

UNCOVERING TRUTH IN AN AGE OF DECEPTION

DISCERNING



PROPAGANDA

"Be very careful, then, how you live - not as unwise but as wise, making the most of every opportunity, because the days are evil. Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the Lord's will is."  
Ephesians 5:15-17

"For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but one of power, love and sound judgement." 2 Timothy 1:7

"Propaganda is the deliberate, systematic attempt to shape perceptions, manipulate cognitions, and direct behavior to achieve a response that furthers the desired intent of the propagandist." (Jowett and O'Donnell)

1. Avoid abstract ideas and appeal instead to the emotions.
2. Employ constant repetition of just a few ideas, using stereotyped phrases and avoiding objectivity.
3. Put forth only one side of the argument.
4. Constantly criticize enemies of the state.
5. Identify one special enemy for special vilification.

"The conscious and intelligent manipulation of the organized habits and opinions of the masses is an important element in democratic society. Those who manipulate this unseen mechanism of society constitute an invisible government which is the true ruling power of our country. We are governed, our minds molded, our tastes formed, our ideas suggested, largely by men we have never heard of. This is a logical result of the way in which our democratic society is organized. Vast numbers of human beings must cooperate in this manner if they are to live together as a smoothly functioning society."  
("Propaganda", Edward Bernays)

"We live in a world of lies, whether we want it or not. That's just the case. But you shouldn't accommodate to it...you will be surrounded by lies - you don't have a choice. Don't assimilate to it. It's an individual decision for each person. If you want to live in fear, or if you want to live in the freedom of the soul. If your soul is free, then your thoughts are free, and then your words are going to be free." (Quote by Maria Wittner, hero of the 1956 Hungarian uprising against Soviet occupation, "Live Not By Lies", Rod Dreher)

## Vocabulary

**BANDWAGON** is one of the most common techniques in both wartime and peacetime and plays an important role in modern advertising. Bandwagon is an appeal to the subject to follow the crowd, to join in because others are doing so as well. Bandwagon propaganda is, essentially, trying to convince the subject that one side is the winning side, because more people have joined it. The subject is meant to believe that since so many people have joined, that victory is inevitable and defeat impossible.

**CARD STACKING**, or selective omission, involves only presenting information that is positive to an idea or proposal and omitting information contrary to it. Although the majority of information presented by the card stacking approach is true, it is dangerous because it omits important information.

**GLITTERING GENERALITIES** occur very often in politics and political propaganda. Glittering generalities are words that have different positive meanings for individual subjects, but are linked to highly valued concepts. When these words are used, they demand approval without thinking, simply because such an important concept is involved. For example, when a person is asked to do something in “defense of democracy” they are more likely to agree. Words often used as glittering generalities are honor, glory, love of country, and especially in the United States, freedom.

**NAME CALLING** occurs often in politics and wartime scenarios, but very seldom in advertising. It is the use of derogatory language or words that carry a negative connotation when describing an enemy. The propaganda attempts to arouse prejudice among the public by labeling the target something that the public dislikes.

The **PLAIN FOLKS** propaganda technique is an attempt by the propagandist to convince the public that his views reflect those of the common person and that they are also working for the benefit of the common person. The propagandist will often attempt to use the accent of a specific audience as well as using specific idioms or jokes. Also, the propagandist, especially during speeches, may attempt to increase the illusion through imperfect pronunciation, stuttering, and a more limited vocabulary. Errors such as these help add to the impression of sincerity and spontaneity. This technique is usually most effective when used with glittering generalities, in an attempt to convince the public that the propagandist's views about highly valued ideas are similar to their own and therefore more valid.

**TESTIMONIALS** are quotations or endorsements, in or out of context, which attempt to connect a famous or respectable person with a product or item. Testimonials are very closely connected to the transfer technique, in that an attempt is made to connect an agreeable person to another item. Testimonials are often used in advertising and political campaigns.

**TRANSFER** is often used in politics and during wartime. It is an attempt to make the subject view a certain item in the same way as they view another item, to link the two in the subject's mind. Although this technique is often used to transfer negative feelings for one object to another, it can also be used in positive ways by linking an item to something the subject respects or enjoys, positive feelings can be generated for it. However, in politics, *transfer* is most often used to lay blame or negative feelings from one politician to another or party members or even to the party itself.