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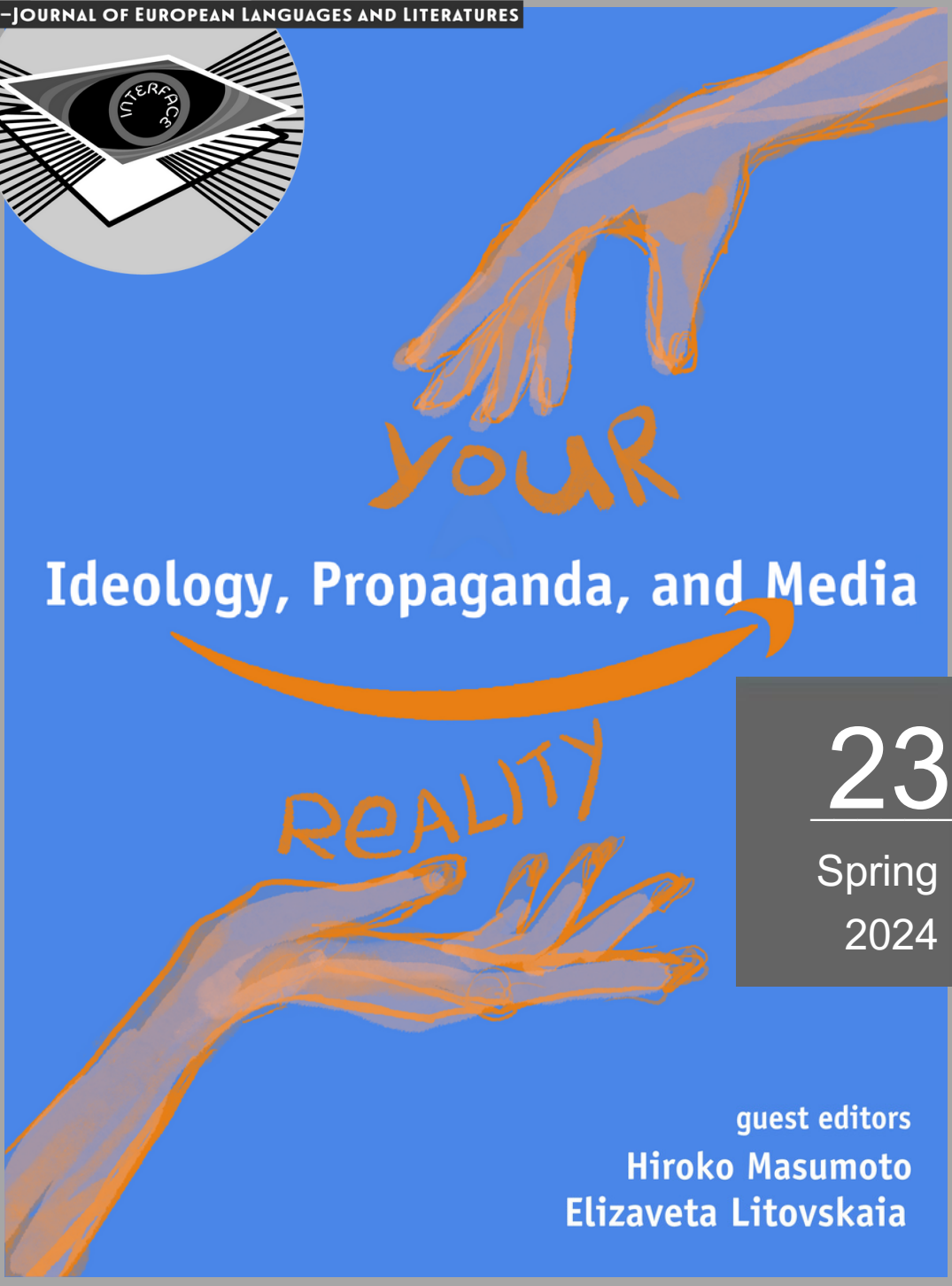

Ideology, Propaganda, and Media

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EDITORIAL:

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 INTERFACEing 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

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.

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.

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The Problem of "Knowledge" in LEF and A. Voronsky's Literary Controversy

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Abstract

In the 1920s, the avant-garde group LEF advocated the "art of life construction" and proposed the "literature of fact," a distinct documentary literature. A notable critic opposing LEF was A. Voronsky, who believed in "art as the cognition of life". This report compares their contrasting views on the role of "knowledge" in art.

Voronsky saw art as depicting the world's essence. According to him, writers must cultivate a pure, direct sense within themselves. For this, they need an infantile "ignorance" of the subject matter they depict. Voronsky's discussion of knowledge in art is a combination of V. Shklovsky's ostranenie and the ideas of philosopher, H. Bergson.

The "literature of fact" starts by trying to overcome such infantile knowledge. S. Tretiakov discusses perspective in literary works based on his experience flying in a passenger plane. Tretiakov compares his first bird's-eye view of the country to a pair of unwiped glasses. According to Tretiakov, the world cannot be fully perceived without a detailed knowledge of the subject. For the avant-garde, who sought to incorporate human action into the cycle of material production, documentary literature about the production process was a means of involving people in it. LEF's emphasis on depicting knowledge of the production process was also a strategy to involve the reader in that very process.

Keywords: Russian avant-garde; LEF; literature of fact; Voronsky; Tretiakov; Shklovsky

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The Problem of "Knowledge" in LEF and A. Voronsky's Literary Controversy

In the 1920s, the avant-garde group known as "LEF," advocated the concept of "art of life construction" and theorized a unique documentary literature style, "literature of fact," as a form of its literary realization. In contrast, one of the leading proponents of "art as the cognition of life" and an opponent of LEF in the literary world was Aleksandr Voronsky, a right-wing critic and editor-in-chief of the journal Red Virgin Soil. Voronsky, like several Bolsheviks in the political center, including V. Lenin, who believed in him, was an advocate of a return to the classics in his view of literature. Therefore, he clashed on many points with LEF, a leftist group oriented toward literary innovation, and they engaged in a series of mutual exchanges of criticism. The points of contention between the two were extremely fundamental and radical, ranging from the representational system to the role of literature, and were related to the foundations of literature. This report focuses on their contrasting ideas about "knowledge" in works of art, providing insights into the differences in logic between 19th-century realist literature, to which Voronsky aspired to return, and the final destination of modernist literature attempting to overcome it.

1 Voronsky's "art as the cognition of life"

Voronsky's problematic knowledge is about the "nature of the world," the knowledge behind the visible world, which eschews LEF's emphasis on social knowledge based on the relations of production. Voronsky (Воронский, 1987, pp. 539-540) argues in his article, "Art of Seeing the World," that for the perception of reality, it is important to perceive the world directly, with fresh sensations, in a way that is "wonderful in itself." Following this method, one can see the object in a new light and from a new aspect, as if a shell that has been shielding the world has been broken. Even in the most mundane of objects, one finds character-

istics that were previously undetectable, and the surrounding environment begins to take on a life of its own. This way, Voronsky advocated the necessity of approaching the world from a perspective different from the mundane. His position was based on his positive conviction that the essence of the world is wonderful and beautiful. However, in Voronsky's view, such a worldview is not possible for everyone. For the majority of people living ordinary lives, this perception of reality is next to impossible and is possible only in very few moments of their lives, except during childhood and adolescence. This is because the basic emotions evoked by habits, preconceptions, and worldly affairs distort one's perception. According to Voronsky, the primary significance of art is to bring back to life and present images of the world that are "wonderful in itself" and seldom glimpsed by ordinary people, and the artist alone has this ability. Voronsky (Воронский, 1987, p. 545, p. 549) believed that the secret of realizing such art is a primitive, pure, unmediated, and direct sense, which the artist must cultivate within himself. What is needed to have such a sense is an "ignorance" about the world.

> To give free rein to artistic potentialities, one must become ignorant and foolish, detaching oneself from everything that causes one's initial perception. The artist must be able to view the world with simple eyes as if seeing it for the first time. These reasoning corrections, which create the initial perceptions in our minds, are valuable and necessary in scientific and practical activities. Without them, we cannot take a single step in the analytical knowledge of the world, but in art, they are not only not necessary, but, on the contrary, often only harmful.
>
> (Воронский, 1987, p. 546)

In Voronsky's view, reasoned knowledge, which prevents us from seeing the world with primitive and naïve eyes, must be avoided by art. The artist must face the subject in a state of ignorance, "as if seeing it for the first time."

2 Voronsky's literary theory and Shklovsky's *ostranenie*

The avant-garde of the 1920s consistently opposed Voronsky. For example, *ostranenie* (defamiliarization) in art, advocated by V. Shklovsky, a member of LEF, was proposed as a counterargument to Voronsky's literary theory in which the artist depicts the subject as a comprehensive image. Shklovsky's article, "Art as Technique," in which he first advocated *ostranenie*, began as an objection to the axiom "Art is thinking with images." Shklovsky's assertion that art, by its *ostranenie*, essentially serves to make us perceive the familiar in a fresh and unfamiliar way (Eskin, 2019, p. 12) overlaps, to a significant degree, with Voronsky's argument that fresh perception should allow us to see reality from a different perspective than mundane. Voronsky responded quickly to the idea of *ostranenie*, which was highly influential in the art world at the time.

However, Shklovsky and Voronsky greatly differ on the quality of "ignorance," which is the premise of *ostranenie*. "Ignorance" in Shklovsky's argument is a conscious lack of social common sense that has an ironic character similar to that of Socrates and, therefore, has an enlightening and demythologizing function (Хансен-Лёве, 2001, pp. 14-15). Tolstoy, whom Shklovsky (Шкловский, 2018, p. 262) cites as an example in his article "Art as Technique," shook his own faith because of creating "ostranenie." This technique has the potential to lead to a critical spirit that jeopardizes the self-evident nature of authoritative objects through decontextualization. In contrast, Voronsky's work is not a "decontextualization" of the authoritative object. His "ignorance" is an intellectual state modeled on infants. This reveals the true beauty of the subject. However, this unreserved eulogistic position on the subject is incompatible with Shklovsky's criticism.

Voronsky's discussion of knowledge in art combines Shklovsky's *ostranenie* and Bergson's ideas. His contemporaries have noted his influence on Voronsky. As the critic R. Messer (Мессер, 1930, pp. 46-49, p. 52) points out, in Voronsky's theory of art, the work of art becomes unconscious, instinctive, and intuitive since it teaches the abandonment of everyday moods by opening the eyes to instinct and intuition. In Messer's view, Bergson's opposition of intuition to intellect and intuition that

is supposed to be outside consciousness, as inborn knowledge of the subject, places art in the realm of intuitive perception. Bergson's view formed the foundation for Voronsky's theory of art. What Bergson calls "intuition" in art is realized through a process analogous to development in an infant. Thus, the infantile nature of the artist's "ignorance" that Voronsky assumes is derived from Bergson.

3 Tretiakov's emphasis on technical knowledge

However, the "literature of fact" advocated by LEF starts by trying to overcome such infantile knowledge. This is well illustrated in S. Tretiakov's reportage, "Through Unwiped Glasses," first published in the journal *Novyi LEF,* No. 9 in 1928. The "point of view" in literary works is discussed here through the experience of flying in a passenger plane, which had only just become popular in the Soviet Union at the time. The perspective of looking down on a country from the sky should be a fresh one that enables us to see the world with new eyes. In this sense, Voronsky would have thought that such an experience would make it possible to recognize the world in its true form. Tretiakov, however, likens his own gaze to "unwiped glasses."

> The motor shouts in different voices. The pilot reads in the voices of the motor, the state of the metal, the wear of parts, the health of valves, and the strength of the traction. And I don't even know how many revolutions of the propeller these different voices correspond to. I see the motor through unwiped glasses. I lack numbers, and the primitive flight experience I have accumulated consistently is no greater than that of a Zulu in my position.
>
> (Третьяков, 1928, p. 20)

The American cultural historian, E. Papazian (2009, pp. 42-43) points out that the metaphor of "unwiped glasses" implies seeing the object with untrained eyes; what Tretiakov and his colleagues at LEF emphasize in productionist literature, for example, is the technical knowledge

of the object, in this case, the motor.

From this standpoint of emphasizing knowledge in artistic representation, Tretiakov criticizes Voronsky's view of art.

> From the above, I know Moscow only from the plans on which districts, police stations, and streetcar lines are marked in different colors. Naturally, at takeoff, one cannot judge which new buildings under construction are marked, which factories in Moscow are growing, in what condition the construction sites of workers' settlements are, whether the green areas have improved or deteriorated, whether there is enough sulfur for repainting roofs, in what position the fairway of the Moscow River is. The city plans in all their colors still need to be adjusted to aerial photography. That is why the mechanisms of a poet and a literary man begin to work for me – a chain of primitive habitual associations that bring everything visible or part of it to the so-called artistic images.
>
> (Третьяков, 1928, p. 21)

Tretiakov reminds us that when an artist is ignorant of his subject, he depends on artistic images. The image of the subject seen through the eyes of infantile ignorance, which Voronsky considers the essence of the artist, is, in Tretiakov's opinion, nothing more than a product of commonplace associations. Such a mode of representation, far from exposing the true nature of the world, condemns even aspects that we see for the first time in a banal, conventional image. To avoid falling into this trap, one must "fit the color-coded plan of the city" exactly to the aerial photograph; that is, have information about the subject hand-down to the smallest detail. This is what Tretiakov considers "ideal" reportage.

Papazian (2009, pp. 43-44) points out that the emphasis on knowledge in the "literature of fact" appeared where the *ostranenie* was also overcome. In "Art as Technique," Shklovsky cites an example of *ostranenie* in Tolstoy's novel, Kholstomer, which depicts society from the perspective of a horse that is ignorant of human civilization and culture. The *os-*

tranenie here is based on the subject's ignorance. Shklovsky attempted to overcome existing literary conventions with this technique in 1917. However, Tretiakov, almost a decade later, went one step further than Shklovsky and tried to destroy art itself as a system. In his essay "The New Leo Tolstoy," published in the first issue of *Novyi LEF*, Tretiakov claimed, "We have nothing to wait for the Tolstoys, for we have our epic. Our epic is the newspaper." (Третьяков, 1927, p. 36) Within the newspaper-modeled literature of fact, the conventions of the traditional novel, such as protagonist and plot, were to be eliminated. Instead, a narrative of the social production process was to take center stage. Eventually, Tretiakov rejected the conventions of the traditional novel to depict the life and psychology of an individual and advocated for "the biography of the object," which describes the production and distribution of things (Третьяков, 2000, pp. 68-72). Hence, LEF's literature emphasized concrete knowledge about the industrial structure.

As the Italian cultural historian M. Zalambani (Заламбани, 2003, p. 82) suggests, citing the arguments of LEF theorist Arvatov, productivist art denied the existence of "reality" in art. In Arvatov's view, the role of art was not to reflect reality or tell the "truth." It is to manage the process by which life itself is produced by producing not only things but also types of behaviors and bodies. Therefore, LEF rejected Voronsky's "literature of perception" and promoted "literature of fact" that relies on knowledge. LEF's coterie, aiming to integrate human action into the cycle of material production, viewed literature on the production process as involving people.

In contrast, Voronsky criticized productionist literature from the standpoint of defending its conventions. In his article "About Industrialization and Art" (1928), Voronsky (Воронский, 1987, p. 590) noted that "We have as much adoration of materialistic things as we like, but, for example, the average worker, with his complex structure of feelings and thoughts, is almost entirely absent from our modern literature." He then asserts, "but the most important thing in art is the person and their relationship to another person."

> The theme of industrialization is not only about things but also about the social man and relations between people. Until our industrialist poets and novelists feel this, their works will remain cold and unconvincing.
>
> (Воронский, 1987, p. 591)

Voronsky's literature about production relations also differs from LEF's because he advocates fiction with the worker as the protagonist. While LEF's coterie attempted to engage real readers with documentary literature about the industrial structure, Voronsky proposed a novel that engages readers' thinking by presenting a fictional image of people living within the industrial structure and inviting their empathy. The basis of the conception of both novels is the expectation of a propaganda function for the recipient. However, while the protagonists of the "literature of fact" correspond to the real readers, in the traditional novel, which is the basis of Voronsky's conception, the protagonists are the fictional image, and the readers are the only living reality. The process by which a propaganda message is sent to the reader fundamentally differs between the two forms.

Furthermore, the novel about industrialization envisioned by Voronsky does not require a detailed knowledge of industry.

> In order to get closer to the worker, it is often suggested to direct the artist to the machine. It is unnecessary to prove that such measures yield positive results. We need to create our own artistic culture; we need to seriously fight bureaucracy and bureaucratic optimism. We need to remove the "scaffolding," and then the building and those who live in it will be properly visible. Otherwise, even those writers who have, until recently, been workers themselves will be systematically disconnected from working life. Be that as it may, our poets and prose writers look at modern industrialization more from the outside than from the inside. Industrialization is the building of a new plant or factory and a new complex of feelings, thoughts, habits, and customs.
>
> (Воронский, 1987, pp. 590-591)

4 Conclusion

Voronsky's method, which emphasizes digging into the essence of a subject based on incomplete knowledge rather than conducting on-the-spot interviews and becoming thoroughly familiar with the subject, had already become out of fashion by the end of the 1920s, when he advocated it. Voronsky's arguments may have sounded outdated in the context of the First Five-Year Plan, when writers were sent to interview exemplary factories and farming villages, one after another. In fact, in 1927, prior to this article, he was expelled from the party on suspicion of Trotskyism. In the 1930s, when reportage as a literary genre was becoming increasingly important in society, it appeared that LEF's "literature of fact" had won, over Voronsky's ideology of restoration of the classics.

Nonetheless, LEF could not be a winner for long either. The group quickly weakened after its leader, V. Mayakovsky, left due to internal conflict. The editorship of the journal, *Novyi LEF*, was taken over by Tretiakov, one of the main theorists of "literature of fact." However, the journal eventually ceased publication with issue 12 of 1928, and the group disbanded. Mayakovsky committed suicide in 1930. By the end of the 1920s, after all these events, the hegemony of the literary world was in the hands of the *Rossiyskaya Assotsiatsiya Proletarskikh Pisateley* (RAPP), an organization of proletarian writers that left no room for dissent on literary matters.

Thus, the literary controversy between LEF and Voronsky ended, with both sides being stifled by that time. However, the literary theories proposed by each flowed into the subsequent socialist realism in different forms. LEF's literature, as a propaganda reportage covering exemplary factories and farms, became a documentary genre emblematic of the Stalinist period. Indeed, artists such as Tretiakov and Rodchenko, formerly members of LEF, participated in the *USSR in Construction*, a journal of national prestige. On the other hand, Voronsky's novels about production workers were already a precursor of the coming socialist realism, both in terms of theme and their method, which was modeled

on the psychologism of 19th-century realist literature.

Their clash on the issue of knowledge in artistic representations was ultimately unanswerable. However, the radical literary theories discussed in this report have not lost accessibility.

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Mass Empathy in New Deal and Stalinist Propaganda: The Path to Victimhood Culture

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Abstract

This paper attempts to provide the cultural history of the "victimhood culture". This paper proposes that the subjective turn of suffering that begot today's victimhood culture can be traced back to the 1920s U.S. At that time, empathy-based strategy of attracting people have emerged in the sphere of advertising and movie industry. This strategy was employed also in the state propaganda starting in the 1930s, amid an unprecedented social, economic, and political crisis. In the U.S. and the Soviet Union, the authorities often tried to arouse reciprocal empathy among their people, thus, mass empathy became salient in state propaganda.

This paper then demonstrates how the U.S. and the Soviet Union began creating the emotional norm specifically designed for the age of social crisis with examples of propaganda that are parallelly seen in both countries; the projects to enhance annual celebrations and leisure time enjoyment and the projects to collect the oral life histories of the socially vulnerable people. Through the analysis of case studies of both countries, this paper attempts to contextualize today's victimhood culture by suggesting that it is an extension of this specifically historic emotional norm promulgated in the late 1930s, which defines that emotions can be, or rather, should be, shared in large unit groups such as a nation.

Keywords: Emotion; Mass Empathy; Propaganda; Stalinism; New Deal Policy

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Mass Empathy in New Deal and Stalinist Propaganda: The Path to Victimhood Culture

The term "Victimhood Culture" was coined by Bradley Campbell and Jason Manning, insisting that the enormous success of the microaggression program starting in the late 2000s, led people to want to identify themselves as victims. According to Campbell and Manning, people of victimhood culture are tend to "combine the sensitivity to slight […] with the willingness to appeal to authorities […] highlighting rather than downplaying the complaints' victimhood" (Campbell & Manning, 2018, p. 16).[1] This phenomenon is closely connected with the one that psychologist Nick Haslam called "Concept Creep." Concept Creep refers to the semantic expansion of psychological negative concepts – abuse, bullying, trauma, mental disorder, and prejudice – showing a consistent pattern that "negative aspects of human experience and behavior have expanded their meanings so that they now encompass a much broader range of phenomena than before" (Haslam, 2016, p. 1)." For instance, although the concept of abuse was classically recognized as physical harm or inappropriate sexual contact, it incorporated emotional abuse and neglect throughout the 1990s, and now it has become "overinclusive" (Haslam, 2016, p. 3). Haslam also indicated that "the conceptual expansion is asymmetrical, evident only for negative concepts" (Haslam, 2016, p. 11) and "concept creep runs the risk of pathologizing everyday experience and encouraging a sense of virtuous but impotent victimhood" (Haslam, 2016, p. 1). In other words, psychological concepts tend to become overinclusive when related to suffering.

Paul Farmer, a physician and medical anthropologist (who spent about 30 years in rural Haiti to provide medical care to the world's poorest people), kept insisting on the need to elucidate the dynamics and distribution of suffering because some individuals and groups are more vul-

1 See also Lukianoff & Haidt (2018).

nerable to extreme human suffering than other individuals and groups[2]. According to Farmer, "The capacity to suffer is, clearly, part of being human. But not all suffering is equal. In spite of pernicious and often self-serving identity politics that suggest otherwise. One of the unfortunate sequelae of identity politics has been the obscuring of structural violence, which metes out injuries of vastly different severity" Farmer, P. (1997, p. 279)." However, it is often the case that assigning a hierarchy to suffering itself is considered ethically unacceptable. As medical anthropologist Arthur Kleinman and others criticized Farmer, stating that "(t)he principle of suffering that counts for less can be a slippery slope that, even when it results from a deep commitment to social justice, creates inadvertent yet nonetheless dangerous moral slides" (Kleinman et. al., 1997, p. xxii), the very idea that suffering can be triaged is likely to generate rejection because it conflicts with the idea that we should not ignore anyone's any kinds suffering. This can be regarded as a "subjective turn" of suffering.

This paper attempts to provide the cultural history of this tendency. Although some accounts relate the creeping of harm-related concepts to the rising psychologization of experience specific to postwar society, Haslam implies that a broader cultural shift should have caused this phenomenon. This paper proposes that the subjective turn of suffering that begot today's victimhood culture can be traced back to the 1920s U.S. At that time, empathy-based strategy of attracting people have emerged in the sphere of advertising and movie industry. (I use the term "mass empathy" as the empathetic response felt collectively via images and stories through various media platforms, distinguished from personal empathy felt individually in everyday interactions.) This strategy was employed also in the state propaganda starting in the 1930s, amid an unprecedented social, economic, and political crisis. In the U.S. and the Soviet Union, the authorities often tried to arouse reciprocal empathy among their people, saying something like: "We all suffer the same way" and "We are all happy the same way," thus, mass empathy became salient in state propaganda. This paper then demonstrates how the U.S. and the Soviet Union began creating the emotional norm specifically

2 See Farmer (2005).

designed for the age of social crisis with examples of propaganda that are parallelly seen in both countries; the projects to enhance annual celebrations and leisure time enjoyment and the projects to collect the oral life histories of the socially vulnerable people. Through the analysis of case studies of both countries, this paper attempts to contextualize today's victimhood culture by suggesting that it is an extension of this specifically historic emotional norm promulgated in the late 1930s, which defines that emotions can be, or rather, should be, shared in large unit groups such as a nation.

1 Creating Mass Empathy in the 1920s: Edward Bernays and Abraham Brill

The concept "empathy" can be traced back to the study of aesthetics by art historian and writer Vernon Lee in the 1890s, who employed the concept "Einfühlung ('in-feeling') to indicate the bodily adjustments and kinetic synchronization experienced when an observer perceives the forms and shapes of the art objects. Since the 1900s, some psychologists started to use "Einfühlung" to mean the relationship among people, and psychoanalysts began mentioning empathetic reaction, introducing the empathic index, which was used to help diagnose mental disorder that is today called schizophrenia (Lanzoni, 2018, pp. 101-125).

Sigmund Freud, in his *Group Psychology and the Analysis of the Ego*, indicated that what brings people together was "emotional ties" (Freud, 1949, p. 46),[3] that was, empathy. According to Freud, "the mutual tie between members of a group is in the nature of an identification of this kind, based upon an important emotional common quality […] we are faced by the process which psychology calls 'empathy [Einfühlung]' and which plays the largest part in our understanding of what is inherently foreign to our ego in other people" (Freud, 1949, p. 66).[4] This was

3 In original: "Gefühlsbindung" (Freud, 1921, p.51).

4 In original: "Wir ahnen bereits, daß die gegenseitige Bindung der Massenindividuen von der Natur einer solchen Identifizierung durch eine wichtige affektive Gemeinsamkeit ist, und können vermuten, diese Gemeinsamkeit liege in der Art der Bindung an den Führer. Eine andere Ahnung kann uns sagen, daß wir weit davon entfernt sind, das Problem der Identifizierung erschöpft zu haben, daß wir vor dem Vorgang stehen, den die Psychologie »Einfühlung« heißt, und der den größten Anteil an unserem Verständnis für das Ichfremde anderer Personen hat." (Freud, 1921, p. 72.)

an outright rejection of the previous theories that explained the nature of crowds as inherently irrational and easily manipulated from above. Freud believed that groups are formed by mutual identification, saying, "A path leads from identification by way of imitation to empathy, that is, to the comprehension of the mechanism by means of which we are enabled to take up any attitude at all towards another mental life" (Freud, 1949, p. 70)."[5] Freud himself did not discuss this further, as it is an area that awaits further research. Psychoanalyst Abraham A. Brill who carried on this theme.

Austria-born Brill was known for his earliest English translations of Freud's major works and for becoming one of the earliest practitioners of psychoanalysis in the U.S. Brill proposed his own "empathy index" in 1920. Brill asked his patients: "What personage from history or legend do you admire most, or whom would you consider your ideal?" (Brill, 1920, p. 132), and then the answer to the question denotes the person's empathy index. "The empathy index definitely shows the trend of the person's adjustment to the world" (Brill, 1920, p. 133), because people almost daily identify themselves with someone who appeals to them and through Brill's empathy index, he said that it was possible to observe the person's mode of adjustment.

At the same time, Walter Lippmann, in his well-known book *Public Opinion* (1922), noted the importance of "The identification, or what Vernon Lee has called empathy" (Lippmann 1922, p. 163) in journalism since "In popular representation the handles for identification are almost always marked. You know who the hero is at once" (Lippmann 1922, p. 163). In other words, the period in which the nature of the collective came to be associated with empathy coincides almost precisely with the period in which empathy was regarded to play a significant role in creating public opinion and thus conducting public relations activity. We must remember here that Brill was a hidden but one of the significant contributors to the formation of public relations today. In 1919, Freud introduced Brill to his young nephew Edward Bernays, who founded

5 In original: "Von der Identifizierung führt ein Weg über die Nachahmung zur Einfühlung, d. h. zum Verständnis des Mechanismus, durch den uns überhaupt eine Stellungnahme zu einem anderen Seelenleben ermöglicht wird." (Freud, 1921, p. 77.)

the firm Counsel on Public Relations in New York in the same year in response to Bernays' request for an introduction to a psychoanalyst for his public relations strategy.[6]

By hiring Brill as the brains, Bernays launched a new public relations campaign in the 1920s to make people admire certain others, desire to identify with them – in other words, to empathize with them - and purchase related products. Advertisement campaigns such as the ones to make women want to smoke cigarettes and to encourage men to buy new cars were conducted by creating and spreading the image that women who walk around smoking were fashionable and urbanely sophisticated, and the image of dignified fathers were driving new expensive cars, respectively.

In 1926, Brill introduced the concept of empathy when he was interviewed by the New York Times about "current question-and-answer craze" (Ware, 1927) as follows: "Here Dr. Brill introduced one of the newest pet words of psychology –empathy. Empathy is sympathy carried a step further. Sympathy is feeling for a thing, whereas empathy is feeling into the thing to such an extent that you become part of that thing yourself" (Ware, 1927)." According to Brill, "The average man who works on these quizzes and ferrets out the answers feels for the time being that he, too, is one of the best minds, a great thinker. That's empathy" (Ware, 1927)." If we apply other advertisement campaigns – let's say the one to make women smoke - to Brill's formula, "the average woman who smokes cigarettes feels for the time being that she, too, is one of the most elegant and sophisticated urban women."

The tag team of Bernays and Brill transformed the whole picture of advertisement. Advertising underwent a significant transformation in the 1920s, characterized by the fact that photographs and illustrations of products were removed from the center of advertisement posters, and instead, it began to focus on ordinary people everywhere who were worried about their reputation and reactions from people around them

6 Freud wrote to Bernays in the letter (September 27, 1919) that he told Brill about Bernays. The letter from Freud to Bernays is cited in Bernays (1965, p. 254)

or on the contrary rejoicing in social victories (Marchand, R.,1986, p. 11). This tendency was, supposedly, caused by the fact that the method to attract empathy for characters in the advertisements has become central.

Advertisements that employed empathy-based techniques met a harsh backlash. At that time, many had "reinforced anxieties about the surfeit of advertising", (Marchand, R.,1986, p. 95) which were "most conspicuous in the print media, but they were also influential in the evolution of radio advertising" (Marchand, R.,1986, p. 95). There were growing concern on how advertising intrude into the intimacy of the possible consumers. Many warned "against any commercial 'intruder' into the sanctity of the home" (Marchand, R.,1986, p. 89) where people are more relaxed and tend to be more emotionally unprotected.

Also in the 1920s, the custom of going out to the movie theaters became common in the U.S., and as film critic James Monaco noted that "Star cinema – Hollywood style – depends on creating a strong identification between hero and audience" (Monaco, 1977. p. 296), there is no doubt that the Hollywood movie industry has centered on audience's identification with characters on the screen. During this period, there were growing calls for censorship of movies on the grounds that they had a negative impact, especially on youth, not only because they were often morally repugnant but also because there were concerns that their emotional manipulation would lead to social unrest in the first place. The Paine Foundation's research project included a series of surveys that raised the issue that audiences tend to empathize too much with the characters on the screen. In this survey, for example, the interviewee asked about romantic scenes, answered: "I've been thrilled and deeply stirred by love pictures and love scenes. Usually when I see them, it seems that I'm a looker-on and one of the lovers at the same time. I don't know how to describe it" (Blumer, 1933, p. 109) and noted that she was naturally assimilated into the characters. Herbert Blumer, the author of the final report, warned that while emotional possession is less of a problem if it is only for a short period, the intense emotional experience of a movie can have long-term effects on the audience's life, causing

more people to live according to a different set of behavioral norms (Blumer, 1933, pp. 126-127).

2 Mass Empathy for Leaders

When advertising and other cultural practices, such as movie industry, began employing collective empathy in the 1920s, it was faced with concerns about its negative and dangerous influences. However, in times of political, economic, and psychological crisis throughout the world (such as the hyperinflation in Nazi Germany, the devastation of the Soviet Union due to the civil war and the collectivization of agriculture that began in 1929, and the repression during the Stalinist period, and the Great Depression of 1929 and the massive farm displacements caused by Dust Bowl in the U.S.), many nations began to pivot their propaganda on the collective sharing of emotions.

2.1 Mass Empathy for FDR

F. D. Roosevelt, in his first radio program, Fireside Chat, delivered eight days before his inauguration, said, "Let us unite in banishing fear!" (Buhite & Levy, 1992, p. 17). This was followed by his inaugural address, conducted in March 1933, in which he famously said, "The only thing we have to fear is fear itself" (Zevin, 1946, p. 13). This means that from the moment he took office, FDR had determined and ordered Americans what kind of feelings they should or should not have. FDR also often emphasized that he could understand the emotions of the people. In his twelfth Fireside Chat aired on April 14, 1938, he said "I can hear your unspoken wonder as to where we are headed in this troubled world. I cannot expect all of the people to understand all of the people's problems; but it is my job to try to understand all of the problems" (Zevin, 1946, p. 123). Expressing that he senses not only the problems that people desperately want to address but also the aspirations and anxieties that have yet to be articulated, FDR staged himself as omnipotent and omniscient. This narrative was a great success. As

a citizen's diary of the time stated, "President Roosevelt was the idol of the people and his smile and pleasant radio voice captivated everybody" (Roth, 2009, p. 160), FDR created an intimate relationship with the people and made them believe that he shared their feelings through his radio program. FDR frequently used the phrase "you and me" in his radio speech to create a sense of closeness with the people. As was ridiculed by the writer Dos Passos, who wrote that "(t)hen there is a man leaning across his desk, speaking clearly and cordially to youandme […] so that youandme shall completely understand" (Dos Passos, 1934, p. 17), this kinds of phrasing and narrative manufactured a disguised emotional oneness with the leader.

At the same time, Hollywood studios, either as a part of state propaganda (such as the case of Warner Brothers) or not connected to the authority, started to employ mass empathy to spread optimism and hope, as film historian Robert Sklar noted that the Hollywood producers at that time "recognized how much their audience longed to be released from its tension, fear and insecurity" (Sklar, 1994, p. 175).

2.2 Mass Empathy for Stalin

To share complex emotions collectively, it is necessary to shed the spotlight on any one particular person. Yet the Soviet Union was quite cautious about introducing propaganda that spotlighted the individual since glorifying one specific person is at odds with collectivism, the basis of communist ideology. For instance, worker-correspondent movements in the 1920s and a shock worker movement launched in 1927 were both designed to motivate workers, but the authority had never single out one particular individuals. As a result, the number of shock workers swelled, and by 1930, 40% of all workers were certified as shock workers.

But around the time of the completion of the First Five Year Plan in 1932, Soviet propaganda gradually shifted from collectivism propaganda to a personality cult propaganda. In 1933, the Party decided that living heroes could be subject to commemoration, and they started to

construct giant statues of Lenin and Stalin. Since then, Stalin became an enormous figure, looking down on people from directly above.

In 1932, at the age of thirty, Sergei Dinamov, an American literary scholar, took the position of head of the Communist Party Central Committee's Art Sector. Dinamov, who had earned a doctorate for his dissertation on Edgar Allan Poe and had a close relationship with American culture since he was involved in translating and publishing American literature, was to be at the helm of Soviet cultural policy around 1934. Dinamov was also a close friend of the writer Theodore Dreiser and others in both public and private life. Dinamov and Dreiser, despite their thirty-year age difference and ideological differences, were supposed to have exchanged a total of 170 letters of correspondence.[7]

In March 1934, a meeting was held between Dinamov and Boris Shumyatsky, the head of the cinema administration and the person know for attempting to directly import Hollywood system from the U.S. As a result, on April 16, 1934, Dinamov published an editorial titled "Toward the Plot-based Art"[8] in central party newspaper *Pravda* and ordered the production of plot-oriented works. Dinamov said that the protagonists of Soviet films "must be the heroes of the people, and their thoughts and feelings must excite and influence the masses",[9] and that the party's new policy was to place the heroic hero at the center and to depict the hero's emotions in a way that many people could share.[10]

According to Dinamov, Soviet cinema "should generate happiness and enjoyment, give the audience optimism, and help them to desire to fight with confidence".[11] This statement resulted in Shumyatsky's famous phrase, "The victorious class wants a good laugh" (Taylor, 1986, p. 55). Like many Hollywood films during the Great Depression Era, making the audience empathize with the cheerful and joyful protagonists was

7 The author could view a total of 168 letters from the University of Pennsylvania's collection, and 28 from Cornell University's collection, and 26 letters are duplicates.

8 С. Динамов, «За сюжетное искусство». Правда, 16 апреля 1934 г. 105., С.2.

9 «Они - народные герои, их мысли и чувства волнуют и заражают широкие массы.» Там же.

10 See also Belodubrovskaya (2017).

11 «картина вышла радостной и бодрой она дает зрителю оптимистическую зарядку, помогает ему увереннее бороться.» Там же.

recommended. In August of the same year, the First Congress of Soviet Writers, in which Dinamov was deeply involved from the preparatory stages, was held. Socialist realism was proposed as the only officially recognized art policy in the Soviet Union.

In August 1935, when coal miner Alexei Stakhanov had drilled 14 times his quota, the records rush created hero workers, called Stakhanov workers. Stakhanov workers were also promised a wealthy life with various privileges, including cheap shopping in luxury stores. Stakhanovite movement was quite different from past similar movements in a way they focused on one worker and on empathy among workers and among a nation. Soviet writer Sergei Tretyakov, a member of the First Congress of Soviet Writers, published an interview-based article "Nine Girls" in 1935, written in the style of an interview with a female Stakhanov worker, Pasha Angelina. Angelina was a tractor driver who would become one of the icons of the Stalin era. In an interview, Angelina talks about her miserable past, when she was once despised and abused because she was a woman. However, she overcame many difficulties and became the leader of a work group of female tractor drivers (Третьяков, 1960). Angelina recalls the time when she completed 20 consecutive hours of work: "It was not easy to work 20 hours straight, but the whole country was watching. But it was also fun to work because the whole country was watching! I was happy to work" she says.[12] Although "the whole country was watching" is only a figurative expression, since the actual progress of the labor was not broadcast live, it reflects the propaganda that labor can be associated with the feeling of "fun" if one works while feeling a sense of unity with the whole nation.

In the 1930s, the people were presented as a close familial group, with Stalin as their ultimate father and there was a growing emphasis on people sharing their intimate love for Stalin and other political leaders. The 1936 propaganda song "Life has become better, life has become more joyous," that quoted Stalin's famous speech at the First All-Union Meeting of the Stakhanovites on November 17, 1935, expresses that "the

12 In original: «Двадцать часов подряд было нелегко. Но работать было весело, потому что на работу эту смотрела вся страна.» (Третьяков, 1960, С. 315).

whole country" shared the same emotion toward Stalin as follows; "Let the whole gigantic country/ Shout to Stalin: 'Thank you, our man, / Live long, prosper, never fail ill' / 'Life's getting better /And happier too'" (von Geldern & Stites, 1995, p. 238).[13]

In the U.S. during the Great Depression and Stalinist Russia (and Nazi Germany was no exception), emotional unity among the people became a central element of propaganda to overcome social crises. The impression of a collective sharing of emotions – "everyone feels the same way" - is the exact opposite of the idea of emotional triage, and emotional norms today can be a direct extension of mass empathy propaganda in the 1930s U.S. and Soviet Union.

3 Celebrating Happiness

Throughout the 1930s, U.S. and Soviet propaganda attempted to intervene in the private life of individuals, especially in intimate spheres related to annual celebrations and leisure time. This section discusses how collective happiness propaganda attempted to provide shared feelings of love, joy, and happiness with those around them, thus gave people the feeling of "becoming a part of it," as Brill mentioned.

3.1. The 1930s U.S.: Romantic Gathering

FDR is known to have extended the period between Thanksgiving and Christmas to maximize the festive atmosphere. Thanksgiving and Christmas, the two major holidays in the U.S., are traditionally spent with family and are times of increased consumption. In 1939, FDR proposed fixing the date of Thanksgiving to November 23 and making it celebrated earlier than the traditional date, which was the last Thursday. After being opposed by many as a disrespect for tradition, rescheduling Thanksgiving was compromised by setting the date to the fourth

13 In original: «Хочется всей необъятной страной, Сталину крикнуть: Спасибо, Родной! Долгие годы живи, не болей» cited in Третьяков, (1960, С. 315)

Thursday in November, as is celebrated today in the U.S. (Leuchtenberg, 1963, pp.176-177).

The very idea of "group eating" was popularized at that time. Group eating, either with family members or with many people living around the neighborhood, strengthens the sense of belonging to a certain community and bonding to get through the Depression. As depicted in "Freedom from Want," one of Norman Rockwell's "Four Freedoms" series (a visualization of FDR's slogan), family or community gathering at the table became a symbol of the American tradition. The group eating in communal units was seen as a nostalgic custom, seen as a part of antebellum-like "romantic pastoral dreams" (Levenstein, 2003, 38). Many people envisioned life in small rural towns in the U.S. as a romantic scene of communal gatherings and meals. Harvest dinners, church dinners, cemetery cleanups, neighborhood barbecues, ethnic feasts, and joint holiday picnics were all associated with regional culinary traditions that reinforced a sense of community belonging[14].

In an attempt to redefine American food culture through various forms of group eating, the Federal Writers' Project (FWP) launched "America Eats!" project in 1937.[15] The plan was to compile a cross-sectional compilation of the group eating cultures in small towns and rural communities, each in the form of an independent essay. For instance, the following is written about barbecue in South Carolina, focusing on a man named Zack.

Oh, he's one 'o the low-downdest men that ever hopped up, Zack Long is! Zack was aimin on havin a barbecue like folks will do to kinda cele-

14 School lunches are another type of group eating. The effects of the Depression were immediately felt in schools, where an increasing number of children were absent from school due to poor health caused by lack of nutrition. In 1930, a decision was made to introduce an expanded school lunch system to provide students with nutritious food at school, thus for many students, school lunch became their only meal of the day. The children were also encouraged to deepen their understanding of food in the classroom by cooking by themselves and making posters, drawing, and singing songs about nutrition. School lunches were also seen as an opportunity to teach immigrant children about what American food were. During this period, immigrant children came to believe that eating "like an American" was the right thing to do as a result of nutrition education in the schools. See: Ziegelman & Coe (2016, pp. 77-84); Levenstein (2003, pp. 27-29).

15 On WPA's art projects, see: O'Connor (1973); Bustard (1997); Mangione (1983, p. 42).

brate when they tobacco's done cured and graded and tied and sold. If a man ever does feel plumb rich, then' the time. And Zack he beat around askin everybody he seen at the store and post-office and them he met on the road to come to his barbecue. (Wilcox Chandler, 2009, p. 136).

The "America Eats!" project, documenting the traditions that remain in rural America and small towns, searched for the ideal of the American way of life in local group eating culture and replaced American affluence with a diversity of regional characteristics.

Other than group eating tradition, spending leisure time with family or community members is also a major element of collective happiness propaganda. Under the New Deal, recreation facilities were built as a part of construction projects to hire the unemployed. The Works Progress Administration, established in 1935, employed 350,000 people in two years, many of them in jobs related to recreational facilities such as parks, playgrounds, swimming pools, and classrooms (Federal Works Agency, 1940, pp. 6-7). According to historian Jeff Wirtz, the most iconic recreational facilities built during this period were public swimming pools because "The pools served as symbolic antidotes to the dust storms and dry soil. They were psychological and social oases. Throughout the country, New Deal pools offered millions of Americans immediate relief from the heat, boredom, and anxiety of the depression years" (Wiltse 2007, p. 94). And the pools provided pleasant experiences of rest along with neighbors, often in the thousands at a time.

Between 1933 and 1938, 750 new swimming pools were built, and hundreds were repaired in the U.S. (Wiltse 2007, p. 93). The New Deal pools were characterized by their enormous size (several thousand people could swim in them simultaneously) and their elaborate design. The New Deal Pool dispelled the image of public facilities as second-class, although the admission fee to the New Deal pools was unbelievably low. S sandy beach was attached in some pools, where people could lie down and relax. Photographs of the New Deal pools show more people lounging or relaxing and talking by the poolside than swimming. What these New Deal pools made possible was a collective way of spending

leisure time, with adults and children, men and women alike, coming together to enjoy the community. Wiltz noted that "Municipal pools became such vital community institutions in large part because they were uniquely intimate and sociable places. Hundreds and often thousands of people gathered together at municipal pools. They changed clothes next to one another, showered together, negotiated crowded spaces, and lay put side by side on sandy beaches" (Wiltse 2007, p. 94). The collective experience of men and women mingling, showing off their swimsuits, and spending time together at rest provided a sense of connection for people living in times of crisis. Doing so turned the private gathering or private leisure time into a stage for the collective happiness.

3.2. The 1930s Soviet Union: Nighttime Delight

According to a survey of interviews with people who spent their childhood in the Soviet Union in the 1930s, many of them cited New Year's celebrations as their happiest memory (Kelly, 2011, p. 15). The Orthodox Christmas custom, which had been banned since religious rituals were regarded as not being fit with Communism, was revived as a New Year celebration in 1936.[16] The opening scene of the first Soviet color feature film, *Nightingale* (1936), depicts a girl in a blue one-piece dress singing happily, decorating a fir tree with many ornaments. The animated children's film *Grandpa Moroz and the Gray Wolf - A New Year's Story* (1937) also demonstrates the newly established New Year's party tradition to show the idea of how to celebrate. Old Man Moroz begins the film by singing the following song.

Today my old forest is lively
I'll bring presents for everyone to celebrate the New Year!
And the fir trees are making a lot of noise; now, it's time to get going!
Let's decorate the New Year tree for children![17]

16 Since Orthodox Christmas is celebrated on January 7, the newly established New Year's celebration was moved up a week.

17 «В старом моем лесу весело сегодня, / Я игрушек всем несу к елке новогодней. / Елки радостно шумят, ждать уже недолго, / Скоро я для ребят сам украшу елку.» From the film Grandpa Moroz and the Gray Wolf - A New Year's Story (1937).

As the custom of decorating fir trees revived, department stores began to stock up on decorative braid, lights, and ornaments. For most Soviet people, celebrating the New Year became a most important annual event since luxury foods and drinks such as chocolates and champagnes were sold at discount prices in December. At this time, the Red October Chocolate Factory, the first model factory for the food industry, was embarking on a radical reform for its chocolate production plant and began selling chocolates on a large scale for decorating fir trees. Most of the new chocolate confections marketed that year were ornament-shaped chocolates in colorful wrappings for decorating fir trees. For many children, chocolate became a symbol of a lively and happy occasion that could only be especially enjoyed during the New Year.

Historian Catriona Kelly summarized the results of interviews with people about their childhoods during the Stalin years, noting that many people "believed themselves to have been happy" (Kelly, 2011, p. 17), although it is impossible to determine whether they were happy or not. The sense of a shared experience of happiness was such a strong enough collective emotion for many that it remained long after the collapse of the Soviet Union. The creation of the "happy childhood" may, in part, have infantilized the Soviet public as a whole. However, compared to the period when the streets were filled with street children, the above examples also show that many people felt a sense of relief that they were able to make children, a vulnerable group, happy and that they were able to share in the joy of children's happiness even in these harsh times.

Around the same time in the Soviet Union, the custom of spending healthy leisure time at recreational facilities became popular, too. The first phase of the Moscow Metro line, which opened in 1935, connected the city center with Sokolniki and Park Kultury (Park of Culture) stations. Sokolniki station was directly connected to Sokolniki Park, while the Park Kultury station was directly connected to Gorky Memorial Park, providing ordinary citizens much better access to leisure facilities. Particularly famous is the Gorky Memorial Park in Moscow. Opened in 1928 as the "Park of Culture and Rest," the park underwent an expansion in 1934 as part of Moscow Reconstruction Plan, with an

outdoor theater, sports fields, a sky sports tower, and a swimming pool. American writer Edmund Wilson, who was visiting Moscow at the time, said of the Gorky Memorial Park: "the Russians never squeal or shriek as we do at Coney Island […] people allowed to do as they please – not checked up by petty officials as in Germany and America – feeling of freedom, lack of self-consciousness – nobody is ever disagreeable or rude, only person I have seen who was since I came to the Soviet Union was an American" (Wilson 1980, pp. 559-560). In the mid-1930s, the Soviet Union began to encourage sky sports as a recreational activity, and large parks offered parachuting and gliding from sky sports towers.

The Soviet Union also began to use romance for propaganda purposes. In the late 1930s, images of young men and women sunbathing by the pool or on the beach began to appear in newspapers, magazines, and other propaganda media. In July 1936, a large-scale carnival (open-air masked ball at night) was held to commemorate the enactment of the Stalin Constitution. On the day of the carnival, corners were set up throughout the park to show the improved production of consumer goods and stalls selling wine, beer, ice cream, cakes, pies, etc. All of this was done at the behest of the Party and was intended to create the impression of the Soviet Union as the country overflowed with goods. Carnivals were held in places other than Gorky Memorial Park every month during the summer from July 1936 onward, and the Party had instructed that men and women form proper pairs when dancing, and in this sense, the carnival was a state project to create a meeting place for men and women (Petrone, 2000, pp.100-102). Soviet propaganda, which had urged Soviet people to sacrifice themselves for the sake of the state, now began to encourage young men and women to fall in love. At this time, skating rinks were set up in many squares in the winter and were portrayed in propaganda films as dating spots for lovers.[18]

18 Leonid Potyomkin, a university student, wrote in his diary in 1935 as follows: "Right outside my window is a skate rink with slides made of wood and painted with the colors of joyfulness cheerfulness and health; the dexterity and beauty of the youth, both workers and students and adults too, right up to aged workers regaining the youth they never experienced. And above the slate rink the marvelous, tender

4 Recovery from Suffering

Psychologist Paul Bloom (2016) argued that empathy tends to lead to unethical and irrational judgments, and therefore, "On balance, empathy is a negative in human affairs" (Bloom, 2016, p. 13). According to Bloom, empathy tends to reflect preconceived notions and lacks a sense of quantity, so it tends to focus on a limited number of objects, such as a spotlight, thus creating a bias toward helping. The spotlight of empathy tends to shine not only on people who share the same attributes as oneself but also on people who have become victims.[19] In times of national crisis, the best way to strengthen national solidarity is to make people empathize with the socially vulnerable. In both the U.S. during the New Deal and in the Soviet Union during Stalinism, the poor, who were seen as victims of structural violence, could most powerfully generate empathy among people.

4.1. The 1930s U.S.: Rewriting America's Past

When the government founded FWP in July 1935, they appointed Henry Alsberg as its head. Alsberg was a journalist who had been staying in several locations in Russia and Ukraine between 1920 and 1921, and he was moved by the participation of the non-elite in artistic activities in the Soviet Union.[20] Alsberg also established The International Committee for Political Prisoners to save Soviet political prisoners and devoted his effort to publish their letters as *Letters from Russian Prisons* in 1925. One of the FWP's main focuses was to give a voice to the socially vulnerable. Because Alsberg was at the helm of the FWP, it was able to shine a light on people who had not been in the spotlight before.

Perhaps the most well-known of the FWP's oral history collections was

elegant melodies of the best music ever created by mankind and the charmingly beautiful sounds of the voices of Soviet singers flow out of an enormous loudspeaker and billow in the air. How I would love to spend time in the theater in the company of an interesting girl, a pleasant person to talk to, a friend to whom I would express my whole soul and ennoble with seething feelings of a tender refined love." Cited in: Garros, Korenevskaya, & Lahusen (1995, p.261).

19 See: Bloom (2016); Battaly, H.D. (2011); Prinz (2011).

20 See: DeMasi (2016).

the project to collect life histories of formerly enslaved people. The Slave Narrative Collection, the most famous result of the Negro Affairs Office, is a collection of interviews with more than 2,000 formerly enslaved people in 17 states about their enslaved pasts.[21] By capturing the words of former slaves who were still alive at the time of the interviews as verbatim as possible, "the narrative was to effectively convey the feeling of 'what it was like to be a slave'" (Yetman, 2000, p. 5). Some were owned with about 1,000 other formerly enslaved people, while others were the only slaves. Others were treated so inhumanly that "If I had my life to live again, I would die fighting rather than be a slave" (Yetman, 2000, p. 116), while others said, "One thing dat made our marse and mistis so good was de way dey brought up us niggers. We was called to de Big House and taught de Bible and dey was Bible readin's everyday. We was taught to be good men and women and to be honest" (Yetman, 2000, p. 119). Many remember Emancipation Day "just like yesterday" (Yetman, 2000, p. 90) and describe how they felt at the time. There may be nothing new to discover in the events they recount themselves. What was important, however, was that the focus was on how they felt.

The project to collect the life histories in the South was launched in 1938, and FWP workers interviewed peasants, factory workers, and others from various occupations in six Southern states. *These Are Our Lives* is a collection of thirty-seven transcripts from over four hundred interviews.[22] In the opening interview, "You're Gonna Have Lace Curtains",[23] a white tobacco farmer couple with five children speak alternately. The two interviewees express their gratitude to the government for helping them make a minimum living, saying, "We've never had more than about twelve dollars a week to live on except in wartime and you know the high prices of everything then. I think we could do good on fifteen dollars a week and pay our bills good, don't you, Sarah?," (Couch, 1939, pp. 16) even though their economic situation is worsening (Couch, 1939, pp. 16-17). In an interview titled "Last Chance to Own a Farm" (Couch, 1939, p. 64), a widow with four children, saying, "I lost

21 See: Botkin (1961); Yetman (2000).
22 Couch (1939).
23 Written by Mary A. Hicks and Willis S. Harrison. In Couch (1939, pp. 3-17).

my husband. But I keep hopin' for better days" (Couch, 1939, p. 64), speaks of her daily efforts to keep the land she purchased during her husband's lifetime and also to give her children small Christmas gifts. In an interview titled "I Couldn't Be What I Wanted to Be",[24] a man born to peasant parents reflects on his tumultuous life. He talks about his life of moving from job to job and being arrested for his involvement in the labor movement. Lastly, he says that he really wanted to be a writer: "I've always had an ambition to save the world. Maybe it's a – what do you call it? – yeah, a Messianic complex. My real ambition is to be a writer and show people what's right. Give 'em truth" (Couch 1939, p. 407).

The interviews included in *These Are Our Lives* were all about how the people - in dire financial straits due to circumstances over which they had little or no control - still managed to maintain their steadfast efforts and the spirit of never losing hope. However, according to Leonard Rapport, *These Are Our Lives* was heavily edited, and some episodes were quite close to fiction. Rather than a collection of oral histories based on accurate records, *These Are Our Lives* should be seen as an attempt to create the image of victims of structural violence who never gave up their hope. The FWP's oral history collections were meant to rewrite America's past and present as a symbol of the country's recovery from the Depression by shining an empathetic spotlight on people's hardships.

4.2. The 1930s Soviet Union: Reforging Prisoners

In the early 1930s, the Soviet Union used prisoners for large-scale construction projects, and this was touted as the perfect opportunity for prisoners to reforge themselves through labor. One of the most notorious examples of particularly harsh prison labor was the White Sea-Baltic Canal, built between 1931 and 1933 to connect the Baltic Sea with the White Sea in northern Russia.[25] The number of deaths from acci-

24 Written by Maurice Russell. In Couch (1939, pp. 380-410).
25 See: Ruder (1998); Draskoczy (2004); Draskoczy (2012).

dents, starvation, and disease is still unknown. *White Sea-Baltic Canal: The Story of the Construction* was a result of the book project proposed in 1932 at a meeting in Maxim Gorky's residence, where Stalin was also present.[26] This book is a compilation of the life histories of those involved in the construction of the Canal, recorded by a team of thirty-six writers, such as Valentin Kataev, Alexei Tolstoy, Victor Shklovsky, and Mikhail Zoshchenko under the direction of Maxim Gorky.

In August 1933, a delegation of about 120 writers traveled to the construction site of the Canal. Their trip was made under the strict supervision of the Main Directorate of State Security, and the delegates could visit only the sites that had been prepared for them in advance in an attempt to give the writers the impression that the camps were clean and far from food insecurity (Ruder, *1998*, pp. 47-70). The resulting book, *White Sea-Baltic Canal*, which includes a section on figures from the Main Directorate of State Security, is basically a collection of life stories of prisoners who achieved "reforging (perekovka)" through the construction of the Canal.

Many of the prisoners in this book were orphans or left home at an early age, so many life histories in this book tell how street children in the early 1920s became adults by the 1930s and got involved in crimes. The common thread that runs through most of the episodes in *White Sea-Baltic Canal* is that these prisoners, who had no hope for the future, are inspired by their encounters at the construction site and by the prisoners around them and begin to have hope again when they realize that Soviet society is prepared for them to be active regardless of their criminal record.[27]

For instance, "The Story of One Reforging"[28] tells the story of an international thief named Abram Rottenberg. Raised in Tbilisi by a gambling-addicted father, Rottenberg learned to steal out of poverty and

26 Беломорско-Балтийский канал имени Сталина. История строительства. М., Государственное издательство «История Фабрик и Заводов», 1934.

27 See also: Draskoczy (2012)

28 «История одной перековки». Written by Mikhail Zoshchenko. Беломорско-Балтийский канал имени Сталина, С.324-342.

was arrested several times for selling fake ornaments. After marrying a female shoplifter he met in prison, he continued his criminal activities, traveling to Turkey, Bulgaria, Egypt, and Greece. However, he was stopped by the police in Jaffa and deported to the Soviet Union on suspicion of espionage and was sent to the Canal construction site. What awaited him at the construction site was a gentle persuasion; he was told that in a socialist country, fraud and theft would no longer be viable occupations because the gap between rich and poor would disappear soon and that it was better for his benefit to work. Rottenberg was convinced and reluctantly decided to go to work at the construction site because he understood that he could no longer make a living by committing crimes in the Soviet Union. Rottenberg says, "I started working. As I did so, I began to think about my former life and how I was. I am not ashamed of being a thief. Yes, I am a thief. My life had made me that way. […] This is not my crime. If I had another life and continued to steal, then it would have been my crime",[29] which is a typical narrative of "reforging" ideology.

In reality, prisoners were forced to work in extremely harsh conditions at the construction sites, and the descriptions in this book hide the cruel facts.[30]. However, when viewed as a story, it vividly shows how poverty in childhood inevitably led them down the path of crime, and it evokes empathy because it tells readers that if they were had been born into such circumstances, they would have become criminals themselves. Thus, the prisoners who committed crimes such as theft and murder were no longer aliens who should be excluded from society but were transformed into victims who should be empathized with.

5 Conclusion

The moral danger of empathy was a concern from the beginning since in the situation of being ordered to feel a certain emotion that "everyone

29 «Я начал работать. И потом думал о своей прежней жизни и о том, что я представлю из себя. Нет, мне не было совестно, что я вор. Ну, я вор. Меня так направила жизнь. […] И значит я буду виноват, если другая жизнь, а я ворую.» **Там же**. С.338.

30 See: Applebaum (2003).

feels," the certain emotion may become the single basis for any judgment. In this case, both rational decisions depending on a solid sense of morality and the responsibility that goes with it may be suspended. In the U.S., advertising and movie industries that used mass empathy were met with great backlash in the 1920s, while the Soviet Union, authorities had also been very cautious about introducing mass empathy propaganda until 1934. Then in the late 1930s, both in the U.S. and in the Soviet Union, affecting one another, state propaganda changed its previous direction. They suddenly began to urge people to share emotions with their fellow citizens or to feel empathy, especially for those who were easy to empathize or sympathize with and tried to give people a sense of becoming part of the nation. This was supposedly an exceptional decision they had to make to combat an unpreceded crisis.

The empathetic response—as seen in a common expression such as "we all suffer the same way"—is convenient for a country in crisis because authorities can embellish as if the distribution of suffering were equal for all people. Thus, this emotional norm, which employed empathy at a massive level, had transcended national boundaries. Adolf Hitler was appealing to people since he was commonly considered to have been suffered just like ordinary German citizens. George Orwell, in his 1940 essay, wrote about Hitler that "there is something deeply appealing about him. […] It is a pathetic, doglike face" Orwell (2002, p. 251). This emotional norm that focused on mass empathy has also spread beyond the boundaries of time and has continued to strengthen its inducement to the present day.

Mass empathy propaganda in the late 1930s US and Soviet Union paved the road to today's emotional norm in which empathetic response plays an excessively significant role in decision-making, thus suspending rational judgments. This emotional norm can support having hope against hope when a person is in exceptional danger since in this kind of abnormal situation, happiness is rare to achieve and thus tends to be imagined as romantic, as was the case in the late 1930s US and Soviet propaganda. On the other hand, the same emotional norm prepared the road for the victimhood culture. Today, people have started to try to behave as if

they were victims, especially (not despite, but) because they live without problems. Craving to be a victim to gain a privileged standpoint to push his or her opinion and identifying himself or herself as a romantic protagonist who suffers under intolerable wrongs resulted in the popularization of the idea that emotions should not be objectively weighed. Thus, it supposedly led to the spread of ethical norms that made it taboo to "triage" the importance of an issue in general.

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Gazing under fire –About a relational psychodynamic third position in times of war

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Abstract

In recent times of war, propaganda and hate unlocked strong psychological defenses such as splitting, projection, or denial, both at the individual and the societal level. The objective of this paper is to re-introduce psychoanalysis as an almost forgotten worldview of humanistically informed science in the discussion about collective reactions to war. Psychoanalytic concepts of the gaze will be connected to intergroup phenomena characterizing times of war, such as hatred or resistance. The popular psychoanalytic metaphor of "thinking under fire", which refers to being able to think in highly stressful situations, will be applied to our visual appropriation of the world in the era of social media. The metaphor of "gazing under fire" will be developed and embedded in the communication in times of fake, fragmented, and radicalized *Weltanschauungen*. A psychoanalytic position of the "third", which looks beyond toxic polarization will be claimed as a basic tool that overcomes dichotomies and essentialist ethnocentric political world views. This position can be reached by acknowledging both one's own guilt as well as the others` pain, despite the primacy of historical and social contextualization of collective suffering. Informed by the psychoanalytic basic principles of communication and treatment, this paper will potentially contribute to the relevance of psychoanalytic concepts for humanities as well as the intellectuals` psychic flexibility in times of war.

Keywords: psychoanalysis; the third position; humanistic science; looking under fire.

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Gazing under fire – About a relational psychodynamic third position in times of war

> *"It [the war] hurls down in blind rage whatever bars its way, as though there were to be no future and no peace after it is over. It tears asunder all community bonds among the struggling peoples and threatens to leave a bitterness which will make impossible any re-establishment of these ties for a long time to come"* (Freud, 1915, p. 12).

In times of crises, intellectuals are too easily trapped in adhering rigidly to their established values and ideas, defending them against the other`s supposedly inferior perspectives. The results can be seen impressively in social media discourses, tweets, slogans, declarations of solidarity and condemnation. There is a strong tendency that conversations mainly reach the benevolent ears of the in-group, of those already convinced and seldomly journeying outside their own area of experience, with a risk of the realities of others being patronized. The respective starting points, the narrative that one chooses, are too divergent to have any common ground. In times when the real-time documentation of cruelties via photography and videos made by their victims as well as by the perpetrators are more available for the broad public than ever, the individual sensitivities and ideologies of those consuming them are highly context-dependent and emotionally charged. On the one hand, videographic footage seems to be objective as it portrays what is happening right now in reality, while on the other hand, the many choices the videographer makes e.g. the frame, the angle of the video, the duration, remain subjective even to the extent of the possibility of creating a "faked" reality. The chosen narrative is the driving force that determines how pictures are interpreted. This might lead to a stabilization of our own identity and creation of divisions against other communities at the same time. The liberal agenda of autonomy underlying various fragmented identity groups lead to a feeling of irreconcilable opinions, as well as to a global retreat of a universal anthropological cohesion and

humanistic *Weltanschauung*, much needed to survive the many global challenges such as the climate crisis.

In the following, the metaphor of *gazing under fire* will be derived by psychoanalytic observations of the psychosexual development of gaze as well as the intersubjective experiences, that shape its appearance and result in its inaccessibility in times of war and hate. Differences between the look and the gaze will be determined. Subsequently, the metaphor will be applied specifically to the Israeli-Palestinian context. Ideas about inner and outer resistance to war will be developed. The early dictum by Ferenczi (1988) "without sympathy no healing" will be proven relevant beyond individual suffering. Without maintaining sparks of empathy for others, despite the dominance of one's own suffering, one will stay stuck in traditional approaches and discourses. The analytic position of the third, the "negative capability", interferes with hate and correlated belief systems. In critically acknowledging one's own aggressive potential and guilt by turning the look at others to a mutual empathic gaze, communication might become possible.

1 What a gaze can be about

The subjective experience of a mutually-held gaze is one of the most profound social encounters, measured by the emotionality it has the potential to evoke in the gazer. This effect goes beyond the individual psychological layer. The many writings of philosophers and poets prove its cultural transmission, and one can find the reverberations of the emotionality of the gaze replicated in visual and written cultural artefacts such as in the tales of Oedipus, Medusa or Narcissus.

Apart from its biological roots, according to which the human`s ability to look is simply understood as the ability to visually perceive and as a means of attention, its psychological meaning strikes from the beginning of life. While early phenomenological approaches argued that seeing comes before words (Berger, 1980), today it is common sense that seeing is always, and from the beginning of life influenced by its

social environment. Through our eyes we establish contact with the outer world. We create meaning and it is via the encounter of another's gaze that we meet the other meeting us (Heron, 1970). The importance of a child being seen by the primary caregiver for healthy human development is well known from findings from infant research. Gaze plays an important role in emotional regulation, as well as the social learning function of children. Of course, there is more to the gaze then serving as a prerequisite for learning: It is a part and expression of our core self (Stern, 1985; Stern, 1974). Through the direction and duration of our gaze we regulate our emotions: eyes and gazes can express all basic emotions, including fear or aggression (Ekman and Friesen, 1974) as well as interactional emotions such as sexual desire, flirting, love (Bolmont et al., 2014, Bolmont et al., 2017), challenging and competing (Argyle et al., 1974), power relations (Hall et al. 2005), dominant and submissive behavior (Tang & Schmeichel, 2015) or shame and embarrassment (Modigliani, 1971). Riemer (1955) went as far as to classify the "abnormalities" of the gaze by defining pathological gazing as not being able to distinguish between appropriate and non-appropriate gazing behavior, whereas ordinary social interactants have an intuitive sense of appropriateness. Extended gazing periods occur particularly in aggressive or libidinal exchanges. Here, a mutual gaze can dissolve the difference between subject and object temporarily. To reduce intimacy on the other hand people prefer to avoid eye contact e.g. in crowded elevators to preserve the individual space from being intruded on by others. Gazing behavior is influenced by many other factors than direct interpersonal relationships e.g., by the gazer`s personality (Mehrabian, 1972) or by power and status differences (Argyle and Dean, 1965). In recent years, gaze has been further conceptualized in connection with identities e.g. heterosexual and homosexual gazes, the "imperial" or the "transatlantic" gaze (Manlove, 2007, p. 84) or the "colonial" gaze. Here, individual behavior is seen through a lense of the broader social context, precisely the opposite to the psychoanalytic inductive perspective, which transfers individual defense mechanisms to collective reactions.

2 Gazing in psychoanalysis

With the onset of psychoanalysis, Freud avoided a mutual gaze with his patients by asking them to lay on the couch, stating that he could not deal with "being stared at by others for eight hours a day" (Freud., 1913, p. 131). To access regressive conflicts and fantasies by talking, the mutual gaze between physician and patient was no longer possible. First stated in his treatises on sexuality, Freud relates gazing to the pleasure principle, a classic drive-theoretical approach.

> "Visual impressions remain the most frequent pathway along which libidinal excitation is aroused. ... It is usual for most normal people to linger to some extent over the intermediate sexual aim of a looking that has a sexual tinge to it.".
>
> (Freud, 1922, p. 156)

"*Schaulust*" serves Freud namely as a juxtaposition to hysterical blindness, and an explanation for his psychogenic explanation of hysteria. Subsequently, Melanie Klein and other ego-psychoanalysts stressed the importance of the child`s physical connection to the mother for the child`s individuation process. Klein understood the gaze to be a mediator of that early relationship. Concepts of self and other in the gaze were later prominent in the writings of Lacan (1977). Inspired by phenomenological approaches like Merleau-Ponty (1962), he states the pre-existence or reversibility of the gaze. Gazing is not one-dimensional, as we are at the same time subject and object of our own gaze. We see only from one point, but are seen in our existence from everywhere (ibid.). The gaze represents the object of desire and is furthermore the central operator of the mirror stage and constitutive for the self. "Reality needs to be ordered by formal structures before we can even conceive it" (Heimann, 2022, p. 710). Through gazing in the mirror, and the identification with the whole image in it (which is the very bodily ego that Freud has declared in "the Ego and the Id" (Freud, 1923), the ego of the child begins to form. Before identification with a caregiver as an essential part of the social development is possible, one needs to experience a feeling of difference (in contrast to fusion) to the object. The interaction

with the other is essential for the child to develop a self. The mirror is not just a reflection of our physical selves, but the insight that, if we can see ourselves, others can also see us. This form of being observed by the imagined other is of primary importance for our self-awareness and being. The gaze as one operation in this mirror function is an essential part of human desire. Gazing towards another object marks our object of desire. The subject desires to be desired by the other. The gaze of the other is always present, even if the subject is alone. Thus, the gaze cannot be tied to a specific real person gazing, but is always influenced by one's own fantasies about the other seeing us. Since the 1970s, and with the growing popularity of infant-observation research as part of an intersubjective and inter-relational psychoanalytic framework, the topic of mutual gazing gained popularity. Starting off with the famous still-face-paradigm (Tronick et al., 1978), today there exists an ample amount of literature on gaze avoidance in infants towards their mothers and later on their psychoanalysts. This is mostly interpreted as early psychological defense mechanisms to regulate distress as experienced in the caregiving situation (Coswill, 2000; Salomonsson, 2016; 2021). Intersubjective theories focus on encounters and relationship experiences in early life and how they form our way of being with others in adulthood. If an early narcissistic vulnerability or oral deficiency comes into play, then one is susceptible to counter-movements such as aggression and anger. In general, the couch setting and the elimination of the mutual gaze in psychoanalysis intensifies deliberately the gaze inwards, the introspection that is necessary for working through psychologically relevant conflicts. At the same time, fantasies and projections towards the imagined quality of the gaze of the analyst intensify. Both aim at the emergence of the second, unconscious layer of conversation, the psychoanalytic mise-en-scene guided by inner conflicts. The same principle is true for the collective, instead of acting-out negative emotions towards the outside, a society will not overcome their collective trauma whithout a working-through of the traumatic past (LaCapra, 2001). Too often, this gaze is blurred by hate.

3 The look of hatred

> *"The man who first flung a word of abuse at his enemy instead of a spear was the founder of civilization."* (Freud & Breuer, 1893)

Violence is a universal human reaction to our innate human dependence, and the "manner in which we are "given genders or social categories, against our will and subjectivized in the context of the repetition of insistencies that construct us according to the dictates of power" (Butler, 2009, p. 167). While Butler's conceptualization as humans is mired in violence from the beginning, other authors, mainly humanistically informed, do not conceptualize violence as an innate human trait. Violence occurs exclusively as a reaction to the failure of needs, and is only indirectly referred to in the context of power or violation of autonomy. Through its many diverse appearances, hate is an existential part of our human condition, psychoanalytically rooted in the destruction-seeking "Thanatos" drive. At least since Winnicott's work on "Hate in the countertransference" (1994), intersubjective, ego —and self— psychoanalysts are convinced that hate is necessary for the psychosexual development, for self-realization and even as a therapeutic tool to work-through in therapies.

The psychologically most relevant division is the one between hate directed towards the outside and a hate that is directed inside. When aggression is absent or turned inwards, the death drive energy is transformed into depressive stagnation and indifference instead of being channeled towards the other person. This can be expressed either in a hostile attitude, or in resignation and depression, and in the most extreme form, in suicide. Anger is a vital force, whereas depression is the opposite. Resentment can be understood as a mixed form between inside and outside hatred. In war, hate is mainly male and loud – war as a man`s game (Virginia Woolf), women are rather the bystanders and victims of male aggression. Theweleit (2015) referred to the worst cases of the male desire to kill as "free floating SS-men". He mentions Anders Breivik, '..the Norwegian neo-Nazi terrorist, who saw himself as a healer cleaning the world, a recurrent fantasy in transfigurations of ter-

ror attacks of individuals. There are some psychological characteristics that differentiate hate from anger (Fuchs, 2021; Blass, 2019). In hating someone, the other holds a very powerful position. The absolute wish to destroy the other occurs alongside a form of self-emptying and is destructive. A more constructive form of anger could be self-defensive, includes fantasies of superiority, of wishing oneself a better life (a progressive feeling) versus hate that is directed towards annihilation, destruction, and powerlessness (a destructive feeling). The more persistent the feeling of injustice, the more likely it is to experience hate. Hate is an obsession, a progressive self-poisoning directed towards one's soul. The greater one's own suffering, the more inadequate and difficult the endeavor is to move from a projective position (which sees the guilt and fear in others) to a depressive position (which mourns one`s own shortcomings). In direct contact between hostile parties (in a manner similar to libidinal contacts), the gaze is attached to the object as if in a form of perversion. The hater cannot let go of the powerful object he or she hates and wishes to destroy. This is specific to the psychoanalytical approach to hatred: it is not so much about the object of hatred itself, but about inner reasons and vulnerabilities in the person who hates. In the concept of destructive narcissism, hate can be understood as a form of traumatic re-enactment. The relationship between trauma and hate lies in the victim perpetrator reversal. In hatred, the aggressor is the strong character, and the weak target is despised. Hating is the reversal of weakness into strength that makes the individual feel (temporarily) strong. Instead of turning the gaze inwards by facing narcisstic injuries in oneself, the gaze turns towards the outside, the other is devaluated and the own position stays untouched.

4 Hate and trauma in the Israeli-Palestinian context

How does hatred manifest itself in a country in which both parties are socialized with a narrative in which they are "victims" –and, of course, are too often indeed real victims from one side or the other– feeling hindered in their aspirations for advancement and furthermore feel united in the feeling of being devalued worldwide? What about a society such

as that of the Palestinians, who have been deprived of their own space since the Nakba in 1948, or the Jews, who had to search for their destroyed space anew after the Shoah? The specific historical and social consistent traumatic Israeli-Palestinian context is susceptible to hate, projections, identity negotiations in both gruops. Here, social experiences of flight and migration, as well as individual experiences of impediment, enter a disastrous resonating relationship, reinforcing each other. The experience of collective violence results in living in an ongoing survival mode (Chemtob et al., 1988). Such a mode is defined in terms of a cascade of neurobiological responses that make the organism ready for the fight-flight response as well as for bonding (Brom, 2014). In existential threatening situations, attachment to benevolent authority is an essential survival mechanism (compare the early infant and caregiver situation). At the same time, just as the attachment is strong, there is a parallel tendency to reject people perceived to be hostile or not part of the in-group (ibid.). Violence could be even used to assert that one's own view of the world is the correct one. As violence is justified as a moral act, one demonstrates that one's own normative claims are justified. Shared hate can further serve as a strong foundation for group identities and there is limited capacity to look beyond a benevolent versus hostile dichotomy.

As noted earlier, hatred arises precisely in the gap where the individual does not find its place to develop, where personal mortification and unresolved mourning occur. The ongoing traumatic environment of violence constitutes a victim state of mind, with paranoid-schizoid mechanisms (Hollander, 2015). Both Israeli Jews and Palestinians suffer the psychological consequences of occupying a position of victimhood, a psychic state that tends to produce diminished self-esteem, a defensive grandiosity, wishes for revenge, a need for compensation resulting from feelings of entitlement, and the splitting of good and evil between self and other that prevents empathy (Hollander, 2015, p. 64). Defenses against mourning (or the depressive position) often include identification with the aggressor, personified in belligerent and bellicose political leaders or organizations that can protect the group from (re)experiencing the humiliation of powerlessness (Falk, 2004). The similarities be-

tween the too similar "brothers" –the Jewish and Palestinian people– are described often. Both suffer from deep narcissistic injuries, driven by the compulsive repetition of trauma and intergroup dynamics, both strongly attached to their respectively claimed homeland and eventually leading to fratricide. Today, these similarities might be seen as a cliché, and yet are more accentuated. Both Palestinians and Israelis are in a status of massive trauma, which intensifies the feeling of being victimized. The Palestinian people are categorized as being the "victim of the victim" or being in a state of "competing victimhood" (Shnabel & Noor, 2012), a competition about being the "true" victim. and proposing. Another conceptualization, the "chosen trauma" (Volkan, 2007), describes the identity-forming state of mind of a people through the trauma that was passed on through generations before who fought in this land. The clinging on to the "chosen trauma" of ancestors could be understood as a (often unintended or unconcscious) resistance to peace, especially when violence is involved as the projection of one`s own and collective vulnerability as mentioned before. Again, hatred is an (illusionary) way to compensate for humiliated self-esteem, because one's own group appears superior and unique in comparison to the devaluated group of the other. Hate consists of a reversal: at the root of hate lies humiliation, loss of honor, and loss of face, devastating experiences that threaten self-esteem. Collectively speaking, hatred towards the outside serves a rescue function in which aggressive energies are released. The threat of self-destruction is transferred to the destruction of the other. Fatally, the two hostile parties need each other to stabilize their identity and world views. Next to trauma, hate can also be passed on to future generations if not —as a first step— active *gazing under fire* is practiced, later followed by actions of a needs-based-model of reconciliation which could have the goal of breaking the cycle of competition.

5 Gazing under fire

The concept of "thinking under fire" was coined by the psychoanalyst Wilfred Bion (1962) who suffered himself from posttraumatic conditions after his experiences as a tank commander in the First World war.

Ever since, it has been a popular metaphor for describing the rising emotional pressure and intensive feelings experienced by therapists during the real-time treatment of their patients, with the task of both containing these emotions in themselves, as well as reacting adequately to those of their patients. The willingness to allow the deepest and most frightening aspects of a patient's inner world to emerge in the encounter (Bion, 1967a) is also described as a "negative capability". This capability entails entering into the encounter with the patient with "no memory no desire" (Bion, 1967b), to immerse oneself in the reverie of the moment, and to not be too influenced by preexisting theory or prejudice. This process aims to deepen the engagement with whatever is in the patient's mind during the therapeutic encounter. Thus, it might be so difficult for psychoanalysts to comment on political topics because they are used to being in this observing, reactive and distanced position. In the following, the metaphor of gazing under fire will be applied to the war situation, where we as observers are forced to look and testify the atrocities being committed.

As mentioned before, in war and trauma, early defense mechanisms such as splitting, denial and projection are effective. Those are driven by the existential fear (Rosenfeld, 1971) which the traumatic event arouses to an intolerable extent. It is extremely hard for those immediately affected and traumatized to be empathic to the pain of the other side, exactly because the level of one's own suffering is so high, and it occupies the whole mind in thinking and feeling. Although the level of empathy increases with the magnitude of pain of each individual, there is no increase in empathy regarding the number of people suffering (Gordon-Hecker et al., 2024). This is refered to as the singularity effect: paradoxically, the level of empathy a single (identified) victim attracts more empathy than a group of victims (Kogut & Ritov, 2005). Beyond individual empathic responses, the regressive pull of war further sweeps us in large group dynamics. Just as at the individual level, one's primitive (narcissistic) vulnerability can be externalized in group conflicts (Volkan, 2007). Well known are Bion's "basic-assumption-groups" (1961), characterized by the basic assumptions of fight or flight (group unites to fight against or flee from), pairing groups (wish

for pairing of two separate parties) and dependency groups (submission under an omnipotent leader). Bion judges the behavior of the groups as a regressive defense against psychotic and "dreadful" fears, feeling helpless in a dependent regressive position. These group states are highly influenced by Freud's group psychology and the analysis of the Ego, where the masses lose their individual ego and instead, affected by the masses` emotions, narcissistic libido is transferred to an idealized leader. Also, in Bion's conceptualization, a leader ("a father figure") unites the groups with different individual positions towards this leader.

For bystanders, for persons not identifying with one of the groups or a leader, such as media consumers who watch hate crimes on social media, the risk is high of experiencing shock and shame looking at pictures without being able to do something about the helplessness provoked. This kind of looking could produce a feeling of voyeurism. Also the felt sense of vulnerability is very high when confronted with traumatic situations, and might be easily projected on the other by intergroup processes. On the other hand, those standing outside the immediate war situation are also able to take on the psychoanalytic third perspective. A psychoanalytic-informed search for meaning and understanding should not be considered as a form of escapism with regard to political or personal moral responsibility. Instead of patronizing reality from an ivory tower, genuine conversations depend on mutual recognition. Ideally, this position will not lead to simplistic answers, but rather reveal complex and ambivalent answers which hold different truths at the same time. In the dictum of Segal (1987) "Silence is the real crime", simply looking without taking the other`s perspective into account, could lead to a silencing of opinions.

But how is it possible to resist these projections, to remain psychologically flexible, to serve one's own values in a way of moral integrity, but to also respond to new developments and the present moment, by looking at the pain of those holding different values? This is certainly a "moral struggle" (Butler, 2009), but possible such as in Butler`s concept of cohabitation. Although the subject always lives on occupied ground, we have the same entitlement by virtue of living on this planet. Regard-

ing the third position, the struggle means to bei empathic, to transform destructive hate to constructive anger. In cases of strong hatred, foregoing revenge is necessary. These processes of mutual recognition are oriented and bound in time, and can take place only when two are open to looking at each other. The intimacy of the intellectual encounter in times of war entails a risk of being shamed. The moment someone is seen and beheld (in their fears, angers, difficulties), the person becomes visible in terms of his or her lack. On the other side of the risk of being shamed by a devaluating response, stands the gain of opening, the gain of being recognized and acknowledged, despite and with our lack, as established by the intimacy accompanying the mutual gaze. The concept of empathy serves not only as a metaphor for (un)-conscious interpersonal resonating processes, but can be understood as a broader anthropological organizing principle, one that has a fundamental social orientation. By reflecting on one's own deficiencies, looking can turn to a gaze, and activity becomes possible.

6 Inner and outer resistance

As introduced in the case of the Middle East conflict, a strong underlying position of inferiority from both narratives is claimed, which leads to a neurotic, paranoid position of mutual distrust and separation. "In the Israeli-Palestinian dyad, both sides feel themselves victims of the other. In this case, resolving their respective recognition needs through mutual accountability is a barrier" (Heifetz, 2023, p. 69). Resistance to working through conflicts in psychoanalysis, and resistance to political conflict by actions, at first glance seem to be two entirely different processes. Resistance as a psychoanalytic terminus refers to the (inner) unwillingness to work through inner conflicts, about the ambivalence of the wish to change, versus the fear of change, of the wish to stay as you are, to close, to hide, to withdraw from contact and protect yourself from disappointed expectations. "Resistance (…) evokes a certain opposition to power – here, that of the analyst – but in a context in which progressive change is the object of that power; which is to say, resistance means closing down, refusing to think, blocking insight, turning away"

(Frosh, 2015, pp. 389-390) or, in other words, resistance is "the mind at war with itself, blocking the path to its own freedom" (Rose, 2007). In political and historical terms, resistance is clearly an outer struggle, directed towards an enemy, an idea and specific persons personifying the disdained system. As a side note, the term "Jihad" refers actually to both an inner and an outer struggle.

Since the development of object-relational psychoanalytic theory however, inner conflicts and outer actions relate to each other in the intersubjective matrix of relationship organization. The most well-known statement might be the sentence "there is no such thing as a baby" by Winnicott (1960). The baby exists only due to the interaction with its mother in a "nursing complex". We evolve our personality by introjecting our experiences with other objects, by identifying and demarcating not in a void, but always with and against someone else. In addition, resistance in the post-colonial context can be understood only in terms of the very existence of the other for the definition of oneself. "Resistance is always defined through the negation of the entity at which it directs itself, forming itself by way of negation with reference to (the abusing) authority. This negative core means that resistance cannot be total because it is always defined by its object. Destroy the object, and you have destroyed the resisting subject as well." (Hadar, 2016, p. 334). This is the whole tragedy of the intractable Israeli-Palestinian conflict, as the identities are constructed in demarcation form one another. The price for the recognition of the pain of the other includes the risk of threatening one's own position of suffering (Kahanoff, 2015), cognitive and identity consistency (Bar-Tal, 2014) and might even be a threat to identity, that is build on asymmetrical constructions. Just one example of that asymmetrical relationship is that of language, where the dominance of Hebrew in the public sphere shapes the cultural landscape one-sided or the narrative of the Palestinians being the indigineous people in Palestine, therefore jewish people are a foreign colonizing body. The gain of recognition of the other side as symmetrical in its potential for immediate and long-term transformation of hate to mutuality. This path will of course (like in many other examples such as in the case of South Africa) lead through resistance of those who prefer to benefit

from the asymmetrical power relationships. In psychological treatment, resistance is a way of understanding something about inner conflicts, about what needs to be resisted against, about what a person is precisely afraid of by transformation. Frosh (2015, p. 390) applies this powerful tool to the political context by stating that resistance

> "has to involve an opening as well as a refusal. The refusal is of the structures of power as they are naturalised in their self-presentation; the opening is the turn towards the reality of the other and of the situation, however alarming and threatening it may be."

By focusing on the colonial context the "perverse relationship" between dominating and dominated subjects and the enactment of "otherness" is implied in the asymmetrical encounter. "Enactments of otherness, therefore, are symptoms, products, and manifestations marked by historic imbalances, exhibited by those involved in unequal albeit regularized inter-subjective relations" (Sheehi & Sheehi, p. 83). The authors endorse an anti-oppressive psychoanalytic praxis inspired by Frantz Fanon and others, who worked on decolonial psychology. From this perspective, eurocentric practice serves exclusively those already privileged. Palestinian mental health is in a constant battle to work to personal and collective dis-alienation and self-realization under and against settler colonialism. In addition, "the Palestinian people appeared (…) in need of both a process of self-liberation and social liberation, because it is difficult to work through internal repression when one cannot effectively work through external repression" (Jabr & Berger, 2016, p. 28). Decolonial authors never tire of stressing that the dialogue between Palestinians and Israelis is somehow doomed to fail, e.g. due to the destructiveness of the colonial introjections of the Palestinians, or the impossibility for Israelis to give up their position as "good Israelis". The extractive introjections (an outer attribution that has been internalized) occur in dialogue because the Palestinian "carries" both the individual and the collective responsibility for their culpability of existence, their resistance, and their desire. Due to this fixation on narrowing the arguments, this framework might (unwillingly) be perpetuating a white and

black perspective and patronizing the victims.

The concepts of *reconciliation* or *recognition* might bridge psychoanalysis and post-colonial theory or identity politics. In psychoanalysis, the aim is to liberate the subject from repression, from being unaware of what is going on inside his or her psyche, while post-colonial theory is about liberating the subject from the oppressor and the state of oppression. Interestingly, both psychoanalysis and post-colonial theory are concerned with the question of how to rehabilitate the subject after injury (Hadar, 2016, p. 332). The path to dialogue between the two sides involves good internal objects. As a first step, this is a prerequisite for working against destructive introjections, e.g. family and social cohesion in Palestinian society as a resource. Recognition depends on others, on the feeling to be recognized in work, familial and private relationships (Honneth) but it also depends on the work on the self, such as in the concept of self-determination (Hegel) or education to modernity (Adorno).

In regard to collective trauma, recognition of the pain and the trauma of the two conflicted groups is a precondition for a possible reconciliation process. Consequently, in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, a recognition of the Nakba would be essential not only for Palestinians but for Israeli society, who surpresses or denies this part of the history in favor of the dominant chosen trauma of the Shoah. Such a recognition could have a profound transformation impact (Benjamin, 2011).

7 A psychoanalytic position of the third

> *Do I contradict myself? Very well then I contradict myself, (I am large, I contain multitudes)* **(**Walt Whitman**,** *Song of Myself***,** 51, 1855**)**

How does the third position concern the intellectual`s writing in times of war? In the void that vanished religious and spiritual power has left us in the 21st century, the search for morality is difficult. Political speech and academic speech are strongly intertwined, especially as, for many scholars, their subject of study is (conscious or unconsciously) entangled with their identity and result in a specific *Weltanschauung.* In the October 7 massacre in Israel, the paranoid transgenerational transmission and stimulation of the biggest fear of the annihilation of Jews since the Holocaust came true –another realization of a psychotic cosmos. "Many Jewish Israelis are moved to rigidify their defenses –psychological, geographic, and military– so as to avoid the experience of passivity in the face of threat." (Hollander, 2015, p. 61). The unfolding of the ongoing cruel war in Palestine and the large number of killed Palestinian civilians, the collective repression of acknowledgement, and witness to the collective trauma of the return of the repressed trauma of the Nakba now in the current war is so overwhelming, that the Palestinian suffering also "inhibits their motivation to negotiate with an adversary whose intentions are experienced as dishonorable" (Hollander, 2015, p. 61). Although both collective traumatic events are not comparable, both left both their traces in the collective memory and are constantly overwritten and regenerated because the traumatic reality is ongoing. Posttraumatic responses are in general ascribed to the victims, but history shows that the perpetrating side also suffers from its violent past. Not acknowledging and repressing the Nakba can be seen as a symptom of collective perpetrator trauma (the Israeli side), that reveals itself in certain social symptoms like still used Arab names for places that were uprooted in the public sphere (Even-Tzur, 2016). Analysis of the current situation that are connected to the traumatic past, metaphors such as "Gaza being a Ghetto that is being liquidated now" (Gessen, 2023) leave a strong impression and imprint, accentuating the perpetrator-victim dialectic instead of acknowledging that both sides are both victims

as well as perpetrators. Although there are real asymmetries of power (compare the numbers of innocent civilians killed on both sides of a war), every single injury needs to be equally respected. The slightly optimistic lesson that can be learned from treating patients is that one cannot compare suffering and that empathy can be cultivated. Every person feels individual pain, pain that is not comparable to that of others. The only way out of each side`s chosen trauma as a collective is "neither obvious nor easy. Having compassion for the other side's trauma means paying a price for one`s own stability and world view. Such sensitivity demands taking risks. Engaging directly with the sensitivity requires making peace with the past by becoming accountable, by facing oneself as both victim and victimizer. It requires slowly and stepwise taking more risks to counter one's sensitivity and false perceptions of safety and truth —the truths of our beliefs, beliefs upon which our identities are built" (Heifetz, 2023, p. 69).

"The 'third' is a psychological position that transcends all the basic oppositions of 'them and us' or 'doer and done-to' by recognizing that we all contain all opposites" (Benjamin, 2004). Specifically, the moral third is the position from which the violations of lawful behavior and dehumanization can be witnessed or repaired. It is a fragile position, hard for both individual and collectives to maintain. It is from the position of the moral third that we acknowledge violations, suffering, indignities, and the debasing of some humans to elevate others. What makes that position of acknowledgment possible? What prevents it? We must admit that we observe in ourselves continually the breakdown and restoration of the capacity to hold the connection with suffering, including our own" (Benjamin, 2015, p. 7).

In her essay "Thoughts on Peace in an Air Raid", Virginia Woolf (1940) urges her readers to imagine peace and the psychosocial conditions that make it sustainable, amid war. If people are capable of being imaginative, there will be no war. This might sound naïve, yet the power of imagination is a creative force that counters the destructiveness of hate. At last, the function of the "third position" could be to not give up the hope that a paranoid-schizoid position can be transformed into a depres-

sive one. Just as transgenerational trauma exists, transgenerational reconciliation is possible. To be able to come into the depressive position, one must accept feelings of guilt and remorse that are completely denied by large group processes (such as devaluing the inferior other and idealizing the own group, seen on both sides of the conflict). Psychic recovery and flexibility mean to identify with something other than the lost object. Neutrality or abstinence that is appropriate in the clinical setting, does not fit when encountered with large group dynamics (Kemp, 2011). Instead, a "universalism" is needed that acknowledges the pain of the other. But "thinking with feeling" as well as "gazing under fire" requires taking on the other side's pain. It involves acknowledging harm inflicted by each side on the other —reconstructing narratives to name the unnamable and building upon common values. It involves making the 'Other" more like "us" to avoid the common conclusion that those who are not "us", are not like 'us' and therefore endanger us (Ahmed, 2014).

Returning to the potential of a psychoanalytic approach to understand a political conflict, the internal struggle or the inner resistance against too convenient thinking is forced. "Psychoanalysis accounts for the capacity to resist by stressing the inevitable divisions within the self that reflect an ambivalent relationship to authority. Agency can be mobilized to uproot internalized versions of hegemony that reproduce the inequities of the social world." (Hollander, 2015, p. 73). As Žižek puts it, the subject comes into being when interpellation is resisted (cited by Ruti, 2014). Ultimately, by giving up the depressive position and speaking in praise of confusion with ambivalent, mixed identities and multitudes, we arrive at hybrid subjectivities and intersubjective relationships (Bhabha, 1994). Thoughts about "a time after" might not yet be realized and are pointed to future directions. After all, the human capacity to rebuild, to get back to life and to not give up the possibility of recovery even after terrible losses, has proven itself as a steady force throughout the history of war crimes.

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The Affects of Racist Discourse: British Media's Scapegoating of Black, Asian, and Minority Ethnic (BAME) Groups in the COVID-19 Pandemic

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Abstract

Through a case study of the news media narrative surrounding British Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) groups published by the Daily Mail during the COVID-19 pandemic, this article analyzes the affects of news media discourse to better understand how and why racial scapegoating and racist ideologies abound in times of public (health) crises. By conducting a critical discourse analysis, this article finds that although BAME individuals were initially presented as heroic healthcare workers in the first few weeks of COVID lockdown, the Daily Mail soon presented them as inexplicable sources of contagion, turning them into public scapegoats for the spread of the virus. Drawing on historical racial tropes of poverty, ill-health and poor living-conditions, the Daily Mail articles simultaneously suggested BAME individuals were biologically inferior to white Brits, and increasingly implied they were personally responsible for their disproportionate COVID suffering. This discourse thus generated emotions of fear, uncertainty, and aversion towards a fictional group of homogenous, non-white individuals, who were presented as a source of contagion and a threat to the health of the white British nation. By scapegoating BAME individuals for the spread of COVID-19, the Daily Mail denied that historic, systemic racism was responsible for COVID-related racial health inequities, and instead succeeded at sustaining the popular imaginary of the UK as a tolerant nation, free of racism.

Keywords: BAME; COVID; news media; racial scapegoating; discourse; affect

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The Affects of Racist Discourse: British Media's Scapegoating of Black, Asian, and Minority Ethnic (BAME) Groups in the COVID-19 Pandemic

On March 23rd, 2020, almost two months after the first confirmed cases of COVID-19 in the U.K., former Prime Minister, Boris Johnson, announced that British residents would be entering a stage of lockdown for the foreseeable future. The lockdown was intended to curb the spread of the virus and prevent the National Health Service (NHS) from becoming overwhelmed with patients. Soon after, as the pandemic worsened, and hospitals overflowed with COVID-19 patients, NHS workers were lauded as heroes, with British residents partaking in weekly curbside public demonstrations of appreciation for the heroic pandemic workers. However, as further research on the virus, patient symptoms, and patient demographics emerged, British news media outlets soon began reporting on the disproportionate suffering of Black, Asian, and Minority Ethnic (BAME) healthcare workers from the virus; not only were more BAME NHS workers catching the virus than white British medical staff, but they were also suffering worse symptoms and were more like to die from the virus. Similar news headlines were published shortly after this initial discovery, detailing the increased rates of COVID-19 infection in BAME communities beyond the healthcare sector and among the general public. Soon, high rates of COVID-19 infection rates within the UK became associated with BAME communities, and race became a salient category for understanding the spread of the virus. This became especially evident on June 4th, only two and a half months after the declared lockdown, when 'The Daily Mail' news outlet published an article headlined 'BAME people may face higher risk of dying from coronavirus because of their higher rates of vitamin D deficiencies, scientist says'.

This article explores how and why COVID-19 infection rates, and the causes and consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic, became very publicly connected to biological race. In lieu of conducting retroactive ethnographic inquiry to explore this phenomenon, I analyze the news media coverage published during the first six months of the pandemic, understanding news media as a form of public discourse and as a construction and representation of social reality that mirrors and reproduces the dominant ideologies within British society during a given period (van Dijk, 1988). By critically analyzing the content and discourse used by the British media outlet, 'The Daily Mail', in the first six months of the pandemic, I track the evolving narrative surrounding British Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) groups and the COVID-19 virus, to answer the following questions: 1) How were BAME individuals presented in COVID-19 news media coverage at the beginning of the pandemic, and how did this narrative evolve in response to emerging research and knowledge of disproportionate suffering, government mandates/actions, and other socio-political events?; and 2) How can this evolving narrative help us understand what is deemed 'sayable' about the socio-political positions, representations, and subjectivities of BAME communities and individuals within the UK?

My research shows how the mediatized representations of ethnic minority individuals shifted dramatically in the first six months of the pandemic, from being presented as heroic healthcare workers, to then being seen as inexplicable sources of contagion, to finally becoming public scapegoats for the spread of COVID-19. I find that the Daily Mail drew on colonial-inspired tropes, that are deeply embedded in 21st century British conceptions of race and bodily health, to effectively scapegoat BAME communities, while simultaneously refusing to acknowledge the role that these racial ideologies have on causing the very conditions that lead to racial health inequities. Ultimately, I make a case for analyzing the affective potential of news media and public discourse as a way to better understand how and why racist ideologies abound in times of public (health) crisis. To make my argument, I turn first to reviewing scholarship on the role that news media plays in shaping discourse, and I provide a brief history of racial scapegoating. Next, I present my own

research methodology in relation to these bodies of previous research, before then beginning my chronological analysis of Daily Mail articles to trace the shift in discourse throughout the first six months of the pandemic. I conclude with considerations about the affective impact of cumulative discourses, and reflect on what the Daily Mail discourse can tell us about the affects of racist ideologies within the U.K.

1 Discourse in News Media

Critical discourse analysis acknowledges how the subjects and objects of knowledge and 'truth' are constituted through language that is produced by (scientific and educational) institutions and information-disseminating apparatuses, such as media outlets (Foucault, 2010). With this in mind, I therefore turn to critical discourse analysis to examine the role that news media outlets, and their textual outputs, play in perpetuating and normalizing discourses that reflect and reproduce widely accepted notions of race (van Dijk, 1991). Historically, it was believed that legacy news media, while successful in determining which issues gained public attention, had very little impact on individuals' opinions surrounding these topics (Curtice and Semetko, 1994; McCombs and Shaw, 1972). More recently, however, media discourse has been acknowledged as one of the most important influencers of public attitudes (Hargreaves, 2003; Lloyd, 2004). The ubiquity of mass media, the consonance and ideological homogeneity of news coverage, and the cumulative nature of news narratives are all thought to affect people's perceptions of public opinion on salient topics (Noelle-Neumann, 1993) – including race-related events.

However, it is worth noting that the influential power existent between news media discourse and public opinion flows both ways; just as the ideologies of media mogul elites and their subsequent news coverage can shape social perspectives, public opinion can also drive news media narratives. (Roberts, Wanta and Dzwo, 2002). In fact, the capital attached to the news media industry means that news discourses are constantly shaped by a multitude of factors, not just the social and po-

litical ideologies of writers, editors, and publishers. For instance, the 'newsworthiness' of topics is influenced by the news outlet's staff, the coverage of competing outlets, the historical trajectory and political agenda of the outlet, and the expectations of the outlet's established audiences (Galtung and Holmboe Ruge, 1965; Harcup and O'Neill, 2001; Harcup and O'Neill, 2017). This final factor is particularly instrumental in shaping the tone of the Daily Mail's narratives, as selective exposure theory and confirmation bias would suggest that individuals don't just expect to see certain types of narratives and news content, but actually gravitate towards and consistently select content that reinforces and confirms their pre-existing belief systems (Stroud, 2008). The Daily Mail, in its effort to maintain a sustained readership, thus complies to the expectations of its consistent target audience, creating a feedback loop of ever-escalating supply, demand and consumption of particular discourses and storytelling styles that appeal to a sub-stratum of the British population – typically white, politically right-leaning, conservative individuals (Lownie, 2023).

Analyzing news media discourse thus provides insight into how racial knowledge is produced, and reified, by news outlets. It allows us to illuminate the often-hidden racial assumptions that have permeated British society and have become unquestionable 'truths', while also enabling us to see how the British press contributes to the continuity of these racist ideologies (Hall, 2021; van Dijk, 1991). By critically analyzing news media discourse, it is possible to see how social power relations are imbued and constituted through news media language and articles. Moreover, by departing from traditional methods of discourse analysis, which typically avoid considering the emotional experiences that can occur when readers engage with particular discourses, this article also makes space for examining the affective and emotional potential embedded in the discourse of news media articles.

My approach to understanding affect and emotion within written news media is inspired by Berg, von Scheve, Ural and Walter-Jochum (2019), who propose a theoretical and methodological turn towards understanding the 'intertwinement of emotion, language and discourse' (46). In

this line of inquiry, they are inspired by affect theorist, Sara Ahmed (2004), who understands the emotionality of discourse as a tool that affects bodies, by aligning groups of people against one another – a central tenet of race relations and tensions. This article thus begins from the premise that affect, emotions, and discourse are intertwined, and that this entanglement has consequences on how bodies relate to one another on a personal and societal level. From an analytical perspective, I therefore consider affect to be a hermeneutic lens that aids in conceptualizing the causes and impacts of discourse and language choice. To accomplish this, I adopt the framework of 'reading for affect' while conducting critical discourse analysis throughout this article. This involves attuning myself to the emotionality of discourse and the affective potential of language, by considering how emotion-laden language is attributed to specific actors and ideas, and how social collectives are linguistically connected to their bodily qualities (Berg, von Scheve, Ural and Walter-Jochum (2019)). With this in mind, it is worth noting that I use the terms affect and emotion interchangeably throughout this article, understanding them both as inextricably entwined and impossible to disentangle from one another (Ahmed, 2004).

2 Racial Scapegoating

One pertinent way in which we see evidence of emotion interacting with discourse, is in the history of racial scapegoating during times of widespread uncertainty and panic – such as pandemics and endemics. The early-20th century outbreak of bubonic plague in San Francisco's Chinatown, for example, has prompted a wealth of analysis into the historical racial violence and scapegoating of America's Asian population during times of health crises (Craddock, 2000; Risse, 2012). Similarly, other scholars have argued that the scapegoating of Black populations during the HIV/Aids epidemic and the 1793 yellow fever epidemic in Philadelphia was not only fueled by racism but has also contributed to the proliferation of incorrect assumptions that innate biological differences exist between races (Hogarth, 2017; Kiple and Kiple, 1980; Markel, 2005). These historical analyses lay the groundwork for contemporary

explorations into present-day public health crises as moments of racial tension and increased racial scapegoating. Most importantly, they also pave the way for examining the role that emotions (such as fear, anxiety, uncertainty, hope etc.) play in shaping prevalent discourses. In doing so, these analyses delineate how public discourses, such as news media narratives, can mutate emotions and affects; they delineate how emotions that originally occur in response to invisible, intangible threats such as viruses, quickly become displaced onto the bodies of foreigners and outsiders.

With regards to the recent COVID-19 pandemic, research conducted thus far into racial scapegoating typically focuses on America's South-East Asian population (see Nakayama, 2020; and Walker and Daniel Anders, 2021), prompted in part by the racial tensions fueled by former President Donald Trump's anti-Asian stance and 'Kung-flu' discourse. Mallapragada (2021), for instance, makes the case for understanding the increase in racial violence towards Asian Americans as a repetition of historical patterns that reify the cultural production of Asians as carriers of such contagion. Perry, Whitehead, and Grubbs (2021), meanwhile, argue that anti-Asian racism during the COVID-19 crisis was primarily undergirded by white Christian nationalism. They also state that Americans who harbor white Christian nationalist ideologies are more likely to blame minorities for their own disproportionate infection rates – regardless of ethnicity. Although more recent research takes into account the European context (Levina, 2022, for example), most of the research on COVID and race has been carried out with a distinctly American lens (see Altschuler and Wald, 2021; Calvente, 2021; Cerdena, 2020; Curry, 2021; Hardy, 2020; Perry et al., 2020). This article therefore intends to supplement this existing body of research by offering a perspective on the British racial and cultural landscape, in a way that acknowledges the distinctly different racial makeup, racial tensions, public attitudes, and media environment existent in the U.K.

3 Method

To delineate how racialized attitudes concerning COVID-19 came into being within the U.K., I carried out a critical discourse analysis of the language used in 60 articles published by The Daily Mail online between April 11th and July 31st, 2020. The Daily Mail is widely-perceived as a right-leaning British news outlet that has historically attracted a largely Conservative audience, and it continues to be the only national newspaper whose readership is more likely to vote for the Conservative Party than the Labor Party (Lownie, 2023). At the beginning of the pandemic, the Daily Mail was the most visited media outlet in the UK (Muck Rack, 2021), and the Daily Mail and General Trust (company owner of dailymail.co.uk) had control over 27 per cent of the British wholesale market. In March 2020, the Daily Mail website (dailymail.co.uk) had an average monthly reach of over 36.2 million adults (Watson for Statista, 2022), with 17 per cent of people within the U.K. using the Daily Mail website or app to read headlines and stay up to date on current news (Ofcom Report, 2020). To better understand the outreach of the Daily Mail, it is worth noting that at the beginning of the pandemic, 70 per cent more people turned to the Daily Mail to stay abreast of political news than who turned to their largest British news media outlet competitor, 'The Sun', or even Twitter and Google (Ofcom Report, 2020). This figure is unsurprising considering that, for several years now, the Daily Mail website has remained within the top five news websites visited worldwide – the only privately owned British website to have gained such global notoriety (Majid for Press Gazette, 2022). In an extremely diversified media market such as the U.K.'s, with its rich history of well-established media outlets such as the 'BBC', and 'The Guardian', these figures should not be underestimated. The language used within these Daily Mail articles has a huge exposure level, and the potential to be impacting and reflecting the attitudes of millions of British readers. Moreover, the outlet's notoriety and the competitive British media market means that the Daily Mail contributes to setting the national news agenda, and is influencing what ideas can, cannot, and should be shared across multiple news outlets (see McCombs and Shaw, 1972; and Roberts, Wanta and Dzwo, 2002, for more on agen-

da-setting theory).

Considering the increased reliance on digital technologies during the government-mandated lockdown at the beginning of the pandemic in the U.K., the popularity of the Daily Mail news outlet, and the ease of accessibility, articles were selected for analysis only from the Daily Mail website that were published within the first six months of the global COVID-19 pandemic. Articles were found for analysis through the search function on the Daily Mail website and were selected if they contained any reference to both COVID-19, and ethnic minority groups. Iterations of the search word 'COVID-19' included 'coronavirus', 'virus', 'COVID', 'COVID-19' and 'pandemic', and iterations of 'ethnic minority groups' included 'BAME', 'Black', 'Asian', 'Ethnic minority' and 'minority'. All possible combinations of these keywords were inputted into the online search function to render as many relevant results as possible. I selected all article results that were yielded through these keyword searches, with the exception of articles that were written by the 'Associated Press' rather than Daily Mail journalists, and any articles that were tagged as belonging to the sports section of the website. This rendered a total of 60 Daily Mail articles published between April 11th and July 31st. Using the qualitative analysis software tool, NVivo, I carried out a word frequency analysis, and used this as a starting point to inductively code for content, discursive themes, and patterns that re-emerged throughout these 60 articles. The coding process was incredibly iterative in nature, with the number of codes and the types of categories changing as the analysis developed. At the end of the process, I rendered a total of 14 codes that indicated recurring thematic content throughout the articles, including topics such as 'religion', 'financial impacts', 'unlawfulness', 'living situation'. 'disproportionate death', and 'underlying health conditions'. Using these codes, I then conducted a close reading and critical discourse analysis of the relevant article excerpts.

4 Limitations

As this paper admittedly only uses a small sample of articles published by one news outlet within a limited time frame, future research in this area would benefit from taking a larger sample size with more longitudinal analysis to track the evolving and competing narratives. That being said, with regards to the concentrated sample size, it is worth noting that the aim of this article is not to criticize the Daily Mail in particular, nor to make the claim that it is a racist news media outlet. Rather, my hope is that this article contributes a much-needed detailed study on the content and discourse of a major British newspaper (van Dijk, 1991) that acts as a demonstrative case study for uncovering the socio-cultural role of the British media press at large.

5 Results

5.1 The Heroic BAME Healthcare Worker

In the very early days of the global COVID-19 pandemic, governments and scientific research teams around the world were scrambling to find out as much as possible about the new virus. Troves of healthcare professionals working in the NHS COVID wards had little access to adequate personal protective equipment and were catching the virus with severe symptoms. At this early stage in the pandemic, the topic of racial health disparities in relation to the COVID-19 virus had not yet become an issue for concern. In fact, it didn't surface in the British media until April 11th, 2020, when it was made public that the first ten doctors to have died from COVID-19 in the U.K. were from BAME communities. In a workforce in which 22.1 per cent of all staff members are from BAME backgrounds, with an even higher percentage of non-white, non-medical staff (Gov.UK, 2021), it is of little surprise that the death of BAME healthcare professionals quickly became a prevalent topic in the news media. By mid-April, the Daily Mail began publishing articles, on average once every two days from April 20th until May 22nd, that either

headlined, or repeatedly emphasized, the disproportionate suffering of BAME groups from the virus. Articles published on April 27th, April 30th, and May 7th, for example, all state that 'doctors have come from other parts of the world to provide vital care and save other people's lives in our health service, and now they have sadly paid the ultimate sacrifice'. Similarly, on May 7th, an article described BAME doctors as 'serving the nation as we fight the virus', and the journalist implores the NHS to 'deploy' BAME nurses 'away from the front line'.

In the early fight against COVID-19, all healthcare workers, regardless of ethnicity or skin colour, thus became the heroes in the country's fight against the virus, and the racially disproportionate deaths were presented as a tragic, but inevitable, part of the battle against COVID-19. By adopting tropes of sacrifice, heroism, warfare and battlefields, the Daily Mail contributed to the creation of a national discursive agenda that glorified the difficulties of the healthcare industry and martyred the dying doctors and nurses. This practice of equating the duties of healthcare professionals with soldiers has historical precedent in previous periods of intense contagion and crisis (Walker, 2020), and has been so widely adopted by media outlets and government officials alike, precisely because of its emotional impact. In a similar way to World War Two propaganda, this discursive media agenda evoked nationalist wartime spirit and rallied British citizens into comradery (Benziman, 2020; Johnstone and McLeish, 2020). Through discourse that conjures 'past histories of association' to times of national and personal uncertainty, fear becomes the emotion that is produced discursively to 'align bodies with and against others' (Ahmed, 2004: 72). In this process, an 'us' was created that united a nation against common external enemies.

On the one hand, the almost-invisible coronavirus thus became reconceptualized as a tangible enemy that needed to be fought on two fronts – in the COVID wards by healthcare heroes, and on the home front, by everyday people. Yet, on the other hand, everyone external to the national other (such as the incoming foreign tourist whose entry into the U.K. signified potential contagion) also became a frightening threat. So, while this early discourse of sacrifice and heroism may initially be

interpreted as supporting and glorifying BAME healthcare workers, it also began the process of 'othering' everyone who did not belong to the collective, national 'us' – an 'us' who has always been imagined as consisting of white Brits (van Dijk, 1991). These early articles thus primed readers to conceive of the COVID-19 pandemic in relation to an us/them dichotomy, and to begin othering the non-white Brit. Evidence of this can be seen in the way that these early articles draw particular attention to the deaths of the immigrant BAME doctors (rather than British-born BAME healthcare workers) and explicitly offer details on their places of birth and their immigration stories. By emphasizing these details, the reader is reminded that while these non-white healthcare workers may be sacrificing their lives for British citizens and 'fighting' on the right side *with* the nation against the virus, these foreign doctors do not truly *belong* to the national 'us'.

5.2 The Biologically and Socially Inferior Non-White Body

The distinction between the (white) Brit and the foreigner that the Daily Mail promoted in the first few weeks of the pandemic was exacerbated once NHS England published a report on April 21st, 2020. The report not only detailed the disproportionate infection rates among BAME healthcare workers, but also BAME communities. After the Daily Mail reported on the findings of this report, mentions of the heroic sacrifices of BAME doctors and nurses slowly faded from articles, and by May 8th, 2020, they had disappeared entirely. Instead, the Daily Mail began offering explanations for *why* BAME individuals were more severely impacted by the virus than their white British counterparts. The prevalence of underlying health conditions, or 'comorbidities' (as they came to be known as by late April 2020), within BAME communities was the most frequently proffered explanation. Almost 60 per cent of all articles published in this six-month period speculated that high levels of diabetes, high blood pressure, cardiovascular disease, sickle cell disease, lupus, kidney disease, thalassemia and/or obesity could all be contributing factors to increased COVID rates among non-white Brits.

Various biomedical studies have proven higher levels of underlying health conditions within certain ethnic communities, particularly in Bangladeshi, Pakistani and Black African diasporic communities in the U.K. (see Ravi, 2020). However, at this point in the pandemic, there was little peer-reviewed and published research connecting the prevalence of comorbidities with severe COVID-19 illness, let alone concrete evidence detailing *which* underlying health conditions were more directly correlated with symptomatic COVID-19 infection. The almost immediate, and very public, unproven connection that the Daily Mail and other media outlets drew between general ill health, BAME individuals, and COVID-19 therefore illuminates widespread ontological perceptions of health within the British context; the presentation of the 'unhealthy body' as likely to endure more ill health, and the 'healthy body' as seemingly minimally-affected by viral infection, reflects the duality of 'health' and 'unhealth' within 21st century conceptualizations of the body. As Lock and Vinh-Kim (2018) state, this conception of health and illness as 'opposite poles along a biological continuum' has been reified through processes of knowledge production within 'Western' biomedicine, that have involved biological classification as a form of race making. As such, by repeatedly referencing the existence of comorbidities within non-white bodies, the Daily Mail discursively situated BAME communities on the 'unhealth' side of the continuum, opposing non-white bodies' ill-health to the foil of the healthy white body.

While not necessarily a conscious discursive strategy by the Daily Mail, the process of attaching racial undertones to the categories of health and unhealth was a diluted continuation of colonial biomedical beliefs that race is a biologically and medically salient category. In early June 2020, the supposition that COVID-19 infection could be directly related to race became even more explicit. On June 4th, the Daily Mail published an article headlined 'BAME people may face higher risk of dying from coronavirus because of their higher rates of vitamin D deficiencies, scientist says', followed by the subheading, 'It is more difficult for people with dark skin to get vitamin D than lighter skin'. Even though this same article later admitted that these findings were neither published, nor peer reviewed, and had actually been quashed by the scientific com-

munity at large, this idea continued to gain traction and reappeared in multiple articles. Between June 3rd and July 15th, 2020, this vitamin D 'connection' was mentioned in more than a third of all articles, without any reference to its unverified nature. The very notion that skin colour impacts susceptibility to the COVID-19 virus situated BAME individuals as biologically inferior to white Brits and tapped into notions of biological determinism. This idea echoed historical biomedical claims that disease susceptibilities and ill health within Black and Brown communities were directly related to biological differences (Cerdena, 2021; Kiple & Kiple, 1980), and thus reflects a type of Darwinian 'survival of the fittest' doctrine (Kiple & Kiple, 1980).

Although general ill health and comorbidities were mentioned most frequently by the Daily Mail as reasons for the disproportionate death and infection rates, other explanations were also provided. 45 per cent of articles published before June 20th, 2020, referenced the living situations and the lower socio-economic statuses of BAME individuals as two of the reasons why infection rates were so high in the communities. 'Higher rates of poverty', 'socio-economic deprivation', 'socioeconomic differences, such as finances', 'working in low paid jobs' and 'the poverty trap' were also suggested as alternative explanations. In the context of the neo-liberal free market society of the U.K., with its meritocratic conceptions of wealth accumulation, poverty is often intrinsically believed to be a result of one's own choices and failings, rather than a consequence of systemic inequalities (Sandel, 2020). That this implication of laziness was connected to non-white communities, and not to the poverty-ridden white 'working-class' British family, is no coincidence; it echoes the colonial trope of non-white indolence, which stemmed from the idea that Black and Brown colonized subjects were biologically rendered languid and lethargic by their hot native climates (Comaroff & Comaroff, 1992). Despite highlighting very real elements of racial and social inequity within the UK, the Daily Mail managed to simultaneously erase from the narrative the decades of systemic racism and the prolonged history of socio-economic oppression, that have contributed to generational poverty cycles within BAME communities. Rather than using the opportunity to draw attention to the underlying

causes of increased poverty levels within non-white families, the Daily Mail simply reiterated the ideology of meritocracy by adopting a narrative that repeated the trope of the poor, non-white individual whose socio-economic status is a personal failing.

5.3 The Non-White Body as a Source of Contagion

In a move that further connected BAME groups with poverty, the Daily Mail also suggested that the living conditions of non-white families could be a potential reason for high rates of COVID-19 infection. 'High-density living conditions', 'densely populated areas' of 'large, multi-generational households', and the 'small', 'overcrowded' 'terraced houses' were also provided as reasons for high infection rates within the articles. The assumption that the living conditions of most BAME families deviate from the standard of the nuclear family household preferred by white Brits is problematic twofold. Firstly, it minimizes the rich tapestries of differing lived experiences among both the various ethnic minority communities within the U.K., and the individuals within those communities themselves. To assume, for example, that all Brits with Pakistani heritage live in extremely similar situations to recent Chinese immigrants, is to homogenize the vastly diverse range of individuals who fall under the category of BAME groups. Secondly, in the reiteration of this stereotype of the cramped, close-quartered living conditions of extended Brown and Black families, connotations of squalor, degradation and unsanitariness are conjured, thus situating the non-white domestic sphere as a source of contagion. This equation of high levels of contagion with the non-white body is yet another racialized medical belief with a colonial legacy (see Comaroff & Comaroff, 1992; and Lieberman, 2009). However, more relevantly, in the age of social distancing and quarantining, positioning the BAME home as a place of contagion (without accounting for any alternative preventative measures that could have been taken by households to prevent the spread of the virus) thrusted the threat of the virus into the realm of the non-white domestic space.

Aside from the disgust that is connected to discourse connoting imaginings of squalor and social degradation, positioning the non-white domestic sphere as a potential source of contagion has additional affective consequences. By presenting BAME communities, not only as more biologically likely to transmit the coronavirus, but also as more socially likely, these Daily Mail articles generate sentiments of fear of the contagious 'other'. Through this discourse, the BAME domestic sphere becomes distinctly separate from mainstream white British society (who are imagined to be those who occupy the public sphere) and a misperceived barrier between the public and private, the 'us' and the 'them', and the white and non-white body, becomes imagined to contain the virus. This discourse, therefore, worked to conjure affects of fear surrounding both the BAME body, and BAME spaces, that impacts attitudes towards who could, and should, be moving through public spaces, and who should be restricted to the private realm. In a period of intense uncertainty and fear regarding the health and wellness of individuals, and the nation, suggesting that BAME communities were sources of contagion enabled readers to redirect their fear at a group of people rather than at a nebulous future.

5.4 The Rejection of Systemic Racism

In these first few months of the pandemic the Daily Mail was not alone in theorizing that general ill health, poverty, poor living conditions, and biological inferiority were key contributing factors to the disproportionately high COVID infection rates in BAME communities. These speculative explanations were all presented across multiple news outlets, despite having no scientific backing, and were often presented without taking into consideration the historical, social oppressions that contributed to these inequities. However, several months into the pandemic, activists and government officials began demanding that a formal, independent health review be carried out in response to growing public concerns over BAME groups' vulnerability to COVID-19. On May 19th, 2020, the Scientific Advisory Group for Emergencies (SAGE), an independent research group advising the British government, answered this

call. They published a report claiming that BAME Brits were *not* biologically more likely to die from COVID-19 if socio-economic deprivation and underlying health conditions were taken into account (SAGE, 2020). This report was followed by the Public Health England's (PHE) review, of which the first installment was published on June 2nd, 2020. Following an outcry that this first half of the report only confirmed the public's suspicions that BAME communities were hit hardest by the pandemic, the second installment of the review was then released on June 16th. This second installment explicitly listed 'historic racism' and 'hostile environments' for immigrant and non-white groups as key factors for the high rates of COVID-19 in BAME communities (PHE, 2020b).

Despite both government-issued reviews drawing attention to the socio-historic contexts that produce financial, social and health inequities among BAME groups in the U.K., the Daily Mail discourse surrounding the causes of COVID-19 disparities did not adjust to reflect these findings. In fact, the opposite happened; from June 3rd onwards, almost 40 per cent of the published articles repeatedly stated that the causes of disproportionate death in BAME communities remained unknown. The articles repeatedly cast doubt on the veracity of the PHE and SAGE report findings, by stating that scientists were 'struggling to explain why', and 'yet to pin down exactly why minority groups are at a heightened risk of infection'. One of the articles published June 30th even explicitly announced that 'there is a crisis of confidence in Public Health England', and further bolstered this by stating that '"historic racism" and its links to Covid-19 are not well explained in the report'. The Daily Mail articles thus served to reject the findings of the long-awaited reports. Instead, the language adopted by the Daily Mail presented a narrative that feigned ignorance of the socio-political factors that impacted disproportionate infection rates.

It is not all that unsurprising that the Daily Mail narrative diverged so dramatically from the research findings; by denouncing the findings of the PHE's review, and feigning ignorance of the causes of disproportionate COVID-19 cases in BAME communities, the Daily Mail could

firmly reject 'historic racism' as an explanation for present day health disparities. These structural explanations for racial health inequalities proposed by the PHE and SAGE reports threatened the very identity of the UK as a 'tolerant' and 'multicultural' country (see Yildiz, 2021). As such, by rejecting the explanation of systemic racism, the Daily Mail could also quash the image of the U.K. as a fundamentally racist society – an image that had gained traction among the British political left in response to the global Black Lives Matter (BLM) protests at the end of May 2020. This attempt to deny the existence of institutional racism was particularly evident in an opinion piece published by Stephen Glover on June 29th, 2020. His article stated, 'this is what the "Black Lives Matter" protesters are alleging – that Britain is a fundamentally racist society. Little evidence is adduced'.

In addition to denying the image of the U.K. as a racist society, the articles published in this period also questioned the efficacy of government actions in the early-pandemic period. Several articles, for example, accused the government of 'winging it' and being 'inadequate', claiming that institutions and public health professionals were feeling 'let down'. This discourse, of both a non-racist Britain, and an ineffective, untrustworthy government was adopted to appeal to the typical Daily Mail audience – 76 per cent of whom have historically expressed dissatisfaction with the government (Duffy and Rowden, 2004). Articles that expressed governmental distrust and skepticism towards political leaders and health researchers therefore aligned better with the views of Daily Mail target-readers, who have been historically unsatisfied with authority figures and experts. Similarly, expressing doubt about the salience of socio-political factors on health helped present a narrative that appealed to readers who could more readily accept that health is dictated predominantly by an individual's biology rather than by socio-cultural factors. By adopting discourse that Daily Mail journalists knew would appeal to their intended readership, the outlet could ensure continued audience loyalty (and thus meet their outlet's financial goals) in an increasingly diversified media industry.

The appeal of this alternative reality of a non-racist U.K., that the Daily

Mail presents, works affectively on several levels. Firstly, the narrative helped readers believe that BAME individuals are dying, not because of the racist actions of white Brits, but rather, because of their own ill-health and social-economic positions. Implicating the individual (rather than the collective or the structural) in the disproportionate suffering of BAME communities from COVID-19, relinquished white individuals of all responsibility in the participation of historic racism that has contributed to systemic health inequalities. From an affective perspective this discourse thus enabled feelings of relief for white Brits, who no longer have to believe that they are complicit in creating the racist conditions that have resulted in the deaths of thousands of BAME individuals; preferencing individual and essentialist explanations, over science-backed structural explanations, absolves Brits of their role in contributing to the continuing high levels of COVID infection throughout the UK, and the disproportionate death rates within BAME communities.

Secondly, rejecting racism as an explanation for high rates of COVID-19 infection in BAME communities also helped redirect fear. Rather than fearing having to come to terms with, and dealing with the consequences of, systemic racism within British society (during an already-intense period of social uncertainty), readers could instead continue to redirect their fear of contagion onto the non-white body. Scapegoating non-white bodies in times of crisis, by imagining them as contagious, is not a new phenomenon. (see Hardy, 2020; Comaroff & Comaroff, 1992; and Lieberman, 2009 for more on the colonial legacy of contagion of the non-white body in times of crisis). Yet, in a health crisis, such as the COVID-19 pandemic, when the health of the nation and the society was so closely intertwined with the actions and health of individuals, identifying the BAME body as a point of contagion, also meant that BAME individuals became scapegoats for both high rates of infection in their own communities, and for infection and suffering within British society at large.

5.5 The Affects of Discursive Repetition

The affective power of the discourse that I have analyzed lies not in readers' engagement with the individual Daily Mail articles, but rather in the cumulative effect of this discourse. Many of the articles published in this early pandemic period on the Daily Mail website actually reuse whole sentences, and even paragraphs, from previously published articles on similar topics. On the one hand, this speaks to the demands that journalists faced in the first few months of the pandemic to publish daily up-to-date news, as new data and information about COVID-19 emerged. On the other hand, this phenomenon is also a direct consequence of the medium of publishing; unlike traditional print newspapers, which are typically purchased and read daily by a continuous audience, online newspaper articles are frequently read asynchronously to their publication date. Moreover, online articles are read by both loyal readers who engage with articles directly through the website, daily email blasts, or the mobile app, as well as sporadic readers who are introduced to the article in algorithmically-impacted news feeds, or through social media. As such, many of these online news articles contain verbatim sections from previous news articles to provide context for online readers who may not be as familiar with the Daily Mail's longitudinal news narrative as loyal print-newspaper readers would be.

For those readers engaging with this Daily Mail content more sporadically, the affective consequences of the discourse may have been far less intense than for loyal readers. However, for Daily Mail readers and/or subscribers, who regularly sought out COVID-related articles during the first few months of the pandemic, they would have encountered discourses of racial scapegoating, language expressing distrust towards experts, and denials of a racist British society on a daily basis. The cumulative consequences of daily engagement with this discourse may have only made its emotional impacts more intense – becoming even more pronounced when considering the bombardment of COVID-related information that readers were encountering during this period from various other news sources and digital/social media sites. At a time of such intense uncertainty and overwhelm of information, narratives that

attempted to simplify the causes and consequences of COVID-19 (such as the Daily Mail narrative regarding biological proclivity for COVID infection) were no doubt more appealing to readers.

6 Conclusion

By carrying out a critical discourse analysis, this article has tracked the evolving narrative surrounding BAME groups and COVID-19 that was presented by the Daily Mail during the first six months of the pandemic. I have argued that the mediatized representation of BAME individuals and communities shifted dramatically during this period, in response to emerging data and the actions of the British government. While BAME healthcare workers were initially presented as heroic in the first few weeks of British national lockdown, by the end of July 2020, the articles on the Daily Mail website had established a very different narrative; as research emerged suggesting that the disproportionate number of deaths within BAME communities were a result of decades of historic racism and inequality, the Daily Mail attempted to decenter these scientific claims and rejected systemic racism as a possible explanation. Instead, the articles created an alternative truth world that maintained the status-quo of existent social and racial hierarchies, by employing historical racial tropes to simultaneously position BAME individuals as biologically inferior to white Brits, and to increasingly imply that they were personally responsible for their disproportionate suffering from the virus. Through these repeated, and decontextualized, claims of poverty, general ill-health and bad living conditions, the Daily Mail was thus able to shift responsibility for COVID health inequities away from mainstream, white British society, and on to BAME individuals. In this process, the differing lived experiences, socio-economic statuses, living conditions and health of BAME communities were minimized, to create a homogenous group of non-white individuals who were cumulatively presented as a source of contagion and threat to the health of white Brits, and to the British nation.

Tracing this shifting discourse and understanding it as both a reflection

of widespread societal beliefs, and as an influencer of these beliefs, better illuminates the often-invisible racist ideologies that are deeply embedded in British society, and that came to the fore during this period of public crisis, when white, hegemonic social norms were challenged by the invisible and intangible threat of the COVID virus. Considering the emotional and affective potential of this shifting discourse also helps delineate why these racist ideologies regarding the body, health, societal success, and communities have prevailed for so long within the U.K. It goes some way to explaining, for instance, how it was possible for a major news outlet to repeatedly and consistently suggest that skin colour impacts susceptibility to viral infection, without referring to any reliable scientific evidence to support this claim. Moreover, by demonstrating how the language used by the Daily Mail was able to create and reflect emotions of fear, uncertainty, and aversion among white Brits during the early days of the pandemic, this article also provides insight into the role that affect plays in processes of contemporary racial scapegoating and creating a shared imaginary of a racism-free society. While it may be impossible to know exactly *why* individual Brits were convinced that BAME individuals were more likely to be infected by COVID-19, viewing these Daily Mail articles as 'repositories of feelings and emotions' (Cvetkovich, 2003: 7) helps us better understand the mechanisms through which racialized conceptions of the body are sustained and reified well into the 21st century.

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