not seem to square with his portrait of a president committed to containment and the preservation of America's credibility. Given these imperatives, would JFK have acquiesced in the South's collapse if he had lived to face the situation that confronted LBJ?

Jones's book will add grist to the mill of those who believe that Kennedy had developed an exit strategy, or that he would not have responded as Johnson did later. Skeptics, though, will probably require further convincing.

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THE FOG OF WAR. Directed by Errol Morris; produced by Errol Morris, Michael Williams, and Julie Ahlberg. 2003; color; 107 minutes. Distributed by Sony Pictures Classic.

In a taped telephone conversation in 1964, President Lyndon B. Johnson asked Robert McNamara, whither Washington's mission in Vietnam? The secretary of defense admitted that "The frank answer is we don't know what is going on out there." That exchange, reproduced in Errol Morris's Academy Award-winning documentary, *The Fog of War*, underlines the film's message: for all its statistics, all its strategic planning, all its economic and military power, not only could Washington not master Vietnam, it could not see it.

What makes *The Fog of War* a stunning historical work is not its vivid retrospect of a "great man's" life but how it implicitly emplots that life within a longer and wider world history of the failures of applying social science in international relations, of imperial interventions self-justified as civilizing missions. Its excavation of the religiosity of reason, of the messianic devotion to "rational" knowledge, recalls Carl Becker's still-magnificent essay *The Heavenly City of the Eighteenth-Century Philosophers* (1932) for its close analysis of the evangelical fundamentalism that has characterized secular thought in the West since the Enlightenment. Absolutist faith in ethnocentric models has repeatedly led to perfectionist crusades that fail to question the methodological presuppositions that determine policies of devastating social consequences, until it is too late.

If John Dos Passos's *The Big Money* (1936) was about the second postwar period, rather than the first, it would certainly have included among its biographical sketches one of McNamara: the poor, bright boy who works his way through the University of California at Berkeley in the Depression; goes on to study and teach at Harvard's Graduate School of Business; applies that expertise to U.S. victory in World War II; parlays wartime military success into postwar corporate achievement; and arrives at the helm of government during the Cold War's peak. Like Dos Passos's cinematically juxtaposed words, Morris's evocatively edited images and sounds provoke insights that surpass their subject's known story. This is done, in the best modernist tradition, as counterpoint to the machine culture the film finds simultaneously inspiring and terrifying. Its stirringly rhythmic music, composed by Philip Glass (once again Morris's collaborator), serves as a moving but nonmanipulative explication of this message. Glass's whirring variations essay the high modernism of U.S. public culture *ca.*1950–1970, not only of IBM mainframes but also the architecture of the Cold War corporate and military headquarters that housed them. The score's lack of sentimentality effectively syncopates McNamara's frequently maudlin regrets for the destructive underside of the technological innovation that brought new forms of mass killing and artistic (including musical) expression in the twentieth century.

More important than its record of McNamara's recent recantations is how *The Fog of War* mobilizes memories to expose the irrationalities committed in reason's name. In one striking sequence, about his wartime work developing strategic-bombing plans for General Curtis LeMay, McNamara recalls that in a "single night, we burned to death 100,000 Japanese civilians in Tokyo: men, women, and children." When from off camera Morris shouts, "Were you aware this was going to happen?" McNamara pauses, leans into the frame, and explains: "I was part of a mechanism that in a sense recommended it." As the soundtrack intensifies, the scene quickly jump cuts between close-ups of hand-written statistical entries, then segues to archival aerial footage of a bombing mission from which not explosives but animated numbers, signs of the mechanized knowledge that guide the destruction, drift toward ground zero.

I first saw *The Fog of War* at its New York Film Festival premiere in October 2003, and I remained after its final reel to hear the director discuss his work. It was not very illuminating; there was little Morris could say that his film had not already said better. His comments did amplify his movie's most compelling rhetorical move: the empathy and frustration McNamara's seeming incomprehension of his own contradictions caused Morris. By exposing its author's ambivalence, *The Fog of War* finally is ethical but nonjudgmental. This is not Michael Moore's Gonzo filmmaking, which, à la Oliver Stone, satisfies muckraking expectations but raises few new questions about the past or how to represent it. By granting no easy closure, the film refuses to reduce history to preconceived notions about what happened, what is happening, what will happen. We are with Morris as he wrestles with McNamara to understand the past.

There are many who will object to this film's sympathetic portrayal of McNamara. Perhaps most upset will be those who (unlike Morris) supported the Vietnam War and find the ex-defense secretary's jeremiads, either on screen or in print, to be self-indulgently hypocritical trivializations of the enormous costs of a noble cause. The war's critics might also object, finding McNamara's mea culpas "too little, too late." Both views, however, miss the film's focus, which is not as much McNamara as the culture of knowledge,

the hubris of "civilization," the international insecurity created by the pursuit of national security. *The Fog of War* reminds us that war itself is the ultimate enemy, one served by the rationalizations that underwrite official violence. In making this point himself, McNamara recalls his World War II days: "LeMay said if we'd lost the war, we all would have been prosecuted as war criminals. And I think he's right. He, and I'd say I, were behaving as war criminals. LeMay recognized that what he was doing would be thought immoral if his side had lost. But what makes it immoral if you lose but not if you win?"

Religion's revival in both Washington's foreign-policy rhetoric and that of its most virulent international enemies is currently on spectacular display. However, faith in progress through efficient destruction remains intact too, directly descended from Becker's heavenly city of reason. As we ponder this moment's particularities, we might usefully revisit McNamara's wish: "Maybe we make the same mistake three times but hopefully not four or five."

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The Trials of Henry Kissinger. Produced and written by Alex Gibney. Directed by Eugene Jarecki. Narrated by Brian Cox. England, Australia, Denmark. 2002; color and black and white; 80 minutes. Distributed by First Run/Icarus Films.

The Trials of Henry Kissinger is a feature-length historical documentary that traces Kissinger's life and career from his youth in Nazi Germany through his tenure as assistant for national security affairs and secretary of state under presidents Richard M. Nixon and Gerald R. Ford. It examines Kissinger's predilection for secrecy and power, including his involvement in Nixon's 1968 presidential campaign intrigue regarding the Vietnam War, but it emphasizes his role in planning and implementing policies, strategies, and decisions that may have included the commission of international crimes. These were the secret bombing of Cambodia in 1969 and after, the invasions of Cambodia and Laos in 1970 and 1971, the military overthrow of the Chilean government and the accompanying assassinations of General René Schneider in 1970 and of President Salvador Allende in 1973, and the United States-approved Indonesian invasion of East Timor in 1975 and the attendant mass killings and deadly famine.

The filmmakers took inspiration from a two-part article by Christopher Hitchens published in the February and March 2001 issues of *Harper's Magazine* entitled "The Case Against Henry Kissinger." Written and published during the period of the establishment of the International Criminal Court (1998–2002) and the arrest of and legal proceedings against former Chilean dictator Augusto Pinochet Ugarte (1998–2001), Hitchens's indictment of Kissinger garnered considerable international attention. In *The Trials of Henry Kissinger*, however, Hitchens makes only a few brief appearances as one of many talking heads. Other interviewees—journalists, jurists, relatives of victims, ambassadors, Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) officers, and Kissinger's aides, as well as Kissinger himself—comment on historical events and Kissinger's motives, decision making, and guilt or innocence at appropriate intervals in the voice-over narrative.

The documentary is not so much an indictment of Kissinger as it is an exploration of the possibility of his criminal behavior. Even though the script and visual content of the film concentrate on those topics that reveal Kissinger's likely involvement in international crimes, the narrator's tone is measured, and there is little obvious departure in the verbal and visual narrative from facts to be found in the most recent and best-researched histories of Kissinger's role in the making of American foreign policy.

There are, however, a few minor errors of interpretation, at least one unsubstantiated claim, and omissions of contextually relevant decisions and events. The film implies, for example, that Kissinger was the prime architect or promoter of strategies such as the "madman theory," the bombing of Cambodia, the Chilean coup, and the Indonesian invasion of East Timor, when in fact Nixon and Ford were in charge, and Kissinger was their confederate and implementor. Regarding the coup against Prince Norodom Sihanouk in 1970, the script claims that it was instigated by the CIA, which is possible but, as far as I know, undocumented. One of the most unfortunate omissions in terms of the argument of the film is the inadequacy of its treatment of the history and status of international criminal law. The uninitiated viewer does not learn that the main provisions of prosecutable international crimes date from at least the Nuremberg and Tokyo trials in the aftermath of World War II, which in turn drew on international rules and laws rooted in the past. Today there exists a coherent aggregation of treaties and conventions that defines international crimes as crimes against peace, war crimes, and crimes against humanity. The purpose of these treaties and conventions was and is to establish a regime of international law that would serve, minimally, to mitigate the horrors of war and, maximally, to prevent war. At the Nuremberg and Tokyo trials, one of the main principles upon which verdicts were based and punishment administered was that those who wielded power and authority were as guilty as those whose hands committed the crimes—if they had been responsible for setting a policy that led to crimes or were negligent in enforcing the rules. If Kissinger is to be charged, this is the principle that is probably most apt.

And if Kissinger is guilty, so, too, were others above and below him. Kissinger's conduct regarding Indochina, East Timor, and Chile, moreover, was not a historical aberration. The U.S. government before and after Kissinger had and has been engaged in coups against governments, assassinations of individuals, and other acknowledged international crimes.

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