

Argumentative Essay

The world is often rocked by controversy, often impacted by disasters and acts that reverberate through the global consciousness long after they end. But these are but sparks, and sparks cannot catch without fuel to set alight. Propaganda, grassroots outrage, and brewing discontent. Manipulation and reinforcement. One sees it in how North Koreans believe themselves to be the freest, richest, and most powerful nation on the planet through a propaganda strategy rooted in collectivism. On how protests and movements surrounding BLM rocked the United States and the globe due to an individualist standpoint on issues; in this case, leading to social unrest. Our game, Mass Control, provides a plausible means by which collectivism can take root in a society and can hijack an individualist world order; in addition, it also demonstrates how individualist societies can contain and reverse the advances of collectivism, and vice versa.

One of the most potent tools for convincing people to do things is through lifelong reinforcement, or brainwashing, as it is commonly known. Brian Myers' *The Cleanest Race: How North Koreans See Themselves and Why it Matters*, describes this in detail. Think about North Korea. Decades ago, famine gripped the nation. The North Korean famine, in official propaganda, was described as a "food shortage (...) but unquestionably better than outside of North Korea" (Myers 119). Despite the power of the DPRK, the government could not stop people from seeing starving children in the streets. They could not stop the farmers talking about how collapsed government supply lines had caused the tragedy; at least, not entirely.

And yet, despite millions of North Koreans seeing the effects of famine, or having the ability to spread the failure of the government, they were still able to convince the people that North Korea was better than the rest of the world, that climate or failed implementation of socialist policies was to blame. North Korea realized a fundamental truth. Truth does not matter, belief does. And when you have instilled values and ideas in all members of society for three generations, and that is all they know, from birth till death, they will remain loyal to those ideals, and believe in them. Virtually all North Korean defectors have not understood the truth on their own; they have had exposure to outside media, reports, or culture, that negates the all-encompassing effect of the North Korean propaganda.

This can be seen in Anthem's society. The way the government is currently run, people are told to refrain from attachment, from the very act of preference. They are given no agency, and are told to have no will of their own. And yet, despite the evidence that the previous order was more advanced technologically, and that their own lives are miserable, evidenced by the fact Equality remarks that many do have "friends", despite preference being illegal; the society generally adheres to the principles the government bestows, thinking their society to be good and their human nature and desires to be sinful. That is all they know, and there is nothing to challenge that worldview. To change this disastrous system of control for the social and moral responsibilities given to each individual in the society, Equality's New Society was constructed to right these wrongs and found a new state in which individualism would play center stage. However lofty this goal was, it was achieved a short while later, but with speed came a lack of decisive and organizational thinking. Therefore, more structure needs to be given in order to make this new society live up to the dreams in which it was founded in.

To avoid the mistakes that The World Council of Scholars has made and rule your population in a way that has a positive impact on your ideology and rule in the next few years or even decades, play this game and experience the strategic overtones that it has to offer. With realistic outcomes and experiences that can be felt throughout the game, you, Equality's New Society, can strategize and test out what does work for your population and what does not, therefore helping you prepare for upcoming events that might be hard to tackle on the fly.

In our game, this is represented through game mechanics. The conformist side loses the social currency, opinion, to a much lesser degree than the individualist side. However, due to their policies, innovation is greatly reduced.

A second tool for this way of thinking is outrage. Look at the Black Lives Matter protests that have gripped the world in the summer of 2020. There are widespread calls to defund the police. This sort of mass call for radical change was sparked by injustice, both the sudden killing of George Floyd, and the centuries-long policies of slavery and Jim Crow. Perceived failures of capitalism worldwide have led many to call for socialism, social democracy, or fundamental changes to the world order. These controversies would and have played important roles in converting people to collectivism. Perhaps the paragon of this line of reasoning is the Russian revolution.

In that crisis, Russian stagnation, the incompetence of the Tsar, and poor living conditions resulted in the adoption of a radical ideology that was untested at the time: Marx-Leninism. The Soviet Union. People rejected the previous establishment in order to embrace what they believed would better them. People did not feel the same for communism at the time, since the world was largely governed by capitalist societies, and therefore a non-implemented ideology cannot be responsible for tragedy. Due to this, randomized disasters have a much lower impact on the collectivists.

And finally, the game does not force a side. Each has its own advantages and disadvantages, and it is left to the players to decide which they believe is more worth the tradeoffs. If the game attempted to proselytize, or force a side, it would undermine the point, and could more easily make itself a target for attacks on the basis of bias. Because it is intended to consider what makes people act a certain way, and provide a thoughtful analysis of both sides, it must be impartial. And we have tried our best to make it so.

In conclusion, Mass Control is a way for people to understand the mechanics of propaganda, persuasion, and the power of belief. Rather than use clunky narration or story, it uses buttons, menus, and formulas to achieve a more subtle effect. It is a way to look at diametrically opposed ideologies and evaluate them on their own merits. And even if you're not a fan of the picturesque art, or serenading soundtrack, or the game as a whole, the ideas it embodies are sufficient reason to play it regardless. It will help you construct the vision for tomorrow.

Some may believe that the game we have created is too simplistic, or does not account for every situation that may occur in real life, and therefore is of poor quality. They are true in that sense, it does not account for every situation that may occur in real life. However, consider this point. Is it possible to account for every situation that could occur if such a campaign were really occurring? Would every ant and speck of dust flung from the Earth be able to be counted and studied the physics of so that battles and campaigns would go "exactly" as planned? It is absurd to believe that this could actually be done, and even if this was "figured out" or "calculated", then too much of the strategy would be focused on unintelligible and unmeaningful facts, therefore clouding the vision of the conqueror. For these reasons, we created a game that is able to help strategize for the most commonly occurring events, so that one does not have to worry about all of the minute details that insure infinite situations, but rather the more

important ones that can make or break a civilization. Thus, play this game well, and strategize to your best abilities. Next time may not be a simulation, and the stakes would be higher!