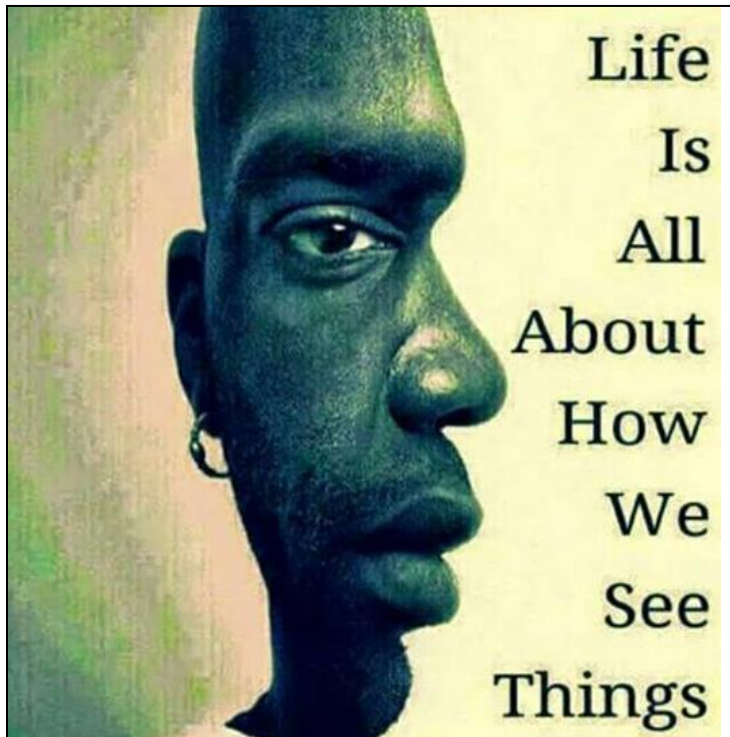# How Images Are Used Against The American Public

And What We Can Do To Change Things

by Jennifer S. Saunders

I enjoyed the popular television shows I grew up watching. 'The Golden Age Of Television Writers were enlightening, creative, witty, engaging, and funny. As a second-year student at Montclair State University in Montclair, New Jersey, in 1978, I jumped at the opportunity to take a Media Studies course.

Little did I know that the Professor's opening remarks on the first day of class would be the beginning of a long journey I'd have to take to understand its full meaning. *"The role of Media is to divide people along the lines of race, class and sex while sowing the myth of the rapid upwardly mobile American so that those on top (who control 90% of the wealth of the nation) can stay on top"* he said.

While I found the professor's statement interesting, most of what he shared throughout the remainder of the semester either permeated into my subconscious or simply went over my head. The President was President Jimmy Carter and the television, film and music industries were cranking out great stories, great dramas and uplifting inspirational music. As a Detroit Public Schools Teacher, five years later, I was introduced to Video Production as a tool that I could use to tell stories about our students or our school. The filming of students in my class

one day coupled with the impression left on me by Tina Turner's ' 1983 music video, 'Private Dancer' sparked the flame that ignited my passion to learn how to use Film to help build a better world.

It was 1984. 16 years had passed since Dr. Martin Luther King was killed and The Civil Rights Movement was in decline. The streets of African American communities seemed to have become war zones overnight. The sale and use of 'crack-cocaine' had reached epidemic levels, street gangs were controlling communities, the AIDS epidemic was rampant, and creative writing, music, film, and television entertainment was drying up.

I naively thought that what Americans needed to turn things around was the widespread distribution of videos and films that told the stories of ordinary citizens organizing, pushing back against the odds and winning. I was so convinced of this that I packed up my things, left Detroit, and headed back East to enroll in *The New School For Social Research's M.A. for Media Studies program in New York City*. If Media were being used to divide people along the lines of race, class, and sex then Media I thought, could be the bridge to build it back.
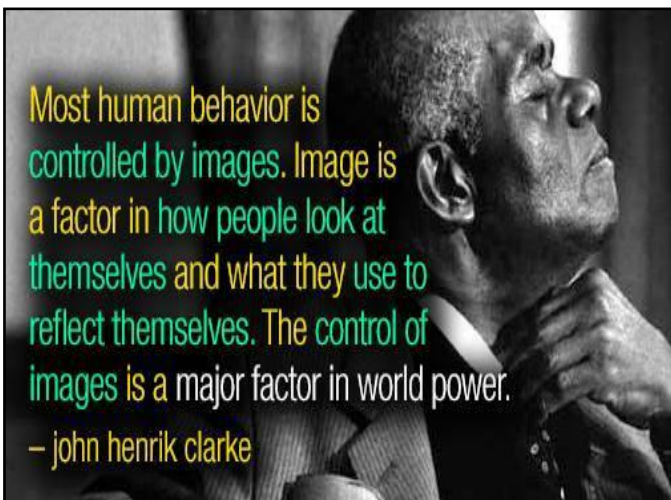
What I didn't know then however, is that a small group of globally interlocked Media Industry *'Big Wigs'* and *'Corporate Cartels'* backed by organizations like *'The Guardians of American Culture'* control and determine what Americans hear, read, and see and what they don't get to read, see and hear.   While Film has achieved material success since its advent, it has been uninfluenced by spiritual factors. Because of *the tragic misuse of the achievements of the science of film* which lies at the root of peoples suffering the world over, its ultimately without value said *British Filmmaker, Andrew Buchanan in 1938.* **"All nations have contributed to Film's creation. All use it for their own ends - all their ends are righteous – all their people suffer".**

He deplored the fact that the screen had not been made to contribute to international friendship since *the signing of the armistice of 1918 and the end of WWI.* "All nations, he said, "had been satisfied, the world over, to offer negative propaganda which was commercially safe instead of having the courage and the vision to present positive propaganda".

"Film, the most powerful communicator the world has ever known does not use its unique power to crush the spirit of suspicion and hatred which is everywhere and build understanding of the people by the people"

This was the primary complaint of British Filmmaker Andrew Buchanan in 1938. Now 83 years later, this is the same complaint that I have with the industry that I love. Americans have been unable to move beyond the crosshairs of conflicts rooted in the past, permitting and encouraging nationalistic hatred to smolder and increase in intensity until today 2021, when pervasive feelings of alienation, hatred, fear, and exclusion now polarize the country.

Film Producers are not molding minds in new enlightened ways. Instead, they are creating and widely distributing images and messages that encourage the spread of values like, egoism, domination, sexism, racism, individualism, classism, consumerism, and shareholder value.

Most human behavior is controlled by images. Image is a factor in how people look at themselves and what they use to reflect themselves. The control of images is a major factor in world power.
– john henrik clarke

Since the early 1980's, two generations have grown up that owe a great deal of their reasoning power or lack thereof, to the screen and a worldview that consistently ignores and distorts the roles of African Americans, race and sex in American life and history.

The purpose of these blog writings will be first to explain how images are used against Americas and secondly, to examine whether this moment-in-time (with cellphones having video capture capabilities), marks the perfect opportunity to use the power of film and video to *re-imagine community and re-build the public square.*

To learn more about how images are used against Americans and what we can do to change things, please sign up to follow our weekly blog post at: _____