

Because of the headline, the reader can infer that Ramakrishna is one of 'us'. Note, too, the contrast between dark and light. Ramakrishna's eyes adjust to the light at the same time as he starts to see the deeper 'truth' of the war movie he has just seen. Ramakrishna goes on to discuss the meaning of the film with the interviewer. The interviewer refers to the film as 'propaganda' and Ramakrishna reacts.

With eyebrows furrowed, he [Ramakrishna] advises, 'Don't use the word propaganda as the Nazis gave the term a bad reputation during World War II. Nowadays it's called "strategic communication."

The rest of the story is a profile of Ramakrishna, describing the research he conducts on social media, social cohesion and the role of society in stopping division and violence. The contrast set up in the headline between 'us' and 'them' is one that continues throughout the story. The sustained use of this and other contrasts creates a clear semantic unity in the story.

Contrasts →
semantic
unity

He also discusses the important role of entertainment in the propaganda war against the war on terror.

'Entertainment is a valuable narcotic for dulling the sensibilities of a propaganda-conscious mind' he preached.

This reminds us that ideologies can be communicated in various media, including films. Ramakrishna is clear that when people are being entertained they are less critical of the messages they receive (see Chapter 3). When we think we're just being told an entertaining story we are less critical of the choices made in how the story is told; we are less likely to look for the filters operating or the ideology that is being communicated.

Notice also that while this is a story in an online newspaper and it clearly contains information and news, there is a focus on the individual being interviewed. This is not unexpected for a profile piece. However, some argue that this shift is more widespread than this. Herbert contends that while in 'traditional print language, the basic unit is the paragraph' (2000: 105), this may well be changing with print journalists writing in a more 'conversational style' (2000: 105). We see this in *The Straits Times* article, with the words of the interviewee being reproduced as direct speech with additional information added to flesh out the feature. We as readers are witnessing a conversation. Herbert sees print journalism as 'becoming simpler, clearer, shorter and more graphic, conversational and informal. All of these qualities it draws from good broadcast writing and language' (2000: 105). It seems to also make these news stories more like entertainment.

The headline in this story sets up the topic and the frame for the story. The ideas of war, language and a clear division between us and them (and good and bad) are set up at the start. These themes and contrasts can be found throughout the article. Of course it is not the case that the headline causes the structure of the feature; rather, the headline points the reader in an interpretative direction.