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Scapegoat,
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Scapegoat, propaganda & rhetoric

An independent research document proposal

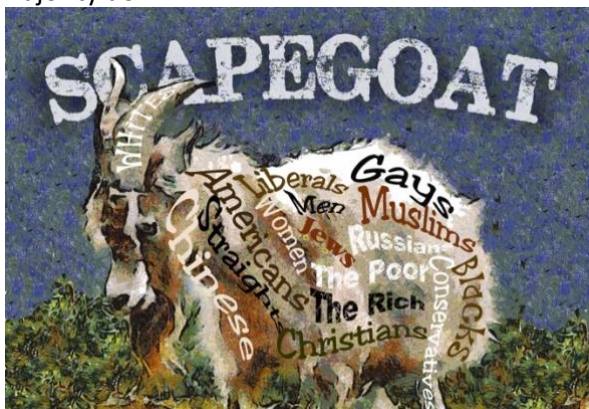
This writing intends to explore three key words to inevitably come to a conclusion at the end in form of a question. It will link said key words, to different images and artists which I will explore and use my interest and critical thinking, which I will then expand upon in my independent research. The key words, scapegoat, propaganda and rationalisation, will be supported by artists or thinkers, such as Tom Douglas (Scapegoat), Alex Rayner (Propaganda) and Joachim Knappe (Rhetoric) These theories will also be supported by art pieces from artists such as Jerry Bacik (scapegoat,) Hans Schweitzer (Propaganda) and Christian Petersen (rhetoric.)

Scapegoat

"The ancient process of the transfer and disposal of evil, which has come to be known as 'scapegoating'" (Douglas. 1995)

Scapegoating is a term which is commonly adopted by the media to place blame, or shift blame of an event on to a general group of people. One example of this, was studied by Julia Layton, where she mentioned how, when Eric Harris and Dylan Klebold, shot at their high school, killing 13 people. Linda Sanders, wife of one of the victims, filed a lawsuit, claiming that video game companies, such as Sony and Nintendo, were to blame for these two kid's actions. 'In the wake of each new, senseless massacre, the entertainment proclivities of the shooters are one of the first things to be reported by the press (Layton 2008.) According to Julia Layton, as of 2001, 79% of Americans played video games, but no where near that amount were committing the crimes they saw.

Scapegoating is a tool that the media take full advantage of, either to place the blame, as previously mentioned, or it can exaggerate a problem which may not be as bad the media portrays. "In today's society, forms of mass media such as newspapers, television and radio exert tremendous influence over the nation" (Koroknay-Palicz, Alex 2001.) Koroknay focuses on how the media uses youth's as a scapegoat and exaggerates how big youth violence is. 'A highly visible manifestation of this scapegoating is evident in society's treatment of youth violence. By exaggerating the extent of youth violence, the media and politicians seek to promote their own personal agendas at the expense of the generation under the age of majority.' Koroknay seems to touch upon the fact that when the media use scapegoats, it tends to be of minorities of society who don't have as big of a voice as the majority do.



Bacik, Jerry (2015) *scapegoat*
Accessed on 11th May

For example, some of the minorities mentioned in the image above by Jerry Bacik, could, or have been used as scapegoats at some point in history. One of the worst hit scapegoated minorities, are different religions to the majority of said country. Europe's Jews, were killed in mass quantities by the Nazis as they blamed the Jews for all of Germany's problems at the time. This type of scapegoating is 'defined as an extreme form of prejudice in which an outgroup is unfairly blamed for having intentionally caused an ingroups misfortunes' (Peter Glick, 2005) This demonisation of Jews was around way before the Nazis. "Before the end of the world the Jews shall be gathered from all parts of the world, and returned from Jerusalem, and live there, and it shall flourish as much as ever, and that they, and all others, shall become Christians, and that wars shall cease, and the whole World live in unity with one another" (Perry, Thomas 1962)

Upon looking into scapegoat as a key word, numerous questions have come into my mind which I could then further look into for my dissertation. Questions such as "Why are groups scapegoated?" Or "is it just minorities who are scapegoated?" Or even "Which group have been scapegoated the most?"

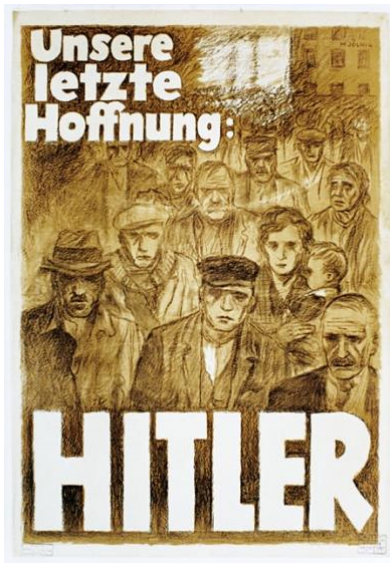
However, I could also look into key words that are commonly tied with the word, 'scapegoat.' Such as, minority, media, subculture, youth, religion. Or, I could look into a specific category and how they are scapegoated, or even victimised, such as, Jews or other religious groups, ethnic minorities, or even something as trivial as video games.

Propaganda

In a 1941 radio address, George Orwell asserted that "Propaganda in some forms or other lurks in every book, that every work of art has a meaning and a purpose- a political, social and religious purpose- and that our aesthetic judgements are always coloured by our prejudices and beliefs." (Wollaege, Mark. 2006) Propaganda is a tool used by the media, especially newspapers, and politicians to spread propaganda to hopefully help achieve their own goals. Working together, the public could be fed lies and be given bias' because they blindly follow the media and what they say about other people. An example of this, is the war of Iraq. "During the run-up to war the Bush administration and Blair government argued that the war was necessary on the basis of a potential threat from Iraq. They claimed that Iraq were developing weapons of mass destruction" (Miller, David. 2004). Which, inevitably gained the public's support with going to war with Iraq.

Yet, the media, as mentioned, can also help people to spread their own propaganda, especially politicians. For example, Hitler did a radio broadcast in 1938. Yet "Before the Führer rose to speak, the German radio announcer named literally dozens of countries, from Lithuania to Uruguay, where

the speech was being broadcast live.” (Vaughn, David, 2008) which was listened to by a few million people.



Schweitzer, Hans (1932) Our last hope- Hitler
Accessed on 13th May 2020

Hans Schweitzer, was the most well known artist to help spread Hitler's propaganda. Becoming interested in politics at a very young age, he produced 43 pieces of work In his lifetime, most of them featuring the swastika, or making Hitler out to be a saint, almost. His help, in spreading the propaganda of Hitler being these people's saviour, would make people think they'd have to side with Hitler otherwise they're will be seriously bad consequences.

Yet, propaganda was spread about something as simple as video games. Since the rise of video games in the 1990's, they have commonly been blamed for acts of violence, theft or other assortment of crimes. These crimes may not have any thing to do with what people do outside of them, but there have never been subsequent facts to back up that video game sequel violence.

"Researchers have extensively studied whether there is a casual link between video games and violent behaviour, and while there isn't quite a consensus, there is a broad agreement that no such link exists."(Draper, Kevin, 2019)

Upon further research into the key word Propaganda, a few more questions have come to mind which I could possibly look into. An example of these questions are "How are wars depicted in the media" "how did Hitler rise to power?" And "Why are video games demonised in the media?"

Within this, I could also look at key words, like falsified, moral panics, chauvinism, partisan, prejudice, bias, and discriminative.

However, i could also look at how the spread of this propaganda has effected people's view of whichever topic I decide to focus on for my dissertation. For example, I could look at, since the popularity of video games have grown since the 90's, I could look at how the media have depicted them or how many times they have been blamed for violent crimes such as the Columbine massacre.

Rhetoric

"A theory of rhetoric is first and foremost, a theory of communication. But because communication touches every aspect of culture, rhetoric is also part of a social and cultural theory" (Joachim Knape, 2013) Media rhetoric have been around, since these media outlets were made, described as persuasive speaking or writing, but often lacks truth in said speaking. From articles with big topics such as race, to something a little smaller as video games. Yet, rhetoric has been traced back to 1st - 2nd AD. "In 'Dialogus de oratoribus' (1st-2nd Century A.D), Tacitus linked the flourishing of rhetoric with the existence of the Roman republic before the imperial era" (Knape, Joachim 2012) Media rhetoric is commonly used negatively, such as people against vaccines. They claim that there have been studies to prove that vaccinations can cause autism in children, but there have been numerous studies, with actual statistics and experiments to prove that that statement is false, yet parents still believe them, which can prove fatal.

Rhetoric is a tool used by the media and people, to spread misinformation, which could lead people to panic. For example, an articles was released which states "violent video game exposure has been shown, to increase aggression in the player. The present research examines the idea that violent video game play does not only have an impact on the player, but also on the players social network" (Greitemeyer, Tobias. 2018) This statement alone, especially parents of younger children, can lead to parents keeping their children away from both video games and social network sites, as they wouldn't want their children to start being aggressive. Yet we have seen in previous articles, such as Kevin Drapers "The data on bananas causing suicide is about as conclusive" So I feel it also has to do with a persons own bias's that effects if they believe that video games can cause violence or not. People have even run experiments to see if violent video games, even have a chance to cause violent crimes. "We found no evidence of an increase in crime associated with video games" (Cunningham, Scott. Engelstätter, Benjamin. Ward, Michael R. 2016). So it is still odd that this argument still exists, as to whether video games cause violent or not, when there has been no hard proof as to if it does or not. Otherwise, if there where, the video game industry would probably have changed drastically, or even, worst case scenario, shut down all together.



Christian Petersen (2019) E3
Accessed on 13th May 2020.

Despite all the bad publicity that video games have gotten, it still remains popular to this day. Essentially trying to break the bad stigma that has surrounded it. But even when video games, or their players do good, like raise money for charity, the media is still filled with senseless rhetoric that they are bad, and all video games can do is bad.

In today's society, one of the biggest ways rhetoric is spread is through social media sites like Facebook and Twitter. As it is so easy for peoples statements, which have absolutely no facts

whatsoever to back them up, to be seen and believed by the masses. These news stories tend to circulate more when more major events are happening, whether they are specific to one country or global. An example, when the 2016 American election was happening, it says "People are much more likely to believe stories that favour their preferred candidate, especially if they have ideologically segregated social media network." "The average American adult saw on the order of one or perhaps several fake news stories in the months around the election, with just over half of those who recalled seeing them, believing them." (Allcott, Hunt. Gentzkow Matthew 2017)

However, in the age of social media, some rhetoric can be used in a positive way. Some "Social media require a marketing rhetoric that embraces emerging language use and shifting communication norms. Emoji's have become quintessential elements of social media communications." (Jing Ge, Gretzel Ulrike 2017). So this proves that rhetoric can be used for some aspects, including some people's careers, but can definitely be used in negative ways also, in terms of how other media outlets use them.

After researching more into different ways rhetoric is spread, a few questions have come to mind that I could look into. "Do video games cause violence?" "Has fake news ever been correct?" And "What is the worst case of fake news that was spread?"

Also, I could look into specific cases of media rhetoric, like the columbine massacre, or "in 2006, 18 year old Devin Moore was arrested in Alabama for car theft, but when they brought him in, he attacked a police officer, took his gun, shot a couple of police officers, then stole a police car, which the media blamed on the game 'Grand Theft Auto'" (Layton, Julia. 2008)

In conclusion, upon researching my three words, I have come up with numerous questions relating to each key word, yet, all of these questions are closely related, as all three key words are very relatable to one another. Being commonly linked to the media. All these key words, I had a wide variety of subjects I could go into.

The question I will explore is 'How the media portrays video games?' And, with this question have come a bunch of sub questions that I will include in my independent research document. One of these sub questions would be 'Do video games cause violence?' Then within this I can look into why people think video games cause violence. How the media has portrayed video games and blamed them. I could then also look into, why the media portrays the video game industry the way it does, has the media industry ever portrayed video games in a positive light? What good has the video game industry done for good? Why do some politician's also blame video games? Why are video games demonised? If any, what facts are there that video games can cause such horrific crimes they get blamed for? What games are blamed the most?

The concepts such as minority, media, youth, demonised, crime, controversy, moral panic, politics, symbolism, social network, aggression, and age ratings have and will be further researched for my independent research document.

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