

The Surprising Power, Vitality, and Potentiality of Examining the “Dark Side”

The Collaborative Production of the *Restraining Voices* Anti-Pattern Language in an Educational Setting

Douglas Schuler and Justin Wagaman

Abstract

In spring quarter 2013, students and faculty in the *Social Imagination and Civic Intelligence* program at The Evergreen State College developed an *anti*-pattern language. In this exploration of the “dark side, we ultimately identified 36 anti-patterns. These are patterns that engender and, thus, perpetuate social forces that we believe to be *bad*, forces that tend to decrease health and happiness of many people and the natural world, while simultaneously making it more difficult to counteract those forces. Beyond that we also learned that creating a pattern language can be an excellent, collaborative project pedagogically as well as a conceptual tool for social change

Introduction

During our study of patterns and pattern languages (via *A Pattern Language* [Alexander et al, 1978] and *Liberating Voices* [Schuler, 2008]) in our *Social Imagination and Civic Intelligence* program at The Evergreen State College, Adam Selon, a student who was intrigued by the patterns of ignorance in society, suggested that we as a class should develop an *anti*-pattern language. While it was not exactly clear what that meant, we adopted his proposal as a collaborative class project the following quarter.

The goal of the project was to probe and present the antithesis of “civic intelligence.” The title, “How to Destroy the World and Make Life a Living Hell for Most People in the Process”, that appeared on the original assignment description was somewhat tongue-in-cheek but, unfortunately, in most cases was not too far off the mark. The project was more like

documenting existing social processes than creating a work of dystopian fiction. Of course the ultimate hope was that by analyzing the processes described in the anti-patterns we would be better able to think about ways to intervene.

This project was especially appropriate and useful in an educational endeavor that focused on civic intelligence. For one thing we were gratified to learn that a workable pattern language could be created collaboratively over a 10-week period — a testament to the pattern/pattern language form. Also, as the title of this paper suggests, we (students and faculty) were very impressed, not only with the tangible results of our work, the patterns themselves, but also with the progress we had made as a team, the spirit we had as a team, and our collective creativity. In addition to be impressed, we were also. The most surprising outcome was the fact that although we focused on the “dark side”, the experience itself was liberating.

We have started refining the results of the first phase; and this should lead into more insights into the connections between the patterns, and perhaps help us identify new ones. We are also beginning to formulate intriguing hypotheses regarding the nature of “anti-patterns”, including their creative and generative uses for social and environmental amelioration.

Objectives

Although we did not set out initially to create a paper, test hypotheses, or necessarily create anything that could be used after the end of the quarter, we did set out with an objective. The objective was to explore the idea of anti-patterns

by developing them. We wanted to see what we could learn and the answer thus far is that we learned a lot — and not just about the content of the subject matter.

The project was appropriate from a pedagogical standpoint. For example, we encouraged *exploration* as an important intellectual approach. Beyond that, the pattern language framework encouraged social analysis and a holistic framework with which to relate disparate findings.

From the beginning we realized that the more realistic, detailed, and accurate our analysis / portrayal was, the easier it would be to develop a set of *anti-anti-patterns* that could help counter the anti-patterns. (These of course are known simply as patterns.) In this project the aim was to identify commonplace phenomena that are encouraging the degradation of the social and environmental worlds.

With the Anti-Pattern project we realized fairly early on that we should make it one of our top priorities to not document them as if we think they are “Bad.” Nor should we write them as if they were “Good,” either. We tried to write them in a neutral and informative style with as little bias as possible regardless of our feelings toward the various behaviors discussed in the patterns. If someone wanted to try to recreate the Cultural Imperialism pattern from our work, he or she could play a role in perpetuating it.

In this project we actually tried to identify commonplace phenomena that are encouraging the degradation of the social and environmental worlds that we live in. Some of these phenomena are of course more successful than others; and it will be interesting to explore to what degree they depend on “human nature,” ignorance, mass-media, the financial resources of the “1%” and/or other effects. But we’re not looking only for big-ticket anti-patterns; presumably there are scores of smaller ones that help enable the truly catastrophic ones. The aim was not to create a comic book filled only with one-dimensional villains, but rather it was to create a set of patterns that were often morally dubious but realistic. The thought was that the more realistic

and detailed our analysis / portrayal was, the easier it would be to develop a set of *anti-anti-patterns* (traditional *patterns*) that is designed to help counter the anti-patterns.

Many of these patterns are enacted consciously, with someone deciding to enact them, but many more are carried out either without thought to the consequence or the collective impact — no one really sees the big picture until it is too late. This is the value that became clear when we were developing the anti-patterns. It shines a light on the process that is happening and once it is fully illuminated it is difficult to not see it everywhere. These are Anti-Patterns in that they are the opposite of what we would like people to do. They are, in many ways, the opposite of the Civic Intelligence patterns that we became familiar with during the earlier part of our school year in 2012-2013. Our hope is that when one reads about these patterns and understands how they work, others will not want to replicate them. We hope that others see the undesirable effects that we have worked hard to outline and expose in our own way.

Patterns and Anti Patterns

Christopher Alexander claimed (somewhat tongue in cheek) that a competing pattern language, that included patterns such as Long and Narrow, Daylight at One End Only, Fluorescent Lights at 10 Foot Centers, Flat Concrete Wall, and Plywood Wall Surface, was used in the design of his original office in Berkeley, California (Alexander 1979). We examine some of these criticisms, including some of Alexander’s own, later in this chapter after examining the concepts in a bit more detail and discovering what people working in other domains have done with them.

Schuler also briefly entertained this theme in his pattern language book (2008) and suggested facetiously that patterns such as Social Darwinism, God Likes Us Best, Technophilia, Proprietary Protocols, Media Monopoly, Conventional Wisdom, Idolatry of Power, Ignore the Unpleasant, Just Turn It Off, Blame the Victim, and Servile Journalism were already in everyday use.

Both Alexander and Schuler presented, not too seriously, a somewhat random collection of observations of phenomena that they disapproved of. For several reasons, these are not patterns in Alexander's original sense, nor, of course does either set constitute a pattern language. These facts do not, however, imply that anti-patterns can't be "real" patterns or that a set of anti-patterns can't be a "real" pattern language. We claim, in fact, that both conclusions are justified.

The point here is not to focus on the question of whether our draft set of anti-patterns is a real pattern language. We do note that the anti-patterns we've identified are, unfortunately, timeless. While they represent phenomena that we do not endorse; rather actively and explicitly decry, the phenomena they describe occurs over and over again throughout history and across cultures, and may, in fact, be closer to being "timeless" than the patterns presented by Alexander et al in the seminar pattern language book.

Moreover, although our current version is still a draft in our view, we do believe that we've made a good attempt at covering a significant and broad area. Also, since this is a pattern language project, we are not developing a random set of patterns, but — hopefully — a coherent set of well-thought-out patterns that are strongly linked to each other, mutually generative and constitute a holistic language.

Process

One of the first decisions we made collectively after our initial decision to launch the project was developing a set of descriptors that we used for each pattern. These descriptors were: Description, How it Works, Evidence, Linked Patterns, and References. They deviated from the original pattern language prototype made by Alexander (Alexander et al, 1979) however, we conjectured that these would better serve our purposes. The How it Works and Evidence descriptors, as an example, would be particularly useful in the design of interventions. (Note that the descriptors are used in the full pattern write-ups but not in the card verbiage shown in the Appendix.)

To create a first draft of this language within the 10-week quarter, we went through a process that proceeded incrementally according to the demands of the project at the time. We generated lots of possible patterns, convened small and large discussions, contributed to the project Wiki, added descriptive images from the public domain, and, finally, arranged, grouped, and categorized the anti-patterns. Ultimately we identified three fundamental anti-patterns, Civic Ignorance, Violence, and Environmental Degradation, and over 30 others, which we arranged roughly from biggest to smallest, similarly to both of our model pattern languages.

We started by generating a large list of anti-patterns in several group brainstorm sessions. This list was whittled down over the course of the next couple of weeks in seminar groups and much discussion. To get the initial list of approximation of one hundred patterns we voted for our top ten patterns and kept the 35 most popular as the first set. The patterns that made it ran the gambit from more serious issues such as Racism and Societal Apathy, humorous titles like Weapons of Mass Distraction and more subtle issues such as Focus on Deficiencies and Mock Public Space.

This first set of patterns was placed on the Evergreen State College Wiki site. Each pattern was given a wiki page so that students could work collaboratively on each pattern and see the changes instantly. We found that a Wiki was perfect for this type of collaborative project, as each contributor could see their work instantly reflected on the site in that clean and familiar wiki style. Changes could be easily tracked and entire sections rolled back in case of any mistakes. We were also able to watch the work grow in real time.

Although we developed a single anti-pattern language we often worked individually and in small groups. Each group would try to identify approaches that work best for them — and for the larger group. The whole group also got together several times during the quarter to help ensure that there was broad coverage and that there wasn't duplication of effort. It turned out that one

group sometimes developed patterns based on suggestions from another group. Also, certain students were better at different tasks like finding research, others better at writing or brainstorming, and others were better at layout and design or in editing and forming the wiki. By encouraging collaboration and sharing of knowledge we were able to better utilize the strengths of the group to create something that would have been difficult for a small group of students working on their own. To further encourage and utilize the collective intelligence of the group, two students were assigned to each anti-pattern we selected and each anti-pattern was worked on by a different set of students so the same two students were not assigned more than one anti-pattern.

Each pattern was illustrated with at least one graphic, photograph, or illustration that was representative of the pattern (and others to illustrate other aspects of the pattern as desired). All graphics that we used in the project were public domain, open source, and/or an appropriate creative commons license that allows free publishing. The use of public domain photos was very helpful, due to our limited time on the project, but it could sometimes result in a very long process to find a suitable photograph or illustration for our needs.

Since this is a pattern language project, we set out, not in developing a random set of patterns, but — hopefully — a coherent set of well thought out patterns that are mutually generative and constitute a holistic language. To that end, we decided to group the patterns by their place and their use within the social landscape. These groups were Cultural, Societal, Institutional, Tactics, Media, and Results. The final overarching group was the group that we thought belonged at the top of the pyramid (so to speak). This final group was called Fundamental Evils, and it contained the three most general anti-patterns of our project: Civic Ignorance, Violence, and Environmental Degradation.

We were always aiming for quality but given the time constraints, not necessarily completeness of individual patterns. We were, however, looking for broad coverage of patterns. This might mean

that additional anti-patterns were identified by name but not yet fleshed out because of time constraints. These patterns were cataloged on the wiki for reference and so that they can be looked at and selected for future addition to the pattern language.

Patterns need to be reasonably generic, timeless, logical, and supported by evidence. Patterns also have an established structure: title, introductory graphic, problem, context, discussion, diagram, and solution. Ours don't need to have each one of these explicitly, but they should contain at least hints of all of them. And we are likely to have the notion of a full pattern language as well as pattern cards, which contain only sketches.

The first draft of the project was completed on the last day of spring quarter, approximately 10 weeks after it started. The fact that a workable pattern language was created collaboratively over a 10-week period is a testament to the pattern/ pattern language form.

In the following quarter (Fall, 2013), Justin Wagaman, with help from colleagues, developed a short description for each anti-pattern and a suitable descriptive image in the public domain. The text and images were packed into physical cards that were presented at the PUARL conference in 2013. The cards are available without cost online and we are integrating them into a collaborative pattern language project this quarter (winter 2014).



Figure 1. Developers of Restraining Voices Pattern Language

The *Restraining Voices* Pattern Language

The current version of the language contains 36 patterns. The first pattern, *Civic Ignorance*, is the most general, while the others are increasingly more specific. Here we discuss the major categories we used and a few patterns. Abbreviated versions of each have been included in the appendix to this paper.

The first category, *Fundamental Evils*, contains the three patterns that we believe are fundamental to oppressive behaviors. This category contains the patterns Civic Ignorance, Violence and Environmental Degradation.

The second category, *Cultural Ignorance*, contains patterns that we believe describe culturally produced ignorance. This category contains patterns such as Consumerism, Semantic Manipulation, Fundamentalism, and Distorting History, which describes how historical records can be altered by teaching events that did not happen, altering events that did happen, or omitting events altogether.

The third category, *Societal Philosophy*, contains the patterns that we believe represent societal philosophy. This includes patterns such as Denialism, Eye for an Eye – Retribution, and Social Darwinism, which asserts that the idea of social inequality is natural and that society shouldn't feel responsible for taking care of less fortunate people.

The fourth category, *Institutional Philosophy*, contains the patterns that we believe institutionalize negative philosophies. This category contains patterns such as Assembly Line Education, Mock Public Space, Sustaining World Hunger, Profit-motivated Health Care and Criminalizing Poverty, which asserts that poverty can be one of the most dangerous things to the stability of a society and that poor people must be punished for the danger they cause.

The fifth category, *Tactics*, contains the patterns that describe actions that can be taken by power elites (and others) to maintain negative social interactions. This category contains the patterns Silenced Voices, Focus on Deficiencies, Activism Delegitimization and Fear Mongering.

The Focus on Deficiencies pattern suggests that the way to look at a community (or other things) is to focus on its deficiencies, not its assets.

The sixth category, *Media*, contains the patterns that we believe characterize the negative roles that the media can play. This category is made up of patterns such as Media Monopolies, "Balance" Deception, Advertising-Funded Media and Weapons of Mass Distraction.

The Weapons of Mass Distraction pattern suggests that societal distractions can be naturally occurring or manufactured in such a way as to distract people and subvert their attention away from social and civic issues of public concern. We assert that if properly occupied by such distractions, public attention diverted away from issues of importance to more trivial matters.

The seventh and final category, *Results*, contains the patterns that we believe represent the results or byproducts of civic ignorance. Note that each of these is also a pattern in that these tend to act as ongoing social determinants. This category contains the patterns Dehumanization, Racism, Xenophobia, Unacknowledged Privilege, and Societal Apathy. The Societal Apathy pattern asserts that a socially apathetic society will lack the civic intelligence to overcome adversities it might face.

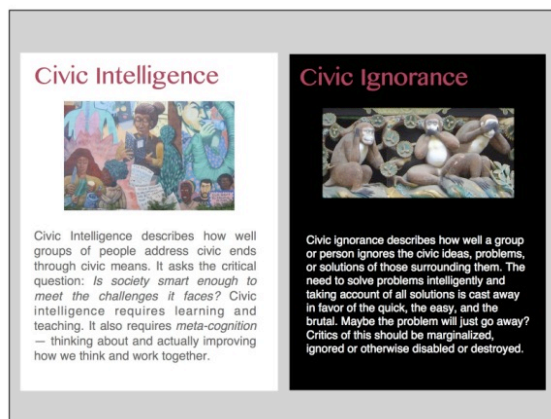


Figure 2. First cards in *Liberating Voices* and in *Restraining Voices* Pattern Languages

Interventions

The identification of an anti-pattern is a type of declaration or assertion. In a general way, the

developers of the anti-patterns are stating that these and the language that contains them are *bad*. While not unequivocally evil (or, more practically, measurable or otherwise easily precisely defined) they are asserted to represent powerful social forces that are generally destructive and, hence, implicitly (at least) should be resisted. While we believe that the development of the anti-pattern language was a significant step, its usefulness would be best demonstrated if and when it helps inform the development of resistance to the anti-patterns. To that end we have begun thinking about the next phase — again in an educational environment and context — and we can offer some preliminary observations here.

We are using the idea of *interventions* as a way to explore the existing and potential forms that this resistance could take. Interventions in this context are responses to social processes that are deemed to be undesirable. Interventions are intended to block or otherwise deflect or dilute the processes described by the anti-patterns, to force detours from the courses that would have been taken had it been allowed to function in their customary operational fashion.

There two phenomena that are commonly identified as interventions (at least in the United States). The first, *military* intervention, is an armed response to a coup or other event. The second intervention is closer to home. An intervention is an action that is enacted by friends and family members (often with assistance from professional social workers or clergy members) to confront a loved one through a dramatic show of opposition to that person’s destructive behavior, generally involving alcohol or other addictive drugs.

The two examples above, however, have implications that get in the way of the way we need to view interventions. Both suggest that interventions are events rather than ongoing processes. They also suggest that interventions focus on one level of engagement, not on several simultaneously, nor are they coordinated with others. Finally, the canonical examples above also prevent us from realizing that interventions are ubiquitous and that they are therefore more-

or-less commonplace. Taking an aspirin for a headache is an everyday intervention. Education is an intervention against ignorance and a soup kitchen is an intervention against starvation or disease. Interventions are not merely disruptions. Interventions in the general sense (a meaning that we’d like to preserve) are calculated responses based on study and analysis.

Although the processes described in our anti-patterns are, unfortunately, “eternal” — as are the set of sustained, diverse, and often lost-to-history counter-processes, “interventions” and other responses to the anti-patterns — we don’t believe that they’re inevitable or permanent, at least at their current levels. We believe that focusing on the anti-patterns and the subsequent development of interventions can result in positive social and environmental change.

Each pattern represents a variety of interrelated research chores and hypotheses. The structure we’ve adopted includes a “how it works” field (mechanisms) and an “evidence” field, both of which challenge us to support our claim that we’ve successfully identified significant anti-patterns. Because each pattern in the set (or language) contains links to other patterns, a complex set of hypotheses is created. The key to developing successful interventions may lie in analysis; careful inquiry as to the systemic linkages of the anti-patterns at all levels.

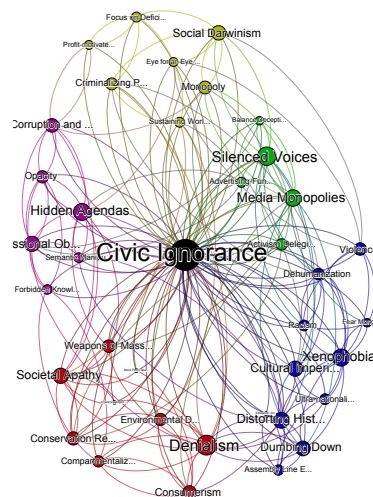


Figure 3. Network of Links between anti-patterns

The current set of links between the anti-patterns is presented above. The mechanisms described in each of the linked patterns should feed into each other. A mismatch of the mechanisms could suggest that the anti-patterns are not linked.

Finally, while we have not spent much time directly considering this, the interplay between the patterns and the anti-patterns that we're engaged with, is a strongly dialectic process, which we hope will help in productive thinking and acting in relation to social engagement.

Research and Pedagogy

Our anti pattern project is still in an early stage. Nevertheless, we've identified several important benefits and virtues that we believe are important, specifically in terms in research and practice around social understanding and social change, but also in terms of pedagogy, which we believe to represent a promising line in education. At a very general level, we could say that we were learning social science by *doing* it, not solely by studying the results of others. Unfortunately, efforts like these run counter to the major contemporary currents in education. Some of these major current, in fact, such as *Assembly Line Education* have been identified as *anti-patterns*.

As has been asserted previously (Schuler, 2010), the pattern language structure is particularly well structured for promoting wide-ranging explorations and representing complex circumstances. The “forcing function” nature of the structure (the problem / solution relationship, e.g.) helps people generate multiple hypotheses to be examined and tested. This extends to the development of interventions which we believe are key to the value of this project. This approach allows students to devise their own research path that allows more freedom than the more structured and codified approaches do not allow. Pursued diligently using the built-in dictates of the pattern / pattern language approach, and with appropriate faculty guidance this approach is not less rigorous (or scientific) than traditional approaches. The rigor here is forced upon us because each anti-pattern is, in essence, a hypothesis, and the evidence and the mechanisms

need to be identified in order for it to be legitimate. Beyond the individual pattern, the pattern language, the network of interrelations among patterns presents another wide set of questions to be addressed through research and inquiry.

We're still trying to figure out why this is exciting — and what are the pedagogical implications? Some of the possible reasons include obtaining satisfactory results in a very short period of time. And, the quick assembly coupled with the perceived magnitude of the findings and the somewhat unexpected coming together of the project from seemingly disconnected efforts may also have contributed. Also, finally, the incongruously *liberatory* nature of actually naming names and pulling back the curtain on social ills was also satisfying.

As a matter of fact, engaging people in a dialectic “game” which does not necessarily lead down the professor's preferred garden path, is likely to be more inspiring, more open to insight and team learning, more likely to inspire a love of learning and self-efficacy in that direction, and, in general, more appropriate for people who find themselves existing in the “real” (i.e. non-academic) world.

There are other interesting research questions that this project has helped surface. For example, is it easier to identify anti-patterns than the traditional patterns put forward by Alexander et al (1978)? This makes intuitive sense because the “solutions” to the anti-patterns have apparently not been wholly successful. This also suggests in an indirect way that the “solutions” — the patterns in the APL sense — aren't as readily discoverable. They may also be too numerous to list because there is unlikely to be one grand scheme that erases the problems. Also, because many of the problems in this realm have persisted so long, it may be the case that they are truly timeless.

Next Steps

We are continuing to work on this pattern language. Our hope is that it will grow into a more detailed and more complete set of patterns that describe many of the possible missteps and

undesirable outcomes of the anti-patterns. At this time we are beginning three main activities: (1) refining the first draft; (2) exploring and designing uses, especially those related to interventions; and (3) using the new pattern language in a variety of ways.

We are relatively pleased with our current product (the draft anti-pattern language and a set of anti-pattern cards) and believe that we have sketched a broad portrait for many of the timeless patterns that perpetuate unhealthy dominance over people and the natural environment. But although we were quite happy with the initial result that had developed so quickly and somewhat effortlessly, it could easily be argued that the “real work” is now beginning.

An important part of this work includes a systematic probe of each anti-pattern as well as a check on the validity of the set of anti-patterns as a *pattern language*. And each set of validation tests, as well as the processes to redress any shortcomings, are different for each focus. Other interesting roles have been advanced, many related to our 2012 paper (Schuler et al). These include leveraging the potential for interaction in the online environment in many ways including annotation. We are also interested in using them in games or workshops, and to counterpoise them with the Liberating Voices patterns to see how the two can help inform each other.

Along similar lines, my students and I have just initiated (winter quarter 2014) a somewhat open-ended process to develop 7-20 pattern languages (first drafts, that is) in a variety of domains, primarily of the student’s choosing. The themes of community health, gardening, native education, bliss and eight others have been proposed so far. Although it’s too early to say anything definitive, we intend to integrate the anti-patterns into the project, probably by incorporating them into the problem statements. We also intend to explore how the various pattern languages can be connected, possibly into one knowledge complex that may or may not ultimately take the form of a traditional pattern language.

Even if our pattern language was more developed, the work wouldn’t stop there. The idea is not to sit on the sidelines and watch the anti-patterns continue their inexorable reiteration of violence and oppression as if life on earth was a movie. The anti-pattern work and the interventions that we hope to identify will need to connect to key efforts in other sectors including political and social engagement, policy development, media access, and the built environment. To some degree, the set of anti-patterns we’ve developed could provide inspiration and support — if not the backbone — for a broad participatory project.

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Appendix — The Anti-Pattern Cards

As part of our work with the anti-patterns we developed a set of pattern cards. These are physical cards that contain an image and an abbreviated version of the card. They are available for free download.

Civic Ignorance

Civic ignorance describes how well a group or person ignores the civic ideas, problems, or solutions of those surrounding them. The need to solve problems intelligently and taking account of all solutions is cast away in favor of the quick, the easy, and the brutal. Maybe the problem will just go away? Critics of this should be marginalized, ignored or otherwise disabled or destroyed.

Violence

Much can be achieved through dominance and submission by using violence. If the subject cannot be subdued psychologically through fear, then injury can be inflicted. If injury is not enough, then the subject can ultimately be eliminated by murder. This is ultimately the underlying threat of violence.

Environmental Degradation

The natural environment; including but not limited to soil, water, air, flora, and fauna, has a natural balance. Through pollution, over usage, and lack of stewardship, the balance is broken causing the natural networks that sustain life on this planet to suffer.

Consumerism

Quality of life is ultimately measured by on the acquisition and display of material goods. At the heart of consumerism is the thought that the "good life" can be purchased. Consumerism also contains a set of standards through which people can be judged based on material wealth.

Semantic Manipulation

Certain words, phrases, or ideas become taboo in societies due to their negative definitions. When these definitions prevent governments or corporations from their goals, they may sidestep the problem by redefining words to manipulate the public into accepting something they otherwise would not accept.

Fundamentalism

Fundamentalism is a term for a range of rigid and extreme beliefs. Fundamentalism is found all over the world. It's often religious when one

group's gods and laws are absolutely true and all others are absolutely false. Some typical characteristics are: exclusionism, strict adherence to certain doctrines, an acceptance of violence, xenophobia, and a belief in the end of the world. Fundamentalism — and not just the religious kind — is fundamental for perpetuating worldwide turmoil.

Compartmentalized Knowledge

Knowledge is effectively compartmentalized (or put into "compartments") when different people not only have access to certain types of knowledge but are actually denied formally or via social norms or personal preferences from going beyond their allowable sphere. Academics often do this to draw boundaries around their own disciplines, thus preventing perceived encroachment and interdisciplinary research.

Distorting History

The historical record can be altered by teaching events that did not happen, altering events that did happen, or omitting events altogether. Over time, knowledge of the truth will die with those witnessed it, and the alternate version will be universally accepted as true.

Dumbing Down

The general population cannot understand complex issues and may even be confused into conflict by certain controversial topics. This can be avoided if topics are dumbed down into easily understood emotionally charged debates that cannot be easily argued with.

Forbidden Knowledge

This is the industrial strength version of Compartmentalization of Knowledge anti-pattern. This occurs when knowing or pursuing some knowledge is actually denied to a certain group of people under the threat of penalty, as when the U.S. Center for Disease Control (CDC) being told they can't study guns as a "Public health issue."

Opacity

Sometimes information is kept secret from citizens. This is useful when hiding corruption, money laundering, vote buying, tax evasion, etc. With Opacity in place, over the years elite

business and governments can distance themselves further and further away from any controls on them.

Hidden Agendas

Society expects its leaders to keep their agendas transparent and in line with the agenda of the groups they represent, however, this is rarely the case. Those in power often have agendas that aren't in line with the public's expectations of them, and for this reason they may choose to keep these agendas hidden.

Corruption and Fraud

Corruption and fraud are, in this context, when an entity in power does things that are dishonest or contrary to commonly accepted ethics and laws. This generally involves bribes or intimidation behind the scene. Profit and power are usually the driving force behind such actions. Go figure.

Social Darwinism

Some people are just weaker than others and have less power or opportunity to take power. The idea of Social Darwinism is that it is natural that these people fail, and that society shouldn't feel responsible for taking care of these people. Basically, it's a dog eat dog world.

Denialism

This is the adherence to certain beliefs proven to be untrue – or refusing to accept as truth something that has been proven to be true. Denialism can be motivated by religious beliefs, self-interest, or as a defense mechanism out of fear or discomfort. Inculcating knee-jerk distrust for particular people or groups is often a useful part of denialism.

Eye for an Eye — Retribution

This anti-pattern stipulates equivalent exchange by way of exact behavior. This is the idea that, "doing unto others the same as has been done unto you," is the true balance of justice. This approach, diligently adhered to, motivates a perpetual cycle of violence; Thus the quote attributed to Gandhi: "An eye for an eye leaves the whole world blind."

Cultural imperialism

This is the way in which powerful cultures present their culture as the most acceptable lifestyle, and condemn the cultural practices of others. Some cultural nuances are acceptable, but if it contradicts the values of the dominant culture, those ideals must be eliminated.

Ultra-nationalism

This is the belief that your country of choice is bar none, hands down, the best country in the world. No other country comes close and your country's interests are more important than all other countries' interests...combined. Without the violence and intimidation that accompanies this anti-pattern, the people and groups who employ would seem a lot more humorous.

Education, Inc.

The Privatization of education helps reverse the idea of high quality free education that potentially undergirds a truly democratic way of life. Privatizing education can reinforce the division of society into haves and have-nots. It can support elite instruction on the one hand and cheap, possibly online training on the other augmented of course with a non-stop barrage of standardized testing. It can erode the role of dedicated teachers and substitute with business goals and software.

Criminalizing Poverty

Poverty can be one of the most dangerous things to the stability of a society. It is especially dangerous to those in power if poverty is viewed as being a failure of the system. If the poverty stricken are viewed as being personally responsible for their state however, then it is seen as their fault and not those in positions of power.

Assembly Line Education

This method of educating students was invented during the industrial revolution, when the main goal of public education was to move children through a school system to become "cogs" in the machine of society. Although that time has passed, our main system of education has not. Standardized testing is a big help here since it removes the particular circumstances of the

students and promotes teaching to the test. This kind of education is cheap, if nothing else.

Mock Public Space

Mock public space is generally physical or virtual “community” space that people perceive as “public” but in reality disallow many aspects of “public-ness” that are important to democracies; free speech for one. A privately owned social-media website, or a mall would both be examples of this pattern.

Professional Obfuscation

The complexities of the world often make reasoning about it very difficult. In many public deliberations it can be useful if this situation remains impenetrable and unsettled. Spreading false information, campaigning to hide the truth, and arguing against the validity of certain studies can all be forms of this pattern. Public relations corporations are available to do this work — if the client has the necessary funds. One of the best cases of this is the case of the cigarette industry in the United States.

Sustaining World Hunger

Due to factors like poverty, displacement of resources, and environmental degradation many in the world go hungry every day. One of the largest factors may well be that food is viewed as a commodity to be purchased and sold, and not a human right. In this way “the market” is responsible, not individuals, corporations, or the world community.

Profit-motivated Health Care

Pharmaceutical and health insurance companies profit off of disease and injury, and so it is in their fiscal interest to keep patients ill and/or injured. Band-aid “solutions” and expensive procedures target symptoms, instead than causes of diseases in this pattern. Health through prevention should be studiously avoided as it leads to “prevention” in profits as well.

Monopoly

Monopolies exist when one institution (or a small number of institutions) control all access to something, generally a commodity, information, or a service. In the absence of external controls, the monopolist institution can

(and almost inevitably does) make up the rules all by themselves, and rarely to the benefit of the many.

Silenced Voices

Words are powerful, and the stories they make can topple governments. The voices of the oppressed can sometimes carry an emotional appeal so strong that organizations and governments will actively censor them to maintain the status quo. Some voices must be silenced to maintain “law and order.” This rationale for silencing some voices — violently in many cases — has stood the test of time as it offers a defensible excuse for tacit compliance.

Fear Mongering

Fear is a very big motivator, perhaps one of the biggest motivators for human behavior. Since it is such an effective motivator it is often used to influence entire societies toward specific ends. When people are stifled with fear they think less clearly and can become easier to manipulate and control.

Focus on Deficiencies

This pattern suggests that the way that people in dominant positions look at a community, school, country, etc. is to focus on its deficiencies; what's broken or dysfunctional. Thus, one can “diagnose” a community for its “diseases” such as crime, drug use, broken families, or “loose morals.”

Activism Delegitimization

Dissenters, especially those who are active in their dissent can be delegitimized in order to take away their ability to be taken seriously by the public. This is very effective when done through mass media outlets. One very effective form of de-legitimization is ridicule because it spreads easily and avoids actually examining the situation.

Media Monopolies

If most major media outlets are controlled by a small number of corporations probusiness perspectives and propaganda that aligns with the special interests of those corporations can dominate the public conversation. Information that challenges or opposes those interests can be

ignored or delegitimized. Rapid progress has been made: just 40 years ago over 80 companies controlled a large percentage of the information that Americans saw, now that number is down to five.

"Balance" Deception

A journalistic practice whereby one side will be presented and then, with equal time allotment, the "other side" will be presented. This pattern can be very effective at obscuring the issue; leading to a situation where it appears that there are two equally credible ways to view an issue, when in fact there may not be. Currently this is being used to suggest that the phenomenon is not established scientific fact.

Advertising-Funded Media

This pattern presents the system wherein media stations are primarily funded by selling advertising time to others. This time is often very expensive and favors large companies. This creates a system in which the media answers not to the public, but to the companies that are paying for the advertising time.

Weapons of Mass Distraction

Societal distractions can be naturally occurring or manufactured in such a way as to distract people and subvert their attention away from social and civic issues of public concern. If properly occupied by such distractions, public outcry can be better controlled and their attention diverted to issues of unimportance such as the private lives of movie stars.

Dehumanization

Dehumanization works by portraying subsets of people who aren't in line with the goals of the state as less than human. This representation will eventually permeate the minds of the population. As the public adopts this attitude, they can

eventually view the target peoples as less than human.

Racism

Racism is the overt and covert, conscious and subconscious, belief that people of different ethnicities have less intrinsic worth than others. The belief that certain ethnicities are inferior or superior can become internalized and expressed subtly through actions or words that demean or dehumanize others.

Xenophobia

An "Us and Them" mentality that leads to extreme prejudices against a group of people. News coverage often subtly encourages xenophobic beliefs for hidden political agendas. This is a common tool used during times of war or in the marketing of war.

Societal Apathy

Societal Apathy is a collective indifference toward issues of concern. A society that is socially apathetic towards its own sense of purpose might lack the civic intelligence to overcome adversities it encounters. Another form is directed outward upon groups of people so as to ignore their situation by seeing the troubles that they face as eternal, unchangeable, and ultimately not worth thinking about.

Unacknowledged Privilege

Although privilege is rampant in virtually any society, it's generally the best-kept nonsecret. Suggesting that others have it suggests that you are just unhappy you don't have it. Acknowledging it in yourself suggests that you don't really deserve the position you're in. Unacknowledged privilege can not only help you into areas that you might not be otherwise qualified for, but can buy you out of negative consequences that you might otherwise have to face.