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ENG 1213 Online

Date Removed *(Remember to use the proper MLA style: Day Month Year)*

Popular Fallacies *(not the best title, but better than: Essay 2)*

Propaganda is something we need to be conscious of and when properly identified will enable us to separate emotion from a particular point of view or concept. Thus enabling us to make educated, informed decisions rather than acting on sheer emotion which can cloud judgment. People have been bamboozled for years by everyone from politicians to used car salesman in numerous ways. *(A good opening paragraph. However, it uses 1st person plural and does not mention Nixon. The author should have explained why he/she is analyzing Nixon (because it is such a famous example of propaganda that fooled people, even though it was over the top).*

“I am as American as apple pie” might be a term used to associate a politicians resemblance to the common man. *(Passive voice and possessive error).* Politicians have long used the argument that they are just an ordinary American to get the attention of citizens and gain support from voters. It is a game that has been played *(passive voice)* for centuries and has been used *(passive voice)* to influence and gain empathy from the American people. *(Very strong opening that clearly identifies a problem concerning propaganda, making the case that it is common, and people have used it for a long time. The opening sentence foreshadows the specific technique the author will discuss in this paragraph, and works well because the author uses a phrase just about anyone would be familiar with).* One of L. Kip Wheeler’s “argumentum

ad populum” is a patriotic approach used to influence an opinion based on a person’s loyalty and patriotism to their country. *(Good, but it’s not really Wheeler’s fallacy – he didn’t invent it, so saying “One of Wheeler’s...” is a bit imprecise. Instead, say: “L. Kip Wheeler writes that ‘argument ad populum’ is a common technique that propagandists use. One specific type of ad populum argument, the patriotic approach, tries to influence an audience’s opinion based on loyalty and patriotism to its country.”)* D. W. Cross *(unless the author uses only initials, always present the author’s name as given. The first time you mention the author, use his/her full name. After that, you need only use the last name, unless you have 2 authors with the same last name in one paper)* defines it *(cut down all uses of “it” and “there” – instead, write: Donna Woolfolk Cross refers to this same technique as the ‘Plain Folks Appeal’)* as the “Plain Folks Appeal” (186) *(Big problem with this signal-out: this page number does not match the page numbers listed in the work cited entry for Cross)*. A good *(words like “good” are imprecise because they are pure opinion and have not objective meaning for anyone other than the user. What does she mean by good? Instead, “effective” would be better because it indicates what way that it is good. Adding an adjective can also add clarity: highly effective, marginally effective, rarely effective, etc.)* example of this patriotic approach can be seen *(passive voice)* in Nixon’s famous “Checkers Speech”. *(Though this transition is adequate, the passive voice and generally bland nature of it do not add much to the essay. Instead, the writer could have said: In Nixon’s speech, he perhaps uses no other appeal often as he does the “Plain Folks.” On nearly every page, readers can find an effort by the Senator to appeal to a common bond between them. Even the name of this speech, “Checkers,” refers to the most infamous example of this appeal that Nixon uses – his kids’ dog.)* While attempting to draw attention away from the accusation that he had possibly misappropriated campaign funds, Nixon used American’s love of pets and children to pull at the audiences heartstrings by claiming he had only received a beloved dog as a campaign gift, and the family both loved and were keeping it.

Nixon also alluded to the fact that he was a common man just like you and me (*inappropriate POV. First, we never use 2nd person in academic writing, we only use 1st person when presenting relevant personal experience that will help establish our ethos, and third, Nixon is not actually speaking to you or me – he’s dead. His audience was that group back in 1952. It is better to say: “alluded to the fact that he was a common man just like his audience”*) by quoting Abraham Lincoln- “I believe that it's fine that a man like Governor Stevenson, who inherited a fortune from his father, can run for President. But I also feel that it is essential in this country of ours that a man of modest means can also run for President, because, you know--remember Abraham Lincoln--you remember what he said--"God must have loved the common people, he made so many of them” (234). (*Good example from the text, but the format is incorrect. In MLA style, the author must isolate quotations over 4 typed lines long. See “long quotation” in the Troyka/Hesse handbook*) Nixon manipulated the American listener by using their loyalty and patriotic feelings and gained empathy by creating a picture of himself as a regular, everyday man. (*Good wrap up of the paragraph, restating the propaganda behind his use of this technique – what did he want to gain*)

Another fallacy witnessed (*passive voice*) in Nixon’s speech is what D.W. Cross defined (*in MLA style, we would say “defines” instead of “defined” because her definition has not changed – it is still current*) as “Name-Calling” or “Personal Attack” (185). (*MLA error in signal-out: not only is the page wrong, but this is not a place where one would cite a page number. The terms “name-calling” and “personal attack” are not Cross’s, so they are common knowledge. In the next two sentences, though, the writer does refer to information Cross provides specifically about these terms, and that’s where the signal-out should go*) This category uses a negative

term or phrase associated with a person to cast them in a bad light or discredit their attack. This approach seeks to illicit an emotional response to prove or disprove a statement or fact (*Cross #*).

(the writer should provide some small transitional link to help us move from the part of the paragraph that defines and explains the term to the part that presents an example from Nixon.

*An effective transition could be: **Though Nixon does not use it as much as “Plain Folks” appeal, he does rely on***

***“Name Calling” quite a lot in his speech.**) Nixon accused his critics of the most seriously offensive thing he could at the time. Nixon attempted to link Stevenson and Mitchell *(who are these people?**

*Identify them briefly if you have not already done so somewhere previously in the essay: **Nixon***

attempted to link two high-profile democrats, Vice-Presidential candidate Adlai Stevenson and Democratic National

***Committee chairman Stephen Mitchell)** with communism *(Communism is capitalized. Use it as you**

would a religion like Christianity or Islam) when he stated, “take communism I say as far as that

subject is concerned the danger is greater to America. In the Hiss case they got the secrets which

enabled them to break the American secret State Department code. They got secrets in the atomic

bomb case which enabled them to get the secret of the atomic bomb five years before they would

have gotten it by their own devices. And I say that any man who called the Alger Hiss case a red

herring isn't fit to be President of the United States. I say that a man who, like Mr. Stevenson, has

pooh-poohed and ridiculed the Communist threat in the United States--he has accused us, that

they have attempted to expose the Communists, of looking for Communists in the Bureau of

Fisheries and Wildlife. I say that a man who says that isn't qualified to be President of the United

States” (235). *(Three problems with this quote. First, the signal-in mentions both Stevenson and*

Mitchell, but this quote only mentions Stevenson. Second, the quote should be set off from the

text since it is longer than 4 lines. Third, the quote is not accurate. Compare it to the actual lines

from Nixon's speech, and you will see the mistakes.) This was an effective argument that

successfully negated his critics standing while not totally casting himself as the bad guy.

(Excellent follow up that analyzes Nixon's intent. However, it does not do much to argue how this is propaganda or a logical fallacy. If his accusations were true, then it would not be a fallacy or propaganda. So the author should have added this component to show the reader exactly why this statement is a problem, how it is meant to manipulate or lie to the audience) He was able to connect them to examples of communism with his examples and further his argument that he was again, an average American. *(a couple of errors: repetition of the word examples in close proximity and for no clear reason and missing comma before the word again. The writer uses one after again, but that does not make grammatical sense. The word is meant to be an aside, so it should be set off by a comma before and after.)*

My *(no 1st person!!!)* final example of a fallacy is the Glittering Generalities approach or using what Cross calls “virtue words or words with good connotations in order to get the public to accept and agree with something” (185). *(MLA error)* These are commonly words or statements that evoke strong emotions to cloud or manipulate our judgment. *(Two errors here: first, the use of the adverb ‘commonly’ is incorrect. Instead, the writer should use the adjective “common.” The use of the prepositional phrase “to cloud or manipulate” is a great description of intent, but it is awkward. Instead, a better way would be: ‘with the intent to cloud or manipulate the listener’s judgment.’ Notice I also removed the 1st personal plural “our.”)* This can be witnessed *(passive voice. Rewrite it to improve the signal into the quote: One of the more obvious uses of this fallacy in the speech appears in the conclusion when Nixon points to his future as the vice-presidential candidate. He says: “And now, finally...”* at the conclusion of Nixon’s Checkers Speech when he stirs the American listener and plays on his patriotic feelings by saying- “And now, finally, I know that you wonder whether or not I am going to stay on the Republican ticket or resign. Let me say this: I don’t believe that I

ought to quit, because I am not a quitter. And, incidentally, Pat is not a quitter. After all, her name is Patricia Ryan and she was born on St. Patrick's Day, and you know the Irish never quit. But let me just say this last word. Regardless of what happens, I am going to continue this fight. I am going to campaign up and down America until we drive the crooks and the Communists and those that defend them out of Washington, and remember folks, Eisenhower is a great man. Folks, he is a great man and a vote for Eisenhower is a vote for what is good for America” (236).

(long quote should be set off with block indent from the rest of the paragraph) In this excerpt he played on the American people’s ancestral heritage, love of sports, and American tradition to cement his position and ally himself with the common man. *(Though this is an adequate analysis, it really tries to do too little with a lot of text. Also, it is unclear how love of sports has anything to do with Nixon’s words. He makes no reference to sports of any kind, though he does talk about not quitting. However, that attitude is not limited to athletes. The author should clarify how this is a link to sports. A good rewrite would involve breaking the quote down, which is what analysis does. After finishing the quote, a better transition would be: In this long passage, Nixon uses several “Glittering Generalities” to appeal to common themes his audience would respond to. The first involves ancestral heritage. He uses his wife’s Irish background as a positive attribute. However, her ethnicity has nothing to do with her honesty and integrity, and takes the listener even further from the issue of his honesty and integrity (supposedly the purpose of the speech). His reasoning in mentioning Pat is obviously to make his listeners think that a woman of such high integrity would not be married to a man who did not have the same honesty.” The question the writer should ask at this point is if he/she needs to use such a long passage. Would mentioning Pat alone be enough to show the reader how Nixon tries to manipulate the audience? If the writer decides to use both the reference to Pat and to Eisenhower, a better organizational option would be to split the original quote, dealing with only one section at a time. To link the two, the writer could*

finish the analysis of Pat, as I rewrote above, and then transition to the next part of the quote:

After mentioning his wife, Nixon then moves to Eisenhower, saying, “[R]emember folks, Eisenhower is a great man. Folks, he is a great man and a vote for Eisenhower is a vote for what is good for America’ (236). Here, Nixon uses his association with the presidential candidate and former 5-star general to establish his trustworthiness. The intent, as in the mention of Pat, is to convince his audience that someone like Eisenhower would not have asked Nixon to be his vice-presidential running mate on the Republican ticket if Nixon were not trustworthy. Because this asks the audience to trust Nixon based on the integrity of others and still does not in any way provide actual evidence to prove he is himself trustworthy or innocent of the accusations against him, it functions as propaganda.” This is a much stronger analysis because it is specific and tackles each element of the quotation. The only part I’ve left out is Nixon’s mention that he is not a quitter and is going to campaign against Communism. I did so because that is not a Glittering Generality. So including it in the quotation is misleading. This is another reason why splitting up the original long passage into 2 parts is better. It avoids confusion and the inclusion of unneeded or off topic elements. He was successful in his endeavor and this is a stellar example of how emotion can cloud judgment. *(The author provides no explanation of how this uses emotion to cloud the reader’s judgment. That is an essential part of each body paragraph – explaining your reasoning in choosing these quotes and matching them to a propaganda technique or logical fallacy. You have to prove to the reader that it makes sense and is a valid analysis. You also have to show them how insidious, dangerous these techniques can be.*

It is important not be bamboozled for numerous reasons. *(Eliminate the “it is” and the passive voice – not a strong opening for the conclusion)* We have an obligation to ourselves to be as educated as possible about important issues that affect our lives. We need to look at all sides of an issue logically and make decisions regarding these issues from there. Emotion will always play an important role in our opinions and decisions, but it should not be the sole motivating factor behind our choices. Being able to identify and recognize propaganda or fallacies will

enable us to make educated decisions and reduce the chance to be led astray or have our judgment clouded by our emotions. *(Though this is a good conclusion, it has multiple uses of 1st person plural. However, in the introduction and conclusion, if the author is trying to forge a connection to the reader and avoid preachiness, then using the inclusive “we” and “our” can be effective. Please note that not all teachers accept this. I do, but I also encourage you to avoid using 1st person if it is not necessary, and then use it sparingly).*

Works Cited

Cross, Donna Woolfolk. "Propaganda: How Not to Be Bamboozled." Isaacs et al 39-47.

Isaacs, Jessica, eds., et al. The Power of Language; The Language of Power. 2nd ed. Boston: Pearson Custom, 2006.

Nixon, Richard. "Senator Nixon's Checkers Speech." Isaacs et al 229-36.

Wheeler, L. Kip. "Logical Fallacies Handlist." Professional web page. 4 June 2007. Carson Newman College. 14 Oct. 2008 <http://web.cn.edu/kwheeler/fallacies_list.html>.

(The works cited page is correct. The author is citing from 2 works from the class anthology, so he/she uses the technique described under #11 on page 403. However, it would have also been correct to cite both like #10)