BLURRING THE DISCOURSE OF TRUTH IN POST-TRUTH DYSTOPIAN WORLD ORDER

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Abstract. The concept of a post-truth dystopian world order refers to our societal condition, where objective facts are less influential in shaping public opinion than appeals to emotion and personal belief. In a world where truth becomes malleable, blurred, or manipulated by powerful entities for control, propaganda, or political and economic advantage, hegemonic discourses of the post-truth agenda arise. This article seeks to highlight how the subjectivity of post-truth politics is slowly engulfing the cartography of the entire world. Furthermore, it examines the dominant role of post-truth ideology in contemporary world politics, where actual truths and facets of everyday life become permanently blurred under the rubric of false political narratives. Despite the bleakness of a post-truth dystopian world order, resistance and recovery are essential to acknowledging the metaphysics of real political subjects.

Keywords: post-truth, dystopian world order, hegemonic discourses, subjectivity, cartography, political narratives

INTRODUCTION

The politico-theoretical term "post-truth" is widely used in the contemporary world to describe the state of politics in the Western world and beyond. It highlights the prevalence of false narratives designed to serve the interests of the capitalist class. The turning point for this term appeared in 2016 when the *Oxford English Dictionary* declared "post-truth" as its "Word of the Year". If we explore the *Oxford English Dictionary* archives, we can trace the transformation of "post-truth" from a peripheral term to a central

concept in contemporary world politics. Returning to the original context in which the term was first used epistemologically, Steve Tesich helps identify the important distinction between truth as the standard of knowledge and truth as the standard for action. This distinction, although it does not fully coincide, first appeared in Plato's seminal work, *Republic*. Here, the great classical theorist Plato describes that when the philosopher—the quintessential bearer of truth—becomes king, the polis that he rules, dating back to antiquity, is far from being an ideal utopian state. Instead, this place is deeply intoxicated by 'lies/falsehood' and coercion.

The 20th-century philosopher Martin Heidegger defined truth as etymologically rooted in the ancient Greek concept *Aletheia*, which he interpreted state of "un-concealment" or "disclosure". For him, the idea of truth is not merely a correspondence between a statement and reality, but rather the process by which beings come into the open and are revealed as they truly are in nature and spirit. In this sense, truth is an event or dynamic process in which the world and its beings are thoroughly critiqued and analysed. Further, Heidegger emphasises the role of language in shaping our conception of truth. Decoding this fact, Heidegger argued how that language is to be comprehended as the *house of being*, which means how we speak about the world shapes our experience and understanding of it.

Another renowned contemporary cultural critic, Hannah Arendt, reveals how totalitarianism provides a powerful lens through which we can analyse the mechanism of post-truth politics. She makes a distinction between factual truth and opinion, arguing that while opinions are inherently debatable and pluralistic in nature, facts are objective realities that cannot be easily disputed without understanding the essence or fabric of a shared world. Her later works explore the relationship between the ideology of totalitarianism and the destruction of truth, scattering in its place the novelty of falsehood.

When it comes to questioning the role of post-truth in contemporary global order, politics and society, we find that this

phenomenon has become a profound challenge to democracy, governance and international cooperation. It undermines trust in "factual realities", destabilises political systems and creates barriers to addressing global crises. International institutions, such as the United Nations, World Health Organisation, and others, are severely struggling to navigate a world where misinformation can undermine their serious political efforts. Further, global governance relies on shared understanding and cooperation but, in the post-truth world, divergent narratives fuelled by false information challenge the very power structure of true global governmentality. This is evident in the rise of political leaders who used post-truth mechanisms to gain political traction.

NEXUS BETWEEN LITERATURE AND POST-TRUTH POLITICS

In this article's title, I use the term *Dystopia* to link the essence of literature with post-truth discourses. The post-Second World War dystopian novelist George Orwell, in his *1984*, offers a striking analysis of the mechanisms of control, manipulation of truth, and the perils of totalitarianism that resonate deeply with the concept of post-truth politics. In *1984*, Orwell introduces the concept of "doublethink", which defines the ability to hold two contradictory beliefs at the same time and accept both as truth.

This concept is central to post-truth politics, where both contrary narratives can coexist without any resolution or acknowledgement of the inherent contradictions. Orwell's philosophy of doublethink allows individuals to accept blatant lies as truth and create a malleable reality that can be manipulated by those in power. This concept offers a powerful lens through which we can analyse many of the contradictions in contemporary politics. In an era of information abundance, social media echo chambers deliberately circulate politically motivated misinformation to delegitimise the corrective public opinions. For example, the recent war between Russia and Ukraine is not about saving nationalist spirits, which are falsely narrated as under threats. But it is a big attempt to derail the

traditional capitalist monopoly of European power that was invested in world politics since the end of the Second World War.

This same doublethink ideology persists in the political landscape of our country as well. After independence, the lower castes, in the name of upliftment, were doubly marginalised to serve the agendas of the capitalist political classes. The so-called lower caste/Dalit communities have been manipulated to suit the political needs of the dominant classes in India.

Further, "newspeak" is another Orwellian concept that is highly relevant to post-truth philosophy. It refers to a controlled language designed exclusively to limit freedom of thought and make dissent literally unthinkable in nature. By reducing the complexity of language, the regime seeks to eliminate the possibility of rebellious thoughts. In the world of post-truth politics, the deliberate simplification or distortion of language serves the purpose of controlling the narratives and the terms of the debate by showcasing power that shapes reality and suppresses dissenting worldviews. George Orwell, in his novel *1984*, discusses how totalitarianism uses propaganda as a tool to create a controlled and distorted version of reality. This novel also discusses the pitfalls of the erosion of objective reality and its replacement with false subjective truth, which deconstructs the very idea of truth /factual reality itself. In post-truth politics, where emotional appeals and present beliefs often outweigh the dominance of objective facts, Orwell's warnings, through his artistic philosophy, highlight the fragility of truth and the ease with which it can be manipulated and deconstructed—now more than ever in history and contemporary politics.

Post-truth philosophers use language as a tool to suit their ends. Taking this view of "language play" into consideration, George Orwell highlights that language is not just a medium of communication, but a weapon that can be used to control thought. In the era of post-truth politics, the medium of language is often used as a weapon to create division, confusion, and undermine the value of trust in objective reality. Critical terms like fake news", "alternative facts", and "post-truth" itself are examples of how

language can be distorted to falsify understanding and delegitimise opposing viewpoints. Manipulation through newspeak or doublethink declines the objective mechanism or rational purposes of language and undermines the ability of individuals to engage with reality and resist oppression. Another novel, *White Noise* by Don Dellio, navigates life in a media-saturated consumer-driven society, where post-truth politics and philosophy come into play. This work explores themes of fear, death, and the overwhelming presence of media in shaping distorted truth. It delves into the ways through which media and consumer culture distort the image of reality and create a landscape where truth is mediated by screens, sound, and bytes mirroring the manipulation of information. A recurring theme of this novel is the fear of death and the search for meaning in a world dominated by consumerism. Characters like Jack Gladeney struggle with the essential dread that arises in a society where traditional sources of meaning have been eroded by the constant barrage of superficial media messages. In a post-truth world, this search for meaning can lead people to embrace falsehood or simplistic narratives that offer a sense of certainty or purpose even if they are not true. This novel also reflects how, in the absence of a stable, shared reality, individuals may turn to conspiracy theories, misinformation, or ideologies that provide a false sense of security. What is distinguished to note is that Dan Dellio has explored the idea of a "simulacrum of reality": in a hyper-mediated society, representations of reality begin to replace reality itself. For example, the *airborne toxic event*, in the novel, is a chemical spill that forces the evacuation of the town. It is often filtered through media reports and statements that obscure its true nature. These highlight the post-truth condition where mediated representations of events can be manipulated to create alternative narratives that otherwise diverge from reality. This dystopian novel, in another sense, serves as a prescient commentary on the dangers of a post-truth world, where the very concept of objective reality is under threat.

Thus, the intersection of literature and post-truth philosophy is a rich and complex field, where literature as a genre often grapples

with concepts like truth, reality, and the ways in which these concepts can be manipulated or distorted forever. The post-truth philosophy, which explores the implications of a society where objective facts are less influential, finds fertile ground in literary works that question the nature of truth and the reliability of narratives. Literature has long served as a mirror to social anxieties and philosophical questions. And in this post-truth era, it continues to explore the consequence of a world where discourses of truth are contested or devalued forever. As societies face the challenges of the post-truth era, the aesthetics of literature can offer a critical lens for reflecting on politics, providing both a warning and insight into the nature of truth and its role in human life.

THE IMPACT OF POST-TRUTH IN GLOBAL WORLD CULTURAL POLITICS

Scholars of international relations and global political economy confront the unenviable task of conceiving and representing the world as a whole. In today's world, populist reactions against the idea of globalism suggest it is highly imprudent in nature. Yet, the discourses of international relations must preserve its quest to diagnose emerging global realities and fault lines. The political term post-truth gained prominence during the 21st century, particularly after events like the Brexit referendum and the 2016 US presidential election, where misinformation and false claims were widely circulated and accepted by large segments of the population. In a post-truth environment, the emotional resonance takes precedence over factual accuracy. The political discourse of contemporary times focuses on striking fears, hopes, and prejudice rather than presenting evidence-based arguments. It thrives in an environment where truth, in traditional institutions, is negligible in nature. This scepticism makes it easier for information to spread as people from time onwards become more reliant on sources that confirm their existing beliefs regardless of their truth and accuracy.

In this context, global cultural politics involve how cultural narratives and symbols are mobilised to influence global political

agendas. The post-truth world serves as a metaphorical space where cultural identities can be manipulated to serve biased political ends. All over the world, global leaders and international or national movements may use cultural symbols and narratives to create a sense of "us vs them" discourses, which often distort historical and cultural facts in the process. Further, global cultural politics also involves the tension between globalisation and resistance, each otherwise provoked to suit their own ends. In some cases, post-truth politics are a reaction to the personal traits of globalisation, such as the loss of national sovereignty or cultural homogenisation. As information becomes more fragmented and highly contested, the organic roots of the global cultural landscape become increasingly polarised, with the idea of truth itself becoming a debatable issue. The is quite unique. In many countries, political actors and media outlets have been accused of disseminating false or misleading information to influence public opinion. This has led to a debate about the role of media, the need for regulation, and the challenge of ensuring that the public has access to accurate information.

The post-truth culture has exacerbated political polarisation, where individuals align more strongly with their ideological groups and are less willing to consider opposing viewpoints. This polarisation is extremely crucial in global world politics, where debates often become more about affirming one's identity or group loyalty than about engaging with factual evidence. The post-truth discourses also involve a deep scepticism toward traditional institutions, including the media outlets, government, and scientific communities. Such mistrust fuels the spread of conspiring theories and undermines efforts to address global challenges like climate change, public health crisis and social inequality.

IMPACT OF POST-TRUTH NARRATORIAL DISCOURSES IN
MASS MEDIA PLATFORMS:

The critic Harsin identifies three main forms of deceptive communication rumour bombs, fake news, and lies as examples of

the current post-truth phenomenon. He compares rumour bombs to statements whose facility is unknown or unprovable and its contradictory claims only generate confusion and disagreement among the public opinion.

"Fake news" is another form or subcategory of the broader post-truth phenomenon. It refers to the deliberate creation and dissemination of false or misleading information, which is presented as legitimate. The intent behind can vary as it might be used to deceive or manipulate public opinion, generate web traffic, or even cause social or political unrest. What is important to note is that the communication of fake news is often spread through various social media platforms, where it reaches large audiences quickly without any veracity or fact-checking. Further, fake news often erodes trust in traditional media and institutions, where people become sceptical of all sources of information. Fake news, as circulated on various social platforms, creates division within society as people are less likely to engage with opposing perspectives. The legitimate mass media platforms bring out ideas to combat fake news and post-truth politics. As a result, various efforts are being made, like media literacy, encouraging critical thinking, fact-checking, and fostering open dialogues to mitigate the challenges of fake or falsified news.

Social media plays a pivotal role in the rise and spread of post-truth ideologies. The ways it operates through the mechanism of algorithms, the speed of information, dissemination, and consumer behaviour contribute significantly to an environment where post-truth politics thrive forever. On social platforms, there are echo chambers where users are primarily exposed to information, which reinforces their existing beliefs. This generally happens because people tend to follow like-minded individuals and join groups or communities that align with their views, reducing exposure to diverse perspectives. Since the arrival of post-truth politics appeals for more emotional appeasement, social media outlets have become an ideal platform for spreading such emotional content without any reliable veracity. The advances in technology, such as "Deep Fakes", make it easier to create and disseminate highly convincing fake

videos, images and audio that manipulate the rational thinking of people in general. The problematic nature of social media platforms is that they provide fertile grounds for the spread of conspiracy theories, which often thrive in a post-truth environment while accentuating the phenomenon of the erosion of public discourses. Polarisation plays an important role. Educating the public about how to critically assess the information they consume is crucial. Hence media literacy programmes should aim to equip users with the skill to recognise misinformation and resist the influence of post-truth rhetoric.

POST-TRUTH CONSPIRACY THEORY IN
CONTEMPORARY GLOBAL POLITICS

The rise of post-truth misinformation in world politics threatens the very integrity of our democratic process, leads to political polarisation and complicates the public discourses. The decline of trust in traditional media platforms, scientific expertise, and falsified institutions paved the way for alternative sources of information, some of which are not credible in nature. In the post-truth world order, the claim of fake news dismisses unfavourable reports or criticism, which can then derail the entire governance structure. As, for example, the rise of alternative facts and the downplaying of scientific data during the Covid 19 pandemic or in climate change demonstrations. Further, misinformation has been used as a tool of conspiracy agenda in Russian politics during the annexation of Crimea and Russia's interference in Western election strategy. Thus, populist leaders often use rhetoric that appeals to the emotions of people rather than invoking factual evidence. These leaders use post-truth as a conspirational weapon to cast themselves as saviours fighting against the corrupt or dishonest system. As such, the post-truth era poses serious challenges to the working of democracy, where what is true and false is seriously manipulated to suit the needs of autocratic/capitalist power classes.

CONCLUSION

The contemporary definition of truth is directly linked to the process of globalisation, particularly in the functioning of global news technologies and the challenges posed by new forms of economic practices. The scenario of a post-truth dystopian future symbolises the debunking of objective facts and truths, blurring the line between fact and fiction, and leaving people confused about distinguishing between lies and truth.

The great contemporary thinker Martin Heidegger, through his philosophy on truth, language, and being, provides a clear framework for understanding the dynamics of post-truth in contemporary politics. His work emphasises the role of language in shaping our reality and highlights the potential dangers of detaching truth from its ontological roots. He would likely caution against the nihilism that can emerge in a world where truth is malleable. His critique of modernity and technology also plays into this concern, as he feared that the technological worldview reduces truth to a mere resource to be manipulated, leading to a form of existential alienation.

Postmodernist thinkers like Jean Baudrillard and Michel Foucault argue that what we consider truth is shaped by power structures, language, and cultural narratives rather than objective reality. Furthermore, the rise of digital media has exacerbated the post-truth condition, as social media platforms enable the rapid spread of misinformation and create echo chambers where people are exposed only to viewpoints that reinforce their existing beliefs.

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