

# The Enemy Caricature

## [The Enemy Within]

### “Blonde Hairs”

## Standing on the Side of Humanity

We are American.

- We are Blonde.

In many American families, babies are born with bright golden hair that shines like sunlight. It is simply one of the many natural variations of human appearance.

Hair color, like eye color or height, carries no moral meaning. Yet throughout history, visible traits have often been used as **symbols in propaganda and social conflict**.

Understanding how this happens is important if we want to stand on the side of humanity.

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## War Propaganda and “Enemy” Caricatures

During major conflicts such as World War I and World War II, propaganda frequently exaggerated physical traits to portray enemies as foolish, immoral, or inferior.

Hair color, facial features, accents, and clothing became visual shorthand in posters, comics, and pulp illustrations.

Examples included:

- Caricatures portraying Americans with exaggerated “blonde” features to symbolize decadence or arrogance.
- Axis propaganda depicting Northern Europeans and Americans as naïve or morally weak.
- Pulp magazines and posters simplifying people into exaggerated symbols designed to provoke emotion.

The purpose of this imagery was psychological warfare.

Its goal was to produce anger, fear, and social unity against an enemy.

When a population is repeatedly portrayed as a caricature rather than as human beings, the groundwork for dehumanization is laid.

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## How Caricature Leads to Dehumanization

The process usually unfolds in stages:

### 1. Reduction

A person is reduced to a visible trait—hair color, skin tone, accent, or nationality.

## 2. Symbolization

That trait becomes a symbol representing an entire group.

## 3. Moral Framing

Negative meanings are attached to the symbol—weakness, arrogance, stupidity, corruption.

## 4. Repetition

Images and jokes repeat the stereotype until the association becomes automatic.

## 5. Justification

Once people are seen as caricatures rather than individuals, mistreatment becomes easier to justify.

This process has appeared many times throughout history.

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# The Modern Environment

In the modern era, the mechanisms of propaganda have evolved.

Instead of wartime posters or pulp magazines, the same dynamics can appear through **viral videos, memes, and social media ridicule**.

Mockery directed at individuals because of their appearance, accent, or identity can spread rapidly online. When a person becomes a meme or caricature, their humanity can easily disappear from the conversation.

Digital platforms amplify emotional reactions and reward content that provokes outrage or ridicule. In that environment, stereotypes and caricatures can spread far faster than in earlier eras.

This does not mean every joke or meme is propaganda. But when ridicule targets **physical traits or identity**, the same historical pattern can emerge.

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# The Problem With Stereotyping

When physical traits such as hair color, ethnicity, or nationality become shorthand for judgment, prejudice begins.

History shows this clearly:

- Wartime propaganda targeting entire populations
  - Caricatures in pulp fiction and early comics
  - Cultural stereotypes repeated through media

In every case, individuals are replaced by simplified symbols.

Hair color itself is simply a genetic trait.

It has no connection to intelligence, character, morality, or worth.

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## Standing on the Side of Humanity

A healthy society rejects dehumanization in every direction.

No one should be mocked, degraded, or targeted because of their physical traits.

No group should be reduced to caricatures.

At the same time, people have a right to speak openly about prejudice when they experience it.

Standing on the side of humanity means recognizing that **dignity belongs to everyone**.

When we defend that principle consistently, regardless of who is targeted, we resist the very mechanisms that propaganda and social hostility depend on.

## Defining the Lines, Ending the Toxic Relationship

By Cowdrey

We are now defining clearer lines around protection and self preservation. In the past, these lines were often more blurred. Today, Americans observe a period of social immaturity, where hostility, ridicule, and aggressive rhetoric have become common in public discourse. All Americans reserve the right to protect themselves from abusive or dehumanizing behavior.

Modern examples of hate and wartime style propaganda should be acknowledged. One example frequently discussed is the mocking of Karoline Leavitt by Hispanic influencers on TikTok, along with other moments in which immigrant or foreign political actors have engaged in rhetoric that attacks or dehumanizes Americans.

At the same time, Americans widely recognize that injustice has occurred across many communities throughout history. The willingness to acknowledge those injustices is one of the qualities that has long defined the strength of the United States.

However, some of the current dynamics resemble tactics historically seen during wartime, when ridicule, caricature, and public humiliation are used to weaken the dignity of a targeted group. The targeting of White Americans has become increasingly widespread, sadly even within domestic communities.

Historically, Americans have often stood up for many communities, including Hispanic communities. Yet many Americans now express concern that the same respect is not returned. This sentiment is especially visible in areas experiencing rapid demographic change, where new immigrants arrive and tensions surrounding identity, belonging, and cultural integration emerge.

Many Americans feel uncomfortable when racism appears from newcomers, just as they would reject racism from anyone else. Such behavior does not build trust or friendship. While feelings of isolation among newcomers are understandable, living in the United States has traditionally included an expectation of healthy participation and cultural coexistence. Ideally, communities share space with mutual respect rather than dehumanizing or violating one another.

Americans reserve the right to confront racism wherever it appears. They also reserve the right to speak openly when hostility or cruelty is directed toward them. The American nation is currently navigating an intense cultural conflict that resembles rhetorical warfare, harsh political confrontation, or social cold war. Some have described this environment as

### **Cold War 2.0.**

The United States is not a shallow place. America represents home and heart, formed by shared effort, memory, spirit, culture, and identity. Over time, Americans naturally develop a sense of who stands beside them as a friend and who behaves as an adversary.

When a seat is offered at the table of American society, it is offered with the expectation of mutual respect. If that seat is taken while the host is pushed aside, Americans are likely to speak up. Despite tensions, Americans have continued to share opportunity and space, even while feeling that conflict and hostility have increasingly entered the conversation.

Historically, many Americans, often motivated by humanitarian ideals, showed patience during long periods of social change. They tolerated criticism, even racism, stepped aside in public conversations, and frequently supported the amplification of other voices. Many did so from a place of goodwill, humility, compassion, and empathy.

Yet that generosity sometimes came at a cost.

Americans have big hearts. That heart is one reason the nation has shared so much with others. But openness can also reveal vulnerabilities. At times, those vulnerabilities were met not with gratitude but with hostility, the open door invited confrontation rather than cooperation.

Because of this, many Americans feel their position in society and politics is changing rapidly.

Where their seat was taken, they are building new seats. The old table remains, but it now feels distant. Conversations around the American table became, in the eyes of many observers, too hostile, too prejudiced, and too filled with propaganda that resembled the tone of enemy narratives.

Some Americans felt that foreign symbols and allegiances were raised at the table of American life while the hosts themselves felt pushed outside their own home.

The house still stands. Yet many people feel they have emotionally separated from certain rooms within it. They left behind the old table and chairs because toxicity had taken hold there.

Still, the recipes shared at that table were theirs. The good spirit that animated those gatherings was theirs as well. And they carried that spirit forward.

Not every experience is in vain, despite what negative propaganda may claim.

In many ways, the American spirit has simply moved to a different table. Many have outgrown the old one. Americans are generous people. They often do not hold grudges. In many ways, this openness is part of what makes the nation great.

Even so, Americans are now building new spaces, new conversations, and new friendships.

In those spaces, they hope for relationships grounded in respect. Places where no one takes another person's seat. Places where hostility is not directed at someone because of their identity. Places where people are not made to feel like impostors in the very home they helped build.

Being pushed out of spaces you created is painful. But, as in any difficult relationship, self preservation sometimes requires stepping away from environments that have become toxic.

So Americans move forward, guided by friends, advisors, and communities that help them see a path ahead.

One truth is clear:

They are not bringing dehumanizers with them.