

**Using & abusing history**by [Joe Escobar](#) - Wednesday, 6 May 2009, 11:27 AM

Throughout human history, catastrophic wars have erupted, and history is never the same during, or after, the occurrence. Enemies are demonized, morality is pondered, and historical truths are difficult to determine as the past is written, re-written, forgotten, and sometimes deliberately obscured.

Under the HTD Materials link, you will find the materials you need for this assignment: two recent articles, a pdf file with 9 images, and a video. I suggest you view them in this order. Then, discuss how history is used or abused, both in these examples, and by all human participants in the conflict. What are the ramifications of these actions.

[Edit](#) | [Delete](#) | [Reply](#)**Re: Using & abusing history**by [Gabriel Pemble](#) - Thursday, 7 May 2009, 12:55 PM

History is written by the victors, for contemporary propaganda purposes, no real fidelity to the past or willingness to view unpleasant truths is desirable when the goal is to manufacture complicity with whatever agenda is being pushed currently. To know the actual realities of the past would put one in a position to instigate history, not just participate in the designs of the manipulators.

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**Re: Using & abusing history**by [Brittany Vanderhooft](#) - Friday, 8 May 2009, 10:54 AM

Not all history is written by the victors, though most of it is really. I would certainly be interested to read a German history book on the World Wars, and see what they have to say about who was "victorious." We often hide the horrible things our side did, and make the bad things the other side did as horrific as possible. Although I have to say in World War 2 there was no overexaggerating necessary, the things Hitler especially had done to people were horrific. And often times we don't even hear much about what Mussolini and Hideki Tojo were doing, we always focus on Hitler, as if he were the only one. But even in Hitler's case most people don't know the half of the stuff he did, all because people don't want to see how horrible it really was. So, even in cases where we wanted to "demonize the enemy" we still almost sugar coated it in a way. But just look at our internment camps, and grant it that though we didn't harm the people, we still contained them and uprooted them from their lives, and they had done nothing, they were supposed to be American citizens with rights. Well we didn't harm them that we know of, but who really knows what went on there? We don't really hear about it too much, because we want to see America as a liberator, a land of the free for all people, not as a place of fear or oppression as it has been at times, many times.

Then there were wars that were not written from the victor's viewpoint, I mean just look at the Vietnam war. We call it "the pointless war," and talk about as such all the time. But how much do we really know about it? I can say I really never got more than a general overview of it in any history class, and all they really said was "we fought for 11 years against communists, nothing really happened, and many Americans died." What about the thousands of innocent Vietnamese civilians that died, did they not deserve life just like any American does? All we really hear are two vague opinions. "The U.S. was fighting for democracy!" or "it was a pointless war and we had no place in a foreign civil war!" Mostly we hear the latter. We seem to use it mostly as an anti-war tool. I think if people learned more about it we could more accurately portray that time in history, but we have a tendency not to dig deep to just keep it simple and to keep it at what we want to hear.

No matter what we do there will always be ways we distort history. Its all about justification, if we can justify actions taken then there is no need for guilt. America has a tendency to want to be seen as the world's savior and so that is what we often see. I have seen it improving though, we're beginning to want to see the truth more as time goes on, which I think is so important. At least this is true with past events, as for things going on now, we often are comfortable with knowing about the good things we do, and would rather not hear about the bad. But, hopefully that will change.

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**Re: Using & abusing history**by [Gabriel Pemble](#) - Monday, 11 May 2009, 12:07 PM

Historians of a defeated nation write, in part to appease the victors and to provide a cautionary tale to future generations; this was true of German and Japanese historians, writing about the 2nd World War.

There are a great many interesting books written about the Vietnam War by people on both sides, who participated in it; they are not strictly historical accounts, or the shallow propaganda you were unfortunately exposed to,

America is not the only country where it's people are encouraged to misremember history; we're not the only exceptionalists or racists for that matter.

My comment was meant to point out that there are deeper truths about the past than mere historical records will reveal and that this obfuscation of true history is often purposeful.

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**Re: Using & abusing history**by [Brittany Vanderhoof](#) - Thursday, 14 May 2009, 10:54 AM

Well I shall most certainly have to look into some of those books on Vietnam, thank you.

Oh and I am fully aware that America is not the only country that encourages people to forget or see history inaccurately. Its a human tendency to want people to see the best of themselves, not to see the worst. Its not just an American thing, and I never said so.

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**Re: Using & abusing history**by [Gabriel Pemble](#) - Monday, 18 May 2009, 12:39 PM

Your right, you never did say so, a thousand pardons.

There are memoirs written by people who were interned during WW2; the damages done to them were tremendous. You won't generally get that from a history book though. Early history books written shortly after WW2 justify the Internment of those with Japanese blood on the basis of a potential security threat posed by cultural loyalty to family and the emperor; better safe than sorry; individual rights are secondary to collective security, argument. Later historians tend to take a more liberal view, questioning whether it was necessary. The point is that expediency rules the day in politics and only long after if it doesn't compromise current political concerns is some of the truth allowed to be placed in major texts, such as a history book.

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**Re: Using & abusing history**by [Jonathon Miner](#) - Tuesday, 12 May 2009, 12:26 PM

Gabriel,

It seems you're comments stem from the point of view of the "powers that be". I might add that in order for propaganda to work as well as it does, there has to either help people come to the belief that they already were having, or else convince them to have the belief being illustrated. For that to happen, I think there must be a complacency on the part of the audience [of the propaganda] to learn the truth. The truth is often available, but people generally choose not to pursue it. Often the truth is not something that is pleasant. I would imagine this is where the phrase "the truth will set you free", in part stems from. People who are willing to find that truth, through the propaganda, are the ones who can often have power. You might even find a correlation between those that know the truth and those that display the propaganda. In fact good propaganda that effectively manipulates the populous is always based in part on truth.

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Re: Using & abusing history

by [Spencer Head](#) - Friday, 8 May 2009, 10:39 AM

I think that its one thing when the government and press uses propaganda to turn their country against another country, because we are at war with them for a reason, so it would probably be much worse if our country liked them than if we hated them. I mean once the government decides to go to war, they might as well get everyone on board. I think it starts to be abusing history when you have groups like the anti flag who take pictures that are really important to people of this country and destroy them. I mean you know your being anti American to an extent when you publish something that is going to offend people who fought to get you the freedom to be anti war.

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Re: Using & abusing history

by [Brittany Vanderhoof](#) - Friday, 8 May 2009, 11:15 AM

Yeah that made me mad when I saw that picture being used for other "not so hidden" agendas. When I first saw the original it actually brought tears to my eyes, just the sense of patriotism. There is something so solemn about it, and yet it brings a prideful joy, a sense of what should be, the fight for true freedom for all. Then to see it used for oil industry, or the one where they hold up the tree, or the "punks" with the flag upside-down, that just really upset me. There's something about classics like that, that you just don't mess with, its rather insulting actually.

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Re: Using & abusing history

by [Rory Shaw](#) - Monday, 11 May 2009, 10:30 AM

I can see how one could feel upset about Anti-Flag's parody of Joe Rosenthal's photograph "Raising the Flag on Iwo Jima". I feel that this image was used to provoke a strong reaction within the viewer. I also see that they are using the use of symbolism. The use of the upside-down American fag can make one feel as though the meaning of this act is one of anti-americanism or seem anti-patriotic. I believe it is important to understand here what it means to display the flag union side down. According to the [US flag codes and regulations](#) section 8a "The flag should never be displayed with the union down, except as a signal of dire distress in instances of extreme danger to life or property." It is my belief that Anti-Flag was using the flag in a similar manner. In the experience of my ten years of listing to Anti-Fag I have noticed they have the belief that America is in distress due to war, internal as well as international poverty, political corruption in government and social unrest. The use of "Raising the Flag on Iwo Jima", I think, is their way of manipulating past propaganda and reconstructing it into new propaganda. In other words they themselves are using it as propaganda to distribute their beliefs.

the image "Raising the Flag on Iwo Jima" is an amassing and awe striking image. It conveys victory and the symbolism of the fight for the free world and democracy to all Americans. It was taken during a war in which America was being attacked and she was fighting off the invaders. However, It was an image used for propaganda to sell war bonds. The fact that this image was used as such, I believe, is the reason why Anti-Flag would use this image to convey a different meaning.

In side the album "A New Kind of Army" Anti-Flag uses a WWII propaganda poster that has been altered with a US soldier resting a shovel on his right shoulder and his left hand empty, dropped down to his side, with a headline that reads, "too smart too fight, too smart too kill. JOIN NOW, a new kind of army" ([link to image](#)). The original poster has the same soldier with the shove only there is a rifle in his left hand, standing with his legs spread so that military vehicles can drive underneath while bombs explode in the background, the writing reads, "We Clear The Way. The corps of engineers united army" ([link to image](#)). I use these descriptions to reinforce my thought of the cover image being altered to parody propaganda to bring about a new message.

I provide this following link for those interested in reading a responce, from Anti-Flag to the editor of the New York Times, to an artical published in the New York Times that mentioned Anti-Flag as anti-establishment. It may give new light on the belifs and non-antiamericanism that motivate them. Or not?

[Anti-Flag in the New York Times!](#)

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Re: Using & abusing history

by [Gabriel Pemble](#) - Thursday, 14 May 2009, 12:54 PM

Why are they pushing for war is the question.

War requires human sacrifices. Had you been in an armed conflict and had a close call or two as I have, you would understand this.

It is un-american to just go along with whatever the Military/Industrial/Congressional Complex (Eisenhower warned about this entity near the end of his presidency), decides is necessary to "preserve freedom".

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Re: Using & abusing history

by [Sarah Fritze](#) - Saturday, 9 May 2009, 11:00 AM

I found the article "War Museum Resists Japan's Historical Amnesia" fascinating because these men and women want people to know what truly went on during that period of time WWII, even if they did horrible, shameful thing to people. They believe it is important to preserve the past as to not make that mistake again you can really see what those men went through.

At the same time it is hard to fully understand because like professor Donald L. Miller said we the U.S. never fully feel the effects of war. We are the only Country that during the time of war grow fat and prosperous. We have never been invaded and when it comes down to number of civilians killed for no reason our count is minimal compared to what we did in WWII for example fire bombing Dresden it did no good.

Another thing I found shocking was the Demonizing and Dehumanizing the "Enemy" which for some reason happens to be everyone of a certain race, religion, or association. Even if they had nothing to do with that particular action. For example My family is German and they lived in the U.S. for almost 10 years and the day the U.S. declared war during WWII my Uncle said everyone in church and in there community stopped speaking German because they knew how judgmental people could be. What makes me disappointed is that it is still going on today. Also I find the cartoons interesting because I understand where people were coming from during the WAR period it made it easier to kill. My question is why are we still doing the same thing? Shouldn't everyone have to think about what they are doing and know that it is either right or wrong. I don't see how we can make killing people justifiable even if they are protecting us. I am not saying don't kill for safety just understand that they are also doing the same for there beliefs. I am very grateful for all the men and women who have served our country and who have given everything. My family included.

Now propaganda ties in with poster and cartoons but it also includes film and the tactics the government took to get people on board of the war where pretty low. They went along with demonizing and dehumanizing but took it a step further by showing false footage of these supposed animals. My perspective is from that of a young adult whose has not experienced propaganda and believed every word of it. So it is hard for me to understand how people at that time just took every word as truth. Of the posters given to us I found the last four to be informative it just shows that we continue to use propaganda as a weapon in its self.

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Re: Using & abusing history

by [Sarah Brolsma Whitfield](#) - Monday, 11 May 2009, 06:41 PM

I agree with your statement about "War Museum Resists Japan's Historical Amnesia". I think it is so important to preserve our history and even though if they were doing wrong things, it is good to have people know what was truly going on. History does repeat itself and we rarely learn from our mistakes. Maybe through the truth and people like this who come out and say how terrible things were happening we can better that from tragic history repeating itself.

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Re: Using & abusing history

by [Gabriel Pemble](#) - Thursday, 14 May 2009, 12:23 PM

You have been exposed to and targeted by propaganda, it is however of a contemporary and therefore more subtle variety, it speaks to your prejudices, and so is harder to identify than that of the 1940's.

We all have prejudices.

Not everyone bought into it then, most who weren't swayed kept their mouths shut though, for fear of alienating their contemporaries; they went along to get along.

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Re: Using & abusing history

by [Spencer Head](#) - Sunday, 10 May 2009, 06:33 PM

When history first started being taught however long ago I'm sure that the truth was often hidden and it was trying to make America look as good as possible, but as time progressed I think that people began to want to know more, and I think now when history is taught your learning more than just what your country will allow, now you learn the whole truth, or at least close to it. Everything the government didn't hide, and hopefully in the future that comes out too. As far as the victors writing history, I'm not entirely sure that's true, I mean when you read about the Vietnam War it's clear we weren't victorious, yet we were still writing the history on it. I just think the most powerful countries have the best opportunity to write history.

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Re: Using & abusing history

by [Kristina LeMoigne](#) - Monday, 11 May 2009, 12:40 AM

I kind of agree with you. I still think that the government hides things from us. Not all of it but the majority of things they try to make look better than they really are or were. I do believe though that there are more people who are telling the truth than there used to be in the past but there is still a lot of propaganda out there. Also yes it's not always the victors writing about history. It's kind of hard to leave a major war like Vietnam out of the history books, so of course they write about it but I'm sure if they had the choice they wouldn't put it in there.

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Re: Using & abusing history

by [Kacy Durfee](#) - Tuesday, 19 May 2009, 01:56 PM

I agree with both of your statements. The first, that a cultural shift is taking place and we not just want to know the truth but feel it is our right to know the truth and will stop at nothing to get it. Second, that the victors don't write the history alone. If any country has the ability to write it they will and this is where the propaganda in the losing country will surface. They will take this opportunity to write the history but leave out details that are dishonorable to the nation. We see Hitler putting out acts that people should not help the Jews and turn them in to the government but many people had no idea what the government was doing with them. Obviously the horrible acts were left out of print to make Hitler look good and his cause to rid the world of Jews good. This type of propaganda is often forgotten. Many people think that it is the posters on buildings, newspaper or a radio ads but there are many other forms of propaganda.

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Re: Using & abusing history

by [Rory Shaw](#) - Monday, 11 May 2009, 08:43 AM

The use of demoralizing our enemies in media seems to be a very effective propaganda technique. As we've seen in class it has been used to convince U.S. citizens to gain support for the unpopular move of military mobilization into Europe in both World Wars. As we look back on the political cartoons of these times we can see uses of racial stereotypes, dis-anthropomorphization (depicting the enemy as brutish non-human beasts) and demoralization of the enemy. We have also seen that reactions toward people of Japanese descent were ones of racism.

We have seen similarities in our recent Wartime media, depicting Muslims as backward, unclean savages that live in an uncivilized nation, whose religious icon is one that promotes unsubstantiated violence. After the September 11th attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon I saw first hand, here in Eugene, the fear and distrust of those of Middle Eastern descent, where a man of dark complexion boasting a long beard and a turban was being tailed by three security guards at the Eugene Celebration (which was almost canceled that year due to the recent attacks). I overheard these security guards speak of this man as a potential threat and they were discussing how they had to keep close watch on him until he had left the celebration. This experience caused me to wonder if internment camps would once again emerge in our nation. I am happy to say that it did not, however, a distrust of all Muslims and people of Middle Eastern descent swept across the U.S. and brought fear to the minds of many Americans. The news would cover stories about people who feared for their lives or would just not take their flight due to the sight of a Middle Eastern man at their boarding station. The fact that terrorists from Muslim Fundamentalist groups do not make up the majority of the world's population of Muslims, being a Muslim does not make one a terrorist, just as being Japanese in America during WWII did not make one a traitor or spy.



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Re: Using & abusing history

by [Sarah Brolsma Whitfield](#) - Monday, 11 May 2009, 06:38 PM

Your cartoon is a perfect example of what I stated about a remark about a group of people can be a remark to the mass group. The clothing that they portray the extremist in is the clothing that most Middle Eastern people wear and it is part of their culture and heritage. People of the United States would be furious if another country insulted our culture.

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Re: Using & abusing history

by [Pedro Luna](#) - Thursday, 21 May 2009, 10:40 AM

I do not think that this cartoon is an attempt to make fun of another culture. I actually see it as being the opposite. In my point of view the man representing the majority is saying ditto to the things the man are saying, and about the extremists. I think that it is our country saying, "hey people, they are all not the same!". I view this as being more of us making fun of ourselves if anything. We have this huge problem that says that all Muslims are the same and that they all believe the same things along with the extremists. I watched an interview of a Muslim who lived in Iran and the area he described where he lived was much like our own. The people despised the extremists and said that they made huge amounts of people look bad. I only hope that we start to let go of our over-generalized biases and work toward realizing the truths behind peoples, as well as their cultures.

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Re: Using & abusing history

by [Sarah Fritze](#) - Monday, 11 May 2009, 10:50 PM

I agree with you and wanted to add that sometimes peoples perspectives are completely off but the U.S. seem to think it is okay misjudge and act upon the judgment even though it is false and the claim fear is supposed to make it okay I think not.

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Re: Using & abusing history

by [Brittany Vanderhoof](#) - Thursday, 14 May 2009, 11:10 AM

Its very true, people these days see a person who looks "middle eastern" and they immediately assume they're a terrorist or Muslim extremist. This is just not the case though; just as in any group they should not be stereotyped. There is I imagine only a **very, very** small percentage of Muslims who are actually extremists in any way whatsoever. The majority is just people trying to live their lives in peace, but they get looped in with the minority and persecuted for things they've not done. Recently in the U of O campus they put a ton of little flags out on a few of the lawns, the red ones (if I remember correctly) stood for American lives lost, and the white ones for middle eastern lives. This was concerning the war on terror. The number of flags for the Americans was **very** small compared to the number of flags for middle easterners. I couldn't help but feel great sorrow for the fact that a great deal of those people were innocent bystanders and it was a tragedy they had to die. It is sad how so many are lost in the fight for freedom, not just those who so courageously "fight the good fight," but also those who did nothing wrong and were merely caught in the line of fire.

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Re: Using & abusing history

by [Colin Kraus](#) - Wednesday, 20 May 2009, 05:31 PM

Many times innocent people die under the auspice of freedom and democracy... look into American history. Slavery, genocide of indigenous peoples, annexation of northern Mexico and absolute defiance of the treaty of Guadalupe, i am not surprised when we spread democracy.

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Re: Using & abusing history

by [Sarah Brolsma Whitfield](#) - Monday, 11 May 2009, 06:35 PM

In history you are usually always taught by the point of view that the country you are learning from in. Rarely do we hear of the tragedies of the opposing side of the history. So often to our side, the United States, wars and taking over other places are seen and portrayed as triumphs when often it is not that.

Posters during the World War II displayed Germans as barbaric and animal like and gave the Japanese racist stereotypes such as small eyes. These characteristics gave Americans the confirming view of how they saw the enemies of war and a deeper negativity to them. Today, people of the Middle East are given the same classification. Not all Middle Eastern people are terrorists or radical Muslims, yet through the personification and racist descriptions of Osama Bin Ladin, Americans see the turban and automatically think negatively and racial profiling has been classified with people from the Middle East.

Propaganda from the past that we have viewed in class I often look at it and are in disbelief at what the government would do to get people on board for the war. However, this propaganda worked and during war time the government needed everyone on board. Today not everyone is on board with the Iraq War and it is and will continue to be a controversy. While I don't agree with most of the use of propaganda, it works and was needed to get people to give money and energy to the war during World War I and World War II.

The photograph "Raising the Flag on Iwo Jima" is a memorable photo for Americans and a symbol of achievement and is very patriotic. When it is replicated or reused for a different purpose, like the tree for the global warming issue, they just want people to connect the importance of the issue to the importance of that picture. It is a noted photograph and will catch the attention to the view.

Along the lines of the "Demonizing the Enemy" article, the United States government has done this through almost every war. They stir up such a great fear that makes Americans assume everyone from the Middle East is a terrorist or everyone who is Japanese was for the attack at Pearl Harbor. The people who are inhabitants of our country should be respected because they are citizens of the United States and are constitution states it. Also, the people from other countries should be respected. As we are lead to believe a certain way about our enemies they are lead to believe certain ways too. Stereotypes, racist marks, and demonetization to one group of people is a demonetization to the mass group.

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Re: Using & abusing history

by [Jonathon Miner](#) - Tuesday, 12 May 2009, 12:12 AM

Perhaps propaganda serves a purpose. I think there are two naturally human traits the gives away to propaganda. First, I think people in general tend to hide from the things they find unpleasant. For example, sans the propaganda of WWI and WWII, it would be very easy for a person to simply not pay attention to what was happening globally. Or, if one kept up on the reading of events they could still easily detach themselves from the event. Propaganda brought the event into their homes and work and places of social gathering. It made the event be more real for them. Is this right or wrong or somewhere in the middle?

Second, I think Anthony Pratkanis was onto it when he discusses how "for most human beings, it takes an awful lot to allow them to kill another human being." Propaganda serves as a means to give justification to those who "need" to do the killing (or abide by it). Again, is this right or wrong or somewhere in the middle. Were the Germans, Japanese and Italians of WWII worth fighting?

Was the war necessary in order to end a humanitarian wrong? If so, then perhaps the propaganda is also a necessary part. Perhaps it simply plays out its role in the mix. If on the other hand someone is saying the war (in this case WWII) was not worth fighting, then clear the propaganda is also a wrong. Perhaps a spectrum question is raised here between the right and wrong of the war and the corresponding influence (right or wrong) of the accompanying propaganda...

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Re: Using & abusing history

by [Gabriel Pemble](#) - Tuesday, 12 May 2009, 12:55 PM

Propaganda is an effective way to influence people, rightly or wrongly.

Advertising is a type of propaganda.

Wars all throughout the history of civilization have been fought for the control of resources, the "good" wars are no exception....look into this.

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Re: Using & abusing history

by [Kristina LeMoigne](#) - Wednesday, 13 May 2009, 12:45 PM

You have a very good point. I also believe that perhaps propaganda serves a purpose. I think gabriel had a good point when she said " Propaganda is an effective way to influence people, rightly or wrongly." The fact that the dehumanized the enemy made the propaganda more intense and made it hard for people to just forget about it and move on with there lives. Also the worse they mad the enemy come across to be mad it easier for people to except the war and make it easier for the people to kill them. Just like you said im not sure if propaganda is right or wrong but perhaps its just necessary.

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Re: Using & abusing history

by [Sarah Broisma Whitfield](#) - Wednesday, 20 May 2009, 09:42 PM

Propaganda definitely serves a purpose and works. It might not be right, but it is going to happen. They needed people to be on their side and they did it through propaganda. If they made people fear the enemy then they would help the cause.

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Re: Using & abusing history

by [Spencer Head](#) - Tuesday, 12 May 2009, 04:46 PM

When we are at war I think that it is only natural to want to belittle the opposition, I mean if you make them seem less then you it makes it easier to harm them but it is also because of the whole make your competition seem smaller and easier to beat, kind of a confidence thing. I think that propaganda is just what happens when you have two countries competing against each other, it is pretty much a natural occurrence. I don't see anything wrong with Propaganda, its the other things that abuse history that start problems, like modern groups turning old propaganda into their new posters and what not.

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Re: Using & abusing history

by [Andrew Godard](#) - Tuesday, 12 May 2009, 11:35 PM

The historian in the video made the distinction that to those of us who did not see these events first hand, to those of us who only learn of these things in school, the events of history may seem inevitable, when in fact there are a thousand things that could have gone differently.

Perhaps the biggest issue with history, in general, is that it is mostly concerned with what happened and not with what could have happened. When you look at history and you see a man leading a country into war, it is not always immediately apparent why they did so, nor is it easy to determine what may have come about if that nation had succeed. It is easy to make the claim that they started the war for greedy purposes, to gain territory, or because they were evil.

Hitler was the cause of many atrocities, and it would be difficult to imagine any good coming of a German victory in WWII. I suppose those who belonged to his "Master Race" would benefit, and history would have been written by historians favorable to that result. What about Japans plans for a unified Asia? Japans plans for "an East Asian Co-Prosperity Sphere" called for "a self

sufficient economic zone under Japanese leadership." Could this have turned out to be a positive thing for Asia, or would it simply have been a fancy name for a new Japanese empire? Certainly Japan's methods for achieving that goal were terrible, but many nations are built upon foundations of war.

As the historian in the video said, there were a thousand things that could have gone differently. What might the outcome have been like if Japan had not attacked Pearl Harbor? The US may have entered the war regardless at some point, but if that were the case, would it have been in time? If America had not entered the war when it did, The Axis Powers might have decimated the allies, leaving America to either side with the Axis Powers, or fight them single handedly. If Japan had not attacked Pearl Harbor, they may have had a better chance of victory. It may have been that single action that doomed Japan and their allies to failure.

If the Axis Powers had won, the difference would not be in who was writing history, but that history itself was different.

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Re: Using & abusing history

by [Kacy Durfee](#) - Thursday, 14 May 2009, 03:33 PM

I think that some abuse of history is necessary. Propaganda while misleading can be, in certain situations, very useful. You are able to gain support through it which may be the only way to keep people going. It seems odd to me that there were set propaganda agency's and places that would produce and campaign for the use of propaganda. Propaganda is not the only thing that I think has been abused. In the video clip we see the atomic bomb dropped. History, in my eyes, was abused by not telling the pilots and men who carried the bombs what they really had. After both bombs were dropped and the pilots realized what they had they were irate. Both men ended up committing suicide within the following 6 years. History has its place to be abused.

There is a right way to abuse it along with a wrong way to abuse it. It is wrong to use a national symbol and distort it into a way to gain followers such as the anti-flag pictures. People need to be smart when looking at propaganda and its effective and destructive uses. Just like everything else, there is a time and place for propaganda.

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Re: Using & abusing history

by [Jonathon Miner](#) - Tuesday, 19 May 2009, 12:23 AM

From a historical standpoint, the Japanese amnesia is a fascinating idea. I would like to visit the museum it talks about. I am not surprised or even upset by the idea of Japanese amnesia. I think it is human trait to try and misremember or down play a part of history that did not show you in a good light. On smaller scales we all do this. The thing that shows character is when the truth is being discussed can you then be honest about your involvement. Japan may not be doing this well, but as time passes and memories are less fresh it becomes easier to separate yourself from the past and view it more objectively.

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Re: Using & abusing history

by [Sarah Fritze](#) - Tuesday, 19 May 2009, 12:39 AM

So what I have a hard time with is people denying that the horrible things that took place during WW2 never happened. Because how can someone not believe so many people were killed. Where did they all go? I have this thing about honesty and honestly it is a whole bunch of uneducated people making accusations towards religion and race.

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Re: Using & abusing history

by [Colin Kraus](#) - Wednesday, 20 May 2009, 05:26 PM

who denies the atrocities committed in WW2?

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Re: Using & abusing history

by [Sarah Brolsma Whitfield](#) - Wednesday, 20 May 2009, 09:43 PM

The leader of Iran... I don't know how to spell his name.

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Re: Using & abusing history

by [Colin Kraus](#) - Thursday, 21 May 2009, 01:42 PM

Before everyone decides to get there information from mainstream pro Israel media actually watch this speech from Ahmadinejad president of Iran not taken out of context in its entirety.

Since we are discussing historical disinformation, be aware of how modern media obscures facts to take people out of context in order to promote certain political agendas

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VjEAC4qt6Hg>

actual Ahmadinejad speech to U.N.

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Re: Using & abusing history

by [Jonathon Miner](#) - Tuesday, 19 May 2009, 01:01 PM

I have a curiosity based semi-spectrum question. Regardless of your stance on war itself, was anyone "affected" by any of the propaganda we've seen? In-other-words, would any of the propaganda have spurred you to action had you lived at that time. I was affected by the one that had the three kids in the sun light with the swastika shadow encroaching. I think that would have caught my attention pretty good and at the very least would have spurred me to inquire as to what I could do. Anyone else?

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Re: Using & abusing history

by [Kacy Durfee](#) - Tuesday, 19 May 2009, 01:47 PM

I think back then I would have been a house wife like most other women and some of the propaganda would have defiantly grabbed my attention. I would, back then, be uneducated in the matters of world affairs and war. If my husband were fighting in the war and I saw some of the posters regarding the red scare and Hitler I would back up anything to stop them from killing my husband and taking over the nation forcing my kids to work or even kill them. The propaganda while "over dramatic" was very effective and I think necessary for the support at home for the soldiers away fighting.

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Re: Using & abusing history

by [Spencer Head](#) - Tuesday, 19 May 2009, 07:16 PM

I agree back then propaganda was much worse because people were not nearly as educated, and so whatever they saw had a much bigger impact on them. Another thing is that someone said that it bothers them that people pretend WWII didn't even happen. That is just weird though, I mean you can't really deny that it happened and nobody intelligent is accepting that as a theory. Those people are a little crazy. Propaganda is, however, kind of necessary under certain circumstances. If not necessary, it is definitely useful. But as far as taking advantage of your country's people, that I dont believe to be necessary or acceptable.

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Re: Using & abusing history

by [Sarah Brolsma Whitfield](#) - Wednesday, 20 May 2009, 09:49 PM

Not only was not everyone educated, but the technology of news and information being spread wasn't as great. People today hear and know everything that could be going on through internet , television, radio, etc. People during WW1 and WW2 didn't hear all the information going on.

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Re: Using & abusing history

by [Chelsie Vandehey](#) - Friday, 22 May 2009, 12:41 PM

That applies to people today as well as people in the past. Just because we have internet, television, etc. doesn't mean we're getting the whole and true story.

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Re: Using & abusing history

by [Chelsie Vandehey](#) - Wednesday, 20 May 2009, 04:13 PM

Our world today is based off of what has happened in history. It is hard to tell what part of the history we hear about is true, though, because so much of it has been distorted and flipped around. Plus, the victors write the story of history so it is glorified and blown out of proportion. In that sense, it is abused. We are taught to use history as examples. "Learn from your mistakes," "Don't let history repeat itself," etc. But how are we supposed to learn if we do not know the truth? The consequences of these lies or half truths about history may be good or bad. If we learn from the mistakes then it is obviously beneficial. It can be bad if the truth is bent and we do not get to know the real history.

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Re: Using & abusing history

by [Colin Kraus](#) - Wednesday, 20 May 2009, 05:24 PM

The ability to define, contort, destroy, and embellish historical facts remain an integral part of the historical process. The ability to define the action of a historical event remains with those societies that define their historical settings. Rome's mighty civilization "helped" develop what we call western history and society. Roman Christianity became what I call "mechanized Christianity," but the winners of great wars prevailed in the telling of what happened and what really happened.

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White Christians: The Construction of European Christianity

A mainstream cultural narrative in the history and evolution of religion and rise of monotheism demonstrate a subjective interpretation rooted in Judeo-Christian beliefs. Early Christian philosophies of egalitarianism, humility, and forgiveness permeate modern western culture as ideals shared in society. Nevertheless, the "Judeo-Christian" values linked between western culture and the Roman Empire obfuscate the original teachings stemming from the African philosophy of a "Spiritual Self." This African philosophy is similar to the teachings of Christ's, where an individual may act according to a metaphysical world where one lives, relative to their relationships with another. Prior to Greek culture, Africans became aware of a higher spiritual self before "Western Culture" constructed its empire. Furthermore, the idea that Jesus Christ developed an African-esque philosophy argues that Christianity is not in fact a western religion at all, but originates from prior African cultures and traditions. The teaching of Christ spread into northern Africa and the Middle East even after the death of Christ in the Roman occupied city of Jerusalem. Nevertheless, Judea Christianity became the model for the latter end of the failing Roman Empire during the rule of Emperor Constantine. The persecution of the early Christians to the adoption of the early Christian faith by the Roman Empire represents the philosophical theft when Christianity went from Africa to Europe and almost symbolically from black to white.

The theft of African philosophy enabled a cataclysmic ripple in the early faith that ostracized women and people of color from participating in early church practices, thus reaffirming white men's superiority in a growing racialized structure. A gradual progression towards a European adulteration of the original gospel culminated into 13 new disciples appointed by King James I of England's to again retranslate an already misconstrued text. Further, the misinterpretation of the original text disassociates the initial intent of egalitarianism, humility, and forgiveness by reconstructing a book from antiquity to reinforce a hierarchy and kingdom in the confines of God. Unlike the original African trinity that connects a mother father to create a child of humanity, the Europeanization of Christianity portrays a trinity not in the unity of a man with a woman, but a patriarchal symbol between a father, son, and Holy Spirit. The Europeanization of Christianity constructed a "white" version of Christianity undermining the original teaching of early Christianity, but reinforcing patriarchal hierarchy and whiteness as a means to enlightenment.

Unfortunately, early Christians of the Roman Empire started what is now the modern Roman Catholic Church. Their negation of women involved a systematic removal of women in historic representations from antiquity. Beginning with the First Council of Nicaea in 325 C.E. the early Roman Catholic Church under Emperor Constantine framed a book representing a narrow interpretation of gospels from John, Luke, Matthew, and Mark forming a blatant mistruth not accounting for the gospels of Mary Magdalene. Negating the gospels of Mary Magdalene demonstrates a clear goal by the early Christian church to ostracize women from positions within the church hierarchy. The early Christians' patriarchy represents the Roman Catholic Church altering a progressive African philosophy to perpetuate Europeanism and whiteness as Christian.

The Roman Catholic Church under the auspice of spreading the word of God, spread the word of "Christ" and Europeanism by sword to reiterate the power and structure of God in the European Kingdom. Even before King James of England Popes used the name of God to invoke wars between Muslims and Christians during the crusades of the middle ages. Behind the façade of

religious cleansing of the Spanish inquisition redefined what Europeanization of Christianity meant. Finally, the conquest of the new world beginning with Spain in 1492 reaffirms the perpetuated myth of European Christianity and superiority. Unlike the original philosophies of egalitarianism, humility, and forgiveness, white Christians attributed a precedent for the bastardization of a faith based in common good and redemption. The Europeanization of Christianity over time has relegated a faith started in Africa to a misconstrued ideology that reinforced patriarchic hierarchy, gave way to manifest destiny, and undermined social existence for those deemed Non-Christian i.e. non-white.

Christians should not be assumed inherently evil, yet the untold history of antiquity often reinforces negative connotations or misinformation we hold in the present. The fact that there is archaeological evidence that demonstrates a similarity between the ideology of Christ and the African Philosophy of a "African Self" argues the African link between Christ and his beliefs. Furthermore, the actions by the early Christians and Roman Catholic reiterate the deliberate actions by early church founders to discount the gospels of Mary Magdalin to downplay her significance in the life of Jesus Christ. These patriarchic notions inevitably led to the unification between father, son, and Holy Spirit, not the father, mother, and child of humanity. Nevertheless, the Europeanization of Christianity permeated through the construction of western culture and society misinforming people who developed negative social constructions of women and people of color not based in the teachings of Christ, But European Christianity and Whiteness.

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Re: Using & abusing history

by [Dominick Forni](#) - Thursday, 21 May 2009, 03:09 PM

History is written by the victor and the presiding power in a country. There are many falsities written into history by the lies told to the people of a country when going to war, or trying to gain public support. These lies have been told and manufactured throughout history and can be seen through the propaganda posters used in the Spanish American War, W.W.I, and W.W.II. Also deception has been used to sway the publics opinion in the sinking of the Lusitania, the Maine blowing up, and the Tonkin Gulf incident. These three lies led to three wars, and all of which were supported by the people when they began. All of these lies have been written into history and usually accepted. Also as countries such as China and North Korea inflict censorship on public media, the people never will have the chance to find out what is real and what their government wants them to believe. Falsities like these are constantly written and re-written into our history books, and the instrument of deception will never stop being used to gain power and controversy .

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Re: Using & abusing history

by [Gabriel Pemble](#) - Tuesday, 26 May 2009, 03:12 PM

Thats true. You can learn more about the nature and operation of human societies, political manipulation, eccetera, by reading works of fiction written during the time period you wish to understand, rather than consulting "fact" based historical records.

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Re: Using & abusing history

by [Breea Weigel](#) - Saturday, 30 May 2009, 10:38 AM

The ramifications of these actions is huge!

--For most human beings, it takes an awful lot to allow them to kill another human being," said Anthony Pratkanis, a psychology professor at the University of California, Santa Cruz. "The only way to do it is to justify the killing, to make the enemy look as evil as possible."--

This exert I thought to be the most important of the articles I read. I believe that we are doing this today to more easily justify our two present wars.

Looking back into history, we can now see the two sides of war conflicts and see through propaganda and realize how this helped drive us against the enemy. However, we may think that propoganda in history was silly, but it is still happening all around us today, and I believe it increased after September 11th. This was when our country was the most sensitive, and we would rally around any reason for war, which could have contained alternative motives.

Ignorance is dangerous. We cannot always believe what governement and media tells us. We need to conduct our own research, ask questions, and educate ourselves, before we take a stance.

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