Propaganda Art from the 20th to the 21st Century

Staal, J.H.

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Author: Staal, J.H.
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CHAPTER I: MODERN PROPAGANDA

Nowadays, the concept of propaganda in popular discourse is ill-defined and its historical origins have been obscured. In popular opinion, propaganda is nearly always inherently related to dictatorship and so-called totalitarianism, whereas democracy is exempt of propaganda proper. The term recalls images of monumental sculptures of Hitler and Stalin and agitprop posters and paintings depicting hysterically joyous peasants and workers celebrating their leaders and state. When we say, "this is propaganda," or "that person is a propagandist," we tend to mean manipulation, lies, deceit, bringing to mind the persecution of minorities and images of concentration camps and gulags. And at the same time, propaganda is considered somewhat old-fashioned; as if it can only refer back to totalitarianism, rather than to contemporary politics. When the term is applied in newspapers or television items, it is in majority to regimes such as Turkey, Russia, or the so-called Islamic State; forms of governance and political organization whose histories in respectively the Ottoman Empire, Soviet Union or religious fundamentalism are associated with aggressive expansion, histories of mass persecution, and terrorist campaigns. While one can certainly make the argument that propaganda plays a key role in these different examples, the assumption that they are the ones who use propaganda and democracy does not, seems highly problematic. Rather, we will develop the argument that we are dealing here with different *propagandas* in the plural.[1]

When propaganda is occasionally applied to democracies, for example in case of the 2003 invasion in Iraq led by the United States based on the false argument that it possessed weapons of mass destruction, there is still a sense that "our" propaganda is or should be of a better kind than the aggressive agitprop of the past.[2] The 2016 election of Donald Trump as president of the United States and his overt attack on independent media and the judicial system has created something of an exception. His claims that critical media belong to the domain of "fake news" and his administration's own counter-arguments in the

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1   The idea that propaganda should be understood in the plural is taken from the philosopher Jacques Ellul's *Propaganda: The Formation of Men's Attitudes* (1962). We will discuss Ellul's work in more detail later on this chapter.

2   In a study on mass media during the War on Terror, Anthony DiMaggio remarks that "American corporate media has overwhelmingly taken the position that the U.S. presence in the Middle East is driven by a noble effort to promote self-determination, human rights, justice, and democracy. Although those Iraqis who resist American occupation are attacked in papers like the *New York Times* for relying on "propaganda that has helped fuel the insurgency throughout Iraq," the propaganda of the American media and government are ignored. It is not considered propaganda, but rather "conventional wisdom" [...]." Such democratic propaganda, DiMaggio concludes, is the result of the fact that "government and media propaganda have always been essential in efforts to convince citizens within democracies of the veracity of officially espoused war aims. The war in Iraq is only the most recent in a longstanding effort on the part of the government and the media to portray the U.S. as unconditionally committed to spreading justice, freedom, human rights, and democracy throughout the globe." See: Anthony Dimaggio, *Mass Media, Mass Propaganda: Examining American News in the "War on Terror"* (Lanham/Plymouth: Lexington Books, 2009), pp. 22, 162.

form of "alternative facts" invoke textbook methods of authoritarian propaganda which have been termed as part of a "post-truth" era of politics.[3] Nonetheless, opposition politics, established media, as well as befriended nations remain hesitant to use the term propaganda for fear of being biased or losing support in the US sphere of influence.[4]

Far more comfort in using the term is shown in relation to one of the last remaining communist states in the world, such as the North-Korean regime of Kim Jong-un. Documentary film makers are rarely allowed into the country and are forced to follow the same government-sanctioned travel routes, where they tend to point toward the obvious: the way the regime boasts through eerie propaganda about its military force, the leadership cult displayed in its media, and public sculptures and posters, and the massive musicals that celebrate the nation and its dynasty.[5] But the North-Korean regime is also portrayed with a lot of irony, for the Western democratic citizen smirks about the idea that "they," the poor North-Korean subjects of an archaic communist state, could really believe in the lies fed to them.[6] Traveling exhibitions of paintings from North-Korea, displaying its heroic leaders and soldiers, its phantasmatic industrial progress, and delirious and committed workers, travel around the world under the guise of informative exhibitions, but they seem more like mockeries, a strange variation of the *Entartete Kunst* exhibitions set up by the Nazi regime.[7] These exhibitions strengthen the idea that "we," the West, can see

through the obvious propaganda schemes, while "they," poor subjects of archaic communism, live in a manufactured world of lies and deceit.[8] Rather than being displayed as propaganda for the North-Korean regime, they are displayed as propaganda for what democracy *is not*.[9]

The role of images – artworks ranging from painting to sculpture, monuments, and films – play an important role in the way propaganda is identified. Throughout this thesis, we will attempt to examine how modern and contemporary propaganda manifests in- and can be traced through art. But the aim of this first chapter is to track down the origins of the concept of modern propaganda, and to explore the relationship between propaganda and democracy, well before the very notion of totalitarian propaganda in relation to the regimes of Hitler or Stalin came into being. We will see that whereas the different manifestations of modern propaganda depend on the regime – on the *kind of power* – they enact, they have been continuously part of to the lives of citizens in highly industrialized countries from their very inception, and that they are therefore not the exclusive property of dictatorships.[10] Modern propaganda has served democracies just as well, to maintain the idea that their citizens are beyond the realm of propaganda, which they, as educated and conscious citizens with access to open and free media, are supposedly able to recognize immediately as archaic models of manipulation.

What we will argue throughout this chapter is that the very idea that one could stand outside of propaganda, recognize it, and as such resist it, merely because one lives in a democracy, is itself the product of modern propaganda. Rather than discussing propaganda as something that disappeared with the fall of the Nazi regime or the Soviet Union, we will thus attempt to trace modern propaganda as part of the emergence of modern society, as much more closely linked to the political model of democracy than one might like to imagine. As we

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3   The concept of "post-truth" was selected as word of the year by Oxford Dictionaries in the light of the Brexit vote and the election of Donald Trump as president of the United States. In this regard, Benjamin Tallis writes that "[Donald] Trump, [Boris] Johnson, [Michael] Gove, [Vladimir] Putin and other post-truthers […] play to a widespread and increasingly cynical, anti-expert and supposedly anti-establishment and anti-authority mood, but one that clearly also still craves leadership and ambition." See: Benjamin Tallis, "Living in Post-truth: Power/Knowledge/ Responsibility," *New Perspectives: Interdisciplinary Journal of Central & East-European Politics and International Relations* Vol. 24, No. 1 (2016): pp. 7–18, at p. 9.

4   We find exception in the case of Jason Stanley, author of *How Propaganda Works* (2015), who writes in a *New York Times* op-ed that "Denouncing Trump as a liar, or describing him as merely entertaining, misses the point of authoritarian propaganda altogether. Authoritarian propagandists are attempting to convey power by defining reality. […] This campaign season has been an indictment of our understanding of mass communication." See: Jason Stanley, "Beyond Lying: Donald Trump's Authoritarian Reality," *The New York Times*, Nov. 4, 2016, https://www.nytimes.com/2016/11/05/opinion/beyond-lying-donald-trumps-authoritarian-reality.html.

5   Good examples in this regard are Discovery Channel's "Children of the Secret State" (2001), National Geographic Explorer's "Inside North Korea" (2007), and Álvaro Longoria's "The Propaganda Game" (2015) in which reporters place a strong emphasis on large scale sculptures of then North-Korean leader Kim Jong-il and his father Kim Il-sung, the mass musicals organized by the regime, and what many reporters consider the staged ghost town of its capital Pyongyang – all standard parts of their brief visitor's tours, time and again described by reporters as totalitarian or dictatorial "propaganda."

6   Wolf Blitzer, a well-known reporter for CNN's *Situation Room,* for example, has covered a wide array of news items on the North-Korean regime, in which he displays a continuous mockery by implicating the last name of its current leader – Kim Jong-un – in a series of puns; for example in headlines such as "*un*-seen threat" or "*un*-der fire." Blitzer's obsession with the regime goes hand in hand with the ironic mockery of the archaic communist state.

7   Referring here to the famous *Entartete Kunst* exhibition, the display of "degenerate art" set up by the Nazi regime that opened on July 9, 1937 at the Archaeological Institute in Munich. The exhibition was intended to show the "cultural decay" of the era before the Foundation of the Third Reich. Six hundred and fifty paintings were on display, including work by Max Beckmann, Marc Chagall, Max Ernst, Wassily Kandinsky, Paul Klee, Ernst Ludwich Kirchner, and Edvard

Munch, surrounded by photos of physically or mentally disabled people. Joachim Von Halas (ed.), *Hitler's Degenerate Art: The Exhibition Catalogue* (London: Foxley Books Limited, 2008).

8   An example was the exhibition "The World According to Kim Jong-Il," exhibited in the Kunsthal in Rotterdam, Netherlands, from June 12 to August 29, under the catchphrase "Never before shown North-Korean art," before touring further around the world. It consisted of about 150 gouaches and 135 paintings on canvas. The exhibition design mimicked the agitprop aesthetics of the objects on display.

9   A more detailed study by Jane Portal forms a relevant exception. Although keeping in line with the general characterization of North-Korea as a "totalitarian" regime – mainly based on the work of Igor Golomstock, which we will discuss in the next chapter – she also points out to a broader vocabulary in North Korean art and crafts, among others in the form of more traditional contemporary landscapes in colored ink, glass, and porcelain works, and the curious and undertheorized practice of painterly depictions of antiquities and archeological findings. See: Jane Portal, *Art Under Control in North Korea* (London: Reaktion Books, 2005).

10   It is important to mention here that citizens of countries with lower industrial development have also been familiar with modern propaganda, often as the *targets* of industrialized states, whether through neocolonial practices or warfare. This *secondary* experience of industrialization has just as well generated particular articulations of modern and contemporary propagandas – such as Stateless Propaganda – which we will address in the third chapter.

will see throughout this chapter, propaganda studies, different from mainstream media, largely agree that there is not only an important historical relationship between democracy and propaganda, but also that there is no reason to presume that any modern society – no matter its form of government – operates beyond the realm of propaganda.

It is important to emphasize here that exploring the relationship between democracy and propaganda does not mean that democracy can be equated with dictatorship. Rather, we will see that modern propaganda is the product of societies that went through the process of industrial revolution – or that have been severely affected by it through colonial practices or warfare – and where a certain level of technological infrastructure and means of mass communication are present or within reach. This does not mean that propaganda is always used the same way, that it serves the same purpose, or that it is necessarily an "evil" phenomenon; but rather that we should understand it as an inherent part of modernity. Furthermore, our use of the word "democracy" will be a critical one. Historically, democracy's egalitarian ideals did not stop the Athenian agora, Enlightenment age, or present-day Western democracies to be implicated – if not the instigators – of colonialism, slavery, and brutal warfare. Democracy has always applied only to a relatively limited class of designated privileged citizens. The contemporary existence of parliamentary democracies, from Putin's Russia to Erdoğan's Turkey, or Trump's United States, has not stopped their authoritarian leaders from taking control; in many cases, dictatorships can very well operate with a democratic front.[11] Similarly, we should keep in mind that the rise of ultranationalist and even fascist parties in 21st-century Europe takes place within systems of parliamentary democracy; from the Orbán regime in Hungary to that of the Polish Law and Justice Party and the near win of the presidency by the Austrian Freedom Party in 2016, a party that was originally founded by Nazis. In all these examples, authoritarian leaders gained power through elections without having to overthrow an existing regime.[12] The model of parliamentary democracy also has largely failed

in applying checks and balances to the 2008 economic crisis, leaving a majority of speculators and bankers unprosecuted, and millions of middle and lower-class peoples in often livelihood-threatening crises. In other words, calling oneself a democracy or modeling institutions after what we associate with democracy does not necessarily say much about the actual democratization of society. The point here is that we should de-mythologize democracy in the process of exploring its relation to propaganda. Democracy can often not be equated with authoritarianism or dictatorship, but in some cases it most certainly operates as a front for them. As such, the evaluation of projected democratic values and their real-time practice should always remain part of critical case-by-case analysis.

The aim of this chapter will be to start tracing the origins of the term propaganda and examine its different understandings in the work of journalists, historians, sociologists, psychologists, philosophers, public relations counsels, and military leaders. We will observe in the process the intertwinement between modern democracy and modern propaganda, and discuss the reason of propaganda's exclusion from contemporary democratic discourse. Our objective in this historical exploration of propaganda will not be to narrow down the term to democracies or dictatorships, but rather to define modern propaganda as a *performance of power* that applies to all industrial and post-industrial modern societies alike.

We will discuss the term "performance" – a word that intimately connects the fields of art and politics – in more detail at the end of this chapter through the work of Noam Chomsky and Edward Herman. For now, we will be using the term as an equivalent of "enactment." When we speak of "power" in the context of propaganda, we refer to structures of power with various components. A structure can consist of an actual "infrastructure," i.e., the material dimension in the form of concrete industries, the military industrial complex, and so on: infrastructures with a capacity to construct our reality to the point of life and death. Naturally, there are aspects of power that cannot be grasped in a purely material sense: lobbyism or even rhetoric, are crucial tools in the social sphere to gain access to infrastructures of power or even to activate them. We will touch upon these different material and immaterial aspects of structures of power by means of concrete examples in this chapter.

11   The argument that authoritarian regimes today might work best with a democratic front and limited – yet functioning – democratic institutions, mirrors Slavoj Žižek's claim that capitalism might function much better in the context of former communist states than in liberal-democratic ones: "[T]he weird combination of capitalism and Communist rule, far from being a ridiculous anomaly, proved a blessing (not even) in disguise; China developed so fast not in spite of authoritarian Communist rule, but because of it." The endeavor here is to challenge presumed oppositions between authoritarianism and democracy on one hand, and authoritarianism and capitalism on the other. In the case of regimes such as that of Turkey and Russia, they seem to be able to encompass both authoritarianism, democracy, and capitalism. See: Slavoj Žižek, *Living in the End Times* (London/New York: Verso, 2010), p. 156.

12   One could term such regimes as forms of "elective dictatorship," originally introduced by the conservative Lord Hailsham in relation to what he regarded as the increasing power invested in British government instead of parliament during a 1976 BBC lecture. A *Guardian* editorial recently re-introduces this concept of elective dictatorship in relation to the 2017 referendum issued by the Erdoğan regime in Turkey with the aim of introducing a presidential system.

See: Scott Prasser, J.R. Nethercote, and Nicholas Aroney, "Upper Houses and the Problem of Elective Dictatorship," University of Western Australia Press, 2008 and "The Guardian View on Turkey: Beware an Elected Dictatorship," *The Guardian,* Jul. 17, 2016, https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2016/jul/17/the-guardian-view-on-turkey-beware-an-elected-dictatorship.

WHAT IS PROPAGANDA?

There is a certain consensus among propaganda scholars that human-kind has propagandized its emerging structures of power from the very beginning of its existence, although this means we must retroactively apply the term. For example, the British communication historian Philip M. Taylor analyzed the history of propaganda, tracing it back to developments before the term itself became used: from cave paintings as the earliest means to impress a set of symbols and ideas upon a community, to Ulysses' wooden horse used by the Greeks to convince the Trojans of their retreat; from the martial poetry of Sparta's Tyrtaeus arousing soldiers to battle to Aristotle's art of rhetoric; from Caesar's dictate to have his portrait placed upon all Roman coins to the Pope's promise for remission of sins for those joining the massive war campaigns of the Crusades; and from Martin Luther who nailed his ninety-five Theses to the castle of Wittenberg's church door in 1517 to the Counter-Reformation that brought the Jesuits to effectively professionalize its propagation of faith through printing press and massive campaigns.[13] Throughout, Taylor's examples feature the term propaganda referring to the performance of power through symbols, rhetoric, literature, currency, religious symbols, and scripture. In all cases, these are examples that are concerned with establishing and spreading – propagandizing – emerging structures of power.[14]

Another overall consensus amongst propaganda researchers is that the actual origin of the specific term is rooted in the sphere of religion. While we might argue that humans have always propagandized in one way or another, until the sixteenth century the word propaganda was mainly confined to the field of biology, referring to the reproduction of plants and animals.[15] Its introduction as a term that comes closer to our present day use dates to 1622, when Pope Gregory XV established the sacred congregation "De Propaganda Fide" with the task to spread the Roman-Catholic faith amongst non-believers, followed by Pope Urban VIII, who subsequently established the "Collegium de Propaganda" to train missionaries in 1627.[16]

According to sociologist Erwin W. Fellows, who investigated the di-

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13 Philip M. Taylor, *Munitions of the Mind: A History of Propaganda from the Ancient World to the Present Day* (Manchester/New York: Manchester University Press, 2003), pp. 20, 25, 27, 33, 41, 97, 110–11.
14 We find similar assessments of such historically retroactive reading of the history of propaganda in many other studies, such as in Edward Bernays's preface to his work *Crystalizing Public* (New York: Liveright Publishing Corporation, 1961), pp. iii–Ivi, and in Garth S. Jowett and Victoria O'Donnell's chapter "Propaganda through the Ages," in *Propaganda and Persuasion* (Thousand Oaks/London/New Delhi: Sage Publications, 1999), pp. 47–98.
15 Erwin W. Fellows, "Propaganda: History of a Word," *American Speech*, Vol. 34, No. 3 (Oct. 1959): pp. 182–89, at p. 182.
16 Ibid.

fferent uses of the term from this foundational moment onward, its first appearance in the English language dates back to 1718, and up to halfway nineteenth century it would continue to be used in a specific, religious framework. Fellows observes that a political and military use of the term becomes common practice, when in 1842 the *American Dictionary of Science Literature and Art* explains propaganda as "Derived from this celebrated society [for propagation of the faith], the name propaganda is applied in modem political language as a term of reproach to secret associations for the spread of opinions and principles which are viewed by most governments with horror and aversion."[17]

The negative connotation of the term, according to Fellows, might have to do with Protestant hostility against Catholicism in Northern Europe and the United States. But the word propaganda would not be used extensively in this way until the First World War of 1914–18, when propaganda became associated with mass psychological and often covert warfare. Fellows therefore concludes that "[i]n the case of propaganda […] we have an instance of shift in meaning from a religious to a military and then to a political context, during a period of less than two hundred years. This shift may reflect a change in the institutional locus of power, from Church to State."[18] In other words, propaganda is not only the process in which power is performed in a given society, but the term itself is shaped by shifting formations of power structures, in this case from the religious to the political.

To the importance of religion and politics in the process of the emergence of modern propaganda, we should add the importance of industrialization. The First Industrial Revolution took place roughly from halfway the 18th to halfway the 19th century: a period that, beginning in Britain, saw the inventions of "the spinning jenny, the steam engine [and] coke smelting," which resulted in "factory textile production, the shift to coal and coke in the iron industry, and the perfection of the steam engine."[19] Whereas the First Industrial Revolution was characterized by important technological innovation, the term "Technological Revolution" is generally applied only to the Second Indus-

trial Revolution, which refers to the period roughly starting in the mid-19th century and culminating in the First World War: a period which, throughout the industrialized world, saw the rise of new technologies such as "electricity, the internal combustion engine, the production of petroleum and other chemicals, telephones and radio."[20] Electricity had an enormous impact on the process of factory electrification and thus on the creation of the conditions for mass production, as well as on the development of modern science and mass media.

Whereas the notion of modern history or modernity generally relates to the European period after the French Revolution, I apply the notion of the "modern" in "modern propaganda" specifically in terms of the late-modern period which started with the First and Second Industrial Revolution. Taylor speaks of the era of this Technological Revolution also as the "Communications Revolution," because of the enormous scale and scope through which technology began to interconnect populations of the world in an unprecedented manner. The First World War would push the limits of this Communications Revolution to even greater extends through the emergence of modern propaganda, a process that would continue throughout and after the world wars. Later on, we will see how propaganda studies gave several other names to the type of society that emerged through the industrial revolution, such as "Technological Society" and "mass society." We ourselves will simply maintain the term *modern society*.

The First World War introduced a war between the minds and hearts of the peoples of industrialized countries, rather than a mere battle between nations within geographically defined areas. Mass communication created the possibilities and need for influencing and shaping public opinion and governmental direction on an unprecedented scale. It is at this juncture that we encounter fundamental differences as to the definition and function of modern propaganda. Before discussing these differences in more detail and within their proper historical context, I will provide a brief overview to grasp the main points of contention.

In his book *Secrets of Crewe House* (1920), Canadian newspaper magnate Sir Campbell Stuart, who ran propaganda operations from the British Crewe House propaganda bureau during the First World War – which superseded the first propaganda bureau, Wellington House, which we will discuss in more detail in the next section – defines propaganda as "the presentation of a case in such a way that others

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17   Ibid., p. 183.
18   Ibid., p. 188.
19   Robert Allen emphasized the social conditions and political system that contributed to the Industrial Revolution, amongst others in the form of the parliamentary control over the executive, the protection of individual property, maintenance of high wages, and a legal system that benefited private investment in the larger context of the state's mercantile and imperialist policies: "How did England maintain a high wage despite rapid population growth, while continental wages fell even though the population grew little? The possibilities […] include: the replacement of absolutist by representative government in the seventeenth century, the enclosure of the open fields, the productivity advantage associate with the new draperies, the growth in intercontinental trade consequent upon the British empire, and the [low] price of energy." Robert C. Allen, *The Industrial Revolution in Global Perspective* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009), p. 123.

20   Andrew Atkeson and Patrick Kehoe discuss specifically what they call the "productivity paradox" of the Second Industrial Revolution, with which they refer to the initial slow diffusion of new technologies due to the difficulty of adaption to the industries at hand. Andrew Atkeson and Patrick J. Kehoe, "Modeling the Transition to a New Economy: Lessons from Two Technological Revolutions," *The American Economic Review*, Vol. 97, No. 1 (Mar. 2007): pp. 64–88.

may be influenced. […] Except in special circumstances, its origin should be completely concealed"[21] with the aim "to reveal to the enemy the hopelessness of their cause and case and the inevitability of Allied victory."[22] In contrast, we may refer to the writings of George Creel, a journalist who became the head of the Committee on Public Information – also known as the "Creel Commission" – which operated parallel to the British one as the propaganda bureau of the United States during the First World War. In Creel's book *How We Advertized America* (1920), he chooses to speak of "advertising" rather than "propaganda," and in relation to the work of the Committee on Public Information he claims that "Our effort was educational and informative throughout, for we had such confidence in our case as to feel that no other argument was needed than the simple, straightforward presentation of facts."[23] According to Creel, the CPI's domestic and foreign aim was "to preach the determination and military might of America and the certainty of victory, but it was equally necessary to teach the motives, purposes, and ideals of America so that friend, foe, and neutral alike might come to see us as a people without selfishness and in love with justice."[24] Between Stuart and Creel, we see that their framing of propaganda widely differs: between propaganda as a necessarily concealed operation to influence opinion and the idea of propaganda as a public information service of facts.

In the development of propaganda studies after the First World War, mainly in the United States, we subsequently see a continuing divergence in the analysis of propaganda within different scholarly disciplines. In response to censorship practices of the American Committee for Public Information during the First World War, journalist and writer Walter Lippmann, in his book *Public Opinion* (1922), claims that "[i]n order to conduct a propaganda there must be some barrier between the public and the event. Access to the real environment must be limited, before anyone can create a pseudo-environment that he thinks wise or desirable."[25] While Lippmann essentially warns of propaganda due to its creation of "pseudo-environments" benefiting the propagandist, a follow-up on his book by public relations founder Edward Bernays, *Crystallizing Public Opinion* (1923), gives a much more positive reading of the possible use of propaganda after the war. Bernays criticizes the treatment of propaganda as a "vaguely defined evil"

and argues that "there is probably no single profession which within the last ten years has extended its field of usefulness more remarkably and touched upon intimate and important aspects of the everyday life of the world more significantly."[26] Between Lippmann and Bernays we witness a difference in analysis of propaganda that derives from their various interests in the concept: for Lippmann, it concerns a limitation of his capacity to effectively control power as a journalist, whereas for Bernays, it forms an essential part of his livelihood as a public relations counsel.

Political scientist Harold Lasswell would become one of the leading post-World War I propaganda theorists, starting with his book *Propaganda Technique in the World War* (1927), in which he, expanding the importance that Lippmann and Bernays placed on public opinion, claimed that "Propaganda is concerned with the management of opinions and attitudes by the direct manipulation of social suggestion rather than by altering other conditions in the environment or in the organism"[27] with the "chief function […] to demolish the enemy's will to fight by intensifying depression, disillusionment and disagreement."[28] Lasswell thus emphasizes the importance of the psychological aspect of propaganda within a pre-existing societal context.[29]

The rise of National-Socialism in Germany in many ways intensified the emphasis on the shaping of public opinion and psychology as the main domains for defining the function of propaganda, as Nazi propaganda aimed not at merely influencing public opinion, but at creating completely new organizational models in order to ensure the conditions of a total propaganda equal to its desire of a total war.[30] Essentially, Nazi propaganda aimed at performing power to construct a completely new reality. Convinced of the idea that the Germans lost the First World War due to the sophistication of British propaganda – which in itself is a propagandistic argument – Adolf Hitler wrote in his book *Mein Kampf* (Volume I published in 1925, Volume II in 1926) about propaganda's importance not merely in a psychological sense,

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21   Sir Campbell Stuart, *Secrets of Crewe House* (London/New York/Toronto: Hodder and Stoughton, 1921), p. 1.
22   Ibid., p. 9.
23   George Creel, *How We Advertized America* (New York/London: Harper & Brothers Publishers, 1920), pp. 4–5.
24   Ibid., p. 237.
25   Walter Lippmann, *Public Opinion* (New Brunswick/London: Transaction Publishers, 1998), p. 43.

26   Bernays, *Crystallizing Public Opinion*, p. 12.
27   Harold Lasswell, *Propaganda Technique in the World War* (New York: Peter Smith, 1938), p. 12.
28   Ibid., p. 214.
29   This would be further elaborated by social psychologist Leonard W. Doob, who in his book *Propaganda: Its Psychology and Techniques*, argues that there are both intentional as well as unintentional forms of propaganda: "In intentional propaganda, the propagandist is aware of his interested aim; in unintentional propaganda, he does not appreciate the social effect of his own actions." Leonard W. Doob, *Propaganda: Its Psychology and Technique* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1935), p. 89.
30   This notion of total propaganda, which we encounter later on in the work of Jacques Ellul, resonates with the famous speech that Joseph Goebbels, Minister of Propaganda of the Nazi regime, gave at the Berlin Sportpalast on February 18, 1943, in which he – in the light of the Soviet threat on the Eastern front – asked his audience: "Do you want total war? Do you want it, if need be, even more total and radical than we are capable of imagining it today?" Joachim Remak (ed.), *The Nazi Years: A Documentary History* (Prospect Heights: Waveland Press, 1969), pp. 91–92.

but also in an organizational one: "When propaganda has filled a whole people with an idea, the organization, with the help of a handful of people, can draw the consequences."[31] This emphasis not just on the psychological, but also organizational and infrastructural dimension of propaganda, can be found also in the work of sociologist and philosopher Theodor Adorno, who, in exile from the Nazi regime in the United States, had been engaged in exchange with some of the American propaganda researchers. Adorno, in his essay "Freudian Theory and the Pattern of Fascist Propaganda" (1951), wrote that "[i]t may well be the secret of fascist propaganda that it simply takes men for what they are: the true children of today's standardized mass culture, largely robbed of autonomy and spontaneity, […]. Fascist propaganda has only to reproduce the existent mentality for its own purposes."[32] So whereas Hitler believes propaganda supports and develops through new organizational models, Adorno claims that these organizational models pre-date the Nazi regime and are rather located in the origins of mass culture as such.

Adorno's insight that apart from the importance of a psychoanalytic reading, the concept of modern propaganda is also rooted in the conditions of mass culture – i.e., the economic, political, and media conditions that resulted from the industrial revolution and its technological achievements – is taken as the foundation of post-World War II propaganda theory by philosopher and sociologist Jacques Ellul. In his book *Propagandes* (1962), he argued that "[p]ropaganda is a set of methods employed by an organized group that wants to bring about the active or passive participation in its actions of a mass of individuals, psychologically unified through psychological manipulations and incorporated in an organization."[33] But this organized group, Ellul simultaneously emphasized, is increasingly located in the technological and mass character of society itself, of which propaganda is essentially the "sociological phenomenon," resulting in a situation in which propaganda "no longer obeys an ideology" except for the maintenance of technological mass society itself.[34] A similar, although more structural analysis, can be found in the work of linguist and philosopher Noam Chomsky and media analyst Edward S. Herman, *Manufacturing Consent: The Political Economy of the Mass Media* (1988), in which they proposed a model of propaganda analysis of mass media that should address its conditions of ownership, financial interest, and government dependency – in

short, its reliance on structures of power that have been monopolized by an elite of stakeholders. We will refer to such structures of power under severely limited elite control as "monopolies of power." In the words of Chomsky and Herman: "[T]he U.S. media do not function in the manner of the propaganda system of a totalitarian state. Rather, they permit – indeed, encourage – spirited debate, criticism, and dissent, as long as these remain faithfully within the system of presuppositions and principles that constitute an elite consensus, a system so powerful as to be internalized largely without awareness."[35] Similar to Adorno and Ellul, Chomsky and Herman thus define modern propaganda as a result of the monopolization of power in mass technological society, rather than being the "invention" of a specific type of regime. Chomsky and Herman add to this definition by means of a comprehensive data analysis, to come to a more precise understanding of the process in which monopolized power is performed in a given society with the aim of constructing reality after the interest of its elites: this is what in their eyes should be understood as modern propaganda.

By introducing the concept of "manufacturing of consent," Chomsky and Herman essentially anchor their own work in the early, post-World War I American propaganda theory, as the concept had first appeared in the 1922 work of Lippmann, in a chapter entitled "The Manufacture of Consent." In the following section, we will explore why and how the First World War defined a concept and practice of modern propaganda that has remained of such importance until our present day, and how it influenced the work of propaganda theorists in the decades in between.

Before engaging in a more detailed understanding of these at times wide array of definitions of modern propaganda from the First World War onward, let us make one observation based on this first summary that will remain of importance throughout this chapter:

- Definitions of modern propaganda arise from widely different backgrounds, ranging from government (Stuart, Creel), journalism (Lippmann), public relations (Bernays), political science and psychology (Lasswell), philosophy and sociology (Adorno, Ellul), and media theory and linguistics (Chomsky and Herman). Based on this we may observe that both the study and practice of propaganda is highly interdisciplinary in nature.

We will now start by revisiting the foundational moment of modern

31   Adolf Hitler, *Mein Kampf*, Vol. II (New York: Reynal & Hitchcock, 1941), p. 851.
32   Theodor Adorno, *The Culture Industry* (London/New York: Routledge, 2001), p. 150.
33   Jacques Ellul, *Propaganda: The Formation of Men's Attitudes* (New York/Toronto: Vintage Books, 1973), p. 61.
34   Ibid., p. 196.

35   Noam Chomsky and Edward S. Herman, *Manufacturing Consent* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1988), p. 302.

propaganda in the context of the First World War to understand how these diverging definitions of propaganda came into being.

1.2 MODERN PROPAGANDA

Philip Taylor, who served frequently as a British military advisor on communications,[36] perceived the rise of modern propaganda to be simultaneous to what he termed the Communications Revolution. This, in turn, created the conditions for a new kind of warfare that he referred to as a form of "total war," in which whole peoples, not just professional military, form a new international front line.[37] In Taylor's view, the manifestation of modern mass media formed a key component of the Communications revolution, which he illustrated through three key events in the year 1895. That was the year Lord Northcliffe founded the *The Daily Mail,* the first newspaper for mass circulation in Britain; it was the year the first commercial screening of the cinematograph by the Lumière brothers in Paris took place; and finally, it was the year Guglielmo Marconi organized the demonstration of the use of wireless telegraphy on Salisbury Plain:

> In one remarkable year, therefore, the principal means of mass communication – press, radio and film – came into their own and the communications revolution made a quantum leap. It was the convergence of total war and the mass media that gave modern war propaganda its significance and impact in the twentieth century.[38]

Similar to Taylor, communication historians Garth S. Jowett and Victoria O'Donnell emphasize the importance of these major historical shifts in communications technology at the outbreak of the First World War when they speak of "the potent combination of the perfect social, political, and economic conditions with the newly established power of the mass media."[39] More than other nations that would become implicated in the First World War, Jowett and O'Donnell explain, the British were forced to use these new communication tools, as there was far from an overall consensus among its population on the need to enter the war, and "Unlike the other major powers on the continent, Britain did not have universal conscription into the army, and thus the decision to mobilize its armed forces was more of a political one than in France or Germany."[40]

Modern propaganda thus began when increasingly international

36   Obituary of Philip M. Taylor by J.R Gair on the website of the University of Leeds, 2010, http://www.leeds.ac.uk/secretariat/obituaries/2010/taylor_philip.html.
37   Philip M. Taylor, *Munitions of the Mind: A History of Propaganda from the Ancient World to the Present Day*, p. 173.
38   Ibid., p. 174.
39   Garth S. Jowett and Victoria O'Donnell, *Propaganda and Persuasion* (Thousand Oaks/London/New Delhi: Sage Publications, 1999), p. 208.
40   Ibid., pp. 209–10.

forms of military warfare converged with the increasing international presence of mass media. This convergence is marked by a particular moment in time, when on August 4, 1914, the British ultimatum to the Germans ended. The first act of war by the British was performed by their cable ship Telconia, cutting of the submarine cables linking Germany with the United States. Both Taylor and Jowett and O'Donnell describe that moment as a key to understanding the new conditions of warfare under the Communications Revolution. Although covert communication and information manipulation are as old as Sun Tzu's *The Art of War*, one could argue that it was at this moment, in which controlling means of mass communication at such enormous scale constituted the first act of war, that modern propaganda was born. The performance of power can be argued to be as old as humanity. But the level at which modern propaganda has proven capable of constructing reality to the point of worldwide wars, separates it from what Taylor explores as "pre-modern" propaganda.

Different from Germany's decision to immediately pour overt propaganda materials into the United States to win them over to their cause, the British devised a far more sophisticated and covert model of propaganda. In that light, Taylor observes that propaganda "is not just a question of what, how, why and when you say something, and to whom, but also of what you decide to leave out. In propaganda, omission is just as significant as commission."[41] What made the cutting of the submarine cables by the British crucial in this regard was exactly their investment in the capacity "to monitor and control the flow of raw information at as many points between source and target possible."[42] It is from this perspective that we should value, Taylor claims, the nineteenth-century development of the British global cable communications system, the so-called All Red Line. This network had been the inheritance of the British colonial Empire; its government had supported the work of private companies to establish the cables to monitor and control its colonies.[43] The All Red Line as such was built upon and through the conquered land of colonized peoples, and subse-

41   Philip M. Taylor, *British Propaganda in the Twentieth Century: Selling Democracy* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1999), p. 45.
42   Ibid.
43   Daniel Headrick and Pascal Griset provide a detailed account of the history of the Imperial "All Red Line," explaining both the technical complexities of its creation in the late 19th century, but also the structural financial support of the British government for private companies establishing the network. Daniel R. Headrick and Pascal Griset, "Submarine Telegraph Cables: Business and Politics, 1838–1939," *The Business History Review*, Vol. 75, No. 3 (Autumn 2001): pp. 543–78. A full chronology of the construction process of the All Red Line was assembled by George Johnson in 1903, explaining the importance of the All Red Line as it "bring the ends of the earth within speaking distance of each other, and knit all men of British blood, the whole world over, into a national union as effective as now prevails within the British Islands themselves." See: George Johnson, *The All Red Line, 1903: The Annals and Aims of the Pacific Cable Project* (London: Forgotten Books, 2015), p. 486.

quently would serve as a system of mass communication. The cutting of the cable between Germany and the United States essentially meant that all German news and information had to use indirect cable routes through Scandinavia and the Iberian peninsula. Britain's first act of war was therefore nothing less than the establishment of an enormous information filter between the Germans and the Americans, through which it would be able to conduct its own propaganda, made possible through the infrastructural inheritance of its colonial Empire.

Taylor emphasizes that modern propaganda manifested within one of the first modern democracies in the world, where voting rights already existed for a substantial part of the male electorate. In 1916, military conscription would be introduced for the first time and this essentially made the road to a full male electorate inevitable. The emergence of mass media involved British citizens further in both a military and a political sense, and by the end of the war the Representation of the People Act of 1918 would include practically all men in the voting process, and began to include women for the first time as well – although it would take until 1928 before voting rights would include the full female electorate.[44] This emphasis on the particular political model within which modern propaganda arose, is relevant for three reasons. First, that modern propaganda did not emerge from so-called totalitarianism or dictatorship, but from the political model of democracy, one close to what we today would understand as parliamentary democracy. Second, that the nature of this democracy was rooted in a colonial Empire, and that its capacity of industrial development and the creation of the international cable network allowed for the capacity to create and control information in modern communication and warfare. The third is that democracy was important as part of the self-image of Britain as a civilized and enlightened Empire, and as such had great impact on the kind of propaganda they were developing during the war. What we will briefly explore now is how, apart from the control of the cable networks, the British gave form to the notion of a *democratic propaganda*.

To sell the hesitant British people and neutral Americans a war, while maintaining the public perception of an open, free, and evolving democracy, the British established their first propaganda bureau, which operated from 1914–17, supervised by writer and Liberal MP Charles Casterman at Wellington House in Buckingham Gate. In 1918, all propaganda efforts of the British were centralized under the Ministry of Information, including Crewe House which had superseded Wellington House and was led by Lord Northcliffe, pioneer of English popular journalism, and – as mentioned earlier – owner of the *Daily Mail*.

44   Taylor, *British Propaganda in the Twentieth Century*, pp. 2–3.

Wellington House operated under such conditions of secrecy that only very few members of parliament were even aware of its existence and operations. Its main work was focused on overseas targets, with an emphasis on the American elites, such as policy makers, academics, teachers, business, and newspapermen. Well aware of the mixed sentiments that existed in the United States with regard to its former ruler, the reasoning behind this secrecy was that the American public would be weary of the British calling upon their sympathies directly. Therefore, Wellington House disseminated materials that were not directly identifiable as propaganda, but which "took the form of reasoned, almost quasi-academic, explanations of the issues involved, with the facts – even if not all the facts – presented in an objective manner and with measured argument."[45] This form of so-called "grey" or even "black propaganda" was distributed through commercial publishing houses, and at the founding meetings of Wellington House prominent academics and writers such as the likes of H.G. Wells attended.[46] By June 1915, "Wellington House had produced some 2.5 million propaganda items in 17 languages and just over 4000 photographs a week."[47] In order to produce this amount of imagery, so-called war artists were involved, and Wellington also produced a documentary film, *Britain Prepared* (1915), and commissioned the film *The Battle of the Somme* (1916).[48] This cultural output, however, was important but not the prime task of Wellington, which maintained covert operations in the US and other allied and neutral countries that needed to be brought to support the British war effort.

There were several events that benefited the British enormously in their conduction of its propaganda campaigns. The German invasion of Belgium on August 4, 1914 had triggered far more resistance from within the country than expected, and the German retaliation against the Belgian population was effectively used by the British to shape the image of the barbaric German "Hun": originally the designation

of a nomadic people that for a short time had controlled large parts of Europe in the first centuries CE, which were now turned into the equivalent of a "barbaric" conqueror.[49] One of the most important propaganda documents in this regard was Wellington House's "Report of the Committee on Alleged German Outrages," better known as the "Bryce Report," conducted by James Bryce, former British ambassador for the United States, and presented on May 12, 1915. With an air of seeming objectivity, the report described German atrocities based on witness accounts of Belgian refugees, with an emphasis on war crimes perpetrated against the citizenry and women and children in particular, ranging from "the cutting of one or both hands" to "cases of slaughter (often accompanied by mutilation) of whole families, including not infrequently that of quite small children" and the "use of women and even children as a screen for the protection of the German troops."[50] Graphic descriptions of group rape, random executions, and forms of torture are amongst the "testimonies" in the report, such as the following one:

23rd August. I went with two friends (names given) to see what we could see. About three hours out of Malines we were taken prisoners by a German patrol—an officer and six men—and marched off into a little wood of saplings, where there was a house. The officer spoke Flemish. He knocked at the door; the peasant did not come. The officer ordered the soldiers to break down the door, which two of them did. The peasant came and asked what they were doing. The officer said he did not come quickly enough, and that they had "trained up" plenty of others. His hands were tied behind his back, and he was shot at once without a moment's delay. The wife came out with a little sucking child. She put the child down and sprang at the Germans like a lioness. She clawed their faces. One of the Germans took a rifle and struck her a tremendous blow with the butt on the head. Another took his bayonet and fixed it and thrust it through the child. He then put his rifle on his shoulder with the

45   Ibid., p. 36.
46   H.G. Wells was one of the British signatories of a pamphlet that appeared in the American press, strongly pitching the British cultural elite against the Barbaric threat of the Germans after their invasion in Belgium: "Whatever may be, we in Great Britain are ourselves conscious of a destiny and a duty. That destiny and duty, alike for us and for all the English-speaking race, call upon us to uphold the rule of common justice between civilized peoples, to defend the rights of small nations, and to maintain the free and law-abiding ideals of Western Europe against the rule of 'Blood and Iron' and the domination of the whole Continent by a military caste." "Famous British Authors Defend England's War," *New York Times*, Oct. 18, 1914.
47   Taylor, *British Propaganda in the Twentieth Century*, p. 38.
48   James Fox in this regard mentions how the involvement of Wellington House with the arts to use "exhibitions to distribute its message," and the overall interest of the UK government in the role of culture in bolstering national identity, even resulted in establishing completely new institutions: "Museums came to be viewed as so central to national identity during the war that the government even formed its own such institution as a result. In March 1917 the War Cabinet approved the decision to form a National War Museum." James Fox, *British Art and the First World War 1914–1924* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), p. 68.

49   The origin to the use of the Hun derives from what is known as the "Hun Speech," delivered by German Emperor Wilhelm II on July 27 1900. In his farewell to the German expeditionary corps that went off to fight the Boxer Rebellion in Northern-China, he said: "Should you encounter the enemy, he will be defeated! No quarter will be given! Prisoners will not be taken! Whoever falls into your hands is forfeited. Just as a thousand years ago the Huns under their King Attila made a name for themselves, one that even today makes them seem mighty in history and legend, may the name German be affirmed by you in such a way in China that no Chinese will ever again dare to look cross-eyed at a German." See: Wilhelm II, "Hun Speech," *German History in Documents and Images*, http://germanhistorydocs.ghi-dc.org/sub_document.cfm?document_id=755, translated from original German in Johannes Prenzler (ed.), *Die Reden Kaiser Wilhelms II in den Jahren 1896-1900,* 2nd volume. (Leipzig: Philipp Reclam jun., 1904): pp. 209-12.
50   O.M. Viscount Bryce et al., *Report of the Committee on Alleged German Outrages* (New York: Macmillan Company, 1915), p. 50.

child up it, its little arms stretched out once or twice.[51]

Translated in thirty languages, this official report, which would largely be debunked by journalists and propaganda theorists after the war, provided an effective framing of these "Hunnish" atrocities and made frontpage news all over the world, not the least in the United States.

Only a few days before the Bryce Report was published, on May 7, 1915, German U-boats had sunk the RMS Lusitania ocean liner travelling from New York to Liverpool. Had the outrage about this attack on a commercial liner not already been enormous, now the event could be framed further through the Bryce Report: as yet another barbaric act of the Huns. The fact that the Germans had warned the ship publicly not to travel through the British waters, which had been declared a war zone, and that the commercial liner was most probably carrying ammunition to serve the war effort of the British, proved futile "facts" in the light of one hundred and eight American citizens that died as a result of the attack and the larger outrage caused by the atrocity stories.[52] One horror story began to amplify the other, and the propaganda frame was set: the struggle was between enlightened democratic civilization on one hand versus barbaric conquest of the "Huns" on the other. This propaganda frame of a clash of civilizations will be revisited throughout this thesis, from the Cold War to the War on Terror. American President Woodrow Wilson declared war on April 6, 1917. Although the propaganda work of the British cannot be given the weight of being the single reason for bringing the United States to its side, it most certainly provided the legitimizing framework by effectively portraying and manufacturing evidence of German deceit and atrocities that would help the American people to support Wilson's military involvement.

With the weakening of the German army and major unrest within the country, armistice was declared November 11, 1918 and maintained until the signing of the peace treaty with Germany on June 28, 1919. And whereas in Britain the activities of the propaganda bureaus would largely cease, their experiment with Wellington House and subsequently Crewe House would only prove to be the beginning of modern propaganda wars on an even more major and sophisticated scale, both during war and in peacetime. With the British propaganda bureaus disbanded, the scope of their operations and creation of falsehoods, especially with regard to alleged German war crimes, became public knowledge. A war that cost the lives of millions proved to

51   Ibid., p. 51.
52   Taylor, *British Propaganda in the Twentieth Century*, p. 39.

be based, in part, on sophisticated covert management of information and blatant lies. The modern propaganda effort in defense of democracy would prove to undermine the very legitimacy of democracy as such. In the next chapter, we will see how this sparked the beginning of public and academic debates on the importance of propaganda, and, more specifically, the question how these processes of manufacturing public opinion could ever be reconciled with the ideals of an informed and transparent democratic society.

In the meantime, one man in particular had become convinced that the Germans didn't lose the war as the result of a military defeat, but as the result of a propaganda defeat. In *Mein Kampf,* Hitler even recalled his personal encounter with British propaganda and its demoralizing effect on German troops.[53] Hitler's anger at what he considered the failure of the German propaganda effort while fighting at the front was compensated by what he claims to have learned from the propaganda efforts of the British: "For what we failed to do in this direction was made up by the enemy with really unheard-of skill and ingenious deliberation. I learned infinitely much more from the enemy's war propaganda."[54] The German propaganda effort, Hitler claimed, failed due to the lack of a single, unified message:

> [T]he war propaganda of the British and the Americans was psychologically right. By introducing the German as a barbarian and a Hun to its own people, it thus prepared the individual soldier for the terrors of war and helped guard him against disappointment. The most terrible weapon which was now being used against him then appeared to him only as the proof of the enlightenment already bestowed upon him, thus strengthening his belief that his government's assertions were right, and on the other hand it increased his fury and hatred against the atrocious enemy.[55]

Hitler's contempt for what he claimed to be the German scientific approach to propaganda, was expressed most strongly regarding what he considered the self-imposed guilt on the country after the war, claiming that "it would have been far better to burden the enemy entirely with this guilt, even if this had not been in accordance with the real facts, as was indeed the case."[56] These conclusions would bring Hitler to take control of propaganda efforts himself when he joined the German Worker's Party after the First World War, where he further developed

53   Taylor, *Munitions of the Mind,* pp. 187–88.
54   Adolf Hitler, *Mein Kampf,* p. 228.
55   Ibid., pp. 234–35.
56   Ibid., p. 237.

ped his theory on the importance of propaganda in relation to political organization. He saw propaganda not just as a message of persuasion, but as an effort to completely change organizational structures of society and reality as such, starting with the party aim to take over the government:

> Propaganda […] needs not to rack its brain about the importance of each individual it enlightens, about his ability, achievements, and understanding or of his character, while the organization has most carefully to collect from the masses of these elements those who really make possible the victory of the movement. Propaganda tries to force a doctrine upon an entire people; organization embraces in its frame only those who for psychological reasons do not threaten to become a brake to a further spreading of the idea. Propaganda works on the community in the sense of an idea and it makes it ripe for the time of the victory of this idea, while the organization conquers victory by the permanent, organic, and fighting union of those followers who appear able and willing to lead the fight for victory. The victory of an idea will be the more possible the more extensively propaganda works on people in their entirety.[57]

Propaganda and organization, Hitler thus concludes, exist in a mutual relationship. Apropos, Jowett and O'Donnell observe how "the enemy's successful use of propaganda itself was used as a form of propaganda," as it allowed for British propaganda itself to become a scapegoat for the German military loss: it had not been a failed military effort, but a failed communication effort that led a heroic people to perish.[58]

Before engaging in a more detailed analysis of the impact of British propaganda on the rise of the field of modern post-WWI propaganda studies and its practice, let us make the following two observations regarding our concise summary of the British propaganda effort:

- The British propaganda effort, according to communication historians such as Taylor, and Jowett and O'Donnell, shows us that the technique of modern propaganda is inherent to both the development of modern democracy and of the Second Industrial Revolution – also termed the "Technological Revolution" or the beginning of the "Communications Revolution." Modern propaganda was geared at involving mass public opinion and this was possible due to the emergence of mass media. The possibili-

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57   Ibid., p. 850.
58   Jowett and O'Donnell, *Propaganda and Persuasion*, p. 211.

ty of such mass communication on an international scale formed the inheritance of the British Empire and its effort to control its colonies;
- The British propaganda effort further shows us, as Taylor concludes, that modern propaganda did not originate in so-called totalitarian regimes, as is commonly thought, but in British democracy. Its initial aim through Wellington House was to create a largely covert model of propaganda, and to promote the image to its own people and the Americans as a free, open government, fighting for democracy in the face of the brute atrocities enacted by the German "Huns."

Let us now continue to explore how the British propaganda operation impacted the discussions on modern propaganda after the First War, not in the least in the United States, which had been the main target of the propaganda efforts of Wellington House. A specific emphasis will be placed on the way in which these discussions focused on the question whether modern propaganda could co-exist with the ideals of open, democratic government.

1.3 DEMOCRACY AND PROPAGANDA

Communication historian J. Michael Sproule researched both the use of propaganda from the American side during the First World War, and, more specifically, the debates on the use and abuse of propaganda after the war that would give rise to the field of modern propaganda studies. In his study, he emphasizes that, more than in the British post-war context, the American discussion on the compatibility between propaganda and democracy formed one of the key points of debate.

A week after Wilson declared war on Germany, the United States had established its own propaganda bureau, known as the Committee on Public Information (CPI), under the directorship of journalist George Creel. Different from the propaganda effort of the British, the output of the CPI was generally of a more overt nature known as "white propaganda," predominantly directed at domestic public opinion. This also explains Creel's own characterization of the bureau not as a propaganda effort, but as a form of public information provision. Sproule described its efforts in different fields, ranging from the distribution of "Fifty million pamphlets," the wide-spread "trolley posters illustrating all manner of ways that the ordinary citizen personally could help win the war" prepared by the Division of Pictorial Publicity, and its league of war artists, as well as an active liaison with commercial movie studios.[59] "[L]eading directors such as D.W. Griffith and major producers such as Carl Laemmle helped rally the new medium of film to Wilson's cause," resulting in propaganda classics such as Griffith's *Hearts of the Worlds* (1918) depicting the war crimes of Germans in French villages, and Rupert Julian's *The Kaiser, The Beast of Berlin* (1918).[60] The depiction of the German leadership as "beasts" in the output of the CPI clearly echoes the success of Wellington House's frame of the barbarian "Hun."

One of the most innovative contributions of the American propaganda effort were the "Four Minute Men," a program developed in late spring 1917, consisting of "75,000 CPI-sponsored local speakers [which] were mounting the stages of America's movie palaces in a program of oratory orchestrated from Washington."[61] The efforts were effective in turning citizens into what Sproule calls "quasi-official agitators," and even when the armistice was declared, it was hard to bring expurgation to an end:

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59   J. Michael Sproule, *Propaganda and Democracy: The American Experience of Media and Mass Persuasion* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1997), pp. 10–11.
60   Ibid., p. 11.
61   Ibid.

Despite the CPI's almost immediate disbanding campaigns against the so-called anti-Americanism of dissidents continued, not only in Congressional hearings on German propaganda but also when revulsion towards symbols of Germany was transferred to the Bolsheviks. This strange transmutation by which Commissar replaced Kaiser as the target of national ire eventually became known as the great postwar Red Scare [the fear of communist infiltration after the 1917 revolution in Russia, JS]. The panic reached its high point in late 1919 and early 1920.[62]

These descriptions are evidence of the strength that the framing of the barbaric "Hun" had on the public consciousness. But while the propaganda machineries of the British started to be dismantled, Sproule describes how "American disillusionment with the propagandas of the Great War began in Europe, where the sentiment spread among American troops that atrocity stories had been false concoctions and that the Germans had behaved no worse than any other combatants."[63] Phillip Gibbs, a prominent British war correspondent, expressed regret at having been complicit in the distortion of the narration of the war, and now began to lay bare the horrors at the frontline of combat, not in the least on the "anger of the Tommies themselves [a popular description of British soldiers, JS] at home-front propaganda that emphasized atrocities and sanitized the experience of war."[64] Gibbs observed the hollow falsity of atrocity stories, and he pointed out the contradiction posed by Britain's propaganda of saving "little Belgium" and its simultaneous crushing of independence efforts in Ireland. The American war correspondent George Seldes in his turn was so disillusioned with British and American propaganda, that he was actually surprised when some of the German atrocity stories proved to be true.[65]

Accusations on the side of manipulation in American propaganda and censorship, received reply from Creel in the form of his book *How We Advertised America* (1920), describing the work and intentions of the CPI: "It was the fight for the *minds* of men, for the 'conquest of their convictions,' and the battle-line ran through every home in every country."[66] He regarded critiques of censorship as false, and claimed the voluntary nature of self-censorship of those involved in the bureau's efforts to propagate its "stainless patriotism and unspotted Americanism." The work of the CPI, Creel concluded, was an effort of

providing public information, not devising propaganda:

> It is the pride of the Committee, as it should be the pride of America, that every activity was at all times open to the sun. No dollar was ever sent on a furtive errand, no paper subsidized, no official bought. From a thousand sources we were told of the wonders of German propaganda, but our original determinations never altered. Always did we try to find out what the Germans were doing and then *we did not do it*.[67]

In the case of Creel, his emphasis on the support of private initiatives and organizations, ranging from newspapers to artists contributing to war exhibitions, explained his description of the work of the propaganda bureau as the "world's greatest adventure in advertising,"[68] and showed how in the last two centuries shifting powers from church to state in the development of propaganda were supplemented by a third power, as an inherent part of the importance of industrialization: that of private business and marketing. Exactly this third power of private business entering the sphere of politics was at stake in what Sproule explains as the movement of "muckrakers" – what we today would refer to as "activist" journalists – who rose to fame in the Progressive Era in America preceding the First World War. The muckrakers aimed at exposing corruption in government and private business, and the reliance of one upon the other. Creel himself, before joining the Ministry of Public Information, had been such a muckraker journalist, investigating and critiquing a grant by the Rockefeller Foundation that had been used to study the causes of industrial unrest.[69] Sproule considered these muckrakers as the first manifestation of propaganda critique in the United States, even before the term propaganda itself would gain notoriety after the First World War.

Another important influence on the post-WWI discussion about the social influence of modern propaganda was the work that had been done in the fields of sociology and psychology. The way in which crowds had been mobilized to serve the war effort made the study of "group psychology" all the more poignant. Important to mention in this context is French sociologist and social psychologist Gustave Le Bon, who had become an influential figure in this debate owing to his book *Psychologie des Foules* (1895). Le Bon analyzed the unconscious actions of crowds and studied what he regarded as different types of

62 Ibid., p. 15.
63 Ibid., p. 16.
64 Ibid., p. 17.
65 Ibid.
66 Creel, *How We Advertised America*, p. 3.

67 Ibid., p. 13.
68 Ibid., p. 4.
69 Sproule, *Propaganda and Democracy*, pp. 22–52.

crowds, categorized in "heterogeneous crowds" such as street crowds, juries, and parliamentary assemblies and "homogeneous crowds" such as sects, casts and classes.[70] Le Bon's concept of the crowd would influence the widely used notion of the "herd," which he describes as an "unstable flock"[71] consisting of a "swarm of isolated individuals."[72] According to Le Bon, such a flock or swarm assembled in a crowd is characterized by certain dynamic psychological characteristics, as its assembly amplifies "their heroism, their weaknesses, their impulsiveness, and their violence."[73] Such characteristics in the context of the crowd are never stable, and Le Bon considers the ease with which a crowd can be influenced as a proof of its barbaric nature. In the crowd, Le Bon saw the loss of individual thought almost as a form of collective hypnosis. It is easy to read in this description the shift of an ordinary public transforming into quasi-official agitators under influence of propaganda as mentioned by Sproule.

In his post-war book *Massenpsychologie und Ich-Analyse* (1921) neurologist and founder of the field of psychoanalysis Sigmund Freud – whose work would have similar impact on propaganda studies to that of Le Bon – critically examined the latter's work on the formation of the crowd. It is important to mention that although the English translation of the book mentions "group psychology," the term "Massenpsychologie" is better translated as "mass psychology." The difference in terminology would be that the "crowd" refers to an unorganized assembly or gathering, whereas the "group" presupposes an element of organization. In the case of the "mass" or "masses," we could still be dealing with both crowds and groups, but in a far larger scale, possibly with an overall organizational model or organizational element in place. Freud, as we will see, speaks of the masses as a constellation that is not without an organizational component, mostly in the form of a leader figure.

While Freud generally approved Le Bon's analysis, he also critically observers that "If the individuals in the group [*Masse*] are combined in a unity, there must surely be something to unite them, and this bond might be precisely the thing that is characteristic of a group."[74] Freud asks, for example, if a crowd indeed acts as if hypnotized, who then is

the one hypnotizing them? In other words: what is the role of the leader figure, the hypnotizer? Freud adds that "in a group the individual is brought under conditions which allow him to throw off the repressions of his unconscious instincts,"[75] and, as a consequence, this can lead to "high achievements in the shape of abnegation, unselfishness, and devotion to an ideal. While with isolated individuals personal interest is almost the only motive force, with groups it is very rarely prominent."[76] Freud thus complicates the image of the crowd as an instant hysteric and dangerous "barbaric" entity, incapable of any good, but instead breaks with such abstraction by analyzing its organizational model through the figure of the leader, and simultaneously highlights the potential transformative capacity of a mass in terms of transcending individual self-interest.

We will see how, in the approach to the question of the effects of propaganda, the opposing views between the crowd as a "swarm of individuals" and the mass as a collective formation deriving from specific, individual libidinal desires, marks a significant difference in the perception of the agency of the human subject.[77] Is the human capable of individual and mass intelligence, and could it thus operate within a properly democratic framework; or is the human by definition shaped by uncontrollable desires and influences, which, both for the individual and for the mass, demand structural direction and control to maintain a secure society? One could say that herein lies the essence of respectively the progressive and conservative world views that would define different conceptions of modern propaganda after the First World War.

As a result of the work of journalists that exposed the falsehoods of propaganda from both the British and American side, the early 1920s saw a rise in debates in the United States on the supposed power of propagandists over public affairs. A key exchange in this debate took place between the American philosopher John Dewey and writer Walter Lippman, the latter being a former muckraker journalist and a repentant public supporter of American involvement in the First World War. Whereas Lippmann considered the media complicit in the propaganda schemes of the First World War, contributing to creating "pseudo-realities" that benefited the propagandist, Dewey, while recognizing this danger, felt this was all the more reason to invest in a critical and

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70 Gustave Le Bon, *The Crowd: A Study of the Popular Mind* (New York: Macmillan, 1896), pp. 165–66.
71 Ibid., p. 219.
72 Ibid., p. 229.
73 Ibid., p. 227.
74 Sigmund Freud, *Group Psychology and the Analysis of the Ego* (London: The Hogarth Press and the Institute for Psycho-analysis, 1949), p. 7. Again, we see that, in original German, "group" is mentioned as *Masse* (crowd): "Wenn die Individuen in der Masse zu einer Einheit verbunden sind, so muß es whol etwas geben, was sie an einander bindet, und dies Bindemittel könnte gerade das sein, was für die Masse charakterisch ist." See: Sigmund Freud, *Massenpsychologie und Ich-Analyse* (Leipzig/Vienna/Zürich: Internationaler Psychoanalytischer Verlag, 1921), p. 7.

75 Ibid., p. 10.
76 Ibid., p. 17.
77 Daniel Pick deepens the relation between the work of Le Bon and Freud, emphasizing the importance of the latter, when concluding that the contribution of Freud's work lies in the manner that he broke the idea that the individual preceded the group or crowd, and replaces it for a more complex interchange between group and individual formation through libidinal economies: "Before Freud's account, it can be argued, crowd theory took the individual to precede the group, as concept; after Freud, we are not so sure." Daniel Pick, "Freud's 'Group Psychology' and the History of the Crowd," *History Workshop Journal*, No. 40 (Autumn 1995): pp. 39–61.

educational journalism so to keep ruling powers in check. Both, essentially, were invested in the question of the role of modern propaganda in democracy.

What had sparked the debate was Lippmann's book *Public Opinion* published in 1922. In his writing, Lippmann scorned the idea of public opinion as something that results naturally from a given community, claiming that "democracies have made a mystery out of public opinion."[78] For Lippmann, the idea of democracy that was shaped in the Progressive Era could only be sustainable within small communities, whereas the Communications Revolution and its impact on the First World War had proved that such communalism had become completely outdated. Politics, trade, and war had become questions of geopolitics, which Lippmann refers to as the "invisible world," compared to the pseudo-worlds constructed through propaganda. How would the average American, he asked, be capable of making informed judgments through the democratic process when it superceded his or her direct self-interests? Did the invisible world and the construction of pseudo-realities not operate far beyond the realm of power manageable within democracy? As a consequence, Lippmann makes a plea for a more rational understanding of the shaping of public opinion – that which he famously referred to as the "manufacture of consent":

> [While] democrats have been absorbed in trying to find a good mechanism for originating social power, that is to say a good mechanism of voting and representation, they neglected almost every other interest of men. For no matter how power originates, the crucial interest is in how power is exercised. What determines the quality of civilization is the use made of power. And that use cannot be controlled at the source.[79]

The real interest of the human, in other words, is to be properly governed, and for government to produce "a certain minimum of health, of decent housing, of material necessities, of education, of freedom, of pleasures, of beauty."[80] Not acknowledging this implies that one's societal development will remain trapped in "the failure of self-governing people to transcend their casual experience and their prejudice," compelled to act without a "reliable picture of the world."[81] This reliable picture of the world, Lippmann concludes, cannot be left in the hands of popular media, as it suffers under the weight of producing news, ra-

ther than truths, and is exposed to commercial interests, ranging from sales to acquiring proper advertising. Instead, Lippmann proposes an independent government department that should be brought into life to guarantee the controlled and factual access to public information, untouched by private interests.[82] Only this would allow the best of democracy – the distribution of truthful information – to be preserved in the age of modern propaganda. Dewey disagreed, and responded in his 1922 review of Lippmann's book in *The Nation*:

> Of course, the expert organization for which Mr. Lippmann calls is inherently desirable. There is no questioning that fact. But his argument seems to me to exaggerate the importance of politics and political action, and also to evade the problem of how the latter is to be effectively directed by organized intelligence unless there is an accompanying direct enlightenment of popular opinion, as well as an ex post facto indirect instruction.[83]

Dewey believed that government-sanctioned information, however independent its providers may seem to be on paper, runs exactly the same risks of structuring information and public opinion based on its own interests, and thus, while recognizing the problems of modern propaganda and public opinion in modern democracy, Dewey continues to emphasize the importance of journalism as a "fundamental general education," which, both necessary and difficult to achieve, is exactly the challenge of what he terms as the "enterprise of democracy."[84] Dewey would come to characterize this search as the shift from a Great Society to the "Great Community," essentially declaring democracy as "the community itself," shaped through "symbols [that] produced a mutuality of desire and purpose whereby energies were transformed into shared meanings that provided an alternative to pure force."[85] This shaping of the community could not be formed by voting alone, but needed a collective engagement in the shaping of critical, public opinion through journalism and education.

We see how the different portrayals of the human subject discussed through the work of Le Bon and Freud are also strongly present in this debate. Lippmann's belief that a community's ideas need, one way or another, to be properly manufactured to facilitate participa-

78   Lippmann, *Public Opinion*, p. 254.
79   Ibid., p. 312.
80   Ibid., p. 313.
81   Ibid., p. 365.

82   Lippmann refers to the key protagonist of such independent government departments as the "disinterested expert": disinterested here meant in the sense of being at a critical distance. Ibid., p. 375.
83   John Dewey, "Public Opinion by Walter Lippmann," *The New Republic*, May 3, 1922, pp. 286–87.
84   Ibid.
85   Sproule, *Propaganda and Democracy*, p. 81.

tion in democratic life leans on the idea of the crowd as a scattered and undirected entity; whereas Dewey strongly upholds the idea of the possibility of a mass to be developed as critical democratic force through mass emancipation and education. One could say that Lippman's perception of the community comes closer to Le Bon's notion of the crowd, whereas Dewey's comes closer to Freud's observations on the potentials of the mass.

In great contrast to Dewey's fundamental belief in the need to turn from the discussion of propaganda to developing models of democratic general education, Lippmann's analysis proved greatly beneficial to public relations founder Edward Bernays, a nephew of Freud. Bernays aimed at effectively commodifying the libidinal economy that Freud observed within Le Bon's definition of the crowd in order to manage the horde. In his book *Crystalizing Public Opinion* (1923), published only a year after Lippmann's *Public Opinion*, he attempted to translate the need for establishing new models of social order upon the horde, which he considered incapable of self-governing in the age of mass communication. In response to this incapacity he proposed the "public relations counsel":

> Society is made up of an almost infinite number of groups, whose various interests and desires overlap and interweave inextricably. The same man may be at the same time the member of a minority religious sect, supporter of the dominant political party, a worker in the sense that he earns his living primarily by his labor, and a capitalist in the sense that he has rents from real estate investments or interest from financial investments. [...] It is from the constant interplay of these groups and of their conflicting interests upon each other that progress results, and it is this fact that the public relations counsel takes into account in pleading his cause.[86]

Bernays himself had been employed by Creel's Committee on Public Information, and what he referred to as public relations was essentially a proposal to introduce the strategies of propaganda developed during wartime to reshape what he and Lippmann considered the problems of democracy during peacetime: problems that Bernays considered to be the scattered and conflicting interests that defined modern society. But different from Creel, who rejected the very notion of propaganda, Bernays presented himself as something of a "propagandist for propaganda," claiming that modern propaganda was neither good nor evil in

and of itself, but dependent on its use and intentions.[87] On this transition from wartime propaganda to peacetime propaganda, he remarked in his book *Propaganda* (1928):

> [T]he manipulators of patriotic opinion [in the First World War] made use of the mental clichés and the emotional habits of the public to produce mass reactions against the alleged atrocities, the terror, and the tyranny of the enemy. It was only natural, after the war ended, that intelligent persons should ask themselves whether it was possible to apply a similar technique to the problems of peace.[88]

Bernays embodied the belief that the engagement of private companies and corporations to develop the tools of propaganda for the American participation of the war essentially embodied the solution to the problems of democracy:

> The conscious and intelligent manipulation of the organized habits and opinions of the masses is an important element in democratic society. Those who manipulate this unseen mechanism of society constitute of an invisible government which is the true ruling power of our country. We are governed, our minds molded, our tastes formed, our ideas suggested, largely by men we have never heard of. This is a logical result of the way in which democratic society is organized. Vast numbers of human beings must cooperate in this manner if they are to live together as a smoothly functioning society.[89]

Rather than being in contradiction with democracy, Bernays considered the work of such engineers of public opinion the solution for its problems. Whereas politics called upon the mobilization of the discomforts, anxieties, and passions of the masses – with risk of chaos and revolt – the task of the public relations counsel was to pre-emptively anticipate the desires of the "horde," to provide satisfying and regulated forms of competition and social cohesion through commercial services, entertainment, and commodities. Democracy is concerned with the rule of the *demos*, the people, but Bernays essentially claimed – in complete opposition to Dewey – that the people could not know what they wanted: their self-interest was limited by the pseudo-realities they lived in, and just as Lippmann argued, this makes it impossible for them to separate their private from common interests. The public

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86 Bernays, *Crystalizing Public Opinion*, p. 143.

87 Mark Crispin Miller, "Introduction," in Edward Bernays, *Propaganda*, p. 15.
88 Bernays, *Propaganda*, pp. 54–55.
89 Ibid., p. 37.

relations counsel, through the invisible government of the state as well as corporate structures of power, was to employ mass psychology to understand, regulate, and engineer public opinion into manufactured consent. "Good government can be sold to a community just as any other commodity can be sold,"[90] Bernays claimed. And the state needed to learn and adapt to this new invisible government that began its rule in the era of the free market:

> Politics was the first big business in America. Therefore there is a good deal of irony in the fact that business has learned everything that politics has to teach, but that politics has failed to learn very much from business methods of mass distribution of ideas and products.[91]

An important contribution of Bernays in this regard was the development of so-called focus groups, which comprised of prototypical consumers – for example, American female caretakers in the household – were interviewed in group sessions, to map out their intimate relations with and possible psychological objections to consumer products. By using focus groups, Bernays for example found out that the lack of success of an all-inclusive baking powder was due to the fact that it instilled a sense of guilt in the caretaker in relation to her family: the lack of labor invested in the product that was already "all inclusive" to start with made her role as a care provider obsolete. A successful resolution was the creation of an all-inclusive backing powder where one only had to add one egg. The emotional investment of the egg – a symbol of birth and care – effectively eliminated the sense of guilt that had been inherent to purchasing a product that threatened to make care labor obsolete.[92] Bernays also did groundbreaking work to create the necessary conditions for the development of consumer needs that had been previously non-existent. Famous is the example of his lobby among architects to include music rooms in their designs of upper-middle-class houses, which effectively influenced the wider sale of pianos. By creating the presumption that a certain standard of living could not do without a specific commodity, he did not just promote the purchase of objects, but of entire, previously non-existent markets.[93]

For Bernays, such campaigns of psychological engineering were in no way conflicting with his definition of democracy. On the contrary:

they were ways of satisfying desires of the masses even before they themselves knew what to desire or why. Bernays's vision of such forms of engineered democracy formed the centerpiece of the New York World Fair, of which Bernays was the public relations director.[94] Entitled "The World of Tomorrow," the fair featured national pavilions as well as corporate pavilions promoting private interests.[95] At the heart of the fair was a massive structure called the Trylon and Perisphere: visitors entered the construction through an electric staircase, and, once inside, they encountered a gigantic rotating architectural model of the city of the future entitled "Democracity," designed by Henry Dreyfuss and crafted in accordance with Bernays's notion of invisible government. The model embodied something of a corporate-utopian urban infrastructure made possible through the replacement of representative government by the public relations industry. In Democracity's brochure, writer and cultural critic Gilbert Seldes adopted the tone of real estate promotional materials when he wrote

> Democracity is an entirely practical city [...]. And there can be a dozen or a hundred such groups of towns and villages and centers in the United States, each with commercial and agricultural and industrial interests. The government exists to see that these interests harmonize [...]. The City of Tomorrow which lies below you is as harmonious as the stars in their courses overhead – No anarchy – destroying the freedom of others – can exist here. The streets, the houses, the public buildings, the waterways, the parks, and the parking spaces – all are built in relation to all the others.[96]

What Bernays aimed for through his model of Democracity, was basically the replacement of the state by corporations under the control of public relations councils, together forming democratic entities insofar as they would be able to represent the desires of the masses in ways that governments could not. This is crucial to understand the mode of governance of the modern democracity, which in actuality is not a city, but rather a corporation in the form of a city.

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90 Ibid., p. 120.
91 Ibid., p. 111.
92 See also the essayistic four-part documentary series *Century of the Self* (2002) on the rise of psychoanalysis applied to the field of public relations produced by the BBC and directed by Adam Curtis.
93 Bernays, *Propaganda*, pp. 78–79.

94 In an address to the World's Fair Committee on April 7, 1937 in New York, Bernays explained his vision as following: "This World's Fair can help make America safe for American democracy in the future. The world will move forward with the World's Fair. Let us make the values of Americans real to Americans. Let us sell America to Americans." See: Edward Bernays, *The New York World's Fair: A Symbol for Democracy* (New York: The Merchant's Association of New York, 1937). The small booklet was published without page numbers.
95 Trylon and Perisphere and the model for Democracity within, is documented extensively in Stanley Appelbaum, *The New York World's Fair 1939/1940* (New York: Dover Publications, 1977) and Bill Cotter, *Images of America: The 1939–1940 New York World's Fair* (Charleston: Arcadia Publishing, 2009). See also: Paul Greenhalgh, *Fair World: A History of World's Fairs and Expositions from London to Shanghai 1851–2010* (Winterbourne: Papadakis, 2011), pp. 176–84.
96 Gilbert Seldes, *Your World of Tomorrow* (New York: Rogers-Kellogg-Stillson, 1939), p. 15.

Bernays's propaganda work in the realm of politics was not limited to engineering his vision of the future Democracity, but also extended to the export of American democracy in the domain of the military. Apart from his governmental work in the Committee for Public Information during the First World War, his most notorious political involvement was in the overthrow of the democratically elected Guatemalan government of Colonel Jacobo Arbenz Guzman, whose 1952 Land Reform program had enraged wealthy planters and United Fruit Company officials. Bernays, who worked as a public relations official for United Fruit Company, effectively devised a campaign branding Guzman as a communist.[97]

In Bernays's conception of modern propaganda we find a strong resonance of the Le Bon's conception of the human. Le Bon frequently features in Bernays's work in relation to his conviction of the need to develop models of group identification and persuasion through the invisible government facilitated by public relation counsels. But the methods employed to do so are strongly tied to the work of Freud, as regards the development of effective strategies of subconscious identification that address the libidinal drives that bring a people to purchase an all-inclusive baking powder, establish a new form of Democracity, or convince the masses of a Guatemalan communist threat to modern American democracy and its companies. More than any propagandist, Bernays articulated an all-encompassing world view ranging from politics to the economy and the military, of which modern propaganda formed the fundament.

Whereas Bernays, compared to Lippmann and Dewey, is himself the unrepentant propagandist, the political scientist Harold D. Lasswell would become the main authority on modern propaganda in the domain of political science, and at a later stage of his life would serve in the Library of Congress in analyzing Nazi propaganda. The major work that brought him to fame was his book *Propaganda Technique in the World War* (1927), strongly grounded in the work of Dewey and Freud. Important was his pragmatic and systematic take on the subject of propaganda in modern democracy. Lasswell argued that "The truth is that all governments are engaged to some extend in propaganda as part of their ordinary peace-time functions. While, therefore, the presumption exists against propaganda work by a democratic government, this statement should not be taken too literally."[98] Rather than claiming that democracy should be protected from propaganda, which

Dewey's analysis seemed more geared toward, Lasswell emphasized the idea that for democratic propaganda "there is nothing to be gained by concealment," claiming that "nothing is lost, if all propaganda operations in neutral and allied countries are carried on openly."[99]

In his analysis of propaganda, Lasswell stressed the importance of understanding the necessary preconditions for propaganda to be of any effect: "Successful propaganda depends upon the adroit use of means under favorable conditions. A means is anything which the propagandist can manipulate; a condition is anything to which he must adapt,"[100] and in this regard he mentions specifically "the communication network, similarities and differences in customs and institutions, interpenetration of population, economic ties, relative military power."[101] According to Lasswell, these conditions were well understood by the British, who were capable of gaining control over the cable network but also had been careful in developing methods of cultural identification toward the Americans. Contrary to the military appeal that the Germans made to the Americans, the "British talked about a war to protect international law and to guarantee the sanctity of treaties, and they fought against a monster, known as autocratic militarism, in the name of democracy."[102] Lasswell argued that effective propaganda meant an effective understanding of its proper conditions, cutting through a variety of domains: technological, cultural, and psychological in relation to its target audience, as well as in military and economic terms. The psychological impact of propaganda, Lasswell claimed, was dependent on the understanding of the societal conditions in which it would operate and cause its effects.

Lasswell, similar to all previously discussed post-war propaganda theorists, took a political position toward modern propaganda, by essentially advocating a democratic propaganda model, while simultaneously developing a model of propaganda analysis. In this light, it is relevant to underline that Lasswell did not seem to consider democratic propaganda as a choice, but rather as an inevitability of the modern age:

> Propaganda is a reflex to the immensity, the rationality and willfulness of the modern world. It is the new dynamic of society, for power is subdivided and diffused, and more can be won by illusion than by coercion. […] To illuminate the mechanisms of propaganda is to reveal the secret springs of social action, and to expose to the

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97   Stephen Schlesinger, Stephen Kinzer, *Bitter Fruit: The Story of the American Coup in Guatemala*
       (Cambridge/London: Harvard University Press, 2005), pp. 79–91.
98   Lasswell, *Propaganda Technique in the World War*, p. 14.

99   Ibid., p. 15.
100   Ibid., p. 185.
101   Ibid., p. 189.
102   Ibid., pp. 198–97.

most searching criticism our prevailing dogmas of sovereignty, of democracy, of honesty, and of the sanctity of individual opinion. The study of propaganda will bring into the open much that is obscure, until, indeed, it may no longer be possible for an Anatole France to observe with truth that "Democracy (and indeed, all society) is run by an unseen engineer."

For Lasswell, propaganda studies itself was the crucial component for coping with the existence of modern propaganda in democracy. It would not disappear through education, as Dewey suggested, but it could be understood through education, and as such be neutralized to a certain extent.

What we essentially see when comparing these different analyses of the conditions, functions, and practices of propaganda, are sets of different political world views. Between Dewey for example, who seeks an educated democracy resilient against propaganda reminiscent of the Progressive Era, and Lippmann who seeks a form of democratic governance that could protect its public from the inevitability of propaganda, we witness two different views concerning the question whether politics is even able to counter the phenomenon of modern propaganda. Lasswell believes in a third way between Dewey and Lippmann in his hope of a transparent propaganda. Sproule nonetheless argues that these quests for a "democratic propaganda," however passionately debated in the interwar era, would find the more progressive views of a democratic propaganda at the losing end: "Working separately, humanist students of communication produced no theory-praxis synthesis strong enough to compete with the growing measurement-management orientation in social science."[103] The dominance of quantitative research in the field of propaganda studies regarding group formation and public opinion, was far removed from the political radicalism of a figure such as Dewey, and as such "early socialist flirtations" of propaganda studies would be replaced with "a benevolent liberalism," bringing Sproule to conclude that "Generally, the measurement-oriented scholars reflected the classic American intellectual stance of wanting to see society made both efficient and democratic."[104] In sum, propaganda studies and propaganda practices would lean towards the Bernaysian worldview. As Lasswell had observed: modern propaganda thrives using the possibilities of a particular moment in time, and Bernays, more than any other protagonist of propaganda studies, had understood that in both theory and practice.

In 1941, one year after the United States had declared war upon Germany once more, Bernays spoke somewhat mockingly about Lasswell's analysis of propaganda in the First World War, regarding the work as that of a "social psychologist looking back over past events" in an attempt to "isolate the factors of marketing."[105] Bernays felt a factual assessment followed by a practical application was far more relevant. The experience from the First World War resulted in an "engineering approach," which successfully led to the "engineering of consent in a democracy."[106] These methods were in itself neither good nor bad, but a matter of choice. The United States had to choose the democratic path of the engineering approaches at hand, and for this, a master plan executed by a "psychological staff" was necessary: essentially, a set of public relations counsels for the effective "selling our democratic ideals of freedom, equality and orderly justice."[107]

As sophisticated as Bernays's modern propaganda strategies were, the worldview in which he had them operate was simplistic. Good propaganda was democratic propaganda. But the moral and ethical questions and objections of his contemporaries regarding who exactly controlled the public relations councils that were to direct the invisible government were cast aside. The free market and public opinion in its turn would judge the democratic propagandist on the legitimacy of his work. But this of course is a catch 22, as the manufacture of consent in public opinion is exactly the stated goal of the modern propagandist. By the time the Second World War broke out, modern propaganda had become a reality of modern society, and those who effectively practiced propaganda had the upper hand over those attempting to catch up with its effects. The Second World War would, at the same time, come to characterize the term propaganda in popular discourse as the definition of evil in the hands of Hitler, Mussolini, and Stalin, undermining Bernays's positive reading of the relation between propaganda and democracy.

Before engaging in a more detailed account of the post-World War II discourse on modern propaganda, let us make the following two observations regarding the post-World War I debate on modern propaganda in the context of the United States:

- The post-World War I debates on propaganda in the United States dealt with whether or not democracy was reconcilable with propaganda, in part through the work of Le Bon and Freud that

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103 Sproule, *Propaganda and Democracy*, p. 78.
104 Ibid., p. 74.

105 Edward Bernays, "The Marketing of National Policies: A Study of War Propaganda," *Journal of Marketing*, Vol. 6, No. 3 (Jan. 1942): pp. 236–44, at p. 236.
106 Ibid.
107 Ibid.

questioned the very nature of crowd and mass formations in the process of manufacturing public opinion;

• The post-World War I debates on modern propaganda in the United States went hand in hand with the actual application of new models of modern democratic propaganda: the manner in which Creel House included models of advertising and commercial campaigns in the propagation of the war effort, was further deepened in modern propaganda as a form of public relations combining business and political interests alike in an attempt to engineer modern democracy.

Let us now explore, in the final section of this chapter, how the Second World War affected the discourse on and practice of modern propaganda, in a way which has had a lasting effect up to our present day.

1.4 PROPAGANDA AS PERFORMANCE

Bernays's lessons did not go unnoticed during the propaganda effort of the United States, once it set out for a war against the Nazi regime. Soldiers embarking to Europe received a pamphlet entitled *What is Nazi Propaganda?* (1944), published by the War Department, in which the Disney cartoon character Donald Duck describes the history, function, and effects of modern propaganda.[108] The pamphlet describes the strategies of Hitler and Goebbels in manipulating the German people by mass manifestations that "hypnotized" its attendants, directing the resentments of the people that suffered the consequences of the Versailles Treaty on "trade unions," "communists," "democracies," and, most importantly, the figure of the "Jew" and its league of international capitalism that had sold out the "Aryan" Germans after the First World War.[109] In response to this, the pamphlet argues, a different propaganda is needed, a "counter-propaganda," for "In the struggle of men's minds that is constantly being waged by propagandists there is […] a fundamental difference between the propaganda of dictatorship and the propaganda of democracy."[110]

We observe a Bernaysian touch in the claim that propaganda in a democracy by definition operates differently than the one in a dictatorship, as reflected in the pamphlet's claims that "democratic countries must present the truth in their propaganda" and that "A free people will soon find out the truth in spite of official suppressions and distortions."[111] This went even further, when the pamphlet explained that democratic propaganda was developed extensively in the form of public relations after the First World War: "Under the conditions of mass production and mass consumption, techniques of propaganda and public relations have been greatly developed to sell commodities and services and to engender good will among consumers, employees, other groups, and the public at large,"[112] concluding that

national propaganda in the throes of a war is aimed to bolster the security of the non-aggressor state and assure the eventual well-be-

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108 Something of a counter-document would be Ariel Dorfman and Armand Mattelart's study of the imperialist, capitalist and orientalist – if not colonialist – narratives of the Donald Duck comic, first published in 1971 during the popular government of Salvador Allende. Whereas Donald in *What is Nazi Propaganda?* claims to do nothing but "reveal" the propaganda of the enemy, Dorfman and Mattelart introduce an analysis of the Disney comic as a propaganda vehicle of United States capitalist democracy. See: Ariel Dorfman, Armand Mattelart, *How to Read Donald Duck: Imperialist Ideology in the Disney Comic* (New York: International General, 1991).
109 United States War Department, *What is Nazi Propaganda?* (London: Foxley Books Limited, 2009), p. 5.
110 Ibid., p. 9.
111 Ibid., p. 11.
112 Ibid., p. 22.

ing and safety of its citizens. No one would deny that this kind of propaganda, intelligibly administered, benefits every man, woman, and child in the land.[113]

This pamphlet may well have been one of the last officially government sanctioned documents that would pitch a democratic propaganda versus a dictatorial one, for the term would soon fall into disuse and disrepute once the Nazi regime was dismantled and the massive propaganda effort aimed at employing systemic violence on a gruesome scale came into full view of the international community. The pamphlet is a remnant of Bernays's legacy and his attempt to save the term propaganda for democracy, but eventually, the term "public relations" would be the one to prevail, even though Bernays – as we have seen previously – considered propaganda and public relations essentially to be the same thing.

Just as we observed in the post-World War I debates, the pamphlet makes an enormous rhetorical effort to keep the notion of modern propaganda within the realm of democratic values. On one hand, it does so by explaining propaganda as part of regular peacetime activities, such as the selling of commodities, associated with the free, democratic consumer society. The problem of course is that this pamphlet explaining propaganda is itself propaganda. The booklet is filled with cartoons of brave allied soldiers facing demonic Germans seducing average citizens with cakes while holding grenades behind their backs. We see a caricature of Goebbels literally seeding a farmland with "seeds of destruction" and a mad looking Hitler giving speeches to brainwashed and fat Nazi-soldiers while crooked Nazi-allied "Japs" seduce indigenous peoples it wished to conquer with jewels – the latter being all the more painful in the light of the massacres of indigenous peoples in the United States. And from beginning to end there is Donald Duck: the all-American narrator of the importance of democratic propaganda.[114]

Obviously, there are fundamental differences between US demo-

113 Ibid., p. 36.
114 In the Second World War, Disney characters were employed *en masse* to support the war effort. One of the most stunning examples might be the 1942 Donald Duck cartoon "Der Führer's Face," in which Donald finds himself as a Nazi in Germany, where he works 24 hours per day in a Nazi weapon factory. When Donald mentally crashes due to the excessive workload, he wakes up in his own bed. Upon realizing it was just a dream, he suddenly sees the shadow of what seems to be a Nazi officer saluting him – convinced that his own country has now been taken over as well; Donald immediately returns the shadow's Nazi salute. At that moment he realizes that he is actually standing in front of the shadow of the Statue of Liberty, and thus reassured he calmly returns to sleep. But at this brief moment, the Nazi salute is equated with the Statue of Liberty's pose. It shows how documents of propaganda can sometimes simultaneously be read against the grain as propaganda critique. See further Disney's self-produced historiography of its role during the war: John Baxter, *Disney During World War II: How the Walt Disney Studio Contributed to Victory in the War* (New York/Los Angeles: Disney Editions, 2014), pp. 60–64.

cratic consumer society and the German Nazi regime. In that sense, the models of society that are propagated cannot be unambiguously equated with each other. Also, the form that modern propaganda takes in these two countries was highly different, between the excessive uniformism and hierarchically imposed symbols, gestures, and slogans of the Nazi regime, versus the differentiated symbols of a society that propagates free choice in the products it consumes and the political parties it votes for. But neither is free from modern propaganda, and post-war theorists of propaganda would start to emphasize exactly this. The intention, means, and effects of propaganda can be framed in different ways, but modern propaganda, and the manner in which it relies on the achievements of the Second Industrial Revolution and its mass media, shows structural similarities across national and ideological boundaries. Rather than modern propaganda being solely the product of dictatorship, it has re-occurred in all highly industrialized nations ever since the First World War. In this final section, we will examine three important examples of propaganda analysis created after the Second World War. While their authors come from different traditions and geographies, they share a common investment in tracing the understanding of modern propaganda in relation to the massive technological and communication capacities of modern society.

The relation between modern mass society, American capitalist democracy, and European fascism was of specific interest to the many different sociologists, theorists, and philosophers connected to the so-called Frankfurt School, which emerged at the Institute for Social Research at the University of Frankfurt. Although not solely invested in modern propaganda theory as such, the subject is reoccurring in the work of, among others, the philosophers and sociologists Max Horkheimer and Theodor Adorno, especially with regard to the rise of anti-Semitism under the Nazi regime. The originally strongly Marxist-oriented Frankfurt School consisted of several members of Jewish descent, and whereas the question of anti-Semitism at first was cast aside due to the fact that Marxist theory of class struggle made the question of Jewish identity one of secondary importance, once many of the members of the Frankfurt School found themselves in exile in America as a result of the rise of the Nazi regime, the issue became more poignant.[115]

Adorno, who had been rejected for a teaching position due to his Jewish father, was forced into exile for fifteen years. While working at Oxford University, he was approached by the sociologist Paul Lazars-

115 Martin Jay, "The Jews and the Frankfurt School: Critical Theory's Analysis of Anti-Semitism," *New German Critique*, Vol. 19, Special Issue 1: Germans and Jews (Winter 1980): pp. 137–49.

feld who invited him to join a project by his Office for Radio Research at Princeton. Adorno accepted, but his own interests would strongly conflict with the project's methodology of quantified measurement research. In American research these methods, as noted earlier by Sproule, had become common practice, but for Adorno, who was also a composer, this came as a shock, as he considered culture as "precisely that condition that excludes a mentality capable of measuring it."[116] This stance testifies to Adorno's critical position both with regard to the fascist political system that had forced him and his colleagues into exile, and toward modern capitalist consumer societies and the models of "applied" social science that it generated.

It is in the light of Adorno's experiences in Nazi Germany and American capitalist democracy that we will look at his post-World War II essay that we briefly mentioned before, "Freudian Theory and the Pattern of Fascist Propaganda" (1951), in which he assessed the heritage of Le Bon and Freud in relation to Nazi propaganda. What is important in the essay is the fact that Adorno links Freud's analysis of the importance of the leader-figure as the supplementary father-figure in the formation of the masses to a Marxist analysis of the specific conditions of modern society that enables such a protagonist to gain political influence in the first place. While Freud was not connecting his analysis of the leader figure to the rise of fascism – he actually referenced socialist agitation – Adorno connects this analysis specifically to the "fascist demagogue" and considers Freud's text as a testimony of someone who "foresaw the rise and nature of fascist movements."[117]

Adorno joins Freud in his critique of Le Bon by stating that the formation of the masses are not merely "de-individualized, irrational, easily influenced, prone to violent action and altogether of regressive nature," and further elaborates by stating that "the members of contemporary masses are at least *prima facie* individuals, the children of a liberal, competitive and individualistic society, and conditioned to maintain themselves as independent, self-sustaining units."[118] Through the fascist demagogue, the mass can be transformed into a unity, if it effectively appeals to the libidinal source of mass formation. But rather than presuming that the masses are primarily shaped through "primitive instincts," Adorno concludes with Freud that the "masses are not primitive men but display primitive attitudes contradictory to their *normal* rational behavior."[119] Fascism is a rebellion against civilization

not because it reoccurs as archaic, but because it actively reproduces the archaic with the aim of gaining power over its masses: "It is one of the basic tenets of fascist leadership to keep primary libidinal energy on an unconscious level so as to divert its manifestations in a way suitable to political ends."[120] The fascist demagogue thus represents an archaic inheritance that makes a passive-masochistic attitude of individuals in the masses possible and exploitable.

Adorno's reading of the effect of propaganda seems mainly a psychoanalytic one, which obviously resonates with our earlier discussion of Freud, as well as with that of Bernays's work, who set out to commodify unconscious libidinal desires to manufacture political consent and to build an effective business-driven economy. But what makes Adorno's text different and of importance to our further study of modern propaganda, is that he did not just test the relevance of Freud's analysis of the masses on the fascist doctrine, but also emphasized the specific societal conditions which, in his perception, made fascism a possibility in the first place when addressing its growth within a competitive and individualistic society. He continues this analysis specifically when speaking about the rise of the "profession" of the fascist agitator:

> Their effectiveness is itself a function of the psychology of the consumers. Through the process of "freezing" [the end of progress and the beginning of repetition, JS], which can be observed throughout the techniques employed in modern mass culture, the surviving appeals have been standardized, similarly to the advertising slogans which proved to be most valuable in the promotion of business. This standardization, in turn, falls in line with the stereotypical thinking, that is to say, with the "stereopathy" of those susceptible to this propaganda and their infantile wish for endless unaltered repetition.[121]

Adorno describes a society in which modern mass culture and advertisement, as devised by public relation counsels such as Bernays, coincide with the most cynical examples of the role of modern propaganda in fascism. While Adorno never fully equates American capitalist society with the Nazi regime, he obviously gears his analysis toward modern mass culture as the breeding ground for fascism's violent doctrine:

> Fascist propaganda has only to *reproduce* the existent mentality for its own purposes; it need not to induce a change – and the compulsive repetition which is one of its foremost characteristics will be

116 Thomas Y. Levin and Michael von der Linn, "Elements of a Radio Theory: Adorno and the
      Princeton Radio Research Project," *The Musical Quarterly*, Vol. 78, No. 2 (Summer 1994): pp.
      316–24, at p. 320.
117 Adorno, *The Culture Industry*, p. 134.
118 Ibid., p. 135.
119 Ibid., p. 136.

120 Ibid., p. 137.
121 Ibid., p. 148.

at one with the necessity for this continuous reproduction. It relies absolutely on the total structure as well as on each particular trait of the authoritarian character which is itself the product of an internalization of the irrational aspects of modern society.[122]

So, without equating fascism with modern society, Adorno observes an existent mentality, which is the product of repetition, referring both to the standardized mass culture that resulted from modern society, as well as to its instruments of mass communication and the authoritarian character of these mechanisms, which form the foundation that allows a total structure, such as the Nazi regime, to operate.

Such analysis will have left, to no surprise, many researchers with extremely rationalized approaches to the question of modern propaganda in the United States stupefied.[123] Even though we have seen in the previous section that engagement with the work of Freud occurs in the United States from Bernays to Lasswell, Adorno radically expands Freud's significance by connecting the manipulation of the subconscious to what in Marxist terms is called as the "substructure" of capitalist society itself. In this case, this substructure would be formed by aspects of the power structure of modern mass society, but whose effects in the superstructure cannot easily be traced back to it. Following Adorno, modern propaganda is not merely a question of intended propagandistic messages, but is located in the power structures of modern society itself. Because mass society exists, propaganda exists: the latter is the expression of the former. And while that expression might be characterized ideologically different in the case of capitalist democracy and fascist dictatorship, both owe their existence of this same substructure.

Adorno was not the only one to expand modern propaganda analysis in these terms, and in the context of post-World War II modern propaganda theory, some have made far more radical analogies between the propaganda of capitalist-democracy and fascism. One such figure is the French sociologist, philosopher, and theologian Jacques Ellul, who has written substantially on the subject of the Second Industrial Revolution as a Technological Revolution – resulting in what he calls the "Technological Society" – in relation to modern propaganda after the Second World War. In some instances, Ellul makes assessments of the relation between modern society and modern propaganda similar to Adorno, but he draws less from the work of Freud and more from the work of post-World War I propaganda studies in the United States, such as Lasswell's, and, to a lesser extent, Bernays's and Dewey's.

Ellul's perception of propaganda was strongly informed by his own engagement in the underground resistance against the Nazis during the French occupation, something that might explain the sometimes highly polemical tone of his texts. Furthermore, the very unconventional nature of his research orientations, reaching from his earlier investment in Marxism to his self-proclaimed position as a Christian – later in his life he would become known as a theoretical protagonist of "Christian anarchism" – must have made it difficult to classify Ellul's work historically, and, as a result, his status in contemporary propaganda and communications studies is quite ambiguous.[124]

Ellul's major works are the complementary volumes *La Technique ou l'enjeu du siecle* (1954), translated as *The Technological Society,* and *Propagandes* (1962), translated as *Propaganda: The Formation of Men's Attitudes.* In the former, Ellul argues that "the most important feature of techniques today is that they do not depend on manual labor but on organization and on the arrangement of machines," with the consequence that "[t]echnique has become autonomous; it has fashioned an omnivorous world which obeys its own laws and which has renounced all tradition."[125] Technological Society, such is Ellul's assessment, overtakes the spheres in which humans decide politically on their self-determination: it decides for them. Ellul believes that the expansion of the state and the risk of extreme centralization such as he perceives in Nazi Germany, the Soviet Union, and the Maoist People's Republic of China, is the result of the dictates of technology: for the state to remain in power, it has to radically consume the technical domains that have come to dictate human progress. Otherwise, technology will create its own pseudo-states giving rise to "organisms as vast and powerful as the state itself."[126] The pseudo-state here could be considered as the equivalent of Lippman's "invisible world" and Bernays "invisible government": parallel structures of power that operate outside the control of democratic politics. But what stands out in Ellul's argument is

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122 Ibid., p. 150.
123 Sproule, for example, mentions the response of sociologist Paul Lazarsfeld to some of Adorno's studies in America: "Adorno treated the intrusion of the commodity market into music, arguing that the result had been the standardization of output, the development of commodity fetishism, and a pronounced regression to infantile listening. Lazarsfeld was incredulous that Adorno felt no compulsion to anchor such broad theoretical brush strokes with quantified data." Sproule, *Propaganda and Democracy,* p. 79.

124 Jowett and O'Donnell, for example, write that "we find Ellul's magnitude, especially his generalizing without regard for different cultural contexts […] troublesome" (*Propaganda and Persuasion,* p. 4); Taylor refers to Ellul's work as "one of the most stimulating conceptual examinations of propaganda" (*Munitions of the Mind,* p. 11); Sproule is by far the most appreciative, when he speaks of the lack and necessity of a "broad thinking about propaganda" in the interwar period, and mentions Ellul as an example of a thinker who was able to bring such analysis about in a later stage (*Propaganda and Democracy,* p. 89).
125 Jacques Ellul, *The Technological Society* (New York: Vintage Books, 1964), p. 14. In this regard, Ellul argues further upon Lasswell's assessment of technique as "the ensemble of practices by which one uses available resources to achieve certain valued ends." Ibid., p. 18.
126 Ibid., p. 235.

that ownership over the Technological Society's means of production can only be relative, as he perceives technique as that which owns the technician, rather than the other way around.

In several ways, we have seen how Ellul's line of reasoning in relation to the field of propaganda studies seems to resonate well: both Lippmann and Lasswell critically discuss the rise of propaganda in relation to democracy as a discussion that is inevitable, rather than desirable. This is what Ellul refers to when he speaks of the "autonomy" of technology, which demands that humanity alter its convictions and ethics to become integrated into the inevitable developments that shape modern society.[127] This brings Ellul to his most radical claim in his discussion of the Technological Society, namely that the concept of the totalitarian state has been wrongly applied to the Nazi regime. This does not mean that Ellul is in any way relativist about the disastrous consequences of Nazism. However, he considers its policies of mass murder rather in terms of being extremely human, than inhuman. Consequently, he considers the "uselessness" of murder on a massive scale contradictory to actual totalitarianism, for under genuine totalitarianism

> nothing useless exists, there is no torture; torture is a wasteful expenditure of psychic energy which destroys salvageable resources without producing useful results. There is no systematically organized famine, but rather a recognition of the pressing necessity of maintaining the labor force in good condition. There is nothing arbitrary, for the arbitrary represents the very opposite of technique, in which everything "has a reason" (not a final but a mechanical reason).[128]

So whereas Adorno takes from modern mass society the possibility of what he termed the total structure of fascism, Ellul radicalizes this hypothesis. He essentially claims that the real totalitarianism is yet to

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127 In regard to the "autonomy" of either the Technological Society or its propaganda, David Menninger argues that for Ellul this autonomy is always relative. Even though its effects supersede present human intention, this does not mean that its construction is not a product of human necessity and desire: "In [Ellul's] estimation, the technical phenomenon of our time is not the result of an alien mechanical force acting independently on history. It is the ironic creation of exuberant human intentions evolving into uncompromising social necessities. […] In Ellul's sociology, humankind's pride is that it forever creates its world, but its adversity lies in the constant threat of being overcome by its creation. The relation between individual and society turns out to contain a ceaseless reminder of past human choices and actions. In this situation, one may almost wish for alien forces to blame, but that would be submitting to illusion. Looking more closely at technique, this seemingly abstract and objective thing, we get a chilling sense of its immediacy. The phenomenon is in fact the product of dreams and choices to which we have surrendered ourselves. At its core, there is no other disembodiment than our own." David Menninger, "Politics or Technique? A Defense of Jacques Ellul," *Polity*, Vol. 14, No. 1 (Autumn 1981): pp. 110–27, at p. 117.

128 Ellul, *The Technological Society*, p. 287.

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come, and that the sacrifice will be the very possibility of a humanity that would allow for any form of doubt, inefficiency, or uselessness to interrupt mechanical reason. Even downright murder would be preferable, as it would still give proof of our humanity. In the endgame of the Technological Society, which Ellul often refers to as an "it," as something with its own internal dynamic – not a will, but an inevitable series of outcomes that largely stand outside of human control – a "new type of human being" emerges, whom Ellul describes as "mass man."[129]

In *Propaganda*, Ellul continues this line of reasoning. Propaganda's task in the Technological Society, Ellul argues, "is less and less to propagate ideologies; it now obeys its own laws and has become autonomous."[130] What Ellul argues throughout the book is that modern propaganda is a sociological phenomenon; an inevitable consequence of Technological Society. Propaganda for Ellul describes the process in which technology as it were "performs itself" in society, and in the process, strengthens its grip on all domains of human life. For this reason, there is need for propagandas in the plural: an interdisciplinary arsenal of technological tools to integrate humans in modern society. For Ellul, power is performed not primarily by humans, but by Technological Society upon humans, resulting in the construction of a reality defined and dominated by technique. Daniel van der Velden and Vinca Kruk of design collective Metahaven, describe this understanding of propaganda as an "interface," as a tool of mediation – of computing – between two or more interconnected systems. In Ellul's logic, the substructure of Technological Society is technique itself, which operates humans in a superstructure through its own propaganda interface.[131]

This analysis results in Ellul's claim that "propaganda no longer obeys an ideology."[132] As the Technological Society becomes omnipotent, its professed ideological values differ less and less from one another as its underlying principles – that of technique itself – will model the propagandists after the interests of propaganda. The outcome of this feedback loop in the Technological Society is the creation of what Ellul calls "total propaganda"[133] and its formation of the "invisible crowd."[134] With the notion of total propaganda Ellul refers to the full employment of all technical means – of all propagandas – whether in the private sphere in the form of radio and television, in the public

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129 Ibid., p. 407.
130 Ellul, *Propaganda*, p. 196.
131 Propaganda overlays reality with an interface that dominates and kills what it was supposed to mediate." Metahaven, "Eating Glass: The New Propaganda," *e-flux journal*, 56th Venice Biennial: Supercommunity, August 18, 2015.
132 Ellul, *Propaganda*, p. 196.
133 Ibid., p.9.
134 Ibid., p. 7.

sphere in the form of advertisement and mass manifestations, or in the sphere of labor, where a similar logic is employed to enforce our designated place as laborers in a society over which we have no longer any choice or saying.

We hear, in this line of reasoning, again the voice of Le Bon. But this time, the crowd is neither the hysterical and barbaric assembly, nor is this invisible crowd fully akin to Freud and Adorno's masses guided by a primordial father figure. In Ellul's totalitarian state of the Technological Society, people are compartimentalized, made efficient, resulting in an invisible crowd that is simultaneously a "lonely crowd."[135] Ellul concludes that "[b]ecause a mass society existed in western Europe at the end of the nineteenth century and the first half of the twentieth, propaganda became possible *and* necessary."[136] Technology has come to precede ideology, and in the process of feedback, becomes one and the same. Whereas Adorno argued that modern society created the conditions for both capitalist democracy and fascism, Ellul fully equates the two outcomes, with the risk that his own argument becomes as "totalitarian" – in this case completely flattening out the actual differences between ideologies.

Ellul cannot but consider the choice clear-cut: "Propaganda is a total system that one must accept or reject in its entirety," although due to his own totalizing theory, this seems problematic: for how to reject something that one is so utterly part of?[137] Or, in the same vein, how can Ellul inhabit a position outside of the Technological Society to theorize it, if indeed it is so all encompassing as he argues? Ellul claims that such an outside to Technological Society is possible as far as one is able to form organized groups, outside or on the fringes and frontiers of the Technological Society. In that light, Ellul references the peasantry that formed some of the strongest resistance both against the implementation of the Nazi regime as well as the forced collectivization of their lands in the Soviet Union.[138] And whereas Ellul argues that democracy is hardly free from propaganda, most certainly not the United States, he maintains that democracy can be the name of a force opposed to the Technological Society and its propaganda:

> Propaganda ruins not only democratic ideas but also democratic behavior – the foundation of democracy, the very quality without which it cannot exist. The question is not to reject propaganda in the name of freedom of public opinion – which, as we well know,

is never virginal – or in the name of freedom of individual opinion, which is formed of everything and nothing – but to reject it in the name of a very profound reality: the *possibility* of choice and differentiation, which is the fundamental character of the individual in the democratic society.[139]

We will return to Ellul's idea of resistance at the end of this chapter. What is important for now to take from Ellul is his elaboration of the specific structures of power that emerged in modern mass technological society already hinted at by Adorno. While we will challenge the Ellulian notion that it does not matter in the name of which ideology these power structures are performed in society, his description of a propaganda feedback loop – propaganda as a performance of power with the aim of constructing a normative reality in the service of this very same power – will prove accurate and crucial in our task of defining modern propaganda.

A propaganda study that allows us to depart from Adorno's and Ellul's general abstractions is the book *Manufacturing Consent: The Political Economy of the Mass Media* (1988) by political theorist and linguist Noam Chomsky and media theorist Edward S. Herman. Their work attempts both to define the conditions of modern propaganda and subsequently proposes a propaganda model, to effectively analyze the data that manufactures consent on a quotidian basis, both in the context of dictatorships *and* democracies – or problematic combinations of the two. Chomsky and Herman refer specifically to Ellul's analysis of the necessity of modern propaganda to become naturalized for the Technological Society to inscribe itself into everyday human behavior.[140] But their work additionally involves quantified data analysis, a methodology that both Adorno and Ellul reject, and bypasses psychological analyses of the impact of modern propaganda on individuals or groups.

Chomsky and Herman employ their propaganda model specifically to gain an understanding of the massive scale of media communications surrounding global warfare in the context of the Cold War. In that light, they describe the aim of their propaganda model to analyze the "behavior and performance" of US media, essentially what we have discussed so far as the performance of power in modern society which we define as modern propaganda.[141] With the use of the term "performance," Chomsky and Herman do not refer to its artistic connotation,

but rather use it in terms of assessing the enactment of a certain goal or objective, in a similar way as one might speak of the "performance" of a company and its employees.

Nonetheless, we will benefit throughout this thesis from expanding this notion of performance to the domain of the arts, when we think for example of the importance of embodiment in artistic performance in relation to the embodiment of propaganda: the internalization by individuals of certain convictions and behaviors that serve a propagandistic purpose. Performance scholar Erika Fischer-Lichte, defines performance as "events in which all the participants find themselves in the same place at the same time, partaking in a circumscribed set of activities", which can apply to "a traditional theatre performance in a proscenium theater in which the actors and audience are strictly separated; a 'Happening' in which these roles are not so clearly demarcated; a soccer game with spectators as well as a Church mass, a wedding as well as a political convention; a funeral as well as a World's Fair."[142] It is interesting to note that Fischer-Lichte moves effortlessly from defining performance in an artistic context to a political one. Similarly, many propaganda studies which are not necessarily grounded in the arts engage interdisciplinary readings of performance, such as the work of Tilman Allert, who discusses the introduction of the Nazi salute as a form of mass performance,[143] or that of Marshall Soules, who discusses propaganda as a form of deception in war and advertisement, but effortlessly ends up discussing performative deception in relation to political performance art.[144]

Throughout our historical exploration of propaganda, we have witnessed a dual logic to propaganda as performance. If we apply performance to the work of Ellul, for example, it relates to the performance of power by and in Technological Society; Technological Society is both the agent and subject of modern propaganda. Through the work of Freud and Adorno we have also witnessed how individuals embody and perform propaganda. Performance as propaganda can be used to simultaneously describe the process in which power is performed upon people on a macro-scale, but also to demonstrate the way people internalize and perform power in a micro-scale. Tillman's book is a good example in that regard, as the Nazi salute was mandated from above, declared on July 13, 1933, as "a general civic duty (..) mandatory in all party and state buildings and at commemorative sites."[145] But the

actual aim was that in everyday life, simple exchanges and social intimacies would increasingly become altered:

> Postmen used the greeting when they knocked on people's doors to deliver packages or letters. Customers entering department stores were greeted with "Heil Hitler, how may I help you?" Dinner guests brought, as house gifts, glasses etched with the words "Heil Hitler"; children were given three-inch-tall plastic figures with pivoting right arms; and print shops turned out millions of copies of photographer Heinrich Hoffmann's famous portrait of the Führer.[146]

The Hitler salute, in Allert's words, "confiscated the act of greeting," in the process in which the performance of power on a macro-scale impacts its day to day practice on a micro-scale. The mandate is an imposition, the day to day enactment an embodiment.[147] Power is performed upon us, but so do we internalize and perform power. We will refer to this dual process as the macro-performative and micro-performative dimensions of propaganda, and through the work of Chomsky and Herman we will see that it is exactly this performative interplay that defines propaganda. In other words, propaganda does not "perform," but it is itself a multi-layered performance. In the case of Chomsky and Herman, we will focus on the political dimension of propaganda as performance, whereas in our next chapter we will deepen its artistic dimension.

Published one year before the fall of the Berlin wall, *Manufacturing Consent* traces the role of propaganda specifically in the domain of mass media in the years of the Cold War and the sphere of anti-communist hysteria in the United States. Mass media in Chomsky and Herman's analysis encompass far more that journalistic institutions and corporations, touching on larger questions of ownership in society and its impact on the construction of reality at large. While invested in questions on the relation between modern society and propaganda similar to those of Adorno and Ellul, the book follows the tradition of American muckraker activism by visibilizing unacknowledged interests between political, economic and media institutions.

Chomsky and Herman define mass media as "a system of communicating messages and symbols to the general populace," with the function to "amuse, entertain, and inform, and to inculcate individuals with the values, beliefs, and codes of behavior that will integrate them

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142 Erika Fischer-Lichte, *The Routledge Introduction to Theatre and Performance Studies* (London/New York: Routledge, 2014), p. 18.
143 Tilman Allert, *The Hitler Salute: On the Meaning of a Gesture* (New York: Picador, 2005), p. 90.
144 Marshall Soules, *Media, Persuasion and Propaganda* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2015), pp. 234-37.
145 Allert, *The Hitler Salute*, p. 30.

146 Ibid., p. 33.
147 Ibid., p. 99.

into the institutional structures of the larger society."[148] This function should be understood as a systemic dimension of propaganda: due to the fact that the mass media are dependent on structures of concentrated wealth and ownership – monopolies of power – it is inherently limited in reporting on facts that would go counter to the interests of its own owners and financiers. Chomsky and Herman define these limits through five "filters" that make up their propaganda model:

(1) the size, concentrated ownership, owner wealth, and profit-orientation of the dominant mass-media firms; (2) advertising as the primary income source of the mass media; (3) the reliance of the media on information provided by government, business, and "experts" funded and approved by these primary sources and agents of power; (4) "flak" as a means of disciplining the media; and (5) "anticommunism" as a national religion and control mechanism.[149]

According to Chomsky and Herman, the elite domination of mass media is so profound that journalists and media institutions operating within it are compelled to internalize its interests as objective facts. A filter is here described as a screen of interests, largely defined by the agendas of mass media owners and financiers.[150] As a result, "the U.S. media do not function in the manner of the propaganda system of a totalitarian state," but rather maintain the idea of a free and critical media "as long as these remain faithfully within the system of presuppositions and principles that constitute an elite consensus, a system so powerful as to be internalized largely without awareness."[151] We can see some resonance between the notion of the "filter" and that what we discussed as Ellul's "interface": the mediation between a structure of power and the society in which this power is performed.

Ownership and advertising are not the only filters through which mass media propagandize a specific reality. There is also the filter that results from political dependency. This goes further than merely trying to obtain diplomatic support for the right to broadcast and distribute, but also affects the acquisition of information. In order to remain objective, Chomsky and Herman argue, mass media lean to official, government sources, as it is far more costly and difficult to obtain information from a source that might oppose state interests, for example in the case of a foreign war.[152] Chomsky and Herman trace the increase of such forms of source dependency back to the operation of the Committee on Public Information during the First World War, which flooded media outlets with so much official information that this would naturally begin to define the dominant filter.[153]

Furthermore, Chomsky and Herman argue that there is a variety of intersections between political and corporate interests that limit the mass media's possibility to facilitate dissident opinion and critical information as a result of the production of "flak" by powerful lobby groups. A returning example in their book is that of Freedom House, dating back to the early 1940s, which formally operated as an NGO in support of democracy, freedom of speech, and human rights, but had "interlocks with AIM [Accuracy in Media], the World Anticommunist League, Resistance International, and U.S government bodies such as Radio Free Europe and the CIA," operating as a "virtual propaganda arm of the government and the international right wing."[154] The ownership of power and wealth in the hands of government and corporate organizations thus built a filter through which information is manufactured after their interests, creating its own experts, sources, and even watchdogs that hardly ever moved outside of the dominant framework – a practice that brings to mind Wellington House's early investment in engineering seemingly "independent" academic publications and expert opinions to trigger the US to join the war effort. Similarly, the use of such flak against supposedly communist elements shows overlaps with Wellington House' framing of the German as the "Hun." Through the filters of the propaganda model – ownership, advertisement, source dependency, flak, and anti-communism – monopolies of power are thus performed in society with the aim to construct a new normative reality that supports its own interests and undermines the possibility for critical or dissident information or opinion.

The propaganda model proposed by Chomsky and Herman is strongly invested in questioning the idea of democracy as advocated by the United States government, its influence on mass media, and the double standards it practices. An important case in this regard is their

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148 Chomsky and Herman, *Manufacturing Consent*, p. 1.
149 Ibid.
150 Jeff Goodwin, though supportive of the definition of the five filters, remarks that these are overall applied by Chomsky and Herman to study the "content of the news" rather than the "journalistic practices" that bring this content into being. The risk, he adds, is that such a propaganda model becomes an "overdetermined model." This results in "the great irony of Herman and Chomsky's work" which is that "they largely eschew a careful analysis of *how* these mechanisms actually shape – and how *much* they shape – the everyday journalistic practices that produce the news." Jeff Goodwin, "What's Right (and Wrong) About Left Media Criticism? Herman and Chomsky's Propaganda Model," *Sociological Forum*, Vol. 9, No. 1 (Mar. 1994): pp. 101–11, at pp. 109–10.
151 Chomsky and Herman, *Manufacturing Consent*, p. 1.

152 As an example, they mention the Pentagon and the thousands of employees at its disposal for mere publicity purposes. The result is that the Pentagon, at the time of their writing, published over three hundred magazines at an annual costs of seventy-five million dollars: "an operation sixteen times larger than the nation's biggest publisher," leaving only the corporations with the "resources to produce public information and propaganda on the scale of the Pentagon and other government bodies." Chomsky and Herman, *Manufacturing Consent*, pp. 20, 21.
153 Ibid., p. 23.
154 Ibid., p. 28.

analysis of what they term "Third World elections" in regimes that the US supports or which the US helped come into being, such as El Salvador (in 1982 and 1984) and Guatemala (in 1984–85), and those that escape its realm of influence, such as Nicaragua (in 1984), which the Reagan administration at the time wanted to dispose of. In all cases, the vocabulary with which government and mass media define legitimate elections will be the same, namely the criteria of freedom of speech and assembly, freedom of press, freedom to organize, freedom to form political parties and absence of state terror. However, they observe that the application of these standards is extremely different.[155]

In the case of the elections in US-backed dictatorships in El Salvador and Guatemala, for example, voting was obliged by law, political threats were made that claimed not voting was an act of treason, ID cards needed to be signed, ballot boxes were transparent, the government crackdown on dissident journalists resulted in outright murder, the bodies of the opposition were exposed in public and the actual opposition in the form of left-wing popular guerrillas were by definition excluded from the elections.[156] Nonetheless, the staged elections were praised by both the US government and mass media: in the case of El Salvador, Chomsky and Hermann mention the lyrical tone with which the massive turnout at the ballot box was reported, without mentioning mandatory voting and the consistent crackdown on all opposition,[157] while in the case of Guatemala the results were hailed as an end to decades of "military domination" and a confirmation of the government's success to curtail insurgents.[158]

In the case of the Nicaraguan elections, Chomsky and Herman explain, the situation was completely different. The government that the Reagan administration wanted to get rid of was led by the Sandinista National Liberation Front, a socialist revolutionary organization that had led the Nicaraguan resistance against US occupation in the 1930s and in 1979 had successfully deposed the leaders of the Somoza dynasty. While threatened by border incursions of contras supported by the US, the conditions for proper elections, as Chomsky and Herman argue, were nonetheless present under the rule of this popular government. Voting was not mandated by law, voting was anonymous, relative freedom of press existed – even, to a certain degree, for the contras – and actual opposition was allowed to participate in the elections.

Nonetheless, the US government and the mass media's assessment of the elections was that of a dangerous communist state staging elec-

tions to win legitimacy, while even the most minimal form of government censorship was reported as a proof of fraud. Whereas more than four hundred and fifty international foreign observers were present during the Nicaraguan elections, giving the process favorable assessments, no US observer was present, giving the government free hand in providing reporters information on the process. The outcomes were reported by the US and its mass media as a piece of theater, a predicable win for the Sandinistas and the mood of voters – contrary to the "massive" turnout in Guatemala and El Salvador – described as indifferent, while providing maximum attention to the US-supported contras, who predictably discredited the electoral process as a coup.[159] Chomsky and Herman describe the underlying logic of the election in El Salvador, Guatemala and Nicaragua as follows:

> In elections held in disfavored or enemy states, the U.S. government agenda is turned upside down. Elections are no longer equated with democracy, and U.S. officials no longer marvel at the election being held under adverse conditions. They do not commend the army for supporting the election and agreeing to abide by the results. On the contrary, the leverage the dominant party obtains by control of and support by the army is put forward in this case as compromising the integrity of the election. Rebel disruption is no longer proof that the opposition rejects democracy, and turnout is no longer the dramatic denouncement of the struggle between a democratic army and its rebel opposition. Now the stress is on the hidden motives of the sponsors of the election, who are trying to legitimize themselves by this tricky device of a so-called election.[160]

Similar to how Chomsky and Herman define "worthy" and "unworthy" victims – the first consisting of highly mediated victims belonging to friendly or client states, whereas the unworthy ones are severely undermediated victims belonging to what the US regards as hostile states[161] – we thus move to "worthy" and "unworthy" democracies, in

155 Ibid., p. 89.
156 Ibid., pp. 141–42.
157 Ibid., p. 108.
158 Ibid., p. 111.

159 Ibid., p. 118.
160 Ibid., p. 90.
161 An example is the manner in which mass media intensely covered the killing of a Polish priest, Jerzy Popieluszko, murdered by Polish police in October 1984. The murder took place in a Communist state, which, in the context of the Cold War, was defined as an enemy state. In contrast, Chomsky and Herman introduce the example of Father Augusto Ramirez Monasterio, father superior of the Franciscan order in Guatemala, murdered in November 1983. The killing took place in an American client state, and it was therefore considered a friendly state. Based on the excess of reporting on the first murder and an extreme lack in the case of the second, Chomsky and Herman conclude that a murder in an enemy state is a "worthy victim," as it supports the legitimacy to pursue military action against them, while that in a friendly client state is an "unworthy victim," as it would not be beneficiary to act militarily against one's own proxy. As proof, they present the data on the reporting of Popieluszko's murder versus Monasterio's in American mass media: "The worth of the victim Popieluszko is valued at somewhere between 137 and 179 times that of a victim in the U.S. client states." Concretely, this means that Pop-

which, according to Chomsky and Hermann, worthy elections are synonymous to the ones serving US policy and interest.[162]

Chomsky and Herman precisely trace how the convergence of political, economic, technological and military interests impact the construction of reality through the mass media. In their examples, the monopolization of power is crucial, as this is what brings about the erosion of borders between domains that in Chomsky and Herman's perception can only serve public interest if they maintain a relative independence. Journalism in the context of mass media is their main example, but one could equally think of the importance of the relative independence of labor unions, political parties and elected officials and the judiciary system. The less relative independence exists for the domains of politics, economy, technology or military, the easier the interests of power become manufactured as collective interest; as manufactured consent.

Assessing the performance of power through Chomsky and Herman's model thus means to trace the interests of the proprietors of monopolies of power, and the multi-layered process through which they aim to construct reality. The macro-performative dimension of propaganda relates to the activation of monopolized structures of power by their proprietors to direct politics, the economy, media and warfare to further serve their interests, whether ideological or financial in nature. The clandestine funding of client states in the form of US sponsored regimes or contras in the fight against communism to perpetrate a political-economic paradigm beneficial to its own interest, is an example of such a macro-performance. The subsequent micro-performative dimension of propaganda relates to the process in which those laboring and living within these monopolies, are affected in their convictions, attitudes, and day to day actions. The role of the mass media has been one of our main examples in this case, who are influenced – through propaganda filters – to normalize US sponsored client states as political and ideological "democratic" allies to their day to day readership,

whereas resistance groups are framed as dangerous agents of "unworthy" political ideas. In Chomsky and Herman's propaganda model, the more the interests of the proprietors of power are brought to converge with those laboring and living within its sphere of influence, the stronger the impact of propaganda on constructing reality. Although we shall see later, that the way macro- and micro-performative dimensions of propaganda interrelate, also depends on the kind of power or claim to power it brings into being.

What becomes clear from Chomsky and Herman's detailed assessment of propaganda in the Cold War is that what they describe as the "societal purpose" of the media is to "inculcate and defend the economic, social, and political agenda of privileged groups that dominate the domestic society and the state."[163] The media are free, but only for those who ascribe to the dominant views of its propaganda filter. They conclude that, in line with those voices criminalized in their attempt to bring into being popular people's governments:

> The organization and self-education of groups in the community and workplace, and their networking and activism, continue to be the fundamental elements in steps toward the democratization of our social life and any meaningful social change. Only to the extent that such developments succeed can we hope to see media that are free and independent.[164]

In these concluding words, we hear an idea similar to Ellul's, when he speaks of those organized groups capable of resisting the propaganda of the Technological Society. In Chomsky and Herman's case, these organized groups take the shape of communities capable of sufficient self-organization that can resist participating in the performance of monopolies of power. This indicates that Ellul, as well as Chomsky and Herman, is not merely describing what propaganda is and how it operates; they are also theorizing possible alternatives and models of resistance. This means that their analysis of modern propaganda and its abuse in democratic systems simultaneously forms a search for the possibility of alternative understandings and practices of democracy. On the one hand, their work shows us that after the Second World War, the concept of propaganda has become synonymous to mass manipulation and anti-democratic tendencies. On the other hand, it also shows us the complex fact that those who analyze propaganda, also tend to propagandize a model of their own: in this case, a model of

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ieluszko's murder was reported between 137 and 179 times more than Monasterio's. Chomsky and Herman, *Manufacturing Consent*, p. 39.
162 It is important to mention that here Chomsky and Herman's methodology was used against themselves in relation to their assessment of the Khmer Rouge Regime in Cambodia. Analyzing media reports of massacres perpetuated by the Pol Pot led regime as well as the witness testimonies of Cambodian refugees, Chomsky and Herman concluded the presence of US media bias due to the fact that the government was a communist led enemy state, its victims and their testimonies were thus "worthy" as they could be used to further US policy objectives. See: Noam Chomsky and Edward S. Herman, *After the Cataclysm: Postwar Indochina and the Reconstruction of Imperial Ideology* (Chicago: Haymarket Books, 1979), p. xi. In the course of the genocide perpetuated by the Khmer Rouge, it became clear that the media rather underreported the extent of violence. In this regard, Chomsky and Herman responded to critique of their own bias in favor of the Khmer Rouge by emphasizing that their analysis was based on the interests with which the media interpreted the events in Cambodia leaving out how the US military had contributed to the insurgency themselves, but that this was not the same as denying that a massacre was actually taking place. See: Noam Chomsky, Edward S. Herman, and Charles Burton, "Correspondence," *Pacific Affairs*, Vol. 58, No. 3 (Autumn 1985): pp. 495–96, at p. 495.

163 Chomsky and Herman, *Manufacturing Consent*, p. 299.
164 Ibid., p. 307.

resistance to propaganda. In the third chapter of this thesis, *Contemporary Propaganda*, we will challenge both Ellul's and Chomsky and Herman's conviction that the only way to resist propaganda is through a counter-propaganda, by proposing an "inverted" propaganda model.

Before coming to a general comparison and conclusion to our exploration of the development of propaganda theory, let us make the following three concise observations regarding our post-World War II propaganda theory up until the Cold War:

- In the aftermath of the uncovering the Nazi regime and its massacres, the post-World War II theories of modern propaganda indefinitely turn into an assessment of modern propaganda as a negative force of mass manipulation and thus opposed to democracy: in the cases of Adorno, Ellul, and Chomsky and Herman an analysis of the dangers of propaganda at best results in propositions of counter-propaganda but not of a more "democratic" propaganda, as was the case in the interbellum years in the United States;
- The post-World War II theories on modern propaganda analyze a continuous relation between the modern structures of technological, political, and economic power in relation to modern propaganda, either in the form of mass society (Adorno), technological society (Ellul), or monopolized elite power (Chomsky and Herman);
- The post-World War II theories of modern propaganda argue that the performance of power aims to construct reality – to manufacture consent – in service of the stakeholders of power.

1.5 CONCLUSION

What we have seen in this chapter is that the development of modern propaganda runs parallel to the emergence of new structures of power, monopolized by an elite of stakeholders, as we have discussed in relation to politics, economy, and technology (mass media). While humanity has always propagandized messages, modern propaganda is a consequence of the Second Industrial Revolution, largely indebted to Britain and its colonial Empire and its development as a modern democracy. This is what Chomsky and Herman

> discuss as the "performance" of the mass media, which is part of the larger performance that we call propaganda: the process in which power is performed through a set of filters with the aim of constructing reality to benefit this same power.

What we have also seen, is that modern propaganda does not exclude democracy, on the contrary. Although it is difficult to reconcile an idealized form of democracy as people's self-governance with modern propaganda, the factual practice of British democracy stood far from that ideal anyway, not just because of its initial exclusion of large parts of the male and the entirety of the female population, but because of its far-reaching politics of imperial colonialism based on which, its own claims of being a "civilized" society were founded. This is something well understood by Edward Bernays, who considers propaganda as a solution to the problems of democracy, claiming that the invisible government of public relation counsels are best equipped to secure collective interest. This understanding of elite rule in the majority's benefit as "democracy" proves to be perfectly capable of building an understanding in which modern propaganda and democracy go hand in hand. This stands in great contrast to the intensive debates between Lippmann, Dewey, and Lasswell, who all remain doubtful in one way or another about the question whether modern propaganda is not by definition a threat to an open and informed society.

While propaganda studies after the First World War intensely debated the question of whether democracy and modern propaganda might be reconcilable, the field turns more critical toward this question after the Second World War up unto the Cold War. The hope for a modern propaganda of the common good seems indefinitely lost after the Second World War, fueled by the rigid and violent mechanisms of Nazi propaganda and the atrocities that it attempted to hide from public view.

Adorno, Ellul, and Chomsky and Herman analyze modern pro-

paganda from a variety of perspectives. Adorno assesses the dangers of modern propaganda in relation to mass society, from modern capitalism to dictatorships by means of a psychoanalytical approach. Analyzing the rise of the Technological Society, Ellul even declares that the real totalitarianism of modern propaganda is yet to come. And finally, Chomsky and Herman focus on the process in which modern propaganda in democracy operates through filters that manufacture consent in the interest of monopolized structures of power. Rather than looking for a "solution" to integrate modern propaganda in democracy, these thinkers – Ellul and Chomsky/Herman in particular – seek modes of resistance against propaganda. In their eyes, an alternative approach to democracy cannot but result in a form of counter-propaganda.

This latter notion of "countering" modern propaganda brings us back to the continuous discussion of the relation between modern propaganda and democracy. Countering propaganda, as we have seen throughout this chapter, is often connected to the idea of protecting or articulating a more principled form of democracy, in which power is subjected to the continuous control of those living in its sphere of influence, for example in the form of radically decentralized or communal governance. This presupposes that the democracies in which modern propaganda became operable are not reconcilable with these ideals of more "principled" understandings and practices of democracy. A principled democracy, as asserted by figures such as Dewey, Ellul, and Chomsky and Herman, is one in which organized groups and communities are capable of protecting their spheres of livelihood from the penetration of monopolies of power. Dewey emphasizes the importance of critical education, Ellul refers to organized groups at the fringes of the Technological Society, whereas Chomsky and Herman point to social movements and self-organized communities.

The discussion about modern propaganda as such is just as much the beginning of a discussion of the possibility of its alternatives. We will elaborate further on the work of those invested in forms of counter-propaganda or alternative, "emancipatory" propaganda throughout the next chapters of this thesis. Let us for now, based on this chapter, propose the following definition of modern propaganda:

- Modern propaganda is the performance of power in modern society

In the following chapter, we will observe that just as there exists a presumption that the concept of propaganda belongs to the domain of archaic dictatorships, there exists a persistent conviction that the "propaganda art" of those dictatorships stands in stark if not absolute contrast with the art developed in modern democratic societies. As we have shown, modern democracy far from excludes the presence of modern propaganda, and similarly we must explore how this affects the practice of art. What, for example, could we expect when applying the propaganda model of Chomsky and Herman to artistic production? Through what filters and in whose interest, is art produced, presented, and validated? And is there a difference in the production of propaganda art depending on the kind of modern society in question?