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Student Name: Cassy Walsh
Student Number: 2007837
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Proposed question for Independent Project Part 1 : *How can I incorporate and highlight my feelings of disgust towards the continuous manipulation by the ruling classes using that clever jolt of revelation that Juxtaposition provides within my work?*

After looking at propaganda and imagery surrounding Russia and the Ukraine on the internet, I started to look at posters and other pro and anti-war propaganda throughout history. Inspired by this, I have decided that my three words are **Propaganda** (Chomsky propaganda theory, Welch). **Juxtaposition** (Berger, Shifman) and **Ideology** (Marx and Gransci's theory of cultural hegemony). These words are imperative to the power and sway of propaganda in my mind.

Propaganda

Meaning: Persuasive mass communication that filters and frames the issues of the day in a way that strongly favours particular interests; usually those of a government or corporations. Also, the intentional manipulation of public opinion through lies, half-truths, and the selective re-telling of history. (OED, 2022)

The use of propaganda is thousands of years old but came into its own in the 20th century with the rise of mass media followed by the internet, alongside modern-day conflicts, advertising and political sways. Propaganda is widely used for any movement which requires the consumer/ population to believe in it (Welch, 2013). The promoters (creators of propaganda) gain this by using deliberate acts to sway public opinions of the audience through the transmission of values and ideas for a "specific persuasive purpose that has been consciously thought out and designed to serve the self-interest of the propagandist" (Welch, 2013). David Welch, author and historian argues "Propaganda is the dissemination of ideas intended to convince people to think and act in a particular way for particular persuasive purpose" (Welch, 2013, p.2). These tactics have been highly influential and widely used since the start of the war in Ukraine, with the use of drawing Hitler's moustache and hair onto Putin's face as done by the Daily Star of Scotland (see figure 1). The intention was to link Putin's actions to those of Hitler; the negative impact of Hitler's dictatorship on the Jewish people directly compared to Putin's actions against the Ukrainian population.



Fig.1

Welch argues that education provides people with the knowledge and information to make up their own minds and make an informed decision; propaganda influences how people think and narrows the thought process (Welch, 2013). This definition provides a good tool on how to spot where propaganda is present.

Noam Chomsky (Social critic, philosopher and author) expresses that mass media is used as a method of communicating symbols to the general public. Its aim is to inform, amuse and entertain but the underlying narrative is to inculcate the populace by instilling ideologies, codes of behaviour and values that will align people with the institutional structures of larger society. This world has war and conflicts, a consumerist narrative which perpetuates class, so to enable this structure people are subjected to systemic propaganda (Herman and Chomsky, 1994). An example of this can be seen in the overpoweringly bright billboards on the sides of motorways designed to sell products. The rules of the road necessitate concentrating on driving with touching mobile devices not allowed however the position of the billboards is intended to distract and persuade when the consumer cannot look away. Arguably this can be considered as double standards and consumerist propaganda at its finest.

In the middle of World War 1 Woodrow Wilson was elected President under the slogan “Peace without victory”. The population at the time was very pacifistic and saw no reason to get drawn into the War in Europe. The Wilson Administration was in fact pro-war and in 1916 the Creel Commission (which later became the Committee on Public Information) was created and within six months it had turned this pacifistic population into a war-mongering and hysterical nation who wanted to destroy all things German. This was achieved by using propaganda images in the press (Chomsky, 2002). Such blanketing of propaganda caused dangerous outcomes such as suppression of freedom of thought and freedom of the press. A lesson was learned that if the more intelligent community can be enthused to indulge in this jingoism then the lower classes will be terrified into fanaticism. This was a tactic known to be used in England, was taken up by Hitler and is still used to this day (Chomsky, 2002). This was evident during the covid lockdown with the multitude of signs and banners saying ‘*Stay home, Protect the NHS, Save lives,’* showing people looking frightened with oxygen masks on (See Figure 2). These signs showed that if the rules were broken then vulnerable people may be killed as a direct result. This was very effective to persuade the masses into believing what was written and to follow the rules without question; that the vulnerable were protected by following the rules.



fig.2

In March 1933 Joseph Goebbels stated “propaganda is a much maligned and often misunderstood word. The layman uses it to mean something inferior or even despicable. The word propaganda always has a bitter aftertaste” (Welch, 2013 p. 2). Just after this was said Adolf Hitler appointed him as minister for popular enlightenment and propaganda. It’s ironic that Goebbels’ Nazi propaganda campaign went on to firmly align propaganda with sinister undertones. The Ancient Greeks however saw the art of persuasion as a logical element of communicating ideas successfully. In 336 BC Alexander the Great came to power and after a victory in the Persian empire he created a coin replacing Hercules (the son of Zeus) with his own image, using this as political propaganda (Welch, 2013). Similar propaganda is used today in on fifty pence pieces, with one side showing the face of our monarch and the other displaying what the government believe to be great points in our history on the reverse. Whilst the points in history are accurate, those considered great must be subjective and a matter of opinion.

Whilst Germany had the ‘Ministry of Popular Enlightenment and Propaganda’ the Soviet Union had its ‘Propaganda Committee of the Communist Party’. In contrast America had the ‘Office of War Information’ and Britain had their ‘Ministry of Information’. Each described the others activity as “‘propaganda’ whilst claiming that it was only themselves who disseminated the truth” (Welch, 2013). This has been rolled out endlessly from Russia recently as reasons to invade the Ukraine.

Propaganda plays a prominent role in contemporary society with pictures, adverts and information continually displayed. Its position is so constant that unless being directly discussed the average person is prone to miss its persuasive influence, instead considering it commonplace. On a daily basis certain ideals and information are presented, aligning the individual towards a certain standpoint or agenda, arguably persuading them to believe and act in a particular way, regardless of their choice or viewpoint.

Juxtaposition

Meaning: Juxtaposition can be defined as “the fact of putting things that are not similar next to each other” (Cambridge Dictionary, 2022): “the act or an instance of placing two or more things side by side often to compare or contrast or to create an interesting effect” (Merriam Webster, 2022).



Fig. 3

Berger said that “Photographs carry no certain meaning in themselves, because they are like images in the memory of a total stranger, that they lend themselves to any use” (Berger, 2009, p.57). He also went on to say “The way we see things is affected by what we know or believe” (Berger, 2008, p.8) “We are always looking at the relation between things and ourselves” (Berger, 2008, p.9) Therefore, the use of Collage as an art form and communication method for stark political standpoints is a powerful one. It gives the artist full rein to evoke many juxtaposing emotions to gravitate the viewer to a different perspective or solidify their own opinion.

Memes are a far reaching and popular way to engage the online masses to a political standpoint. They frequently use juxtaposition, collage and image manipulation within their imagery. Some political memes are humorous whilst others are deadly serious, regardless of this they are about making a point visually. The rise of Social Media and the memes within it has managed to stimulate younger and previously least likely to engage into participating in political debate. (M*emes in digital culture* p.120). All the candidates in the American 2008 election exploited memes within social media platforms. (M*emes in digital culture* p.121)

Internet bases political memes have 3 interwoven functions

1. Persuasive capability
2. Linking personal and political citizen empowerment
3. Enjoyable and cheap way to express opinions
(M*emes in digital culture,* p. 123)

In 1999, Kalle Lasn (Canadian author and activist) wrote a manifesto entitled ‘Culture Jam: Uncooling of America’. He suggested ‘Jamming’ corporate messaging through creative vandalism. He claimed that to resist big corporation memes, people should create counter memes and circulate them. This type of activism is called ‘Culture Jamming’. (*memes in digital culture* p124). I like this as a creative and beautifully passive aggressive as shown in this juxtaposing meme below (Figure. 4)



Fig. 4

In 1916, German born John Heartfield invented the ‘Photo-montage’. Heartfield had come from a poor background and worked his way through art school in Munich. He and his brother Wieland started a left wing magazine and in 1918 he became the founder member of the German Communist Party. from there, in 1920 he played the leading role in the Berlin Dada Fair. (*Understanding a photograph,* 2013) Heartfield then became a graphic Propagandist for the German Press. Between 1927-1937 he was internationally renowned for the force and wit of the photo-montage posters and cartoons he created

With Heartfields talent and just using a pair of scissors, the photo-montage technique became a vidid yet subtle means of political education, Berger believes more importantly a Marxist education (*Understanding a photograph,* 2013). Heartfield cuts objects and events away from where they originally belong and arranges them in an unexpected way to make a political point.

The bizarre advantage of a photo montage is that all that has been cut out keeps its familiar appearance. “We are first looking at things and only afterwards at symbols” (Berger, 2013, p.25) Because the images have been moved from their natural surroundings in which they usually exist to enable an unexpected message to be transmitted, we are made aware of the arbitrariness of their normal continuous message. As Berger notices “their ideological covering or disguise, which fits them so well when they are in their proper place that it becomes indistinguishable from their appearances, is abruptly revealed for what it is. Appearances themselves are suddenly showing us how they deceive us” (Berger, 2013, p.25).

When I chose Juxtaposition as my word, it was this exact ‘Abrupt Revelation’ that I wanted to investigate. It’s that jolt of thought, disgust , humour or any number of other emotions and then a moment of revelation when the penny drops to what the artist is trying to convey to you as shown in Figure 3. This magical phenomenon is best achieved for me through the art of collage (Photo-montage) and some clever internet memes.

But what is it that groups us together that allows the artist to ‘sway’ our opinions or come together in agreement? Values? Ideology, Culture? Hegemony?

Ideology

Meaning: Ideology can be defined as “a system of ideas that an economical or political theory is based on; the set of beliefs held by a particular group” (Oxford Online Dictionary). Marx described Ideology as ‘false consciousness’ (Wooden & Zarate, 2004); a set of values, attitudes and perceptions to which we relate ourselves to the broader world around us.

My word was Ideology but how can Ideology be used to manipulate the natural and normal thoughts of society? This is when I found ‘Hegemony’ which seems to be the broader theory behind Chomsky’s ‘Propaganda Theory’ and ‘Media Control’ via mass media. I did not know how closely aligned these subjects were when I started my investigations. This journey has been both enlightening and terrifying in the way we are lead and misled to keep us distracted whilst the rich and powerful can predominantly do as they wish and I had never noticed this before. The relationship between ideology, culture and hegemony is that Culture is usually means the whole collections of values, attitudes and norms which bind us together as a functioning working unit of society. Although, according to Marx and Gramsci it is a mistake to see this as morally neutral (*Marxism- A graphic guide,* 2004). So culture is the mix of ideologies and values that bind us together as a unit and hegemony is the manipulation of those ideologies by the controlling powers to sway the people into consent and willing compliance to the will of the ruling classes.

Antonio Gramsci was born in Italy in 1891. Gramsci invented the theory of cultural hegemony by noticing that the capitalist bourgeoisie controlled the proletariat in two ways. Firstly through economic domination with the fear of job losses or force. Secondly, by controlling the ideas or ideologies of the working classes to make them complicit. Gramsci named this coercion which manipulates social consciousness ‘hegemony’ (Marxism- A graphic guide, 2004). He noted within his theory that physical force and economic pressure was not enough to ensure control by themselves and needed the ruling classes to establish ‘spontaneous consent’, then this combination would aline the consciousness across the majority of society.

Gramsci's hegemony can be characterised as-

• Agreement from most of society that we agree with the 'Picture of life' that those in power display to us.

• The political and moral values displayed in the 'Picture of life' are those of the ones in power.

• This 'Picture of life' becomes the unquestioned and natural way of thought by the majority of society.

• Mass consent is peacefully achieved. however, small amounts of physical force can be used against the disagreeing minority if the majority are complicit in the 'Picture of life'.

It could be argued that once you know this characterisation of hegemony is practice it will be easier to see when your ideologies and values are being used to manipulate you.

I have investigated Noam Chomskys Propaganda theory and the history of Propaganda through the writings of David Welch. This has allowed me to see the tactics and patterns in which propaganda has been used to aline the population with the regime of the powers that govern us and corporations which want to extract compliance or money from us. it has been very interesting to see how tried and tested patterns of manipulation regularly get implemented to move the 'bewildered herd' (Chomskys term for the blind masses).

I then moved onto Juxtaposition, well more that jolt of revelation which allows us to suddenly see the revelation of what the artist is conveying to us. For this I investigated 'Culture Jamming', the creative technique of manipulating corporations advertising imagery and throwing it back at corporations with a meaningful or humorous twist (sometimes using the starkly contrasting imagery we can regard as juxtaposed), thus regaining power back from the Capitalists. Also, I read about the history of the first manipulation of photographs to change the meaning to one of a visionary point from inside an artists head. As collage/ photo montage is at its most effective when juxtaposing images are placed along side each other. To do this I read a variety of John Berger books.

Finally I looked at Ideology which led me to understand that it's the use of hegemony that enables governments, propagandists and artists to aline society willingly to their ideology. This enabled me to understand that our Ideologies can be weaponised against us if we are unaware of the tactics of hegemony.

These words link together in a way which makes me question what I'm being fed by the *so called* Powers in the world. They also make me question where my allegiances lie, meaning I've needed to take a closer look at my personal values to truly understand this. I am very much inspired by juxtaposing imagery and the influence they have over contrasting and sometimes deep emotions. I will be drawing on the inspiration of these investigations into my print and glass art. These investigations have led me to my research question of - How can I incorporate and highlight my feelings of disgust towards the continuous manipulation by the ruling classes using that clever jolt of revelation that Juxtaposition provides within my work?


which way are you looking?
which way do they want you to look?
[ROWI] Order Nr. 489

Fig. 5



Fig. 6



Fig.7

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Figure 1: Scottish Daily Star front page *Available at:* https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-scotland-60518295 (Accessed 4 February 2022)

Figure 2: Covid NHS Government Stay at Home Campaign. *Available at:* https://www.prweek.com/article/1705406/nhs-staff-patients-implore-public-follow-rules-powerful-covid-19-campaign (Accessed 14 August 2022)

Figure 3: Coldwar Steve Artwork. *Available at:* https://coldwarstevearchive.com/#GmediaGallery_103-all-0-1805 (Accessed 6 May 2022)

Figure 4: Peter McColl Artwork (Example of Culture Jamming) *Available at:* https://twitter.com/petermccoll/status/1315979640683614209?lang=en-GB (Accessed 15 September 2022)

Figure 5: Cassy Walsh Propaganda Glass Jewellery 2022

Figure 6: Cassy Walsh Propaganda Collage 2022

Figure 7: Cassy Walsh Propaganda Glass 2022