

Propaganda

How to spot it and analyze it....

What is Propaganda?

- ◆ A way of manipulating people using images and words to achieve a desired affect or outcome
- ◆ Propaganda clouds reality and gets in the way of clear and honest thinking
- ◆ During wartime, propaganda is designed to provide a focus for our mistrust and hatred, to dehumanize the enemy so they may be killed without remorse

How is it used?

Propaganda can be as blatant as a swastika or as subtle as a joke.

Its persuasive techniques are regularly applied by politicians, advertisers, journalists, radio personalities, and others who are interested in influencing human behavior.

Propagandistic messages can be used to accomplish positive social ends, as in campaigns to reduce drunk driving, but they are also used to win elections and to sell alcohol.

Some vocabulary



- ◆ **Ubiquitous** – seeming to be everywhere; omnipresent, as in: *In the upcoming months, political ads will be **ubiquitous**.*
- ◆ **Aesthetic** – relating to beauty or physical appearance, as in: *That Calvin Klein ad is effective because it relies on the **aesthetic** appeal of the people portrayed in it.*
- ◆ **Subliminal** – below the threshold of awareness; subconscious, as in: *Although we didn't notice the **subliminal** message at first, the main character was always shown drinking a Diet Coke.*

Why now?

- ◆ The information revolution has led to information overload, and people are confronted with hundreds of messages each day.
- ◆ Although few studies have looked at this topic, it seems fair to suggest that many people respond to this pressure by processing messages more quickly and, when possible, by taking mental short-cuts.

Propaganda Techniques

- ◆ Propagandists love short-cuts -- particularly those which short-circuit rational thought.
- ◆ They encourage this by agitating emotions, by exploiting insecurities, by capitalizing on the ambiguity of language, and by bending the rules of logic.
- ◆ As history shows, they can be quite successful.

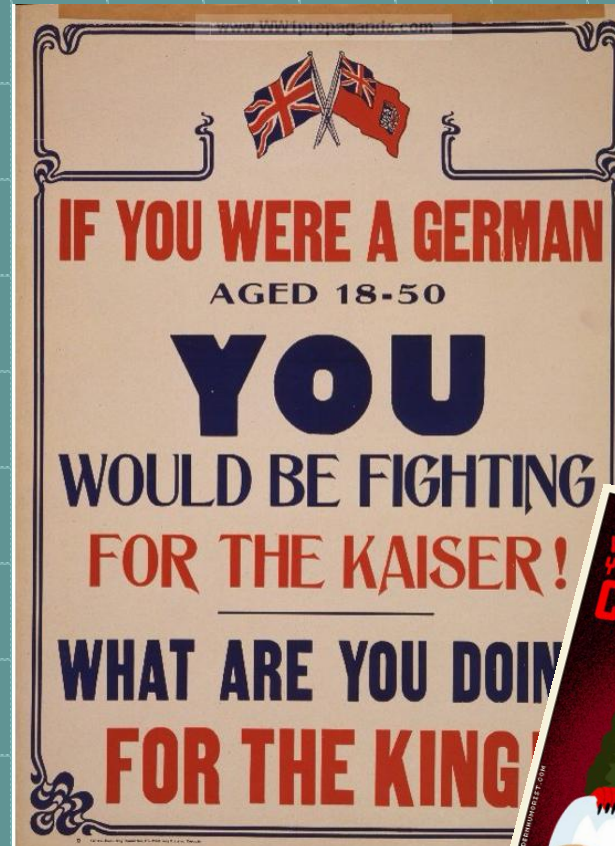
Name-Calling

- ◆ The name-calling technique links a person, or idea, to a negative symbol.
- ◆ The propagandist who uses this technique hopes that the audience will reject the person or the idea on the basis of the negative symbol, instead of looking at the available evidence.



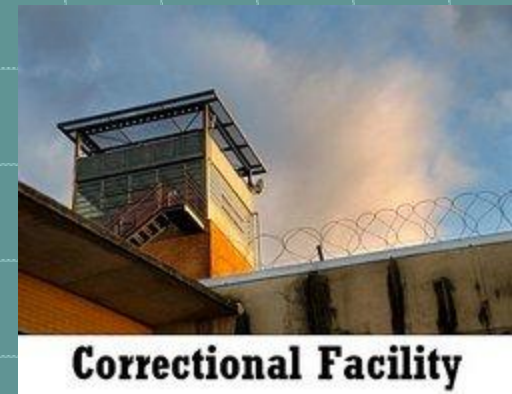
Glittering Generalities

- ◆ The use of “loaded words” that carry extreme positive or negative connotation
- ◆ Designed to influence opinion
- ◆ Words like Christianity, Democracy, civilization, etc.



Euphemisms

- ◆ Changing words around to make the unpleasant seem “not so bad”
- ◆ Example: “The company will be *downsizing*.” (i.e. “You’re fired.”)
- ◆ “You’re vertically challenged.”
- ◆ “You show a negative gain in test scores.” (“You failed.”)
- ◆ Others: “collateral damage”, “liquidation”, “friendly fire”, etc.



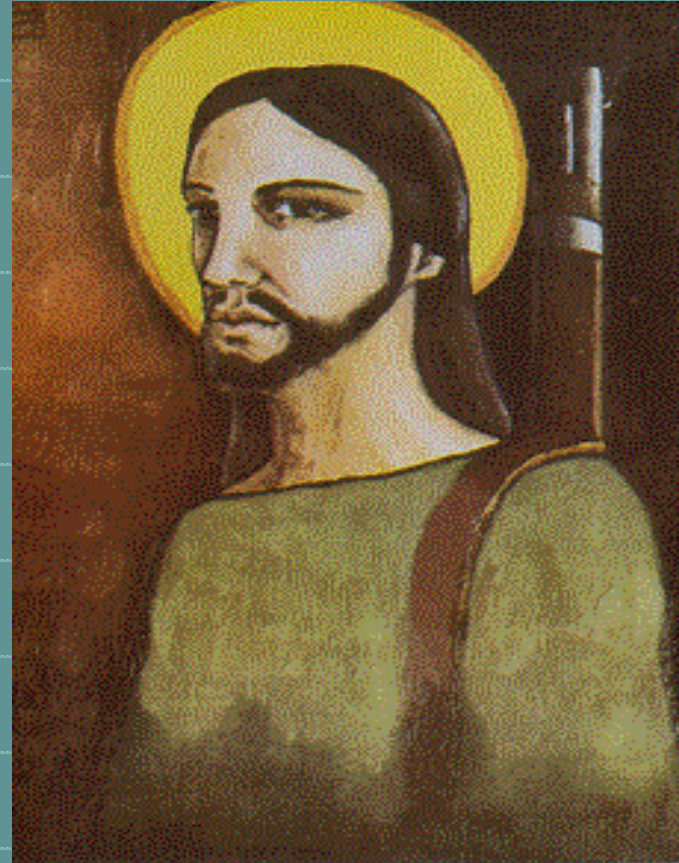
Correctional Facility

So many choices with so little calories.



Transfer

- ◆ Transfer is a device by which the propagandist carries over the authority, sanction, and prestige of something we respect and revere to something he would have us accept.



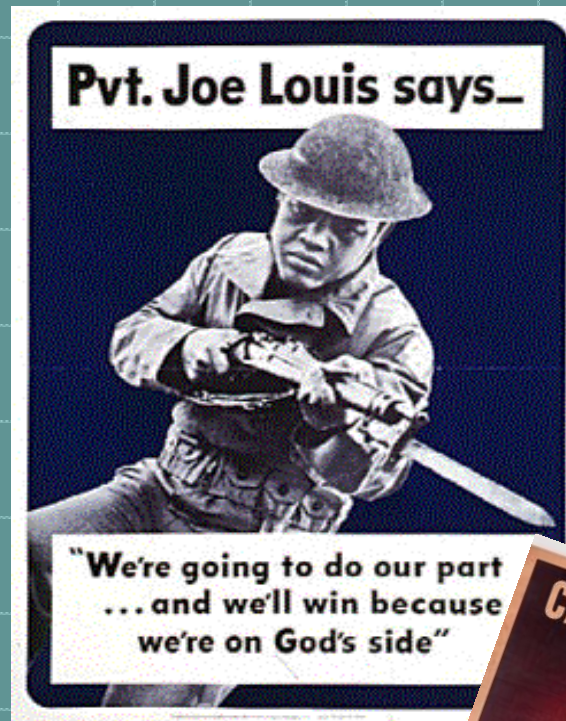
Band Wagon

- ◆ Attempting to convince an audience that they should do something because “everyone else is”
- ◆ Also, politicians who claim to be “just a regular guy.”
- ◆ Jump on the band wagon!



Testimonial

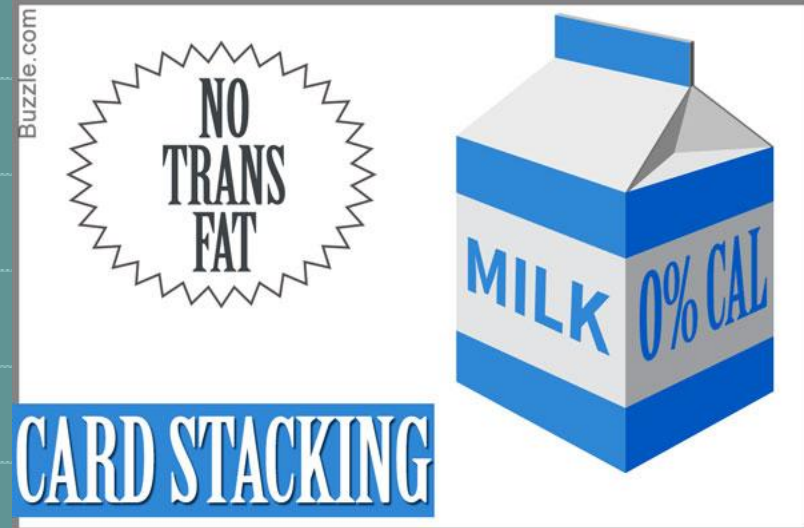
- ◆ This is the device most frequently used by advertisers
- ◆ Associating a celebrity with a product or idea, even if they're unrelated
- ◆ "I'm not a doctor, but I play one on TV...."



Card Stacking/Misleading Facts

- ◆ Often, propagandists will only tell half the story, or only use facts that support their position
- ◆ Sometimes, they will even use faulty logic...

Food advertisers often only highlight the positives of the product and not the bad, which makes products appealing to a consumer.



It is a technique that is also used by political parties to highlight the good that they have done while never mentioning the negatives.

Fear

- ◆ Probably the most effective and potentially most abused tool of all
- ◆ Almost all of our wars are a result of this
- ◆ Plays on deep-seated fears; warns the audience that disaster will result if they do not follow a particular course of action.



Can you identify the techniques used in these examples?



More...



So what?

- ◆ Be aware! Don't be taken in by propaganda!
- ◆ Now more than ever you must be aware!
- ◆ Don't be like this guy... pay attention and think about the sources of your knowledge!

