Art & Propaganda



OBJECTIVES

By the end of this discussion, you should be able to do the following:

- Define propaganda.
- Understand different types of propaganda and be able to list various examples of
- Understand and explain the purpose and use of various types of image projection.
- Understand the herd mentality and apply it to your own experiences.
- Understand what a demagogue is and be able to give examples.
- Begin to understand and explain how an agenda affects an artwork.

KEY TERMS

By the end of this discussion, you should understand the following terms:

- Propaganda
- Soft propaganda
- Demagogue
- Herd mentality

- Visual Arts
- Literary Arts
- Dramatic Arts
- Musical Arts

PREPARE

Study the following instructional material:

Propaganda literally means "that which is spread out to affect a greater number or area propagated." It is an attempt by any person or group of people to project a certain image; with the purpose of leading other human beings to either behave in a certain way; or to increase their awe, respect, patience, or allegiance, patience, or support. Propaganda is usually thought of as a political practice, but it is also used for economic, religious, moral, and social purposes.

Propaganda is a loaded term. Generally, we think of it as a bad thing, and only use the word when we disagree with its content or purpose: conservatives speak of liberal propaganda, capitalists of communist propaganda, Baptists of Mormon propaganda. But <u>Fin reality</u>, propaganda is <u>really</u> just a set of skills, used by all sides, consciously or unconsciously, to put forth their own points of view. In fact, we all indulge in it, in the way we talk, in the way we dress, in the company we keep, and so on. Take, for example, the young man driving down

Comment [BI1]: We felt the original definition was circular, so we modified it for clarity.

Comment [32]: Some of the words used in this list were synonyms of other words used, so we removed the ones we felt were redundant. Throughout this chapter, we treated lists in this same way by removing words we felt were repetitious to both reduce redundancy as well as shorten the lists.

the street with his windows open, rattling all the glass in the neighborhood with his sub-woofers. He is engaging in a kind of image projection; similar to the propaganda activities used by states, churches, and companies to define how they would like others to perceive them.

Not all propaganda is deliberate or systematic, nor is it always deceptive or manipulative. People and organizations often use propaganda to project a clearer and more accurate image. Likewise, deception and emotional manipulation havehas been used to further good ends. George Washington never chopped down a cherry tree, but the fable has encouraged American children to tell the truth for over two centuries. Indeed, all systems of education are laced with propaganda; even though modern liberal societies like to think that they are careful to present all sides equally.

Propaganda has many faces. Most governments, parties, <u>factions</u>, sects, companies, and individuals have used it, and few of them have been completely honest in its application. Nearly every royal dynasty and most elected regimes have <u>cheated in inventing invented</u> their own pedigrees, <u>denigrating discrediting</u> their predecessors; <u>and while</u> exaggerating their own achievements. Religious propaganda may have a more benevolent purpose, but it too manipulates the facts to achieve specific ends, in <u>fact</u>, <u>Actually</u>, religious propaganda is <u>even</u> more inclined <u>than political</u> to use irrational, mystical, and unproven statements, as well as emotionally-charged images and language, to convince the public of the truth of its doctrines. Companies use propaganda to make their products more memorable and appealing. <u>In fact, Essentially</u>, the entire capitalistic economic system rests upon the creation and maintenance of consumer confidence, and the acquisition and consumption of <u>Obtaining and using</u> material goods governs our work, <u>competition</u>, wages, recreation, and self-esteem.



Sometimes propaganda takes the form of agitation, terrorism, and mob manipulation. Sometimes it seeks to project an image, sometimes to stifle one. In their Nazi rise to power, the Nazisthey used beatings and assassinations both to intimidate and silence their opponents. Terror, however, is not new to the 20th ewentieth century. The Aztec religion was based onupon a thirst for human sacrifice, and this thirst created a demand for constant warfare to provide victims. In response to this need, the Aztecs devised a propaganda system that glorified the military caste and terrified

everyone else into abject-submission. Their art was imbued with fear and dread; for example, the *tzompantli*, or stone sculpture of a rack of skewered human heads, carried a direct and undisguised threat to the Aztecs' enemies; and clearly portrayed the image of a powerful and implacable state.

The headsman's axe carried the same threat in the Middle Ages, and the guillotine served a more humane but no less clear purpose during the French Revolution.

Comment [BI3]: We noticed the phrase "in fact' was used quite often in the chapter. We've changed many of them to prevent repetition.

Comment [B14]: Some of the words used in this section, as well as the rest of the chapter, would be unfamiliar to many freshmen and sophomores, so we have made suggestions for word substitutions or deletions to make it easier for students to understand.

Comment [BI5]: We changed the placement of the *tzompantli* picture because it appeared after it was discussed.

Comment [J6]: We felt it improved clarity by moving the subject of the sentence, the Nazis, to the front of the sentence here.

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Governments and Propaganda

Governments use this kindpropaganda to of intimidateion to cow not only their own citizens, but other nations as well.- Rival nations behave much the same as bull elk in rutting season. The impressive rack of antlers is not there because the bulls intend to fight, but in the hopes that they will not won't have to. A bull in his prime usually just has to strut around a bit, and if he If a bull in his prime is ever challenged, a little pushing almost always solves the issue without resort to serious bloodshed. In the same way, nations display their armaments, their economic prowess, their cultural achievements, and even their adeptness at sporting events in an attempt to overaweintimidate their potential opponents. In the late 1970s, For example, when India's underground testing of tested nuclear weapons underground on the Pakistani border in the late 1970s, it was a particularly risky form of rutting. But even in war, the point is not to kill all of the enemies enemy's soldiers, but to get, as the Confederate eGeneral Nathan Bedford Forrest called it, the "skeer" on the enemy:—to convince them that they have been whipped and that they should cut and run rather than stand and fight. Unfortunately, the whole thing becomes nastier when enemies are too evenly matched to overaweintimidate each other, or when effective propaganda convinces a people that persistence will pay off, or even that death does not matter as long as one fights valiantly.

Perhaps the most dangerous form of propaganda, however, is merely that which is diversionary. Instead of drawing attention toward a center of power, it draws it attention away from it. It is, as Karl Marx called it, an opiate, a kind of drug that dulls awareness of or distracts attention from serious issues that might cause unrest or unhappiness if anyone was to dwell on them for too long. The Romans called such diversionary tactics "bread and circuses," and all serious politicians were careful to provide the sem tactics to the masses. In Roman times, the "circuses" were chariot races, mock battles, and gladiators.

Today they are sports stars and celebrities, football games, soap operas, talent contests, and lifestyles of the rich and famous.

This kind of "soft propaganda" also reinforces what is normal; and contributes to a kind of mass self-esteem. The paintings of Norman Rockwell, the films of Frank Capra, and the songs of Bing Crosby all contributed to a cozy sense of well-well-being and rightness with the world in mid 20th mid-twentieth century America. Today, we have celebrities, sports, soap operas, and talent contests. This is not to suggest that these works indicate a secret government conspiracy to pacify the American people, but it does indicate that stroking an audience's ego is good business; and that the commercial value of such art leads artists to produce lots of it.

Comment [J7]: As a class, it was decided that, if there was a comfortable place to include contractions, then it was appropriate to do so. We felt that it reads more clearly to include a contraction here

Comment [BI8]: We felt this was extraneous and could be removed.

Comment [BI9]: We clarified the fact that this is a short example that will not be discussed further by restructuring the sentence.

Comment [BI10]: We felt this was a bit too long; the meaning was lost in the words, so we clarified the meaning by removing some of the words.

Comment [J11]: We felt that it made more sense to move this sentence here. It creates a comfortable progression of time from Roman times to the midtwentieth century to today. As with other lists in this chapter, this sentence has also been pared down to reduce redundancy and to shorten the list.

Propaganda and the Fine Arts



ince the beginning of history, mankind has used the fine arts as a Coin vehicle for image projection. For our purposes, we shall eConsider the arts in four groups: the visual arts, such as painting, sculpture, and architecture; the literary arts, such as novels, stories, and poetry; the dramatic arts, such as theater, dance, film, and event management; and the musical arts, such as operas, anthems, and aymphonics of course pPropagandists often make use of the arts in various combinations.

Sometimes a distinction is made between propagandistic art and so-called "pure" art. and literature. This particular issue raises a number of philosophical questions about the nature of art and how it fits into the society that creates and propagates it. What is art? Why do humans create and appreciate it? Is it an activity that is separate and distinct from the activity of image projection? Is there such a thing as art without an agenda? If so, is it by definition better than art with an agenda? Does an agenda corrupt art and make it less artistic? Does the goodness or badnessmoral standpoint of the agenda affect the quality of the art? Can there be bad art with a good agenda or ? How about good art with a bad agenda? It cannot be denied that some great masterpieces had distinct political aims: Beethoven's opera -Fidelio sang sings praises to the ideals of liberty, equality, and fraternity; Shakespeare's Macheth paid pays homage to the ancestors of the Scottish dynasty that had comecame to power as the rulers of England; Michelangelo's painting on the Sistine Chapel ceiling showed shows the kings of the earth kneeling before popes; Picasso's Guernica showed shows the brutality of the Fascists in the Spanish Civil War; and Dante's Inferno featured features a hell especially designed for the damnation of his political enemies. The political aims of these masterpieces could be interpreted as either propagandistic or as powerful art with meaning. Nevertheless, despite the meaning behind a work, it is possible to appreciate the art in its own right.

Visual Arts

A Roman

Coi

The first widespread use of the visual arts to mass-produce a political message was the coinage of the Macedonian and Roman empires. These coins bore the flattering images of the rulers that minted them, and carried political messages into the hands of a vast number of their subjects.

Since then, Various various entities have used the visual arts to create and propagate unifyingeorporate symbols—: the Star of David, lions, eagles, the Christian cross, the American flag, the hammer and sickle, the skull and crossbones, the Nike logo, the beehive, and the CTR ring. All of these symbols achieve gain their power by taking advantage of the human need to belong to a group. Those who propagate them assume that, when a person belongs to a group, they are more likely to behave as the group behaves.

Comment [J12]: To create balance, since all of the other types of art include a short list of what is included in that category, we added a short list here for the musical arts.

Comment [J13]: Literature is listed as one of the arts, and so we feel it is not necessary to include both art and literature here.

Comment [BI14]: We felt that the number of questions listed here is overwhelming. We believe the questions we have left convey the necessary ideas.

Comment [J15]: Works of art are typically referred to in the present tense rather than the past tense, so we made the necessary changes here.

Comment [B116]: We feel that a short summary explaining "so what?" would be helpful after this lengthy list of examples. We have provided a suggestion for a potential "so what?" conclusion.

Comment [BI17]: These examples would be more effective if the students could see or listen to them.

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Comment [B118]: The full name of the coin image is "Laureatre and Cuirassed Bust at Right," but we felt that the only caption necessary to understand the image is "A Roman Coin."

Comment [B119]: While we felt that, for all intents and purposes, most, if not all, of these groups are essentially well-run corporations (including the religions), the point being made is that the symbols used by these groups are unifying. The idea of a corporate church upsets some people.

The classic example of image coordination was during the Hitler Nazi regime in the 1930s and 1940s, with its corporate colors of red and black displayed with high frequency, and the standard swastika applied to flags, uniforms, buildings, flags, documents, film, and modes of

transportation. tanks, ships, and planes.

Comment [J20]: We felt that flags are the most well-known of the Nazi propaganda and should be

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Nürnberg, Reichsparteitag, SA und SS-Appell (Honoring the Dead)

Hitler's subjects were constantly reminded of the Nazi regime and awed intimidated by it. It encouraged, and the feelingidea was that everyone is on board, so and you should be too, and if you are notaren't, you had better be very-careful.



Throughout history, rulers and governments have used architecture to project stability and power. "Kings are judged by [the] size of their monuments," said Colbert, a minister in Louis IV's court., and mMost of the world's architecture, from the pyramids to Versailles to the World Trade

Center, owes its existence to that principle.

was a result of local rulers attempting to paint themselves into history; in order to show themselves as enlightened patrons of the arts; as_possessors of that unique combination of

The mediums of sSculpture and painting too have also been used to tell the stories of nations and to laud-praise the achievements of their patrons. The entire Italian Renaissance

intelligence, taste, and manliness that they called virtù.

In modern times, photography has joined the lineup of visual arts used by propagandists. Robert Capa's Moment of Death The Falling Soldier, from the Spanish Civil War, raised the medium to new heights of emotive communication.

Comment [W21]: This photo is taken from Wikipedia. It's English translation was given in the "extra information" area.

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Comment [BI22]: We were unable to locate this quote through our research to verify its accuracy. If the source cannot be found, it might be better to paraphrase the quote rather than include it as a direct quotation. A suggestion for paraphrasing is, "Royalty is often judged by what is built during their time !

Comment [W23]: We were able to find the suspected source of this painting of Versailles (http://www.conservapedia.com/File:Versailles.jpg), but were unable to find out who painted it or what its official title is. However, it does fall under fair use

Comment [J24]: We cropped out the included caption of this photograph because the title was wrong. The photograph is also falsely titled in the text itself, being called Moment of Death. The original title of this photograph is Loyalist Militiaman at the Moment of Death, Cerro Muriano, September 5, 1936, but it is better known as The Falling Soldier.

Photographic propaganda increased greatly during the Nazi Regime and World War II. On the other side, Heinrich Hoffmann was the photographer exclusively responsible for portraying Hitler to his people—. hHis photo gallery portrays the Führer as a classic model of German Volkstümlichkeit (folksy coziness); relaxing in his Heledrhosen, gathering flowers, playing with his dog, or talking to children. The intent of this propaganda was to counter Hitler's negative associations by instead portraying him as an approachable German man who was making German life better.





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Comment [BI25]: We unable to discern what this phrase meant, and so we wrote in a preceding sentence to put things in context.

Comment [B126]: We felt that explaining what the purpose of Hoffmann's pictures was would solidify this paragraph and make the transition easier.

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Heinrich Hoffmann (1885–1957), Hitler on the Berghof Terrace

Literary Arts

Like pictures, words can pack an enormous emotional impact, and t The literary arts, both great and small, have been used to both advance and undermine great causes. Virtually every cause has at least one great literary work associated with it. But for a work to reach its audience, it must be accessible—; the shelves of libraries are full of books that eloquently argue the case for many worthy causes, but their effect is minimal because few read them, and fewer follow them. Dull, nagging propaganda, even for the worthiest causes, can be counterproductive—; witness the catastrophic failure of governments and private organizations to persuade young people to avoid dangerous drugs. Likewise, causes such as world peace, racial harmony, religious toleration, and family values fall flat if the propaganda fails to strike the right chord. Quiet, thoughtful reasoning is often not effective because it becomes dull boring or unintelligible; and relies upon the reader to carefully follow all the

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Comment [W27]: This photo of Hitler was very hard to find, but if the caption is to be believed it is "Hitler auf Terrasse des Berghofs" by Heinrich Hoffmann, taken in 1942. We've used the translatory title "Hitler on the Berghof Terrace"

Comment [J28]: We feel that it would be helpful to include some examples here to clarify the point. However, none of us felt qualified to endeavor to suggest any examples, not knowing much about this subject ourselves.

steps of the argument. It is difficult to accomplish this with an individual; to make it happen with a crowd is nearly impossible. A written argument becomes much more digestible if it is reduced to an emotionally resonant catchphrase or soundbitesound bite, and repeated endlessly. If it is rhymed, alliterative, or rhythmical, all the better to chant it by.— Some examples include "Tippecanoe and Tyler Too,"; "Winston Tastes Good Like a Cigarette Should,"; "I Like Ike,"; and "Fired Up? Ready to Go?"

The analytical and logical foundation for such the ideas being conveyed becomes irrelevant because of their direct emotional appeal. Entire edifices of irrational, emotional judgments can be built around a single, unsupported statement if it is catchy enough, and surrounded by other unsupported statements. In fact, some words are created not to inspire thought, but to prevent it. In his novel 1984, George Orwell describes a futuristic society where the government regulates language in order to regulate thought. The new language Orwell calls this new language newspeak, and in it, entire groups of words with various shades of meaning are replaced with a single simple word that comes to stand for them all.: For example, bad, evil, incorrect, and immoral, for example, are all replaced simply with by the word ungood. Thus, newspeak reduces language's capacity for subtle shades of meaning.

In such the samea way, simple clichés and catchphrases substitute for real dialogue on political and social issues. Words such as *socialist*, *chawinist*, *feminist*, *liberal*, *reactionary*, *Red*, *hippie*, *democracy*, *brotherhood*, and *freedom* have such complex emotional connotations; as a result, that they are seldom used as part of a meaningful discussion. In recent times, the use of the suffix -gate, deriving derived from the Watergate incident, has been attached to a myriad of names; to raise the specter-plant the idea of political scandal without proving much of anything—: *Irangate*, *Koreagate*, *Zippergate*, *Monicagate*. In general, extremist propaganda is clearer, more confident, and more committed than that for of moderate causes, and uncompromising ideas are generally the easiest to promote.

The Dramatic Arts

Thanks to film, radio, and television, Many 20th twentieth century many theatrical works have hadcontaining political messages have been made more widely available throughout the twentieth century. and, thanks to film, then eventually radio, and television, these have been made available to larger audiences than ever before. Leon Trotsky prophesied that film would "take the place of religion and vodka" as an opiate of the people. It has done more than that. In fact, p Producers, directors, and event managers have discovered that the impact of their messages grows exponentially as the size of their audience increases. This is sometimes called the herd mentality, or getting on the bandwagon, or going with the flow.

In crowd dynamics, doubters are more easily persuaded to conform by the mass large amount of true believers. The effect of crowd manipulation has been proven to diminish confidence in rational thinking, heighten confidence in apparently seemingly strong leadership, and eliminate the effects influence of the conscience. Event managers know this, and regularly plant in the crowd compliant participators, cheer starters, and leading question askers in the crowd. Some of the most effective forms of crowd manipulation take advantage of the fear already inherent in a group: —fear of outsiders, of unemployment, of unpopularity, and so on. Often the blame falls on some kind of political scapegoat, such as —the Communists, the Jews, the liberals, or the privileged class.

Comment [J29]: We felt that this is unnecessary. It interrupts the flow of thought to insert an opinion that is not relevant to the discussion.

Comment [330]: We believe that including pictures and/or including links to the sound bites of these slogans could be helpful, if they're available.

Comment [J31]: We felt that the way these ideas were conveyed was very confusing and disjointed. We have condensed and restructured the sentence for clarity.

Comment [J32]: It did not seem necessary to include two idioms to define the same term, so we left the one that we believe conveys the idea the clearest.

Comment [J33]: It makes more sense to conclude the list by indicating that there are many other fears that are taken advantage of.

First the propagandist spins outemphasizes fear, reducing his audience to anger, despair, and pent-up frustration. Then he offers an easy solution: whatever he is promoting or selling. This is marketed as a cure-all, or even a messiah, that will deliver the people from their oppressors in return for their unquestioning obedience. In each case, when the initial reaction reaches critical mass, majority the enthusiasm and intimidation of the majority take over to mop up the stragglers. This is the craft of the demagogue, the "teacher of the people," who first flatters the people in the crowd into seeing themselves as innocent victims, then fills them with fear and revulsion of their supposed persecutors, and lastlythen promises them deliverance in a kind of saved_by_grace catharsis. Its most sinister examples have resulted in war, oppression, and genocide. But the same kind of effect takes over with commercial marketing, fashion, adoration of pop idols, or any other trendy or "politically correct" mass movement.

Comment [J34]: We felt that it would be helpful if specific examples were given here to illustrate the point.

Musical Arts

-Music's power comes from its direct appeal to our emotions. It can quicken or slow our pulse, agitate us or calm us, brighten our mood, or give vent to our sorrows. The Greeks told of Alexander, languishing in drink and depression, but leaping to his feet and arming himself when the musicians struck up a military tune. Almost as soon as a cause is born, it creates its own anthem: the "The Song of Marseille" ("La Marseillaise") for the French Revolution, "Dixie" for the Confederacy, the "The Internationale" ("L'Internationale") for Communism, and "We Shall Overcome" for Civil Rights.

Sometimes an old tune helps to-transfer our loyalties when the words are changed to advocate a new cause. Joseph Haydn's 18th eighteenth century "God Save Emperor Francis" ("Gott erhalte Franz den Kaiser") Hymn to the Emperor became a liberal-German national anthem, during the revolutions of 1848. It was titled "Song of Germany" ("Deutschlandlied") Finigkeit und Recht und Freiheit (and in the third stanza, it calls for "Einigkeit und Recht und Freiheit" ("Unity, and Right]ustice, and Freedom"), during the revolutions of 1848. After unification was achieved, German expansionism called for a more militant makeover of the old song, and it became Deutschland über Alles ("Germany overAbove aAll") ("Deutschland über Alles"). When Germany was defeated in World War II and the new nation eschewed renounced imperialism, the 1848 words returned, and this version remains Germany's national anthem to this day.

Conclusion

-Propaganda is a powerful tool that can be used for good or bad purposes. It has been an implemented tool for a very long time. However, Tthe 20th twentieth century has been exceptional in many ways with regards to propaganda, including the intense politicization of all human activities, the ability to deliver propagandistic messages to a large population, and the dramatic and often dire results it has had on society. Without a doubt, the 20th twentieth century has been the most violent in recorded history, and it is likely that the more effective delivery of propaganda has been a major contributor. But at the same time, 20th twentieth century art has raised awareness of issues heretofore previously swept under the carpet, and in these cases at least, ignorance is not always bliss.

TEACH ONE ANOTHER

Discussion questions:

- Think of one example of propaganda in each category: political, religious, social moral, and economical.
- 2. The text cites the use of music in car stereos to project a personal image. What other things do people do to project their chosen image? What things do you do? What image are you trying to project? Are you successful?
- 3. Do democracies employ terror as a means of propaganda? If so, name an example. If not, what do they use instead?
- 4. The text compares military propaganda to elk in rutting season. Name some examples from the present day that illustrate this principle.
- 5. Give some examples of "soft" propaganda in today's society.

Comment [J35]: We did not feel that this example is adding anything to the discussion, and so we removed it.

Comment [J36]: As per your request, we have changed all of the titles of works in this discussion so that they all have the English translation first followed by the original foreign title in parenthesis.

Comment [J37]: Having links to these songs would be helpful to the students, especially with the lesser-known examples.

Comment [J38]: "Hymn to the Emperor" is not the proper title of this piece. It is actually called "Gott erhalte Franz den Kaiser," or "God Save Emperor Francis."

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Comment [J39]: The actual title of this anthem is "Song of Germany," though there is a line in the third stanza that has the words "Einigkeit und Recht und Freiheit."

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Comment [340]: We felt that a better, summarizing transition was necessary here to tie everything together.

Comment [J41]: We feel that it would be helpful to include specific examples from the twentieth century to illustrate the point being made here. It would also help bring this discussion to a fuller conclusion.

Comment [342]: It would be helpful to include specific examples here as well, which would also help give this discussion a stronger conclusion. It needs to end with the idea that propaganda can be good or bad, and that it has been used in many different ways, to sum up the overall point of this discussion.

- 6. Can you think of a time when you were persuaded by the herd mentality to do something that you later regretted; or at least would not have done otherwise?
- 7. Name five people that you would consider to be demagogues. What do they do that makes you feel that way?
- 8. Consider the following excerpt from the text, and be prepared to give and defend your opinion on the questions it asks: "What is art? Why do humans create and appreciate it? Is it an activity that is separate and distinct from the activity of image projection? Is there such a thing as art without an agenda? If so, is it by definition better than art with an agenda? Does an agenda corrupt art and make it less artistic? Does the goodness or badness of the agenda affect the quality of the art? Can there be bad art with a good agenda? How about or good art with a bad agenda?"

PONDER AND PROVE

Prepare and submit the following creative assignment:

Design a slogan for a product, idea, or belief. MadeMake it short and catchy.