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## INDICE

Using Eye-tracking to Study the Reading Pattern of Subtitles  
and Cognitive Load in Video game Players: A Pilot Study.  
KATELL DROUET

4

The forgotten faith of locally recruited conflict zone interpreters.  
A case study of interpreters in the wars in Bosnia-Herzegovina  
and Croatia in the 1990s.  
ELEONORA BERNARDI

14

The Extended Mind Theory as Explanation of  
Mass Manipulation of the Korean War  
CHIARA INNOCENTI

29

## The Extended Mind Theory as Explanation of Mass Manipulation of the Korean War

### Abstract

*Why are humans so susceptible to media manipulation? This research has a prime interest in answering this query, to finally understand the real nature of this long-standing issue. The Extended Mind theory, first conceived in the Nineties by Clark and Chalmers, serves here as the theory that convincingly explains the swift information dissemination now ruling the world (CLARK – CHALMERS 1998). Investigating the scheme of a wildfire-like rampant thought, first conjectured by the extended mind theory developers, is geared to unveil the psychological mechanisms which, nowadays, commanding heights leverage to shape public opinions.*

*The impact of a biased thought deliberately grafted into society has been analyzed historically: thanks to a thorough analysis and comparison of publications released by the most authoritative news outlets of the leading countries of the Cold War (US and Russia), suspicious upside-down narratives about the Korean War (1950-1953) will be disclosed. Ultimately, the Korean War will loom as an easy subject that Governments used to exploit, given the impossibility of the public witnessing long-distance events.*

*This comparative analysis aims to pinpoint the differences between Soviet and American reports and show that the common thread between these theoretically opposing representations is the aggressive communicative patterns used, which makes the realities perceived by the Americans and Soviets highly mediatized. The awareness about brain functioning in today's globalized world which stems from a full comprehension of the extended mind theory is eventually meant to provide humans with a better critical eye, transforming the influence each person exerts on surroundings into the sole reliable truth worth accepting.*

**Keywords:** *Manipulation, Extended Mind Theory, Influence, Cold War, Korean War.*

### Introduction

While civilization responds to today's needs by applying technological progress to every domain, a much more primary dilemma remains unsolved: what is the actual nature of human beings? In the 16<sup>th</sup> century, René Descartes dispelled any doubt through the image of a universe as a combination of two discrete substances. According to Descartes, each element on this planet, possesses two components: the *res cogitans* – or the spiritual substance, meaning the mind – and the *res extensa*, or the physical world, meaning the body (DAMASIO 1995). In clarifying the composition of individuals, Descartes also depicts the human mind as autonomous from the body, since the spiritual substance and the physical world are different in functions and features, which makes them never interact by nature. Can this assumption be considered completely exhaustive, if contextualized in modern societies? When the individual mind is analyzed in a more realistic social context of several people living together, it becomes evident that it features a natural proneness to stretch and connect with surrounding environments (CLARK – CHALMERS 1998). This paper intends to use what Clark and Chalmers called the Extended Mind Theory, to explain the continuous exchange of information among people and ultimately comprehend the functioning of mass manipulation. To this end, the Korean War is chosen as a case study. Its occurrences – retraced through the pages of the most authoritative newspapers of the US and Soviet Union (respectively, The New York Times and Izvestija) – allow shedding light on the easy success of those manipulative messages somehow distorted by American and Soviet institutions.

## Toward the Extended Mind Theory

Clark and Chalmers questioned Cartesian dualistic metaphysics advocating the existence of an *extended mind* (CLARK – CHALMERS 1998). For them, the mind is not to be perceived as a separate element from the surroundings, as isolated in its functioning; but as a detail, understandable just, if, framed in a much more complex scenario, namely the universe. The world was for the first time seen as a cryptic system in which interdependence reigns, where the functioning of a single part is correlated and more often reliant on the functioning of others. In such a context, the physical world activates and facilitates the human mind in every action (*active externalism*), whereas the mind is a stream of thoughts that continuously reaches beyond the boundaries of the body, merging with the environment and stimulating it (CLARK 2011).

To support this thesis, Clark and Chalmers give the example of Inga and Otto (CLARK – CHALMERS 1998): two regular teenagers differing in their intellect. Inga is equipped with a natural congenital memory whereas Otto suffers from Alzheimer's disease and relies on a notebook to fix information that otherwise would get lost. Clark and Chalmers focus their attention particularly on the mnemonic processes of Inga and Otto, in case they are asked to reach the Museum of Modern Art on 53<sup>rd</sup> Street in New York City. Clark and Chalmers posit that, in retrieving the address of MoMA, Inga and Otto, would both demonstrate the effectiveness of their *memory*. Otto's notebook – a material object – serves him just the same way a natural object – memory – serves Inga. This proves that memory can be extended to the outside of the body.

## The Extended Mind in Society

Similarly, Hutchins describes a mind functioning in tandem with the environment (HUTCHINS 1995). This time, the scenario relates to the crew of a Navy ship that, during navigation, has to deal with many complications. According to Hutchins, the *being together* with other people solves all problems the crew faces, because togetherness infers spreading across more people what normally weighs on the shoulders of one person. This optimizes an incredible amount of time accomplishing a given cognitive process. Consequently, the mental effort required by each member is lower because the stream of thoughts reaching beyond the body gives rise to joint reasoning.

Gallagher made further progress in defining the mind, supporting that, the stream of thoughts in a civilized community does not move solely from one individual to their entourage, but also from the clutch of minds gathered in those organizations operating to regulate society (GALLAGHER 2013). What Gallagher calls *mental institutions* are in fact in power to massively influence the mental states of single individuals with premeditated values and ideas as in the example of Alexis (*ibidem*). Alexis is a judge who must issue a sentence to end a case. Because of this, three different scenarios are possible: (1) Alexis bases her decision on evidence provided by witnesses during the trial; (2) Alexis bases her decision on evidence provided by witnesses during the trial and experts reports; (3) Alexis bases her decision on evidence provided by witnesses during the trial, experts reports, and a pre-set scheme of rules.

According to Gallagher, Alexis makes the same cognitive process in the three scenarios but in the first one, her cognitive effort doubles, because she lacks the pre-set scheme of rules and experts' reports. As a consequence, she has to rely on more subjective reasoning, while in the second and third scenarios, her mental effort is lower because she can rely on the mental efforts distributed across more individuals. Gallagher also posits that the first scenario gives a lot of support to Alexis' cognitive process, because what is perceived as "subjective reasoning" depends on the knowledge Alexis acquired through her academic career, namely the body of laws and practices that humanity has produced across centuries.

All in all, Alexis is subject to the influence of the outer world, to which she also contributes. In this context, not only is Alexis vulnerable to surrounding contingency, but she is also an active player

who can change the course of events. Every participant in the trial affects and is immediately affected by others' people behavior. The slightest variation in people's attitudes – as verbal (words), non-verbal (facial expressions, postures, body movements, gestures, eye contact), and para-verbal (pitch, tone, pace) – will have considerable repercussions for the surroundings. A different judge's ruling, a different witness testimony, and a sole difference in experts' consideration will bring to a different sentence or scenario.

### **Extended Mind Pattern as Reason for Manipulation**

Clark, Chalmers, Hutchins, and Gallagher and the extended mind theory in general demolish the Cartesian dualistic perception of the universe and conclude that the mind is an autonomous element, a game of influences and interdependence among humans. But are these influences comparable to manipulative attempts? According to Gallagher, not only do mental organizations influence individuals, but they also can determine their mental states, which is precious to catch the dual facet of manipulation. To explain this concept, Gallagher gives the example of a charitable organization (GALLAGHER 2013). If, for instance, a charitable organization was mounting a campaign for the personal sake of money, there would be no reluctance to acknowledge this initiative as manipulative. Considering now the opposite case a charitable organization was about to launch a fund-raising campaign to aid a country at war, everyone would refrain from leveling such charges. To rebut the widespread belief that manipulation always hides the conscious utilitarian aims of manipulators, it is essential to cover the analogies between the strategies the aforementioned organization would employ in both cases. If the organization was interested in robbing people of their fortunes like in the first scenario, or in allocating money to save civilians in the bombing like in the second, there would be no difference in its campaign strategy. In both cases, they would appeal to logical fallacies to convince people of the soundness of the initiative. For example, it would target human emotional vulnerabilities by limiting the advert to the experience of people on the battlefield. Advertising the campaign by making the images as much moving as possible, e.g. by spotlighting the suffering of a person at risk, would be undoubtedly more effective than showing general statistics about death tolls. In other words, the organization would opt for photos triggering a chain of emotional reactions in the recipients, in power to nurture people's desire to donate. Believe it or not, transcending the real aim beyond these disguised-as-benevolent campaigns, the mental state of recipients would be altered in both cases, and people swayed to do something that, in other circumstances, would not do.

In light of these considerations, not only does the extended mind theory offer a renowned model of the universe, but also, a reconsideration of humanity. Exerting influence yet remaining vulnerable, humans demonstrate to be, for the first time in history, double players: manipulators and easy prey to external manipulation. Every detail of their demeanor – mental states, emotions, behaviors, actions, and everything that defines them *in their being* – proves to be a reaction to external elements that are unlikely to be dominated. Individuals, though naturally endowed with rationale, lose control over destiny, and are forced to accept unpredictability.

### **The Korean Case Context According to History**

Thus far, a definition of the extended mind has been presented, which outweighs Descartes's dualistic vision of the universe in terms of exhaustiveness. In fact, this interpretation of the mind as expanding and becoming an integral part of the universe becomes explicative of a continuous information flow moving from the individual to the surroundings, which ends up exerting instrumental force in defining the mindsets of people. Apart from the "modest" force released by the synergy of two people, the extended mind theory serves the purpose to analyze a more overwhelming and unrestrainable force, deriving from societal ruling organizations' messages.

Now, it is crucial to provide tangible cases of mass manipulation tapping into the crucial role that distorted ideas played in fanning hatred of countries for the opposite Bloc during the Cold War. To illustrate mass manipulation at work, the major US and Soviet publications covering the Korean War in the time span between 1950-1954 were analyzed. In this period, the United States and the Soviet Union succeeded in creating administrations ruled under their influence (LUCIANI 2011). While the North – the Democratic People's Republic of Korea – emulated a full-fledged Marxist-Leninist regime, the South – the Republic of Korea – duplicated the American Capitalist reality. In this complex scenario, on June 25<sup>th</sup>, 1950, the Communist North stormed South across the 38<sup>th</sup> parallel, initiating a "civil" armed conflict (*ibidem*). Comparing the reports on this topic of the most authoritative US and Soviet news outlets (i.e., The New York Times and Izvestija), the Korean conflict will emerge as an outstanding case of disinformation, presenting an offensive language, and several unfathomable mysteries.

### The Korean War according to US and Soviet Newspapers

Carrying out a comparative analysis between The New York Times and Izvestija publications on the major events of the Korean War, the first discrepancy that emerges is in the time the press announced the start of the war. On June 25<sup>th</sup>, 1950, The New York Times acquainted its people with what was happening on the peninsula with a report (War is Declared by North Koreans: Fighting on Borders). Following the declaration of war, the American reporter also specified the coordinates, fractions, times, and specific movements of the troops on the battlefield. Izvestija waited until June 27<sup>th</sup>, 1950. On June 25<sup>th</sup>, an article deemed it wise to emphasize the benevolence of the Soviets, vehemently expressing opposition to all forms of violence, including wars (Ves' Sovetskij narod gorjačo odobrzaet Zajavlenie Verchovnogo Soveta URSS: naš narod za mir). Without mentioning the Korean War, the article hinted at an abstract conflict that had recently started looming. The instigator-was the United States which, under the protection of Democracy, was in reality causing unemployment with Capitalism. After that, the article juxtaposed the communist society with the fervent belief in equality and the "bossing imperialist predators" with their revolting pursuit of wealth (*ibidem*). The American system was depicted as a brutal one, hinging on financially benefitting from the unemployment and misfortunes of the underprivileged social classes. The sources were multiple Soviet hardworking sailors traveling abroad. Americans were ultimately defined as "podžigatel' vojny" (instigators of war), which openly presaged the outbreak of the war (*ibidem*).

The second discrepancy is in the casus belli. According to the New York Times, the war sparked off because of dangerous special operations that the Northern leader Kim Il Sung, called the "Soviet Puppet", had organized along the dividing line of the country (War is Declared by North Koreans: Fighting on Borders). The Northern Korean attack was with all evidence "an aggressive action that could not have been carried out without Soviet direction" (*ibidem*). The Soviet Union was training the North Korean forces; and the dodgy fighter aircraft overflying the South of the peninsula, noticeably Russian for their look, were a clear proof of that. On the contrary, America had to be sublimated for constructing all those enviably effective textile manufacturing and processing plants that, at that time, succeeded in reviving the plummeting economy of South Korea (*ibidem*). Izvestija presented the conflict in a totally different manner, reporting on the Northern Korean leader's press release of 26<sup>th</sup> June 1950 (Obraščenie Kim Ir Sena k narodu Korei). According to Kim Il Sung, on 25<sup>th</sup> June, the army of "the puppet government" guided by the Southern Korean leader – Syngman Rhee – initiated the attack on the territory north of the 38<sup>th</sup> parallel, which ultimately forced the Democratic People's Republic to "launch a decisive counteroffensive" (*ibidem*). Syngman Rhee had always been against the peaceful reunification of the country. More than this, he was liable for being an unforgivable "predatel'" (traitor) who, just in the shameful bid to recreate a socio-economic framework modeled on American Imperialism, had even come to terms with whom for long years had enslaved Koreans, the Japanese (*ibidem*).

The third discrepancy is in the picture that the press draws of the Southern Korean people receiving the troops from the North. According to what is told to Americans, the Southern capital – Seoul – was ready to appeal to the United Nations for help (Washington holds Russia to account: State Department Eyes 'Serious Matter' in Korea – Seoul Set to Appeal to U.N). There was a perception of a discouraged people, which was annulled by Northern invaders, and that, for this, was on the verge of gathering around American protective forces (*ibidem*). While the Administration affirmed that Russia was the "motivating power" behind the North Korean Government, the first secretary of the Korean Embassy specified that the attack was not a sheer "local incident", but more likely "the next step of Soviet Russia to dominate" other countries like Japan and, in general, the Far East (*ibidem*). According to the press, Russia was also striving to boycott the UN Security Council, in the meantime calling for peace talks and immediate ceasefire (US Blames Russia: Korean Cities Invaded by Communists). Dissimilarly, *Izvestija* described the achievements and conquests of the northern army as liberating (Naselenije južnoj Korei privetstvet voinov Narodnoj armii). The people inhabiting the South who, for a long-time endured repression by the authorities, were now celebrating the Communist "voinov-ocvoboditelej" (soldiers-liberators) with thrilling cries, large bouquets, and flags representing the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (*ibidem*). Truman's Declaration issued on June 27<sup>th</sup>, to call on the US navies to assist South Korea, sounded false and wicked in the eyes of the Soviets (Zajavlenie Trumena). Despite the evident enthusiasm that Koreans were showing for the Northern soldiers' arrival, the United States was depicted as wanting to aid the opposing faction, even at the cost of collapsing its economy (Padenie kursov akzij na n'iu-jorjskoj birže).

Ultimately, the fourth remarkable discrepancy is in the truthfulness of biological warfare. On March 14<sup>th</sup>, 1952, the Soviets charged the United States with committing monstrous crimes (Sovetskij narod gnevno protestuet protiv čudoviščnik zlodejanij amerikanskich aggressorov). The imperialist invaders or the "ljudoed" (cannibals) – to exterminate all dissident populations – were supposedly fighting by deploying the most ruthless of all weapons (*ibidem*). The US Government, "prikryvajas flagom Organizatsii Ob'edinjonnych Nazzij" (hiding behind the flag of the United Nations), was spreading serious illnesses by dropping from fighters hazardously infectious mosquitoes (Vstupitel'noe slovo akademika B. D. Grekova). Plague, cholera, and typhus bacteria were wiping up the whole of South Korean civilians (*ibidem*). In the meantime, the US Secretary of State Dean Acheson was shamelessly arraigning the accusation, but the evidence of American incivility lays in the fact that the politician – despite rebutting the libel against his people – always abstained from proclaiming the inadmissibility of bacteriological weapons (*ibidem*). On the contrary, The New York Times responds to the accusation with an article (British Reds End Parley: Lay Bacteriological Warfare to U.S in Korean War) clarifying that disregarding continual denials on the part of the US, the Communist party congress kept stubbornly making its own way. According to The New York Times, on April 14<sup>th</sup>, 1952, the "British Reds" even adopted a Resolution urging the Government to end the deployment of such horrifying weapons, and this, purely in the bid to fan across the nation what thereafter Americans called the "germ war hoax" (The Germ War Hoax).

## Conclusions

From this analysis, emerges that, during the Korean War, a dangerous *language of war*, to be imputed to the US and Soviet governments, pervaded the press. Omitting and distorting reality was a daily occurrence because the events needed to be adjusted to mainstream prejudices. It all materialized in different narrative devices. First, in the two newspapers, there were different choices about the beginning date of the war, the identity of the instigators, initiators, and victims, and finally, a diverse stand on the biological warfare allegedly implemented by the US throughout the following years. Second, there were discriminatory political adjectives with a high occurrence in all texts herein analyzed, i.e the "Red Soviets", the "Communists", the "Imperialists", and the

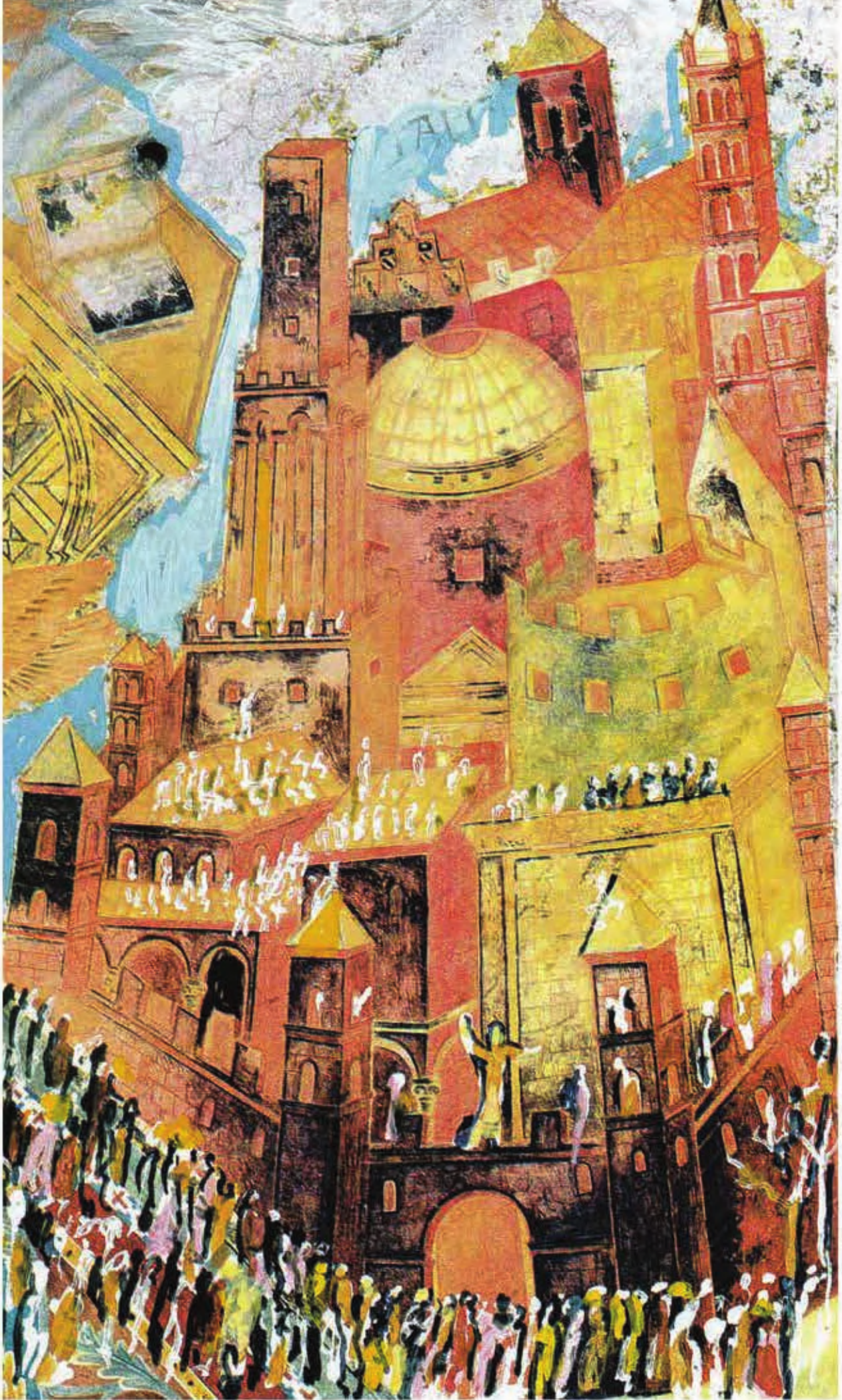


"Capitalists", inserted most probably to fuel hatred and remind the audience of the ideological characteristics of its enemy.

During this period, the Soviet Union and the US experienced bitter rivalry and hence, the authorities featured a precise political interest in instilling patriotic zeal into common people. For this, journals, radio, television, and newspapers idealized their nation at the expense of the opponents beyond the Iron Curtain, to heighten public awareness about the deplorability of the antithetical ideology. In such a historical framework, not only did Gallagher's mental institutions dictate laws, but also premeditatedly determined the thoughts that wedged into the minds of people, which ultimately succeeded in molding the conscience of entire nations. This research intends to demonstrate that, elucidating and comprehending the easy play of manipulation of the Extended Mind Theory, can also provide the readers with a larger and more reliable interpretation of historical events.

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