

HYDE PARK

Got something to share with fellow Democrats?
Now's the time and here's the place!

Submit contributions to wayne@looking4light.com.

Occasional Virtual Soap Box

December 3, 2021

Speaking about framing....

The laast article in this issue is an explanation of what I mean when I talk so often about “framing,” “controlling metahors,” or “controlling perspeective.” So, to establish a frame of my own, I thought I'd start the issue with an example of precisely that phenomenon. It happens also to be a critique of the news media, one of the main culprits in spreading destructive framing.

Think about what's being said here, without being distracted by the way it's said!

Axios has published a report that is making some *Republicans* furious. “Young *Dems* more likely to despise the other party,” the headline reads.

It doesn't get much better for those on the right.

The study of 850 college students finds 71% of *Democrats* would not go on a date with someone who voted for Donald Trump. Just 31% of *Republicans* surveyed said they would not go on a date with a Biden voter.

The article is about *Republican* outrage over the fact that 71% of college *Democrats* wouldn't date someone who voted for Trump. OK. So tell me this: What percentage of college *Republicans* wouldn't date someone who voted for Biden? $100\% - 31\% = 69\%$. 71% vs. 69%!

They report the percentage of *Democrats* who **would not** date someone who voted for Trump. Then they compare that to the percentage of *Republicans* who **would** date someone who voted for Biden. In other words, they compare apples to persimmons. And they toss in the preposterous term “despise”!

WHY?!

Wayne's blog: <https://looking4light.com/scarab/>.

Back issues of *Hyde Park* can be found there.

Note

The content of this newsletter has not been approved by the Volusia County D.E.C. Each item is the responsibility of its author. Questions and comments are welcome. Direct them to wayne@looking4light.com.

To unsubscribe, email volusiadem@gmail.com

Paid political advertisement distributed by Volusia County DEC independently of any candidate or committee.

Feature

From Michael Moore's newsletter

Michael Moore



A Mother's Love for Son, Gun and Country.

"LOL — I'm not mad. You have to learn not to get caught."

Editor's Note: Moore cites sections of a letter to Donald Trump written by the mother of the Michigan school murderer. What she says is...let's say "not safe for work." It is, in fact, both stupid and disgusting. But it reveals a lot, not just about the murderer's family, but about Trump's "base" in general.



15-year old Ethan Crumbley of Oxford MI was given his *Sig Sauer* as an early *Christmas* gift on *Black Friday*, 10 days ago. So exciting — why wait until the Lord's birthday to open it ! The next day mom took Ethan to the gun range shooting all those happy bullets. Mom Jennifer Crumbley posted on *Instagram*: "mom and son day testing out his new Christmas present." It wasn't *Christmas*. It was November 27.

...

Who would do that? After some minimal research, I can offer you one possible explanation. On November 11, 2016, three days after Trump's victory in *Michigan* and elsewhere, Ethan's mom, Jennifer, wrote a love letter to Donald Trump. Here is the part where the mother helps us understand:

November 11, 2016

Dear President Elect, Mr. Trump:

Feels funny to even be writing your name like that, but you made history on Tuesday. I'm not going to lie. I was scared shitless to circle your name on my ballot. I have been back and forth on whether to vote for you, or not vote at all [...]

Mr. Trump, I actually love that you are a bad public speaker because that showed sincerity, and humility. You changed your

mind, and you said “so what”. You made the famous “grab them in the pussy” comment, did it offend me? No. I say things all the time that people take the wrong way, do I mean them, not always. Do I agree that you should of shown your tax returns? No. I don’t care what you do or maybe don’t pay in taxes, I think those are personal and if the Gov’t can lock someone up over \$10,000 of unpaid taxes and you slipped on by, then that shows the corruption. I like that you have failed. I love it even more that those failures taught lessons and made you one of the most successful Business Men in my history. I’m not scared of your big personality and quick temper. There is a whole house of representatives that still have to approve if you decide to get pissed at China and blow them up.

The Wall. The famous Wall. See Mr. Trump, I support that wall. I am not racist. In fact my grandfather came straight off the boat in Italy. Fought, struggled and had to prove his way to be an American Citizen. He went through the great depression, he then started a successful coil company here in MI where he employed other hard working Americans and paid them a good wage. I want every non-American that wants to live in this great country to have to go through the same process. I don’t even know where we went wrong with that, but if you want to be here, work here, live here damnit, fucking earn it and prove it.

As a female and a Realtor, thank you for allowing my right to bear arms. Allowing

me to be protected if I show a home to someone with bad intentions. Thank you for respecting that Amendment [...]

We bust our ass Mr. Trump. I pay taxes, my husband pays his child support, I donate to charities. We are good fucking Americans that cannot get ahead. And what makes me sick, is people that come over here from other countries and get free everything.

You see Mr. Trump, I need you to stop common core. My son struggles daily, and his teachers tell me they hate teaching it but the HAVE to. Their pay depends on these stupid fucking test scores. I have to pay for a Tutor, why? Because I can’t figure out 4th grade math. I used to be good at math. I can’t afford a Tutor, in fact I sacrifice car insurance to make sure my son gets a good education and hopefully succeeds in life. My parents teach at a school where the kids come from illegal immigrant parents. Most of their parents are locked up. They don’t care about learning and threaten to kill my mom for caring about their grades. Do you realize Mr. Trump that they get free tutors, free tablets from our Government so they can succeed? Why cant my son get those things, do we as hard working Americans not deserve that too?

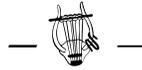
My husband suffered a stroke and a broken back and we were with just my income. Do you know how hard it is to support a family on only \$40,000 a year? I couldn’t qualify for State Aid. I made to much.

Mr. Trump, this is why I voted for you. I see the change that we so desperately need. I see jobs coming back, people having to (work) for their handouts, money going to who really deserve it... Jobs given back to our American workers. I believe YOU are the President who will make these things happen. I have NEVER had this much belief in one person, and you are it.

If this blog even makes it to your eyes... thank you. From the bottom of my heart.

Yours Truly,

A hard working Middle Class Law Abiding Citizen who is sick of getting fucked in the ass and would rather be grabbed by the pussy.



AlterNet

Magdi Semrau November 22, 2021

President Joe Biden's polling appears to be in a slump. His approval average is 43 percent, with 52 percent disapproving.

These numbers are perplexing, given a majority supports his legislative agenda. For example, a new Washington Post/ABC News poll recorded Biden's approval at 41 percent, whereas support for the bipartisan infrastructure bill was 63 percent and Build Back Better was 58 percent. The same poll also found that the GOP midterm advantage is higher than it's been since 1981. All despite the fact that Republican representatives largely oppose the agenda that voters support.

These polling trends are likely due to multiple causes.

[One] player driving this odd mismatch: the media.

Blaming the media can seem like an easy scapegoat. However, given the current set of circumstances, there are good reasons to question whether the press corps — those who are meant to convey information about legislation to the public — are doing a good job.

First, we have to understand the media environment, including our own role as news consumers. The press should not be presidential cheerleaders. Its job is to critically relay facts and analyses. That said, the media and media consumers are subject to a level of negativity bias that can drive public perception in irrational directions.

Humans are more likely to engage with negative information.

Feature

Republicans don't often know (or care) what words actually mean

Wayne Dickson



Essential Meaning of Marxism

: the political, economic, and social theories of Karl Marx including the belief that the struggle between social classes is a major force in history and that there should eventually be a society in which there are no classes

Essential Meaning of socialism

: a way of organizing a society in which major industries are owned and controlled by the government rather than by individual people and companies

Essential Meaning of communism

: a way of organizing a society in which the government owns the things that are used to make and transport products (such as land, oil, factories, ships, etc.) and there is no privately owned property

AlterNet

Larry Volk, superintendent for the *Starkweather Public School District* in *North Dakota*, is calling for a “Christ-centered republic” at the same time he is vowing to keep “critical race theory” out of public schools in his district.

But the far right is conflating any mention of racial justice with CRT, and Volk is a prime example. In a recent e-mail, journalist Caroline Vakil reports in *The Hill*, Volk wrote, “Racial injustice has been pushed by a political ideology — not a race of people. There is no systemic racism in *America* created by our Founding Fathers — the racism is the project of the godless *Democrat Party* that has rejected God, family, faith and *America* and embraced secularism in the form of Marxism.”

These are the words Thomas Jefferson had carved on his gravestone:

HERE WAS BURIED

THOMAS JEFFERSON

AUTHOR OF THE DECLARATION OF AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE

OF THE STATUTE OF VIRGINIA FOR
RELIGIOUS FREEDOM

AND FATHER OF THE UNIVERSITY OF
VIRGINIA.



Thomas Jefferson definitely qualifies as a “founding father,” wouldn’t you say? But, while he might not have been a racist by your definition, Mr. Volk, he did father a number of children with a Black woman whom he “owned” as a slave. And Jefferson was a deist, about as far from “fundamentalist evangelical” as you could get. (His version of the **New Testament** omitted all the supernatural stuff like miracles and kept only the narrative and ethics.)

He insisted on having just three items on his gravestone:

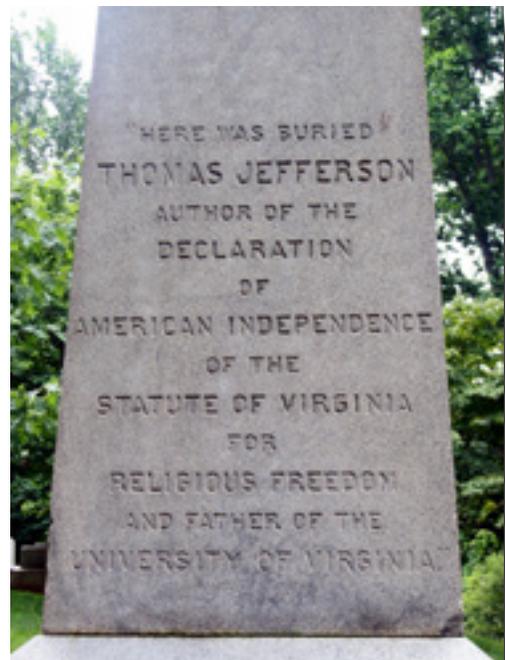
- *Author of the declaration of American independence*

Yeah. That one was a no-brainer!

- *Of the statute of Virginia for religious freedom*

This is the model for the “establishment of religion” clause in the *Bill of Rights*. It was intended specifically to reject the notion of a state church like the one that exists in *England*. A *Christian* state church. You know, like the one Volk says the founding fathers wanted.

- *And father of the University of Virginia.* That would be an institution where you can bet your booty CRT is taught in graduate school, law school, and undergraduate schools.



Feature

Look for the systems, patterns, designs....

Wayne Dickson



In a recent newsletter, Robert Reich made the following point:

You will hear lots of reports this week about whether the economy is strengthening or weakening, whether Biden’s “Build Back Better” bill will get fifty votes in the *Senate*, and whether the Omicron variant of Covid will rapidly spread in the *United States*. What you will not hear is how closely these three questions are related to each other and to the strength of our system as a whole.

Economics, politics, and public health are often treated as separate topic—each with its own reporters, editors, experts, and analysts. But if we have learned anything over the past 21 months of crisis, it is that these three are intimately connected. In many respects, they suggest we’re at an inflection point similar to the one we were at 21 months ago.

It is impossible to know where the economy is heading without knowing where the Omicron variant is heading, because the pandemic continues to dictate economic activity in US and around the world....

It’s impossible to know where the Omicron variant is heading without assessing the strength and agility of our public health system....

It’s impossible to assess the strength of our public health system without knowing the capacity of government....

Anyone who reads *Hyde Park* would have anticipated that I’d seize on that observation immediately!

As an undergraduate, I majored in *English* and minored in *Religion*. In earning my master’s degree, I majored in *American* literature of the mid 20th century. In earning my PhD, I majored in *American* literature of the late 19th–early 20th century. I minored in *Anglo-Saxon/Old English*. During that same period I studied without taking a degree at *Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary* and *Duke Divinity School*.

As a college professor, I taught many different subjects through the years. However, during the last 2/3 of my career I focused exclusively on interdisciplinary *Honors* and *Humanities* courses. The point always was to look for

patterns of relationship either within a given time period or culture or stretching across a number of different periods and cultures.

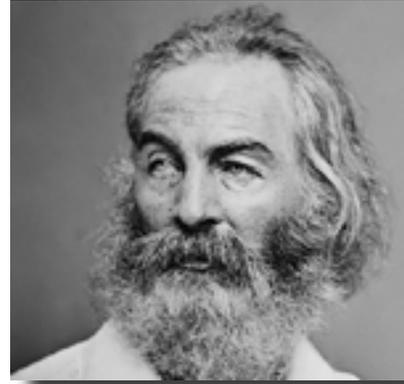
In other words, I was always looking for patterns, designs, relationships, connections. I was always trying to see the big picture and the way the parts within that picture related.



Remember the *Disney* animated movie *Finding Nemo*? The leading character was a clownfish named Marlin, whose voice was provided by Albert Brooks. His girlfriend was some kind of blue colored fish named Dory, whose voice was provided by Ellen DeGeneres. (I know embarrassingly little about botany or zoology.) Dory's problem was that she was entirely incapable of staying focused or of seeing the big picture. She was continually getting distracted by one shiny object or another.

The major media, especially the broadcast media, feature a variety of talking heads as either "hosts" or bloviating pundits. The majority are simply clones of Dory, continually chasing one shiny object after another. Problem is that they all tend to chase the same shiny

object, and they all frame their descriptions and comments about the object in exactly the same way.



A much more constructive approach is suggested in Walt Whitman's poem "A noiseless patient spider."

A noiseless patient spider,

I mark'd where on a little promontory it
stood isolated,

Mark'd how to explore the vacant vast
surrounding,

It launch'd forth filament, filament, filament,
out of itself,

Ever unreeling them, ever tirelessly speeding
them.

And you O my soul where you stand,

Surrounded, detached, in measureless
oceans of space,

Ceaselessly musing, venturing, throwing,
seeking the spheres to connect them,

Till the bridge you will need be form'd, till
the ductile anchor hold,

Till the gossamer thread you fling catch
somewhere, O my soul.

For a specific example of what Whitman is talking about, consider Thomas Jefferson's words from the *Declaration of Independence*:

[W]hen a long Train of Abuses and Usurpations, pursuing invariably the same Object, evinces a Design to reduce [a people] under absolute Despotism, it is their Right, it is their Duty, to throw off such Government, and to provide new Guards for their future Security. Such has been the patient Sufferance of these Colonies; and such is now the Necessity which constrains them to alter their former Systems of Government. The History of the present King of Great-Britain is a History of repeated Injuries and Usurpations, all having in direct Object the Establishment of an absolute Tyranny over these States.

This is what we must do:



- Follow the train of discrete actions.
- Recognize the object they are intended to achieve.
- Analyze and understand the design by which they are attempting to succeed.

Feature

Framing

Steve Rathje



I write often about the importance of “framing,” or establishing a controlling metaphor. This is what I’m talking about. It’s an excerpt from *The Guardian*:



George Lakoff

[George] Lakoff researches how framing influences reasoning, or how the way we say something often matters much more than what we say. And he has used his research to inform how *Democrats* can better frame their party positions. He consolidated his advice for *Democrats* in his book, **Don’t Think of an Elephant!** The title conveys one of its main insights: if you negate a frame,

you strengthen a frame. In other words, if you say “don’t think of an elephant,” you can’t help but think of one.

...

The impact of a frame

Research in framing was spearheaded by classic experiments by *Nobel Prize Winner* Daniel Kahneman and his collaborator Amos Tversky in the 1980s. Their research upended the assumption that humans behave rationally – an assumption that a number of economic models previously rested on. They instead showed that we are often consistently irrational, relying on a number of mental shortcuts to speed up our reasoning, which can make us remarkably sensitive to how things are framed.

But, just how strong is the impact of framing? A recent study showed that, in some contexts, it might have an even stronger effect on our reasoning than our own political views.

In the study, participants were presented with brief passages about crime in a hypothetical city named *Addison*. For half of the participants, a few words were altered so that the passage said that crime was a “beast preying” on the city of *Addison*. For the

other half, crime was described as a “virus infecting” the city.

Simply changing the metaphor in this passage by altering a few words influenced people’s beliefs about crime more than pre-existing differences in opinion between *Republicans* and *Democrats*. Those exposed to the “beast” metaphor were more likely to believe that crime should be dealt with by using punitive measures, whereas those exposed to the “virus” metaphor were more likely to support reformative measures.

One of the most remarkable things about the metaphor’s influence in this study was that it was covert. When participants were asked about what influenced their decision, no one mentioned the metaphor. They instead pointed to other aspects of the passage that were the same for all participants, such as statistics.

Knowing that something as simple as a metaphor can covertly influence our reasoning can allow us to slow down and try to be conscious of the forces that are influencing us. Moreover, we can use this knowledge of the power of framing to make more effective political arguments.

Choosing the right frame

Why is it so hard to convince someone of the opposite political party as you? Research shows the *Democrats* and *Republicans* tend to have very different moral foundations. Whereas *Democrats* are more likely to pay

attention to values like fairness, reciprocity and doing no harm in determining what is moral, *Republicans* are more likely to pay attention to things like in-group loyalty, respect for authority, and purity.

People tend to frame political arguments in terms of their own values, but when arguing across party lines, it is much more effective to frame your argument in terms of your opponent’s values. For instance, environmental issues are often framed in terms of the harm pollution wreaks on the environment. However, when environmental issues are reframed in terms of the conservative value of purity – emphasizing the importance of keeping our forests, drinking water, and skies pure – conservatives are much more likely to support this cause.

