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Demonizing the Enemy

by Joe Escobar - Friday, May 17, 2013, 9:27 PM

This forum thread is for Demonizing the Enemy posts and replies.

After studying the required materials, address the individual questions in SEPARATE posts.

To make your POSTS, click the reply link in this, MY post.

To reply to another student's post, be sure to click the reply link within in THEIR post.

BE SURE to use an informative subject line for your post.

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How to demonize the enemy in one easy step...maybe

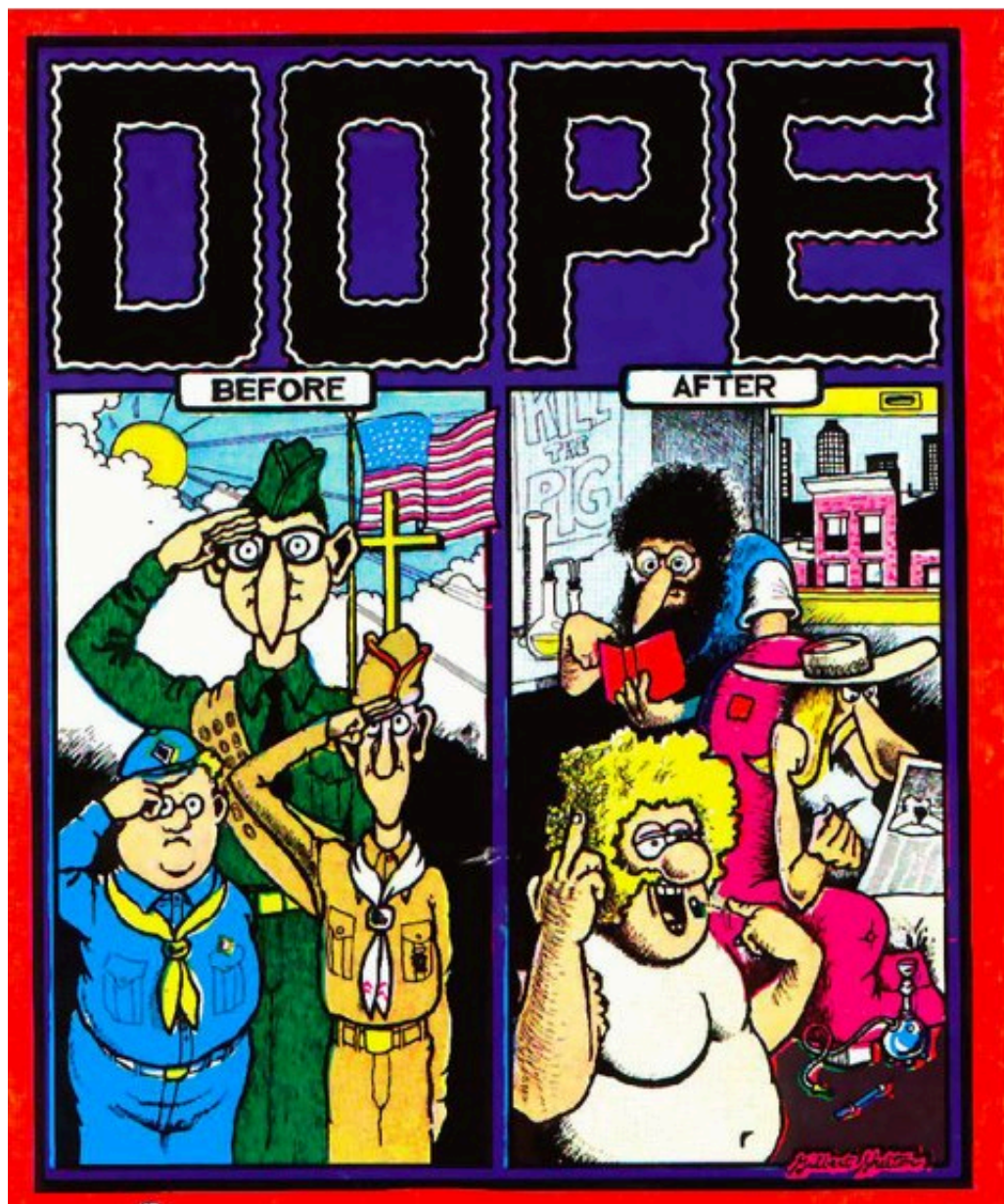
by Barry Sommer - Saturday, May 18, 2013, 10:18 AM

It is easy to demonize in order to kill, it is difficult to make a rational argument for the killing of another human being. By reacting to a perceived (or real) threat with nothing but hatred in the form of pictures/movies/internet, escalation of an irrational sort occurs. Does the image of a monster really make the point that we are better than what we portray?

Example; the war on drugs. Since the turn of the last century we have been dealing with a myriad of propaganda pictures meant to instill a fear of drugs. The 30s witnessed the demonization of non-whites and jazz; they promoted sexual frenzy among innocent white women due to marijuana, cocaine and the saxophone.



Then we have the other side during the 60s when drugs were seen not as a race thing but a "hippie" thing. The Fabulous Furry Freak Brothers led the way in representing the youth drug culture not as a dangerous trend, but as the new normal.



Unintended as it may seem, the campaign over the last decades did not stop, or even slow the use and experimentation with drugs. They were seen as humorous and not at all derisive of the drug culture, except by the republicans who had little power to stop drug use without a new prohibition. Drugs were made illegal but as with alcohol there was little impact. Just because one has the message doesn't mean people listen. Moral issues are especially tricky; it is hard to regulate personal choice behavior when it comes to what we put in our bodies.

The war on drugs has created the atmosphere where legalization is now taking place, and medical use of marijuana is the norm in 20 states. The propaganda worked, just not in the way originally intended.

Sum of ratings:3 (1)

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Re: How to demonize the enemy in one easy step...maybe  



by Alex McNeil - Tuesday, May 21, 2013, 3:37 AM

You make a fair point about the ineffectual nature of propaganda used in the first war against drugs, but don't you think that the sort of propaganda used in war serves a more legitimate purpose?

By today's standards, demonizations of the enemy during WWI and WWII may have been a bit over-the-top, but let's not forget that some of those propagandists were responsible for galvanizing the nation into action.

The threat that was brought to life (though hyperbolized it may have been) by wartime propaganda served a very real purpose: It alerted the nation to a real danger--the danger posed by non-U.S.-allied political powers; It got our nation off its (pardon my french) ass and aligned us behind the **righteous** efforts of the U.S. military.

Sum of ratings:2 (1)

2

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Re: How to demonize the enemy in one easy step...maybe  

by Barry Sommer - Tuesday, May 21, 2013, 4:58 PM

Whether the propaganda is legitimate is in the eye of who makes it, as a rule. Our dear leaders felt that drugs presented a very real threat to the "American way of life" and saw drugs as just as dangerous as fighting a war. I agree that their zeal to eliminate drugs was ill-founded (see prohibition) yet I also see how those in power saw drugs as a direct threat to their perception of what the US was supposed to be.

War is never preferable, but as man continues to use his ego instead of his intellect people will die, and propaganda will always be part of the PR message. The use of propaganda as a warning, or a call to action will always present the danger as something to which hatred is the only result. Hatred is easy to manipulate into action, no matter the moral ground the message-giver occupies.

Sum of ratings:2 (1)

2

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What's the opposite of Propaganda?  

by Andrew Schubert - Monday, May 20, 2013, 8:32 PM

Demonizing the Enemy

I really appreciated all the examples cited in the article. After reading it, and deciding I wanted to contribute to wherever this thread goes, I realized that I had nothing to add that hadn't already been cited. What we've gone over in class is abundant and very obvious; the Germans being portrayed as vicious killer apes covered in blood, and

the Japanese as rats or molesting butchers.

One thing that stands out in my mind however is the (albeit in the minority) examples of the opposite. Can anyone else think of a piece of media that took the “Now hang on a minute” stance, and actually tried to enlighten rather than scare? When it comes to Hollywood, it’s apparent that they have operated either under the threatening glare of, or for, the United States Government, they can be considered guilty on both accounts. But one example of the opposite stands out in my mind.

After 9-11 there was a flurry of activity in the media, all wondering “Why do they hate us” and almost none portraying anything middle-eastern in a very positive light. But shortly after the attacks, one of my favorite shows of all time, took a patient hour out of their canon and asked their audience to take a step back, think about things realistically, and to not get caught up in the fervor that was starting to fly.

The following is an excerpt from The West Wing, airing on October 3rd, 2001. It was entitled “Isaac and Ishmael”.

At the start of the episode, they admit that the episode itself doesn’t actually fit the storyline that the show was following, and thus is meant as a stand-alone. The preamble alludes to some terrorist attack on American soil, thus putting the White House on lockdown, and an unfortunate group of visiting high-school seniors is thus not permitted to leave the mess hall of the White House.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VatPKqTgzh4>

Are there any other examples one can think of that could be considered to be the OPPOSITE of propaganda? Where media has been used time and time again to rabble-rouse, or install fear, how many examples are there of the contrary? One more that comes to mind is in another show. Rapidly growing older and perhaps more out of date, M*A*S*H has been a favorite show of mine for many reasons. One such reason being its ability to again, take a step back, explain the sentiment that was going on at the time (The Korean War), and instead of instilling that It’s-us-versus-them mentality, tries to stress the humanness that can sometimes be witnessed during wartime. Although I cannot seem to find any good excerpts that iterate my point, there are many in which wounded soldiers will comment that when face to face with the enemy, they are surprised at the mutual young age and the mutual expression of fear.

Can anyone think of any others?

Sum of ratings:3 (1)

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Re: What's the opposite of Propaganda?



by Barry Sommer - Monday, May 20, 2013, 9:39 PM

You mention MASH, also one of my favorite shows and you say that the show "...instead of instilling that It’s-us-versus-them mentality, tries to stress the

humanness that can sometimes be witnessed during wartime" but you cannot remember a particular segment. Let me help.

In one show there was a North Korean female sniper who was wounded and captured, then sent to the 4077 for treatment. There is a South Korean officer who wants the woman for "interrogation" and as she heals Hawkeye and BJ do their best to shield her from the SK officers brutal intent. At the same time, right before she is turned over to her inquisitor, she tells Hawkeye and BJ that if she had a chance she would kill them, as surely as she will be killed by the officer. Even with that confession, Hawkeye and BJ still don't believe her, and almost lose their lives trying to stop her from being taken and put on a truck. It is a powerful scene, real propaganda that slants to the left. Notwithstanding the outward message of "there is more to the war than just carnage" it is a chilling statement on just how blind one can be in the face of a truth too painful to contemplate. Isn't that what propaganda is all about; making a case in truth (stretched at times, yes) that is too emotional to ignore?

Sum of ratings:2 (1)

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Re: What's the opposite of Propaganda?

by Alex McNeil - Saturday, May 25, 2013, 10:19 PM

The West Wing is one of my favorite shows, too. One of the reasons I appreciate it so much is because it has a knack for shedding light on the sides of an issue that receive less exposure. Media has the power to manipulate the public's perception--we all know that. But I think we underestimate the power media has to control the way controversial events are perceived. The U.S.'s perception of the middle east was damaged irreparably by the way that media chose to treat 9/11 and the events after.

Another show that does a good job of reversing media polarization is called the News Room. It's about a news anchor who decides to provide unbiased, reporting to the American news networks. Though the show is fictitious, it does a good job of giving an accurate picture of the news industry and the effect news-created propaganda can have on the American public.

Here's a clip from the show: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BJWKccHQFOA>

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Demonizing. Why?

by Keeler McJunkin - Monday, May 20, 2013, 8:48 PM

We have seen, and read about many different styles of war propaganda in the last few weeks. Clearly, a large part of the propaganda is geared towards demonizing the enemy. I think a key reason for this is obviously to promote your side as the "Correct"

side. They want to push the beliefs of the average person into being on their side. This is done by depicting the enemy usually as some sort of animal, or devil. With bloody weapons in their possession or murdered civilians by them.

Some unintentional consequences can arise from this as well. Say if you devise some sort of propaganda that gets discovered by the other side, it can be used against you. Things like "look how they are depicting us" and "they think we are animals". This can be shown to the people and can bring up unintentional bad press. So, propaganda can be a good thing when used correctly. Also, could be a bad thing if used incorrectly.

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Re: Demonizing the Enemy

by Brittney Nestle - Monday, May 20, 2013, 8:52 PM

The intent of "Demonizing propaganda" is as the article suggests to "whip up support." Since dehumanizing the enemy is really the only way to "justify the killing," even in war.

All Quiet on the Western Front serves as anti-war novel, but I think it can also serve as an anti-propaganda novel, since there's really no demonizing on either side, simply a fictional (but true-ish) account of german soliders during WWI. This book is interesting because as Americans it's easy to be exposed to the "evil" that were the Germans in both wars, when the novel points out that they are human and were similar to every other solider from every other country in that war.

I think the extreme consequence of Propaganda is this: it's way too general. When nothing but obscure cultural identifiers (hats, symbols, uniforms etc...) are attached to an animal or demon like being, we forget the people that are underneath the race that is being dehumanized and that's when we get problems like WWII's Japanese internment camps.

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Re: Demonizing the Enemy

by Joseph Standridge - Tuesday, May 21, 2013, 1:07 AM

I agree with you. Since killing another human being is often considered to be an insane inhuman act, dehumanizing a race helps to let us rest easy at night, knowing our crime wasn't really that bad. Propaganda is also extremely general, it does tend to lump things together to get a message across, and that still comes across today. There are still some symbols and stereo types that are played up to strike up the feeling of fear when connected to certain images.

However, I also think that propaganda is less effective at this day and age. With

the spread of the Internet and an increase in communications, it's harder to "dehumanize" someone because we can clearly see what they are like and that they aren't less than human. But that also works against us because the Internet can also be used to spread propaganda, which could quickly be confused with truth in the minds of the unaware.

Sum of ratings:2 (1)

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Re: Demonizing the Enemy

by Keeler McJunkin - Saturday, May 25, 2013, 1:13 PM

I agree. It seems a key aspect of the propaganda back in the day was to make us feel better at home. To "rest easy" like you mentioned. I think we wanted to use the propaganda to make us always feel like we are on the "correct" side of the war or disagreement.

I also agree that propaganda is definitely less of a big deal in today's day and age with all of the social media and fast news we get from the Internet and television. There isn't much chance of hiding the truth anymore.

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Lasting Effects by Hayley Demanett

by Hayley Demanett - Tuesday, May 21, 2013, 8:30 AM

I think that when governments or other groups use propoganda to demonize someone or something they don't consider the long term effects. I think when you put a traditional German helmet on a raging gorilla and call it a German soldier you're only thinking of how it will affect people's mindsets in the present and not how people will view it in the future. Granted that at the time it caused a shock which was most likely its goal, so it was considered successful "advertising". However, now when people look at old propoganda posters and videos they're almost comical. Now they just seem over the top and some of them are very racist.

Sum of ratings:1 (1)

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Re: Lasting Effects by Hayley Demanett

by Leah Livesay - Tuesday, May 21, 2013, 5:48 PM

Hayley-

I agree with you very much. I definitely do not think that long term effects are really considered at the time. I can very much agree that these posters and what not are very comical and by no means seem like they would have been used as serious propoganda. You don't see things like that regarding other

people these days, so it's very different to me. I feel that the propoganda was taken a bit too far in a sense, making the "enemy" and anyone else from the same place look as if they were the devil himself. I think that portraying the German soldiers the way they did pretty much included anyone who was German to be these completely horrible people who should all be killed. A little over the top I think!

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Re: Lasting Effects by Hayley Demanett

by Andrew Schubert - Wednesday, May 22, 2013, 2:07 PM

Hayley, I think you bring up an interesting point that has not yet arisen in this forum about propaganda. What are the lasting effects? Is there a case to be made that some aspects of racism and sexism are simply residual elements left over from propaganda?

I was reading an article online the other day that was trying to examine "What aspects of today's society will seem bizarre and/or funny from the future's perspective", and one of the most agreed upon answers was the elements of bigotry, sexism and racism that still remain in our culture. Would it be safe to assume that because today's examples of propaganda are much more subtle, that propaganda itself is losing its potency? And if so, is this going to be the cause of a more harmonious future? I find myself hoping so.

Andy

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Breaking the chain of lasting effects?

by Joseph Standridge - Saturday, May 25, 2013, 11:17 PM

I agree. Propaganda's purpose is to sway everyone to help make and enforce a point of view. However I imagine that they understand that in the long term, the same beliefs will change. I don't think they care though, because they have something they are trying to sell and it sells.

What interests me is the fact that the same common traits in propaganda seems to pop up over and over again. Such as the bloody knife, or showing someone as a gorilla. However, I wonder if such symbols are lost today because I like to think we are more "conscious" about the rest of the world and can't imagine a foreign person as an ape.

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Drawing the line...

by Brandon Wiskow - Tuesday, May 21, 2013, 9:01 AM

For me the main point of propaganda is not do "demonize" the enemy, it is designed to draw the line between us and them. While propaganda is very good at doing both at the same time I think that the demonization is what makes the distinction extremely clear. Then it becomes either you are with us or against us and the more unattractive you can make the other side the easier it makes the decision. All the posters depicting germans as gorillas is a great example. Unfortunately this propaganda is probably too good. After war it is hard to reverse a way of thinking and rehumanize a group of people. Which I think is the worst unintended consequence of this kinda of propaganda.

In todays world the best way to influence people is with real images and videos. These things can be spread worldwide in hours if they are compelling enough thanks to the virality of the internet. And that is part of the problem. To become viral it has to show an extreme and that paints a picture of normal that is most likely not true. The most recent story that comes to mind is from Syria. <http://www.inquisitr.com/668550/syrian-cannibal-abu-sakkar-explains-why-he-ate-soldiers-heart-video/> I have not watched the video myself but there are a few interesting things in the article. The video being labeled as "propaganda", the mutual condemnation of the act, and the fact that the US is not involved in the conflict. The last one is probably the most important one for us to look at because this is something that is still being debated. One of the more interesting comics I have seen about this issue is this.

http://media.cagle.com/78/2013/04/28/130926_600.jpg

It almost asks if the cold war is really over or has it just evolved to a different level? We are no longer directly engaged with Russia but we are still in direct conflict with our international policies.

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Rehumanising the Enemy

by Lesley Pilz - Tuesday, May 21, 2013, 11:18 AM

I can personally say that propaganda is alive and well today. I just have to check my Facebook page to see ridiculous accusations from both sides of the spectrum. Demonizing the enemy serves the immediate need to rile a group into what is an "us vs them" mentality. People are more likely to follow the group leaders or government with no questioning of motives or their own morals.

One of the lingering problems that is sometimes not considered by those who use propaganda is what can happen if mobs become too far entrenched in their "group think". Members within the community itself that speak up are quickly felt with, sometimes violently. Stereotyping a whole people or nation cuts you off from those within that group who may offer assistance. Demonizing people only leads to bigotry and racism.

I believe that historically there was a larger emphasis within the population for conformity, and therefore propaganda was more likely to sway thoughts and actions. Today we have a higher respect for the individual and uniqueness, so perhaps persuasion is harder to accomplish. For example, I don't think a political cartoon can really persuade a member of one party to switch sides or even reconsider their view on an issue.

Something I found extremely interesting and relevant to this topic was the speech given by the Dalai Lama earlier this month. The first half of his speech focused on the need to rehumanize our enemies. When we see someone as a fellow human with our same wants and needs first, he said, and remember that race, religion, and nationality are all secondary then we will become more likely to use discourse than violence.

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Re: Rehumanising the Enemy

by Barry Sommer - Tuesday, May 21, 2013, 4:05 PM

I was there to see the Dalai Lama also, and he was quite specific in his thoughts as a Buddhist on how we need to see our enemies. I agree with his views, and also question the results. As a Jew/Christian/Buddhist myself I understand the "Godliness" of which he speaks, and I ask how to do that in the face of being told that I should die by that same enemy. Example; Islamic ideology does teach that it is a requirement to convert, subjugate or kill non-Muslims. Of course few Muslims feel this way, but the ones that do not only use religion as a justification for their bloodlust, they have been inculcated to hate non-Muslims from the day of their birth with propaganda that shows Jews, Christians, Buddhists, Hindi and others are not worth letting them live, except as a Muslim.

The message of the Dalai Lama is lost on these ideologues, so I ask how do I practice what the Dalai Lama espouses in the face of a very real threat of

death? Do I respond with propaganda of my own and lower myself to the level of a bully? Do I ignore it, hoping if I am peaceful they will be to? Should I make a preemptive strike and remove the possibility of attack against myself? What are my options in the face of continued and severe propaganda that demonizes me and encourages violence?

I do practice what the Dalai Lama professes, and I also am prepared to defend myself, my friends and family in the event I am approached by someone who has not heard, or refuses to listen to the message of peace. There is a saying "Peace through superior firepower" and as grotesque as that sounds, there will be times, before true enlightenment that this firepower will be the deciding vote on who wins and who loses. Propaganda will play an important part in our future battles; whether we achieve our goals will depend on how well we get the message out.

Here are two of my favorite jihad posters;



And this;



This is Al-Qaeda and the black banners of Islam. This is not a friendly propaganda poster in any sense of the word.

Sum of ratings:3 (1)

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Re: Rehumanising the Enemy

by Lesley Pilz - Friday, May 24, 2013, 4:17 PM

I was using the speech to pertain to personal interactions with people. Governments almost always use diplomacy first (in most situations) because they are used to dealing on a worldwide field. In day to day interactions, remembering that the Muslim person sitting next to you on the bus is a person first and a Muslim second may help from an altercation accruing due to misunderstandings or custom differences.

The Dalai Lama's instruction is dealing with the ideal and not reality. There are going to be instances where diplomacy will fail to work and other means must be found.

Also anyone who didn't get a chance to see it and is interested, here is the link to the speech.

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Re: Rehumanising the Enemy by Hayley Demanett

by Hayley Demanett - Saturday, May 25, 2013, 9:33 AM

Lesley-

I really like the point that you bring up about individuality and how people today are more focused on being unique and different from others. During this time period we are studying, one poster could probably affect more people's ways of thinking than one poster could today. We are so often today, told not to conform that it could make it more difficult to affect a larger groups way of thinking with a simple poster or video.

Sum of ratings:1 (1)

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Demonizing as a tool

by Matt Blackshear - Friday, May 24, 2013, 12:37 PM

Demonizing, in the eyes of some, is a useful tool to help get someone on your own side. America has used it time and time again to get public support for war. A president doesn't want to send his country to war without his country's approval. If you read in chapter 26 on pg 882 of our textbooks it talks about how Roosevelt and his advisors wanted U.S. entry into WWII but lacked public support. Roosevelt was hoping that Germany would do something to "jar public opinion" We all have seen the pics of the monkey with the German helmet, being used to help persuade public opinion.

During The Spanish-American war the U.S. troops first encounters were challenged due to demonizing and glorifying the troops. U.S. made the Cubans seem similar to whites, being intellegent, white and civilized. That was quite the opposite as Cubans were mostly black, and poorly outfitted. The Spanish soldiers were also potrayed as, "dark cruel eyes, dark swaggering men,"(text book pg 749) who were also barbarians and cruel. However when U.S. troops arrived they found that the Spanish soldiers "Appeared well discliplined, tough in battle, and light complexioned."(text book pg 749) These descriptions made it more difficult for American soldiers once over there.

Demonizing still happens today, such as with the man in Syria eating another mans heart (which in itself is already wicked). Its up to the individual to believe what they want to believe, and choose what side they want to be on.

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consequences of demonizing an enemy

by Francisco Gomez - Friday, May 24, 2013, 9:48 PM

It seems to me that whatever war we are in, our goverment has no problem

demonizing the enemy. We are told to hate them because they will come us in own home if dont help out with the war effort. The propagana towards the ememy is totally racist. From the World War I to the Cold War, the posters and the meida at the time demonize out enemy with facial feautres and what they stood for. In turn of demoming our enemy, the world is werry of America's role of that the state police. We have been meet with harsh critcticism over our forein policy to this very day on the way we demonize others.

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Racist propaganda?

by Keeler McJunkin - Saturday, May 25, 2013, 1:20 PM

It seems like a lot of us believe a key part of propaganda has to do with racism from reading some posts on here. While I believe it's definitely an aspect of the propaganda I don't believe it's an intended part of it. I feel like the key of it is just to unite the people against a common enemy.

Clearly, we have seen posters of propaganda that have a racist representation. I just don't feel it was the intention. The main reason of propaganda is to help the war effort hit home among normal citizens. To make them want to get involved in one way or another. Whether that is through war bonds, volunteering or just being in support of the troops.

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The Realities of Demonization

by Thomas Comings - Saturday, May 25, 2013, 10:48 PM

Demonization the enemy is an inevitable part of any war. As the UC Santa Cruz professor stated in the article, it does take a lot to motivate large amounts of humans to kill people and for the public to be okay with it. The government often aids already-present demonization by spending lots of time and money on making propaganda and convince the public that they really on the right side of a conflict.

While I see the strategy and potential benefit of demonizing the enemy, it can lead to harmful effects down the line in society. We've all heard stories of peaceful muslim Americans being beat up because they look like what the enemy is supposed to look like. The problem with Demonizing the enemy is just that -- there always ends up being collateral damage. During WWII, thousands of Japanese Americans were interned for no other reason than the fact that they look like the Japanese soldiers and leaders we were supposed to hate. Short-sighted ignorance can lead to long-standing prejustice views, often with regards to race.

Sum of ratings:2 (1)

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Demons becoming evil masterminds?

by Joseph Standridge - Saturday, May 25, 2013, 11:32 PM

If you think about the images we saw in class, the propaganda always included the enemy portrayed as some less than human creature, like a gorilla. However, today I feel like that's starting to become less and less popular. I tend to see the enemies still staying as human beings, albeit their proportions are often distorted. I feel the effect of trying to portray another race or group as something other than human no longer works. We simply have too much access to seeing them as humans that the best we can do is show them doing the same thing.

While I don't believe portraying them as an ape is effectively, the principle of a bloody knife still remains. I see images of terrorists burning the American flag, and that also finds it's way into our propaganda. I personally see the impact propaganda has as on a decline.

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