

The Psychological Technique of Martin Luthers' Radio Addresses, by T. Adorno

a. People / Organizations:

•

b. Quotes:

- **"Fascism aims at the repressive maintenance of an antagonistic society** - an aim which is intrinsically irrational. It is rational only with reference to the interest of single groups or individuals. The discrepancy between such interests and the irrationality of the whole makes itself keenly felt. One may well assume that the hidden awareness of the irrationality of the final goals of the "movement" produces some sort of bad conscience within each individual fascist. Here the hypnotic element comes into play. It helps to overcome that bad conscience. The fascist stops thinking, not because he is stupid and does not see his own interest, but because he does not want to acknowledge the conflict between his particular interest and that of the whole. He gives up his reasoning because it is "rationally" inconvenient to him. There is an element of spitefulness involved in his "belief." He has to switch it on himself, again and again, in order not to lose his spurious faith. **Fascist hypnotism may be characterized as being essentially self-hypnotism.**" - Author (notes on pg. 15)
- "Authoritarianism yields only to authority" - Author (pg. 51)
- **"People are terrorized in order to believe, to wit, to stop thinking.** Conversely, terrorized people are incapable of clear thinking and are reduced to the blind reactions of the *sauve-qui-pent*-pattern, an attitude particularly favorable to adherence to a leader who promises to think and act for them if only they trust in him." - Author (pg. 63-64)
 - **"People tend to love that which they cannot quit - to identify themselves with even their prison walls"** - Author (pg. 69-70)

c. General Notes:

▪ Section 1

○ The Personal Element: Self-Characterization of the Agitator (pg. 1)

- **"The fascist leader characteristically indulges in loquacious statements about himself.** In contrast, the liberal as well as the radical propagandist has developed a tendency to avoid any reference to his private existence for the sake of "objective" interests to which he appeals: the former in order to show his matter-of-factness and competence, the latter because his collectivistic attitude would be jeopardized if he should play up his own personality. Whereas this "impersonality" is well grounded within the objective conditions of an industrial society, it has definite weaknesses considering the orator's audience. The detachment from personal relationships involved in any objective discussion presupposes an intellectual freedom and strength which hardly exists within the masses today. Moreover, the "coldness" inherent in objective argumentation intensifies **the feeling of despair, isolation, and loneliness under which virtually each individual today suffers** - a feeling from which he longs to escape when listening to any kind of public oratory. **This situation has been grasped by the fascists.** Their talk is personal. Not only does it refer to the most immediate interests of his listeners, but also it encompasses the sphere of privacy of the speaker himself who seems to take his listeners into his confidence and to bridge the gap between person and person." (pg. 1)
 - **"The more impersonal our order becomes, the more important personality becomes as an ideology. The more the individual is reduced to a mere cog, the more the idea of the uniqueness of the individual, his autonomy and importance, has to be stressed as a compensation for his actual weakness.** Since this cannot be done with each of the listeners individually or only in a rather general and abstract manner, it is done vicariously by the leader. It can even be said that part of the secret of totalitarian leadership is that the leader presents the image of an autonomous personality actually denied his followers." (pg. 1-2)
- **"Furthermore, the self-advertising of a fascist leader is a kind of a confidence trick.** Although he occasionally boasts and can bluff in decisive moments, he prefers, especially before having achieved power, to play down the theme of his irresistible strength. He dwells upon his "also being human," that is to say, being as weak as his prospective adherents. The idea of strength and authority is not sufficient in itself to explain the appeal of fascist leadership. It is rather the idea that the weak can become strong if they surrender their own private existence to the "movement," the "cause," the "crusade" or whatever it may be. **By referring to himself in an ambivalent way as both human and superhuman, weak and strong, close and far, the fascist leader supplies a model for the very attitude that he intends to affirm in his listeners.**" (pg. 2)
- "The American fascist is generally prepared to accept democracy as a cloak for his own ends. However, by plugging himself and by applying a technique of high-pressure publicity, he hopes to secure so much power as to build up a tremendous pressure group which may finally **overthrow democracy in the name of democracy...**" (pg. 3)
 - "It is incidentally one of the most outstanding characteristics of fascist and anti-Semitic propagandists that they blame their victims in an almost compulsory way for exactly the things which they themselves are doing or hope to do." (pg. 4)
- **"[fascists leaders play] up one's own courage and integrity in order to win the confidence of those who feel that they are underdogs and alone..."** (pg. 4)
 - "Under present social conditions, people are not only afraid of manipulation, but also, conversely, they long for it and for the guidance of those who they realize are strong and capable of protecting them." (pg. 5)
- "The more power is concentrated in the agencies and individuals who control the channels of communication, the more their propaganda amounts to "truth" insofar as it expresses true power relations." (pg. 5)
- "[the fascist leader] is consciously and emphatically emotional as part of his technique." (pg. 6)
 - **"The ultimate aim of the "emotional release" device is the encouragement and endorsement of excess and violence.** As soon as the barriers against crying and self-pity are broken down, one may express unchecked one's suppressed feelings of hatred and fury as well..." (pg. 7)
 - "It has often been pointed out that **fascism feeds upon the lack of emotional gratification in an industrial society and that it grants to the people that irrational satisfaction which is denied them by today's social and economic setup.**" (pg. 7)
- "The fascist agitator has to reckon with people as they are, sober and practical, and can induce them to irrational attitudes only if he makes them appear as "sensible" according to the psychological economy of their own lives." (pg. 8)
 - **"It is an extremely pragmatic irrationality..."** (pg. 8)
- "Second, the manipulated irrational gratifications are spurious. Manipulation itself is intrinsically opposed to that "release" which it sets in motion. Moreover, fascist propaganda for its own purposes does not touch upon the roots of emotional frustration in our society but rather encourages emotionalism by words. There is no real pleasure or joy, but only the release of the feeling of one's own unhappiness and the achievement of a retrogressive gratification out of the submergence of the self into the community. In short, the emotional release presented by fascism is a mere substitute for the fulfillment of desires." (pg. 8)
 - "It presupposes a certain disposition within them, and so the shrewdness of a successful agitator actually consists in sensing dispositions which he can use as bait for his own purposes. A strong basis for the desire to escape the rigidity of psychological self-control must exist in the listeners themselves, and hence an adequate idea of this "basis" must be developed. It is in itself a result of the very same process of

rationalization from which people want to get away. **People want to "give in," to cease to be individuals in the traditional sense of a self-sustaining and self-controlled unity, because they must.**" (pg. 9)

- ◆ "The strength to control oneself reflects the strength to compete with others and to determine economically and thus also psychologically one's own fate. Today, when this independence begins more and more to dwindle, self-control begins to disappear too. The social forces to which each individual is subject are so tremendous that he has to yield to them not only economically by becoming an employee (rather than remaining a self-sustaining social unit), but also psychologically under the social and cultural pressure put upon him, a pressure which he can bear only by making it his own cause. He must act in terms of adequate conformist behavior rather than in the terms of a unified, integrated personality. The individual becomes not only harder insofar as he is taught to think more and more pragmatically. He also becomes softer insofar as his resistance to the impact of the social world as a whole and industrial technology in particular becomes weaker. The more he ceases to be an ego, a "self," the less he is capable and willing to fulfil the requirements of self-control. **Hysteria is an extreme expression of a psychological configuration spreading rapidly over the whole of society. It is this particular disposition which is met by the "emotional release" device.** Stoicism is derided because the individuals neither can nor will be stoical any longer, that is to say, because the final compensation for emotional self-control - an existence firmly established in itself and secure - no longer prevails. **The effect of the emotional release device is not so much that it evinces the reactions to which it refers, but rather that it makes them socially acceptable and lifts an already tottering taboo so that people may have the feeling of doing the socially correct thing if they abandon their self-control.** This mechanism of a "social affirmation" of attitudes which already operate within the subjects but which they still vaguely feel to be at variance with the rules that they were taught in their youth is an intrinsic element of all fascist and anti-Semitic propaganda." (pg. 9-10)
- "The selection of the personal qualities the speaker directly or indirectly claims to possess gains significance only with reference to some which are conspicuously absent. He stresses, for example, his personal integrity and honesty, therewith falling in line with old patterns of election propaganda. He also hints at his qualifications as a leader. But he never refers to his particular equipment for doing the rather ill-defined job upon which he embarks. He points out neither his training, his political background, his erudition nor any specific personal features by which he may qualify as a political leader. Instead he is satisfied by vaguely referring to God's call." (pg. 10)
- "...Thomas uses the vagueness of his image of himself to leave room for any kind of fantasy on the part of the audience. He presents himself as a kind of empty frame which can be filled out by the most contradictory conceptions on the part of his listeners. He may be imagined by them as a benevolent and humane clergyman, or as a reckless soldier, as a high-strung, emotional human being or as a shrewd man of practical life, as a keen observer who knows all dubious inside stories and as a pure soul who calls in the wilderness. Vagueness about his own personality is a means of integration concomitant with the vagueness of his political aims. Both serve to herd together most different types of listeners who are willing to follow him the more blindly, the less exactly they know who he is and what he stands for. **A certain abstractness, interspersed with petty concrete references to daily life, is characteristic of the pattern of the fascist agitator.**" (pg. 11)
- **"There is, above all, the desire to "stir up," which may be regarded as the archetype of all aggressiveness.** It is one of the innermost drives of fascism to perpetuate actually and ideologically the necessity of hard work, thus obtaining a justification for "discipline" and oppression. This attitude, grounded in socioeconomic tendencies, permeates the whole fascist setup into its last psychological ramifications. **Under fascism, psychologically, no one is allowed to sleep:** one of the favorite tortures applied by authoritarian governments to their victims is that their sleep is interrupted hourly until their nerves completely break down. The fascist hatred of sleep - in the broadest sense of leaving anything alone - is reflected by the fascist leader's emphasis upon his being indefatigable himself, therewith setting an example for his followers. Indefatigability is a psychological expression of totalitarianism. No rest should be given, unless everything is seized, grasped, organized. And since this aim will never be reached, the ceaseless efforts of every follower are needed." (pg. 13-14)
 - "Yet, while indefatigability is stressed, the agitator does not actually want to evince a fully "awake," conscious, lucid attitude in his followers. To be sure, he wants them to be active and to be ready to do things, but only under a kind of spell. There is an element of truth in the reference to "mass hypnotism" in fascism, though this reference often underrates the highly "rational" element in fascist mass movements, the followers' hope for material gain and an improvement of their social status. However, so much may safely be said: It is the activity of the hypnotized which is expected by fascist propaganda rather than that of responsible and conscious individuals. Thus, the insistence upon indefatigability works as a kind of dope. Just because the follower is expected, in a way, to fall asleep and to act while he is asleep, he is told innumerable times that he has to be awake and that he must not sleep. **The relationship between sleeping and indefatigability is highly ambivalent and the agitators feed upon this ambivalence.** He who is to sleep while he is told that he has to be indefatigable and that he is indefatigable, may offer much less resistance to the will of his leader than he otherwise would. He is made to believe himself vaccinated against the very contagion that threatens him." (pg. 14-15)
- "...many fascist leaders were originally propagandists rather than actual politicians..." (pg. 16)
- **"Representing the psychological "integration" of his audience as a totality, he is both weak and strong:** weak insofar as each member of the crowd is conceived as being capable of identifying himself with the leader who, therefore, must not be too superior to the follower; strong insofar as he represents the powerful collectivity which is achieved through the unification of those whom he addresses. The image that he presents of himself is that of the "great little man" with a touch of the incognito, of he who walks unrecognized in the same paths as other folks, but who finally is to be revealed as the savior. He calls for both intimate identification and adulating aloofness; hence, his picture is purposely self-contradictory. He reckons with short memories and relies rather on the divergent unconscious dispositions to which he appeals at different times, than on consistent rational convictions." (pg. 19)
- "To sum up the personal attitude that Thomas pretends to take: he stresses the personal element, the similarity between himself and the audience, and the whole sphere of interest, as a sort of emotional compensation for the cold, self-alienated life of most people and particularly of innumerable isolated individuals of the lower middle classes. The very immediateness and warmth of his approach, furthered by radio, helps him to get a firmer grip over them. The substitute for their isolation and loneliness is not solidarity, but obedience. He advocates obsolescent, quasi-precapitalistic forms of human euphoria against the streamlined conditions of today, in order to prepare for their transformation into something even more streamlined, the totalitarian leader-state. The sham individualism, preached by Thomas, only furthers the tendency to dispose of the individual by incorporating him into a collectivity, where he may feel "sheltered" but where he has no say at all." (pg. 27)
- Section II: Thomas' Method (pg. 28)
 - "With Thomas as with most of his kin, the method, the "how," is more important than the contents, the "what." His actual interest is the manipulation of men, their transformation into adherents of his organization, and in the last analysis everything serves this purpose. The specific ideas and postulates serve merely as bait and have very little objective weight." (pg. 28)
 - "He obeys an old German chauvinistic rule of the thumb: *Immer daran denken, nie davon reden.* Partly, **the goals themselves are vague and inarticulate** and will have to be adapted to changing political situations, as soon as the fascist feels himself in command of power. Partly, **his followers should not know too exactly what is intended,** his political program, for they might discover the blatant discrepancy between their own most primitive interests and the interests which they are called upon to serve. Thus, the emphasis is shifted from the

'what' to the 'how'." (pg. 28)

- ◆ "There is no clear-cut and transparent relationship between premises and inferences, causes and effects, data and concepts. It would be a mistake, however, to attribute this lack of discursive logic to a lack of intellectual capacity. Thomas is a shrewd man. The lack of objective logic in his statements is due to quite logical reflections about the psychology of his listeners and the best way to reach them; and some of his apparently most illogical devices are certainly the result of hard thinking and long experience..." (pg. 29)
- "As a whole, however, Thomas' radio speeches offer an excellent example for one of the basic characteristics of fascist and anti-Semitic propaganda, namely, **the entirely calculated, highly rationalistic nature of its irrationalism**, not only with regard to the irrational philosophy that it implies, but also to its irrational effect. Thomas' method may be adequately described as 'emotional planning.'" (pg. 29)
- "Thomas reckons with an audience who cannot think, that is to say, who is too weak to maintain a continuous process of making deductions. **They are supposed to live intellectually from moment to moment, as it were, and to react to isolated, logically unconnected statements, rather than to any consistent structure of thought.** They know what they want and what they do not want, but they cannot detach themselves from their own immediate and atomistic reactions." (pg. 34)
 - "The most important device of his logic of manipulation is his technique of associational transitions. Whether he chooses this technique deliberately or whether it flows simply from oratorical habits, **its essence is to connect different sentences, or ideas, not by any logical operation, but simply by some element which they have in common and which makes them appear connected in spite of possibly complete logical disparity.**" (pg. 34)
 - ◆ "Its ultimate aim is probably not so much the selling of a false argumentation as, indeed, the complete breakdown of a logical sense within the listeners and eventually the collapse of any meaning that the idea of truth may have for them. They are trained to accept oratorical exhortation, backed by all the authority which is implied in the attitude of any speaker who addresses a mass, as a sort of command. **They are to give up the element of resistance that is implied in any act of responsible thinking as such.** They are to follow the leader first intellectually, and finally in person through thick and thin." (pg. 36)
- "It is a truism that authoritarian propaganda does everything to establish authoritarian ideas. This, taken in isolation, however, is not a specific characteristic of fascism. Other ideologies, particularly religious and feudal-conservative ones, have always dwelt on the concept of authority. The new element in propagating authority is that anti-democratism can no longer refer to authorities which are regarded either as being guaranteed by supernatural revelation, such as the Church, or as being grounded in an omnipresent tradition, such as the "legitimistic" idea of feudal authority and, to a certain extent, even of monarchism. Modern authoritarianism has to face an issue which first came into the open in the period of French Restoration, in the writings of reactionaries, such as Bonald and de Maistre. Throughout modern society the problem is conspicuously manifested. The fascist must try to justify authoritarianism which is an inherent tendency of modern industrial organization. Yet he must face ways of thought which are essentially opposed to authority itself, and must confront those very masses which are to be subdued by authority. This task, essentially insoluble, calls for certain twists and distortions if it is to be undertaken with any chance of success." (pg. 37)
 - "His psychological status is paradoxical: It combines irrational devotion on the part of his followers with the rationality that he is actually best equipped to do the job and that the followers should recognize him as best. Here, no doubt, the model of the military officer has been transferred to the realm of politics and emancipated from any idea of expertness and organized control." (pg. 39)
 - ◆ "Two facts are to be borne in mind. First, the concentration of economic power in certain nations has reached such a level that those who hold such power actually exercise what amounts to absolute authority within a "rational" industrial society. Second, the potential strength of the underlying population makes itself felt insofar as the authoritarian leaders are compelled to justify their usefulness in some way to those whom they command. This state of affairs leads to the paradoxical construction of the Führer as an absolute yet somehow "responsible" authority. The social conflict that stands behind this construction and, as it were, calls for it, invests the Führer principle with an inner strength which is comparatively immune with regard to its inherent logical inconsistencies." (pg. 40)
- "The idolatry of the term leader itself is not simply a relapse into barbarian habits of thought, though it doubtlessly implies retrogressive elements. It is in itself the outcome of late industrial society in a way which at least may be hinted at. The intermediary between industrial rationality and magical idolatry is advertising. The technique of competition has developed a certain tendency to turn the slogans under which the commodities are sold into magical ones. Such magic of the words is promoted by incessant and omnipresent repetition which is planned rationally but blunts the conscious discrimination of the prospective customers. An important element in this process is that the customers feel the tremendous power concentrated behind the ever-repeated words and therefore display a certain psychological readiness to obey. This obedience tends to a certain extent to sever the link between the customers' own interest and the actual usefulness of the commodity. They come to attribute to the product a certain value per se, a certain fetish character. This mechanism has become so automatized throughout the buying processes of modern life that it can easily be transferred by simple advertising techniques to the political field. **The mode of "selling an idea" is not essentially different from the mode of selling a soap or a soft drink.** Sociopsychologically, **the magical character of the word leader and therewith the charisma of the Führer is nothing but the spell of commercial slogans taken over by the agencies of immediate political power.**" (pg. 40-41)
- "[there is] a much broader pattern underlying all fascist propaganda, at least in this country. It may be called the 'fait accompli' technique. It consists of presenting an issue as one that previously has been decided." (pg. 42)
 - "Of course, the "fait accompli" technique, which in many cases assumes silly and fraudulent forms, could hardly work unless it had some basis in reality as well as in the psychology of the people. As to the former, it is true that the present organization of economy actually tends to make people to a very large extent objects of processes which they often fail to understand and which are utterly beyond their control. The dwindling of economic free enterprise and initiative makes life appear to most people as something that happens to them rather than as something which they determine by their own free will. To most people their life actually is decided in advance. **As soon as there appears an organization which evokes the idea of some strong backing by the powers that be, and which promises something to its followers, great numbers may be willing to transform their vague awareness of being mere objects into adherence to such a movement.** Thus they may turn the hateful idea of being thoroughly dependent into an asset, namely, into the belief that by giving up their own will they join the very institution whose victory is predetermined. **The "fait accompli" technique thus touches upon one of the central mechanisms of the mass psychology of fascism: the transformation of the feeling of one's own impotence into a feeling of strength.** The feeling of impotence is represented by the idea that the issue already has been decided without one's having had any say in it; but acknowledgment of this very fact, by "going over" to the established victor, mysteriously and irrationally changes the feeling of impotence into one of power. It is probably the most important task of counterpropaganda to interfere with this mechanism and to demonstrate strikingly to the masses that the mere acknowledgment of impotence, the mere giving up of oneself, by no means entails actual strength and social reward. The manipulation of this whole mechanism, by the way, is by no means limited to fascist propaganda, but is set in motion throughout modern mass culture, particularly in the cinema. A fascist propagandist utilizing this mechanism can rely on processes which to a certain extent have been already automatized. Under this viewpoint even the apparently most harmless movie comedian may unconsciously serve the most sinister purposes of domination." (pg. 43-44)

- ◆ "However, involved in that mechanism there seems to be an element which pertains to even deeper psychological processes, and which may set the stage for the more obvious effects. Here, we can hint at it only in rather general terms. **We mean the widespread tendency of present society to accept and even to adore the existent - that which is anyway.** The processes of enlightenment, the spirit of positivism in its broadest sense, have destroyed magical and "supernatural" ideas by confrontation with empirical reality, with that which exists. In America in particular the conviction prevails that truth is only that which can be verified by referring to facts." (pg. 44)
 - ◇ "All this has tended to invest the factual itself with that very halo against which the idea of fact was originally coined. One may go so far as to say that religion largely and unconsciously has been replaced by a very abstract yet tremendously powerful cult of the existent. That something exists is taken as a proof that it is stronger than that which does not exist, and that therefore it is better." (pg. 45)
- "The "fait accompli" technique exploits this disposition. By investing anything that is propagated or desired with the quality of existence, this device tends to make it an object of adoration in a sense similar to that in which half-grown boys adore motor cars or airplanes. This adoration of the existent becomes stronger, the more the existent itself is presented in terms of technical rationality and practicability." (pg. 45)
 - ◆ "At this point fascist propaganda is profoundly interconnected with basic trends of modern cultural anthropology. It may be added that it can be fought with more than ephemeral success only if the magification [sic] of the existent is finally overcome at its foundation in our present setup. The irrationality of the fascist's delight in the "accomplished fact" idea in general, and in that of established leadership in particular, is but the last consequence of the common sense idea that nothing succeeds like success. The absurdity of fascism can be exploded only if the apparent reasonableness of such ideas is exploded, too." (pg. 45-46)
- "All fascist movements have a tendency to represent themselves as authority supplementary to and opposed to the actual government, as valid organizations supplementary to the still prevailing organization of society, ready to replace the latter at any given time." (pg. 46-47)
- "The psychological appeal to unity counts heavier than the actual existence of chaos. The concept of unity itself, as used in this particular device, is void of any specific content. Unity as such is exalted as an idea." (pg. 47)
- "Behind the veneer of democratic equality, of being affable and not regarding oneself as something better, looms an aggressive "anti-highbrow" attitude in favor of a carefully calculated image of the common man with sound instincts and little sophistication - an attitude zealously fostered by the Nazi denunciation of the intellectual. **The fact that American tradition is intrinsically bound up with democratic ideas and institutions has tended to give to some elements of democracy a quasi-magical halo, an irrational weight of their own.** Wholesome as this may be in some respects, it also involves certain dangers upon which fascist propaganda may feed..." (pg. 52)
 - "On the surface the "plain folks" device appears to be innocuous enough, and it is by no means a characteristic of fascist agitators to flatter the people as they are. One might assume that such a psychological treatment cures the little men and women of their inferiority complexes and elevates their unvoluntarily humble lives, e.g., by inferring, as Thomas does, that the humbleness is self-imposed out of Christian humility. Yet this device has most sinister implications. It reflects the fact that large sectors of the population - in fact, all those who are excluded from the privilege of education, and through manual labor, bear the burden of civilization - **preserve certain traits of rudeness and even of savagery which may be called upon in any critical situation. By praising their humbleness and their folksy ways, the agitator indirectly praises this savagery which is simultaneously both repressed and generated by modern culture.** Thus, he leads them to release their savagery under the name of robust, sound, plain instincts. Whenever a group is gathered under the slogan of being "just plain folks" who are opposed to the refinements and perversions of cultural life, it is ready to strike at those against whom they may be directed to strike." (pg. 53)
- "The following group of five devices pertains to Thomas' "strategy of terror." Here he enters the sphere of the dark, mysterious and frightening, and resorts to techniques which **exploit fear and its ambivalence.** The terror technique is used in different degrees, from the slight innuendo of hidden evil to the threat of impending catastrophe. Each of these grades has somewhat different psychological implications." (pg. 53)
 - "Innuendo points toward the future, to a time when the facts merely hinted at are going to be made clear, or to a final day of reckoning. Curiosity is stirred up and people are made to join the organization, or at least to read its publications, by the hope that they are going to be "let in" at some future date if they simply follow what the agitator says and writes. Here interest in what one will hear later creates a sort of emotional tie between speaker and listener. This mechanism is used throughout advertising, and represents the harmless, surface aspect of the innuendo technique. **The lure of innuendo grows with its vagueness. It allows for an unchecked play of the imagination and invites all sorts of speculation, enhanced by the fact that masses today, because they feel themselves to be objects of social processes, are anxious to learn what is going on behind the scene.** At the same time they are prone psychologically to transform the anonymous processes to which they are subject into personalistic terms of conspiracies, plots by evil powers, secret international organizations, etc. **The innuendo device is based upon the neurotic curiosity prevailing within modern mass culture.** Every isolated individual longs not only to know the hidden powers which his existence obeys, but even more to know the dark and sinister side of those lives in which he cannot take part. This disposition helps to transform the innuendo device into something not at all harmless." (pg. 54)
 - ◆ "Its dangerous aspect consists, first of all, in an irrational increase of the speaker's prestige and authority. **To listen to innuendo and to rely on purposely vague statements requires from the listeners a certain readiness to "believe," since the vagueness stands in the way of a comprehensive statement of facts and a discursive treatment of their interrelation.** It is exactly this attitude of blind belief which is fostered by Thomas' innuendo technique." (pg. 54-55)
 - ◇ "To believe is necessary...Innuendo is a means of making the leader appear as heir to divine omniscience. He knows what the others do not know. He underscores this difference by never telling exactly what he does know or revealing the full extent of his knowledge. He always reserves for himself a surplus of knowledge which inspires awe and at the same time makes the public wish to participate in it." (pg. 55)
 - ▶ "Indeed, one of the main incentives offered to them is **the wish to "belong,"** to become a member of a closed ingroup." (pg. 55)
 - ◆ "Innuendo is a psychological means of making people feel that they already are members of that closed group which strives to catch them." (pg. 55)
 - ◇ **but, there is more to this - innuendo also aims to absolve oneself of a claim to the future. By "pushing past" the present and immediate future, standing in the far-off, unseen, and remote portion of the future, one is able to leverage uncertainty to rebuff accountability - they're able to "cash in", nearly at any moment, the fact that matters changed too abruptly and, therefore, unduly disrupted the circumstance by which they were to achieve their ends. And, in fact, it's knowledge of such rapid flux and continually evolving circumstance they, in the first instance, seek to attribute fault - so, in plain terms, not only are they seeking an instance whether they can conjure forth someone or something to point their finger at to blame but, using such a platform to deliver ideology and force cohesion through division.*
- "The overtone of this "intelligence" is invariably a threatening one. Psychologically, what purposely remains unsaid is not only the

knowledge which is too horrible to be stated frankly but also the horrible thing which one wants to commit oneself, which is not confessed even to oneself, and yet is expressed and even sanctioned by innuendo. The "if you only know" device promises to reveal the secret to those who join the racket and pay their tithe. But it also implies the promise that they will some day participate in the night of long knives, the Utopia of the racket. Moreover, the form of innuendo is a threat to all those who are excluded from the whispering and are supposed not to know 'what I mean'" (pg. 56)

- **"The fascist-minded listener, at least, is willing to accept without examination any scandal story, even a most stupid one like the ritual murder legend.** Furthermore, he generalizes cases which may happen under any political system, regarding them as typical of democracy, especially of its "plutocratic" nature. He becomes furious about facts which at closer scrutiny appear most innocent, or belong so strictly to the sphere of private life that nobody has a moral right to interfere." (pg. 58-59)
- **"Another aspect of Thomas' terror technique ought to be stressed. It consists of the direct or indirect assertion that a catastrophe is imminent, that the situation is desperate and has reached a peak of crisis, that some change must be made immediately."** (pg. 64)
- "One of the main tasks of the fascist is to prevent this and to divert revolutionary trends into their own line of thought, for their own purposes. In order to achieve this aim, the fascist agitator steals, as it were, the concept of revolution. Again, the idea of catastrophe, of the fateful moment, is the substitute. It implies radical change without, however, having any specific social contents. Nobody looks beyond the end of the world. Moreover, catastrophe is something that happens to people rather than materializing by their own free will. They are divested of their spontaneity and transformed into spectators of the great world-historical events which are going to be decided over their heads, while their own energies are absorbed by their adherence to the organization, and their love for the leader." (pg. 66)
- "Today for fascist propaganda, revivals and conversions have become a means to the end that people might become practical, that is to say that they might yield any theoretical thought of their own, might become integrated into teams and organizations, and might take action in accordance with their collective interest rather than with their rational conviction. The lack of capacity for abstraction, the old compulsion to "illustrate" any concept by its most immediate application which often implies a deterioration of its true meaning, this incapacity for abstraction which is more likely to have become stronger than to have decreased under modern conditions, is used as a lever for propagandistic purposes. The ideal that becomes immediately and inconsiderately identified with some practical measure or attitude, becomes meaningless as an ideal and is reduced to a mere embellishment of the next practical step. This, however is actually what Thomas' propaganda, like that of all fascists, aims at. Conscience becomes nothing but an ideology which lends its glamour to the deeds of naked self-interest, carried out by the organization. By discrediting the ideas while they are being transformed into terms of practical, everyday life, **the follower is made to understand that what matters is not the idea, not even the intentionally vague "matter for which it stands," but in the last analysis only the organization itself, that is to say, the power apparatus and that authority which finally decides what policy is expedient.**" (pg. 74)
- Section III: The Religious Medium (pg. 75)
 - "American fascist propaganda shows a very strong affinity to certain religious movements..." (pg. 75)
 - "Fascist rationality consists in the establishment of an omnipotent power system rather than in the enforcement of any 'philosophy'" (pg. 76-77)
- Section IV: Ideological Bait (pg. 104)
 - "...the agitator's dream [is] the unification of the horrible and the wonderful, the drunkenness of an annihilation that pretends to be salvation." (pg. 131)

d. Further Readings:

- The Strategy of Terror, by E. Taylor <https://dn790004.ca.archive.org/0/items/strategyofterror010789mbp/strategyofterror010789mbp.pdf>