

Contemporary Media and Politics

Announcement published by Aaron Aquilina on Wednesday, February 15, 2017

Type:

Call for Papers

Date:

July 15, 2017

Location:

Malta

Subject Fields:

American History / Studies, Humanities, Journalism and Media Studies, Literature, Philosophy

Contemporary Media and Politics

'There is no name for this: we read this as a truism. What is unnameable here is not some ineffable being that cannot be approached by a name; like God for example. What is unnameable is the play that brings about the nominal effects, the relatively unitary or atomic structures we call names, or chains of substitutions for names. In these, for example, the nominal effect of "difference" is itself involved, carried off, and reinscribed, just as the false beginning or end of a game is still part of the game, a function of the system'

- Jacques Derrida, "Difference"

'Brexit means Brexit'

-Theresa May

We are living, as one Ancient Chinese curse aptly puts it, in interesting times. This observation has not gone unnoticed, of course, by that industry that both reports and manufactures news. Endless numbers of pages about the major topical stories of the past few months—ranging from Brexit to Trump and Syria—are being written as you read this very sentence.

As may be evident from the epigraphs above, however, there may be somewhat of a discrepancy between "the way things are" and "the message delivered about the way things are". Typically, of course, the latter is tantamount to the news that eventually gets published. Brexit, it may be argued, has delivered a master class in this respect. Complex realities involving different groups of people are simplified to a ridiculous level in a patronising exploitation of the emotions of the disenfranchised. Simple enough matters, on the other hand—often to do with the failures of hegemony—are deliberately obfuscated or completely ignored.

Rupert Murdoch's catchy headlines, Nigel Farage's infamously deceitful NHS bus, and Donald Trump's one-line foreign policy of building a wall are symbolic of the mindset that is keen on

simplification *ad absurdum*. Their power, as we have seen, is not to be underestimated. There appears to be something of the memetic force about it—yet a meme does not imply the possession of an agenda or *telos*: its only concern is self-replication. Could there be something of this empty void behind the repetitiveness within this very political scenario, or does this suggestion actually play into the hands of the pro-simplification motives? Certainly, the lure of money and power has a presence that can be felt in all of this. However, this determined obsession seems to hint at something more nuanced, something more obviously psychological than material. When this intrudes into personal spheres—whether in the form of a familial rift, representations of alterity, or the shocking murder of Labour’s Jo Cox in her own constituency—what does this tell us about the relationship between politics and empathy, the individual and the group?

It is easy to circumscribe this over-simplification to the dwindling nanoseconds of our attention spans; and yet, this does not explain why the same guilty parties sometimes go to great trouble in order to unnecessarily over-complicate issues. A brief and witty headline will sell a paper, but it is the steady feed of articles that keeps the newspaper business afloat. Within this context, it is suddenly normal for readers to discover that an article they had read was based on a complete fabrication (as with the infamous Katie Hopkins article from December 2015, falsely linking the Mahmood family to terrorism), and the concept of “fake news” and “post-truth” has only run more rampant since.

Are the measures of monetary compensation and brief Twitter apologies, as have become the norm, sufficient to repair the damage wrought by politicised media, which is not necessarily synonymous with the media of politics? In view of multifarious journalistic and political tactics, why is there still no sign of any collective that exposes these and provides the alternative? When a reader is trapped in the information filter bubble, how likely is it that one encounters articles from the other side in the first place? Is this why one must out-outrage the other and say always the more preposterous thing, regardless of substance, simply to slip past the net and obtain a desired virality, and since when did the “virus” become desirable? Should the Left quit the introspective navel-gazing, therefore, and finally learn to play the game?

Presumably, this endless list of questions is not the message that Theresa May wished to be delivered when she glibly assured everyone that Brexit is what Brexit means. However, beyond any pure conjecturing, our special edition on the topic would like to invite tentative answers to some of these questions and others. In light of the above, the editors of *antae* welcome submissions on or around the topic of contemporary politics and the media. The authorial guidelines are available on www.antaejournal.com, and **the deadline for submissions to antaejournal@gmail.com is the 15th of July, 2017**. Submissions should be in the form of finalised papers of around 5,000 to 7,000 words. Issues and topics relevant to this publication include, but are not limited to:

- Post-truth/anti-intellectualism/academia and contemporary politics
- Contemporary questions of immigration, alterity, and representations
- Politics and the viral
- Contemporary warfare, digital warfare; Syria on Twitter
- Spaces: real and virtual; information bubbles and echo chambers
- Writing and multimodality; the power of the hashtag

- Art and politics: photography, graffiti, digital art, and narratology
- Politics in traditional and digital media
- Literature as alternative fact

Contact Info:

antae is an international refereed journal aimed at exploring current issues and debates within literary studies, theory, and criticism. It seeks a comprehensive collection of intellectually rigorous essays from diverse fields within academia, welcoming submissions situated across the interdisciplinary spaces provided by diverse forms and expressions within narrative, poetry, theatre, literary theory, cultural criticism, philosophy, media studies, digital cultures and language studies.

Contact Email:

antaejournal@gmail.com

URL:

<http://www.antaejournal.com>