

Proposal

Title - The Wonderful War of Disney: Walt Disney and the Promotion of American Ideals in Cold War America

Presentation Type – PowerPoint

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Category – Textual or Investigative

Abstract: This paper investigates the influence of Walt Disney on Cold War America during the 1950s. It argues that while Disney was openly political in the 1940s through the Motion Picture Alliance and the Un-American Activities House Subcommittee, he influenced the American public far more in promoting traditional American ideals in many of his live-action films and Disneyland. The post war period was one of great fear for many Americans, as the Cold War started, and few knew what the next day would bring. Many Americans longed for a sense of normalcy, and they wanted to cling to their ideals and their view of America. Walt Disney's films and theme park reflected these desires. Many of his films and attractions showed an idealized version of an American past and some even an idealized American future. At a time when people worried their American values may be lost, Disney showed a version of America which people could be proud of. Through his films, T.V. shows, and park, he showed a land built on American values with close families, heroic deeds, individual choice, and self-sacrifice. Through Tomorrowland, he showed a nation progressing scientifically. He showed a "tomorrow" where trips to the moon would be a common occurrence. Disney gave the American public, as well as world leaders, an ideal through his media influence.