, at our expense of course, but you would keep ten percent of profits” (Rozema 145). Noteworthy is Edmund’s suggestion that the publishing expenses would be theirs, but the profits hers. Edmund’s attitude betrays a late twentieth century mindset about money management and equal opportunities, an approach that would have been unimaginable in 1806 when Rozema’s adaptation is set. Prior to the Married Woman’s Property Act of 1870, a woman such as Fanny would not have been permitted to retain her earnings or property acquired after marriage; upon her marriage a woman’s personal and real property would pass to her husband, with whom her legal existence was amalgamated. In the case of Edmund and Fanny, the legal precedent of the time would have been for Edmund to control Fanny’s earnings and pay for her publishing expenses.

Women’s career aspirations are also supported in another recent adaptation. Edward Ferrars has high hopes for young Margaret Dashwood’s professional future in Lee/Thompson’s adaptation of Sense and Sensibility. Edward is represented as supporting female independence in his encouragement of Margaret’s wish to travel and command a ship. He tells Elinor “[s]he is heading an expedition to China shortly. I am to go as her servant but only on the understanding that I will be very badly treated” (Thompson 45). The remark can be read several ways, as a playful and innocuous comment reflecting his special friendship with the child and as a signal of his belief in women’s equality. Lee/Thompson would have us adopt the second interpretation by having him make the remark to Elinor, who Edward knows supports women’s equality,
having heard her protest the fact that women cannot earn a living. As an educated man of wealth and privilege, presently battling his family members about his own occupational aspirations, Edward surely would know that a woman of his era would never be permitted to head a nautical expedition. Yet Lee/Thompson have him encourage the child repeatedly about commanding a ship and give further sanction to her dream by addressing a letter to “Captain Margaret” (Thompson 80). Lee/Thompson’s reconstruction of Edward would most certainly make for a more appealing male character to a predominantly female audience with modern ideas about equality. The filmic Edward, like Rozema’s Edmund and Michell/Dear’s Wentworth, has no equivalent in Austen’s source novel. Ideologically, these reconstructed male characters enact the same ideas we see represented in other films of the 1990s, such as \textit{The Fisher King} and \textit{The Doctor}. \textit{The Fisher King} represents egalitarianism when it pairs a celebrity media personality with a homeless person; two unlikely friends whose economic differences would normally produce a social divide. While both benefit from the friendship, the radio host profits most by learning forgiveness and generosity from his friend. Egalitarianism is also enacted in \textit{The Doctor} by privileging the union of an authoritative, socially advantaged male physician with a dying powerless female cancer patient. Her suffering and humanity are the catalyst for his change. All of these motion pictures favour the notion of human equality as the means of bridging social and economic gaps.
The Emotionally Expressive Man

Displays of compassion, nurturing and egalitarianism represent only one dimension of the reconstructions performed on male characters in recent Austen adaptations. Public demonstrations of emotion that also characterise the recent batch of adaptations, represent yet another disconnection from their literary and pre-1995 adaptation counterparts. Lee/Thompson's adaptation of Sense and Sensibility, for example, enacts male emotionality with its transformation of Colonel Brandon into a vibrant, sensitive romantic figure from Austen's dull character on the threshold of middle age. Thompson's screenplay puts Brandon's emotionality on public display from his first on-screen appearance, where his facial expression is described as reflecting "pained surprise" and "melancholy, brooding" as he gazes at the lovely Marianne "with an unfathomable look of grief and longing" (Thompson 71). This poignant event is a far cry from the scene in the novel, where Brandon has the obverse reaction to Marianne. In contrast, Austen's Brandon "alone, of all the party, heard her without being in raptures. He paid her only the compliment of attention" (Austen 30). As well, Austen's Brandon is presented as "silent and grave" (Austen 29) and uninviting to the young Dashwood sisters. They observe "[h]is appearance...was not unpleasing, in spite of his being in the opinion of Marianne and Margaret an absolute old bachelor, for he was on the wrong side of five and thirty; but though his face was not handsome, his countenance was sensible" (Austen 29). Conversely, Lee/Thompson's Brandon, played by the striking Alan Rickman, exhibits a wide range of emotions demonstrating that he is anything but grave. For instance, in
one scene we see Brandon buttressed against a wall for support as if to suggest that emotional turmoil, caused by Marianne's illness, has rendered him physically weak. His anguish is conveyed once more in his urgent and earnest request to Elinor to "[g]ive me an occupation...or I shall run mad" (Thompson 181). With his task outlined, we next see the anxious Brandon sprinting out of the house, mounting his horse and galloping off in the direction of Marianne's mother. In contrast, when Brandon's literary counterpart is given the same task in Austen's novel, he handles his assignment with calm self-control. Austen's Brandon "whatever he might feel, acted with all the firmness of a collected mind, made every necessary arrangement with the utmost dispatch, and calculated with exactness the time in which she might look for his return" (Austen 269). The filmic Brandon also displays a heightened emotional reaction, compared with Austen's Brandon, when he sees Marianne after she has regained consciousness. The film's Brandon cannot bring himself to enter the bedroom, choosing instead to remain in the doorway with "eyes full of tears" (Thompson 186). In Austen's novel, Brandon's emotional display at the sight of Marianne is fleeting and subtle.

His emotion in entering the room...was such as, Elinor's conjecture, must arise from something more than his affection for Marianne...and she soon discovered in his melancholy eye and varying complexion as he looked at her sister the probable recurrence of many past scenes of misery to his mind. (Austen 295)

Austen's Brandon is a man of sensibility, but he keeps his deep feelings concealed.

Male emotional expression and attractiveness are also grafted into Henry
Crawford in the 1999 motion picture adaptation of *Mansfield Park*. Rozema invites us to gaze at the handsome young man and his equally striking sister in a series of camera shots that unhurriedly scan their physiques from toe to head. Her shooting script describes the pair as “[t]wo handsome young people of fortune” (Rozema 37), an embellishment of a line from Austen’s novel that refers to them as “young people of fortune” (Austen 68). Austen’s Henry is also distinct from his film counterpart in that he is “not handsome” (Austen 70, 72), a characteristic underscored by the narrator’s repeated notation. He is presented as an arrogant, selfish and conniving young man who hatches a devious plan to spend a fortnight trying to captivate Fanny because she has refused his attention. His ego wounded, the incredulous Henry remarks “I was never so long in company with a girl in my life—trying to entertain her—and succeed so ill! Never met a girl who looked so grave on me! I must try and get the better of this. Her looks say, ‘I will not like you, I am determined not to like you’, and I say, she shall” (Austen 243). This odious character is similarly represented in Giles/Taylor’s 1983 miniseries adaptation of *Mansfield Park* for the BBC, which features a Henry who mirrors his literary counterpart in appearance, conduct and dialogue. The miniseries scene where Henry outlines his false campaign to charm and woo Fanny is portrayed using almost identical dialogue to the novel’s. Yet, Rozema’s reconstructed Henry shows no sign of trickery; he is represented as an emotionally expressive romantic genuinely anxious to win Fanny’s love.

Convincing us of Henry’s fondness for Fanny are his words of romance, words such as “I wish to continue, improve and perfect my intimacy with
you...Fanny, you have created sensations which my heart had never known before" (Rozema 83). Another emotional display sees Henry playing the role of a contemporary, love-struck Romeo. In what appears vaguely reminiscent of the Renaissance balcony-wooing scene in *Romeo and Juliet* (Levenson 207), we see Fanny peering out of her bedroom window and discovering a grinning Henry standing on the lawn below. The shooting script instructs Henry to "step out of the shadows and look up at her" (Rozema 80). Rozema again constructs Henry's emotional side when she draws on Austen's short-lived engagement to Harris Bigg-Wither, a family friend whose marriage proposal Austen first accepted but then rejected (Troost and Greenfield "Mouse" 190). Rozema's fabricated engagement scene, located on the picturesque Portsmouth waterfront, has Henry pour out his emotions to Fanny. When she accepts his proposal, Henry utters "[y]ou will learn to love me. Say it again. Say it, please. Once more and forever." Next, we see them in "a deep and desperate kiss" (Rozema 116).

Henry's romantic side is further developed in two related scenes centring around Laurence Sterne's, *A Sentimental Journey*. In the first, Henry is seen reading Fanny the story of the caged starling desperately crying out that it cannot escape its captivity. Rozema's shooting script instructs the actor to deliver the passage with sincerity enough to touch the emotions of both Fanny and Henry (Rozema 67). Strong emotions and the liberation theme are later recalled in a scene set in Portsmouth, where Henry hires a hand organ and orchestrates the release of dozens of white birds outside the Price's home, presumably to recreate the emotions the pair shared during their reading of Sterne. Crawford
instructs the delivery boy to dispense words of romance to Fanny, words the boy later remembers as something about “starlings flying...some romantic thing” (Rozema 105). The captivity theme is borrowed from Austen’s novel, but Rozema uses it in an entirely different context to develop the Henry-Fanny romance plot. Austen’s captive is Maria Bertram, a woman trapped in a loveless marriage. In contrast, Rozema’s prisoner is Fanny.

Love and sentimentality are also expressed by the reconstructed Mr. Bennet of Wright/Moggach’s motion picture adaptation of *Pride and Prejudice*. In one of the film’s most poignant scenes, loosely adapted from Austen’s novel, an emotional Mr. Bennet is seen weeping when he is asked to sanction Elizabeth’s engagement to Mr. Darcy. Fighting unsuccessfully to choke back tears, Mr. Bennet avers, “you really do love him, don’t you?” This scene is in marked contrast to Austen’s novel, which features the incredulous Bennet patriarch looking “grave and anxious” (Austen 374) upon learning of the engagement. Austen’s Mr. Bennet appears to mistrust his daughter’s judgment, demanding, “what are you doing? Are you out of your senses, to be accepting this man?” (Austen 374-5). Similarly, Mr. Bennet of Langton/Davies’s miniseries adaptation reacts to Elizabeth’s news with disbelief. Towering over his daughter, the angry patriarch asks “are you out of your senses to be accepting this man Lizzy?” Coke/Weldon’s miniseries adaptation omits the scene altogether.

Perhaps the most emotionally expressive reconstituted man is Mr. Darcy of Langton/Davies’s adaptation of *Pride and Prejudice*, a reconstruction the screenwriter admits was intentional. Wishing to represent a side of Mr. Darcy
unexplored by Austen, screenwriter Andrew Davies deliberately produced what he labels a "pro-Mr. Darcy" (Cartmell and Whelehan 244) adaptation, which aims to make Mr. Darcy appear more human and sympathetic by exposing his feelings. Davies has Mr. Darcy express his feelings primarily physically, and occasionally verbally, in three invented scenes occurring after Elizabeth has rejected his marriage proposal. The first, which shows Mr. Darcy alone in his room composing a letter to Elizabeth, uses a series of flashback scenes to expose his steadily declining emotional state. With every scene shift from past to present, Mr. Darcy's emotionality is heightened through his progressively more dishevelled appearance and state of undress. The sequence begins with a fully clothed Mr. Darcy at his writing table followed by a flashback scene of his days at Cambridge. When the action reverts to the present, Mr. Darcy, still at his desk, has removed his cravat and undone his vest. Following a second flashback, we see Mr. Darcy reaching his emotional nadir as he completes his letter. Now sweaty and dishevelled, Mr. Darcy leans back in his chair with eyes closed, suggesting he is both emotionally drained and physically exhausted. Next, he is at the washbasin rinsing the sweat from his face in what appears to be an attempt to regain his composure. Mr. Darcy finally brings the turbulent episode to a close when he snuffs out a candle with his fingers.

Mr. Darcy's fragile emotional state is manifested more physically in the second fabricated scene. Shown fencing against a fencing master, we see an indomitable look on Mr. Darcy's face and sweat drenching his neck. His tousled appearance is reminiscent of the tumultuous letter-writing episode. At the
match's conclusion, Mr. Darcy turns in the direction of the camera and resolutely states, "I shall conquer this, I shall." We know Mr. Darcy is not talking about triumphing over his fencing master but rather conquering his feelings of love for Elizabeth.

In what is perhaps the film's most celebrated scene, Mr. Darcy's intense emotions are physically enacted one last time in an occurrence that precedes his reconnection with Elizabeth. Mr. Darcy first comes into view on horseback riding toward his estate, Pemberley. Dismounting next to a pond, the sweaty Mr. Darcy undoes and sheds his cravat and dives into the murky water to cool down. The motifs of sweat and the missing cravat are again present in this scene. When Mr. Darcy encounters Elizabeth minutes later he is both physically unkempt and verbally incapacitated. Mr. Darcy's surprise, coupled with his intense feelings of love, elevates his emotions to their zenith; emotions manifest in his clumsy attempt at conversation with Elizabeth. This awkward meeting denotes the initial sign of Mr. Darcy's rebirth by making his emotionality public for the first time, the earlier shows of emotion having been displayed privately in either self-talk, facial expressions or physical action. Mr. Darcy's redressing in the next scene signals the retrieval of his emotional composure, and more importantly, it reveals that his transformation is complete. While his physical appearance reminds us of the old Mr. Darcy, this is a new man, whose emotional distress has altered him for the better, rendering him capable of winning Elizabeth's love.

Mr. Darcy's pond dive is open to multiple interpretations. Cheryl Nixon (24) contends Mr. Darcy's body is a vehicle of emotionality, and the dive discloses his
emotional potential; it reveals a romantic bond with his natural surroundings, a salutation to a home where he can unclothe down to his essential being and a renewal of his love for Elizabeth. Beyond that, the dive can also be interpreted as a Baptism that introduces a new self after the last vestiges of an unviable being have been washed away. Lisa Hopkins (116) observes the importance of the fused leitmotifs of heat and sex in the visual imagery of Mr. Darcy’s emotional turmoil, themes that are apparent in the heat-radiating candle, on Mr. Darcy’s overheated body and in his various stages of undress. More notably, Mr. Darcy’s cravat is symbolic insofar as its presence or absence supplies revelation about his emotional state. Mr. Darcy is always seen with his cravat, an integral part of a gentleman’s attire, until the letter writing episode, the scene that marks the commencement of his transformative emotional journey. The cravat, absent during the fencing scene where more of his emotional turmoil is revealed, is again removed for Mr. Darcy’s pond dive. The cravat disappears during Mr. Darcy’s most emotional moments, only reappearing when it is time to introduce his new and improved persona to Elizabeth.

Interestingly, the missing cravat is also a symbol of Mr. Darcy’s emotional state in Wright/Moggach’s motion picture adaptation of *Pride and Prejudice*. The garment is absent during the film’s two most emotional and romantic scenes involving the heroine and hero. The cravat is missing for the first time in the scene where Mr. Darcy, clad in an unbuttoned white dress shirt, marches across an open meadow to deliver his heartfelt second marriage proposal to Elizabeth. The cravat is absent again in the film’s romantic final scene where the new Mr.
and Mrs. Darcy are seen embracing in front of a large pond set against an illuminated Pemberley in the background. The cravat-less Mr. Darcy is presented as the more loving and emotionally expressive of the pair as he kisses Elizabeth about the face. It is difficult to picture Austen’s Mr. Darcy or any of her reserved male characters engaging in this type of loving clinch, or speaking words of romance to a heroine.

The Emotionally Expressive Man Revealed

The introduction of male emotional expression and the new masculine traits began with Lee/Thompson’s Sense and Sensibility and Langton/Davies’s Pride and Prejudice, adaptations that enjoyed financial, critical and ratings success. To identify the winning formula the makers of the later adaptations had only to look at the reception to Colin Firth’s Mr. Darcy to discover what an Austen audience was seeking in a male character. Having discovered that male character reconstructions resonate with women, it is not surprising that directors and screenwriters have continued to reproduce these modern men. Three of the five adaptations examined in this essay were financed by profit-driven motion picture studios; the others by taxpayer-funded public broadcaster television networks that rely on public support. The Hollywood studios that produced Sense and Sensibility, Mansfield Park and the 2005 Pride and Prejudice have become increasingly commercially oriented, according to Los Angeles Times reporter Richard Natale. He contends Hollywood has developed into a risk-averse company town where “the concept has to be large; the stars have to be large”
That description especially befits *Sense and Sensibility* and *Pride and Prejudice*, with the casting of such celebrated and critically acclaimed actors as Emma Thompson, Keira Knightley, Brenda Blethyn and Judi Dench, all of whom have received or been nominated for American Academy Awards. Conceptually, these motion picture adaptations are large and satisfying in their featuring of vast picturesque estates with opulently decorated interiors, nineteenth century clothing, horses and carriages, balls, elaborate displays of food and traditional dance scenes. The Hollywood success imperatives Natale describes are equally applicable to Pfeil’s list of sensitive man films released in 1991, with casts that include Harrison Ford, William Hurt, Robin Williams and Billy Crystal, all popular leading men of the time. If large concepts and well-known actors are the obligatory ingredients of a Hollywood hit motion picture, the recent consignment of Austen adaptations has delivered with their famous and physically appealing cast members, their scenic locations and lavish costumes. But where these adaptations have succeeded most is in their ability to leverage commercial sales and audience ratings by correctly identifying what women audiences desire in a Jane Austen adaptation. Women want to see their ideal of a male partner, a man who expresses loving emotions and who is compassionate, nurturing, and who endorses women’s equality.

This presentation of the ideal male partner allows the audience to indulge in romantic escapism. Lisa Hopkins (120), in her examination of the Langton/Davies miniseries adaptation of *Pride and Prejudice*, convincingly argues that Mr. Darcy’s emotional display of affection for Elizabeth satisfies a
fantasy in all women to be the object of a man’s intense desire, to be treasured in a fashion that men rarely enact in real life. The cinematography, which frames Mr. Darcy in extended camera shots, invites us to participate actively in the daydream by gazing at Mr. Darcy gazing at Elizabeth (114). Screenwriter Andrew Davies admits he deliberately added emotionality and physicality to the novel’s reticent character with the goal of transforming Mr. Darcy into a real person who would appeal to the audience (Cartmell and Whelehan 244). If we adopt Hopkins’s view, the basis for the positive reaction of women to the miniseries lies in its having delivered a satisfying form of escape and wish fulfilment to viewers. We watched the adaptation because we wanted to imagine ourselves as the object of the desirable Mr. Darcy’s yearning.

The popularity of Austen adaptations might also be attributed to what some see is a resemblance to another successful commercial format. Deborah Kaplan (178) contends the adaptations have undergone a “harlequinization”, whereby filmmakers have affixed the commercially successful genre of romance fiction to their versions. Romance is a genre that is typified by beautiful, emotionally expressive heroes and heroines facing and overcoming obstacles as they fall in love. The casting of handsome actors, such as Colin Firth, Hugh Grant, James Purefoy and Jonny Lee Miller, would suggest at least partial conformity with the romance genre. Beyond that, Austen’s storylines, which feature the engagement of heroes to heroines, also supply the emotionally satisfying endings that are found in romance novels. But in other ways, Austen’s novels do not easily lend themselves to a ‘harlequinized’ adaptation. Where
Austen’s works differ from modern day romance novels in their complexity and realism. Austen, for instance, develops even her minor characters, while romance writers focus almost exclusively on the male and female principals. Austen’s well-drawn characters, major and minor, have not been forsaken in the recent adaptation process, especially in the lengthy miniseries format that features running times of four to five hours. Although Austen’s story lines are marriage plots they do not dwell on courtship, and in this way they also differ from the romance novel format. Never in Austen do we read about amorous heroes and heroines engaging in physical acts of passion. As a matter of fact, the true feelings of the heroes and heroines remain hidden until late in the novels.

**Conclusion**

A fabricated scene in Rozema’s *Mansfield Park* has a curious Susan Price questioning older sister Fanny about her handsome and mysterious suitor Henry Crawford. Unaffected by Fanny’s suggestion that Crawford has a seamy side, Susan reveals her want of such a man with her purring response of “yes, please” (Rozema 103). Women audiences have been uttering the same reply to the reconstructed men of Jane Austen motion picture and miniseries adaptations produced since 1995 with their patronage of these products. The makers of these adaptations have found a receptive audience and commercial success by
expunging Austen’s emotionally repressed heroes and neglectful fathers in favour of new, modern men who are emotionally expressive, and who possess the modern masculine virtues of compassion, nurturing, and egalitarianism. These characters do not represent Austen’s views of masculinity, but instead enact our ideals of a man.
Reference List


THE IRAQ WAR’S EMBEDDED MEDIA PROGRAM:
MEDIA MANAGEMENT AND MANIPULATION
Introduction

A US news presenter admits to intentionally downplaying reports of civilian fatalities following a US bombing strike in Iraq (Knightley “Journalism” 171); another US journalist offers his best wishes to American troops during an on air interview (Friedman 30); and a different reporter boasts that she pre-arranged for American fighter pilots to give a ‘thumbs up’ to television cameras before taking off from an aircraft carrier (Ricchiardi 30). We might be correct to assume that these reports are the work of the US military’s own journalists. But we would be wrong. These examples, from FOX and CNN, represent the extent to which the US mainstream media was willing to surrender its public service role as an impartial watchdog and cheerlead for the US military at the start of the Iraq War in 2003.

Some contend that American reporters have always trumpeted the US government’s stance during wartime, and that their championing of the US military in Iraq simply upheld the tradition (Von Hoffman 39). Others recall how negative reportage during the Vietnam War turned US public opinion against the government and the military, thereby souring military-media relations (Rutherford 71). Even today, the Pentagon regrets the assistance it gave the US media establishment in Vietnam by allowing reporters unfettered access to the war theatre (Swain 2). Since then, the Pentagon has trodden on journalistic freedom by imposing practices and procedures to restrict journalists’ movements in times of war and to control what they see, hear and can report. In one conflict the
Pentagon banned reporters from the battle zone; in another it sequestered them in so-called 'information centres' where they were fed measly rations of news at daily briefings conducted by media-trained military personnel. At times, the media organizations acquiesced to the arrangements, and at other times they cried censorship. Their complaints about prohibitions during the Gulf wars of the 1990s sowed the seeds of the Pentagon's latest and possibly most effective media management tool up to now. Unveiled for the 2003 Iraq War, the Embedded Media Program marked the return of a restrictive media management practice dating back to the US Civil War (Pfau et al. “Embedded” 468).

The Embedded Media Program saw 692 journalists, photographers, producers, technicians and camera operators posted with American and British military units stationed throughout Iraq (Wright and Harkey S-1). Although the participation of media organizations was short lived, lasting less than eight weeks in the spring of 2003, both the media and the military have deemed it a success (Wright and Harkey S-2). Compared with other media management practices, the program appeared to have some pluses; it offered journalists the same ringside view of the action their counterparts in Vietnam had enjoyed, and it supplied them with access to military officials and soldiers for interviews. But embedded journalists also paid a high price for this access as they laboured under the watchful eye of their military handlers who controlled what they could observe and with whom they could speak. The Embedded Media Program came with numerous strings attached; to be admitted journalists had to agree to refrain from publishing information in 19 categories (Fahmy and Johnson 302) and submit
their stories to on-demand military vetting prior to publication to ensure “operational security” (Zeide 1316). Beyond these overt controls, the program’s design also spawned a covert by-product that was the derivative of isolating journalists within military units. The segregation caused personal bonds to form between some embedded journalists and the soldiers with whom they lived (Dillow 33). This social bonding, which possibly also led to some reporters adopting the military’s values, is thought to have encouraged biased reporting on the part of some embedded journalists (Pfau et al. “Embedded” 479).

This essay will examine how the Pentagon’s Embedded Media Program was able to manipulate journalists into producing pro-military reportage in the early days of the Iraq War. I will explore the design of the program and the role public relations practices and practitioners played in its creation. Additionally, I will examine how US patriotism and the corporate interests of America’s largest and most powerful communications companies might also have censored reporters and contributed to the pro-military flavour of the reportage. I will begin with a brief discussion of the history of military-media relations, an association characterised by periods of teamwork and tension. As we will see, the parties have long been engaged in a battle over information with shifting winners and losers.

The History of Military-Media Relations

As long as humans have made war, they have chronicled their conflicts. The methods of storytelling have become more sophisticated over time and so have the storytellers. Perhaps more than any other type of narrator, the war
correspondent has become synonymous with romanticism and bravery, risking life and limb to ‘get the story.’ In Britain, military-media relations date back to the mid-1800s when *The Times of London* newspaper assigned journalist William Howard Russell to cover the Crimean War. According to Brendan McLane (2), Russell was initially banned from the battlefield, but still managed to report on the war by interviewing soldiers who had seen combat. In time, Russell was allowed access to the front, but he upset military officials when he condemned their leadership and the abject conditions faced by the troops (Freedman 64). The military countered by accusing *The Times* and Russell of disloyalty, a move that cowed the newspaper into limiting its reportage to descriptions of select and completed military operations (Mclane 2).

World War One saw the embedding of British journalists with military units. According to Des Freedman (64), the British military initially prohibited reporters from entering the war theatre, but then relented. Journalists were issued uniforms and transported to the conflict zones. In exchange for their access to the action, the journalists consented to the military’s demand for pre-publication scrutiny of their reports, a practice aimed at ensuring that the stories were favourable to the British and downplayed the skyrocketing death toll. Newspaper proprietors were cognizant of the misrepresentations they were publishing, but unwilling to contest the censorship and divulge the truth to their readers. Publisher Lord Rothermere reportedly admitted, “we’re telling lies, we know we’re telling lies, we daren’t tell the public the truth, that we’re losing more officers than the Germans, and that it’s impossible to get through on the western front” (Freedman 65).
Communicating falsehoods was preferable, it seems, to upsetting the military and Downing Street, and having their newspapers banned from the front. The war journalists in the field appeared unbothered by the censorship, perhaps because they had forged friendships with the soldiers with whom they were embedded. British journalist Sir Philip Gibbs admitted he and other reporters came to identify with the soldiers (Knightley “History” 102). American journalists covering World War One were similarly uniformed, embedded and suppressed. Like their British counterparts, they too acquiesced to demands for military censorship for reasons of patriotism and in exchange for access to the battlefield (Mclane 2).

The practice of embedding was also a feature of World War Two, and it spawned one of the most jingoistic and biased journalists of all time. American Ernie Pyle made no bones about glorifying the humble US infantryman, whose accomplishments and hardships he documented in reports from North Africa, Italy and France (Rutherford 73). Pyle, who was published in six hundred newspapers, appeared on the cover of Time magazine and earned the prestigious Pulitzer Prize in 1944 (Mills 74). His brand of partial reporting was precisely what Supreme Allied Commander General Dwight D. Eisenhower expected from his nation’s corps of journalists. Eisenhower insisted they act as “quasi-staff officers”, (Freedman 66) performing their patriotic duty by boosting public support for the military, because “public opinion wins wars” (Swain 2). Few American journalists complained when they were prevented from photographing the images of dead and wounded soldiers and reporting on the treatment of enemies (Freedman 65). It was during the Eisenhower era that the US military
established its own propaganda publications, including *Stars and Stripes*.

The embedding of journalists with military units had disappeared by the start of the Vietnam War in 1961. Gone too was the military's practice of censoring media reports, but there remained an expectation that the news coverage would be pro-American (McLane 2). The absence of restrictions allowed journalists to travel freely and report on what they observed in the conflict zones. Recognized reporters were given accreditation cards that entitled them to rations and lodgings, air, water and ground transportation and the "full co-operation and assistance" (Knightley *The First 443*) of the military. Television coverage of the war demonstrated the medium's immense power to transform public opinion. According to former American news executive Paul Friedman, the freedom and access the media enjoyed in Vietnam spawned "gritty, gripping stories about people and courage and fear and heroism" (31) that had never been seen before on US television. Reporters had plenty of time to gather information and add context to their stories because, unlike today, 1960s broadcast technology did not allow for stories to be quickly produced and rushed onto the airwaves. War journalists used film to capture their images, which often had to be flown to the US for processing before it could be edited and assembled for broadcast. The stories that made it to air regularly contained images of corpses and other gruesome sights that caused American television viewers to experience a "visceral response to the horrors of war" (Harris qtd. in Hastings 390). Support for the conflict was already waning when America's most esteemed television journalist, CBS news anchor Walter Cronkite, proclaimed the Vietnam War a
losing proposition. Daniel Hallin does not believe the US media establishment was biased against the war or deliberately torpedoed the military’s efforts. He contends journalists in Vietnam frequently presented themselves as patriots; one, for example, repeatedly characterised the war as “‘our’ peace offensive” (qtd. in Freedman 66-67). Phillip Knightley (The First 417) and Nicholas Von Hoffman concur, contending the US mass media always supported its government, and “backed the Vietnam War to the hilt” (39). Nevertheless, the US military blamed reporters for its defeat in Vietnam, branding the media an enemy that needed to be more tightly controlled (Mclane 2). Following the Vietnam War, the Pentagon redefined its relationship with the media, and the upshot has meant more restrictions and fewer freedoms for journalists.

Other nations and their militaries have followed suit. The 1982 Falklands War saw the British military initially deny reporters access to the South Atlantic islands (Knightley The First 478). As the conflict progressed, the military introduced the practice of embedding, a move that made journalists dependent on the military for access to the battle zone, food, shelter, protection and the transmission of their news reports. Knightley (The First 478) characterises the military’s ground rules as ‘crippling’; allowing only British reporters to embed while denying access to impartial journalists from other countries. As well, in a blatant attempt at censorship, the military issued reporters a pamphlet advising them that they were expected to “help in leading and steadying public opinion in times of national stress or crisis” (Knightley The First 479). A post-war examination of the reporting from the Falklands found that the media
management operation had worked; the news coverage had been highly favourable to the British military. It was suggested this outcome was due to the camaraderie that had developed between journalists and soldiers during the embedding process (Miskin, Rayner and Lalic qtd. in Pfau et al. 75). Reporters may also have been influenced by the biases of their media organizations. Both the *Telegraph* and *The Times* supported the Falklands War, while the *Guardian* was opposed (Hastings and Jenkins 136). Research into the reportage of embedded journalists in the Iraq War two decades later would turn up findings similar to the Falklands news coverage study.

Despite the positive media coverage embedding generated for the British military in the Falklands, the practice was not immediately re-adopted by the US. Instead, the Pentagon turned to other media management methods during the 1980s and 1990s. In the Grenada War of 1983, the military banned reporters from the island (Ricchiardi 30), and in Panama in 1989, the Pentagon implemented a 'pool' system of information sharing (Mclane 2). A pool is comprised of a small group of journalists and camera operators from print and broadcast outlets. Pool members are taken on tightly controlled expeditions, sometimes to former battle sites and receive briefings from military officials. The proviso is that they share the information with other journalists, even their competitors. Journalist John MacArthur characterised the Pentagon's actions as a muzzling of the media:

The Pentagon had experienced spectacular success in Grenada, first by creating a pool and then by sending it to the island too late, and in Panama by virtually imprisoning the pool on an army base. In both cases, reporters missed the fighting entirely, and the
American public was treated to antiseptic military victories minus any scenes of killing, destruction or incompetence. (Second 32)

It is no wonder the Pentagon reemployed the pool in the Middle East a decade later. In the Gulf War of 1991, General Colin Powell reportedly used the pool system to control the media's access to the war zones, apparently out of concern that live television coverage of graphic events would generate anti-war sentiments in the United States, as it had done in the Vietnam War (Starnes 3). Not surprisingly, media organizations complained that their restricted access to the war theatre amounted to censorship (Knightley The First 490), and it was their chorus of criticism that sowed the seeds of a return to journalist embedding in the Iraq War in 2003.

The Embedded Media Program

The implementation of the Embedded Media Program in Iraq could be the Pentagon's most clever strategic move of all time against the media. The program quelled the news organizations' demands for greater access to the battlegrounds and the troops and satisfied the Pentagon's imperative to manage the media's movements and generate positive news coverage. It also divided the US media establishment on the question of whether it was an instrument of censorship. According to Paul Rutherford (72), the program co-opted journalists by making them full partners with the military in a mission to promote a pro-war message to the American public. Rather than the media acting as military rivals and watchdogs on behalf of the public, embedding transformed some journalists into the war's most vocal and visible supporters. Some praised what they
believed was unfettered access to the war theatre.

Journalists who participated in the Embedded Media Program were assigned to a particular military unit, which was responsible for the provision of food, shelter, protection, medical attention and transportation. In essence, embedding converted the journalist into a unit member who shared the same experiences as the troops. Given their ringside view of the action, and access to military personnel, it is easy to understand why journalists found embedding a vast improvement over the detested pool system of earlier conflicts. In all, 692 media personnel from 224 media organizations signed up for the program. Sixty-four percent were from the US national and regional media, 27% were international journalists, and 9% represented local news organizations (Wright and Harkey S-3-4). As a condition of admission, journalists were made to sign a pact agreeing to adhere to a 50-point plan (Miller qtd. in Schechter 84) that included submitting their work to military vetting on demand (Miller 90), concealing the names of casualties for 72 hours, suppressing information about vehicles, troops, equipment, security levels, future operations, the condition of enemy prisoners and the efficacy of enemy action (Zeide 1315-1316). This degree of censorship was not entirely unprecedented. For example, during World War Two, British media organizations had to submit all their reports about the death and destruction caused by German ‘V-weapons’ to government censors. Britain was fearful that by revealing where the bombs had landed, Germany would correct the bombs’ aim and achieve greater accuracy and higher casualties (Waller 75-76). Although the media yielded to the censorship, The
Times rejected the government’s additional request that it refrain from publishing the obituary announcements of those killed by the weapons out of concern the information would disclose where the bombs had landed (Waller 82).

In Iraq, embedded reporters also had to comply with a rule that designated every conversation between a military representative and a reporter to be on the record and attributed. This repressing regulation was meant to prevent whistleblowers and insider critics from alerting the media to procedural and operational problems (Fahmy and Johnson 303). Journalists who refused to accept this and the rest of the conditions were denied admission to the program, and those who disobeyed the rules risked expulsion. In the end, only three embeds were permanently “involuntarily disembded” (Wright and Harkey VI-28-29); one for taking an unauthorized photograph, another for making an unauthorized phone call on a satellite phone and the third for writing about troop movements.

Once admitted to the program, the would-be embedded journalists began their military indoctrination, months before the war even started, by participating in a basic training course, known as Embed Boot Camp. Its official aim was to familiarize journalists with combat survival skills and military life, yet some assert boot camp was where US military officials commenced their media manipulation campaign. One journalist observed that soldier-journalist bonds were being formed through “marching, commiserating, and drinking” together (Mclane 3). Boot camp attendees were reportedly told the Pentagon was expecting them to convey a positive war message to Americans once the fighting began.
The US Department of Defense cited numerous ‘official’ reasons for implementing the Embedded Media Program. All were aimed at securing pro-war media coverage. The Pentagon expected its corps of embedded journalists to lead the media coverage of the conflict, to counteract third-party disinformation and to aid in acquiring US public and international support for the war (Wright and Harkey S-6). More specifically, the US wanted the media to counteract Saddam Hussein’s propaganda about the occupation (Whitman qtd. in Pfau et al. 75) and contradict what it believed were ‘lies’ emanating from the Arab news agency Al Jazeera (Clarke 3). Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld spoke of the need to tell “the factual story – good or bad – before others seed the media with disinformation” (Starnes 2). Not surprisingly, the Pentagon constructed the Embedded Media Program in a way that would ensure that few ‘bad’ stories about the American presence in Iraq ever would be reported.

The design of the Embedded Media Program was put in the hands of Victoria Clarke, a former Hill and Knowlton executive who was the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Public Affairs, and Rumsfeld’s senior spokesperson (Pfau et al. 74). In 1999, Hill and Knowlton was the second largest advertising firm in the United States with net fee earnings exceeding $243-million (USD) (Seitel 188). The company, which had been hired to conduct public relations for the Kuwaiti government during the Gulf War, had been involved in the ‘incubator babies’ ruse, which saw the circulation of news reports alleging that Iraqi soldiers had tossed premature babies out of incubators at a Kuwaiti hospital (MacArthur Second 54, 58-9). Hill and Knowlton also arranged for a Kuwaiti teenager to
testify about the atrocity to the US Congress. It was later discovered the girl was
the daughter of the Kuwaiti ambassador to the US (Knightley The First 487-488),
and some doubt she was even in Kuwait at the time of the alleged incident
(MacArthur 104). Clarke also brought considerable knowledge of the television
industry to her defense department job, having served as the vice president of
the National Cable Television Association, a US lobby group (Department of
Defense).

The public relations procedures Clarke would have used in her corporate
PR career were implanted into the design of the Embedded Media Program.
According to public relations practitioner Fraser Seitel (178), the first step in any
communications plan is to define an opportunity or problem. In the case of the
Iraq War, Clarke’s problem would have been the military’s fractious relationship
with a hostile media bent on escaping the access constraints the Pentagon had
employed with its pool system during the Gulf wars of the 1990s. The Pentagon
was risking a media backlash, replete with cries of censorship and anti-military
coverage, if it failed to identify an acceptable alternative method of media
management in Iraq. Clarke’s next planning step would have been to outline the
specific tactics (Seitel 178) necessary to satisfy the media’s desire for greater
access to the war theatre and the military’s desire for control over the events to
which the media could bear witness. For the Embedded Media Program, this
step would have included the drafting of the numerous requirements and
prohibitions and the design of the journalists’ living and working conditions within
the units. Clarke’s subordinate, Deputy Assistant Secretary of Public Affairs
Bryan Whitman, acknowledges a lot of energy went into this stage of planning:

We discussed many things. We made a whole list of bad things that could happen-everything from journalists being killed, to violations of the ground rules, to reactions of commanders if there was a violation of a ground rule. We talked about the ways in which we would try to mitigate some of that and what our actions would be. We did public affairs planning like we would do for any other form of war planning. We war-gamed it. (207)

The needs of television would surely have been given special consideration in the planning stage because of the medium's enormous capacity to sway public opinion (Hastings 389). Given television's power, the leveraging of television journalists would have been critical to the government's goal of selling the Iraq War to the American public. The Pentagon was able to co-opt television by giving embedded journalists proximity to the action images television most covets, such as exploding bombs and advancing military vehicles. Thanks to sophisticated and portable satellite technology that was a vast improvement on the equipment available during the Gulf wars, journalists were able to beam these images into US living rooms, a move that transformed the Iraq War into reality television, a program genre that was generating ratings and advertising revenues in the early part of the decade. What Clarke created was the first ever live, made-for-cable-television-news war, a production that was borne out of the marriage of war action and entertainment and given the name 'militainment' (Hastings 390). The stars of Clarke's spectacle were the embedded journalists and US military personnel, and she held that Americans would be the better because of their exposure to this new brand of reality television:
The more information you give people about the military, the more you let them see just how incredible these young people are and how they perform so well under extraordinarily difficult circumstances, the better off we’ll all be. (Clarke 4)

Embedded reporters generated a staggering six thousand stories per week (Skiba qtd. in Starnes 5) in the early part of the war. But the Embedded Media Program was divisive from day one with some journalists seeing it as a return to the Vietnam model of war reporting and others viewing it as an instrument of covert censorship.

The Pros and Cons of Embedded Reporting

It is not difficult to understand the Embedded Media Program’s appeal to the US news organizations that had been so upset with the skimpy information rations served up by the pool system of prior conflicts. National Public Radio’s Tom Gjelten summed up the benefits of embedding this way: “we were offered an irresistible opportunity: free transportation to the front line of the war, dramatic pictures, dramatic sounds, great quotes. Who can pass that up?” (qtd. in Jensen 1). Wolf Blitzer of CNN was equally enthusiastic, dubbing the Embedded Media Program a win for the public, the media and the military (Mclane 3). The Associated Press’s Ross Simpson described embedding as “an adventure” (qtd. in Cochran 1), and military journalist Colonel William Darley characterised the embedded journalist as a ‘straw’ through which to see the war and “the more straws you can get out there, the more coverage…the better” (“Into the” 46). A post-war survey of embedded journalists found “an overall positive perception of embedding reporting” (Fahmy and Johnson 310). One of the program’s key
pluses was said to be that it offered journalists a ringside view of the war action, a vantage point to which they had not been allowed access since Vietnam.

Some embedded reporters observed both positives and negatives. The Christian Science Monitor’s Dan Murphy, while appreciative of his access to intelligence officers and combat, noted the limitations of being subjected to the military’s travel schedule and the inability of embedded reporters to “talk to Iraqis” (“Into the” 46). National Public Radio’s Anne Garrels reported a disconnection with the military unit to which she was assigned, saying “the marines clearly didn’t want me, an old woman, and they didn’t know what public radio was...if they were gonna have a correspondent, they wanted a guy from FOX” (“Into the” 53). Garrel’s NPR colleague John Burnett said that military officials never refused to comment, but he found their remarks were often self-serving and revealed “a disconnect between the official line and what he saw” (“IRE” 9). BBC Radio’s Tim Franks said flair was required to produce fair and balanced reporting while staying on the good side of the military: “we were journalists; the military were propagandists...it was information that always needed to be treated sceptically [sic]” (2). Newday’s Letta Tayler (qtd. in MacArthur Second xxxvi) reports that she was threatened with expulsion from her unit after she reported US Marines referring to Iraqis as ‘ragheads’ and ‘camel jockeys’.

But the most serious criticism of the Embedded Media Program centred around its propensity to breed reporter self-censorship. Renowned American journalist Seymour Hersh, who uncovered the Vietnam War’s shocking My Lai massacre, worried that embedded reporting encouraged a ‘Stockholm Syndrome’
effect on journalists (1). Consider, Hersh said, the soldiers who “shoot up a
carload of people at an intersection. [A reporter is] not going to tell that story
because if you do it right, you’re not going to be with that unit anymore. You’re
going to be a rat…these are all very complicated matters that cut into the ability
of reporters to be reporters” (2). US talk radio reporter Gareth Schweitzer also
saw the program as having a potentially corrupting effect on journalists,
observing that “anybody who tried to claim that their reporting, as an embed, was
unbiased was not telling the truth” (qtd. in Schechter 34).

Concerns about embedding encouraging partial reporting were well
founded. Two separate post-war studies conducted by Pfau (et al. 2004, 81-82;
et al. “Embedded” 478) found Iraq War coverage produced by embedded
newspaper and television journalists was more favourable in overall tone towards
the US military compared with stories filed by non-embedded journalists. The
result of the 2004 study of newspaper reporters was based on an analysis of the
content of 291 articles, published in the first five days of the Iraq War in the New
York Times, Washington Post, Los Angeles Times and the Chicago Tribune
(Pfau et al. 79) The 2005 study of television reporters examined the content of
network television newscasts during the first three weeks of the Iraq War,
 focusing on ABC, CBS, NBC and CNN. Both studies proffered that the pro-
military tone of the embedded reporters’ coverage may have been caused by
soldier-journalist friendships, by embedded journalists having adopted the
organizational values of the military (Pfau et al. 2004, 83; Pfau et al. “Embedded”
482). Organization values are embraced when an individual has a favourable
reception to an organization's attitudes (Schein; Beyer, Hannah and Milton; Pacanowsky and O'Donnell-Trujillo qtd. in Pfau et al. "Embedded" 471). Social penetration can also play a role in the adoption of organizational values (Altman and Taylor qtd. in Pfau et al. 78). Social penetration occurs when relationships are developed through personal contact and disclosure. Over time, the personal communications between the parties gain more depth and intimacy, which causes deeper bonding of those involved (Derlega, Metts, Petronio and Margolis qtd. in Pfau et al. "Embedded" 470). Close bonds have been found to develop quickly in close quarters or 'hot conditions,' such as combat situations (Soeters qtd. in Pfau et al. "Embedded" 470). The Iraq War's embedded journalists would have been susceptible to social penetration and the adoption of military values because of their isolation and dependence on the military. These factors could have contributed to the production of the partial, pro-military coverage the Pfau (et al.) studies identified. Orange County Register columnist Gordon Dillow observed his own vulnerability to social penetration, admitting:

I fell in love with "my" marines...when you live with the same guys for weeks, sharing their dangers and miseries, learning about their wives and girlfriends, their hopes and dreams...you start to make friends—closer friends in some ways than you'll ever have outside of war. Isolated from everyone else, you start to see your small corner of the world the same way they do. (33)

Embedded reporters weren't the only ones who 'fell in love' with the military. According to an examination of Iraq War images published in three major US daily newspapers (King and Lester 632-4), embedded photographers also produced pro-military coverage.
Embedded journalists would most certainly challenge any assertion that they were deliberately pro-military and partial in their reporting. Supporting this are the findings of a survey that polled 159 war journalists on the perceptions of their performance. The study found about 75% of respondents judged their reporting in Iraq to have been fair, trustworthy and accurate, while fewer than 25% viewed embedded reporting as encouraging bias (Fahmy and Johnson 309). Also, the journalists perceived that their reportage had been guided by their own values more than their having been manipulated by the US military (Fahmy and Johnson 313). These results suggest the reporters were blind to the covert repressive elements that were built into the design of the Embedded Media Program. Because the program was planned in a way that deliberately exposed embedded journalists exclusively to the US side of the war, their news stories inevitably reflected the one sidedness of their situation. Their limited vantage point did not afford them the opportunity to balance their stories with quotes from Iraqis. Within the restricted confines of the Embedded Media Program, it is possible that the journalists did produce stories that were accurate, fair and trustworthy, albeit one sided. This explains how the journalists could have viewed themselves and their work to be impartial. They only judged themselves in the context of their very narrow view of the war, failing to consider the broader ramifications of embedding and its pathway to censorship. Danny Schechter argues the Embedded Media Program’s manoeuvring was so insidious that journalists were unaware they were being exploited “in a carefully calibrated media spin operation” (19). Still, Military Public Affairs officer Guy Shields
contends it is “a pile of crap” (75) to suggest embedded reporters were unable to maintain objectivity and accuses the critics of “just letting their biases speak out” (76).

The Embedded Media Program can be blamed for some, but not all, of the pro-military reporting during the Iraq War. American journalists were under intense pressure to be seen as patriots, and severe consequences were meted out to those who made statements others considered unpatriotic. *New York Magazine*’s Michael Wolff was branded a possible traitor by conservative commentator Rush Limbaugh after Wolff questioned the military’s wisdom in confining some reporters to a media centre in Qatar (Wolff 39). When MSNBC’s Ashleigh Banfield publicly questioned the accuracy of reporting from Iraq, she was labelled a ‘slut’ by her colleague Michael Savage and encouraged by Limbaugh to seek employment with the Arab news network Al Jazeera (Schechter 38). Banfield left the cable network shortly after the episode. MSNBC reportedly fired talk show host Phil Donahue because his left-leaning, anti-war views ran counter to the jingoistic fervour of the time (Lydersen 2). Some contend a new, fervent brand of American patriotism took hold of the media following the 9/11 terrorist attacks (Thomas 126). Fearing reprisals for expressing dissent or being seen as un-American, it is easy to see why some reporters would adopt a pro-war stance in their Iraq War reportage.

The media organizations jumped on the pro-war bandwagon as well. The president of FOX Television, Roger Ailes, even went public to announce his network’s pro-military, pro-US government slant (Levanthal 192). FOX reporter
Oliver North revealed his bias in stories that praised the ‘humanitarian actions’ of US soldiers (*Project 9*). The former military official also frequently referred to “my marines” (*Project 8*). CNN was only slightly subtler in its pro-war stance, entitling its Iraq War coverage, ‘The Fight For Iraq’, a slogan that implies a justification for the war, that Iraq is an entity that needs to be fought for. Similarly, both FOX and MSNBC adopted the slogan of “Operation Iraqi Freedom” (*Project 9*), again justifying the war by giving the impression that Iraq needs to be set free by the US. The news organizations were well aware of the pro-military slant of their stories, deliberately targeting their patriotic cheerleading to specific audiences. For example, CNN’s domestic service aired more stories featuring elements of self-congratulatory patriotism than did CNN International (Schechter 23-4).

The corporate interests of America’s media and communications giants, in my opinion, may also have contributed to the cheerleading that was a feature of the Iraq War’s news coverage. The war began at a time when these organizations were desperately trying to curry favour with the US government. According to Jeff Chester (qtd. in Schechter 100), in early 2003 the big four US television networks and the major newspaper chains were actively lobbying the Federal Communications Commission, the government agency that regulates communications, for deregulation that would have relaxed the monopoly rules preventing a single company from owning multiple media outlets in a local market. If successful, the companies stood to increase their profits by billions of dollars. In June 2003, three months after the Iraq War began, their wish came true when the FCC removed many of the restrictions. A strong proponent of
relaxing the regulations was the head of the FCC, Michael Powell, the son of Gulf War General Colin Powell (Lieberman “House” 1). One of the most aggressive pursuers of regulatory change was Rupert Murdoch’s News Corporation, the company that owns the pro-US military and conservative-leaning FOX network (Lieberman “House” 2). News Corporation is one of a half dozen companies that dominate the US media industry. The others include Time Warner, the parent company of CNN and *Time* Magazine; Disney, the owner of ABC; Viacom, the company that was formerly CBS; and General Electric, the owner of NBC. A study by the Centre for Responsive Politics found media organizations spent more than $82 million (USD) on federal lobbying services, much of it connected with the FCC process, between 1999 and 2002; of that Disney spent $16 million and Time Warner’s share was more than $15 million (Williams 200). The reportage of these media organizations was among that analysed in Pfau’s (et al.) two studies that reported findings of pro-military coverage during the early days of the Iraq War.

It is easy to see how the mindset of self-interested media corporations trying to bring about regulatory change could have filtered its way down to its embedded reporters in Iraq. Many an astute, ambitious journalist employed by a major news organization would see the merit of adopting the company line, as the alternative could mean falling out of management’s favour and endangering one’s career prospects. Although most reporters do not mix with their corporate owners and board directors, they can nevertheless be swayed by corporate attitudes. Media sociology studies (Fico and Drager 4) suggest reporters are
most influenced by their immediate superiors, the middle management newsroom editors whose own ambitions are best served by adopting company values. Reporters who conform to the attitudes of their editors are more likely to be rewarded with higher pay, better story placement and more prestigious assignments. The attitudes of the corporation, passed down the chain of command, are adopted by ambitious employees hoping to move up.

The working conditions of embedded reporters in Iraq, namely their isolation within military units, also necessitated a type of story framing that generated reports that could be viewed as pro-military. The story framing was the upshot of journalists having ready access to soldiers to act as interview subjects. Known as ‘episodic’ framing (Lyengar qtd. in Pfau et al. 77), this style of news story design relies on central characters, in this case US soldiers, to act as the ‘stars’ of the news report. FOX News reporter Rick Levanthal admits he frequently used soldiers in his reports, interviewing, “whoever was closest to me. I would just grab someone and say, ‘Hey, how’s it going...[w]hat’s your story...[w]ant to say hi to anybody?’” (191). Episodic story framing differs from ‘thematic’ framing which is a more context driven format that focuses on facts and analysis instead of central characters. Pfau’s (et al.) 2004 study of stories produced by embedded newspaper journalists found that episodic story framing was the predominant style in Iraq (Pfau et al. 81; Pfau et al. “Embedded” 480). The absence of contextual thematic framing was obvious to University of Texas journalism professor Robert Jensen, who contends, “the US media did a good job of describing the lives of the military personnel and narrating the advance of
US troops and a lousy job of covering the politics of the war” (2).

Episodic framing was the natural outcome of isolating reporters in the field with no one to talk with except soldiers. Secluded within their units, and frequently on the move in remote regions, embedded journalists were forced to rely on the military personnel around them for information and interviews. Supplementary information that would have added context, such as enemy or civilian death tolls, would not have been readily available to embedded journalists. The information vacuum created by embedding was observed by veteran ABC reporter John McWethy, who noted, “riding around in a tank is fun, but you don’t know [expletive] about what’s going on” (Project 11). Journalists’ efforts to add context to their stories from other sources would have been hampered by technical problems with the computer and satellite phone systems meant to link them with research staff in their home-base newsrooms. Some of the technical problems identified during the Iraq War included the lack of a power supply, the inability to access a satellite and equipment breakdowns due to desert sand (Friedman 30). As well, logistical matters, such as time zone differences between the Middle East and North America, would have impeded journalists’ ability to raise research staff during working hours. All these factors surely conspired to encourage the production of episodic-framed reports featuring soldiers and their observations. Simply put, military personnel were the only information sources to which embedded journalists had ready access, and this is why their comments and activities became the focus of the stories.

The narrowness of the stories they were generating was certainly not lost
on the embedded reporters. Fahmy and Johnson’s 2005 study of embedded journalists’ attitudes and perceptions of Iraq War coverage found 90% of respondents felt embedded reporting offered a limited view of the conflict (309), but 75% of them also described their own stories as being as complete as possible (311). The respondents noted they could not check facts or offer a broader perspective because they were deprived of Internet and television access in the field (311). However, they also remarked that their news organizations were not expecting their stories to present the entire picture of the war. Instead, the embedded journalists’ reports were to be augmented by stories from non-embedded journalists to create a comprehensive package of Iraq War coverage (312).

Narrow story framing would also have been encouraged by the demands of the 24-hour news cycle -- news organizations’ voracious appetite for new content and fierce competition. Undeniably, journalists in Iraq would have felt pressure to keep producing fresh accounts of the war action featuring the most current images and eyewitness descriptions from soldiers. Only episodic-framed stories can be assembled with relative speed; the story elements necessary for the content-rich thematic story variety take longer to amass. Some embedded reporters were especially prolific. NBC Television’s David Bloom filed more than one hundred reports during a two-week period, and on a single day he supplied thirteen live reports during a 19-hour stretch (Wright and Harkey VII-2). Some of the stories consisted only of Bloom addressing the camera (Rutherford 94). In one 10-minute dispatch Bloom focused on the food he and his unit members had
been eating and on soldiers sending their best wishes to loved ones back home ("Embedded Reporters"). A study conducted by the non-partisan, Washington D.C.-based Project for Excellence in Journalism found that 60% of the 108 embedded reports it examined featured reporters presenting live and unedited material ("Embedded Reporters"). The study also found that 48% of the reports focused on troop movements, military strategy, morale, and the tasks performed by soldiers ("Embedded Reporters"), the information that was the most attainable to an embedded reporter isolated in a military community.

The design of the Embedded Media Program engineered a particular set of working conditions for journalists that in turn spawned episodic, pro-military and soldier-focused reporting. These narratives, in my opinion, were precisely what the Pentagon considered necessary to achieve its aim of swaying public opinion in favour of the Iraq War. According to public relations practitioner Fraser Seitel, the ability of a message to influence public opinion is increased when an individual can be engaged: “if you wish to persuade people you must cite evidence that coincides with their own beliefs, emotions and expectations” (57). Additionally, Seitel notes, people are responsive to emotional appeals. The embedded reporters’ narrow, solider-centred, patriotic reportage would have delivered these fundamentals by appealing to Americans’ love of country, its values, and their post 9/11 anxiety about terrorists who intended their destruction. Embedded reporting sold the pro-war message to the people back home every time it quoted a soldier or celebrated the achievement of a particular heroic man or woman who was fighting to defend America’s interests.
Given their terrorism fears and love of country, it is easy to see why American audiences would have been attracted to news stories depicting brave soldiers defending their nation, an attraction that was reflected in elevated television audience ratings. MSNBC saw its audience grow 651% during the war’s first week (Rutherford 103). There is no evidence to suggest American audiences were aware of or troubled by the one-sidedness of the reporting from Iraq, an occurrence that might be explained by their reading and viewing habits. US newspaper circulation figures intimate that Americans prefer news that is uncomplicated, understandable and episodic. This preference is suggested by the success of America’s largest newspaper, USA Today (Ahrens 2), which features stories told in a concise manner and whose circulation exceeds the context-laden New York Times and Wall Street Journal (Lieberman “Newspaper” 1). More evidence that audiences prefer episodic storytelling is found in the popularity of Entertainment Tonight, Access Hollywood and other personality-focused television programs, including reality shows.

In my opinion the absence of thematic, contextual reporting in America’s news diet has had a serious downside. The episodic reportage that figured so prominently in Iraq War coverage may have deprived Americans of the important facts they ought to have known about their nation’s foreign policy, the conduct of its military and administration, the effect of the war on Iraqis and the direction of trillions of US taxpayer dollars to the conflict. Only well after the war’s onset have Americans learned the truth about their government’s false weapons of mass destruction claims, the justification for invading Iraq, the military’s faked rescue of
Private Jessica Lynch from an Iraqi hospital and the torture of Iraqi prisoners at Abu Ghraib prison by US soldiers.

The Treatment of Non-Embedded Journalists

Non-embedded reporters attempting to cover the Iraq War faced numerous challenges. An estimated 2100 non-embedded or unilateral journalists (Zeide 1318) were stationed around the region, some based in Baghdad hotels, others headquartered in Kuwait. A survey of embedded and non-embedded journalists found that the unilateralists filed news stories on a wider range of topics than their embedded counterparts, focusing more on refugees, civilian casualties, and the Iraqi reception and perceptions of the US military (Fahmy and Johnson 312). Non-embeds certainly enjoyed more journalistic freedom than their embedded counterparts, but they faced many obstacles in their information gathering. Kuwait-based unilateral journalist Paul Workman (1) said the US military tried to dissuade non-embedded reporters from covering the war by refusing to assist them with their news gathering efforts. There have been suggestions the US and British governments tried to prevent the Iraqi side of the war story from being told. Prior to the start of the war, the US demanded that Al Jazeera remove its Baghdad-based journalists, and British Prime Minister Tony Blair issued a similar order to the British Broadcasting Corporation (Knightley “History” 101). A BBC journalist reported that the US Army intended to target non-embedded journalists (Aidie qtd. in Schechter 70), and it appears the promise was executed. US forces attacked both Al Jazeera’s Baghdad offices and Baghdad’s Palestine Hotel, the home to many western journalists (Massing
34). The US military made no secret of its dislike of non-embedded reporters. Colonel Glenn T. Starnes, a battalion chief in Iraq, contends the military was opposed to the unilaterals because they did not respect “the rules” (9) and expected support while endangering the lives of troops. Another reason is that reportage of the Iraqi side of the war was never one of the Pentagon’s goals in its campaign to win public support for the invasion.

**The Future of Embedded Reporting**

An assessment of the Embedded Media Program prepared for the US Department of Defense by the Institute for Defense Analyses in Virginia concludes the program was an achievement for the military, in part because it generated soldier-focused stories, encouraged soldier-journalist bonding and celebrated US military feats in Iraq. The report, entitled *Assessment of the DoD Embedded Media Program*, details how both the military and the media believe the program succeeded because it strengthened their relationship, reduced lingering suspicions the parties held of each other and allowed the public to see “the professionalism, dedication, sacrifice, and outstanding performance” of its military (Wright and Harkey S-9). Military officials interviewed for the report stated the news coverage in Iraq was better when it was provided through the eyes of the soldiers (Wright and Harkey VII-1). The report also says military officials did not believe soldier-journalist bonding led to a loss of journalistic integrity and objectivity; instead they viewed it as a positive development, contributing to the journalists’ depth of understanding of the war (Wright and Harkey VII-16). Additionally, the report notes that embedded journalists filed numerous “tough
stories" (Wright and Harkey VII-17) and military personnel never balked.

What is truly alarming, in my opinion, is what the study reveals about the degree to which embedding generated practices that journalists ought to have known were taboo. For instance, some journalists allowed US soldiers to use their computers for emailing and their satellite telephones for contacting family members back home (Wright and Harkey VII-7). These ‘favours’ would have incurred costs for the journalists’ news organizations, some of which were reportedly spending one million dollars per day on war coverage (Wright and Harkey VI-32). One embedded journalist reported a one-month satellite phone bill exceeding $11,000 (USD) (Wright and Harkey VI-34). What is problematic is a purportedly neutral journalist supplying benefits in the form of phone and computer services to one faction in a conflict. Additionally, as contact with family members would have had a morale boosting effect on the soldiers, news organizations allowing military personnel to use their equipment could be accused of subsidizing and supporting the US military’s war effort. Another worrying practice noted in the report saw embedded journalists voluntarily asking military officials to review their reports before publication or broadcast, claiming that vetting was needed to ensure their stories conveyed the facts, adhered to the rules, and used the correct military terminology (Wright and Harkey VII-28-29). Fact checking is not unheard of in journalism; journalists will often verify a particular word or element of a story with a source, but never should they voluntarily submit an entire report to a source for pre-publication examination. To be fair, the need for journalists to request military vetting might imply the rules of
the Embedded Media Program were too complex to be understood. If this is true, we might ask whether the complexity was a deliberate construct of the program, designed to ensure that journalists would have to voluntarily seek story vetting with military officials or risk expulsion if their reportage overstepped the program’s bounds.

The perceived success of the Embedded Media Program ensures its survival into future conflicts. Although the media has lauded the program, some news organizations have advertised their intention to assign more non-embedded journalists to the next war to add more depth and context to their coverage. Whether this will occur remains to be seen. The promise of more comprehensive reporting in the future could simply be a way of deflecting criticism of the national journalism establishment’s shameful lack of balanced news coverage prior to the war. The New York Times, the national newspaper of record, has faced serious accusations of biased reporting for its failure to scrutinize the Bush government’s weapons claims (Herman 178). In 2004, more than one year after the start of the Iraq War, the New York Times published an extraordinary editorial admitting serious lapses in its coverage of Iraqi weapons and terrorism claims prior to the war, promising more aggressive reporting in the future “aimed at setting the record straight” (“The Times” 2). The editorial, issued by the paper’s public editor Daniel Okrent, cited numerous examples of coverage that was “not as rigorous as it should have been” (“The Times” 1). It also acknowledged the less prominent placement of stories that challenged US government claims on Iraqi weapons, the newspaper’s reliance on Saddam’s
opponents as story sources and the publication of controversial information that was “insufficiently qualified or allowed to stand unchallenged” (“The Times” 1). The editorial casts the blame on competitive and scoop-hungry “editors at several levels” (“The Times” 1) who failed to challenge reporters to prove the veracity of their sources’ claims. While the editorial is remarkable as a mea culpa, it falls short of addressing the failings of the newspaper’s top managers who permitted an obvious pro-war editorial agenda to dominate the coverage in the months leading up to the invasion of Iraq. It seems implausible that the managers of a newspaper that employs some of the world’s top journalists, including highly educated correspondents with decades of experience reporting on wars and the propaganda campaigns that help support them, could be so easily duped and neglectful of the journalistic principal of balance. It also seems inconceivable that some reporters within the organization were not openly criticising the newspaper’s editorial direction in discussions with their superiors. It does not seem possible that the management team remained unaware the newspaper was publishing biased stories of questionable reliability. If substandard, unbalanced journalism was practiced at the Times in the months leading up to the Iraq War, it had to have had the blessing of the top management.

Presuming management was cognizant of its editorial bias, we can only speculate as to why the New York Times would adopt such a stance. One factor that can likely be ruled out is the need to curry favour with federal communications regulators who oversee broadcast ownership regulations, the
suspected cause of some of television's pro-war cheerleading. The broadcast holdings of the newspaper's parent company, The New York Times Company, were minimal at the time; it owned only eight television stations, all of them in small to medium markets, such as Oklahoma City, Des Moines and Memphis. A plausible scenario for the New York Times editorial bias, in my opinion, was the newspaper's need to retain readers amid falling earnings and declining circulation (Project and Edmonds 1-3). The newspaper industry is facing tough times due to a younger generation that reads less often and consumes its news online, and from competition from free daily commuter newspapers (Project and Edmonds 5). Newspapers such as the Times, have been struggling to hang onto their core readers. The editorial actions of the Times leading up to the Iraq War might be explained by what Walsh (4) argues is the propensity for large mainstream media organizations to cater to the views of the ruling elite for reasons of political expediency and to preserve the status quo. Adopting the government's line on the weapons claims might have simply been a matter of the Times assessing which way public opinion and the political winds were blowing at the time and deliberately hitching its editorial wagon to the side of the war debate it deemed most likely to maintain and retain readers and advertisers. The weapons of mass destruction stories first appeared in the year following the 9/11 terrorist attacks, a time when Americans were highly suggestible to the idea that their country was under siege. For this reason, the Times staff might have been reluctant to subject the weapons reportage to the usual editorial scrutiny, especially after the US government linked Iraq with terrorism.
Ultimately whether the *New York Times* and other news organizations will be in the position to deliver on their promise of more balanced war coverage in the future is uncertain due to their ongoing financial problems and cost-cutting measures that have resulted in staff redundancies. The year 2007 saw editorial cuts announced at the *New York Times*, the *Boston Globe* and *Time* Magazine (Morrison and Gershberg 1). The *Los Angeles Times* has trimmed its news division by more than 250 journalists during the last five years (Seelye 1). When future wars happen cost conscious news organizations may be unwilling or unable to devote the resources to produce the in-depth coverage that was absent in Iraq. If this is the case, resource-strapped news organizations may find the Embedded Media Program even more appealing because its structure guarantees ready-made, action packed stories, great visuals and ready access to military interview subjects. In contrast, non-embedded reporting offers less certainty of access to newsworthy information.

The Embedded Media Program appears here to stay. But censorship-conscious news organizations could be doing more to minimize the risk of its journalists being co-opted. They need to demand changes to the program’s structure. For instance, the ‘embed for life’ policy (Wright and Harkey VIII-5), which prohibits journalists from changing military units once they have been embedded, should be eliminated. Movement between units would lessen the chance of social bonding occurring between journalists and soldiers. Journalist rotation is routinely performed during election campaigns to prevent the Stockholm Syndrome effect. To minimize the chance that reporters will adopt...
military values, news organizations should demand that embedded journalists be allowed in-out privileges, so they can temporarily leave the program to report on non-combat events and other issues.

Clearly, convincing the Pentagon to agree to amendments that will weaken its control over journalists will be difficult and perhaps impossible. There is only one way news organizations can amass the power necessary to affect change, and that would require them to band together to threaten a media-wide boycott of future embedding programs. The prospect of hundreds of non-embedded journalists wandering around the war theatre without restrictions, as they did in Vietnam, might have the force to convince the Pentagon to re-examine its approach to media relations. A uniting of members of the US media establishment, however, does not appear likely for competitive and commercial reasons. As long as the media remains fragmented it will be powerless to force change, unable to prevent the Pentagon and its public relations partners from adding new co-opting elements to the embedding program. There are already calls for journalists to be embedded with their hometown units (Starnes 10) in the future. This would certainly guarantee the intensification of episodic and pro-military coverage, for journalists would not risk raising the ire of their community and soldiers’ family members, nor jeopardise the advertising revenues generated from local businesses, by producing uncomplimentary stories about local troops.
Conclusion

Today, with the American death toll in Iraq approaching four thousand, and with no end to the war in sight, the nationalistic cheerleading that figured so prominently in news reports at the beginning of the war has abated. News organizations have been justifiably criticised since 2003 for their abysmal coverage of the Bush administration's activities in the months leading up to the invasion. That criticism appropriately extends to some of the pro-military coverage generated by embedded reporters. To be fair, embedded journalists were placed in a working environment where it was easy for them to submit to censorship. Some surrendered to the pressures of their isolation and bonded with the military personnel they were expected to cover objectively. Some may have hoped to advance their careers by adopting the patriotic stance of their self-interested employers. Others may have feared the consequences of being perceived as un-patriotic and un-American. The US media organizations promise things will be different next time, but their plans to produce more balanced reporting by assigning additional resources to future wars may be a pipe dream. War coverage is an expensive proposition and newsrooms are cutting budgets and staff. The Embedded Media Program was a success for the Pentagon because it converted supposedly unbiased reporters into pro-war cheerleaders. We can be sure that the military and its public relations partners are already hard at work 'war-gaming' the media relations of future conflicts.
Reference List


