In “Propaganda under a Dictatorship,” novelist Aldous Huxley claims that modern technological, psychological, and neurological advances have made the kind of mind control totalitarian regimes desire all the more accessible (something he'll ostensibly discuss in a later chapter in the book from which this excerpt is taken). In this section, though, he looks at Hitler both to see an example of a propagandist in action and to judge whether Hitler's theory of humanity is correct.

Hitler's first assumption, he explains, is that “the masses are utterly contemptible.” Hitler was careful to make his listeners feel less like individuals and more a part of a crowd in order to “herd-poison” them, a term Huxley uses to mean the act of taking away one’s “responsibility, intelligence and morality” by subjecting one to the “frantic, animal mindlessness” of a crowd. He played on the unspoken fears and anxieties of his listeners in order to manipulate them. Further, he understood that propaganda must be presented in black-and-white terms, as one-sided, dogmatic assertions repeated over and over again.

Huxley admits that though Hitler's opinion of humanity is a “very low opinion,” it is only true as applied to the masses. Individually, Huxley argues, humans tend towards “virtue and intelligence,” not “mindlessness and moral idiocy.” Thus he concludes that in order to combat herd-poisoning and those who would use it, we must “reassert the value of the human individual”—though exactly how that is done, Huxley leaves unanswered, at least in this chapter.

[247 words]