Examining the Use of Heroism as a Method of Persuasion in the Great War Propaganda—The Case of United States of America Posters

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Abstract

The Purpose of Study: *This article aims to understand the compositional methods used in the propaganda. In this sense, the central theme of this study is to understand how heroism was portrayed in the posters of the Great War propaganda in the United States.*

Literature Review/Background: *The way heroism is portrayed in the Great War propaganda posters is the main topic of this paper. Propaganda in this sense is understood as a means aimed at manipulating information so that public opinion conforms to the propagandist's intentions.*

Method: *In this paper, it is believed that the study of posters depicting heroism will deepen the study of propaganda and its use as an instrument of deception. Because the phenomenon of heroism occupies an important place in cultures, it has been discussed in detail in a separate section. The posters discussed in the study were analyzed using the semiotic analysis of Roland Barthes.*

Results: *The depiction of heroism on the Great War propaganda posters underpins its narratives in both direct and indirect expression. The direct messages of heroism were mainly accompanied by slogans that combined religious idealism, morality, a noble cause, honor, and justice. The indirect messages, on the other hand, were associated with themes of unity, desirability, journey, and duty. In addition, the depiction of heroism was directed at women and children, who were referred to as the 'home front.'*

Conclusion: *In poster propaganda in the United States, the distinction between good as 'our' side and evil as 'their' side is obvious. It has been noted that the use of heroism in propaganda posters at the most critical moments of the Great War was a crucial element, as its depiction reduced the war to an abstract metaphor rather than conveying the harsh reality of war.*

Keywords: *Great War, Propaganda, Poster Art, Semiology, Heroism, Visual Culture.*

Büyük Savaş Propagandasında Kahramanlığın Bir İkna Yöntemi Olarak Kullanımının İncelenmesi— Amerika Birleşik Devletleri Posterleri Örneği

Öz

Giriş ve Çalışmanın Amacı: *Bu makale, Birinci Dünya Savaşı sırasında propaganda afişlerinde kullanılan kompozisyon yöntemlerini anlamayı amaçlamaktadır. Bu bağlamda, afiş propagandasında kahramanlığın nasıl tezahür ettiği bu çalışmanın ana temasını oluşturmaktadır.*

Kavramsal/Kuramsal Çerçeve: *Büyük Savaş propaganda afişlerinde kahramanlığın tasvir ediliş biçimi bu çalışmanın ana konusudur. Bu anlamda propaganda, kamuoyunun propagandacının niyetlerine uyması için bilgiyi manipüle etmeyi amaçlayan bir araç olarak anlaşılmaktadır.*

Yöntem: *Bu çalışmada, kahramanlığı tasvir eden afişlerin incelenmesinin, propaganda ve onun bir aldatma aracı olarak kullanımı konusundaki çalışmaları derinleştireceğine inanılmaktadır. Kahramanlık olgusu kültürlerde önemli bir yer tuttuğu için ayrı bir bölümde ayrıntılı olarak ele alınmıştır. Çalışmada ele alınan afişler Roland Barthes'ın göstergebilimsel analizi kullanılarak analiz edilmiştir.*

Bulgular: *Büyük Savaş propaganda afişlerindeki kahramanlık tasviri, hem doğrudan hem de dolaylı anlatımıyla anlatılarının temelini oluşturmaktadır. Doğrudan kahramanlık mesajlarına çoğunlukla dini idealizm, ahlak, asil bir dava, onur ve adaleti birleştiren sloganlar eşlik etmiştir. Dolaylı mesajlar ise birlik, arzu edilirlik, yolculuk ve görev temalarıyla ilişkilendirilmiştir. Buna ek olarak, kahramanlık tasvirleri 'ev cephesi' olarak adlandırılan kadın ve çocuklara yönelik olmuştur.*

Sonuç: *Amerika Birleşik Devletleri'ndeki poster propagandasında, 'bizim' taraf olarak iyi ile 'onların' tarafı olarak kötü arasındaki ayrım çok açıktır. Büyük Savaş'ın en kritik anlarında propaganda afişlerinde kahramanlığın kullanılmasının çok önemli bir unsur olduğu, zira bunun savaşın sert gerçekliğini aktarmak yerine savaşı soyut bir metafora indirgediği belirtilmiştir.*

Anahtar Kelimeler: *Büyük Savaş, Propaganda, Afiş Sanatı, Göstergebilim, Kahramanlık, Görsel Kültür.*

1. Introduction

The Great War, or in other words, World War I, is one of the second largest wars in human history and continues to reverberate with its consequences to this day. Historian Margaret MacMillan refers to the War as the phenomenon that killed millions, destroyed economies, and devastated empires and societies alike, but above all shocked and surprised everyone because of its unprecedented scale (2013, pp. 18). Because the war had a global focus, news from the front was of absolute importance. However, in the early 1900s, mass media was limited and not as readily available as it is today, so information about events in war zones was under the control of political rulers and shaped to serve their interests. The media were

instrumentalized because widespread support and military mobilization were necessary factors for political rulers to exploit in order to achieve victory. In this context, propaganda through myths that captivated the public to gain support and encourage more people to join the army was a primary strategy to recruit, legitimize, and win the ongoing war.

The simple definition of propaganda means a specific method used to promote or spread certain ideas (Jowett & O'Donnell, 2012, pp. 2). However, in contrast to this established meaning, the effect of propaganda is not considered neutral, as stated in the definition, but a negative phenomenon, usually used as a synonym for words such as lies, deception, dishonesty, manipulation, and mind control (Ibid.). The most telling example of the loss of neutrality in how propaganda promotes specific ideas is the discrepancy between what propaganda promised in the case of the nations that entered the Great War and the war's outcome. It is undeniable today that the literal promise of swift and heroic victories, accompanied by the visual stimuli that propaganda had employed, drove humanity to such phenomena that its never-ending violence in war culminated in catastrophic human tragedies on a global scale.

Therefore, this research article aims to analyze the theme of heroism depicted on the propaganda posters. Before embarking on the analysis of the posters, the paper first examines what propaganda is in general. The following chapter analyzes the concept of heroism by locating its roots in culture and understanding its ontological necessity in social dynamics. The last part of the paper analyzes posters that use the narratives of heroism.

2. Propaganda as a Misleading Factor

Although propaganda gained unprecedented popularity in the 20th century, its origins are not rooted in that era. The term derives from the Latin word propagare, meaning to spread, and was first used in the 16th century for catholic purposes authorized by Pope Gregorio XV (Pedrini, 2018, pp. 15). Moreover, the philosophical and theoretical origins of propaganda can be traced back to ancient Greece. The term was actively used by Alexander the Great, the Roman Empire, the early Christians, and later, thanks to the invention of printing by Martin Luther for his fight against the Catholic Church. With the new means of communication available to propagandists, especially during the French and American Revolutions and later by Napoleon, propaganda took on a new status within social dynamics (Jowett & O'Donnell, 2012, pp. 51).

With the aforementioned information, it is evident that the meaning of the term did not originally refer to misleading information or a creative enticement to manipulate social

consciousness but instead was used to propagate ecclesiastical philosophy and, with the French Revolution, political purposes (Pedrini, 2018, pp. 15). As the abstract status of the masses began to disappear in the eyes of politicians and gradually gained more weight in decision-making about the future of their nations, the idea of public persuasion gained momentum as the need to appease the masses became a significant obligation for politicians—and the ruling class. In other words, Robert Tombs points to the rise of the masses in the 19th century, when the decline of Western monarchy became irreversible, and no matter how limited the plebiscite, how twisted the rules, or how unreliable the brand-new parliaments, the new elections often took an increasingly serious interest in politics, newspaper articles, and public meetings (2003, pp. 31). Thus, the more the public placed its trust in coming plebiscites, the greater the need for mass persuasion became. Therefore, political attention and the development of propaganda coincided with the social changes that began in the late 19th century.

One can conceptualize this underlined need for persuasion and social change by comparing the visual arts between the neoclassical movement and the renaissance. Whereas the latter drew most of its artistic motivation from religious structures and Christian philosophy, the former, while not wholly distancing itself from ancient culture and also producing such artworks symbolically similar to Renaissance themes, comparatively shifted its aesthetic focus to the glorification of political leaders and the founding of nations/states. Most artworks—especially by Jacque Louis David or Jean Auguste Dominique Ingres—depict figures such as the self-made politician(s) or delineate stories supporting the liberal movement and political upheavals. In the painting by Louis David (Figure 1), for example, we see a composition that does not tell an ecclesiastical story, as Michelangelo did in the Sistine Chapel (Figure 2), but instead depicts a figure known as Napoleon standing at his work table. The candle on his right is lit, and the clock behind the desk indicates that it is almost thirteen past four. After viewing the painting with the given information, the viewer can immediately absorb that the painting not only immortalizes Napoleon through visual art but also tries to convince the viewer that Napoleon is an "extraordinary man" who does not know the meaning of sleep—because the

lit candle and the time shown on the clock indicate that it is the earliest—or latest—time of the day—and works continuously for the good of French citizens.

Figure 1. Jacques-Louis David, The Emperor Napoleon, 1812, Oil on Canvas 2.04 x 1.25 m

Figure 2. Michelangelo, The Creation of Adam, 1508-12, Fresco, 2.08 x 5.07 m

There is inevitably more to be said about the subtle messages the painting in Figure 1 conveys to the viewer. The lion motif, the map on the table, the blue and white uniform, and much more hidden in the composition express that Napoleon was no ordinary man but a historical figure who served ideals and progress. With that information in mind, the motifs and symbols deciphered here show that this aesthetically and realistically designed tableau is, if not an archetype of a convincing work of art, a masterful example of propaganda in the 19th century (Eitner, 2000, pp. 201-202).

Although there is a visible connection between David's Napoleon tableau and the conventional terminology of propaganda in the sense of implicit or overt promotion of ideas and people, the painting cannot conceptually be classified as propaganda in the form used

in the Great War. As mentioned earlier, propaganda in the War differs from its historical predecessors for two reasons: A: thanks to the advance of mass duplication devices, the propagandist's message could be disseminated en masse—primarily through printed posters; and B: a propagandist in the Great War not only aims to win the public over to the desired goal (e.g., justification for entering the Great War), but in doing so, it also censors the use of words or reality by emphasizing content that touches on emotion rather than rationality. Most often, these emphases are made by psychological tricks to arouse the public's guilt and will to act in the propagandist's interest, and by distorting the reality of war by enacting an artificial concept of war of heroism and antiheroism.

Political scientist Harold D. Lasswell (1938) defines 20th-century propaganda not as a mechanism that controls mental states nor as a mechanism of moral obligations, but its only goal is to control public opinion through symbolic communication. Laswell points out that thanks to these symbols, which include stories, rumors, reports, images, and other social communication methods, propaganda enabled influential figures to establish a public consensus and social control. In this sense, Lasswell states, propaganda, along with military operations and economic pressure, is the most necessary means against a belligerent enemy (pp. 8-9).

Therefore, propaganda became the primary means of communication for governments in the 20th century, as its form allowed regular contact between the public and political figures (Pedrini, 2018, pp. 4). For example, since Great Britain did not have the necessary number of professional soldiers because there was no universal conscription until 1916, a Parliamentary Recruitment Committee (PRC) was established so that political leaders could control social pressure and consequently recruit young people for the war (Pedrini, 2018, pp. 20).[1] By May 1916, the organization managed to distribute more than 12 million posters, 34 million leaflets, 5.5 million brochures, and 2 million copies of other types of printed materials (ibid.). Through the enormous scale of mass production and distribution of printed matter, as well as organized rallies, public events, and other forms of propaganda communication, the Committee's wartime propaganda was so successful with British families that most young men volunteered

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[1] The PRC was not an isolated case in Britain. When it became apparent that the U.S. was about to enter World War I in favor of the Allies, the Committee on Public Information (CPI) was formed to mobilize public opinion and win their support for participation. Established in 1917, CPI became another successful mass communication for the war that increasingly influenced the American public. Similarly, Germany established the German Information Bureau (GIB) in hopes of gaining American support; however, Jonathan A. Epstein (2000) notes in his article that German efforts to gain American support failed because German propaganda suffered from misunderstanding the American character.

to fight for Britain to avoid the social stigma of being labeled cowards or the like and to avoid some ostracism.

3. Heroism as a Cultural Phenomenon

Heroism is undoubtedly one of the most complex concepts and could be both an exciting and torturous process for those who set out to explain every aspect of it and its relationship to culture. The reason why heroism is a complicated subject is not only because of the variety of definitions associated with it but also because the concept of heroism occupies a vast and contradictory space in history, in its nature concerning the subjective value system of each social dynamic, and the diverse interpretations of scholars. As for the variety of scholarly definitions of heroism, Hegel, for example, believed that heroism is a "spiritual" matter and that the ultimate process of one's heroism is free from errant, carnal desires and pressing duties and is predetermined in a web of events at the end of which one becomes a hero (cited in Hook, 1957, pp. 61). In the Hegelian sense, Alexander the Great, Napoleon Bonapart, or other leading figures usually come to mind. However, a quick understanding of Hegel's and other 19th-century social determinists' concept of heroism would completely ignore the opposing side of history, namely the story of the Persians and Indians, who were tormented by Alexander's expansionism or the price paid by thousands of conscripts and civilians from both France and the warring nations due to wars fought for the sake of Napoleon's political agenda. Moreover, the definition of heroism also ignores the social dynamics that made such critical historical moments possible. Thus, a study that focuses solely on heroism to evaluate the deeds of a historical figure but completely disregards the historical, situational, and sociopolitical reasons and cultural dynamics that produced a particular figure, as well as the consequences of that figure's deeds, would fall short.

Thus, in the effort to understand heroism and its relationship to culture, an approach that grounds its scientific bent in heroism that is free of the spiritual concept is a necessary methodology, and orthodox Marxism accommodates this necessity. Georgi Plekhanov (1950), for example, summarizes the question of heroism in an alternative doctrine in which he rejects two aspects of the individual's influence in a given society: first, active heroism in individuality, and second, the categorical passive succession of the individual. Plekhanov believes that everything that has happened in the continuum of historicity is determined not by the deeds of specially selected individuals or Carlyle's "great men", but by the social force and socio-economic relations that determine the course of significant events and the prospects of societies. Although individual talents may exert some influence, they are the product of persistent social trends (pp. 41-53).

The approach that conceives of heroism as a social product, as Pleakhanov intended, rather than the 19th century social determinists such as Hegel, would be more informative in understanding heroism from a perspective that approaches the aspect that makes it a unique research topic: why we need heroism in our cultures. Therefore, in order to understand the place of heroism in the cultural scene, it is essential to introduce the topic by addressing the concept of culture before turning to the definition of heroism. Cultural anthropologist Ernest Becker theorizes that culture is a spectrum in which humans find an immortal and imperishable symbol and cosmic relationship with their kind in the face of nature's chaos and danger (1974, pp. 3). When our distant ancestors recognized the "I"—the linguistic term for self-knowledge—in their social context, it became categorically impossible to remain in deep oblivion amidst the disinterested food chain of nature (Becker, 1971, pp. 22). In this context, for Becker, the "I" or the self should not be seen as a banal exploration of self-consciousness, for its discovery leads humans to the deepest core of their psyche, as the concept itself poses a riddle of self and body. An animal without self-knowledge lives in timelessness and in a world of emptiness, where the now counts above all (pp. 16). Humanity with self-knowledge, on the other hand, cannot behave this way, because self-knowledge fixes time with yesterday, today, and tomorrow, creating a self-relevance of existence within endless reality (idib). Thus, whereas an instinct-driven animal, which perceives external threats only when they come too close, can continue its life without a neurotic breakdown, a self-conscious human is deprived of this situation, for, as Becker says, s/he is not a mere object that "simply undergoing experiences," but a subject of which "I am not simply undergoing experiences, but I am experiencing myself" (pp. 23).

Culture thus constitutes human life beyond the sole biological chain of events in the processes of nature. Eliade states that in the midst of this boundless, unknown, and threatening expanse that we call fauna, a human had to develop a new orientation (orientatio), otherwise survival was impossible (1978, pp. 3). In this new orientation, that is, in culture, human became no longer alienated from the organismic beings that faced the state of nature, but drew their centrality from the culturally existing mythologies and cosmogonies. "Culture itself," says Becker, "is sacred because it is the "religion" that in some way ensures the perpetuation of its members" (1974, pp. 4). On the one hand, then, culture gives people a collective sense of belonging and a symbolic anchorage through which they feel part of a larger scheme of life. On the other hand, it is another reality in which mythologies and stories meet the collective consciousness through symbolic communication, transporting it to a world of frontier adventures and bold undertakings in which the cosmos is restored and collective human life is affirmed not only in the presence of nature but also in the worlds beyond. It is in this cosmic relationship between

human beings and their existence in nature that the concepts of heroism and antiheroism take their place.

In particular, Joseph Campbell argues that heroes, whether occidental or oriental, modern, ancient, or primitive, are the forms of collective expressions of truths that masquerade for us as the lessons of our mythologies (2004, pp. 21). In other words, heroes as myth in history are not simply dreamed interpretations or one's unconscious biography in relation to the culture and its history, but rather symptoms of traditional wisdom that provide people with a particular sober worldview and culturally available survival mechanism (pp. 8-11). Campbell explains that every hero has to undergo a formidable adventure, consisting of departure, initiation and return. Through the monomyth, or the heroes' completed journey to the unsecured and unknown maps, their respective triumphs and failures taught a philosophical value of humility and virtue and provided prosperity.

Campbell's study of heroism in myths presents a very remarkable idea of the way we understand culture and the narrative relationship of heroism in culture. However, Campbell continues, the monomyth in human history is disrupted in the industrial age because the permanence and influence of the network of myths it created fell away. However, it is important not to overlook Campell's emphasis that a certain monomyth does not disappear in modern life, but rather is impoverished by the glorification of the nation and its flag as a totem (pp. 358-359). In this sense, heroism as a cultural need is always a norm in collective human life regardless of the nature of public relations and cultural dynamics. To understand what is meant here, it is worthwhile to examine heroism as an ontological necessity in culture by returning once again to Ernest Becker.

In The Denial of Death (1973), Ernest Becker analyzes the concept of heroism, but instead of dealing with its mythological meaning, as Campell did in his studies, he seeks to understand why a culture needs heroism within its platform. Therefore, Becker addresses the necessity of heroism and even goes so far as to say that the concept of heroism is the central pillar that drives the entire philosophy of culture and the mechanism of cultural and social traits, because heroism is primarily the reflex of the terror of death (pp. 11). According to Becker, the sense of being unique is the way of earthly heroism, and each system assigns roles for different degrees of heroism in a given society. In this sense, according to Becker, heroism consists mainly of two roles: on the one hand, the "high" heroism of identities that drive and influence people on a large scale, such as Napoleon, Churchill, or Buddha; on the other hand, the "low heroism" of masses such as doctors, construction workers, or farmers who experience a special satisfaction in their limited scope of lives because their everyday deeds mean that their working hands

balance the family or others appreciate their energy (pp. 4-6). Regardless of how heroism functions—that is, whether it is religious, primitive, secular, or scientific—the magical status of heroism is always in play to convey a sense of value of importance, cosmic specialness, lasting significance, and participation in unity or creation (idib).

4. The Phenomenon of Heroism Reflected on Posters: The Case of the United States of America

As propaganda during the Great War used psychological manipulation to control public opinion and persuade young men to enlist, the theme of heroism was one of the most frequently illustrated messages on posters. Regardless of how heroism was depicted on propaganda posters, the system of depiction always coincided with a particular myth-making, and each of the materials used on the posters was utilized as a unit to capitalize on the propagandist's intent. In this sense, the representation of heroism in propaganda stands synonymous with Ronald Barthes' use of semiology as a decoding mechanism of the ideological or propagandistic rhetoric of mass culture. Barthes argues that any form of expression, such as a speech, photograph, painting, or poster, is the subject through which a particular myth acquires its existence, and the anatomy of myth takes its form through deviation from real events and historical context, and in turn, the expression of the intended message is justified (1972, pp. 111-117). From this Barthes concludes that myth is alive not in the way a representation is designated or denoted, but in the way it has been connoted by the spectators in a particular context (1967, pp. 89-91).

The first example of the representation of heroism as mythic enactment in Barthes' sense is evident in the ambiguous and abstract manner in which the great war propaganda presents its case. Laswell notes that the themes of propaganda were realized in abstract values such as religious idealism and ethical sense, but not through an overly vivid expression of the true horrors of war (Laswell, 1938, pp. 97-98). Similar to Pedrini, the war was in many ways called a crusade because it described the cause as a holy one that exquisitely justified support and recruitment in the public consciousness (Pedrini, 2018, pp. 68). The depiction of heroism on propaganda posters, as suggested by Laswell and Pedrini, distorted the actual identity of the Great War and gained its mythical status primarily through the way it was represented through abstract values such as honor, justice, divinity, and spirituality in the Hegelian sense. Moreover, these messages suggested a kind of desirability, uniqueness, togetherness, journey, and noble duty, and offered a certain heroism in the sense of Becker, in which the main aspiration in life is to find a place in

the cosmic unity in the dominant culture and, moreover, to experience a special respect and desirability (see: Figure 3).

Figure 3. James M. Flagg, "Together We Win"
1917-18, 97 x 73 cm

In this context, the main reason for using heroism on posters as a myth was twofold. The first and most obvious was to gain support from home and sell the war to the male interlocutors, while the second was to convince those who remained rather passive and apathetic to enlist in the great war (Pedrini, 2018, pp. 39). This dual motivation of Great War propaganda is particularly evident in the way propaganda posters in the United States, as in Figures 4 and 5, support its arguments. A brief analysis reveals that both images aim to call interlocutors to military service, and the depiction of American flag and other nationally significant mythological figures support the call as a noble and divine cause.

The main difference in how they call, however, lies in whom they speak to and how they convey the sense of heroism in their respective depictions. In the semiological analysis, the call in Figure 4 is a fairly strong element in the poster. The visual and lyrical representation—as in "Make it"—is one of urgency, offering active participation in the making of history rather than passively watching history being made. This call for active participation in the captivating events and decorations of the symbolic icons of the American nation on the poster should not be understood as a mere appeal to the interlocutors, for the poster represents a higher offer and suggests that accepting the call involves a noble decision and a promise of heroism. To understand what is meant here, it is worth looking at Campell's analysis of the monomyth. Campell notes that in order to make a particular journey a monomyth, the protagonist must first answer the divine call before embarking on the adventure. Campbell defines the "call to adventure" as a certain destiny that summons the hero "and transfer[ed] his spiritual center of gravity from within the pale of his society to a zone unknown" (2004, pp. 53). For Campbell, this unknown territory usually represents a distant land, a secret island, or a mythical kingdom, and crossing these lands makes one a hero—as it did for Theseus or Odysseus—but no matter what the journey represents, it is always a place of danger and torment (idib). With this articulated information, the poster in Figure 4 correlates with Campell's monomyth, for the poster also conveys a very strong message that it is calling for a dangerous adventure, namely to the front lines in Europe, where one's deeds will become history-making—not only in America, but throughout the world—and the soldier will thus become an American hero.

The poster shown in Figure 5 also uses the theme of the call to adventure, but in an ambiguous or indirect way. To understand its implicit message, Campell's study of the monomyth again provides a starting point. Campell points out that the mythologies of history show that the chosen protagonists do not always accept the call; rejection is always an option within the stories. Rejection of the call, Campell argues, transforms the adventure into a negative phenomenon; the subject—like King Minos—loses his power and becomes another victim to be rescued—by Theseus who accepted the call—, his world becomes a wasteland, and life becomes meaningless (2004, pp. 54). Similarly, Figure 5 shows a young male figure standing in the dark in an apartment watching the soldiers marching in the light. With the text "On which Side of the window are you?" the message is directed at the young Americans who have chosen to reject the call to participate in the war. Aside from the guilt and sense of betrayal imposed on interlocutors who continue to not sign up for the war, the way the male figure is depicted in darkness and isolation represents two things at once. First, the anxiety and insignificance triggered by his passivity—in Becker's terms, the destruction of cultural heroism. Second, this passivity implies betrayal of the noble cause of Americans going to the great war.

Figure 4. James M. Flagg, "The Navy Needs You!" Lithography 1917, 104 x 69 cm

Figure 5. Laura Brey, "On Which Side of the Window are You?" Lithography 1917, 99 x 66 cm

As we learn from Campell, Minos failed to advance in his role in life by taming the divine bull rather than facing it, because taming the bull gave him a sense of security, and in the end that very bull (Minotaur) became a terror in his realm (pp. 55). The same theme is vividly connoted in the poster in Figure 5, for it implicitly suggests that refusing the call is tantamount to collaborating with the enemy. In both cases, the character's refusal obstructs his path to heroism. The character could have made history, but his refusal to answer the call meant not only that he had to watch admiringly as the American soldiers in unity and solidarity marched into the realm where history will be written, but also that he had to endure the stigma of betrayal, for his refusal suggests that he is leaving the marchers without support.

The emphasis on the call to adventure is not limited to the concept of the posters mentioned just now. The portrayal of adventure as a possible chance to see the world was one of the successful materials used to attract young men to the war. The posters in Figure 6, for

Figure 6. James Drugherty, "Come along—learn something, see something in the U.S. Navy" Lithography 1919, 107 x 71 cm

Figure 7. Winsor McCay, "The New Education" Lithography 1919, 36 x 28 cm

example, emphasize the greatness of adventure by offering prospective soldiers the chance to "learn something [and] see something." Posters of this type also offered interlocutors free participation in this promised world tour and provided cordiality and education during their military service. The poster in Figure 7, in particular, is full of these promises. The iconic figure of the American nation, Uncle Sam, displays a fatherly gesture with arms wide open, introducing the inexperienced young man to the possibilities and vastness of the world that awaits him, especially in Europe. Furthermore, the manipulative power of the poster in Figure 7 does not end with the information provided here. Pedrini argues that the depiction of symbols like Uncle Sam suggests an authority that goes hand in hand with the domestic values, unity, warning, and power, so that the very depiction of Uncle Sam also demonstrates to the American interlocutors the nobility of the content proposed in the pro   paganda posters (2018, pp. 62).

In analyzing the American propaganda posters of the Great War, another strong aspect of the use of the theme of heroism is revealed in the way the posters reduce all reality to a stereotypical generalization. Before we semiologically analyze the works of posters that make use of a particular stereotyping, we should first briefly discuss how the term itself functions in a social context. For Ronald Barthes, stereotyping belongs to metalanguage, which is a method of communication in the form of a depoliticized aphorism and a "decorous equivalent of tautology" (1972, pp. 155). In this sense, stereotyping is another element of the staging of the myth, since its representation grounds its core in the basis of the elusive relationship with nature. On the other hand, Stuart Hall (2003) explains that what makes stereotyping a very powerful phenomenon in the social sense is the construction of difference. Hall explains that difference does not necessarily mean something negative, as the root word suggests; however, it becomes problematic when it stands for a form that is a subjective simplification of otherness within an expanded understanding of traditional norms (pp. 238). Hall gives the example of the stigmatization of Africans in general as inherently childish, simple-minded, primitive, and dependent, and in constant need of guidance from white masters (pp. 243-244). What made them a subordinate element of white masters was their idiosyncratic way of life and skin color in the face of Western imperialism. In this sense, cultural otherness, Hall argues, takes its stereotypical form when a particular culture or representation of a culture does not conform to the categorical objectivity of the dominant cultural system, dividing it into acceptable and unacceptable, deviant and normal, insider or outsider, or us and them (pp. 258). Pedrini (2018) also speaks of stereotyping, but he sees it as the generalization of indigenous values as a unified representation of the dominant culture. Pedrini argues that stereotypes are not necessarily the complete images of the world, but the possible images of a universal world in which people feel at home, and that through this adaptation people and things acquire their familiar places, rituals, and particular traditions (pp. 75).

If we try to bring about the operation of stereotypes for both domestic values and otherness in the way propaganda posters use them, we arrive at a very rich content of images. The reason that such stereotypes were very common in the posters is that the quality of their use also correlates with the generalization of both internal social dynamics such as American liberalism, democracy, and the portrayal of heroism as the protector of these values, as well as the atrocities committed by the belligerent nations and certain representations of anti-heroism portrayed as the aggressor of these so-called domestic values.

Let us understand this information in coordination with the given context by looking at the posters in figures 8 and 9, which illustrate the aforementioned dual stereotyping in their own way. While in Figure 8 the public admiration and appreciation for the soldiers in the center of the poster first catches the eye, Figure 8 shows a striking and dramatic composition in which the notion of this otherness (or anti-heroism) commits a cruel crime. What makes them a striking example of stereotyping is the way their representation does not specifically concern a person or a movement in a historical context, but the way it proclaims its argument within the framework of 'us' and 'others.' In Figure 8, the young soldier is the protagonist of the poster and embodies these national values through the American flag, the military uniform, and the rifle. The stereotyping element of the poster becomes very vivid when the viewer pays direct attention to the circle of people at the bottom of the poster looking admiringly at the soldier. The slogan "Honored and respected by All" is visually supported by this circle of people, as their representation includes a variety of ages, including young children, and both genders. Therefore, the accompanying materials in the composition depict a soldier as the embodiment of this noble cause in every dyn amic of American society.
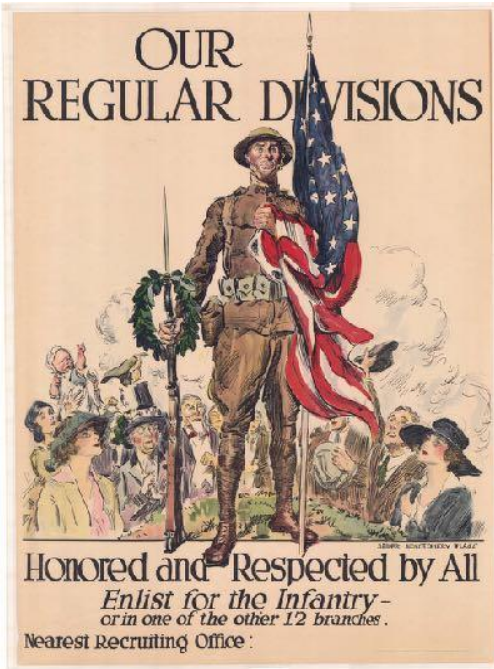
**Figure 8.** James M. Flagg," Our Regular Divisions" Lithography 1918, 70 x 52 cm
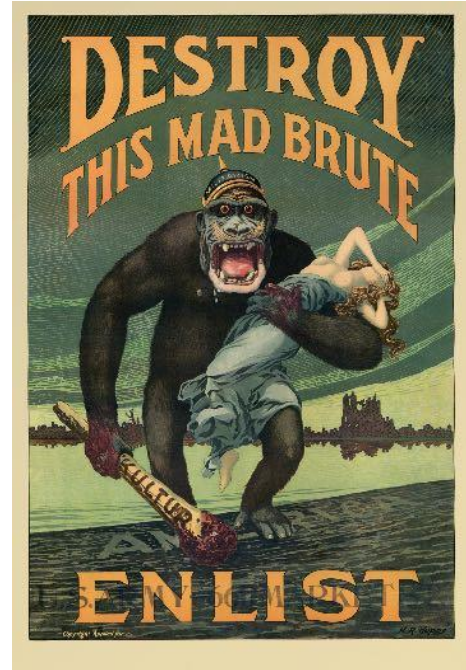
Figure 9. Harry R. Hopps," Destroy This Mad Brute" Lithography 1918, 106 x 71 cm

In contrast to the poster in Figure 8, the poster in Figure 9 illustrates the stereotyping associated with Hall's depiction of otherness, that is, the enemy. In a semiological understanding, the first conclusion suggests that the text is more striking and the visual content more dramatic than in the poster in Figure 8. The composition features a monstrous and screaming gorilla in the center holding a deceased young woman who lies half-naked in its claws. A closer analysis reveals that the first term that appears on the poster is the text "kultur," which can be seen on the bloodied stick that the gorilla is clutching. In addition, the monstrous gorilla wears a German helmet that reads "militarism." From this information, one could conclude that the monstrous gorilla is a mythical representation of barbarous Germany as a culture of militarism. The myth further establishes that this mythical phenomenon committed a crime by raping and murdering the woman "Lady Liberty" who represents the "freedom" of liberalism and the unifying force of its values.

The poster propaganda that addresses the themes of stereotyping of antiheroism in Figure 9 is not limited to this image, but is evident in a variety of different compositions and concepts. For example, the stereotype of anti-heroism is also very well expressed in the poster in Figure 10. Here, the visual narrative shows more of a realistic depiction of German militarism invading the American homeland. The message of the poster is very clear. With the texts "It will be too late to fight" and "When the enemy is at your door," the narrative focuses on the personification of fear as a motivating factor that compels viewers to enlist or justify the war. In some examples, however, the depiction of stereotyped antiheroism is more ambiguous, and its physical existence is omitted from the poster, a phenomenon that presents another and more complicated factor in the analysis of these posters. For example, the poster in Figure 11 expresses the vicarious consequences of the atrocities committed by the stereotypical anti-hero. In other words, even if the depiction of the enemy is omitted from the content, the dark background as destroyed debris of the city and the terror of the mother and her son for their lamentation over the lost daughter already scream the atrocities of depicted antiheroism.

This distinction of stereotypical values as real and touching the heart of the audience coincides with the vivid portrayal of real events taking place in the ongoing great war. Along these lines, James Aulich points out that the unprovoked German attack on Belgium allowed campaigns like PRC to create the impression that British soldiers were fighting for a just war against an arrogant and tyrannical enemy (2007, pp. 37). Therefore, the portrayal of German anti-heroism as a stereotypical expression of active victims and witnesses of atrocities, as in Figure 11, not only justifies the entry into the war and the soldiers as heroes, but is primarily aimed at imposing a special guilt and shame on people who have a contrary opinion about the enemy or the war itself. Pedrini suggests that posters such as Figures 10 and 11 represented a "moral blackmail" that imposed responsibility for these crimes even on those who refused the call, preferring to remain passive in the face of the ongoing world war (2018, pp. 169). In this sense, these posters resemble the previously analyzed poster in Figure 5, where refusing the call had its own destructive consequences.

The use of heroism was not directed only at the young men who were to be recruited for the ongoing great war. When enormous numbers of men enlisted for the war and were deployed to the fronts, countries such as Great Britain and the United States had a shortage of workforce to work at home, and for this reason, women and children were the main substitutes for this shortage (Pedrini, 2018, pp. 84). When women began to play an active role in the economy as well as in the production of munitions and the like, poster propaganda, in order to awaken the patriotic spirit of the nation as a "home front," had to organize a special campaign in which women were portrayed as protagonists.
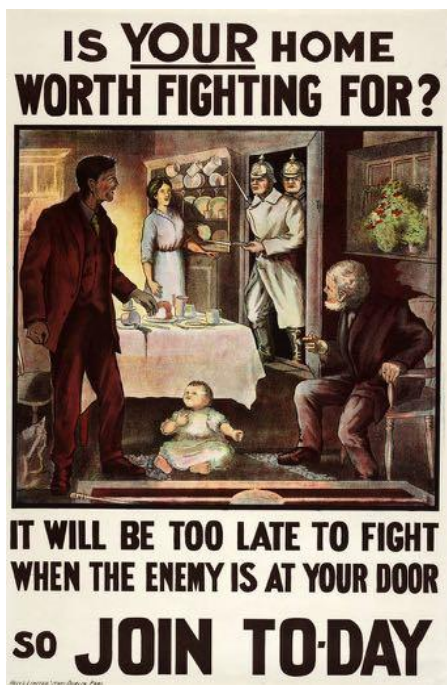
Figure 10. [S.l.: s.n., 1915], "Is Your Home Worth Fighting For?" Chromolithography 1915, 76 x 50 cm


Figure 11. Anonymous, "Don't Let Them Die You Can Save Them"1918, 75.5 x 54 cm

In the case of American posters directed at women, one element is particularly important to note. Just as wartime propaganda exploited the authority of national symbolic figures such as Uncle Sam to persuade men to enlist, the depiction of the elderly lady as a maternal figure was used as a proxy for all women. The poster in Figure 12 is a striking example of this behavior. The elderly lady opens her arms and invites the women to buy the government bonds. The maternal and transparent gesture of the depicted figure represents the feminine version of the iconic personifications of the nation—contrary to Uncle Sam, who stands for national masculinity.

It must be emphasized, however, that the depiction of women on propaganda posters suggests a more indirect and implicit representation of heroism than the depiction of men. That is, the way the women were highlighted on the posters rather emphasizes a supportive element for the highlighted noble cause of the U.S. in the way they fight in the great war. The poster in Figure 13, the composition shows strong, exemplary behavior for this information. The poster in Figure 13, the composition shows a strong exemplary behavior for this information. The poster

demonstrates a young woman carrying an American flag and plowing the ground. The message is directed at the women who are needed for the positions that not only maintain the economy of the United States, but also help the men on the front lines. According to Pedrini,
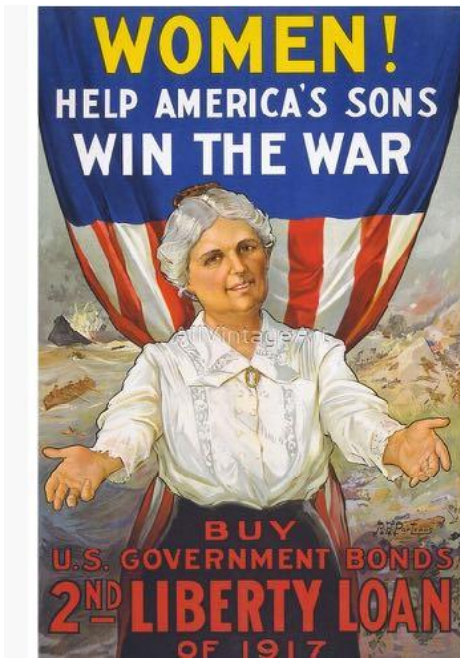
Figure 12. R. H. Porteous, "Women! Help America's Sons Win the War Lithography 1917, 75 x 49 cm

Figure 13. National War Garden Commission, "Will You Have a Part in Victory? 1918

posters that emphasize on the 'home front' suggested a mutual teamwork that the nation expected from its citizens: while the man fulfills his noble duty and defends his family, the woman's noble cause is the w ork that supports him on the battlefield (2018, pp. 85).

5.   Conclusion

Any apparatus used as propaganda material was also a weapon that, instead of fighting the enemy in battle, served to influence the public at home and trigger psychological domination over the enemy. From this perspective, according to Fiona Reynoldson, propaganda is a kind of advertising--or vice versa. Governments use propaganda for two reasons: 1. propaganda sells the war to the public to avoid a domestic crisis, and 2.

propaganda abroad is used to convince other countries that the enemy is in the wrong and will be defeated (1991, pp. 4).

The portrayal of heroism in American wartime propaganda was crucial in persuading men to enlist for the war. The main reason for the delineation of heroism lies in its sacred and central status in cultural dynamics and its historical contribution. The work of propaganda as talented artists, necessary technocrats such as Edward Bernays, and the mechanism of mass reproduction that made it possible to control public opinion about the Great War. The second reason lies in the sacred and central status of the concept of heroism in cultural dynamics. Because heroism suggested the protection of intrinsic values, nobility, drive, unity, and social desirability, the exploitation of the propaganda of this concept in the United States entailed a powerful, persuasive mechanism.

The main component of the portrayal of heroism in wartime propaganda was based on appeals and myths rather than on the actual events of the war. Selected examples suggest that wartime posters used this concept in direct and overt messages and indirect and implied gestures. These gestures were used interchangeably to suggest a sense of honor and active participation in making history and to harness the power of guilt and shame.

The analysis reveals that in its propaganda activities, U.S. used posters to declare those who participated in the war as heroes, those who refused the call as national renegades, and the enemy as the antihero. The term heroism was not limited to men in the United States but also included women and children, who were portrayed as the 'home front.' Since women played an active role, in the United States, in the absence of men, it was concluded that it was necessary and adequate to portray them as additional heroes of the ongoing war in order to gain the support of all segments (men-women, children-seniors) so that propaganda could convince women (and children) not only to support the war but also to work for the war and donate to the war.

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Figure 1. https://pixels.com/featured/the-emperor-napoleon-in-his-study-at-the-tuileries-by-jacques-louis-david-up-close-cora-wandel.html?product=greeting-card

Figure 2. https://fineartamerica.com/featured/creation-of-adam-michelangelo-buonarroti.html

Figure 3. https://digital.library.temple.edu/digital/collection/p16002coll9/id/3007/

Figure 4. https://www.loc.gov/resource/cph.3g10238/

Figure 5. https://www.loc.gov/item/98503178/

Figure 6. https://www.loc.gov/item/2002709071/

Figure 7. https://www.loc.gov/item/2002719778/

Figure 8. https://www.loc.gov/item/2002712331/

Figure 9. https://www.loc.gov/item/2010652057/

Figure 10. https://www.loc.gov/resource/cph.3g10977/

Figure11. https://artsandculture.google.com/asset/don-t-let-them-die-you-can-save-them/CgHKSaVD1us3ng?hl=en

Figure 12. https://www.loc.gov/item/93510435/

Figure 13. https://ohiomemory.org/digital/collection/p16007coll51/id/798/