



REPORTING AMERICA AT WAR: PROPAGANDA

What is Propaganda?

Propaganda is the use of a variety of communication techniques that create an emotional appeal to accept a particular belief or opinion, to adopt a certain behavior or to perform a particular action. There are a variety of techniques that are used in propaganda.

Propaganda Techniques:

NAME CALLING – links a person, or idea, to a negative symbol. *Examples: commie, fascist, yuppie*

GLITTERING GENERALITIES – use of virtue words; the opposite of name calling, i.e., links a person, or idea, to a positive symbol. *Examples: democracy, patriotism, family*

TRANSFER – a device by which the propagandist links the authority or prestige of something well-respected and revered, such as church or nation, to something they would have us accept. *Example: a political activist closes her speech with a prayer*



TESTIMONIAL – a public figure or a celebrity promotes or endorses a product, a policy, or a political candidate. *Examples: an athlete appears on the Wheaties box; an actor speaks at a political rally*

PLAIN FOLKS – attempts to convince the audience that a prominent person and his ideas are “of the people.” *Examples: a prominent politician eats at McDonald’s; an actress is photographed shopping for groceries*

BANDWAGON – makes the appeal that “everyone else is doing it, and so should you.” *Examples: an ad states that “everyone is rushing down to their Ford dealer”*

FEAR – plays on deep-seated fears; warns the audience that disaster will result if they do not follow a particular course of action. *Example: an insurance company pamphlet includes pictures of houses destroyed by floods, followed up by details about home-owners’ insurance*

BAD LOGIC – logic is manipulated deliberately to promote a cause. *Example: Senator X wants to regulate the power industry. All Communist governments regulate their power industries. Senator X is a Communist.*

Adapted from Propaganda Critic Website. For more detailed definitions and additional examples see www.propagandacritic.com