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Say the word "propaganda" and most people imagine a scene out of Leni Riefenstahl's Nazi propaganda film "Triumph of the Will": masses of people shouting in response to a charismatic figure on stage. But propaganda comes in many forms, some of which are not so easily recognized. In this issue, we provide resources for responding to propaganda in all its guises.

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Theme: Propaganda and Media Literacy

Propaganda: The War for Hearts and Minds

This year marks the centennial of World War I, an event which, among other things, brought several important and lasting changes to the communications environment of industrialized societies. As propaganda scholar David Welch notes, World War I was ". . .the first 'total war' in which entire nations rather than just professional armies were locked in mortal combat...The gap between the soldier at the front and the civilian at home was narrowed substantially in that the full resources of the state--military, economic and psychological--had to be mobilized. In a state of total war, which required civilians to participate in the war effort, morale came to be recognized as a significant military factor, and propaganda slowly emerged as the principal instrument of control over public opinion and an essential weapon in the national arsenal" ("Opening Pandora's Box," 5).

When the United States finally entered the War in April 1917, Edward Bernays, who founded the field of public relations, coined the slogan, "Make the World Safe for Democracy!" Within days of the war declaration, President Wilson appointed Progressive journalist George Creel as chair of the Committee for Public Information (CPI). While the CPI performed many roles, more than anything else it functioned as a national news agency. Newspapers passing up content produced by the CPI (arguably, by some of the best news and information professionals of the time) would find few other sources of news related to the war, and would court financial ruin (Axelrod, *Selling the Great War*, Chap. 6).

Some of the information policies first formulated by the CPI remain with us today. In 1991, and again in 2003, military authorities had complete, air-tight control of information about American forces in Iraq. In June 1917, The CPI sent the first 'embedded' reporters to France with General Pershing, and the practice of making journalists dependent on the armed forces for information is still frequently used as a means of 'controlling the narrative' of war in the 21st century.

While propaganda is not always accompanied by violence, it is associated with it. In a definitional article on propaganda, Beth Bennett and Sean O'Rourke place propaganda along a "spectrum of influence." Rhetoric--speech or writing which appeals to audiences to make a choice or take action which the speaker favors, is on one end of the spectrum. Propaganda, which attempts to corral audiences into a single choice or action, is next. The next two terms are "coercion" and "force." That is to say, war is the bluntest and most violent form of persuasion. The term "psychological warfare" would fit in this spectrum somewhere near propaganda. For example, during the Revolutionary War, George Washington, writing in the *Pennsylvania Press*, skillfully capitalized on the reputation of frontiersmen in his forces as highly skilled marksmen: "The worst of these men will put a ball into a man's head at a distance of 150 or 200 yards, therefore advise your officers who shall hereafter come out to

America to settle their affairs in England before their departure" (Thum and Thum, "War Propaganda and the American Revolution," 78).

In contemporary U.S. society, audiences are likely to equate propaganda with biased, false or misleading information before they give any thought to its coercive force. And yet the state of our communications environment is such that average citizens are exposed to such forces on a daily basis. Media literacy education is needed to understand what those forces are, and to distinguish the outlines of propaganda in all its guises. For example, the scripts and techniques that unscrupulous salespeople use with prospective customers functions much in the same way that propaganda does. As Douglas Rushkoff explains in *Coercion*, these techniques are used with the expectation that "people can be handled, made to like you, won over, and ultimately changed without their knowledge" (37). In his first chapter, "Hand to Hand," Rushkoff narrates the story of a friend who sold a bed to an elderly couple at an inflated cost. Rushkoff proceeds to deftly compare his friend's interactions with the couple with strategies developed in CIA interrogation manuals. One results in the close of a highly lucrative sale, the other in the extraction of highly valuable information--which may also be used to influence others.

In this issue of *Connections*, we discuss the variety of forms in which propaganda appears, and provide media literacy resources to help you formulate your responses to it. In our first research article, we turn to the work of two prominent scholars in the field of rhetoric to discuss the differences between propaganda and open, public discussion and decision making. In our second research article, we discuss the main argument of Edward S. Herman and Noam Chomsky's influential book *Manufacturing Consent: The Political Economy of the Mass Media*, and address the challenge of responding to propaganda that is more pervasive or indirect in nature. In our resources section, we present a discussion between CML Director Tessa Jolls and Museum of Tolerance Director Liebe Geft on the uses of museum education and media literacy education to confront the social problems created by propaganda in contemporary society. In addition, we present a case study of commercial propaganda in the form of corporate-supported campaigns for breast cancer awareness. And in our MediaLit Moment, your late elementary and middle school students will have the chance to contemplate the values that comic book superheroes represent, and to imaginatively reconstruct them as emissaries of their own view of the world.

Research Highlights

Distinguishing Between Rhetoric and Propaganda

The U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum offers a concise definition of propaganda: biased information designed to shape public opinion and behavior. The intentions behind propaganda are not always bad. For example, a billboard that discourages teens from consumption of alcoholic beverages would generally be considered a public service. The bias in the message has to do with the exclusion of alternative or opposing views.

In their overview of developments in the study of rhetoric and propaganda, Beth Bennett and Sean O'Rourke find that perjorative connotations for the word "propaganda" accumulated rapidly in the 20th century, at a time when propaganda was widely used to build the power of nation states. And yet little was done to separate propaganda from beneficial uses of rhetoric because no single discipline could be applied to the task. Communication studies focused on effective, strategic persuasion in mass media, while speech or rhetorical studies concentrated on public address skills and development of effective, responsible civic leadership. And, according to the authors, matters became more complex towards the end of the 20th century and the beginning of the 21st. Some critics pointed out that humanistic rhetoric assumed equal access to society's mainstream public forums when access was anything but guaranteed. And, while the development of new media technologies has afforded increased opportunities for public expression of private identities or lives, the widespread use of those technologies has not necessarily led to increased demand for new media sites as venues for public rhetoric--the reciprocal exchange of different or conflicting views. And some contemporary communication scholars argue that users of new media are simply allowing themselves to be entertained with guile and charm and flattered by what they want to hear ("Prolegomenon to Future Study of Rhetoric and Propaganda," 54-56).

It must be noted that this last argument has been made about media audiences for some time. Neil Postman writes at length about the distraction of audiences in his classic text *Amusing Ourselves to Death: Public Discourse in the Age of Show Business* (1985). Generally, the argument carries with it the assumption that audiences are passively consuming media. In his [Voices of Media Literacy](#) interview, Jean Pierre Gouy argues that the notion of passive consumption mischaracterizes the relationship between audiences and producers: "Our personality is stimulated and guided by numerous motivations, desires or fears whose origins might sometimes be innate, but are more often the result of personal history or the effect of our socio-cultural milieu. Among them are the attraction of the unknown, the fear of death, to be rejected. . .all kinds of forces, often contradictory, which lead us toward certain messages, to certain depictions, with such an intensity that, beguiled by a fantasy or fascinated by anxiety, we lose control and give ourselves up to its attraction" (17). Throughout his interview, Gouy argues that these attractions are what make us vulnerable to the propagandist's art.

In their analysis of rhetoric and propaganda, Bennett and O'Rourke draw binary distinctions between the two in terms of Audience, Nature of Choice, Desired Response, Means, Nature of Truth, and Self.

In the use of rhetoric, audience members are seen as co-participants in decision making, and as persons worthy of the presumption of equal respect. In propaganda, audiences tends to be seen as a target or recipient, "as something to be struck or filled" (67).

Because the propagandist tends to view the audience in an instrumental way, and usually seeks efficient use of the audience to achieve desired ends, he or she generally seeks to limit the field of choice open to audience members. Choice is limited by strict control of information flow, by appeals to "act now," and by concealing source information. In rhetoric, on the other hand, persuaders try to offer audiences a wider range of significant choices. The rhetor may not fully explain all points of view or all sides of an argument, but still seeks to promote an open investigation into the claims and counterclaims made about the issue under discussion.

Accordingly, rhetoric seeks to promote a thinking response from audiences. Bennett and O'Rourke draw from the work of Hannah Arendt to define this as a "reasoned, self-reflexive deliberate engagement of a person's cognitive and affective functions"(68). In other words, rhetoric seeks to engage the whole person--rational, emotional and moral. Propaganda, by comparison, seeks to short-circuit thinking. The propagandist prefers a reactionary, behavioral response where thought is minimized and reflection diminished. As Golay suggests, the propagandist always seeks out an emotional response from his audience.

Obviously, propagandists will choose the most effective means of persuasion available. Frequently, propaganda comes in the form of emotional appeals imaginatively constructed to produce immediate action (a perfect description of advertising!). Further, the propagandist probes the audience for weaknesses--needs, desires, unfulfilled dreams, identity issues, and more--in order to exploit them. The rhetor, by comparison, must limit him- or herself to ethical appeals, in which the inventive challenge is to appeal, with reason, to the whole person, and encourage investigation, questioning, and response.

For the rhetorician, the "true" and the "good" is discovered and constructed in the public sphere. From a media literacy perspective, this discovery of truth is part of the Empowerment Spiral, where reflection and discussion among students leads to action. In the practice of propaganda, truth is simply determined by the propagandist's goal.

Finally, in the practice of rhetoric, the persuader sees him- or herself as a co-participant in decision making, and is often, but not always, of equal or lesser power than many others. The propagandist, on the other hand, views him- or herself as more important than others. Often he works on behalf of those in some position of power and thus sees himself as greater and more important than the rest of society.

How to Respond to Propaganda without a Propagandist?

In *Manufacturing Consent: The Political Economy of the Mass Media*, Edward S. Herman and Noam Chomsky argue that a web of media institutions advance the propaganda aims of what is essentially a corporate state. The first paragraph renders the argument with concision: "The mass media serve as a system for communicating messages to inculcate individuals with the values, beliefs and codes of behavior that will integrate them into the institutional structures of the larger society. In a world of concentrated wealth and major conflicts of class interest, to fulfill this role requires systematic propaganda"(1). No Josef Goebbels or Wizard of Oz is behind the curtain directing the flow of information. Propaganda is the product of the entire media sphere.

From a media literacy perspective, this view of mass media can be problematic. The media are universally condemned as tools of power. Mass media can only serve to distract audiences from the truly critical issues of the time. The pleasure which youth take from popular culture is entirely guilty; instead, they should be charting the structures of the global conglomerates which constrain, if not dictate, what they find pleasurable or rewarding in their lives.

On the other hand, the idea that mass media serve to integrate audiences into larger institutional structures is supported by the work of a number of media literacy pioneers. For example, in his *Voices of Media Literacy* interview, Len Masterman points to the implications of television as a representational system: "Who is doing the representing? Who is telling us that this is the way the world is? That their way of seeing is simply natural? . . . Then we have inevitably to consider the nature of the world which is being presented to us as common-sensed. What are its values and dominant assumptions?" (5-6). Elizabeth Thoman, CML's Founder, in her *Media and Values* article "Rise of the Image Culture," observes the cumulative effect of advertising: ". . . when an ad reaches us in combination with other TV commercials, magazine ads, radio spots and billboards for detergents and designer jeans, new cars and cigarettes, and soft drinks and cereals and computers, the collective effect is that they all *teach us to buy*" (emphasis in original). The field of critical media literacy studies has been built in large part on the contributions of these pioneers.

How does one respond to propaganda? Generally, the methods for responding to direct propaganda are simpler than the methods for countering propaganda that is more pervasive or indirect. Propaganda which perpetuates negative racial and ethnic stereotypes must be challenged, or prejudice will remain unchecked. Use of information literacy skills to assess the credibility of sources and persuasive claims remains an essential task. Among others, news releases by public relations agencies are a great resource for interrogating the intentions of producers and analyzing propaganda techniques.

Arguably, public relations agencies pose a serious threat to democratic deliberation and debate because their methods can be difficult to detect. They can fashion documents which

appear to advance scientific research but promote the interests of a client. They can pump comments onto social media sites which appear to originate from the general public, or they can create front groups which claim to represent genuine constituencies. While public relations agencies can be very secretive about their practices, media scholar Sue Curry Jansen suggests that there is some good news: "In efforts to increase their efficiency, reach and penetration, and to amplify their powers, they may have inadvertently made some of their activities easier to track, inasmuch as size attracts attention from regulatory agencies, business media, investors and business research companies" ("International Public Relations," 234). In a new media age, one response to public relations propaganda is to invite students to use the tools of the investigative journalist.

And what about the proliferation of media forms which are not fastidious about accuracy, including those which distract, flatter and titillate --news shows which deliver substantial helpings of opinion, infotainment, celebrity gossip, or reality television, to mention a few? Deconstructive analysis, particularly with Key Questions 4 and 5, which can clarify the values and intentions of producers, may be the best defense.

By the same token, media education shouldn't always be premised on a defensive stance towards media texts that are biased or play loosely with the facts. In a recent article in *I/S Journal*, media literacy scholar Renee Hobbs focuses on media which blur the boundaries between art, journalism and advocacy, and suggests that these should not be dismissed out of hand. For example, Jason Russell's Kony 2012 video was widely criticized for its de-contextualized and paternalistic treatment of complex social and political issues--and yet some audiences responded favorably. Some saw it as an innovative use of new media to raise awareness for an important cause. Still others responded empathetically to what they saw as an artistic and deeply emotional expression of identity.

For Hobbs, such "blurry" media texts are some of the best sources for media literacy education: "When a text is blurry, I'd say that we don't want to reject it, because blurry texts force people into social situations where they must discuss the meaning, if they're not sure about it. Have you seen "The Thin Blue Line"? It's a movie that blurred fact and fiction in such elegantly complicated ways. Trying to make sense of it meant that you had to talk about a movie for once."

"I actually think blurry texts are good for democracy and for media literacy and critical thinking. They force us into conversations. I trust the *New York Times*. I accept it as fact; it doesn't require my participation. But blurry texts force me to turn into an active interpreter. I have to talk back. Otherwise, I'll be confused. You need to engage with other people as well."

Perhaps most intriguing is Hobbs' argument that educators should take students far beyond the task of interrogating the blurry text for its truth-value: "The approach most often taken to texts in school is, is it factual or not? But in school we really need to learn how to tackle texts

from many points of view, which will really help you in life. If the only way to encounter them is to ask whether they're accurate or not, or literary or not, or beautiful or not, it will limit your experience. Students aren't being trained to look at a text from 30,000 feet up, through sociological analysis, or to swoop back down to look at the emotional heart of a text--or to look at its literary qualities, its language and images, or to look at the technological constructedness of the text. We need to look at texts multi-perspectively. It's really an important way to manage our relationship with media today.



CML Recommends The 2014 Horizon Report
As stated on the NMC website, *The NMC Horizon Report 2014 K-12 Edition examines emerging technologies for their potential impact on and use in teaching, learning, and creative inquiry within the environment of pre-college education.*

The internationally recognized NMC Horizon Report series and regional NMC Technology Outlooks are part of the NMC Horizon Project, a comprehensive research venture established in 2002 that identifies and describes key trends, significant challenges, and emerging technologies likely to have a large impact over the coming five years in education around the globe.

CONSORTIUM
for **MEDIA LITERACY**

Uniting for Development

About Us...

The Consortium for Media Literacy addresses the role of global media through the advocacy, research and design of media literacy education for youth, educators and parents.

The Consortium focuses on K-12 grade youth and their parents and communities. The research efforts include nutrition and health education, body image/sexuality, safety and responsibility in media by consumers and creators of products. The Consortium is building a body of research, interventions and communications that demonstrate scientifically that media literacy is an effective intervention strategy in addressing critical issues for youth.

<http://consortiumformedia literacy.org>

Resources for Media Literacy

Interview with Liebe Geft, Simon Wiesenthal Center

Liebe Geft is the Director of the Museum of Tolerance (MOT) in Los Angeles. Over the past 17 years Geft has significantly developed and integrated the Youth Education, Professional Development and Public Outreach Divisions of the Museum. The *Tools for Tolerance®* programs which she developed have been recognized by the President's Council on Race and the U.S. Department of Justice as among the best practices in the country, and continue to win numerous awards. These programs include leadership initiatives which have served over 200,000 professionals in the public and private sectors, and are also offered at the Museum of Tolerance in New York. She has initiated several customized programs in the Department of Youth Empowerment and Education which serve over 130,000 youth per year, and reach out to the broad community through interactive exhibits, innovative technologies and a series of Arts and Lectures programs. Geft is a frequent speaker at national and international seminars and conferences, and regularly moderates public debates on pressing social issues. She has lived and worked on four continents, enjoying successful careers as an English teacher and television news anchor.

In this interview, Geft and CML Director Tessa Jolls discuss the problems created by propaganda, and the need for media education to help young people become aware, informed, engaged and responsible citizens.

TJ: What lessons have been learned regarding propaganda, given the central role that it played in bringing on the Holocaust?

LG: The museum presents alarming examples of the power of media and its potential abuses, which are far reaching if left unchecked. Propaganda is a special part of the work of the museum. It's an integral part of museum experience, and one of most important facets of discovery, this journey that the museum encourages visitors to embark upon. Propaganda is related to our theme of "The power of words and images." When we visit the events of the Holocaust in Nazi-dominated Europe, we're doing so not for the sake of learning historical fact, or transporting ourselves back in time, but to learn the imperatives and compelling lessons which will help shape a better informed, more tolerant, more enlightened future.

Propaganda was one of most powerful tools of the Nazis which was very deliberately engaged. The Nazis documented their perspectives, intentions, and uses of all sorts of means to hammer home their message. One of the most compelling lessons of this collection is the need to understand how vitally important it is for us to become critically analytical consumers of messages, especially as global communications and digital communication have become so widespread.

At the museum, we have the testimony of Joseph Goebbels on how to tell a powerful lie, and to tell it often enough so that everyone will believe it. And all this was written and documented so proudly. The idea behind the propaganda machine was that the great mass of people, in the simplicity of their hearts, would be taken in by a big lie, not a little one. The big lie was intended to simplify the message that there was just one enemy, with the intention to wrap all the racism into this propaganda, and unleash it through every known means possible--through adult education, through literature in multiple publications, through public administration and public organizations. Within two months of March 1933, the Reichs Ministry of Popular Enlightenment and Propaganda was created. It was created to generate deliberate oversimplification of ideas, which were repeated over and over again, with tremendous disrespect and condescension to the public. Hitler worked in the propaganda section of the Bavarian army after World War I. Nazi propaganda didn't just start in 1933 and end in 1945. Hitler very well knew its power, how it could be manipulated, and wrote quite extensively about it. It was not at all intended for the scientifically trained intellectual. He wrote that intellectuals won't be swayed, and that propaganda was meant for the masses.

Of the lessons that we've learned from the Holocaust, one of the most chilling and most relevant is that propaganda starts with a big lie and dehumanization. From there the propagandist moves on to study technique, environment, and audience receptivity. As audiences, if we don't ask the question, how do I know?--if we don't analyze each piece of information, for source, intention, and missing voices--then we are at risk of being lumped in with easily swayed and ignorant masses.

The first thing that visitors to the museum see is a corridor filled with real time, random uncensored feeds from multiple news sources. These include sources from the Internet and social media--all of this just to force ourselves to ask, what do I know about world in which I live? What do I do about it? What role do I play? And, what's being selected as newsworthy? Much of the news that shows up on these feeds are really the latest gossip and scandal, which may lead visitors to ask, of all the important things happening in the world today, is that what the media is telling us what's important?

It's critically important for us to distinguish what is a valid point of view, even if we disagree, and where there is systemic promotion of ideas to manipulate our thinking or promote someone else's cause. We owe it to our ourselves to learn and teach these skills, and to our children, and grandchildren.

Recently we learned about a critical thinking exercise undertaken with 8th grade students. The primary question for the exercise was, did the Holocaust happen, or was it concocted to gain sympathy? It took long a time for this to come to light. As it turned out, some of the sources from which students could derive their arguments were sources promoting denial of the Holocaust. It was irresponsible, misguided, and done in name of enlightened education, and made use of Common Core practice for critical thinking.

TJ: It shows the need for methodologies for teachers to teach critical thinking in a credible way, using the core concepts of media literacy.

LG: We're an educational institution. All of us hope that our work can be an antidote to hatred and misinformation. One of the partners we work with, Rabbi Jonathan Sacks, in the UK, argues that human dignity comes from the opportunity and exposure to technologies of communication, and also the skills to use them wisely, so as to not fall prey to their malicious intent.

We want to inform and inspire. We don't want to indoctrinate or embitter. We're concerned about knowledge and information, and knowing how to use them wisely. We cannot be responsible, engaged citizens in a participatory democracy if we're not given the methodologies and skills to navigate in a vast universe of information--not just images, but words and music, and every facet of communication. The knowledge and skill to rise above it and see through it is a crucial element for teaching children for the 21st century.

TJ: Children have access to everything now. They need to know how to discern the nature of the media and information that comes their way when they're up against the masters of manipulation.

LG: The techniques of propaganda are being used to spread hatred, and for the purposes of terrorism even today. They're lifted lock, stock and barrel from the Nazi playbook. Language is hijacked for these purposes. The elements of dehumanization are used--using some truths and half truths for the big lie that they construct. Information is used selectively, and messages are simplified. There's a deliberate play on emotions, which is used to attack opponents viciously. Some of this goes into advertising for political campaigns to sway audiences and win support. There's something nefarious about propaganda versus actively promoting and trying to persuade audiences with a transparent, solidly supported idea or platform.

TJ: We'd like to send you a link for one of our Voices of Media Literacy interviews--a project in which we interviewed twenty of the pioneers in the field. Jean Pierre Golay was the founder of the first educational television station in Switzerland. He lived through the era of Nazi propaganda, and commented on how it affected lives in Switzerland. He was familiar with Goebbels' rules of propaganda. Each of the interviewees was given an opportunity to add materials to the initial interview, and Golay's interview became quite substantial. Golay is a fascinating figure, and he's a giant in media literacy circles.

Since Golay's time, we've had all this increased access to media platforms that we can use to create our own media; so, we're starting to emphasize media production, and what does it mean to be a responsible producer? We're looking at other side of the coin now. Since costs have gone down, it's much more possible to work with students and teachers to do that.

LG: We've all become producers of media. It's a critically important skill for us to learn.

TJ: We started with a focus on how it works, and how to deconstruct it, and now we can apply some of those same principles to ourselves as producers and circulators of media messages.

LG: These are great developments. At the same time, because there is so much media out there, it adds a great deal of intensity to what you have to say. It's a daunting task.

TJ: We are trying to institutionalize the methods of media literacy. The methodology needs to be recognized and incorporated into training and credentialing for teachers.

LG: The first national grant that we wrote was for teacher training. We actually built a media lab next to the library, with the purpose of nurturing tolerance and diversity. At the heart of our teaching was the methodology, the media skills and awareness needed to understand why tolerance and diversity is so critically important. Maybe we were just a little ahead of our time, but I don't think there's any doubt now, given what's happening in our media world, where the sheer volume and number of channels have increased exponentially. It's even more urgent now, but if we have the right method and skills, it doesn't matter how much the media have expanded, if we can approach each text, and each task, in a deliberate, well-informed manner.

We have an enormous amount of research on the negative side of the issues--the hate, the bullying, discrimination, prejudice. By now it's an entire field of social studies to itself. But from the perspective of the museum, it's not sufficient. It's not sufficient to say, don't do evil. What is inclusive to respect, and what does it look like?

We need to actively pursue human dignity, and how to put this pursuit into practice, so that we can have an environment in which real learning can take place. We know what is disrespectful and non-inclusive. We know about the teaching environments in which tolerance and diversity will not take root. We've done a good job of pointing out the perils of propaganda, indifference, and its cost to human society. These are very important. We're not paying attention to these things until we're shocked to our very core. But every person can make a difference, and there is a way to create environments conducive to positive outcomes. This is where we need to focus our attention on education for opening the eyes and minds of students, and not on facts and figures to spew back.

We need to up the ante, to amplify our ability to articulate and implement this kind of education. We've always been positioned to do so. At one point I analyzed the themes in museum. That kind of exercise makes one mindful of what museum visitors are seeing, and why. The power of words and images was clearly one of the most important themes--but personal responsibility was also key.

Cause-Related Marketing and Breast Cancer Awareness: A Case Study

In previous articles for this issue, we've discussed how to define, analyze and respond to propaganda. In this article, we examine a particular form of propaganda--corporate marketing of a social cause--and discuss a particular case: corporate marketing of breast cancer awareness.

In cause-related marketing (CRM), a company (or a celebrity or other entity) selects a social cause which reflects its brand image and appeals to its customer base, partners with a non-profit organization devoted to that cause, and establishes a program in which customer purchases trigger a donation to the partner organization. Advertising and publicity alert the customer to the existence of the program, affirms the company's commitment to an important social or environmental cause, and congratulates the customer for supporting that cause with his next purchase.

Bennett and O'Rourke, referenced in our first research article on definitions of propaganda, suggest that hidden (as opposed to revealed) intent is a primary characteristic of propaganda. The messaging in cause-related marketing falls into this category. While companies publicize the social benefits generated by their programs, they don't discuss the "bottom line" benefits that accrue to the company itself. Customer purchases can generate substantial profits, non-profit partners can generate considerable free publicity (and advertising) for the company, and customers and other attendees at public events become talent/assets who help burnish the company's brand image.

Bennett and O'Rourke also suggest that propaganda is characterized by unilateral communication, as opposed to dialogue. In CRM, one-way messages define what constitutes the "good" that customers and the public should be working towards. These goods must match the priorities of the company, and the interests of customers, especially if the company caters to a wealthy clientele. Given the company's sensitivity to its brand image, it's likely to negotiate those priorities with the non-profit partner, and any other partners, before any public discussion is held.

One case in point are CRM campaigns for breast cancer "awareness." Samantha King, author of *Pink Ribbons, Inc.: Breast Cancer and the Politics of Philanthropy*, asks, "What exactly does 'awareness' mean in the context of breast cancer, and what is that consumers are being asked to gain 'awareness' of?" (95). In her profile of Avon international breast cancer campaigns, King writes, "When Avon campaigns do venture into specifics, awareness usually means preaching the benefits of early detection through mammograms" (ibid).

Why the focus on detection? Undisclosed self-interest may play a role. Pharmaceutical companies and equipment manufacturers are often recruited as research partners for clinical studies--and can potentially benefit from this research as well. Astra Zeneca, the producer of tamoxifen, one of the best-selling breast cancer drugs, clearly has an interest in early

detection. As more women are screened, sales of tamoxifen are likely to increase. Not coincidentally, Astra Zeneca founded National Breast Cancer Awareness Month in 1985. As discussed in our research article on definitions of propaganda, propaganda tends to offer audiences a limited range of choices for action, and this is also characteristic of corporate-supported breast cancer campaigns. Consumers can buy a product which triggers a donation, wear a pink ribbon or buy pink-colored merchandise intended to raise awareness, or they can participate in sponsored events, usually a walk or run for breast cancer awareness. Again, public discussion of choices is relatively limited, as companies and their partners generally strategize actions for others to follow.

The last choice mentioned, walking or running 'for the cure,' deserves to be placed in a category by itself. As Bennett and O'Rourke explain, propaganda appeals to the emotions. Almost universally, corporate-supported breast cancer campaigns frame their advocacy as a "battle" against cancer that can and must be won. "Survivors" in the battle take an honored place in public events, and those who walk or run are encouraged to see themselves as an advance guard in the fight.

While the appeal to emotion in the battle against cancer doesn't mask hidden agendas, it does enforce a culture of optimism among participants which deserves discussion. In "Pink Ribbons, Inc.," a 2011 film based on King's book, a group of stage 4 (terminal) breast cancer patients are interviewed, one of whom reflects, "The message is, if you try hard enough, you put forth the effort, if you just live strong maybe, you can beat it. The problem is that you can't have that message, and then not see people who die as somehow not having lost. . . I don't know that people really think that through, but it's a very clear message that we are aware of."

Finally, corporate marketing of breast cancer awareness broadcasts the kind of pervasive, indirect propaganda discussed in our second research article. In this case, the message is that the consumer economy is sufficient to the task of solving the problem presented by breast cancer, and that scientific research and industrial production are the best means of finding a solution. While companies and their partners (most notably Susan G. Komen for the Cure) devote significant resources to promoting the advantages of these approaches, members of the public hear little about their potential disadvantages and liabilities.

For example, the emphasis on early detection assumes that women have access to health care which includes coverage for mammograms. King notes that breast cancer activists and some biomedical practitioners argue that the breast cancer movement has historically focused on funding of research, rather than on access to or payment for treatment. And they argue that the cancer control establishment (the American Cancer Society, National Cancer Institute, the CDC, FDA, etc.) and the larger breast cancer movement has been composed of affluent individuals for whom the costs or availability of medical care have been largely irrelevant. King concludes that the aversion to dealing with access to treatment "grows out of a broader culture of for-profit health research and care and a commitment to maintaining market-drive service provision" (xviii).

And, most ironically, the companies which support breast cancer awareness may be contributing to the cause, as well as the cure. Until its corporate reorganization in 2000, Astra Zeneca was a subdivision of Imperial Chemical, a leading producer of the carcinogenic herbicide acetochlor, as well as numerous chlorine and petroleum-based products that have been linked to breast cancer (King, xxi). In addition, the Environmental Working Group's Skin Deep database, which provides safety reviews for over 50,000 personal care products, finds that Avon, Revlon and other cosmetic companies involved in the breast cancer awareness movement sell products linked to cancer and a variety of other health problems. If we are going to have an open discussion of priorities for breast cancer advocacy and research, a focus on prevention might be a good place to begin.

Resources for this Issue

New Resource: "News Literacy: Teaching the Internet Generation to Make Reliable Information Choices" by James Klurfeld and Howard Schneider

What information neighborhood are you in? Journalism? Entertainment? Advertising? Publicity? Propaganda? That's one of the main questions asked by faculty at the Center for News Literacy at SUNY Stony Brook, which has been up and running since 2008. In the last six years, founder and former *Newsday* editor Howard Schneider and his colleagues have had time to fine tune their freshman course (which will have served 10,000 students by fall of this year), export the curriculum to 50 other universities, initiate an international exchange program, and start the process of program evaluation. This report is a review of lessons learned in the teaching of news literacy, and the possibilities for fostering this vital citizenship skill in the future. A link to this report is available at:

<http://www.brookings.edu/blogs/fixgov/posts/2014/07/03-good-news-news-literacy-rauch>

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MediaLit Moments

Superheroes, New and Improved!

Summer is here, and Marvel superheroes are . . .getting a makeover? In a single week, Marvel comics fans have been rocked by the news that Thor can no longer take up the hammer, and must yield it to a woman. And Steve Rogers, a.k.a. Captain America, has shed the cape and bestowed the mantle of Captain America on Sam Wilson, the African-American superhero formerly known as the Falcon. Usually, audiences view superheroes as standard-bearers for a generic "American Way" that they might not be able to articulate even if they were asked to do so. Makeovers like these, however, stimulate the moral and sociological imagination of audiences by reminding them that superheroes can and do represent specific values, lifestyles and points of view. In this MediaLit Moment, your late elementary and middle school students will get the chance to revise their favorite fantasy characters to embody--and even deliver--the message of their choice.

Ask students to "revise" a fantasy character they already like

AHA! By changing this character, I can say things that are important to me!

Grade Level: 4-7

Key Question #4 for Producers: Have I clearly and consistently framed values, lifestyles and points of view in my content?

Key Question #4: What values, lifestyles and points of view are represented in, or omitted from, this message?

Core Concept #4: Media have embedded values and points of view

Materials: Paper, pencil, imagination

Activity: Deliver the news to students about the recent changes to Marvel characters if they haven't heard it already, and ask for their reactions (If you wish, display or play relevant media to help engage them in the activity). If they read comic books often, have they seen similar changes before?

Familiarize students with KQ and CC #4. One way of introducing students to the concept is to ask, what might these new versions of classic superheroes have to say about themselves, and why? Since these changes have to do with race and gender, you may want to ask questions to heighten students' awareness of larger social issues.

Next, ask students to pick a fantasy character they like, and change that character to reflect

their own outlook on the world. Producing a sketch should help students imagine and present the changes to their character. Has that character changed radically (like Thor or Captain America)? Have they simply picked up a new hobby? Next, ask students to explain the significance of the changes they've made. Is there something new this character has to say? What would the world be like if this character indeed had the power to change the world? As discussion continues, help students recognize that they're exchanging different points of view about what an ideal world should be like.

The Five Core Concepts and Five Key Questions of media literacy were developed as part of the Center for Media Literacy's MediaLit Kit™ and Questions/TIPS (Q/TIPS)™ framework. Used with permission, ©2002-2014, Center for Media Literacy, <http://www.medialit.com>