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### Introduction

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The present issue of *Historein* includes a variety of topics ranging from the economic language of financial crisis, the philosophy of history, historiography and digital history to conceptual history, historiography and cultural/film studies and encompasses a wide geographical era including China, the former Soviet Union, Europe and USA – practically the northern hemisphere. In his thoughtful, but at the same time subversive, article, Sande Cohen tries to demystify and deconstruct the economic language of crisis since 2008, using as a case study the op-eds by Paul Krugman in the *New York Times*. Ivelina Ivanova and Todor Hristov trace the major transformations in the theory of history since the 1960s, by first conducting a content analysis of the *History and Theory* journal, the main forum for theoretical discussion in history, and second by examining university curricula in philosophy of history in a variety of countries. The main conclusion of their research is that philosophy of history has been reinstitutionalised, with the main questions shifting from how history evolves, to how we obtain reliable knowledge from the past, and to the theories of the representation of the past. Apart this itinerary, the end of the twentieth century marked a turning point from the print to the digital world, and from history to memory. Despoina Valatsou presents the state of the art in the field of digital humanities, discusses the notion of crowdsourcing in history and memory, and illustrates the advantages of the collaborative aspect for digital history and the involvement of many people in collecting memories and producing historical knowledge.

## *Introduction*

In a paper rich in references to representative works of Chinese historians, Xupeng Zhang offers a comprehensive survey of the changes in historical studies and writing in the People's Republic of China since 1978, when the Chinese Communist Party decided to implement reforms. He traces how Chinese historians have turned away from traditional political history to cultural and social histories and analyses four paradigms in contemporary historical research in China: the revolutionary history paradigm, the modernisation paradigm, the postmodern paradigm and the global history paradigm. Reviewing in depth world history studies in China, he proposes that Chinese historians have to be sensitive to all foreign historiographies while adhering to the best Chinese traditions. But historiography also has its cut threads. One of these is the Soviet semiotic tradition in historiography. Taras Boyko, who explores the Tartu–Moscow semiotic school's contribution to the theory of history, contextualises a corpus of ideas expressed in the works of Yuri Lotman and Boris Uspensky – the two most prominent representatives of the school – within Soviet reality but also from the perspective of the reception of Soviet science in the west. The article highlights the

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interesting contrast between the novel ideas of the Tartu school regarding history and the historians' craft, and the conservative environment of late Soviet historiography.

Despina Papadimitriou focuses on western political thought during the early Cold War era, and addresses the question of totalitarianism in western discourse. She explores how this concept was constructed and on which dichotomies it was based, such as democracy versus totalitarianism, universal freedom versus totalitarian oppression, etc. Through the study of French, American and Greek anticommunist discourse, the author employs a transnational approach in order to investigate its character. At the same time she adequately shows how the concept was transformed as it moved through different national traditions and historical contexts.

The collective imaginary of the past is the topic of Kostis Kornetis' article on film presentations of the Greek "long 1960s" and, in particular, the Greek junta, from the early 1980s to the present time of economic crisis. He presents the ways these Greek films, which depict everyday life in 1960s and 1970s Greece, have shaped our image of recent history. He also observes the shifts in the visual representation of the dictatorship years from an ironic and political attitude to a nostalgic one and recently again back to the political perspective, caused by the changes wrought by the economic crisis in the ways Greeks look at their past.