

# Media culture and communication

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**ASSIGN  
BUSTER**

The paper shows that narrated by Walter Huston and Dana Andrews, the film is 60 minutes long. It was shown to allied soldiers serving in the Pacific region during that time. Directed by Frank Capra on behalf of the US War Department, it was produced to inform the allied soldiers about the last enemy that remained in the war after the fall of Italy and Germany: Japan. The idea was that increased knowledge about the history and culture of Japan would create an understanding of the current situation that would cause a positive effect on the allied war effort. Every chance to condemn the Japanese and their ideologies were used in the course of the film.

As this propaganda film was designed for army personnel being sent to fight the Japanese, it contains generalizations and stereotypical caricatures of the Japanese people and culture. Expected to have deliberate propagandistic content, this paper looks into the techniques of persuasion used.

Embedding history and culture. Much of the film is devoted to the life of the average Japanese, Japanese religion and the part religion played in the rise of Hirohito as the Emperor of Japan. There is an explanation of how the warlords, reviving and misusing the old Shinto religion created a Japan that became a belligerent world power rather than a peaceful one.

Japanese citizens are portrayed as being raised from a very young age to be soldiers, thought to be the “ highest human achievement” in their society. Japanese values such as the collective-versus -individual character, and the willingness to die for one’s master, among others, are exploited to show the negative side of the Japanese. In reality, however, these are issues irrelevant as to why Japan should be fought. To the Japanese, these values have proven positive to them.

Brooding sound and visual effects. There are animated sequences in the film.

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Clips from Japanese samurai films of the 1930s lend a brooding visual effect. Made up of sequences from documentaries with narration and music, there are bits that clearly are re-constructions of passed events but are presented as though they are real news footage. Sequence joint shots of Japanese soldiers and civilians preparing for war with the repeated image of a steel bar being relentlessly hammered in a forge gives a sinister effect.

Race and negative association. The film explains how the Japanese of today are a mixture of races that originally stem from the Ainu (described as " a hairy barbarian") with a touch of Mongolians and Malaysians. Their claims to be a pure race are put down and they become " a well-mixed plasma cocktail". The Japanese social classes and their development for 2000 years are summarised. The endless civil wars between local warlords are described as well as the Samurai system. The Samurai code, bushido, is referred to as " the Art of Treachery".

Use of symbolism for evil and pain. The movie encourages Americans to distrust Japanese people - in the context of the hateful and totalitarian worldwide thrust towards Pacific Ocean domination. It speaks of the world fomented by the Japanese Imperial Army. The Imperial Army was a vile force for hatred, genocide and narcissistic stupidity, which produced a world of suffering and pain. It is in fact evil. An attempt to explore the reasons for Japan's rise as a belligerent world power, it relies heavily on image and sound to communicate its message. In other words, the movie appeals to fear as it seeks to build support by instilling anxieties and panic on the viewers.

Use of repetition. An idea, repeated many times, may begin to be taken as the truth. The film suggests that Japan's national ambition was to control "

the eight corners of the world under one roof," an idea credited to Jimmu, Japan's first emperor. This is one of the many ideas promulgated in the film. The idea of "double-cross." The film states that Bushido (the way of the samurai), as well as other Japanese sports, depends on the art of the "double-cross". The movie seems to suggest that Japan's rise as an imperialist, incendiary, and aggressive world power, depended on this. Hitler lied and deceived the countries around him endlessly to win at any cost. He backstabbed those who believed him. Some quarters, however, believe that Japan's military merely copied this technique, since they were in league with Hitler and Mussolini.

Images of dead bodies. There are several pieces of the film that are meant to shock the viewer, particularly about death and dead bodies of Chinese children and others dead with their hands tied behind their backs. These are images that tend to demonize the enemy. The Japanese are presented to be sub-humans.

Symbolism in Japanese Octopus. The political machinery of the time is presented. There are great cartoon-like illustrations like the "Japanese Octopus" taking islands, for example.

Use of Euphoria. Supposedly positive, the euphoria was exploited in the film to produce a different effect on the audience. As used against Japan, Euphoria was created by utilizing military parades with marching bands and patriotic messages. Together with Flag-waving, these are attempts to show patriotism on the part of Japan. Alternating graphic shots of dead babies with euphoric Japanese soldiers at a rally, the use of these persuasion techniques all the more reinforce the beliefs of the American soldiers as the audience that time, to fight against them because of these war atrocities. A portion of <https://assignbuster.com/media-culture-and-communication/>

the film, in fact, is taken from captured Japanese news footage, showing Japanese victories.

On the other hand, for the American soldiers as the audience, Euphoria and Flag waving are also used – this time for positive persuasion effect. There is the actual combat footage of the battles for Okinawa, Corregidor, and Iwo Jima. There are the great scenes of General MacArthur wading ashore as he returns to the Philippines, paratroopers jumping and landing in combat zones and the famous scene of the raising of the American flag on Iwo Jima.

Finally, there are World War II paratroopers jumping from transport planes and landing in a combat zone. There is the underwater view of a torpedo being launched from a submarine and striking a ship with the resulting explosion. After being shot down, a Japanese airplane plunges into the sea. Euphoria!

In sum, the film is asking the audience to believe that Japan must be defeated. Having highlighted its interest to isolate, differentiate, and demonize the Japanese character as a threat to America, it makes a success out of it. The majority of the material, though, seemed more like a recruiting film rather than a documentary because of its time.

The film is able to persuade its intended audience which is the American soldiers through its many persuasion techniques.