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Continuing the Discussion

by Joe Escobar - Sunday, October 16, 2016, 2:21 PM

This thread is for discussions on the Continuing the Discussion topic. 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.

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Purposely or Not?

by Jessica Fialho - Tuesday, October 18, 2016, 10:43 AM

After reading Losers are Pirates I am reminded again that there is no such thing as pleasing everyone. It's absolutely impossible to please everyone out there when information about history is released. I think we have to take this into account as well with information that goes against the PBS series. I am not saying I 100 percent trust the PBS series, but I believe regardless of what information they left out or if they failed to mention an event, there would be someone out there unhappy about the PBS series. Now I am still in the process of comparing all our materials and trying to figure out which one gets my approval or endorsement. I still find this difficult to do. I am sure I am not alone in this.

On a different note, with the AIM program part 2, I want to touch on what Dan Cragg said when he pointed out,

"I think the great unjustness of this film is that it portrays the american soldiers in Vietnam as a drug addict, a racial bigot and a man who murders his officers and NCOs almost at will. The hundred of thousands of Americans who went to war Vietnam who served honorably and bravely have got to be insensitive (?) of this terrible terrible misrepresentation of their bravery and sacrifice on the battlefield."
(AIM part 2, 6:03)

Now, from the PBS series thus far, I didn't get the impression it was purposely trying to misrepresent american soldiers in Vietnam. Does anyone see the PBS series as purposely misrepresenting american soldiers? I feel that Dan Cragg was being incredibly harsh when stating it was a "...terrible terrible misrepresentation." I do however believe that the PBS series didn't do everything it could to represent the american soldiers from all aspects though. I feel this is a difficult "shoe" to fill.

Sum of ratings:2 (1)

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Re: Purposely or Not?

by Andrew Kilmer - Thursday, October 20, 2016, 11:43 AM

Hi Jessica, great question on the PBS series. Yes, I do think they gave a very skewed impression. Not inaccurate, but definitely one-sided. They showed them shooting an unarmed Vietnamese man, then drug him out of the woods like a deer. They quoted a soldier saying all Vietnamese are the enemy. The most apparent to me though was the intense interview with the soldiers who recounted the village (I don't think they ever say the name). We hear horrible and tragic stories and then a quick cut to soldiers drinking beer on the beach. That scene is where PBS lost me. To me that segment said "kill everyone, drink beer". I have no doubt that this was one aspect of the war, but to show it as a broad statement is dangerous to our perception of those men.

Sum of ratings:2 (1)

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Re: Purposely or Not?

by Jessica Fialho - Thursday, October 20, 2016, 11:55 AM

Thank you for pointing these scenes out Andrew. That brings up great points about the PBS choosing to negatively display American soldiers. These scenes you are mentioning are in Episode 4 "America Takes Charge" correct? I know it is getting difficult for me to figure out what sources to trust, but it is still great we are getting different perspectives even when we disagree with how things are being portrayed. I wonder if PBS actually thought about how they were portraying the American soldiers. I am beginning to think they either didn't consider the consequences of portraying only one side or if they just didn't care. It's a constant battle to learn all the information we can though.

Sum of ratings:1 (1)

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Re: Purposely or Not?

by Andrew Kilmer - Friday, October 21, 2016, 5:11 PM

Thanks for the feedback. You know I do think PBS knew exactly how the were portraying the troops. It is very clear to me that the makers of the film weren't searching for answers to questions, they were answering the questions the way they wanted America to view the war. Its all checks and balances though, we are responsible for checking the information that his put in front of us. Thanks again for the response, I enjoyed the ideas we exchanged.

Sum of ratings: (1)

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media knows best

by Amber Gaboriault - Wednesday, October 19, 2016, 12:34 PM

I enjoyed reading all the comments from both sides of the AIM and PBS; this is still a current issue that we still deal with today. Is the media bias? Did they report the truth, or which side is true? After all my readings, I felt like the media disappointed me in the way they treated our veterans. Vietnam was the first "lost" war, and it was also the first war publicly televised, and it was the first war that society disapproved of. An oversight I noticed, PBS failed to mention one of the biggest demonstrations in support of the war on May 13th, 1967, it became known as the Parade That Never Was (AIM 11:43). The media encouraged the youth to revolt against the youth and forgot to honor the ones serving. In the Appy book, it talks of an airline stewardess who would fly guys in and out of the war, and she mentioned how veterans would return home, and no one noticed, that she encouraged them to change their clothes quickly out of the army

uniform. The producers of the PBS series choose wisely on who aired their program, choosing a station that is known for education, and the AIM organization is known for its controversy, I feel this plays an impact and can change people's opinion of what is truth. I think after all my readings and findings; I would believe both sides to have truth. I do agree more with the AIM video and that PBS leaves out very important details about northern Vietnam.

Sum of ratings:2 (1)

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Re: media knows best

by Jimmy O'Neal - Saturday, October 22, 2016, 1:16 PM

Hi Amber, I also found the media to be very misleading and biased during the war. The Parade That Never Was was a great way to show our troops that they are not forgotten and that we still support them through everything and the media blatantly disrespected our troops by showing it very little coverage. I agree that both sides should be looked at when trying to find out the truth behind the war, but it is as you say, the AIM program does seem to point out more of the faults with North Vietnam than the PBS series does. I hope this changes as the PBS series goes on but I won't be surprised if it doesn't.

Sum of ratings:1 (1)

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Re: media knows best

by Amber Gaboriault - Saturday, October 22, 2016, 8:49 PM

Yea Jimmy, I agree, it is hard to think about how bad the soldiers were forced to fight with the draft, and then treated poorly upon return. I hope as well the PBS balances out their information with the remaining episodes. A third piece of information is nice to see what may be the truth or the closest to the truth I feel the Herring book does a fairly decent job of sticking to the facts.

Sum of ratings: (1)

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Bias dominates the media

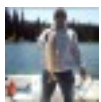
by Andrew Dellinger - Wednesday, October 19, 2016, 12:45 PM

The complexities of learning the truth in history have never been so apparent to me until now. It seems that no matter where we turn there is controversy. After watching part 4 of the PBS series, and part 2 of the AIM video, I have yet again found myself wondering who to believe. The biggest issue I found when trying to interpret who I should believe more was that part 2 of "The Real Story" talks a lot about the events at the end of the war. Whereas we are

currently learning about the early stages of America's major involvement in the war. However, there are still underlying views that are conflicting in both the films. To me the best example is the fact that PBS focuses primarily on the shortcomings of American and South Vietnamese armies and politics. They give little attention to the atrocities of the communist regimes, and portray them as liberators and freedom fighters. Furthermore, PBS selectively chooses American veterans who struggled with the purpose of the war, and treats them as the ideas of the common soldier. In "Losers are Pirates" the author expresses that the PBS series was made by "decidedly antiwar and anti-military production staff" (Losers are Pirates p. ii). This poses a problem especially considering that the series is meant to be an educational documentary. With this information, I started to realize that this could in fact be an attempt to justify the major antiwar movement in America. AIM is not without bias as well, for they are quite obviously advocates of the war. I truly think that "Losers are Pirates" provides a much needed middle ground, because they call out PBS for its glancing over of important facts and events. And because the author concedes that America did make mistakes politically and militarily, therefore he does not set out to portray only good things about the war.

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Re: Bias dominates the media

by Andrew Kilmer - Thursday, October 20, 2016, 11:19 AM

Andrew- I couldn't agree with you more, the search for the truth seems very elusive when it comes to Vietnam. I was reminded of it while I was watching the Presidential debate last night. It all depends on your perception of right and wrong, left and right, or who you chose to believe in. Was America's army handcuffed by policies or held back to prevent nuclear war? Did the gradual increase of Air Power allow the north to prepare, or save innocent lives? Was the ARVN really "chickens" stated in the PBS video, or did we disable them (Herring 197). I don't think these questions can be given concrete answers because it depends on our feelings on the matter. I noticed we are not asked to find lies in the videos, just conflicting viewpoints or information.

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Re: Bias dominates the media

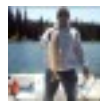
by Andrew Dellinger - Thursday, October 20, 2016, 6:27 PM

Hi Andrew, I absolutely agree with you, it seems that the two videos are arguing about there perception of the events during the war not necessarily the truth. However, I do think it's true that PBS focused way more on American faults than the whole picture of the war. AIM definitely reveals facts that PBS

glanced over, but seems only interested in proving them wrong while turning their backs to any possible wrong-doing. All together I think the closest we can get to the truth is using all the resources we have in collaboration and weeding out the bias. Part 2 of "The Real Story" seems to point towards more of the perception PBS was presenting of Americans in Vietnam. I would agree that they went out of their way to show our soldiers doing the wrong things, but we also can't deny the fact that there was bad apples. It truly is the producers showing content that backs their own opinion. It's kind of sad that it's so hard to find historical information without some kind of bias twist.

Sum of ratings:1 (1)

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Re: Bias dominates the media

by Andrew Kilmer - Friday, October 21, 2016, 5:14 PM

Yes it is hard to find the truth, but really the truth is probably different based on each persons experiences. That makes history different, it all just depends who we chose to accept our information from. I personally am more apt to believe Herring and the Appy book just because I have yet to find a personal agenda in either reading.

Sum of ratings:1 (1)

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Different View-Points

by Andrew Kilmer - Wednesday, October 19, 2016, 2:33 PM

It seems to me after reading and listening to all the information this week that history is interpreted by perception has much as facts. I would classify the PBS video to the left, with AIM on the right. Herring falls somewhere down the middle (possibly leaning left a bit). As was stated in the New York Times article, the media is an outlet for projecting personal opinions.

I noticed in the PBS video that almost all the interviews were conducted with low level troops who had been involved in horrible events. I'm sure this wasn't true for all veterans, but I have no resource to tell me otherwise. The AIM video utilized ranking officials and pilots, they were also chosen because they believed in the WAR. This group's view of the war was totally different, and certainly no infantry were interviewed by AIM. Neither video tried to provide research that would challenge the views they wanted to portray. When the PBS video showed the recounting of the burning of a village and the horrible things associated with the event, it said the story was told by "both sides". We then heard from soldiers and villagers from South Vietnam. (No enemy is every mentioned) The AIM video says that these were unfortunate isolated events and not the normal behavior during the time. I feel the

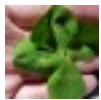
truth is somewhere down the middle. After we hear and see this horrible event there is a quick cut to soldiers drinking beer at the beach. That is not a recount of history, but a purposeful attempt to manipulate my perception of the war.

Herring states on pg. 180 that McNamara conceded that during operation rolling thunder that the tally of civilian casualties was close to 1000 people a month. We destroyed over 50 percent of South Vietnams timberlands (pg189), burned villages and displaced thousands of people. The AIM video and Losers are Pirates try to make it seem like America and South Vietnam were in this together and that it was only poor politics that lost us the war. To me this again is a manipulation and an attempt to rewrite history from a political stand and not an attempt for truth.

There is much more I would love to discuss, but I'm sure Jane Fonda, Red Coats, POW's, and the well-being of Vietnam veterans will come up in other discussions.

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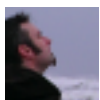
Re: Different View-Points

by Jessica Fialho - Thursday, October 20, 2016, 12:08 PM

Andrew thank you so much for putting this in perspective. I really enjoy how you explained the PBS video is to the left and the AIM video is to the right, where the Herring book is in the middle. I think this is a great way to help visualize the different points of view we are getting. I definitely can see now how the AIM video and the PBS video are on opposite sides and trying to give out what they see as the "truth". Where from the novel I can tell it is trying to get more of both sides where the shows are not putting in the effort of this.

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Examining the Press

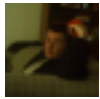
by Timothy Lucas - Wednesday, October 19, 2016, 2:47 PM

The New York Times article by John Corry reminds us that it is important to not only monitor our media, but to question possible contradictions in history. Corry points out a, 'persistent problem in television.' "How can the medium present grievances against itself?" (Corry, Times) In this case we see *Television's Vietnam: The Real Story* by AIM dispute the accuracy of *Vietnam: A Television History*. Something important that AIM points out is the protests in 1983 against the original airing, "when the series was rebroadcast in the summer of 1984, some of the wording was changed to give credit to the Yen Bai Rebellion where it belonged..." (Heston, AIM 13:14). This shows how inaccuracies can be challenged with popular support of alternate views of history to create change, and that PBS made these changes quietly while neglecting to recall the original tapes.

Corry is supportive of the PBS series, yet he finds a 'paradox' in the public television community that would, "rule out all points of view except their own." I agree with this assessment of what groups like AIM intend. Clearly there is value in viewing both sources, if nothing else to give us a reason to look deeper into what the official story might be and what the other side might have to say.

Sum of ratings:3 (1)

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The suffering of soldiers

by Jimmy O'Neal - Wednesday, October 19, 2016, 5:44 PM

This week I couldn't help but notice how the AIM program called out the PBS series for not bringing up the suffering and torture that the US and South Vietnamese soldiers had to endure. In the PBS series we see plenty of instances where the US soldiers had assaulted Vietnamese citizens but we don't have a single example of our soldiers being tortured. We hear John McCain talk about this in the AIM program, saying that he had witnessed first hand the appalling conditions that he and other POWs had to face. He stated that Vietcong were not mistreated when caught by US and South soldiers but the North wanted to torture the US soldiers to fulfill some propaganda agenda. (AIM, John McCain). From what I have read in both of the books I don't see any stories or historical accounts of any POWs so I can't really reference anything from our texts.

Another difference I noticed was how the soldiers were supported in both shows. In the PBS series we see a lot of anti-war protests, but in the AIM program we can see a very large march that was in support of our troops. The AIM program states that the media intentionally ignored this march, because people were trying to justify their own reasons for fleeing from the draft. (AIM, Col. Harry Summers). We do see the type of abandonment of our troops in the Appy book with Helen Tennant Hegelheimers story "*I was their wife, their sister, their girlfriend.*" In her story she talks about having to fly soldiers to Vietnam and giving them their possible final good-byes. In the final lines she said, "I had grown up with World War II movies and everybody had a band or something to welcome them home. At Travis there was absolutely nothing. It was just me at the bottom of the ramp. An ungrateful nation let some twenty-three-year-old stewardess welcome these guys home. That was their only greeting." (Patriots, Hegelheimer, pg. 110). This was pretty much what it was like for the soldiers. At the end of the day they were left to deal with their problems on their own.

Both of the articles we had this week brought about some pretty good insight on the PBS and AIM shows. They both stated how the PBS show did omit a lot of information and put Ho Chi Minh up on a pedestal. (Losers are Pirates, pg. 1-2). Because of these articles I would have to say that I put my approval in the AIM program. The PBS program just omits too much information and seems to disregard anything that our soldiers went through. While it does show a different side of the same story I just think that it should tell the whole story.

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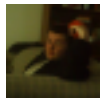
Re: The suffering of soldiers

by Amber Gaboriault - Wednesday, October 19, 2016, 8:44 PM

Hi Jimmy, great analysis! I agree with all you stated. I really enjoyed seeing John McCain speak, knowing he was a runner in the presidential elections a few years ago. It really seemed like the media wanted an anti-war movement and I had forgotten about how AIM reasoned it with people fleeing from the war. When AIM spoke to a former veteran it seemed like they could state their experience versus PBS seemed to grill the veterans for their actions against the Vietnamese stories never once explaining how hostile the environment truly was.

Sum of ratings:1 (1)

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Re: The suffering of soldiers

by Jimmy O'Neal - Friday, October 21, 2016, 1:31 PM

Hi Amber, watching the PBS episodes so far really does seem like they want to make the veterans look like villains. I just don't realize why they haven't been talking about the horrible treatment that our soldiers had to go through when they were taken as POW. This seems like a huge injustice to some of our finest men. What do you think about this? Do you think the PBS series avoids these topics to further push their antiwar message?

Sum of ratings: (1)

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Re: The suffering of soldiers

by Amber Gaboriault - Friday, October 21, 2016, 3:13 PM

Hi Jimmy, I absolutely think the PBS use only specific stories to promote the antiwar message. I am sure there were many injustices that happened in Vietnam, but to leave out the people who most likely seen the cruelty of Northern Vietnam first hand seems intentional. Leaving out the offenses of Northern Vietnam in the PBS series is what makes me believe the series is not an accurate description of the war, and more of a bias.

Sum of ratings:1 (1)

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Re: The suffering of soldiers

by Jimmy O'Neal - Saturday, October 22, 2016, 1:02 PM

Hi Amber, I completely agree with you on this. The PBS series does seem to hold back a lot of good information that pertains to the war. But I also think that the AIM series does this a bit as well. When we watch the AIM series it only seems to try and contradict the PBS series rather than tell the whole story. I hate that the PBS series has yet to discuss the suffering our soldiers had to go through but I do wish that the AIM series did tell both sides of the story.

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Re: The suffering of soldiers

by Peilin Duan - Sunday, October 23, 2016, 10:00 PM

Hi Jimmy, I just wonder that if you couldn't trust the media (like PBS series), how can you trust the book? I think both AIM programs and PBS series are biased in some ways and if you say the PBS didn't tell the whole story, I think AIM program did the same thing. For example, the AIM videos mentions that the Catholics are suffering from the North Vietnam but they didn't say the Buddhists are torturing from the South. The AIM video this week is more like "American propaganda" to me, it shows how brave and respectful of the American soldiers are. I don't know if the POWs were being tortured or not, but I think American soldiers did having "pleasure" from them based on some pics.

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Re: Continuing the Discussion

by Peilin Duan - Wednesday, October 19, 2016, 11:02 PM

Is that PBS series so biased?

In the readings excerpted from *Losers are Pirates*, strongly against the PBS series, a detail about a PBS official chided James for his improper language; James claimed that he used the "Communist" for certain characters in the war; the official points out this and is that might reflect that the PBS is precise and being neutral from another hand? Based on my reaching about PBS, is a non-profit organization, why does such an American media cooperation want to build Ho Chi Minh, who is an communist or nationalist leader from another country, as a hero but slander their own home country and own people? What's benefit they get from that? In addition, are all the several directors from PBS less educated like James said in his book? I don't get what point is about arguing Ho is a nationalist or communist, I think it doesn't matter if they are doing what they are claiming. I agree with what mentions in the NYT article "Its great strength was that it offered room for many points of view" ('TELEVISION'S VIETNAM: THE REAL STORY,' ON PBS). It talked about the history from various respectives and gave rise to lots of discussion and attention about the Vietnam War.

Sum of ratings:2 (1)

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Re: Continuing the Discussion

by Jessica Fialho - Thursday, October 20, 2016, 11:45 AM

Peilinn thank you for doing more research about the PBS series. Unfortunately, I think all sources are biased in some way. The AIM videos were made to counteract points in the PBS series that they believed should have been put in the PBS series. This to me already shows the AIM video is biased against the PBS series. It is impossible to take out human bias. So, unless we develop machines to record history for us, I do believe all the sources we read will have a biased opinion. I think it was a great question, thank you for bringing it up and pointing out that we should be seeking all the different views in perspectives. I do agree that this is a huge part of history. Seeking the different perspectives and gathering everyone's different truth. After all, as humans we cannot perceive everything going on around us at once. The different perspectives help us gather data to create our own opinion.

Sum of ratings:1 (1)

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Re: Continuing the Discussion

by Peilin Duan - Sunday, October 23, 2016, 9:24 PM

Hi Jessica, I do believe that human beings are biased because we have emotion. I feel like the instructor bring the AIM videos to us because he wants to let us know that the PBS series are biased but to some extents, I think the AIM is more biased than PBS series. Now we know that they both have bias in some points. Personally, I am very curious about this question. Hope we get our questions answered after this class.

Sum of ratings:1 (1)

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Re: Continuing the Discussion

by Amber Gaboriault - Thursday, October 20, 2016, 2:55 PM

Hi Peilin, your comment about Ho being a nationalist or a communist caught my attention. I feel it was important because if we were fighting against a nationalist, it would contradict everything America stands for. I think fighting a communist validated the reasons for the war, if you took communism out of the equation then there was no purpose for the war. Most of the government had support from society if it was a fight against communism. Almost every speech we have seen LBJ give always included the fight against freedom and communism.

Sum of ratings:1 (1)

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Re: Continuing the Discussion

by Peilin Duan - Sunday, October 23, 2016, 8:58 PM

Hi there, I agree with you said that America support the war for against the communism. I say that because I think Ho is definitely a communist and he is also a nationalist because he protects his Vietnam from foreign force.

Sum of ratings: (1)

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Updated Impression

by Dan Johnson - Wednesday, October 19, 2016, 11:50 PM

The main legitatment concern of AIM and other groups is the lack of information on the fall out of communist supremacy in South East Asia. PBS was not inaccurate, but they could have more strongly emphasized these possibilities and outcomes of communist fall out. AIM's portrayal of anyone associated with communism as inherently evil is a simplification born out of "us" vs. "them" thinking. PBS does well to demonstrate the humanity of all parties; however, it overshadows two main aspects: the consequences of unchecked communist action and the complex dilemma of how to actually create a truely peaceful outcome from both points of view. This overshadowing from my estimation is not based on entirely on political motivation. It's based more tenably on post-modernism, which is not inherently liberal or conservative. It's reflective of the conversation many people were having of "how do we know what we know" and "how do we know we're right", which is understandable considering the misery of the Vietnam war. Naturally, because of this existential crisis, PBS tends to take a critical eye at the U.S. rather than Vietnam. It is a view of the war that continues the practice of pondering how the U.S. should have acted based on key facts. It is a practice of attempting to learn from mistakes from an American point of view. For some of the conservative critics, this practice would appear to make them uncomfortable because they feel perhaps it projects weakness. This dynamic naturally makes the PBS series accurate yet incomplete and the AIM and other groups misleading yet necessary. This dynamic between conservative and liberal holds together the process and foundation for the stabilization and growth of a society in imperfect terms.

Sum of ratings:3 (1)

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Re: Updated Impression

by Andrew Kilmer - Thursday, October 20, 2016, 11:29 AM

Dan- I really enjoyed your post. I have been looked at this as two clear cut sides.

The left vs. the right. Your perspective definitely adds to an overall understanding and one that I will think about as we continue this term. I think I would place Herring as a post-modernist considering what I have read to this point. While I still believe that both PBS and AIM had direct political motivation, I will continue to remember your ideas as I read on.

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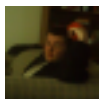
Re: Updated Impression

by Amber Gaboriault - Thursday, October 20, 2016, 2:48 PM

Hi Dan, great analysis!, I do believe there are truths to both sides in the PBS and AIM. One of my big concerns is the fact that the producers used PBS to support their view. PBS was viewed as academic TV vs someone's opinion. I feel they should have portrayed both sides not just the American flaws. I felt they abused the trust of the viewers by using PBS, it made the information seem more factual. I think AIM had to be dramatic to get their point considered.

Sum of ratings:1 (1)

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Re: Updated Impression

by Jimmy O'Neal - Sunday, October 23, 2016, 4:22 PM

Hi Dan, I totally agree that both programs have a flawed point of view. As you say the AIM program does have a rather simplistic outlook on the communism vs democracy theme of the war. This could be because that was a very common outlook of the time. Most citizens didn't even know what communism was but since the government said that communism was evil the average citizen took it to heart. The PBS series does try to take more detailed look at this theme but it is with biased undertones. Because the people that made this series were some of the people that dodged the draft and opposed the war in the first place it has a certain stigmata against the US soldiers and Americas involvement with the war as a whole.

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Using Both Videos in Collaboration

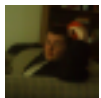
by Andrew Dellinger - Friday, October 21, 2016, 11:01 AM

In my belief, I don't think we should have to choose one of the videos to get our endorsement; I think both sources should be used in collaboration. Only choosing one side we would leave out the possibility of a different point of view, and that's one of the reasons learning history is so important. The best way to get

close to the truth is to use all of the available sources and find what they have in common, and when they are conflicting we should do even more digging. The AIM video critiques PBS for certain details they left out, but they never say that they are flat out wrong on everything. I think we can use PBS as one of our main sources while keeping in mind the things that AIM pointed out so that we get a bigger picture. From PBS we get a good sense of some of the mistakes that the U.S. government made, while in AIM we are reminded why we were there and the devastating effects of communist rule. A good example is how PBS portrays the lack of elections as a result of American interference for fear of Ho Chi Minh winning. This is not really inaccurate, however it is not the whole story. Bruce Loeb's in the AIM video reminds us that the U.S. demanded that the elections should be observed by the U.N. to ensure that they are fair. When we take all of the information into consideration we can realize that these issues aren't so cut and dry. Therefore, on the issue of the elections, it's safe to say that America did have a hand in stopping the election, but it wasn't without good reasons. I think analyzing the information this way is the best path to determining the truth.

Sum of ratings:2 (1)

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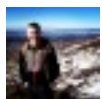
Re: Using Both Videos in Collaboration

by Jimmy O'Neal - Friday, October 21, 2016, 1:39 PM

Hi Andrew, I agree that we should use both sources as a whole rather than picking one individually. Both have their own points to put out and if we put all of the pieces together then we are more likely to get the real picture rather than just biased fragments. As for the elections I think that America was right in that if they were to hold elections then the UN should monitor them to make sure that nothing fishy happens. I personally don't think that the US had anything to do with the rigging of the election. Diem wanted to make sure that he would win the election and changed everything up at the last minute, but I do think that America should have stepped in to make sure something like that wouldn't have happened.

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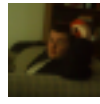
Re: Using Both Videos in Collaboration

by Andrew Dellinger - Saturday, October 22, 2016, 3:58 PM

Thanks for the reply Jimmy, I too believe that America was justified to want the elections monitored. When you say that America didn't have anything to do with the rigging of the election, which election are you talking about? The national election that was promised in the Geneva Agreement, or the South Vietnamese election that Diem used to get rid of Bao Dai (Herring 67)?

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Re: Using Both Videos in Collaboration

by Jimmy O'Neal - Sunday, October 23, 2016, 4:08 PM

If I remember correctly in the AIM program one of the speakers stated that the Geneva Agreement didn't even cover the topic of elections. It was said that America said that if Vietnam were to hold elections then they should be regulated by the UN to make sure that nothing fishy happens. As for the other election I do agree that it was underhanded of Diem to rig the elections to get rid of Bao Dai, which might have been a better leader overall.

Sum of ratings:1 (1)

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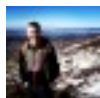
Re: Using Both Videos in Collaboration

by Amber Gaboriault - Friday, October 21, 2016, 3:20 PM

Hi Andrew, I agree with you. My concern is with information such as the PBS series is that what if an AIM video wasn't made? It seems the AIM video was also controversial being from a known conservative source. I feel that the producers tried to manipulate its viewers by having it aired on PBS which is a known educational system to push the antiwar movement what do you think?

Sum of ratings: (1)

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Re: Using Both Videos in Collaboration

by Andrew Dellinger - Saturday, October 22, 2016, 3:37 PM

Hello Amber, I think you are right to be worried with PBS. It's very concerning to me that the PBS series was marketed as an educational film series, and that because of the channels history of airing educational programs people expected it as factual. The great thing about America is that freedom of speech allows others in the media to confront information they think is wrong. AIM is a great example of this, and so is "Losers Are Pirates." Both exemplify the checks and balances that is necessary in modern media. Now on the issue of PBS trying to push an "anti-war" agenda, I think it's difficult to confirm whether or not this was their intention. However, there is certain details that convey an anti-war attitude in the film. "Former prisoner of war Robinson Risner, complained that the producers had promised to let him preview his segment before the broadcast, but he never heard from them again" (Losers Are Pirates ii). The treatment of Risner by PBS provides a good example of how the producers seemed to manipulate those who were interviewed, and could have twisted their words around. Another example is in the way PBS focuses mainly

on the bad things American soldiers did, and hardly ever on good things our soldiers did. In short, I agree that they had an anti-war attitude, but I think it's too hard to confirm if it was entirely made to push an anti-war movement. Thanks for the reply.

Sum of ratings:2 (1)

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Re: Using Both Videos in Collaboration

by Peilin Duan - Sunday, October 23, 2016, 10:23 PM

Hi Andrew, I agree with what you said that we should collect all sources we have and do more digging. But from the perspective of America, do you think they won't find an excuse for cancelling the election but tell the whole world they did that because the fear of Ho is about to win?

Sum of ratings: (1)

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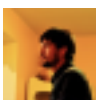
Re: Using Both Videos in Collaboration

by Dan Johnson - Sunday, October 23, 2016, 11:27 PM

I think you bring up a good point, Peilen. At what point is it ok to realize that a group like AIM would have been dissatisfied with PBS as long as it didn't fit its a pro-Vietnam War narrative? If PBS were to have placed into their documentary more content on communist aggression and displayed Ho's communist leanings more, I strongly speculate that they still would have criticized the documentary for any content that in any way implied U.S. impropriety or North Vietnamese reasonableness. On this ground, AIM loses much of its credibility on its ability to accurately reflect the war. Would they be ok with talking about any American acts of atrocity committed? Probably not. To the credit of *Losers are Pirates*, it at least does admit that US did make mistakes and that it wasn't simply liberal rhetoric that failed the Vietnamese operation. AIM's assertion that liberal sentiment doomed U.S. ability to win the war is an obvious over-statement. Even pro-war advocates like Allen Dulles of the CIA during the Eisenhower Presidency even suggested the odds of winning the war were at 1 in 10. This sentiment was in no way an anomaly as many U.S. strategists felt the war would be difficult to win and often felt pessimistic about their ability to maintain their operations in South Vietnam. More time after a twelve year period of involvement would have been very unlikely to improve the situation if I am to believe the Herring book and other sources at all or the many credible people the interview and discusses.

Sum of ratings:3 (1)

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**Picking apart language.**

by Nick Cervantes - Friday, October 21, 2016, 2:55 PM

In part 2 of the AIM video, they pick apart some of the language used by the PBS program, taking specific issue with the PBS claim that a large number of Vietnam veterans “are still haunted by the experience” post-war. I would agree with AIM that PBS does not spend a lot of time talking about successful, proud veterans. At least from what I’ve seen of the PBS videos so far, they do focus on the tolls of the war. At the same time, war is a negative means (even when the ends are positive) and I doubt the producers at PBS would disagree with Kenneth Moorefield that those who lost their lives died with dignity and honor. (AIM 6:30). This is a conflict not so much of facts, but of tone. And the attitude of a piece of media does influence public perception of history.

Sum of ratings:2 (1)

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**Re: Picking apart language.**

by Amber Gaboriault - Friday, October 21, 2016, 3:05 PM

Hi Nick, I agree that PBS doesn't spend a lot of time talking about the successful veterans. what your post made me think about was the part in PBS where they listen to the southern Vietnam's village story of a raid and compare it to the American version. while watching the PBS I felt they believed the south Vietnamese story over the veterans. I understand telling both views of the story, but I felt it lacked why the American soldiers where so paranoid and suspicious of the south Vietnamese villages. I think PBS could have balanced the story more with what happened when a village also included the Vietcong and the soldiers were not prepared for it. Stories in the media definitely play on the publics perception, especially with one side.

Sum of ratings: (1)

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**Re: Picking apart language.**

by Nick Cervantes - Saturday, October 22, 2016, 4:44 PM

Hi Amber, good point about the raid stories in episode 4. I felt sympathy for both parties and I can only take any of those stories at face value. The Americans felt pinned-down, Jack Hill called it "chaos" (Ep.4 34:30) and it probably was. I certainly felt for the people who lived with their families in that village. They're probably both telling their truth, and it's all bad. I think the PBS series is trying to be thorough but generalizing at the same time, and a bias is inevitable. Spending so much time thinking about the biases in both programs

makes me grateful for the Appy book, that gets a lot of perspectives from so many participants. I'm sure everyone's experience was unique and it's interesting to go case-by-case.

Sum of ratings:1 (1)

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Re: Picking apart language.

by Dan Johnson - Sunday, October 23, 2016, 10:52 PM

Hi Amber, I think your statement about adding in stories about why the Americans were afraid would better reflect the reality. There are plenty of stories of villagers who looked completely innocent: young,old, male, female, and the like, that would suddenly start killing American troops. This better emphasizes the two fold reality of the war; instead of, acting like the South Vietnamese were **all** completely innocent. Although they did speak to the confusion of the American soldiers on identifying their enemy, they damaged their reflection of the war by not adding in a story that spoke to such a sentiment.

Sum of ratings:2 (1)

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Re: Picking apart language.

by Jimmy O'Neal - Saturday, October 22, 2016, 1:09 PM

Hi Nick, what bothers me the most about the PBS series is that it seems to only talk about the negative experiences that the Vietnamese dealt with. We all know that the North used torture and other gruesome methods when they captured our soldiers but it has not been discussed in the PBS series as of yet. I do agree that the PBS series also doesn't seem to cover any stories of soldiers that believe what they did was for the good of Vietnam and the US. I think that its great that the AIM series covers this topic at least.

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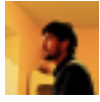
Re: Picking apart language.

by Peilin Duan - Sunday, October 23, 2016, 10:44 PM

Hi Nick, I jus want to say that the soldiers were brave and honored, but sadly, they are victims of Political. They died because America got involved in a foreign war to against communism which is potential threaten for them. There was never have winner in a war, it only brings sadness and death. PBS didn't talk too much about proud veterans, but AIM videos, as a program which is opposite of PBS series, I think they magnify this part.

Sum of ratings: (1)

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Emotional and rational criticisms of media.

by Nick Cervantes - Friday, October 21, 2016, 2:59 PM

The preface of "Losers and Pirates" has a passive-aggressive tone of bitterness that, for me, subtracted the James Banerian's credibility. He argues for objective reasoning but sarcastically uses phrases like "as innocent as babes" and "a hero for all mankind." The introduction seemed more calm, and its objectives were clear. He does do a good job describing the violence, poverty, and oppression in the region after the war. I am more approving of the NY Times article by John Corry. While he is less dismissive of PBS than AIM is, he is more evenly critical. Corry suggests that, while PBS may have tried to be fair in production, they stand rigid against criticism of "Vietnam: A Television History. He argues that new interpretation of history is natural and should at least be considered. PBS and AIM seem to be engaged in a prideful battle.

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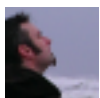
Re: Emotional and rational criticisms of media.

by Timothy Lucas - Sunday, October 23, 2016, 11:21 PM

"Prideful battle" is very much what these two sources seem to hold on to. While I generally support the narrative of the *PBS* series, I believe it has held up over time because there are people who have protested parts that might be less than accurate. These actions have forced retractions and reversions to the *PBS* series because of popular protest from not only from Vietnamese immigrants who live in the United States, but a range of veterans from the war who protested through direct letters to *PBS* and writing books such as *Losers are Pirates*. Voices from all sides are important to our understanding, AIM and Benerian remind us to look closer to the 'facts' we are presented and offer us a chance to decide for ourselves.

Sum of ratings:1 (1)

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Shimmering Haloes

by Timothy Lucas - Sunday, October 23, 2016, 8:35 PM

Of the many criticisms *PBS* has incurred because of the narratives in its Vietnam series, one particular point *Losers are Pirates* exposes is a lack of voices that support the war effort, or have a positive view of those who participated on the American side. "Persons who defend U.S. involvement in Vietnam get very little attention in the program, while critics are portrayed so generously that one can almost see haloes

shimmering over their heads.” (ii Banerian) While Banerian may have a slightly different copy than myself, it is very easy to recall the many voices of opposition, criticism and especially the servicemen who describe less than savory actions taken in the field, and some of the dubious reasons they felt they were there.

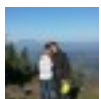
The primary voices we hear in *PBS* that favor the war are mostly from Presidents Kennedy and Johnson in an interview or speech declaring unwavering American support. Or portions of government films, such as the dramatic and narrowly viewed *Why Vietnam*. The statements from these sources are usually quickly countered by the *PBS* series narrator, or by an interview such as the one by Private Bill Ehrhart, who speaks in a somber tone after the crescendo of *Why Vietnam* within the first 5 minutes of the program, and is seen throughout Episode 4 of the *PBS* series. He later laments that he felt as though he were, “the Red Coat” (51:22 *PBS*) in reference to an occupying force that he had learned as a child was the enemy to the early revolutionary Americans.

I do not believe it was the intention of the *PBS* series to present an entirely balanced view. To do so would have required a much more open narrative that might have rendered the topic neutral to the point of being benign. “...approval for the series seems to come from two groups: those who opposed America’s involvement in the war and others who have limited background in the history of Southeast Asia and the war.” (5 Banerian) If that is true the only benefit to a narrow range of voice, is that it can open the door for criticism and therefore further examination of claims made by large sources (and largely funded) such as *PBS*.

The above claim made by Banerian can dismiss the views of those we do see in the *PBS* series that not only show a dark side to good intentions, but the confusion some felt with the overall mission. The stories from those such as Private Ehrhart provide a counter to the former official story of righteousness and unwavering support we saw in early government programs. *PBS* may have its own narrow view and interpretation, and even if it is steeped in anti-war or an alternative view of an official narrative that was unable to herald victory...it is still certainly worth study. Especially if it inspires or forces people to look deeper and constantly reexamine meaning and intentions of historical and current events.

Sum of ratings:3 (1)

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Re: Shimmering Haloes

by Dan Johnson - Sunday, October 23, 2016, 10:38 PM

I agree with you that *PBS* narrative should have its own value. I also disagree with the notion *AIM* proposes that the *PBS* series is completely misleading and inaccurate. In many ways, the *PBS* documentary is reflective of the Vietnam War. It was a brutal, bloody war where confusion was common place, and a percentage of Americans did commit atrocities against the Vietnamese. The government's use of Agent Orange could be considered an atrocity in its self. It also mentions

however from the voice of Paul Warnke 42 minutes in that US could have acted much stronger against the North Vietnamese claiming there was a consideration to completely annihilate the North through bombing, but out of "basic humanity", they did not.

The PBS film is not an anti-American film. It's funded by the government. It absolutely has an anti-war tinge to the movie, but should it have a pro-war tinge? Shouldn't there be some natural opposition to war? Isn't war suppose to be a last resort under traditional American wisdom? Also, by portraying the soldiers' personal confusion and discontent with the war is absolutely reflective of the how many soldiers and Americans felt, which is an unique facet of the war compared to others. They also include Everett Bumgardner's perspective on the Vietnamese fighters saying, "he has to be able to a pretty savage fighter; ambushes, quick hit and run operations, participate in the terrorism and beheading or assassination of village chiefs or effective government officials who are opposed to him." This quote suggests the immorality and viscousness of the Vietnamese fighting force, which doesn't support they acted well. It does dedicate roughly twelve minutes to the story about the American troops destroying the village. This story was certainly prolonged and absolutely does not frame the actions of certain soldiers in the best light; however, it also shows the incredible amount of stress, strain, and fear of the American soldiers because of the extreme conditions they were under as it was stated the troops were without food, water, and sleep for 36 hours in 100 degree heat. It seems highly realistic that under those conditions such action would be taken. Could they have also shown a story about American soldiers helping Vietnamese soldiers? They could have and should have, but the destruction of villages was a part of the war strategy. The United State military did take an approach of total war. This approach is well-documented. It's war, and it doesn't bring out the best in people. American troops didn't all act deplorably or all act honorably. The soldiers who went to Vietnam deserve a tremendous amount of respect and compassion for their experiences. Simultaneously, the soldiers represent a sample size of the American population, which suggests their character ranges just like any population.

Does PBS sensationalize the war? I think they do. The war had more complex origins and circumstances than they present. Simply saying that the Americans were not ready for the complexity of Vietnam does not represent the complexity to the audience. The Soviet's were sending in aid to Laotian militants and the government was failing. Cambodia was also involved in similar difficulties. The "domino theory" was an accurate reality of the spread of communism in the region. The basic scenario the communist influence taking over the region after the brutality of communism seen over the previous few decades is a completely troubling situation. With Russian, North Korean, and Iranian aggression, the United States faces similarly complex circumstances even today. At the same time, it is fair to point out the mistakes and flaws of the United States approach to these circumstance because there were plenty. AIM's unwillingness to point out United States' failings or the failings of those the United States was aligned with is

inherently misleading. Their claims about the competence of the South Vietnamese government seem in the context of other sources totally false. On a separate note, their claims about the El Salvadorian government at the time was also completely false as they were a repressive military dictatorship at the time, not the stewards of liberty as they are portrayed.

On a last note, in observing the PBS documentary it's important to ask irregardless of it's inequalities did it accurately reflect the reality of the Vietnam War in a concise way. A piece of journalism can focus more time on certain aspects of the war than others because those aspects better reflect the war even if those aspects don't show both sides equally. PBS should not be judged on its equality of information. Instead, it should be judged on its ability to accurately reflect the war. On most occasions, it reflects the war exceptionally. It fails at the reflecting in its entirety the viscousness and lawlessness of the North Vietnamese , the rampant spread of communism, the repressiveness of other communist governments, and the repressiveness of the North Vietnamese government. In fairness, we have only watched four episodes of a twelve part series. It could still redeem itself where it lacks.

Sum of ratings:3 (1)

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