

*F*rcing Change

Manipulating the Masses: Penetrating Psychological Operations - A Primer on Global Propaganda

by Carl Teichrib



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“The citizen should be molded to suit the form of government under which he lives.” - Aristotle, *Politics*, Book VIII¹

“Never before in human history have so many had such easy access to so much potential power for so many diverse purposes.” - *In Athena's Camp: Preparing for Conflict in the Information Age*.²

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“Psychological operations” is not a term typically found in the lexicon of the general public. Normally, it is a military phrase referring to an information operation specifically aimed at changing the behaviours and attitudes of a target group. In military affairs this has historically been enemy combatants and/or the general population of an enemy country.

Today we live in an age where information is deemed central to the maintenance of political and economic power, placing the scope of psychological operations far beyond military-only applications. While this is not fundamentally new – information and its leverage has always been an instrument of power – an understanding of its manipulative importance and persuasiveness is sadly lacking by most people.



Psychological operations in the broadest form are intimately tied to its information cousin: propaganda. Indeed, the distinction between the two is thin, and in the literature (including military documents), these two sciences are tightly woven.

Peter Kenez, author of *The Birth of the Propaganda State*, writes,

“To discuss the matter sensibly, we must abandon the hope of finding a definition of propaganda that would be precise, cover all acts of propaganda and only propaganda, and be usable regardless of time and space. Instead, we must accept the broadest possible definition: Propaganda is nothing more than the attempt to transmit social and political values in the hope of affecting people’s thinking, emotions, and thereby behavior.”³

An older Canadian military document on psychological operations, simply titled *Psychological Operations – First Draft*, postulates a similar position,

“Psychological Operations (PSYOPS) is the generic term used to cover all aspects of psychological activities and is defined as – planned psychological activities in peace and war *directed to enemy, friendly and neutral audiences* in order to influence attitudes and behaviour affecting the achievement of political and military objectives.”⁴ [italics added]

Bridging the two information concepts, this Canadian document explicitly states, “Propaganda is the primary tool of PSYOPS.”⁵

In featuring the value of propaganda as the leading instrument of PSYOPS, it’s important to consider the role and use of the “message.” A section out of *Psychological Operations – First Draft*, may be helpful,

“A propaganda message is a communication with the purpose of bringing about an action

and an attitude. Before it can accomplish its purpose, it must get a hearing by a designated receiver (target). In brief, a message must be received, be understood, be believed, offer a solution, and bring about a desired result. Given a policy, intelligence, a target, themes, and appraisal of the desired results, the propagandist composes his message. He must construct, time, and transmit his message so that, even though in competition with considerable other material being presented to the target, it gets a hearing. The target must understand the message and give it the interpretation intended by the propagandist.

A propaganda message must arouse or stimulate needs. It must cause an action or bring about an attitude desired by the propagandist. This requires that the message tell the target how to satisfy its needs – by following the course of action desired by the propagandist. This, in turn, requires that the actions (urged openly or implied) be appropriate and important to the target. In order to get the action or attitude desired, the message must, in the opinion of the target, offer the best solution (or the only logical one) toward solving the problem addressed or in fulfilling target needs.

In essence, the propagandist must take all necessary steps to assure that the action he desires will succeed and that the action he does not desire will have the least opportunity to appeal to the target; ie, that the undesired action will fail.”⁶

This is significant, for it demonstrates the intentional shaping of a group (society) via the dissemination of specific information, the message, to meet particular target goals. Furthermore, this message-target relationship isn’t usually apparent to the audience. While situational vagueness isn’t always the case, typically the target group is unaware of the outside influences working to shape opinions, beliefs, values, and attitudes.

Articles to Watch for in Upcoming Issues of *Forcing Change*

- Bridging Politics and Religion for Global Unification
- Earth Day: A Radical Religious Agenda
- Utopian Politics: International Socialism and the Rise of Global Governance
- Cult of Green: The UN Earth Sabbath
- Fundamental Fears: Biblical Christianity as a Factor in Global Instability

PSYOPS and Domestic Influence

An interesting admittance of military PSYOPS targeting can be found in a publication released by the Command and Control Research Program, which operates within the Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense, US Department of Defense. In discussing the importance of public support for military operations, specifically after the 1993 Battle of Mogadishu – which left 18 US service men dead – the authors of the CCRP report stated,

“After Somalia, the ‘hearts and mind’ to be won over in mounting these operations were not only those of the host country – the traditional PSYOP target. They now included, perhaps predominately, the hearts and minds of the American people and Congress.”⁷

This is sobering. As Peter Kenéz reminds us, “...propaganda often means telling less than the truth, misleading people, and lying...”⁸ And while the above CCRP example may or may not have a direct linkage to lying or “misleading people,” it does illustrate the public policy “persuasion” aspect, bringing into play questions of ethics and

governance.

Ethical issues surrounding public persuasion abound. In an updated report released in 2005, the US Congressional Research Service examined the actions of US executive branch agencies and found numerous examples of controversial information activities. Agencies as diverse as the Internal Revenue Service, the Office of National Drug Control Policy, the Social Security Administration, the Department of Education, the Department of Health and Human Services, and the Environmental Protection Agency were all fingered as employing highly questionable information campaigns. Many of these campaigns were aimed at advancing government positions. In the case of the Federal Communication Commission, however, it was found that the FCC was specifically promoting digital television (DTV) sets – along with large corporate interests that would benefit through the sales of DTVs.⁹

While television sales are trivial in terms of propaganda activities, it does illustrate how accepted and ingrained information manipulation has become. Sadly, it also raises the validity of the public’s general mistrust of government.

Recognizing the trust-blowback dilemma of deception as a policy tool, especially as it relates to larger concerns, one US Army War College report noted,

“Because governments have practiced deception involving issues as important as national security, it is difficult for many in the media, and the public at large, to discount totally the possibility that government announcements could be disinformation...”

...anyone engaged in deception operations, offensively or defensively, should be aware of the credibility issues inherent to this subject. Often there is more at stake than a temporary political or military advantage.”¹⁰

There is a lot at stake, including the long-term trustworthiness of basic civil structures. This is

inherently true regarding propaganda that was initially set in motion to swing domestic social values and behaviours; for once the mechanism has established itself into the fabric of civil life, its influence can persist long after the official program has closed. In other words, a snowball effect may well continue until the misinformation is countered by more reasonable voices, or until it self-destructs under the inertia of its own deceptions, or until the original PSYOPS outcome – or a variation thereof – is achieved.

Unfortunately, the reach of propaganda frequently infects all levels of society, and long-term civil integrity suffers. This credibility gap can in turn adversely impact the educational system, press and media services, police and military functions, the roles of churches and seminaries, and various offices of public authority. Moreover, all of these institutions not only have the potential to be used via PSYOPS, but in particular cases may actually employ propaganda as a way of forwarding their own agendas. [Ed. note: a large part of *Forcing Change* is to document this reality; future issues will highlight specific agenda examples].

If propaganda has a positive angle, it's during times of actual warfare where PSYOPS is directly used to combat enemy nations, including battlefield deception tactics.¹¹ But that form of deception is tightly connected to an immediate life-and-death struggle. It's the use of propaganda as an instrument for domestic change, however, that is much more troubling.

The Soviet Model

From an internal political perspective, three major powers in the twentieth century exerted tremendous energy in shaping their home societies through information manipulation. The Soviet Union, Nazi Germany, and communist China each established specific agencies for creating and disseminating propaganda. And here is where we can

truly begin to grasp the significance of psychological operations: the subtle and systematic bending of core values.

Professor David E. Powell, author of *Antireligious Propaganda in the Soviet Union: A Study of Mass Persuasion*, revealed the heart of the Soviet transformational structure,

“The Party has tried to break down traditional authority patterns and relationships that it considers inappropriate to the modern world, and to develop in their place a new set of attachments. It has chosen to shape the values of an entire people through a massive program of education and indoctrination...It has tried to change the views of adults and to inculcate into younger people, who have fewer and less firmly held preconceptions and attitudes, views that it deems correct.”¹²

“‘Political socialization’ is the process by which people acquire their political standards and beliefs. It involves a wide range of institutions and individuals, from parents and teachers to the press, the courts, and the military. Through contact with these socializing agents, people modify or discard old values, acquire new ones, or reinforce their preexisting notions.”¹³

“In their effort to restructure the political culture and transform a religious people into atheists, the Soviet leaders have tried to socialize and resocialize the entire population.”¹⁴

If you're asking the question: how does this fit in today's world? – You're making the wrong enquiry. The real question is: are there forces at work in our present national and global system attempting to “shape the values of an entire people through a massive program of education and indoctrination...”?

The Club of Rome, an influential organization

of prominent individuals from around the world, already admitted to advancing a global change agenda in 1976, primarily through specialized agencies placed within the international community,

“At the highest level of world affairs, international institutions must form the prime movers of planned change. The efforts to be made by institutions at higher levels can be viewed as ‘means’ which can be mobilized to achieve desired ends. This implies that institutions control a number of ‘handles’ which can be used to guide change through efforts of individuals and smaller institutions. The control which institutions can exercise, however, is not unlimited but rather determined by the *power structure* in which they operate. In the case of powerful institutions, the means at their disposal are often organized into *policies*. As such, policies may refer either to the current operation of the socio-economic order or to action designed to execute planned change to the existing order. They can, therefore, be directed towards either reinforcing or transforming the international status quo.”¹⁵
[italics in original]

This strikes at the root: managed global change, and fits within Mikhail Gorbachev’s greater vision. As the former President of the Soviet Union wrote in 2000, “New approaches are needed, new orientations in both thought and action. We must make the transition to a new [global] civilization.”¹⁶

In order to see how propaganda for a “new civilization” is unfolding in our modern context, we need to review transitioning examples. Many exist, however time and space will only permit us to briefly highlight one case in point: the international environmental movement as an agent of global restructuring.

The Greening of PSYOPS

For decades the international community and linked environmental lobby groups have cried for massive changes in how our world operates. This includes not only economic and political restructuring, but also the reshaping of individual systems of belief, attitude, and behaviour. Therefore, a new global ethic is being carried forward; one that embraces a neo-pagan worldview with an ethos built on strategic embellishments (see the first IISD quote below for an admittance of this fact). And not surprising in a PSYOPS campaign is the placing of youth and “education” at the top of the agenda. After all, in order to radically alter society, we need to “inculcate into younger people” the correct planetary views.



Consider the following quotes, all from the International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD), one of the most prestigious environmental bodies operating in global governance circles. Please note: the IISD is a “private governmental organization,” a government-funded organ that has the window-dressings of autonomy, yet is designed to forward national and international policy actions, paid for in large part through tax dollars.¹⁷

When reading the material from the IISD, watch for elements of PSYOPS aimed at national and global values change, and the means to achieving this transformation. The propaganda isn’t hard to see. Some especially audacious quotes may have to be read a couple of times to catch the full flavour.

- “During any ‘issue-attention-cycle’ in environmental campaigning, there is a phase in which the issue needs to be strategically exaggerated in order to establish it firmly on an agenda for action.”¹⁸

- “Education has been advanced as significant in bringing about changes in attitudes, behaviour, beliefs and values...In order to redirect behaviour and values towards institutional change for sustainable development there is a need to investigate strategic options in relation to educational philosophies, scope for propagation and adoption, and groups most likely to be susceptible to change.”¹⁹

- “...a new way of doing things is clearly required. Education and training goals need to be re-defined and criteria of success measured in terms of advancement to the next level...A shift needs to take place: in approach, from teaching to learning; in the parameters of learning, from the confines of the classroom or training centre to elements of the socio-cultural, political and environmental contexts; and in method, from responsive or worse, passive, to proactive and participatory.”²⁰
[Ed. Note: this is the creation of *activists*].

- “Young people are also well positioned to push for [environmental/sustainable development] change. Most are significantly less dependent on the economic system, which allows them room to protest. Their protests are more readily accepted as sincere and unselfishly motivated as compared to those coming from other sectors of society. As products of education and social engineering and as the inheritors of the planet, they have a right to be heard. Being linked together by educational institutions, ideas easily flourish and take root.”²¹

- “...it is said that if the world is to really change, then the inspiration for that change cannot come from the modern society based on Western economic, social and political ideology. The inspiration has to come from those who see the world and its people in its holistic beauty and not from people who have internalized the material, individualistic and violent values that society has acquired through history. As youth, it is our struggle to free ourselves from the indoctrination of modern society...”²²

- “The task of education for the immediate future is to assist in activating an ethic of planetary sensitivity that will assist us in practicing disciplines that protect us from the allurements of our morbid commodity culture... We have to completely revise our western understanding of what it is to be an inhabitant of the planet Earth, our human story and the western story; for indeed our new situation reveals the true reality of what we have been doing.”²³

- “We must pass from a human-centred to an earth-centred sense of reality and value. We now must recognize the larger earth community, and not the human community, as normative as regards [to] reality and value.”²⁴

Finally, the IISD suggests that a part of the educational process of global sustainable change

requires that the target group is “to feel like masters of their own thinking...”²⁵ This is classic PSYOPS.

Dealing with Propaganda

The above example taken from the environmental movement is only one in a long list of initiatives that either flirt with propaganda or use it outright. Global warming is rife with information manipulation, including propagandist movies such as *The Day After Tomorrow* and *An Inconvenient Truth*. Likewise, aspects of the human rights movement pivots on “global citizenship” propaganda, which is unfortunate, as legitimate human rights concerns exist.²⁶

Regrettably, it appears that wherever one turns, an intentional slant exists to challenge and change your core values. As Peter Kenez writes, “...to rail against propaganda is useless, for it is an integral part of the modern world.”²⁷ And so it seems.

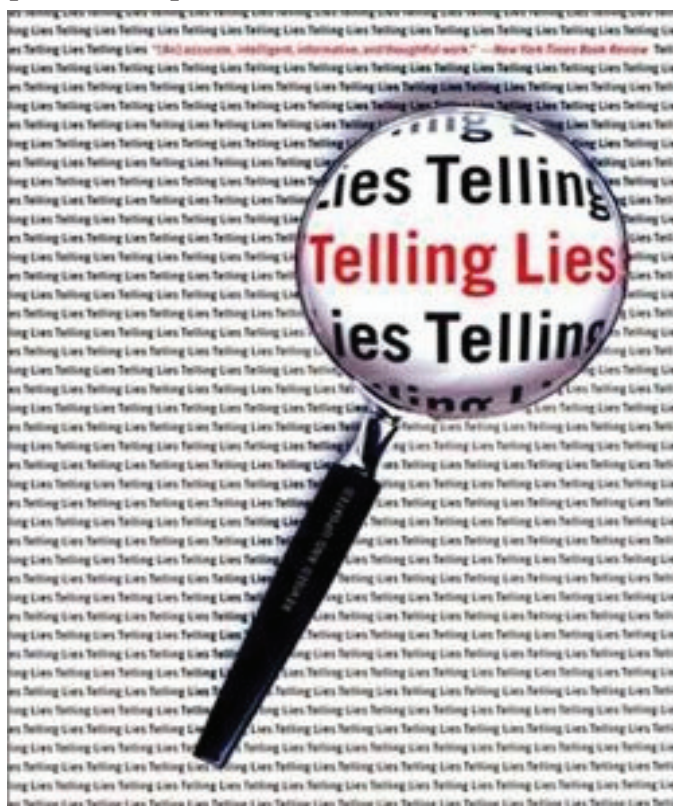
For the individual the real danger of PSYOPS goes beyond the fact that information manipulation regularly bombards us. There’s a more fundamental risk lurking. Moreover, this danger expresses itself in a two-fold manner for the individual,

1) To ignore or marginalize the subject, either by proclaiming PSYOPS as a conspiracy theory or to dismiss it as a paranoid ranting. To take this approach is to intentionally ignore the vital lessons of history, human nature, and the constructs of social power.

2) To believe that a boogiemaster exists around every corner: The path of paranoia is as self-defeating as is marginalizing the subject. It’s a road that places too much emphasis on fear while ignoring logic and reasoning.

So how do we safeguard against PSYOPS/propaganda and other information deception tactics – primarily when dealing with social change paradigms?

One way is to ask reflective questions, such as; is there a challenge to my values, attitudes, and beliefs in what I am seeing, hearing, or experiencing? What is the challenge based on, and how is the message prompting me to reorder my principles? How does the information I am receiving stand-up when measured against logic, history, and knowledge? Do subtler and deeper agendas crop up when researching the surface intent of the message? Is the message and meaning of the information inducing me to conform my behaviour towards accepting or rejecting a particular agenda, product, or process?



It’s not always easy spotting a well-designed PSYOPS/propaganda package. But the above questions help in formulating the critical analysis needed. As Joseph W. Caddell, writing for the US Army War College, asserts “A comprehensive methodology for dealing with deception will never be written. It is a nebulous and ever changing field of virtually infinite proportions.”²⁸

Nevertheless, Caddell, chiefly writing to a military audience, does offer some basic building blocks in the battle against deception.

“The more that you know about your adversaries and about the events which are unfolding, the better prepared you will be to combat deception...Never rely on a limited number of sources of information or a limited number of collection methodologies. The more sources one knows, the harder it is for someone to manipulate information out of context. The more one knows, the more likely one will detect a fabrication.

Knowledge should also include knowledge about oneself. Recognize the biases and assumptions one, one’s organization, and one’s culture possesses. Beware of ‘mirror imaging’ – anytime one assumes that others will behave in a way similar to oneself, one is opening the door to self-deception.”²⁹

All of this seems elementary, and to a large degree it is. Granted, technologies to deliver the message are always being changed and updated, but the fundamental concepts remain. Let’s not forget, the art and science of propaganda is as old as the act of lying and manipulation, and while the vehicles used to disseminate a lie or influence an audience may change with time and technology, the root actions remains the same.

Source Documents...

Two source documents used in this article can be downloaded in the *Forcing Change* Membership section.

- *Psychological Operations: First Draft.*

- *Deception 101: A Primer on Deception.*

Caddell reinforces this assertion. In discussing the seemingly simple countermeasures to deception, such as knowledge and sound analysis, he closes with this straightforward remark,

“These observations may seem self-evident to even a casual student of deception. Therefore, one might wonder why these obvious statements need repeating. The answer is simple. In successful deception operations, the perpetrator hopes that one or several of these self-evident observations will be overlooked.”³⁰ **FC**

Endnotes:

¹ Aristotle, *Politics*, Book VIII, Part 1. An online version of this book exists under the domain of the MIT Internet Classics Archive. See Aristotle’s quote at <http://classics.mit.edu/Aristotle/politics.8.eight.html>.

² Brian Nichiporuk and Carl H. Builder, “Societal Implications,” *In Athena’s Camp: Preparing for Conflict in the Information Age* (Santa Monica: RAND/National Defense Research Institute, prepared for the Office of the Secretary of Defense, 1997), p.295.

³ Peter Kenez, *The Birth of the Propaganda State: Soviet Methods of Mass Mobilization, 1917-1929* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), p.4.

⁴ Issued on the authority of the Chief of Defence Staff (Canadian Department of National Defence), Mobile Command Headquarters, *Psychological Operations – First Draft*, CFP 315(5), 1988, p.1-1.

⁵ Ibid, p.1-3.

⁶ Ibid, p.3-14/3-15.

⁷ Kevin Avruch, James L. Narel, and Pascale Combelles Siegel, *Information Campaigns for Peace Operations* (DoD C4ISR Cooperative Research Program/Command and Control Research Program, 2000), p.14.

⁸ Peter Kenez, p.2.

⁹ Congressional Research Service Report for Congress, *Public Relations and Propaganda: Restrictions on Executive Agency Activities* (CRS, February 8, 2005).

¹⁰ Joseph W. Caddell, *Deception 101 – Primer on Deception* (Carlisle, PA: Strategic Studies Institute, US Army War College, 2004), p.5.

¹¹ For one text on the subject, see Jonathan Gawne’s book, *Ghosts of the ETO: American Tactical Deception Units in the European Theater, 1944-1945* (2002).

¹² David E. Powell, *Antireligious Propaganda in the Soviet Union: A Study of Mass Persuasion* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1975), p.1.

¹³ Ibid, p.5.

¹⁴ Ibid, p.6.

¹⁵ *Reshaping the International Order: A Report to the Club of Rome* (New York: E.P. Dutton, 1976), p.100.

¹⁶ Mikhail Gorbachev, *On My Country and the World* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2000), p.73.

¹⁷ For a history of the IISD, including its early Canadian federal and Manitoba provincial support, see *IISD Timeline*, www.iisd.org/about/timeline.asp. To view IISD government funding from Canadian sources and other governments, including the United States and European nations, see the IISD annual report for 2005-2006. Tabulated Canadian tax-generated funds given to the IISD since its inception in 1990 runs into the tens of millions. IISD annual reports going back to 1996 are located at the IISD website. The author of this article also has hardcopies of the annual reports prior to 1996 on file.

¹⁸ Robin Mearns, "Environmental Entitlements: Towards Empowerment for Sustainable Development," *Empowerment for Sustainable Development: Toward Operational Strategies* (Winnipeg: International Institute for Sustainable Development/Fernwood Publishing, 1995), p.51.

¹⁹ Naresh Singh and Vangile Titi, "Empowerment for Sustainable Development: An Overview" *Empowerment for Sustainable Development: Toward Operational Strategies*, p.27.

²⁰ Gretchen Goodale, "Training in the Context of Poverty Alleviation and Sustainable Development," *Empowerment for Sustainable Development: Toward Operational Strategies*, p.83.

²¹ *Youth Sourcebook on Sustainable Development* (Winnipeg: International Institute for Sustainable Development, 1994), p.60.

²² Ibid, p.79.

²³ Budd Hall and Edmund Sullivan, "Transformative Education and Environmental Action in the Ecozoic Era," *Empowerment for Sustainable Development: Toward Operational Strategies*, p.102.

²⁴ Ibid, pp.102-103,

²⁵ Naresh Singh and Vangile Titi, "Empowerment for Sustainable Development: An Overview," p.19.

²⁶ The author of this report has been part of various human rights conferences and has witnessed the propaganda side firsthand.

²⁷ Peter Kenez, p.4.

²⁸ Joseph W. Caddell, *Deception* 101, p.15.

²⁹ Ibid, pp.15-16.

³⁰ Ibid, p.16.

Flattery and the Big Lie

By Carl Teichrib

We've all heard the old saying, "flattery will get you nowhere." Sometimes I wonder; did the first person who made this statement do it in jest? For you see, flattery works, and it works remarkably well. More than that, in a peculiar sort of way, flattery is connected to the Big Lie.

From a strictly marketing perspective flattery has to be one of the most overused techniques in the advertising industry. "You deserve it!" intones the radio and television ads. Really? You think so? In the course of an average day, how many times do you hear, see, or read an advertisement that caters to this line of thinking? It's a flirtatious form of psychological leveraging, and it gets results.

On a personal level the use of flattery is all too evident. People love to be praised, held in high-esteem, and have their egos stroked. Face it; we've all succumbed to this temptation at one time or another. But in the hands of someone who knows how to use this character flaw, it's an open door for manipulation.

Anton LaVey, author of *The Satanic Bible* and founder of the Church of Satan, openly mocked man's gullibility through the vice of flattery in his book, *Satan Speaks*.

"I would have made a good PR man, because my most flagrant lies are to other people, about themselves. If the Devil is a flatterer, I do my job well...

I am the worst kind of rascal, for I flatter up like nobody's business. I am an unwilling, habitual practitioner of what Gypsies call "lavengro." It is the art of telling people what they most want to hear, and the fortune teller's stock and trade. A therapist would call it "supportive" and note that it reinforces another's self-esteem. The lower one's self-esteem, the more valuable and effective it is.

Oh, how I lie! If a fellow be a churlish lout,

I tell him how sensitive and discriminating he is. If a girl is so ugly that she must sneak up on a glass of water, I allude to her great beauty. If one's performance is mediocre at best, I applaud his great talent. I praise the skinflint on his generosity and the hysteric on his levelheaded judiciousness. And it makes them all feel good.”¹

While LaVey's admission is couched in a somewhat comical approach, the use of flattery in terms of mind manipulation is anything but humorous. In the May-June 1997 issue of *Military Review*, an article titled “The Age of the New Persuaders” detailed the geopolitical uses of persuasion techniques. Whether it's called “psychological operations” or “perception management,” the ultimate aim is to modify the thinking of the intended target by influencing “emotions, motives, and objective reasoning.”

Speaking specifically of psychological tools, the author of the *Military Review* article, Timothy Thomas, explained that this type of mind-game exploitation seeks to turn “personality weaknesses to one's advantage.” And flattery, as a manipulation tool, was recognized as an effective technique. According to Thomas, “One can use an object's vanity and conceit to advantage. This can be done by flattery...”

The New Age Movement too uses a form of flattery as a tool for mind manipulation. Unlike the typically understood idea of flattery – which usually emphasizes someone's outer qualities, talents, or expertise – this particular type of flattery reaches deep within the soul and works to rearrange the foundational basis of reality.

“You are God...you are a god in the making.” This is the Big Lie found in the Book of Genesis, where the Serpent (Satan) approaches Eve and offers her the chance to “be as god.”² It's a form of manipulative flattery, and central to the New Age Movement.

Consider the following statements as found in the World Core Curriculum, a New Age philoso-

phy of education produced by long-time United Nations official Robert Muller,

- “...as it is vividly described in the story of the Tree of Knowledge, having decided to become like God through knowledge and our attempt to understand the heavens and the Earth, we have also become masters in deciding between good and evil...”

- “...we were always meant to be: universal, total beings. The time for this vast synthesis, for a new encyclopedia of all our knowledge and the formulation of the agenda for our cosmic future, has struck. It is becoming increasingly clear that in this vast evolutionary quantum change the individual remains the alpha and the omega of all our efforts...It is to make each child feel like a king or queen in the universe, an expanded being aggrandized by the vastness of our knowledge. It is to make each human being feel proud to be a member of a transformed species.”³

This is flattery at its highest: you are the master in deciding good and evil...you are the alpha and omega...you are royalty – an aggrandized member of a transformed species.

In the spring of 1997, Muller was the keynote speaker at the Global Citizenship 2000 Youth Congress, a meeting of students, teachers, and education officials from across Vancouver and the lower mainland of British Columbia. The purpose of this event was to enlarge the *World Core Curriculum* idea and thrust it into the framework of Canadian public education. As Muller explained to the gathering, “You are not children of Canada, you are really living units of the cosmos because the Earth is a cosmic phenomena...we are all cosmic units. This is why religions tell you, you are divine. We are divine energy...”⁴ His words struck a visible cord, and the atmosphere was charged with the excitement of social transformation.⁵

Going back eighty plus years, J.D. Buck, a mystic and author of repute within esoteric circles, eagerly shared this same occult philosophy in his 1925 work, *Mystic Masonry*. “It is far more important that men should strive to become Christs than that they should believe that Jesus was Christ...Jesus is no less Divine because all men may reach the same Divine perfection.”⁶

Other early leaders that shaped today’s New Age Movement, individuals such as Madame Blavatsky, Annie Besant, and Alice Bailey, delved heavily into this realm of thought. Not surprisingly, modern New Age writers repeat this spiritual flattery. Consider the words of John Davis and Naomi Rice,

“It is time to reveal our divine glory, summon our courage, and demonstrate our wisdom. It is not only necessary to worship the Christ, WE MUST BECOME THE VERY CHRIST. This inner Christ birth enables us to collectively endeavor to clarify our perception of the New Age and to learn how to give expression to that vision through our lives.”⁷
[capitals in original]

The flattery continues: not only are you a god in the making, but also your salvation depends on yourself. As Muller’s curriculum states, you are the “alpha and omega” – *that’s how important you are*. Salvation, the New Age teaches, is a process that you hold within you.

Anton LaVey candidly encouraged the spiritual adventurer to proclaim, “Say unto thine own heart, ‘I am my own redeemer’.”⁸ Blavatsky wrote that “mankind will become freed from its false gods, and find itself finally – *SELF-REDEEMED*”⁹ [italicized capitals in original]. And Henry C. Clausen, while holding the title of Sovereign Grand Commander of the Supreme Council 33° of Scottish Rite Freemasonry, penned, “We must find the answers ourselves. The path to personal enlightenment is introspective.”¹⁰

Just in case you didn’t catch the insinuating flat-

tery found within Clausen’s statement, he gives it to his fellow Masons in a more neatly wrapped package; “You are a towering example of man’s ability to burst out of an animalistic state and go forth bravely upon the road toward freedom and enlightened living, ascending ever upward onto a higher spiritual plane.”¹¹

Whoever said “flattery will get you nowhere” didn’t know what he was talking about. Flattery as a religious mind-manipulative technique works remarkably well. Drove of men and women are rushing to embrace the esoteric doctrines of the New Age Movement, complete with its messages of self-deification, self-redemption, and self-enlightenment.

But why would humanity embrace this obvious grand illusion of self-deification? After all, even a casual observation of human nature – with all its corruption, evil-intent, and degradation – completely annihilates the idea of self-deification.

Anton LaVey’s earlier statement gives us a clue; “...it makes them all feel good.”

William Glasser, an internationally known psychiatrist who’s work advanced an idea called “control theory,” reinforced this concept of “feeling good” in his book *Stations of the Mind*,

“To control people successfully we have to guess what it is they desire (what their reference levels are) or in general what gives them pleasure (what causes them pain). Then, well aware of the ancient force of reward and punishment, all a good controller or operant conditioner has to do is to fine-tune his control so that it focuses on specifics. What causes the most pain or the most pleasure with the least effort to me? To be most effective, however, a good controller must discover how to apply these forces in such a way that does not cause conflict, that makes the controlled person happy to be controlled.”¹²

LaVey’s “makes them feel good” statement, and Glasser’s idea of making the controlled person

“happy to be controlled” follows an age-old concept that is found in the Bible; that sin produces pleasures – *it makes you feel good* – even if it is only for a short time (Hebrews 11:25). But the Bible also tells you something that this controlled pleasure line-of-thinking does not: that in the end, this “feel good...happy to be controlled” condition has its conclusion in pain, heartache, and death.

All of this brings us around to an interesting observation. Humanity, with its ears tickled by the flattery of the Big Lie, would rather choose to follow an illogical philosophy of self-godhood with its encumbered pride, than humbly face the reality that we cannot *redeem ourselves*. **FC**

Endnotes:

¹ Anton Szandor LaVey, *Satan Speaks!* (Feral House, 1998), pp.101-102.

² Genesis 3:5.

³ *World Core Curriculum* on file.

⁴ Audio tape of the speech on file.

⁵ See *Hope For The World Update*, Fall 1997, for a first-hand report on this event. Contact information for back issues of *Hope For The World Update* can be found at www.garykah.org.

⁶ J.D. Buck, *Mystic Masonry* (Regan Publishing Corporation, 1925), p.62. The full title of this book is, *Symbolism of Freemasonry or Mystic Masonry and the Greater Mysteries of Antiquity*.

⁷ John Davis and Naomi Rice, *Messiah and the Second Coming* (Wyoming, MI: Coptic Press, 1982), p.69.

⁸ Anton Szandor LaVey, *The Satanic Bible* (Avon, 1969), p.33.

⁹ Helena Petrovna Blavatsky, *The Secret Doctrine*, Volume II (Theosophical University Press, 1988), p.420.

¹⁰ Henry C. Clausen, *Emergence of the Mystical* (Washington, DC: Supreme Council, 1980/81), p.62.

¹¹ *Ibid*, p.67.

¹² William Glasser, *Stations of the Mind* (HarperCollins, 1981), p.144.

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