



# NEO-PR

PUBLIC RELATIONS IN A POSTMODERN WORLD



CHRISTOPHER CALDIERO

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A POSTMODERN WORLD



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## *Foreword*

*Protagoras*: Truth is relative. It is only a matter of opinion.

*Socrates*: You mean that truth is mere subjective opinion?

*Protagoras*: Exactly. What is true for you is true for you, and what is true for me, is true for me. Truth is subjective.

*Socrates*: Do you really mean that? That my opinion is true by virtue of its being my opinion?

*Protagoras*: Indeed I do.

*Socrates*: My opinion is: Truth is absolute, not opinion, and that you, Protagoras, are absolutely in error. Since this is my opinion, then you must grant that it is true according to your philosophy.

*Protagoras*: You are quite correct, Socrates.

Although Protagoras seems to be conceding to Socrates, is he? Some think so. At least, Sahakian and Sahakian (1966) seemed to think so when they wrote, "Hence, he (Protagoras) necessarily contradicts himself and implicitly admits that truth is objective, not relative" (p. 28). I disagree. I see Protagoras' final response as an affirmation of his *own* truth. He simply affirms for Socrates that Socrates' truth is also the truth...for Socrates. If this is the slightest bit confusing, do not lose heart. Where we are about to tread often belies traditional public relations thinking and, in some ways, encourages dissent and conflict.

I think it important to begin by describing what this book is and what it isn't. This is not a textbook. It is not a simple collection of case studies. It is, in my view, a treatise on the philosophy of communication; specifically, a treatise on the philosophy of *public relations*. It is intended as a reader for undergraduate and graduate public relations students who seek not only to be informed about today's practice but who desire to help create their *own* contribution to the meaning of what public relations can and should do for organizations and publics.

Now, you may rightfully ask, what does philosophy (especially moral and metaphysical philosophy) have to do with public relations? Unfortunately for those of us who seek to analyze and improve the practice of public relations, philosophical approaches have been few and far between. Further, there has always been an unspoken tension between those who see public relations as purely an organizational objective function (as much as marketing or sales might be) and those who seek to peel the layers back a bit and understand the reasons why certain strategies work, what motivates organizations to communicate the way they do, and how our practice can better help publics we serve.

The work presented here seeks to continue that peeling back and to go even deeper. The primary goal of Neo-PR is to understand *meaning*; the meanings of the messages, the meanings of the media (in the most “McLuhanesque” way), the meaning of *truth*, and most importantly, the meaning of choices made for both organizations and their respective publics. In our postmodern world (more on that in a moment), I argue that the way that organizations and publics create (and co-create) meaning is closely tied to new realities that organizations must face and address. These new realities, as we will see, both shape and are shaped by a combination of media and culture.

It is no great revelation to suggest that the practice of public relations has changed in the past, say, 10–15 years. Although it is true that the practice has continually evolved since the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, there has been a notable change with the advent of social media. I see many forms of social media as classic examples of media convergence, the phenomenon whereby new technology and media seem to be evolved forms of earlier technologies. And, importantly, these new forms inherently retain some of the characteristics (both physical and *impactful*) of their progenitors.

For example, television has been with us for many decades now. Subsequently, and understandably, the impact of television on our lives has been studied for almost as long as the medium itself has existed. This study has, to a lesser but no less important degree, been done in the context of postmodernistic thinking. If we can accept that the Internet and its own related “offspring” such as social media are themselves descendants (or least relatives) of television, then it is time to examine these forms for what they are—impactful, important meaning-shapers and facilitators for us today.

In light of this general declaration, a few more specific premises are presented; social media and other related technologies are part of our world in this early part of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Organizations and publics use these technologies in ever-greater numbers. As such, this book is an attempt to analyze and understand the impact these technologies have on today’s public relations practice. Further, the impact of these technologies *and* the changing culture we are embedded within have, in many ways, helped to redefine what public relations is and how it should be done. This is Neo-PR.

A few caveats if I may. If you, faithful reader, have no belief in or conviction about postmodernism, you may very well find this treatise problematic. Wonderful! The real goal of this work is to start discussions and debates. Postmodernism (as we will see in Chapter 2) is inherently problematic to begin with. Therefore, some might argue it is a shaky foundation from which to begin any discussion, let alone one about public relations. I encourage you to challenge these ideas. Of course, I strongly believe in what I present here, but

one of the very basic tenets of postmodernistic thinking is the idea of “multiple truths.” These multiple truths can all be real, can all be important and impactful, and do not have to conflict or contradict each other.

Who is this book for? Ultimately, that is not for me to decide. After all, as Barthes reminded us, the author is dead. What you make of this book and what use it has for you are your choices. I *can* tell you what I hope this book provides for you. I believe the practice of public relations is changing, in multiple ways. As it does, scholars should continue to expand the horizons of critical examinations of public relations and organizational communication in general. Further, I think there is real ground for using postmodernism as a starting point for these examinations and analyses. Technological changes have more than given practitioners (and publics!) new tools for communication; they have, in effect, changed the way that meaning is derived from communication.

As such, there is a massive ripple effect; as the way organizations and publics communicate in the context of public relations changes, the derived meanings can change, and thus, the consequences of that communicate change. What might have once “worked” for an organization may no longer work. What might have been appropriate then is no longer appropriate. Together, we will examine a number of recent cases in which traditional modernistic public relations strategies did not “work” in the way in which they were intended to.

What are the reasons for these changes? Well, there are many to discuss. But at the heart of it all, they are the results of changes in our culture and our times. Yes, social media and technology change the methods. But these changes cannot be parsed from larger social changes and from other types of media, including traditional forms. I believe that media do not change as much as they adapt and are adapted. There are reasons *why* social media forms bloom and flourish and, in some cases, die. These reasons are best left to other discussions and analyses. However, we will do our best to understand the forces at work. Ultimately, as students, scholars, and practitioners of a very specific form of communication, we must understand that the changes occurring inevitably affect public relations practice. Moving forward, it is my hope that Neo-PR provides a bit of a roadmap for the practice and promise of our ever-changing field. Indeed, I see this book, in part, as a guide for practitioners. The principles of Neo-PR can, I believe, serve as a template for public relations thinking *and* action.

Chapters 1 and 2 introduce the concepts of modernism and postmodernism and place them both in the context of where public relations has been, where it is now, and where it may be going. Beginning with Chapter 3, we will explore together a number of recent cases. Some you may know well. Others will

not be as familiar. Chapter 3 presents an overview of the 2010 British Petroleum Deepwater Horizon oil spill disaster. Here, we will examine the important role of narratives in our postmodern world. Chapter 4 presents a discussion of the 2012 Planned Parenthood/Susan G. Komen case. We will focus on the use of social media and the notion of “multiple truths.” Chapter 5 presents an analysis of the Boy Scouts of America membership case, during which that storied organization confronted issues regarding its policies on homosexuality and pedophilia. This chapter allows us insight into the postmodern machinations at work in this sensitive case. Chapter 6 takes a deeper look into the 2011 Penn State crisis involving, amongst others, famed sports icon Joe Paterno. Chapter 7 presents a discussion on the 2013–2014 Sea-World/*Blackfish* crisis—a recent example of the way public relations is changing in our postmodern world. The Afterword re-presents the argument for postmodern thinking in today’s public relations world and offers ways for practitioners to consider Neo-PR in their own practice and experience. Lastly, there are helpful appendices that will allow you to review important timetables, quotes, events, and facts from each of the cases.

As a graduate student, I remember thinking how nice it would be to eventually write something that practitioners could keep close at hand—a practical guide intended to shed light on the proper mentality and strategies for ethical and effective public relations. If this book even comes *close* to that goal, I am satisfied.

I encourage you to use this text as a supplement to your own research, your own discussions, and your own debates. Always find out *more*. Each of the cases presented here had their day(s) in the news and the cultural discussions of that time. Many others have written about these cases. Seek this scholarship out to better enhance your understanding of both the circumstances of the case and the communication that occurred. Decide for yourself whether the tenets of postmodernism were in play. Try to uncover what you believe to be the *reality* of the situation. What reality truly *is* exists as a focusing point for much postmodern thinking. Finally, remember that I mentioned I view this book as a philosophy text. As such, dissect it, disagree with it, challenge it, and debate it. As Roman statesman Marcus Tullius Cicero stated, “Philosophy, rightly defined, is simply the love of wisdom.” Find that wisdom for yourself. I hope this book, in some small way, contributes to that journey.

There are many to thank for their help in this endeavor. My colleagues at Fairleigh Dickinson University have been, without fail, supportive of my work. In this regard, a thank you to Dr. Jennifer Lehr, my colleague and former department Chair. Thanks to Dr. Gary Radford, my current department Chair, for helping to nurture my interest in some very different ways of thinking

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For Lily Anne.

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## CHAPTER 1

# Modernism and Public Relations

What is postmodernism? How does it compare to modernism? What does public relations have to do with all of this? These are seemingly simple questions but with complex answers. This book does not attempt to fully answer the first two questions, but we will examine all three and put our efforts towards attempting to answer the third. Public relations as a profession and a practice has, without question, been shaped and continues to be shaped by changes in our culture and society. These changes include, but are not limited to, dynamic changes in technology and media, the public's expectations with regard to organizational communication, and new realities concerning public relations tactics and strategies. Concurrently, changes in public relations practice are shaping larger societal and cultural forces. As such, I argue that our postmodern world both shapes, and is shaped by, new and different ways that organizations (and publics) "do" public relations.

Almost every discussion of postmodernism begins with a caveat. The caveat is that postmodernism cannot be defined (or at least *easily* defined). Instead of using that traditional opening, perhaps it is best to briefly examine the broad concept of modernism—the core set of ideas that postmodernism seeks to critique and, in some ways, replace.

Modernism, like postmodernism, is subject to wide-ranging interpretation and application. Perhaps Habermas (1983a) defined it most succinctly when he said that modernism aims to "develop objective science, universal morality and law, and autonomous art according to their inner logic" (p. 9). Of course, embedded in this definition are a number of concepts of significant depth. For example, *objective science* refers to modernism's tenet of seeking THE truth—a singular, all-encompassing truth that can benefit mankind. Similarly, *universal morality* references the post-Enlightenment goal of creating and employing a singular template of morals and values that would benefit all. Because modernism was born from the Enlightenment period (Kellner, 1989), proponents of modernism sought to further advance human civilization by embracing technology, scientific thinking, and the social sciences. Also, as is evident in Habermas' definition, there exists a theme of singularity or "oneness" within modernism. This is, in essence, the debate between pluralism and homogeneity, as we will see going forward.

In the course of examining public relations in the context of modernism and ultimately attempting to understand how public relations has been practiced in a "modernistic" fashion, it is important to understand some of the history of the field. Although this book is not a history text and the basic stories of the beginnings of public relations (in the United States) may be familiar to

many of you, it is no mere coincidence that public relations began at time when modernism was taking shape or being re-shaped. The advent of the industrial revolution in the late nineteenth century and its continuation into the early twentieth century coincided almost precisely with some of the events that are associated with the birth of public relations as a professional field. Indeed, I argue that because of the predominance of modernistic thinking in the early 1900s, public relations was destined to be shaped, and ultimately practiced for many decades to come, in the framework of basic modernistic principles. Let us begin with a deeper examination of modernism, the beginnings of public relations in the context of modernism, and the path public relations has taken since those early days.

Modernism (and relatedly, *modernistic*) is a broad term that can describe and/or categorize a number of different elements of our world. The term has most often been associated with the art world and its growing rejection (in the late nineteenth century) of artistic realism, norms, and traditions (Orton & Pollock, 1996). And while the modernistic movement in the arts deserves its own discussion, it does not alone inform the genesis of public relations as we have come to know it. However, if we consider Habermas' (1983) description of modernism and some other basic tenets, we *are* able to see how the pioneers of public relations and some of the events most associated with the field's beginnings seem intrinsically tied to some of the larger cultural, philosophical, and societal changes of the early twentieth century.

Let us first consider Ivy Lee and his 1906 "Declaration of Principles." After being hired by the anthracite coal industry that same year to help advise during a strike by miners, Lee decided to provide daily updates to the relevant newspapers of the day. And although we would be quick and correct to view these updates as a type of "proto-news release," Lee faced criticism and backlash from the newspapers who viewed his updates as nothing more than advertisements for the coal industry or, worse, propaganda. In response, Lee wrote and issued his Declaration of Principles.

Lee's relatively short Declaration is widely considered to be one of the first attempts to define the goal of public relations as being honest and open communication with the public (Vos, 2011). Here is Lee's Declaration in full:

This is not a secret press bureau. All our work is done in the open. We aim to supply news. This is not an advertising agency; if you think any of our matter ought properly to go to your business office, do not use it. Our matter is accurate. Further details on any subject treated will be supplied promptly, and any editor will be assisted most cheerfully in verifying directly any statement of fact. Upon inquiry, full information will be given to any editor concerning those on whose behalf an article is sent out. In brief, our plan is, frankly and openly, on behalf of business concerns and public institutions, to supply to the press and public of the United States prompt and accurate

information concerning subjects which it is of value and interest to the public to know about. Corporations and public institutions give out much information in which the news point is lost to view. Nevertheless, it is quite as important to the public to have this news as it is to the establishments themselves to give it currency. I send out only matter every detail of which I am willing to assist any editor in verifying for himself. I am always at your service for the purpose of enabling you to obtain more complete information concerning any of the subjects brought forward in my copy.  
(<http://prpretaporter.wordpress.com/2011/06/15/declaration-of-principles-ivy-lee/>)

If Lee's Declaration can be considered an important milepost at the beginning of the public relations highway, we can use it to examine whether or not it fits into modernistic thinking of the day. First, there is clearly a tenor of objectivity and totality of truth. Lee offers to the newspaper editors verifications of "facts," "full" information, prompt supply of detail, and frank and open communication. And while these claims certainly lay the groundwork for the kind of ethical communication that public relations practitioners and scholars have long sought to establish as the accepted norm, they also fit squarely into some of the basic ideas of modernism including, but not limited to, totalizing explanations for phenomena, centralized control, seriousness of intent and purpose, and determinancy. Indeed, Lee seems almost to be pleading for reasoning and faith in his intentions—trust me and my information, and we'll all be better for it.

Lee's Declaration of Principles was in no way the sole milepost during this period. Other events and personalities were occurring almost simultaneously. Consider George Creel and the Creel Committee. Officially titled The Committee on Public Information, the Creel Committee (so named for the leadership and influence of journalist George Creel, who chaired the committee) was formed by President Woodrow Wilson in 1917 to help persuade the American public that participation in World War I was just and necessary (Snow, 2003). Public relations scholars have routinely cited the Creel Committee as one of the first large-scale public relations campaigns, especially in the context of American involvement in wars and foreign affairs (Hollihan, 1984). And while some have focused on the Creel Committee's association with unethical practice, here we can examine it in the context of modernism and the birth of public relations.

Ironically, Wilson was re-elected to the presidency in 1916 largely on a platform of non-involvement in the worsening affairs in Europe. "He kept us out of war!" was a common slogan for his campaign events (Graham & Luke, 2003). Increasing German aggression, particularly against American shipping interests, began to change Wilson's mind although he knew he faced a reticent public. The public, by and large, did not feel American involvement was necessary or prudent. The creation of the Committee on Public Information was

wholly an attempt to persuade the public that American involvement was both. In the two-year period it existed, the CPI employed various methods and technologies to communicate those very ideas. Al-though Creel later referred to the committee's activities as being largely open and positive, critics used other less upbeat descriptors such as censorship, untrustworthy, repressive, and dishonest.

Regardless of the validity of such claims (and it seems some claims of dishonest communication were indeed valid), the formation and existence of the Creel Committee ultimately paralleled ongoing modernistic trends of the time. Creel himself initially viewed the committee's purpose not as one of propaganda (which he correctly or incorrectly saw as solely a German tactic), but rather as a "propagation of faith" (Jackall & Hirota, 2000, p. 13), which Creel saw as the truest form of propaganda. Creel's Roman Catholic upbringing notwithstanding, his belief that the committee's purpose was one of communicating clear and absolute truths in a fog of war reflected the larger social climate of modernism, embracing totality of knowledge, faith in government, and master narratives (or metanarratives) that should inherently be taken as truth and reality.

The fact that the committee's work as time went on morphed from a template of facts and positivism to hate-based fear-mongering (especially in the context of war posters depicting the "Hun's" potential destruction of America) in no way changes the fact that, at least initially, the committee sought to communicate a totality of truth. This, coupled with the committee's efficient and effective use of any and all media technologies of the day (however limited we may consider them by today's standards), displayed modernistic preferences for mass consumption of information, centralized communication, and the call for individual faith in government. Indeed, Habermas's (1983b) reference to "universal morality and law" squares with Creel's wish that the committee not be viewed as a propaganda machine (which it arguably was) but rather as a righteous tool wielded by a government wishing to propagate the faith and tell the truth.

Consider further mileposts on public relations' journey through the early twentieth century: Walter Lippmann's foundational book, *Public Opinion* and Edward Bernays' equally-noted work, *Crystallizing Public Opinion*. Lippmann and Bernays knew each other from their mutual work on the Creel Committee (although Jansen [2013] wonders just how well they worked together and what their level of collaboration was). Ultimately, both men would influence each other's thinking about a number of related topics including propaganda, public opinion, and public relations.

In describing public opinion and the problems ordinary men face when forming their opinions, Lippmann writes:

...artificial censorships, the limitations of social contact, the comparatively meager time available in each day for paying attention to public affairs, the distortion arising because events have to be compressed into very short messages, the difficulty of making a small vocabulary express a complicated world, and finally the fear of facing those facts which would seem to threaten the established routine of men's lives.  
(<http://xroads.virginia.edu/~Hyper2/CDFinal/Lippmann/ch01.html>)

Lippmann goes on to write:

I argue that representative government, either in what is ordinarily called politics, or in industry, cannot be worked successfully, no matter what the basis of election, unless there is an independent, expert organization for making the unseen facts intelligible to those who have to make the decisions.  
(<http://xroads.virginia.edu/~Hyper2/CDFinal/Lippmann/ch01.html>)

Let us reflect on these two statements. First, Lippmann lists a number of obstacles preventing the common man from forming an “accurate” public opinion about his world. This is due largely to, as Lippmann argues, limitations of time, social contact, vocabulary, etc. His solution? An “independent, expert organization” to help clear away the detritus so that the common man can see the “truth.” Interestingly, Lippmann shows prescience in other sections of his first chapter when he speaks of the “images in our head” and the paradox of representations versus reality (concepts more closely related to discussions of postmodernism, as we will see). Nonetheless, here Lippmann, like others of his time, proclaims a need for centralized, technologically sound, and final authority with which to properly educate and inform the public.

Jansen (2013) offers another take on Lippmann's goals. She writes, “Lippmann accompanies his definitions...with numerous examples, which unequivocally demonstrate that he regards them as impediments to achieving Enlightenment ideals of reason and democracy” (p. 1102). Lippmann was extremely worried about censorship, a lack of public involvement, and the impact of technology on the common man's ability to effectively make sense of his world. However, regardless of Lippmann's analysis, he was (understandably) unable to escape the blooming modernistic views of his time. Thus, the field of public relations (as explicated by Lippmann and, even more so, by Bernays) was inexorably bound to be shaped by the *rejection* of Enlightenment stalwarts (organized religion, tradition, etc.), the *acceptance* of modernistic realities (technology, industrialization, etc.) and the increasing duality and conflict of both.

In short, although Lippmann sought to reject modernism (without saying as much), he knew that shaping public opinion was impossible (or at least ineffective) without embracing and mastering the technological tools available to organizations then. And, ultimately, Lippmann would and could only have so much impact on what was really happening in the world around him, a world that was rapidly rejecting the concepts and philosophies that had dominated society since the Enlightenment.

Bernays, a man heavily influenced by Lippmann (Jansen, 2013), published his seminal work, *Crystallizing Public Opinion*, in 1923. Both men used the term *public opinion* because it was far better known and more commonly used than the term *public relations* (Walker, 1988). Most who know the history of public relations have heard of Edward Bernays. What some may not know is how brilliant he was when it came to his own self-promotion. Bernays was perhaps *most* effective at promoting his own legacy, and this was true throughout his very long life. Starting with his early work on the Creel Committee, the publication of his 1923 book, and lasting all the way to the end of his life in 1995 (at age 103), Bernays was a master at selling himself. Scholar and author Stuart Ewen, following an interview with Bernays, wrote, “in the days following our meeting, it became clear to me that my entire visit had been orchestrated by a virtuoso” (1996, p. 17). Bernays’ long career was a true exercise in duality. While he was rightly known as a pioneer in public relations, he was equally adept at communicating his own self-worth and prowess. So, in effect, Bernays helped grow the field while never losing sight of the value of growing his reputation.

Ernest Bormann, in his 1962 review of a later reissue of *Crystallizing Public Opinion*, writes,

He (Bernays) refers to Public Relations as a profession and disassociates it from the work of publicity agents and propagandists. The PR man both attempts to ‘create news’ for all media that will present his client in a favorable light and counsels his client to take socially responsible actions so that the client will deserve this favorable presentation.

The middle two sections on theory and practice are sketchy and based largely on “herd” psychology from the First World War period such as Walter Lippmann’s *Public Opinion*, and William Trotter’s *Instincts of the Herd in Peace and War*. The book is of historical interest in that it emphasized the mobilization of every avenue of persuasion in a comprehensive campaign to change a public image which has become such an important feature of contemporary mass persuasion. (p. 451)

Bormann’s review highlights two major themes of the book: the “creation of news” (the fabrication of news?) and the very clear association Bernays made with shaping public opinion and some of the basic principles of “herd”

psychology (Bernays was a nephew of Sigmund Freud, and was known to remind others of that fact). How do these two themes align with modernism?

First, we can say that both themes are related to a term often associated with discussions of postmodernism—*metanarratives*. We will discuss metanarratives in much greater detail in the next chapter, but for now we can simply define what they are the grand “stories” that shape larger societal or cultural dynamics. One of the arguments that appears in a number of different postmodern discussions is a call to reject metanarratives, as they can allow dominant power structures to remain dominant and thus possibly oppressive to those without power. In light of the brief definition and the idea that metanarratives are a condition of modernity to be rejected by postmodernistic thinking, we can go one step further. I suggest that the two ideas Bernays focuses on in his book represent two dominant metanarratives that helped shaped the realities and perceptions of the public relations field. Further, because 1920s America was fully ensconced in modernism, these metanarratives were more easily accepted and, therefore, more impactful in shaping the burgeoning practice of public relations.

Ewen, in his important work *PR! A Social History of Spin*, wrote of his interview with Bernays in 1990, five years before the elder public relations spokesman passed away. Ewen noted how, as his interview progressed, he perceived Bernays’ true feelings about the public. Ewen writes:

(Bernays) saw the public as a malleable mass of protoplasm, plastic raw material that—in the hands of a skilled manipulator—could be manufactured at will. According to Bernays, the public mind posed little danger and could be engineered through dexterous appeals to instinctual and unconscious inner life. (p. 399)

Clearly, if Bernays’ opinions about the public were even half as toxic as Ewen perceived them to be, it makes sense that Bernays saw the “manufacturing of news” as a perfectly viable, and even beneficial, action for organizations to take. Do public relations practitioners *create* or *report* an organization’s “news”? Likely a bit of both. However, if we are to reflect on the beginnings of the public relations field (and where the field stands today) and the impact of Bernays and his book, it seems clear that a metanarrative existed of organizations shaping public opinion—by whatever means necessary.

Related to what means and methods an organization has at its disposal, Bernays focused on what is somewhat colloquially known as “herd psychology.” The study and/or philosophical discussion of how humans behaved socially (as opposed to individually) was rather popular at the time, having been started by the likes of Kierkegaard, Nietzsche, and Freud and continuing with

Trotter's foundational work, *Instincts of the Herd in Peace and War*. Trotter, in fact, seems to have heavily influenced Bernays' thinking.

Noted American physician Sanger Brown, in a review of Trotter's book writes:

To pass upon the value of herd influence, as it exists in society today, is not easy. Doubtless herd influence is of inestimable value in some directions, mainly, as a tremendous force in making for law and order, with the great mass of people, acting through the medium of public opinion, it also places a powerful check upon undesirable excesses. (1921, p. 236)

While it may be clear (and indeed, worthwhile) to consider Brown's comments in the context of rule of law, one cannot escape the sense that Trotter, Brown—and Bernays—considered herd psychology to be an important concept, one worth serious consideration for behavioral studies and, in the notable case of Bernays, vital for organizations to comprehend (and use!). Thus, as public relations was just beginning to take shape as a profession and craft, one of the overarching and impactful metanarratives of the day was herd mentality. It is little wonder then that the field began, and continues to be plagued, by questions of ethical practice.

Lastly, let us examine the circumstances surrounding the now-infamous 1929 Easter Day Parade. This event has entered into the annals of public relations history. Here, again we see the impact of Bernays (who planned elements of the event) and notions of herd mentality. Additionally, other modernist elements, including “production,” played out to help shape early perceptions of the public relations field.

American women had, for some time, been condemned for smoking and, in particular, for smoking in public. Indeed, certain jurisdictions such as New York City and the District of Columbia had attempted to legislate and effectively ban smoking by women (Amos & Haglund, 2000). Four factors were in play at the turn of the twentieth century that began to change the dynamics of female smoking. First, tobacco companies improved their manufacturing techniques so that they could produce cigarettes much faster. Second, as a result of the first circumstance, tobacco companies had more product and needed to sell it. Third, during the First World War, many women took on traditionally male roles as the men served overseas. Fourth, these women began to organize and the suffragette movement reached its apex.

And while these were all powerful conditions of the time, even into the 1920s and *after* women had gained the right to vote, female smoking was still seen by most people as scandalous and taboo. The American Tobacco Company, a large organization and an original member of the New York Stock