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COM416

Propaganda Reflection

Propaganda is the mode of communication used to spread information, facts, ideas, allegations, and rumors to manipulate or influence the opinions of groups in order to support a belief or particular cause. People have been influenced by propaganda in many ways because it has taken the form of artwork, speeches, music, and advertisement. When you think of the word propaganda most would have negative thoughts, however the word is sometimes used in a positive way. Propaganda can include substantial emphasis on the benefits and merits of one idea or group.

In my class Com416, I have learned a great deal about how the world is affected by propaganda. During this class I have also learned about government attempting to influence people through media by controlling which media outlets received the information. The government can also control the coverage of the news and shape the details the audience receives. According to Welch, "In the 20th century, the advent of total war changed forever the relationship between media, old-style diplomacy and the need for secrecy" (2013). The media during the 20th century has the power to mold people's opinions, and politicians feared them because of this (Welch, 2013). My eyes have been opened to how propaganda was used during removal of Native Americans, in the Jewish

Holocaust, in terrorism, in China, in Russia, in the ethnic cleansing of Tutsis in Rwanda, and in fake news demagoguery.

As I reflect on the reading, videos, and discussions during this class the thing I find most meaningful is how fake news and false advertisement use propaganda to get revenue. The reason I find fake news and false advertisement important is because I have been affected by propaganda. I am a witness of tabloids, media, news, and social media providing its readers with fake news and fake advertisement. I have been a victim of believing information posted to find out later that it was not true and was to benefit a cause.

I feel that fake news is a problem because it deliberately lies to the audience about the cause at hand. The deliberate lies cause the audience not to trust the information given by the media. False advertisement causes the audience to be skeptical to buy from a company (Carroll, 2017). The biggest problem with fake news and false advertisement in my opinion is that once the audience receives it they tend to share the information creating a world believing in deliberate lies.

Propaganda in advertising is used to promote or publicize a message that is bias or misleading to influence a customer to pick the product of advertised. The advertisers use propaganda to control what a large group of people should believe about a product. The hidden quality of propaganda is that the customer perceives the product and the communication about the product as the truth. Deliberately spreading of information about the product through mass media helps the advertiser to communicate and have an affect on the consumer.

Media is guilty of presenting breaking news just to be the first as opposed to being correct. The reporter is privy to inside information and feels their source is beneficial so they go with getting the news out. Companies go with presenting a product just to get a competitive advantage by dramatizing their commercial or making it sound as if it is the best product. Everyone is so focused on the speed of getting information out that they do not focus on the actual validity and quality of the information. The world is a big competition to get the audience of those willing to listen. With fake news and false advertisement it is hard to believe what you hear on media.

In the newspaper, on television, and on social media there are so many ads of false hope. For example McDonalds shows pictures of big juicy burgers that are perfect, however when you receive it from the store you are disappointed. The teenagers and woman are also affected by the face cleanser ads such as proactive and Clearasil. As a basketball player I know first hand about the advertisement on sportswear and sneakers. The advertisement will help you to believe that if you purchase Kobe Bryant sneakers you will play like him or even have his skills set. Another example is that buying Jordans will make you “play like Mike” or jump high and dunk the ball.

Now that the world has become conscious about weight loss many ads have products that make you think you can lose weight overnight. I know you have heard about the drink that you have and you never have to workout or the pill that will burn fat overnight. Other examples of how the media and companies grab your attention is through workout ads discussing how their machine, “shake

weights”, and workout video are more likely to help you lose weight. The problem occurs when a retraction is on media or in an advertisement. A retraction is when a correction is made or they give correct information about a situation or product. The same advertisement about the “shake weights” being better than dumbbells was proven to be untrue.

All the advertisements mentioned bring the audience into a state of emotion because the social marketing is rich with visuals and flashy terms to lure in the audience. According to Joffe (2008), there is power in using visual material, the state of emotion and identification to persuade an audience. The media and advertisement have a persuasive effect to get the audience to buy into the cause. For example the media shows serious car accidents to fear the audience to wear seatbelts. In today’s media there are many commercials of what will happen if you text and drive, this is an example of evoking fear to persuade the audience. There are benefits to these fear evoking commercials because drivers are being cautious because they have a visual of what may happen if they don’t wear their seatbelt or text and drive.

What do you actually believe and how do you know who is telling the truth? You really never know what to actually believe unless you research a topic and find a reliable source. Don’t allow fake news, false advertisement, or propaganda to persuade you. Check the websites, dig deep for the truth and look into products for your self. Don’t always believe what you hear. Don’t be the victim to propaganda.

Reference:

Joffe, H. (2008). The power of visual material: Persuasion, emotion, and identification. *Diogenes* 55 (1) p.84-93 doi: 10.1177/0392192107087919

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