

The century of the self

[Business](#), [Marketing](#)



Consumerism is geared in an abundance to address our way of life. We as individuals believe that our minds control choosing what we need but, consumerism caters to the beliefs that specific things are needed to make living easier. This is not a need, but rather a want. Sigmund Freud developed an understanding that there was a way to trigger this reaction in our way of thinking that we need something rather than want it. Edward Bernays, nephew of Sigmund Freud, introduced this to the United States later; through times of war and times of peace. He proposed the commonly known persuasion method of propaganda.

The film *The Century of the Self* shows that an Austrian neurologist Sigmund Freud has found a method for studying the hidden parts of the mind; this method would be known to mankind as Psychoanalysis. By using this method, Mr. Freud discovered that "powerful sexual and aggressive forces can be unearthed in the human brain." He would relate this to be the "remnants of human beings animal past." With this part of the hidden mind, Freud had unearthed the studying of the unconscious state of mind which is a part of the brain that had never-before been examined. This film shows extraordinary minds using manipulation as a source to expand consumerism across the globe.

While Freud developed this practice of examining the mind, Vienna rulers were not at all pleased with this ability. If I were a ruler at this time, I too would have felt the same. This is essentially changing the way of governing for Vienna. At this time, Vienna felt threatened towards their society, as would many other high-class beings, such as rulers. This had been a time in societal righteousness when feelings were not allowed to correlate with

actions; in other words, if I felt like I were under paid, then I would not be able to show discomfort. Rulers of Vienna became even more fearful from news of Freud's theory showing that hidden inside all human beings were dangerous instinctual drives. Understanding that there is a change being presented through the study of Sigmund Freud, there is the sense that with these findings, it would not be hard for a way of life to be changed drastically.

Edward Bernays is the nephew of Sigmund Freud. In the film *The Century of the Self*, Edward Bernays is introduced as an average human being with a unique view on society. He seems to take human beings as a group rather than as individuals. With this viewpoint, Bernays can then use this as an advantage in persuasion. Mass persuasion on a group of individuals is known as propaganda. After the war, Bernays began to ponder on the thought of using persuasion on a mass group of beings, this time being in a more peaceful environment. With this idea, it would seem to be that he would have to alter the mindset of a large group of people. To change the way of thinking of so many people, it would require a unique mind of its own to use a technique that can alter the process of decision making. This shows how powerful Bernays' ideas really were.

In this new revolution of thinking, Mr. Edward Bernays knew that Propaganda had a more negative connotation, which is why he used what he had already known on the subject and made it into a more positive sounding field: public relations. He had been aware, at that time, of his Uncle Freud's work on Psychoanalysis. This would give him the missing key to what he needed,

which could prove to change the world we knew. For Bernays to make a success in this field, he completely understood the importance of influential figures; this led him to Dr. Brill. Dr. Brill was a known Psychoanalyst who would prove to enlighten Bernays. He aided Bernays on a special subject: womensmokingin public. From then on, Edward Bernays exploded in the economic world, representing many other corporations while helping to advertise millions of products essential to what human beings would want.

Edward Bernays brought upon society a new way of thinking. He made mass groups of human beings think that what they wanted was something that they needed; if they had this need, then it would also make them feel better about having said substance. This is something that I do not think the consumers of the New World understood at the time. They were basically being controlled into buying these goods that were unnecessary. As imagined, Bernays had then been sought after by major companies to represent them. They would use him to exploit their reservoir of items in which they hoped to be distributed to the masses. These different goods would then prove to be satisfactory to the much less competent consumers.

In the film *The Century of the Self*, Edward Bernays introduced society to one of the most major breakthroughs in history involving the stock market. With the stock market, I feel that he made a source of consumerism all in one. What I mean by that is with this innovation, there is a much different source of income and production. With the stock market, there would be satisfaction, and with this satisfaction he knew that democracies could do whatever they pleased. They would be able to have a better sense of control.

With these discoveries by Sigmund Freud, there came the belief that guiding principles of what a mass democracy was were wrong- " the belief that human beings could be trusted to make decisions on a rational basis," as well as, " the need for democracy to be reconsidered."

With this film, Bernays not only shows how people are " active participants of society", but he also shows that human beings are more " passive consumers of society." This proved that if human beings' desires were able to be satisfied, then there was no limit as to the objectives achieved by these drives from deep within. The film demonstrates there is an understanding of how resources are used. For the making of the billions of goods in the United States, there are equal amounts of resources used in this production. How can this use of resources have a major effect? This film shows the mass production of goods, in which people are buying, not realizing the cost of this consumption. There are impulses that bring our attention to a large amount of goods, no matter as to what they may be or how they really play a role in our way of life.

This film has aroused many details of consumerism, differentiating between what I know and what society knows about the effects of consumerism. The comparison of our minds to enslavement just proved to be baffling. How can the studying of different minds be as negative as enslavement? Perhaps when the strengths of desire take over and lead to action upon that desire, enslavement does become a relating topic. With this comparison, it demonstrates how true desire effects our mindset. This effected mindset

does not allow for proper decision making, which means understanding how a specific good is truly beneficial, as well as nonbeneficial.

My understanding of democracy was completely different than how explained in this film. See, I have always been taught that democracy is the greatest, and it has been the key to our societal structure. After watching this film, I have begun to question this statement. Democracy is supposed to have citizens making the major decisions with representatives to carry out actions for them, but *The Century of the Self* shows that in a way, the representatives of the people are in total control, by manipulating the minds of consumers across the United States. They use a form of Propaganda in everything they do, whether it be to make you buy something that you really don't need or voting for someone you don't really know. With this film, the stereotypical form of democracy has been turned upside down, shaking all of the secrets loose.

The market has proven to be legally cruel to human beings, by using manipulative techniques. Many Corporations only show care towards making a decent profit, rather than what will benefit society. For example, just because a more fuel-efficient car comes out, does not mean it will save the world. Therefore, corporations can be related to democracy, in the sense of false representation. They show themselves as beneficial to society, but they are only representing what is good for them, as well as, what they want; rather than what plays a better role for human beings.

I have come to the decision that democracy is a corrupt form of manipulation. Therefore, anyone else feels this is acceptable in society: the

reason why major corporations feel the need to use our own human desires against us. Not only against us do they use these desires, but they use them to better themselves rather than modern day society.