

Arming our hearts and minds for the brave new media

- Political figures penetrate our mental space through media—as myth (savior or demon), brand, gossip, and/or sales pitch. This may be in the form of an ad, but is not limited to advertising. We ARM ourselves for media attempts to target our minds with ANALYSIS and awareness **of our roles** in the equation
- DECODING ADVERTISING by Judith Williamson 1972: Our minds unconsciously link products, images, and emotions to produce the meaning of ads. The “currency of signs” does not exist “without our active, desiring minds transferring meanings and values between signs” (examples given).
- **So instead of reacting to the ad or media object’s content, and mudslinging, we could coolly consider how the images and language are used. Develop mindfulness of --Where is it seen? When (relative to the election/sale)? Who is the target audience? Who is the counter-audience targeted to be provoked/get angry at the ad? What images are employed? What imaging techniques? What speech or text is employed? Which sound/music=MOOD? ((Who made it? Who paid for it?)) If it is political ad was it the candidate's organization, or the party, or another group such as a PACS?**
- The so-called “currency of signs” does not exist without our desiring minds transferring meanings and values between signs. The ad offers the subject a mirror image with which to identify, constructed out of various signifiers. Through the advertised image the subject can experience an illusionary feeling/misrecognition of self-sameness, of one-ness with the advertised product. We desire to create ourselves through the image, because we lack something that it proclaims to have. Just as ads create differentiation between their product and similar products, they create social differentiation between groups of people. Ads encourage us to align ourselves with—and differentiate ourselves from— others--based on what we consume.
- Because we all stare constantly at the screens of our digital devices, critical viewing skills have become an important aspect of media literacy instruction.
- Visual literacy is a part of the Common Core ELA standards as well as the arts standards of most states, but as per Betsy de Vos :“Power has been returned to state and local entities to be able to decide what standards and what expectations they are going to have of their students. We want states to shoot high on behalf of their students, but *the reality is there is no more federal Common Core and it’s not mandated from the federal level.*”
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- Political ads use many tricks that melt in your mind. The Kuleshov Effect (using montage) is the backbone of film commercials. Kuleshov edited a short film in which a shot of the expressionless face of a matinee idol was intercut with a plate of soup, a child in a coffin, and a beautiful woman. The audience responded that the actor’s affect was

different each time, depending on the object he was regarding, showing expressions of hunger, grief or desire.

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- One Hillary Clinton ad utilized video footage that “shrinks images of her opponents down...subtly negating them.” Draining the color in a video to disparage the opponent. Shifting into slow-motion for a sinister feel
- Panning to “Professor Teachout’s” Birkenstocks
- Authoritarian Fear Speech—“it will get worse!!”
- Numbers=facts=truth---18 Billion Dollars!!!
- Previously, adding machines and cash registers provided authority, now images of computers and medical equipment are used.
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- When viewing ads survey for errors — are there omissions of fact or errors? Frank photoshopping? Was any proof offered for the claims in the ads? If so, where? ☐
- [FlackCheck.org site, the Annenberg Public Policy Center at the University of Pa. aims to help the public recognize flaws in arguments, including those made in political ads.](#)
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- FEAR ADS "People regard fear ads as the worst kind of negative ad," Brader* says. "That's a misconception. Fear can help direct the public's attention to important issues. It prompts people to rethink their course of action. FEAR "unlocks the grip that habit holds over people's decisions." In Brader's study, the fear ads were the only ones that persuaded people to change their votes. Discussion of Daisy Girl Commercial (1964)
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- Ads have a short half-life. In “The Monkey Cage,” a blog, John Sides of George Washington and Lynn Vavreck of UCLA researched the 2012 campaign. They concluded that ads mattered but only in “very circumscribed ways” and the “effect of ads appeared to decay quickly.” (3-4 days). They asserted that “back-loading — airing ads close to the election — was more effective than “front-loading” ads early in the campaign —if the goal was to influence voters on Election Day.”
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- Spending on Ads 2016: While Trump's campaign increased its spending on television ads in its final election push, it still used this traditional outreach tool much less than Clinton's did. As of late October, Clinton's campaign spent about \$141.7 million on ads, compared with \$58.8 million for Trump's campaign, according to NBC News.
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- ZMET—Zaltman Metaphor Elicitation Technique.
- Neuromarketing developed in the late 1990s by Harvard professor Jerry Zaltman applies the principles of neuroscience to marketing research.
- Studies consumer's sensorimotor, cognitive and affective response to marketing stimuli using functional MRI to image metabolism in the

brain, EEG to measure activity and brain response, biometric sensors for heart rate, blood pressure, galvanic skin response, and facial coding for emotional response and eye tracking. This all in order to learn why consumers choose as they do and which brain areas are responsible

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- **IN CONCLUSION our armor is our minds and hearts. To expose the ideological work of an ad, we must make conscious the unconscious links that signifiers (including advertisements) ask us to make. Attention and analysis are needed, instead of reactivity. And be vigilant that the response of your brain to lures will be the object of intense interest in coming campaigns.**