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More on the Fakeness of Fake News

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Title: More on the Fakeness of Fake News

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A recent *IBPP* article from July 23rd 'Fake News: Is Truth Really Under Attack?' described common epistemological concepts from Western philosophy suggesting something called *truth* has long been under critique at no later than from philosophy's axial beginnings (1). The current article identifies common occurrences in getting out all the news that's fit to print, fit at least in the eyes of those who get the news out. These, as well, problematizing the *truth*.

First, there's *accountability* for the various consequences of the news. There often are laws—only because their violation is a certainty—constructed because the interpretation, meaning, and presumed consequences of the news will necessarily be multi-varied. So are social judgments on what is presumed to be desired, undesired, and barely acceptable. Studies of how we get to interpretation, meaning, and presumed consequences necessitate interactions among characteristics of the news producer, the recipient, content itself, and a dynamic socio-cultural and political context (cf. 2). The law is the formal construction of what may be true or not, with fake news always a possibility.

Second, there's the *political agenda*. Each news source, even one that espouses a non-political stance inevitably has this as its political stance. In other words, in the polis everything is ineluctably political. This is analogous to a non-action still being the action of choice.

Third, there's the *political slant*, ineluctable as the political agenda. The difference between the two? The former is intended to engender a general effect, preparing the battle field of ideas before the information war begins. The latter fights the war. Both political agenda and political slant illustrate the necessary impotence of a valueless truth. Whatever truth (or science) might be, will have or mirror value (3).

Fourth, there's the selective *reconstruction* of the information collected. Even verbatim accounts of a speech can be rendered with infinite purpose contingent on the elements of context committed or omitted.

Fifth, there's straight out *fabrication*, often enough coupled with *reconstruction*. Although sometimes with intent to deceive, at other times there's unwitting misinformation encompassing misinterpretation and distortion about the self and the world around it, including *disinformation* perceived as truth by the self and constructed and transmitted by others. Here, the psychiatric construct of *confabulation* is germane.

So besides the epistemological problematics of truth, we have occurrences intrinsic to news production which also problematize. In addition, there are many psychological research findings challenging what would be termed *true news*. Psychodynamic approaches to the mass psychology supporting authoritarian leaders describe *projection*, *projective identification*, and *escape from freedom of choice* rendering

leader-approved news as the only news that's not fake (4). Theories of *system identity threat*, wherein perception that society's fundamental, defining values are under siege due to social change, predict conspiracy thinking and conspiracy as truth (5). Various types of childhood traumas, even those not inducing psychiatric diagnosis, can lead to deficits in social cognition such as choosing what to believe in the social world without concurrent deficits in general cognitive abilities (6). And the research tradition of political psychology demonstrates that leftists and rightists diverge from one another in terms of: (a) personality characteristics; (b) cognitive processing styles; (c) motivational interests and concerns; (d) the prioritization of personal values; and even (e) neurological structures and physiological functions (7). All these impact on construal challenges bearing on truth and falsehood.

In conclusion, fake news is fake. Because it's true.

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Keywords: **Keywords:** Fake News. Disinformation. Misinformation. Truth. Propaganda.

Abstract/Description: This article identifies occurrences within the process of news production and also examples of psychological research which mitigate against the construct of fake news.

Disciplines: Other Psychology, Philosophy, Political Science, Other Political Science, Psychology, Defense and Security Studies, International Relations

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