

Jordan Tredinnick

Project report

MACS390, “Media, war and peace”

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Media and Cultural Studies, University of Wollongong

The project report assignment had two parts. For details of the assignment see http://www.bmartin.cc/classes/MACS390_11outline.pdf

Jordan Tredinnick prepared

(1) an information pack in the form of a blog, available at <http://www.unspokengenocide.blogspot.com/>

(2) a fictional dialogue about doing the project, which starts on the next page.

This document is located at http://www.bmartin.cc/classes/MACS390_11tops/.

MACS390- MEDIA WAR AND PEACE

ASSIGNMENT THREE- PROJECT

Blog: www.unspokengenocide.blogspot.com

The blog has several different posts and pages. To ensure that you view the entire project, below are the topics covered:

1. About this blog (first post) (text and image)
2. What is the Cambodian genocide? (text and image)
3. Why haven't I heard about this before? (text and image)
4. Video- thinking about the Cambodian genocide (made by me). Video can also be viewed at:

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nVDWhkjFIs8&feature=player_embedded#at=26

5. Cambodian genocide in pictures (pictures with captions)
6. How could the media just ignore a country in need? (text and image)
7. Why report on Rwanda and not Cambodia? (text and image)
8. Video- the truth about the Cambodian genocide (from YouTube)
9. Want to learn more? Some useful links to further reading or resources (links)
10. References (text)

You can view all of these posts from the home page. The main ones are on the first page, to view the others just click on "older posts" at the bottom. Alternatively the posts are also broken up into pages that can be reached by links on the right hand side of the page.

If any of these do not work or you can't find them, please do not hesitate to email me and I will send you the hard copy version. I have shown the blog to several members of the public and they have been able to view it easily, so there shouldn't be any issues.

Dialogue

The following is a fictional conversation that represents the theory, process and reflections of my project. The conversation is between Harry Potter and his mentor Professor Dumbledore. In terms of reality, both characters are representations of the thought, research and decision making processes I went through to create the project. The case study, de Bono techniques and theories I applied to the project are discussed in further detail in the dialogue and the supplementary footnotes.

Professor Dumbledore (PD): Ahhh young Harry, I understand that you are having some troubles with an assignment Professor McGonagall¹ has given you.

Harry Potter (HP): Yes sir, I just don't know where to start!

PD: Hmm I see. Well Harry I find the best place to start is with something that interests you greatly, but still has some theories that can be applied to it. I find the best way to do this is to write down what is good, bad and interesting² about it.

HP: Err well the Dursleys³ just got back from Cambodia and when I was looking at their photos I was fascinated by the photos at Choeung Ek⁴. I have never even heard anything about any genocide in Cambodia, so maybe I can do something about that?

PD: Yes, that seems like a good idea Harry, but what approach are you going to take?⁵

HP: Err, well I guess if I haven't heard about it, then many other people haven't. I could look at why that was.

PD: Yes that seems like a good thesis to me, but I seem to remember Professor McGonagall telling me that you have to incorporate the media into it. So how are you going to do that?

HP: Err well I guess a lot of what I know about what happens in other countries comes from the media. I read the newspaper everyday to find out what is going on in the world, so I guess

¹ Another teacher in the fictional story Harry Potter. In this dialogue it is representative of Brian Martin.

² PMI De Bono Theory involves asking what are the pluses, the minuses and interesting aspects of something when evaluating a decision. Wrennall, W. (1998). *Decision Aids for evaluation and selection: the Kordanz approach*. International Journal of Productivity and Performance Management. Vol 47, Iss 6, pp213-218.

³ Fictional representation of my parents

⁴ The Buddhist memorial at one of the Killing Fields in Cambodia.

⁵ Example of De Bono lateral thinking technique. This constant questioning of ideas helps keep focus, or shows you when a change in focus is needed. It also helps you think of other alternatives. De Bono Thinking Systems. (2011). *Lateral Thinking*. <http://www.debonothinkingsystems.com/tools/lateral.htm> (accessed 5/5/11).

if they didn't report on something I wouldn't know about it⁶. So maybe I could look at why the media only chooses to report on certain genocides, and use Cambodia as a case study.

PD: Well Harry, it seems like you now have a clear thesis for your project. But how are you going to present this to the public?

HP: I want to keep the audience engaged, and so don't want to just use text. I would like to use the great photos that I have from the Dursleys, as well as make a video so I think I will create a blog⁷.

PD: Well done Harry, We are now halfway there, now all we have to do is fill this blog with content. Where are you going to start?

HP: Ahhh, err I'm not sure Professor. Should I start by talking about Cambodia, or genocide or the media? I'm confused!!

PD: I find that when I don't know where to start, I simply think about what I want to know about the topic. So what is it you want to know most?

HP: I guess I find the case study the most interesting part. So I guess I will start by researching the Cambodian genocide. The Dursleys told me all about what they learnt when they visited the Cambodian Genocide Memorial⁸ which is a great start. I guess I will also do some light reading that will give me a brief overview of the issue⁹.

PD: That sounds like a good idea to me Harry, but remember you can't base a project on background research. You need to have some theorists to create the backbone of the information portrayed to the public. It is very important that when you create the blog that you write in a way that is simplistic and easy to understand, but you have the power of knowledge on your side.

⁶ It is the media's role to portray the world for the public. They make decisions that shape the way that the public perceive the world they live in. Seib, P. (2002). *The Global Journalist*. Rowman & Littlefield Publishers Inc, England. Pp109-111.

⁷ Another example of De Bono Lateral Thinking technique. It is an example of the use of random entry as using several different mediums on a blog allows audience members to view information in different ways that will allow them to think in different ways. De Bono Thinking Systems. (2011). *Lateral Thinking*. <http://www.debonothinkingsystems.com/tools/lateral.htm> (accessed 3/5/11).

⁸ Example of primary research from interviewing my parents. Secondary to verify facts: Memory and Justice. (2006). *Choeung Ek Centre of Genocide Crimes*. <http://memoryandjustice.org/site/choeung-ek-center-of-genocide-crimes/> (accessed 4/6/11)

⁹ Intrepid website country information. (2011). <http://www.intrepidtravel.com/destinations/cambodia> (accessed 4/5/11). Information in an easy to read format that gives overview of the Khmer Rouge and the regime they created. Also gives an overview on Choeung Ek and Tuol Sleng. Good base for getting overview before reading academic sources.

HP: Yes sir. I have got some books from the library that discusses the Cambodian genocide¹⁰ as well as media theories¹¹. I am also going to look at some online journals¹². Oh no Professor, only when reading through the books on the Cambodian Genocide have I found that they are all by the same author! It's a disaster!

PD: Come now Harry, this isn't such a big problem! They are all different books, with different information yes?

HP: Yes, sir.

PD: Well now, I say you can use the information you gather from these books, you just need to supplement the information with other authors so you don't get biased information.

HP: Yes, sir you are right. I have looked on the Internet¹³ and have made sure that the information that I have isn't biased.

PD: Good work Harry! Now you have all your information, how are you going to condense this for your audience?

¹⁰ Kiernan, B. (1993). *Genocide and Democracy in Cambodia*. Yale University, US. Kiernan, B. (2008). *Genocide and Resistance in Southeast Asia*. Transaction Publications, USA/UK. Kiernan, B. (1996). *The Pol Pot Regime*. Yale University Press, USA. These books gave detailed representation of how the Khmer Rouge was created, what their policies were, how they carried these out and what the consequences were. Kiernan insights into Cambodia and its people were invaluable when writing the blog. Not only does he have detailed information about the numbers of deaths (between 1.7-2.3 million people), but also how the Khmer Rouge were created (Pol Pot went to university in France and joined a student communist party. When he returned to Cambodia he spread his knowledge there and collected leaders that shared his view that Cambodia should return to their old ways) and what it means for the country ("The Cambodia that survived Pol Pot is like a dismembered body that is trying to come back to life (Kiernan 1993: 10)).

¹¹ McKane, A. (2006). *News Writing*. Sage Publications. London. Solomon, N. (2005). *War Made Easy*. John Wiley & Sons. New Jersey. Seib, P. (2002). *The Global Journalist*. Rowman & Littlefield Publishers Inc, England. These books show war reporting and genocide from the media's perspective. McKane (2006) is a book written for journalism students that teaches the elements that make a story newsworthy and how to rate them when determining if a story is newsworthy or not. In terms of genocide I found that proximity, public interest and shock value were the most important elements in determining newsworthiness. The other two books looked in detail how to report on war and tragedy, and what effect this reporting has on society. The Fourth Estate notion in the project comes from Solomon (2005: 113) that shows the blind faith that the audience has in the media and how it is the medias responsibility to live up to this faith. I found the comparison between Rwanda and Cambodia to be interesting to see the changing nature of the media. No longer do we have to rely on the traditional mediums of media; (like the audience did in Cambodia) we now have many different online media sources, as well as access to different country media sources. We are a much more global community now (Seib 2002: 3). We are also a different audience now then we were in 1975, we are much more desensitised to violent images, and we are much more informed about the happenings in other countries. This is demonstrated in the change in reporting between Rwanda and Cambodia.

¹² Winterdyk, J. (2009). "Genocide: International Issues and Perspectives worthy of criminal justice attention". *International Criminal Justice Review*. Vol 19, no 2, pp101-114. The paper discusses how difficult it is to gain justice for genocide victims, and how work must be done to prevent such action, rather than focus on trying to fix the problem after it has developed.

¹³ The Cambodian Genocide Group. (2008). *About the Cambodian Genocide*. <http://www.cambodiangenocide.org/genocide.htm> (accessed 4/6/11). Doyle, K. (2009). *In Cambodia, Pol Pot's Regime on Trial at Last*. Time Magazine. <http://www.time.com/time/world/article/0,8599,1879869,00.html> (accessed 5/5/11). Convention on the prevention and punishment on the crime genocide. (1997). *United Nations*. <http://www.hrweb.org/legal/genocide.html> (accessed 4/6/11).

HP: Ahhh....

PD: (chuckles) Oh Harry! This is the most difficult part. Think of how you can separate the information into chunks, but still keep the audience interested and stimulated.

HP: I guess by breaking the information up into a question and answer format that is clear and easy to read.

PD: Very good Harry, and what theories are you going to use with these?

HP: Well I have the UN definition of genocide¹⁴ and the research I have done on Cambodia during the Pol Pot regime definitely fit this definition¹⁵. I also know that the reporting of the genocide was minimal as it fell at an unstable time in the Western world¹⁶.

PD: Very good Harry, that is your written text sorted. Now how are you going to do the video you mentioned before? You aren't going to apparate¹⁷ to Cambodia are you?

HP: (sighs) No, I don't think I have time. I want to create a video that will help people think more critically about the Cambodian genocide.

PD: That sounds like something De Bono¹⁸ would be helpful for. He has some excellent techniques in the way of helping people think critically about things.

HP: That's a good idea sir. I think Professor McGonagall wanted us to use his techniques as well.

PD: Well now all you have to do is find a De Bono technique that suits the video. Might I suggest the six thinking hats¹⁹? They are one of the most well known of his techniques, which

¹⁴ UN defines genocide as (a) Killing members of the group;(b) Causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group;(c) Deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part;(d) Imposing measures intended to prevent births within the group;(e) Forcibly transferring children of the group to another group. Convention on the prevention and punishment on the crime genocide. (1997). *United Nations*. <http://www.hrweb.org/legal/genocide.html> (accessed 4/6/11).

¹⁵ Kiernan, B. (1993). *Genocide and Democracy in Cambodia*. Yale University, US. Kiernan, B. (2008). *Genocide and Resistance in Southeast Asia*. Transaction Publications, USA/UK. Pol Pot was an unusual dictator as he killed his own people. Although the minority Laos, Thai and Vietnamese groups were targeted first in his regime, he ultimately was raging against an entire nation of his people. He exterminated 25% of the population, harmed and tortured millions of others, and imposed law against the existence of families, taking children away to be trained to believe that they must only believe the Khmer Rouge government.

¹⁶ Kiernan, B. (1993). *Genocide and Democracy in Cambodia*. Yale University, US. The Vietnam War ended the year the Cambodian genocide began. Audiences had just witnessed war on television for the first time and were unsettled.

¹⁷ Term used in Harry Potter novels for travelling from one place to another in an instant.

¹⁸ De Bono Thinking Systems. (2011). *Lateral Thinking*. <http://www.debonothinkingsystems.com/tools/lateral.htm> (accessed 3/6/11).

will be helpful in assisting the audience in understanding the meaning of the video. But I also think they help break things up very well, helps you look at the bigger picture. Don't you agree?

HP: Yes sir, I think that is a brilliant idea. The video will use a combination of images, text and sound to create the overall emotive message. It will aim to show how genocide is one of the worst crimes against humanity, but how little is it represented in the media. I want to show people that they can make a difference by speaking out and demanding to know more²⁰.

PD: That is great Harry. That is what you want to achieve with an information pack- you want to inform people about an issue and spark their interest to make a change or read further on the topic.

HP: Yes sir, I have already shown by information pack to members of the public to see what they thought about it. They said that they learnt a lot about the issue, but found parts of it too difficult to understand. I then reworked the copy so as to sound less academic and more appealing to the public.

PD: Good work Harry. It is very important for the writing to remain simplistic and emotive to keep the audience interested and engaged. Especially with an online medium, there are so many other distractions, like YouTube, facebook, twitter... (Pulls out iphone and begins to browse)

HP: Professor?

PD: Sorry Harry! Got a little distracted there...So did you find that you got a better response once you had rewritten your copy?

HP: Yes! It was amazing, as soon as I took out any mention of academics or particular theories, the audience seemed to respond much better. But they were still retaining the information I wanted them to get out of the project. I just hope that Professor McGonagall realises that I still used theories to reach the conclusions I have. I think this is one weakness

¹⁹ De Bono technique on critical thinking. Each hat represents a different way of looking at something. De Bono Thinking Systems. (2011). *Six Thinking Hats*. <http://www.debonothinkingsystems.com/tools/6hats.htm> (accessed 4/6/11).

²⁰ Seib, P. (2002). *The Global Journalist*. Rowman & Littlefield Publishers Inc, England. (P39-40 & 67-68). Seib discusses how if the public creates hype about something and demands to know more, the media will do their best to comply. If the media is able to create enough sensationalism and the public continue to demand action and apply pressure policy makers and the government will also get involved.

of the project- it doesn't have a lot of theoretical framework. There is also a lot of information on the blog. The people I showed it to really enjoyed it, but it did take time for them to go through it all.

PD: Well Harry, I think you've just shown to me that you have a pretty good understanding of the topic, so I'm sure Professor McGonagall will see this too! The findings are insightful and informed and you clearly have a great passion for the issue. The combination of text, pictures, videos and hyperlinks create a really informative package that is interactive with the audience. I think it really gives the audience a great understanding of the issue and inspires them to question the role of the media within society.

HP: I sure hope so! I learnt so much doing this project. It was a very different approach to much of my other studies but I really enjoyed it. I feel that I have learnt so much about not only Cambodia, but also the way the media treats genocide and other atrocities. As a journalism student it was interesting to get another perspective on how the media is perceived and how much of an effect it can have on the public and their perception. I was so shocked to find out that a quarter of a nation was just wiped out, gone forever- and I had no idea it ever happened! It makes me question what else is going on in the world that I don't know about!

PD: (sighs) Harry the world is full of horrible things- sometimes it is better to not know. Don't you agree?

HP: No sir, not at all! It is only with knowledge can we make a change. Don't you think that if people had known that a quarter of a population were being killed they would want something to be done? It was so difficult to find concrete sources on this issue- it was like the world just wanted to forget that this had ever happened! I think I will continue to investigate this topic further, and link it to other genocides like Somalia and Darfur that aren't reported on a lot. It feels like we only care after it is over.

PD: Well Harry it sounds like you have really got a lot out of this project. You have clearly found something that interests you and drives you to question to find out more. You have integrated several de Bono techniques in your creative process, as well use a variety of primary and secondary sources in your research to create a package that is informative and entertaining, and will hopefully create the passion I see in you in other people. Well done Harry!

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