



**EDITORIAL:**

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**Ideology, Propaganda, and Media**

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The theme “Ideology, Propaganda and Media” of the 23rd issue of *INTERFACE* was one of the main topics of the recent *INTERFACe*ing International Conference “Changing Paradigms: Humanities in the Age of Crisis,” held at Kobe University from 25 September to 27 September 2023. Systems of ideas and values, commonly described as ideologies, play a decisive role in the life of both the individual and society. The similarity or difference of ideological beliefs creates the basis for many alliances, antagonisms, and conflicts that define the dynamics of the modern world. It is natural for each side to seek to defend and expand its ideological position in this confrontation.

One of the most effective means in this competitive confrontation is propaganda. Known since ancient times, propaganda has gained new dimensions and influence with the development of technological progress. In the hands of the state and influential social groups, the media became a powerful tool for disseminating ideology and propaganda, reaching millions of people. With the development of the Internet, another step has been taken: now, potentially, every person who is connected to a social media network can act not only as a recipient but also as a creator of ideological and propaganda content. This essentially democratic development, however, has also unlocked new opportunities for spreading false and manipulative information, reevaluating existing ideologies, historical processes, art heritage, and current events, and shaping new ideological meanings.

All four articles in this issue deal with very interesting aspects in this

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context. It begins with Michiko Komiya's (The University of Tokyo) essay on literary theory in the Soviet era, which is still relevant today. Shortly after the October Revolution, the young Soviet state witnessed a lively debate on the ways of developing up-to-date art and literature forms. Along with Russian Formalism, movements such as Constructivism, Productivism, etc. gained influence. Their theoretical legacy remains important for literary criticism to the present day. The article is devoted to a discussion of the problem of "knowledge" in literature. In particular, the polemic on this issue between the leading theorist S. Tretiakov of the journal LEF (Left Front of the Arts) and the influential Soviet literary critic A. Voronsky is presented.

The second contribution by Masumi Kameda (Chukyo University) is a comparative study of the use of the leader's figure to evoke feelings of mass empathy in F.D. Roosevelt's America and the Stalinist Soviet Union of the 1930s. It shows that, despite the differences between the political systems, there are significant similarities in the mechanisms of mass empathy that link the general public to the political leader. It concludes with a critical assessment of the role of mass empathy as an emotion that influences the objective vision of problems and hinders rational decision-making. In this sense, the increased exploitation of mass empathy, which could be observed in the USA and the USSR since the 1930s, can be seen as the cause of some negative phenomena in contemporary social life, such as the "victimhood culture" or the expansion of psychologically negative concepts such as abuse, bullying or trauma.

Mass empathy is also one of the keywords in the third essay by Jasmin Spiegel (The Hebrew University of Jerusalem). It examines the problem of the "gaze" in a conflict situation, particularly in the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, within a psychoanalytic framework. The metaphor of "looking under fire" is derived from the famous psychoanalytic metaphor of "thinking under fire," which refers to the ability to think in highly stressful situations and is embedded in communication in the age of social media. Finally, a psychoanalytic position of the "third" beyond toxic polarization is called for as a fundamental tool for overcoming essentialist ethnocentric political worldviews.

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Media bias in the unique situation of a pandemic such as we have recently experienced is the subject of the final paper by Deanna Faye Holroyd (The Ohio State University). She shows how media representations of Black, Asian, and Minority Ethnic (BAME) individuals and communities in the UK changed dramatically during the first six months of the COVID-19 pandemic. Her article traces this shift through a detailed analysis of Daily Mail articles written between March 2020 and August 2020, showing how the newspaper gradually constructed a very different narrative from the one that initially portrayed BAME health workers as heroic, which ultimately helped to maintain existing social and racial hierarchies.

In this issue, we aim to show how different propaganda mechanisms have been formed, shaped, and applied in different historical, social, and art contexts over the last 100 years and extend the important discussion started in the conference meeting rooms in times when it becomes more and more problematic to set an ideology, propaganda, media, and arts apart.