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Sowell as propagandist — a reader's analysis

The most effective tactics of the professional propagandist are to accuse your enemy of your own faults, and to distort the facts beyond reason. Thus, Thomas Sowell accuses the “liberal” media of a Pavlovian campaign against Texas senator and presidential candidate Phil Gramm (we are to think “mean” whenever we hear his name) and of accusing average working Americans of being greedy (see “GOP choices: accommodator vs. annihilator,” *Opinions*, March 3).

In fact, Sowell is a blatant, albeit somewhat clumsy, Pavlovian manipulator himself. His stimulus of choice, “the anointed” (meaning liberals, of course), appeared 25 times in 10 of his last 19 published *Daily News* columns — one to six times per article. Sowell freely associates “the anointed” with liars, double crossers, monstrous crimes, Nazis, the Klan, Marxist dogma, repression and totalitarianism.

Only the intellectually dense believe that “Phil Gramm is mean,” and “the liberal media are totalitarians” are remotely similar in truth content (now that “comm’nist” is no longer in vogue, will “the anointed” have the same effect on the necks of American conservatives?)

Nor do the “liberal” media attribute greed “only to people trying to keep what they have earned.”

Nevertheless, Sowell’s methods work because anti-intellectualism and anti-liberalism are deeply rooted in the American psyche. He need not worry that being unmasked will lessen his effectiveness.

— Bill Becker
Woodland Hills

Here the editor omitted a portion of my submitted letter. Had it been included, the penultimate paragraph would have read as follows:

“Nor do the liberal media attribute greed “only to people trying to keep what they have earned. In fact, it was such high-rolling cheats and lawbreakers as Michael Milken, Ivan Boesky, California legislators Alan Robbins and Paul Carpenter, and Charles Keating who breathed new life into "greedy " during the free-wheeling Reagan/Bush years. They were hardly trying simply “to keep what they earned,” and the media never equated them with the hard-working Americans Sowell seeks to influence.”

I accept the edit as being a space-saver rather than an attempt to weaken my argument.
— Bill Becker 30Sep09