

Worksheet 6 – Indoctrination and Ideology

Review: Lecture 5

In the fifth lecture of the unit, Dr Madeleine Davies discussed the importance of surveillance in *The Handmaid's Tale*.

- ✓ What were the features of Jeremy Bentham's panoptical prison design and how did it influence *The Handmaid's Tale*?

Recall: Lecture 6

Answer these questions after watching the video lecture to check how much you remember.

1. Which of the below is not a description of Gilead as a society?
a) Theocratic
b) Patriarchal
c) Democratic
d) Totalitarian
2. What phrase is psychoanalyst Sigmund Freud famous for writing?
a) Motherhood is a woman's destiny
b) Anatomy is destiny
c) Follow your destiny
d) Anatomy is everything
Bonus point: Explain in your own words what this phrase means.
3. Which character uses false oppositions to justify their opinion to Offred?
a) Nick
b) Serena Joy
c) Aunt Sarah
d) The Commander

Analysis

4. Dr Davies mentions two theorists in her lecture: Noam Chomsky and Sigmund Freud.
a) Research both theorists and make a note of five key facts about their work and ideas.
b) Find a quotation from *The Handmaid's Tale* that connects to the ideas of each theorist and explain why.
c) Do you think Dr Davies agree with the ideas of both theorists? Why/ why not?

Extension: In *Manufacturing Consent: The Political Economy of the Mass Media* (1988), Noam Chomsky and Edward S. Herman write about how mass media is used to control people in the United States:

In sum, the mass media of the United States are effective and powerful ideological institutions that carry out a system-supportive propaganda function by reliance on market forces, internalized assumptions and self-censorship, and without significant overt coercion. This propaganda system has become even more efficient in recent decades with the rise of the national television networks, greater mass-media concentration right-wing pressures on public radio and television, and the growth in scope and sophistication of public relations and news management.

- In your own words, explain what is being said in this quotation. *Hint: Use the Glossary to help you.*
- Can you find an example from *The Handmaid's Tale* where mass media is used in this way?

Evaluation

5. In her lecture, Dr Davies comments that one of ways that Gilead runs as a totalitarian society is that it 'trains women to police other women'. She comments that this is something that already happens in contemporary Western society.
- What do you think Dr Davies means by this statement?
 - Do you agree with Dr Davies? Make a list of three reasons both for and against her argument.

6. Write a blog article with the title: '**Are women used to police other women?**'

You should:

- Include research into a real contemporary issue (e.g. body image/ expectations around motherhood/ attitudes towards sexuality).
- Refer to *The Handmaid's Tale* as evidence for your ideas
- Write persuasively to engage the reader with your opinion (e.g. utilising features such as: rhetorical question, repetition, anecdotes, direct address, statistics).

Glossary

- **Ideology** – a system of ideas and ideals, especially one which forms the basis of economic or political theory and policy.
- **Indoctrination** – the process of teaching a person or group to accept a set of beliefs uncritically.
- **Theology** – the study of God and religious beliefs
- **Patriarchal** – relating to or denoting a system of society or government controlled by men.
- **Matriarchy** – a society or community controlled by women.
- **Subject** – a person or thing that is being discussed, described, or dealt with.
- **Specious logic** – arguments that appear at first as if they might be true, but are actually wrong
- **False opposition** – when two ideas are presented as being mutually exclusive (or opposing), when in fact they are not
- **Mass media** – a range of media technologies (e.g. social media, the internet, television) that reach a large audience via mass communication.
- **Propaganda** – information, especially of a biased or misleading nature, used to promote a political cause or point of view.
- **Coercion** – the action or practice of persuading someone to do something by using force or threats.