

Media <> Psychology

ADJUSTING SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR FOR
POLITICAL MEANS

The 2020 US Election



Overview

1. Intro
2. B F Skinner – Behaviour Conditioning
3. Harold Lasswell – passive audience (conditioning)
4. Shoshana Zuboff – Use of new media technologies
5. Carole Cadwalladr - Facebook's role in Brexit — and the threat to democracy (15 min TED talk)
6. Q & A / explanation



Cat Flap







B.F. Skinner
operant conditioning

“The fiction of free will”?



Propaganda v persuasion

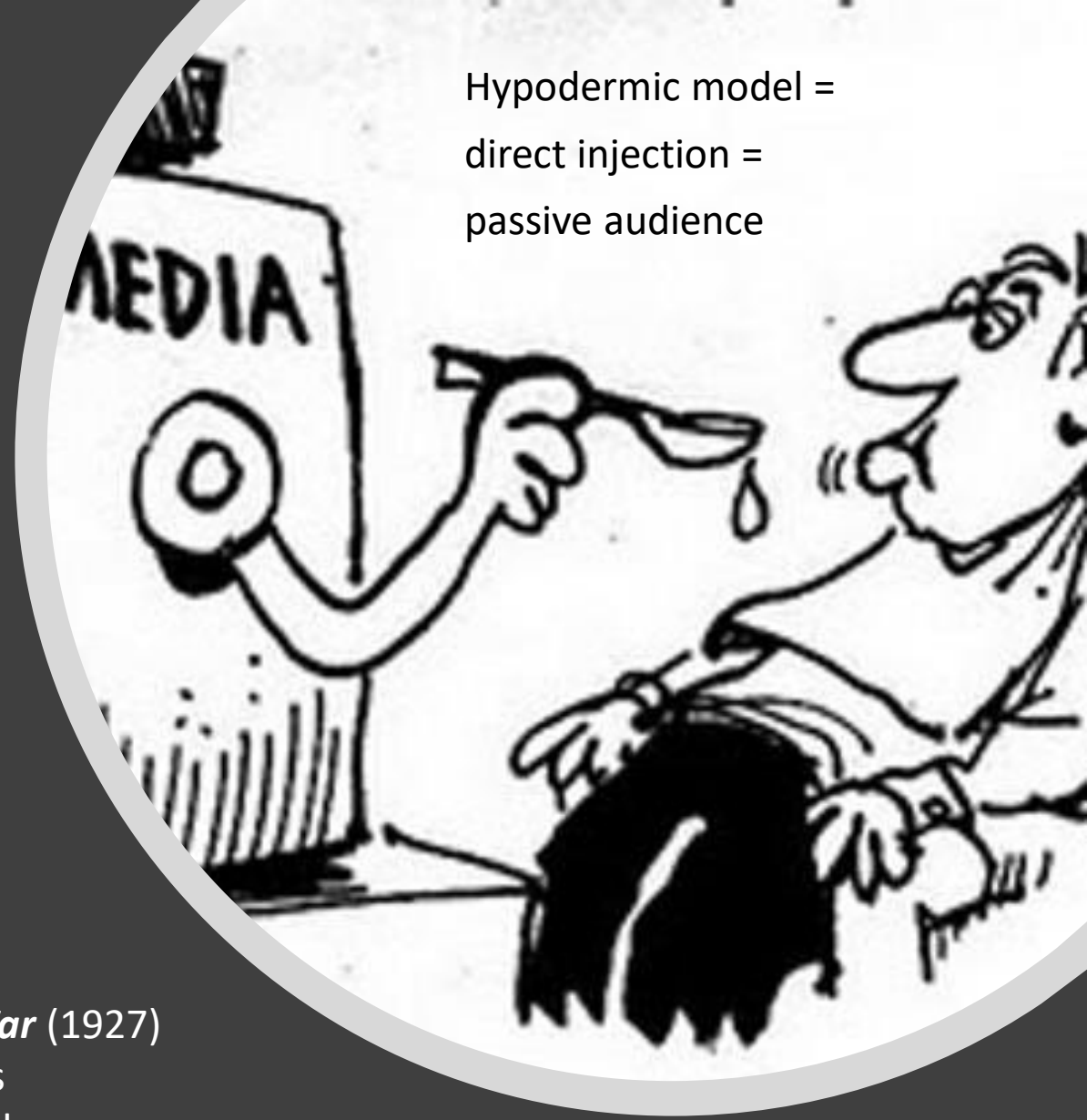
Propaganda is the expression of opinions or actions carried out deliberately by individuals or groups with a view to influence the opinions or actions of other individuals or groups for predetermined ends through psychological manipulations.

Ellul, 1965, p.12 [Institute for Propaganda Analysis](#)

propaganda appears as overtly political and manipulative, whereas the process of **persuasion** often appears invisible at first glance, subsequently revealed as invidious, suggesting concealment, strategy, manipulation. Essentially, the heart of this post which is/are the technique(s) known as **behaviour management**.

[Harold Lasswell](#), *Propaganda Technique in the World War* (1927) highlighted the brew of 'subtle poison, which industrious men **injected** into the veins of a staggering people until the smashing powers . . . knocked them into submission' ([link](#))

Hypodermic model =
direct injection =
passive audience



**THE AGE OF
SURVEILLANCE
CAPITALISM**

THE FIGHT FOR A
HUMAN FUTURE
AT THE NEW
FRONTIER OF POWER

**SHOSHANA
ZUBOFF**

As Zuboff highlights, again drawing on the 1974 sub-committee report:

'a major segment of the emerging behavior control technology is concerned with conditioning, through which various forms of persuasion are used to stimulate certain types of behaviors while suppressing others'


uploaded in HD @ TunesToTube.com

POLITICAL VOICES

The Land Song

a radio feature about the Liberal anthem which some regard as Britain's best political song; reporter, Andrew Whitehead - BBC World Service, 1991

MORE DETAILS ABOUT THE LAND SONG:
<http://www.andrewwhitehead.net/the-land-song.html>



Print, Television and radio
used as tools of
persuasion and/or
propaganda.

**THE AGE OF
SURVEILLANCE
CAPITALISM**

—
THE FIGHT FOR A
HUMAN FUTURE
AT THE NEW
FRONTIER OF POWER

—
**SHOSHANA
ZUBOFF**

Individuality & personal freedom

v

behaviour modification

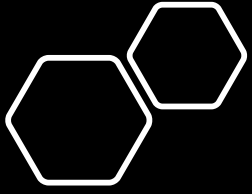
. . . technology has begun to develop new methods of behavior control capable of altering not just an individual's actions but his very personality and manner of thinking . . . the behavioral technology being developed in the United States today touches upon the most basic sources of individuality and the very core of personal freedom . . . the most serious threat . . . is the power this technology gives one man to impose his views and values on another.

Zuboff pp.322-3

The Social Dilemma 2020

- We tweet, we like, and we share—but what are the consequences of our growing dependence on social media? As digital platforms increasingly become a lifeline to stay connected, Silicon Valley insiders reveal how social media is reprogramming civilization by exposing what's hiding on the other side of your screen.





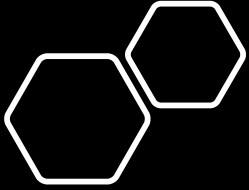
The Great hack (2019)

The Great Hack is a 2019 [documentary film](#) about the [Facebook–Cambridge Analytica data scandal](#),

The documentary focuses on Professor David Carroll of [Parsons](#) and [The New School](#), [Brittany Kaiser](#) (former business development director for [Cambridge Analytica](#)), and British investigative journalist [Carole Cadwalladr](#).

Their stories interweave to expose the work of Cambridge Analytica in the politics of various countries, including the United Kingdom's [Brexit](#) campaign and the [2016 United States elections](#).





Cambridge Analytica
whistleblower: 'We spent
\$1m harvesting millions of
Facebook profiles'

Christopher Wylie, who worked
for data firm Cambridge
Analytica, reveals how personal
information was taken without
authorisation in early 2014 to
build a system that could profile
individual US voters in order to
target them with personalised
political advertisements.



Facebook's role in Brexit — and the threat to democracy | Carole Cadwalladr

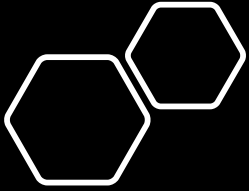
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OQSMr-3GGvQ&t=3s>

- Journalist Carole Cadwalladr digs into one of the most perplexing events in recent times: the UK's super-close 2016 vote to leave the European Union.
- Tracking the result to a barrage of misleading Facebook ads targeted at vulnerable Brexit swing voters -- and linking the same players and tactics to the 2016 US presidential election.
- Cadwalladr calls out the "gods of Silicon Valley" for being on the wrong side of history and asks:
 - *'Are free and fair elections a thing of the past?'*



News

CAMBRIDGE ANALYTICA UNCOVERED



summary:

a brief insight into
the pervasive use of
popular culture for
(often) invidious
political ends



What next?

- **Individually:**

- Watch your social feed and read your media . . . with a very critical eye . . .
- Choose carefully
- Think carefully
- Check sources of information
- Think broadly (theoretically / academically)
- Look for connections, be cynical, inquisitive and suspicious
- Use your social media for positive impact

- **Institutionally:**

- Regulate social media
- Hold them to account
- Recognise that social media companies are not technology companies. They are MEDIA companies!
- Subject to regulation control and inspection by national governments and international bodies