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Advertising: Critical Analysis Essay

Due November 17

Bank of America; a bank made for the people right? A trustworthy American chain of banks that we can trust to put our money into? Wrong. Bank of America is not for all American people. It is just another money hungry financial institution that supports the exploitation of our natural resources. They could care less about the individual American and the ecological future of America; false advertising at its finest. The ad I chose prides BoA in a slogan reading, “building a culture of diversity and inclusion,” which is far from the underlying truth. Is this deception far from the societal norm? In accordance to the Netflix film, “(Dis)honesty: The Truth About Lies,” a lie is like a knife: “To stab someone is wrong. But to use the knife to put butter on your bread is inherently right.”ⁱ We as Americans are exposed to 61 minutes of ads per day or 5,000 adsⁱⁱ in total. Each ad markets a different product targeted to our weaknesses as consumers. In fact, over 75% of U.S. homes have at least three televisions.ⁱⁱⁱ As if advertisements had not perforated our daily lives enough, we are now exposed to more commercial televised content than the actual program aired on television itself. Television has been the biggest advertising medium in the United States in the last few years, and is projected to maintain the market lead in 2016. TV advertising revenue is forecast to grow from 71 billion U.S. dollars in 2015 to around 75 billion U.S. dollars in 2016.^{iv} If media is paid for by advertisers in this vicious cycle we call entertainment, just think of how many messages we are subjectively exposed to through each show we watch on television. Every ad we see contains some sort of lie or fallacy; but if it is for the company to “butter their bread,” so to speak, is the advertising business really to blame? Business is a dog-eat kind of world. However, it is at the utmost importance if you are

going to take advantage of the benefits of lying, you better be prepared for the repercussions when you get caught up in your elaborate facade.

In recent news, a certain human rights crisis has arisen. The first Americans were the Native Americans, and they have been exploited since the beginning of our nation's history. Black Mesa, the termination of the Menominee, the Cherokee Strip, the Indian Child Welfare Act of 1978, the theft of Geronimo's skull, the Trail of Tears; all atrocities against the Native American people. And now what? Today in 2016, do we put at risk an entire Native American community's water supply and watch as they have no say? A 570,000 barrel-per-day pipeline has hit recent news to be constructed on the ancestral lands of the Standing Rock Sioux Reservation in North Dakota. And what has Bank of America done to combat this next atrocity to our natural resources, environment, and Native American community? They have committed to lend \$350 million to the DAPL's financing. This is counterproductive, since they pride their company on the "53 billion dollars they have invested in non-carbon fueling."^v For them to invest in this major fossil fuel infrastructure "would continue to lock America into a climate-busting carbon economy for decades."^{vi} BoA has actually committed "to go carbon neutral by 2020,"^{vii} however this commitment is now false-advertising, in lieu of current affairs.

I have held my money in Bank of America ever since my parents opened my first account at age 15. I never knew that this huge corporation was such a money-hungry machine; naïve of me to think. I liked this bank prior to its recent fallacies. I admired its ease of access being so prominent around my hometown and college campus. I enjoyed its online banking app and e-banking operations. I was reassured it was a good bank with good interests for American people by their demographically appealing based ad's. Their billboards would show their support for our troops, American families, and other things us Americans hold near and dear to our hearts. To

put into perspective, \$7 billion is spent on U.S. billboards a year.^{viii} So why spend so much money on billboards as a company, to project lies and deception? But I am sure BoA does not see it this way, nor do they see these values they represent as a lie. These values are the moral foundation of their bank. But again in recent news, and in lieu to their ecological green promise to the environment, their foundation of values is crumbling down fast. Being an avid supporter for a sustainable environment, I am now ashamed to put my money in such a corporation keen to lend out its money to shameful oil reliant operations. In response, just as millions of others who use BoA, I have recently signed multiple petitions to make my voice heard alongside thousands of others. Others have gone as far to peacefully protest this corrupt construction in hopes that BoA will take back its hand out to the oil industry.

I am however extremely biased, as well as thousands of other Americans that support the fight for sustainable energy reliance and equality for all Americans. To change perspectives, let's talk about immediate reactions the pipeline has provoked around the nation. Interesting enough the instant social media backlash to this crisis in North Dakota, was also a platform based on lies. According to the records, "the number of check-ins at the Standing Rock Reservation Facebook page went from 140,000 to more than 870,000 by Monday afternoon."^{ix} More than 1 million people have checked in on Facebook to the Standing Rock Indian reservation in attempts to overwhelm and confuse the Morton County Sheriff Department to delay construction. To fully analyze this dynamic crisis, we must critically look at why human rights and environmentalist advocates are "playing on the same ground" so to speak as BoA. Why are citizens deceiving law enforcement regarding their location?

"All creatures are capable of deception...birds, insects, chimpanzees," more so, "because if we can justify we are doing something for a good cause there's no problem; no lie."^x So maybe

BoA sees funding the pipeline as helping the pockets of Americans, or strengthening the nation's economy. In regard to the American economy, "the number of people living in high-poverty areas has nearly doubled since 2000, despite the significant decline in concentrated poverty in the previous decade."^{xi} So maybe BoA justifies their actions to endorse the oil pipeline for these impoverished Americans, maybe these Americans are the ones they allude to in their advertisements. Who knows. The only dilemma here is that they have lied to the public on their promise "to go green" by 2020 and their promise as well to endorse diversity across American culture. And on the opposite spectrum, perhaps Facebook activists see deceiving law enforcement as helping the Native Americans from afar. They don't see themselves as liars on Facebook, they see themselves as unifiers. Them, as well as thousands of other Americans, that showed up in North Dakota to peacefully protest and feel as they are making a contribution to stop such devious construction.

Looking back to the advertisement I chose, BoA has caused quite a conundrum for itself. It advertises itself as a bank for all American people alike: black, white, Hispanic, Asian, veterans, and teenagers. But it has caused a huge atrocity against the Native American population and 20th century ideals such as sustainable resource reliance. They have gone against their promise for a green future in doing this huge credit loan for the pipeline construction. What have the repercussions been in regards to their massive deception? Well, thousands of Americans have now felt inclined to take their business elsewhere when it comes to putting their money into the bank. An interesting statistic according to *Sum of Us: people fighting against profit* advises: Virtually every name in the financial pantheon has extended credit in some form to the Dakota pipeline project, according to a remarkable dossier assembled by the organization Food and Water Watch. It shows a credit line of \$10.25 billion (that's a b) for the companies directly

involved in building the project—from 38 banks...Maybe there's a Citibank branch in your neighborhood. Or Wells Fargo or Bank of America or HSBC. Maybe you even keep your money in one—if so, you inadvertently helped pay for the guard dogs that attacked Native Americans as they tried to keep bulldozers from mowing down ancestral grave sites.^{xii}

This site and hundreds of others encourage Americans to voice their opinions through their actions. They illegitimate using services that defy our values. When it comes down to it BoA is just a service we buy into as consumers. The beauty of American is having many different options when it comes to services and goods as a consumer. If you are unhappy with one service; simply take your money elsewhere. Do not buy into false advertising and false promises, use your affluence to make a difference.

ⁱ *(Dis)honesty: The Truth About Lies*. Dir. Yael Melamede. Perf. Dan Ariely. 2015. Web.

ⁱⁱ *Art & Copy*. Dir. Doug Pray. Perf. Mary Wells, Dan Weiden, Hal Riney. 2009. DVD. Web.

ⁱⁱⁱ *Art & Copy*. Ibid.

^{iv} www.statsoft.com. "Easy-to-use Predictive Analytics Software Brings the Analytics to the Data." *Big Data Analytics, Enterprise Analytics, Data Mining Software, Statistical Analysis, Predictive Analytics*. N.p., n.d. Web. 13 Nov. 2016.

^v "Bank of America Corporate Environmental Sustainability." *About Bank of America*. N.p., n.d. Web. 12 Nov. 2016.

^{vi} @sumofus. "Bank of America Is Lending \$350M to Build the Dakota Access Pipeline." *SumOfUs*. N.p., n.d. Web. 13 Nov. 2016.

^{vii} "Bank of America Corporate Environmental Sustainability." Ibid.

^{viii} *Art & Copy*. Ibid.

^{ix} Tegna. "Why Are All Your Friends Checking in at Standing Rock Indian Reservation?" *WFAA*. N.p., n.d. Web. 15 Nov. 2016.

^x *(Dis)honesty: The Truth About Lies*. Ibid.

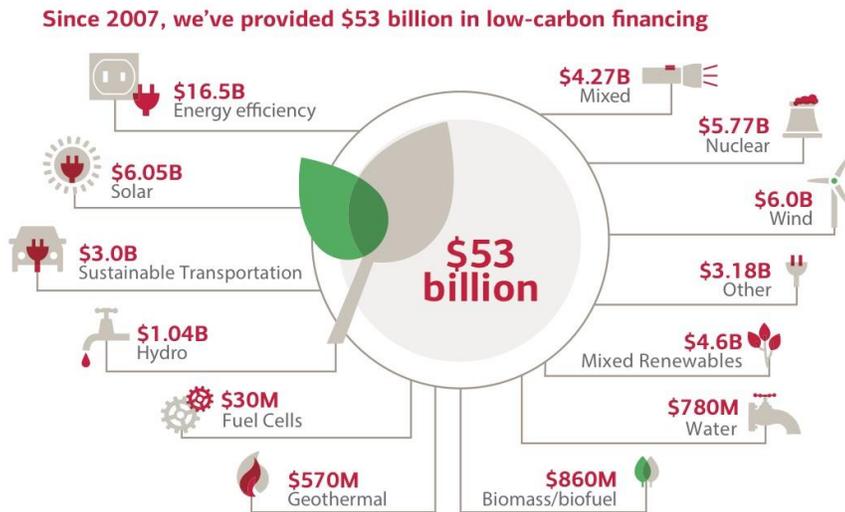
^{xi} Kelly, Marjorie, Sarah McKinley, and Violeta Duncan. "POLITICS OF PLACE/POLITICS FOR PLACES: Community wealth building: America's emerging asset-based approach to city economic development." *Renewal: a Journal of Labour Politics* 24.2 (2016): 51.

^{xii} Bill McKibben Posted Sep 22, 2016. "A Strategy to Stop the Funding Behind the Dakota Access Pipeline." *YES! Magazine*. N.p., n.d. Web. 15 Nov. 2016.

Advertisement Images:



http://www.fx170.com/?q=elearning_boa



<http://about.bankofamerica.com/en-us/global-impact/environmental-sustainability.html>

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