

The News, The Lies and How to Differentiate

Michelle Hall, November 19, 2021

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Mark Twain observed that “*If you don't read the newspaper, you're uninformed. If you read the newspaper, you're mis-informed.*” While the way news is disseminated since his time may have changed, his observation still holds. Today, most news sources intentionally try to give you a false narrative, typically for political reasons. Let us explore how to identify misinformation, also known as propaganda.

Our media, especially the news, has always been our “trusted” source for what is happening in our towns and cities. Media in the last 3 decades has evolved from paper sources and television to 24hr access via the internet and cable television. Society today believes they have an avenue to news and current events about their community to the fullest degree. But what they do not realise is that much of the available “news” is government propaganda, skewed toward a specific party. They no longer are impartial.

Governmental influence in the production of the news is not new. There is a very tight connection between the governing bodies of a country and those who are bringing the citizens the news. The media plays a vital role in bringing knowledge to the public that concerns the world and local events. But if the public is only given that which the government *feels* we need, then we are not getting unbiased information to support good decision making. We will have received government cherry picked info. Could this then mean we are not fully informed?

Propaganda comes from the Latin word “propagare” – meaning how plants reproduce and expand their territory. History has evolved that word to be used as “propagating.” All propaganda is used to expand or reproduce “their” (whoever *they* maybe) beliefs, ideologies, interests, by trying to convince others to follow with them in their pursuits or persuade the masses from seeing any other contravening ideas/beliefs. Propaganda is messaging used to spread an ideology or worldview. Britannica.com defines it as “dissemination of information, facts, arguments, rumours, half truths, or lies to influence public opinion.” Wikipedia defines it as “Information that is not impartial and is used to influence an audience and further an agenda, often presenting facts selectively to encourage a particular synthesis or using loaded messages to produce an emotional rather than a rational response to the info presented.”

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William W. Biddle, an American social scientist, concluded in 1931, that “*Propaganda as a means of social control, is relying less upon techniques which help the individual to come to intelligent control of his conduct, and is relying more on techniques which induce the individual to follow non-rational, emotional drives.*”

Biddle also further identified four main principles of successful propaganda:

1. *Rely on emotions, never argue.*
2. *Cast propaganda into the pattern of “we” vs “an enemy”.*
3. *Reach groups as well as the individual.*
4. *Hide the propagandist as much as possible.*

The methodology by which propaganda is pushed to the public must be capable of changing minds and must look like they have your best interests at heart. Propaganda can come as a threat of repression, a form of extortion, to subdue its public into an “acceptable” narrative. Past historical narratives are used to lend credence to the new “plan” or proposed action to shroud the liberties the government is taking to create their new “order.” For example “Climate Change” and the imposition of “carbon” taxes and the demonization of the petroleum industry.

Governments have been using propaganda as a part of their “official toolbox” for as long as recorded history. They use it in well thought out, very deliberate ways to persuade its country’s citizens in support of whatever cause they want us to “follow.” The Canadian government established the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC) in 1936, and the National Film Board in 1939. The latter produced five hundred films during the Second World War that were shown before feature films at theatres. The founding commissioner called these propaganda films “a hammer to shape society.”

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During the Cold War, most of the world was divided into the west (US led) and the east (soviet led) and they each used propaganda to convince people that their way was the right way. Canada used the CBC-IS (International Services). It was the Canadian governments tool in what it referred to as “political warfare.” Lester Pearson, who at the time was the Liberal Foreign Minister, described it as “*doing valuable work for Canada*” and playing a useful part in the “*psychological war*” against communism. Pearson was also, at that time, a key player in a top-secret, interdepartmental group called “the psychological warfare committee.” This shows the “behind the scenes” happenings that we as a public are never privy to, until many years after its creation and use.

They have become stealthy in their propaganda. They realized over the years that people would rebel. So, the government decided to use media against us by scripting the “news.” In the last few years, it was brought to the worlds attention that the news was “fake news” and that they intentionally leave out pertinent facts or add a little bit of “misinformation” to cause the reader to not have a full, accurate version of the story. When scripted and manipulated by the government, it is no longer news but propaganda.

When most media organizations in your country are funded by billions of dollars from your government, they are now technically a division or office of the government. They will do the bidding of the government by always favourably highlighting that governments agenda and squashing any outside discussions. In Yves Engler’s book, “A Propaganda System: How Government, Corporations, Media, and Academia sell War and Exploitation” (2016), he documents “*The fiscal year of 2012-2013 DND (Dept. of National Defence) monitored a*

whopping 29,519 newspaper articles. That means that the Canadian Forces Public Affairs Office determined what members of the media were putting out the proper messaging.” Taxpayer funded, government monitored, fake news.

Serving the dictates of the political, military, and economic authorities to establish and shape the domestic and foreign policies of our country, we become a product of the era we are in. However, just following along with the beliefs and social orders of our government and ruling elites, not questioning the motives behind what shapes the country, does not excuse your affiliation with them. If they are working against the interests of the entire population or are actively collaborating with dictators or unscrupulous individuals, you too will be held accountable when the society stands up and takes back its country. As it was clearly stated at the Nuremberg Trials, *following the orders of superiors, no matter what your affiliation (be it military, political, economic, or social sphere) is NOT a legitimate excuse for criminal behaviour.* Not following common sense and morality, “turning a blind eye” to ensure your paycheck is not an excuse to act like a criminal under the guise of “just doing my job.”

The “father of propaganda”, Edward Bernays, said in 1928 “***The conscious and intelligent manipulation of the organized habits and opinions of the masses is an important element in a democratic society. Those who manipulate this unseen mechanism of society constitute an invisible government which is the true ruling power of our country. We are governed, our minds are molded, our tastes are formed, our ideas suggested largely by men we have never heard of.***”