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PEN, Peru, Pornography, Propaganda, and Power

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Postmodern approaches to basic tenets of science often deconstruct basic concepts such as cause and effect, prediction, empirical validation, and the like. At least at some levels of understanding, one might apperceive postmodernists of various stripes to be suggesting that we know little about the world, any world.

Take propaganda as an example. For teaching purposes, IBPP has explicated some of the problems in establishing the power of propaganda from a postmodern perspective. One might read these articles and then discount propaganda's influence and its efficacy. Yet when PEN can easily document the plights of writers throughout the world who are imprisoned for their writing and for its putative effects; when governments such as that controlled by the administration of Alberto Fujimori (or military/security officials) can seize control of a television station for broadcasting information that allegedly injures these governments masquerading as the soul of the nation; when governments and international organizations seek to restrict Internet content under the guise of ambiguous criteria for foreign contamination, one must pause.

Haven't the powers that be validated the power of propaganda with their own applications of power? (See Dowd, S. (Ed.) . (1996). *This prison where I live: The PEN anthology of imprisoned writers*. NY: Cassell; *Political Propaganda: A Postmodern Analysis*. International Bulletin of Political Psychology, 1(17)/2(1)/2(3); Sims, C. (1997). Lima TV station critical of Fujimori is seized. The New York Times, <http://www.nytimes.com>; Wayner, P. (1997). Computer privacy: Your shield? Or a threat to national security?)