

Tom Latkovic 221
August 29, 1993
AP English 7°

"Brainwashed"

Most Americans believe they are free to observe and think what they want, but in actuality are conditioned to think and act how the powers that be want. The editors of newspapers, directors of T.V. stations, and high ranking government officials all have some influence on what the masses think. Therefore every time someone turns on the T.V., look at the cover of a magazine, or picks up a pare they are being brainwashed.

By the manipulation of fact, biased editing , and other methods the United States media influences its patrons to certain views. Although reporters don't necessarily lie, they have numerous ways to convey their opinion. They chose how to approach a topic, what "experts" they will talk to, and what facts will be presented. For example, during the last presidential campaign there were numerous articles on who Bill Clinton's proposed tax plan would effect. Depending on whose facts an figures you look at the answer varies from the very wealthy to the poor. Holders of both opinions claim to be right, but who is? Reporters also use psychology to their advantage. By playing on human emotions, especially fear, they can impress their opinions. Editors of magazines and

newspapers also have a great deal of power. Every time a certain article is put on the front page and another on page 11 thoughts are being influenced. He controls what we see and read. If an editor puts a "pro-life" article on the front page and then denies all "pro-choice" articles submitted he is influencing the reader. Editors also inculcate people by what subjects get more attention. For instance a politically liberal T.V. station may choose to air an abundance of stories on issues democrats are strong on to support them. The placement of pictures, the size of the headlines, and the time allotted to certain subjects all diminishes objectiveness. Another example of this is during the Pope's visit to Denver Mtv news covered Youth Day. They spent 30 seconds discussing the 250,000+ youths assembled to listen to the Pope and 3 minutes on 50 gay protesters, unhappy with the teachings of the Catholic Church. Mtv reported objectively but, by way of air time conveyed their beliefs.

The United States government attempts to control the thoughts of Americans by what and how information is released. Propaganda has been used in times of war since the beginning of recorded history, but to our government it is an every day tool of manipulation. They like journalists use emotions to their advantage. If they can evoke enough fear, confidence, or whatever they can sway opinions. For instance, during the Gulf War we were bombarded with images of U.S. planes destroying Iraqi chemical weapons plant, but never saw the thousands of civilians with body parts blown off. This is

because the military filters the images we see to maintain confidence and support. In the U.S. we are giving freedom of speech, but we have courts to decide just how far free speech should go, therefor deciding what we can hear and can't hear.

By means of opinions expressed and characters the entertainment industry has an tremendous influence on the way we think. If a popular T.V. show consistently portrays blacks in servile roles and whites in power positions viewers are being conditioned to believe that is the way it should be. If a station program director chose to show an abundance of shows with gay parents taking care of children, viewers are being influenced to think it is an acceptable thing. It is also interesting how certain characters in the entertainment world influence popular culture. After Tom Cruise wore Ray-ban® sunglasses in the movie "Risky Business", Ray-ban® sales increased dramatically. Movies also use emotions to influence thought. If movies are consistently being made about a nuclear holocaust people are going to be more concerned with that issue.

In George Orwell's novel 1984 people live in a society where they are told what to think and how to act. If someone thinks in opposition to the government they are reprogrammed, or brainwashed into thinking correctly. Many Americans couldn't fathom any similarity between that desolate place and our country, but it turns out there are many. Although it isn't as extreme, the media, government, and entertainment industry all have ways to influence the thoughts, beliefs, and

emotions of everyone. It is extremely difficult to shield oneself from the onslaught of "biased objectivity". Therefore almost everything you think is in some way a result of brainwashing.