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Fiction

Fiction generally is a narrative form, in any medium, consisting of people, events, or places that are imaginary—in other words, not based strictly on history or fact.[1][2][3] It also commonly refers, more narrowly, to written narratives in prose and often specifically novels.[4] In film, it generally corresponds to narrative film in opposition to documentary.

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An illustration from Lewis Carroll's *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*, depicting the fictional protagonist, Alice, playing a fantastical game of croquet.

Overview

In its most narrow usage, fiction refers to novels, but it may also denote any "literary narrative" (see literary fiction),[5][6] including novels, novellas, and short stories. More broadly, fiction has come to encompass storytelling with imaginary elements in any format, including writings, audio recordings, live theatrical performances, comics, animated or live-action films, television programs, games (most notably, role-playing and video games), and so on.

A work of fiction implies the inventive construction of an imaginary world and, most commonly, its fictionality is publicly acknowledged, so its audience typically expects it to deviate in some ways from the real world rather than presenting only characters who are actual people or descriptions that are factually true.[7] Fiction is generally understood as not adhering precisely to the real world, which also opens it up to various interpretations.[8] Characters and events within a fictional work may even be set in their own context entirely separate from the known universe: an independent fictional universe.

In contrast to fiction is its traditional opposite: non-fiction, in which the creator assumes responsibility for presenting only the historical and factual truth. Despite the usual distinction between fiction and non-fiction, some fiction creators certainly attempt to make their audience believe the work is non-fiction or otherwise blur the boundary, often through forms of experimental fiction (including some postmodern fiction and autofiction)[9] or even through deliberate literary fraud.[10]

Formats

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Fact

A **fact** is a thing that is known to be consistent with objective reality and can be proven to be true with evidence. For example, "This sentence contains words." is a linguistic fact, and "The sun is a star." is a cosmological fact. Further, "Abraham Lincoln was the 16th President of the United States." and "Abraham Lincoln was assassinated." are also both facts, of history. All of these statements have the *epistemic quality* of being "ontologically superior" to opinion or interpretation — they are either categorically necessary or supported by adequate documentation.

Conversely, while it may be both consistent and true that "most cats are cute", it is not a fact (although in cases of opinion there is an argument for the acceptance of popular opinion as a statement of common wisdom, particularly if ascertained by scientific polling). Generally speaking, facts transcend belief and serve as concrete descriptions of a state of affairs on which beliefs can later be assigned.

The usual test for a statement of fact is verifiability — that is whether it can be demonstrated to correspond to experience. Standard reference works are often used to check facts. Scientific facts are verified by repeatable careful observation or measurement by experiments or other means.

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Etymology and usage

The word "fact" derives from the Latin *factum*, and was first used in English with the same meaning: *a thing done or performed* a meaning now obsolete.[1] The common usage of "something that has really occurred or is the case" dates from the middle of the sixteenth century.[2]

Fact is sometimes used synonymously with *truth*, as distinct from opinions, falsehoods, or matters of taste. This use is found in such phrases as, "***It is a fact that the cup is blue***" or "***Matter of fact***",[3] and "... not history, nor fact, but imagination." Filmmaker Werner Herzog distinguishes between the two,

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Experience

Experience is the first person effects or influence of an event or subject gained through involvement in or exposure to it.[1] The term does not imply that useful or long term learning, or the acquisition of skills necessarily takes place as a consequence of the experience, though the two are often associated, and experience is often used as a proxy for competence. A large amount of learning of knowledge and skills is associated with experience, and experience is a necessary, though not always sufficient component of the learning of physical skills. Terms in philosophy such as "empirical knowledge" or "*a posteriori* knowledge" are used to refer to knowledge based on experience. A person with considerable experience in a specific field can gain a reputation as an expert. The concept of experience generally refers to know-how or procedural knowledge, rather than propositional knowledge: on-the-job training rather than book-learning.

The interrogation of experience has a long term tradition in continental philosophy. Experience plays an important role in the philosophy of Søren Kierkegaard. The German term *Erfahrung*, often translated into English as "experience", has a slightly different implication, connoting the coherency of life's experiences.

Certain religious traditions (such as Buddhism, Surat Shabd Yoga, mysticism and Pentecostalism) and educational paradigms with, for example, the conditioning of military recruit-training (also known as "boot camps"), stress the experiential nature of human epistemology. This stands in contrast to alternatives: traditions of dogma, logic or reasoning. Participants in activities such as tourism, extreme sports and recreational drug-use also tend to stress the importance of experience.

The history of the word *experience* aligns it closely with the concept of experiment.

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Types of experience

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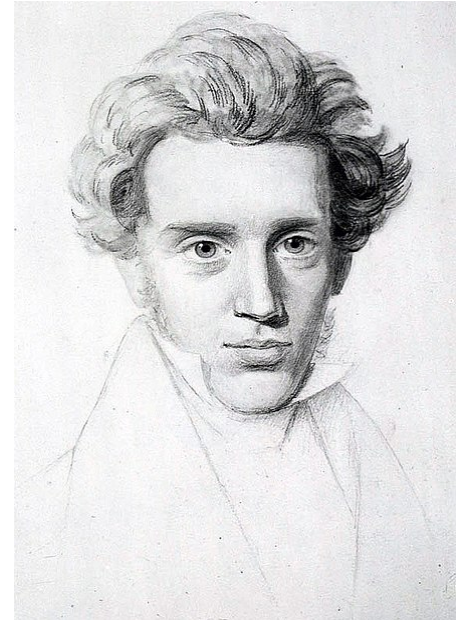
Philosophy of Søren Kierkegaard

The philosophy of Søren Kierkegaard has been a major influence in the development of 20th-century philosophy, especially existentialism and postmodernism. Kierkegaard was a 19th-century Danish philosopher who has been labeled by many as the "Father of Existentialism"[1], although there are some in the field who express doubt in labeling him an existentialist to begin with. His philosophy also influenced the development of existential psychology.[2]

Kierkegaard criticized aspects of the philosophical systems that were brought on by philosophers such as Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel before him and the Danish Hegelians. He was also indirectly influenced by the philosophy of Immanuel Kant.[3] He measured himself against the model of philosophy which he found in Socrates, which aims to draw one's attention not to explanatory systems, but rather to the issue of how one exists.[4]

One of Kierkegaard's recurrent themes is the importance of subjectivity, which has to do with the way people relate themselves to (objective) truths. In *Concluding Unscientific Postscript to Philosophical Fragments*, he argues that "subjectivity is truth" and "truth is subjectivity." Kierkegaard conveys that most essentially, truth is not just a matter of discovering objective facts. While objective facts are important, there is a second and more crucial element of truth, which involves how one relates oneself to those matters of fact. Since how one acts is, from the ethical perspective, more important than any matter of fact, truth is to be found in subjectivity rather than objectivity.[5]

Unfinished sketch of Kierkegaard by his cousin Niels Christian Kierkegaard, c. 1840

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Note on pseudonyms

Themes in his philosophy
> Alienation
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> Individuality
> Pathos (passion)
> Subjectivity
> Three stages of life
>> Stage one: aesthetic
>> Stage two: ethical
>> Stage three: religious

Kierkegaard's thoughts on other philosophers

Wikipedia

Postmodernism

Postmodernism is a broad movement that developed in the mid- to late 20th century across philosophy, the arts, architecture, and criticism, marking a departure from modernism. The term has been more generally applied to describe a historical era said to follow after modernity and the tendencies of this era.

While encompassing a wide variety of approaches and disciplines, postmodernism is generally defined by an attitude of skepticism, irony, or rejection of the grand narratives and ideologies of modernism, often calling into question various assumptions of Enlightenment rationality. Consequently, common targets of postmodern critique include universalist notions of objective reality, morality, truth, human nature, reason, science, language, and social progress. Postmodern thinkers frequently call attention to the contingent or socially-conditioned nature of knowledge claims and value systems, situating them as products of particular political, historical, or cultural discourses and hierarchies. Accordingly, postmodern thought is broadly characterized by tendencies to self-referentiality, epistemological and moral relativism, pluralism, and irreverence.

Postmodern critical approaches gained purchase in the 1980s and 1990s, and have been adopted in a variety of academic and theoretical disciplines, including cultural studies, philosophy of science, economics, linguistics, architecture, feminist theory, and literary criticism, as well as art movements in fields such as literature, contemporary art, and music. Postmodernism is often associated with schools of thought such as deconstruction, post-structuralism, and institutional critique, as well as philosophers such as Jean-François Lyotard, Jacques Derrida, and Fredric Jameson.

Criticisms of postmodernism are intellectually diverse, and include assertions that postmodernism promotes obscurantism, is meaningless, and that it adds nothing to analytical or empirical knowledge.

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Overview

Postmodernism is an intellectual stance[1] or a mode of discourse[2][3] that rejects the possibility of reliable knowledge,[4][5] denies the existence of a universal, stable reality,[6][7][8][9] and frames aesthetics and beauty as arbitrary and subjective.[10][11] It can be described as a reaction against scientific attempts to explain reality with objective certainty, recognizing that reality is constructed as the mind tries to understand its own personal circumstances.[12] It is characterized by an attitude of skepticism, irony, or rejection toward the grand narratives and ideologies of modernism, often denying or challenging the validity of scientific inquiry,[13] or declaiming the arbitrariness of the aesthetics of artistic works or other artifacts of cultural production,[14] or questioning various assumptions of Enlightenment rationality.[15] Initially, postmodernism was a mode of discourse on literature and literary criticism, commenting on the nature of literary text, meaning, author and reader, writing and reading.[16] Postmodernism developed in the mid- to late-twentieth century across philosophy, the arts, architecture, and criticism as a departure or rejection of modernism.[7][17][17][18]

Postmodernism relies on critical theory, an approach that confronts the ideological, social, and historical structures that shape and constrain cultural production.[19] Common targets of postmodernism and critical theory include universalist notions of objective reality, morality, truth, human nature, reason, language, and social progress.[15] Postmodernist approaches have been adopted in a variety of academic and theoretical disciplines, including political science,[20] organization theory,[21] cultural studies, philosophy of science, economics, linguistics, architecture, feminist theory, and literary criticism, as well as art movements in fields such as literature and music.

Postmodern thinkers frequently call attention to the contingent or socially-conditioned nature of knowledge claims and value systems, situating them as products of particular political, historical, or cultural discourses and hierarchies. Accordingly, postmodern thought is broadly characterized by tendencies to self-referentiality, epistemological and moral relativism, pluralism, and irreverence. Postmodernism is often associated with schools of thought such as deconstruction and post-structuralism, as well as philosophers such as Jean-François Lyotard, Jacques Derrida, and Fredric Jameson.

Criticisms of postmodernism are intellectually diverse, and include assertions that postmodernism promotes obscurantism, and is meaningless, adding nothing to analytical or empirical knowledge.[22][23][24][25] Some philosophers, beginning with the pragmatist philosopher Jürgen Habermas, assert that those who employ postmodernist discourse are prey to a performative contradiction and a paradox of self-reference, as their critique would be impossible without the concepts and methods that modern reason provides.[26] Conservatives Michael Oakeshott and Leo Strauss considered postmodernism to be an abandonment of the rationalist project which many conservatives consider the most important cultural product of humans. Strauss sought to restore rationalism to a more skeptical Aristotelian version "embedded in the ordinary reality that humans

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Truth

Truth is most often used to mean being in accord with fact or reality, or fidelity to an original or standard.[1] Truth is also sometimes defined in modern contexts as an idea of "truth to self", or authenticity.

Truth is usually held to be opposite to falsehood, which, correspondingly, can also suggest a logical, factual, or ethical meaning. The concept of truth is discussed and debated in several contexts, including philosophy, art, theology, and science. Most human activities depend upon the concept, where its nature as a concept is assumed rather than being a subject of discussion; these include most of the sciences, law, journalism, and everyday life. Some philosophers view the concept of truth as basic, and unable to be explained in any terms that are more easily understood than the concept of truth itself. To some, truth is viewed as the correspondence of language or thought to an independent reality, in what is sometimes called the correspondence theory of truth.

Time Saving Truth from Falsehood and Envy, François Lemoyne, 1737

Various theories and views of truth continue to be debated among scholars, philosophers, and theologians.[2] Language is a means by which humans convey information to one another. The method used to determine whether something is a truth is termed a criterion of truth. There are varying stances on such questions as what constitutes truth: what things are truthbearers capable of being true or false; how to define, identify, and distinguish truth; what roles do faith and empirical knowledge play; and whether truth can be subjective or if it is objective (in other words, relative truth versus absolute truth).

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the notion of "steadfast as an oak" (e.g., Sanskrit "taru" tree).[4] Old Norse *trú,* "faith, word of honour; religious faith, belief"[5] (archaic English **troth** "loyalty, honesty, good faith", compare *Ásatrú*).

Thus, 'truth' involves both the quality of "faithfulness, fidelity, loyalty, sincerity, veracity",[6] and that of "agreement with fact or reality", in Anglo-Saxon expressed by *sōþ* (Modern English **sooth**).

All Germanic languages besides English have introduced a terminological distinction between truth "fidelity" and truth "factuality". To express "factuality", North Germanic opted for nouns derived from *sanna* "to assert, affirm", while continental West Germanic (German and Dutch) opted for continuations of *wâra* "faith, trust, pact" (cognate to Slavic *věra* "(religious) faith", but influenced by Latin *verus*). Romance languages use terms following the Latin *veritas*, while the Greek *aletheia*, Russian *pravda*, South Slavic *istina* and Sanskrit *sat* have separate etymological origins.

Major theories

The question of what is a proper basis for deciding how words, symbols, ideas and beliefs may properly be considered true, whether by a single person or an entire society, is dealt with by the five most prevalent substantive theories of truth listed below. Each presents perspectives that are widely shared by published scholars.[7][8][9]

Theories other than the most prevalent substantive theories are also discussed. More recently developed "deflationary" or "minimalist" theories of truth have emerged as possible alternatives to the most prevalent substantive theories. Minimalist reasoning centres around the notion that the application of a term like *true* to a statement does not assert anything significant about it, for instance, anything about its *nature*. Minimalist reasoning realises *truth* as a label utilised in general discourse to express agreement, to stress claims, or to form general assumptions.[7][10][11]

Substantive

Correspondence

Correspondence theories emphasise that true beliefs and true statements correspond to the actual state of affairs.[12] This type of theory stresses a relationship between thoughts or statements on one hand, and things or objects on the other. It is a traditional model tracing its origins to ancient Greek philosophers such as Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle.[13] This class of theories holds that the truth or the falsity of a representation is determined in principle entirely by how it relates to "things" by whether it accurately describes those "things". A classic example of correspondence theory is the statement by the thirteenth century philosopher and theologian Thomas Aquinas: "Veritas est adaequatio rei et intellectus" ("Truth is the adequation of things and intellect"), which Aquinas attributed to the ninth century Neoplatonist Isaac Israeli.[14][15][16] Aquinas also restated the theory as: "A judgment is said to be true when it conforms to the external reality".[17]

Correspondence theory centres heavily around the assumption that truth is a matter of accurately copying what is known as "objective reality" and then representing it in thoughts, words and other symbols.[18] Many modern theorists have stated that this ideal cannot be achieved without analysing additional factors.[7][19] For example, language plays a role in that all languages have words to represent concepts that are virtually undefined in other languages. The German word *Zeitgeist* is one such example: one who speaks or understands the language may "know" what it means, but any translation of the word apparently fails to accurately capture its full meaning (this is a problem with many abstract words, especially those derived in agglutinative languages). Thus, some words add an additional parameter to the construction of an accurate truth predicate. Among the philosophers who grappled with this problem is Alfred Tarski, whose semantic theory is summarized further below in this article.[20]

Proponents of several of the theories below have gone further to assert that there are yet other issues necessary to the analysis, such as interpersonal power struggles, community interactions, personal biases and other factors involved in deciding what is seen as truth.

Coherence

Walter Seymour Allward's *Veritas* (Truth) outside Supreme Court of Canada, Ottawa, Ontario Canada

For coherence theories in general, truth requires a proper fit of elements within a whole system. Very often, though, coherence is taken to imply something more than simple logical consistency; often there is a demand that the propositions in a coherent system lend mutual inferential support to each other. So, for example, the completeness and comprehensiveness of the underlying set of concepts is a critical factor in judging the validity and usefulness of a coherent system.[21] A pervasive tenet of coherence theories is the idea that truth is primarily a property of whole systems of propositions, and can be ascribed to individual propositions only according to their coherence with the whole. Among the assortment of perspectives commonly regarded as coherence theory, theorists differ on the question of whether coherence entails many possible true systems of thought or only a single absolute system.

Some variants of coherence theory are claimed to describe the essential and intrinsic properties of formal systems in logic and mathematics.[22] However, formal reasoners are content to contemplate axiomatically independent and sometimes mutually contradictory systems side by side, for example, the various alternative geometries. On the whole, coherence theories have been rejected for lacking justification in their application to other areas of truth, especially with respect to assertions about the natural world, empirical data in general, assertions about practical matters of psychology and society, especially when used without support from the other major theories of truth.[23]

Coherence theories distinguish the thought of rationalist philosophers, particularly of Baruch Spinoza, Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz, and Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, along with the British philosopher F. H. Bradley.[24] They have found a resurgence also among several proponents of logical positivism, notably Otto Neurath and Carl Hempel.

Pragmatic

The three most influential forms of the ***pragmatic theory of truth*** were introduced around the turn of the 20th century by Charles Sanders Peirce, William James, and John Dewey. Although there are wide differences in viewpoint among these and other proponents of pragmatic theory, they hold in common that truth is verified and confirmed by the results of putting one's concepts into practice.[25]

Peirce defines truth as follows: "Truth is that concordance of an abstract statement with the ideal limit towards which endless investigation would tend to bring scientific belief, which concordance the abstract statement may possess by virtue of the confession of its inaccuracy and one-sidedness, and this confession is an essential ingredient of truth."[26] This statement stresses Peirce's view that ideas of approximation, incompleteness, and partiality, what he describes elsewhere as ***fallibilism*** and "reference to the future", are essential to a proper conception of truth. Although Peirce uses words like ***concordance*** and ***correspondence*** to describe one aspect of the pragmatic sign relation, he is also quite explicit in saying that definitions of truth based on mere correspondence are no more than ***nominal*** definitions, which he accords a lower status than ***real*** definitions.

William James's version of pragmatic theory, while complex, is often summarized by his statement that "the 'true' is only the expedient in our way of thinking, just as the 'right' is only the expedient in our way of behaving."[27] By this, James meant that truth is a ***quality***, the value of which is confirmed by its effectiveness when applying concepts to practice (thus, "pragmatic").

John Dewey, less broadly than James but more broadly than Peirce, held that inquiry, whether scientific, technical, sociological, philosophical or cultural, is self-corrective over time ***if*** openly submitted for testing by a community of inquirers in order to clarify, justify, refine and/or refute proposed truths.[28]

Though not widely known, a new variation of the pragmatic theory was defined and wielded successfully from the 20th century forward. Defined and named by William Ernest Hocking, this variation is known as "negative pragmatism". Essentially, what works may or may not be true, but what fails cannot be true because the truth always works.[29] Richard Feynman also ascribed to it: "We never are definitely right, we can only be sure we are wrong."[30] This approach incorporates many of the ideas from Peirce, James, and Dewey. For Peirce, the idea of "... endless investigation would tend to bring about scientific belief ..." fits negative pragmatism in that a negative pragmatist would never stop testing. As Feynman noted, an idea or theory "... could never be proved right, because tomorrow's experiment might succeed in proving wrong what you thought was right."[30] Similarly, James and Dewey's ideas also ascribe truth to repeated testing which is "self-corrective" over time.

Pragmatism and negative pragmatism are also closely aligned with the coherence theory of truth in that any testing should not be isolated but rather incorporate knowledge from all human endeavors and experience. The universe is a whole and integrated system, and testing should acknowledge and account for its diversity. As Feynman said, "... if it disagrees with experiment, it is wrong."[31]

Constructivist

Social constructivism holds that truth is constructed by social processes, is historically and culturally specific, and that it is in part shaped through the power struggles within a community. Constructivism views all of our knowledge as "constructed," because it does not reflect any external "transcendent" realities (as a pure correspondence theory might hold). Rather, perceptions of truth are viewed as contingent on convention, human perception, and social experience. It is believed by constructivists that representations of physical and biological reality, including race, sexuality, and gender, are socially constructed.

Giambattista Vico was among the first to claim that history and culture were man-made. Vico's epistemological orientation gathers the most diverse rays and unfolds in one axiom—***verum ipsum factum***—"truth itself is constructed". Hegel and Marx were among the other early proponents of the premise that truth is, or can be, socially constructed. Marx, like many critical theorists who followed, did not reject the existence of objective truth but rather distinguished between true knowledge and knowledge that has been distorted through power or ideology. For Marx, scientific and true knowledge is "in accordance with the dialectical understanding of history" and ideological knowledge is "an epiphenomenal expression of the relation of material forces in a given economic arrangement".[32]

Consensus

Consensus theory holds that truth is whatever is agreed upon, or in some versions, might come to be agreed upon, by some specified group. Such a group might include all human beings, or a subset thereof consisting of more than one person.

Among the current advocates of consensus theory as a useful accounting of the concept of "truth" is the philosopher Jürgen Habermas.[33] Habermas maintains that truth is what would be agreed upon in an ideal speech situation.[34] Among the current strong critics of consensus theory is the philosopher Nicholas Rescher.[35]

In the Islamic tradition, this principle is exemplified by the hadith in which Muhammad states, "My community will never agree upon an error"[36]

Minimalist

Deflationary

Modern developments in the field of philosophy, starting with the relatively modern notion that a theory being old does not necessarily imply that it is completely flawless, have resulted in the rise of a new thesis: that the term **truth** does not denote a real property of sentences or propositions. This thesis is in part a response to the common use of **truth predicates** (e.g., that some particular thing "...is true") which was particularly prevalent in philosophical discourse on truth in the first half of the 20th century. From this point of view, to assert that "'2 + 2 = 4' is true" is logically equivalent to asserting that "2 + 2 = 4", and the phrase "is true" is completely dispensable in this and every other context. In common parlance, truth predicates are not commonly heard, and it would be interpreted as an unusual occurrence were someone to utilise a truth predicate in an everyday conversation when asserting that something is true. Newer perspectives that take this discrepancy into account and work with sentence structures that are actually employed in common discourse can be broadly described:

- as *deflationary* theories of truth, since they attempt to deflate the presumed importance of the words "true" or *truth*,
- as *disquotational* theories, to draw attention to the disappearance of the quotation marks in cases like the above example, or
- as *minimalist* theories of truth.[7][37]

Whichever term is used, deflationary theories can be said to hold in common that "[t]he predicate 'true' is an expressive convenience, not the name of a property requiring deep analysis."[7] Once we have identified the truth predicate's formal features and utility, deflationists argue, we have said all there is to be said about truth. Among the theoretical concerns of these views is to explain away those special cases where it **does** appear that the concept of truth has peculiar and interesting properties. (See, e.g., Semantic paradoxes, and below.)

In addition to highlighting such formal aspects of the predicate "is true", some deflationists point out that the concept enables us to express things that might otherwise require infinitely long sentences. For example, one cannot express confidence in Michael's accuracy by asserting the endless sentence:

> *Michael says, 'snow is white' and snow is white, or he says 'roses are red' and roses are red or he says ... etc.*

This assertion can also be succinctly expressed by saying: **What Michael says is true**.[38]

Performative

Attributed to P. F. Strawson is the performative theory of truth which holds that to say "'Snow is white' is true" is to perform the speech act of signaling one's agreement with the claim that snow is white (much like nodding one's head in agreement). The idea that some statements are more actions than communicative statements is not as odd as it may seem. Consider, for example, that when the wedding couple say "I do" at the appropriate time in a wedding, they are performing the act of taking

the other to be their lawful wedded spouse. They are not **_describing_** themselves as taking the other, but actually **_doing_** so (perhaps the most thorough analysis of such "illocutionary acts" is J. L. Austin, "How to Do Things With Words"[39]).

Strawson holds that a similar analysis is applicable to all speech acts, not just illocutionary ones: "To say a statement is true is not to make a statement about a statement, but rather to perform the act of agreeing with, accepting, or endorsing a statement. When one says 'It's true that it's raining,' one asserts no more than 'It's raining.' The function of [the statement] 'It's true that...' is to agree with, accept, or endorse the statement that 'it's raining.'"[40]

Redundancy and related

According to the redundancy theory of truth, asserting that a statement is true is completely equivalent to asserting the statement itself. For example, making the assertion that " 'Snow is white' is true" is equivalent to asserting "Snow is white". Redundancy theorists infer from this premise that truth is a redundant concept; that is, it is merely a word that is traditionally used in conversation or writing, generally for emphasis, but not a word that actually equates to anything in reality. This theory is commonly attributed to Frank P. Ramsey, who held that the use of words like **_fact_** and **_truth_** was nothing but a roundabout way of asserting a proposition, and that treating these words as separate problems in isolation from judgment was merely a "linguistic muddle".[7][41][42]

A variant of redundancy theory is the disquotational theory which uses a modified form of Tarski's schema: To say that '"P" is true' is to say that P. A version of this theory was defended by C. J. F. Williams in his book **_What is Truth?_** Yet another version of deflationism is the prosentential theory of truth, first developed by Dorothy Grover, Joseph Camp, and Nuel Belnap as an elaboration of Ramsey's claims. They argue that sentences like "That's true", when said in response to "It's raining", are prosentences, expressions that merely repeat the content of other expressions. In the same way that **_it_** means the same as **_my dog_** in the sentence **_My dog was hungry, so I fed it_**, **_That's true_** is supposed to mean the same as **_It's raining_**—if you say the latter and I then say the former. These variations do not necessarily follow Ramsey in asserting that truth is **_not_** a property, but rather can be understood to say that, for instance, the assertion "P" may well involve a substantial truth, and the theorists in this case are minimizing only the redundancy or prosentence involved in the statement such as "that's true."[7]

Deflationary principles do not apply to representations that are not analogous to sentences, and also do not apply to many other things that are commonly judged to be true or otherwise. Consider the analogy between the sentence "Snow is white" and the character named Snow White, both of which can be true in some sense. To a minimalist, saying "Snow is white is true" is the same as saying "Snow is white," but to say "Snow White is true" is **_not_** the same as saying "Snow White."

Philosophical skepticism

Philosophical skepticism is generally any questioning attitude or doubt towards one or more items of knowledge or belief which ascribe truth to their assertions and propositions.[43][44] The primary target of philosophical skepticism is epistemology, but it can be applied to any domain, such as the supernatural, morality (moral skepticism), and religion (skepticism about the existence of God).[45]

Philosophical skepticism comes in various forms. Radical forms of skepticism deny that knowledge or rational belief is possible and urge us to suspend judgment regarding ascription of truth on many or all controversial matters. More moderate forms of skepticism claim only that nothing can be known with certainty, or that we can know little or nothing about the "big questions" in life, such as whether God exists or whether there is an afterlife. Religious skepticism is "doubt concerning basic religious

The truth predicate "*P* is true" has great practical value in human language, allowing us to **efficiently** endorse or impeach claims made by others, to emphasize the truth or falsity of a statement, or to enable various indirect (Gricean) conversational implications.[69] Individuals or societies will sometime punish "false" statements to deter falsehoods;[70] the oldest surviving law text, the Code of Ur-Nammu, lists penalties for false accusations of sorcery or adultery, as well as for committing perjury in court. Even four-year-old children can pass simple "false belief" tests and successfully assess that another individual's belief diverges from reality in a specific way;[71] by adulthood we have strong implicit intuitions about "truth" that form a "folk theory" of truth. These intuitions include:[72]

- Capture (*T*-in): If *P*, then *P* is true
- Release (*T*-out): If *P* is true, then *P*
- Noncontradiction: A statement can't be both true and false
- Normativity: It is usually good to believe what is true
- False beliefs: The notion that believing a statement doesn't necessarily make it true

Like many folk theories, our folk theory of truth is useful in everyday life but, upon deep analysis, turns out to be technically self-contradictory; in particular, any formal system that fully obeys Capture and Release semantics for truth (also known as the **T-schema**), and that also respects classical logic, is provably inconsistent and succumbs to the liar paradox or to a similar contradiction.[73]

Notable views

Ancient

Greek philosophy

Socrates', Plato's and Aristotle's ideas about truth are seen by some as consistent with correspondence theory. In his **Metaphysics**, Aristotle stated: "To say of what is that it is not, or of what is not that it is, is false, while to say of what is that it is, and of what is not that it is not, is true".[74] The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy proceeds to say of Aristotle:

> [...] Aristotle sounds much more like a genuine correspondence theorist in the **Categories** (12b11, 14b14), where he talks of "underlying things" that make statements true and implies that these "things" (pragmata) are logically structured situations or facts (viz., his sitting, his not sitting). Most influential is his claim in **De Interpretatione** (16a3) that thoughts are "likenesses" (homoiosis) of things. Although he nowhere defines truth in terms of a thought's likeness to a thing or fact, it is clear that such a definition would fit well into his overall philosophy of mind. [...][74]

Similar statements can also be found in Plato's dialogs (**Cratylus** 385b2, **Sophist** 263b).[74]

Religion

In Hinduism, Truth is defined as "unchangeable", "that which has no distortion", "that which is beyond distinctions of time, space, and person", "that which pervades the universe in all its constancy". The human body, therefore is not completely true as it changes with time, for example. There are many references, properties and explanations of truth by Hindu sages that explain varied facets of truth, such as the national motto of India: "Satyameva Jayate" (Truth alone wins), as well as "Satyam muktaye" (Truth liberates), "Satya' is 'Parahit'artham' va'unmanaso yatha'rthatvam' satyam" (Satya is the benevolent use of words and the mind for the welfare of others or in other words

Aquinas (1225–1274)

Reevaluating Avicenna, and also Augustine and Aristotle, Thomas Aquinas stated in his *Disputed Questions on Truth*:

> A natural thing, being placed between two intellects, is called *true* insofar as it conforms to either. It is said to be true with respect to its conformity with the divine intellect insofar as it fulfills the end to which it was ordained by the divine intellect... With respect to its conformity with a human intellect, a thing is said to be true insofar as it is such as to cause a true estimate about itself.[79]

Thus, for Aquinas, the truth of the human intellect (logical truth) is based on the truth in things (ontological truth).[80] Following this, he wrote an elegant re-statement of Aristotle's view in his Summa I.16.1 (http://www.newadvent.org/summa/1016.htm):

> Veritas est adæquatio intellectus et rei.
> (Truth is the conformity of the intellect and things.)

Aquinas also said that real things participate in the act of being of the Creator God who is Subsistent Being, Intelligence, and Truth. Thus, these beings possess the light of intelligibility and are knowable. These things (beings; reality) are the foundation of the truth that is found in the human mind, when it acquires knowledge of things, first through the senses, then through the understanding and the judgement done by reason. For Aquinas, human intelligence ("intus", within and "legere", to read) has the capability to reach the essence and existence of things because it has a non-material, spiritual element, although some moral, educational, and other elements might interfere with its capability.

Changing concepts of truth in the Middle Ages

Richard Firth Green examined the concept of truth in the later Middle Ages in his *A Crisis of Truth*, and concludes that roughly during the reign of Richard II of England the very meaning of the concept changes. The idea of the oath, which was so much part and parcel of for instance Romance literature,[81] changes from a subjective concept to a more objective one (in Derek Pearsall's summary).[82] Whereas truth (the "trouthe" of *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*) was first "an ethical truth in which truth is understood to reside in persons", in Ricardian England it "transforms...into a political truth in which truth is understood to reside in documents".[83]

Modern age

Kant (1724–1804)

Immanuel Kant endorses a definition of truth along the lines of the correspondence theory of truth.[74] Kant writes in the *Critique of Pure Reason*: "The nominal definition of truth, namely that it is the agreement of cognition with its object, is here granted and presupposed".[84] However, Kant denies that this correspondence definition of truth provides us with a test or criterion to establish which judgements are true. Kant states in his logic lectures:

> [...] Truth, it is said, consists in the agreement of
> cognition with its object. In consequence of this mere
> nominal definition, my cognition, to count as true, is

the dichotomy between 'absolute = perfect' and 'relative = imperfect' has been superseded in all fields of scientific thought, where "it is generally recognized that there is no absolute truth but nevertheless that there are objectively valid laws and principles".

In that respect, "a scientifically or rationally valid statement means that the power of reason is applied to all the available data of observation without any of them being suppressed or falsified for the sake of a desired result". The history of science is "a history of inadequate and incomplete statements, and every new insight makes possible the recognition of the inadequacies of previous propositions and offers a springboard for creating a more adequate formulation."

As a result "the history of thought is the history of an ever-increasing approximation to the truth. Scientific knowledge is not absolute but optimal; it contains the optimum of truth attainable in a given historical period." Fromm furthermore notes that "different cultures have emphasized various aspects of the truth" and that increasing interaction between cultures allows for these aspects to reconcile and integrate, increasing further the approximation to the truth.

Foucault (1926–1984)

Truth, says Michel Foucault, is problematic when any attempt is made to see truth as an "objective" quality. He prefers not to use the term truth itself but "Regimes of Truth". In his historical investigations he found truth to be something that was itself a part of, or embedded within, a given power structure. Thus Foucault's view shares much in common with the concepts of Nietzsche. Truth for Foucault is also something that shifts through various episteme throughout history.[99]
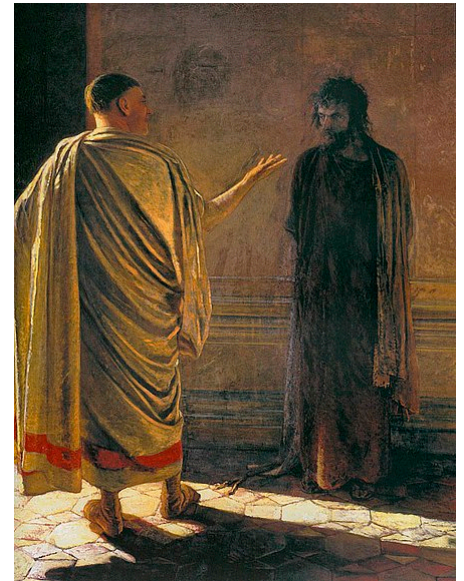
Baudrillard (1929–2007)

Jean Baudrillard considered truth to be largely simulated, that is pretending to have something, as opposed to dissimulation, pretending to not have something. He took his cue from iconoclasts who he claims knew that images of God demonstrated that God did not exist.[100] Baudrillard wrote in "Precession of the Simulacra":

Quid Est Veritas? Christ and Pilate, by Nikolai Ge.

> The simulacrum is never that which conceals the truth
> —it is the truth which conceals that there is none. The simulacrum is true.
> —Ecclesiastes[101][102]

Some examples of simulacra that Baudrillard cited were: that prisons simulate the "truth" that society is free; scandals (e.g., Watergate) simulate that corruption is corrected; Disney simulates that the U.S. itself is an adult place. One must remember that though such examples seem extreme, such extremity is an important part of Baudrillard's theory. For a less extreme example, consider how movies usually end with the bad being punished, humiliated, or otherwise failing, thus affirming for viewers the concept that the good end happily and the bad unhappily, a narrative which implies that the status quo and established power structures are largely legitimate.[100]

In medicine and psychiatry

There is controversy as to the truth value of a proposition made in bad faith self-deception, such as when a hypochondriac has a complaint with no physical symptom.[103]

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Bad faith

Bad faith (Latin: ***mala fides***) is double mindedness or double heartedness in duplicity, fraud, or deception.[1] It may involve intentional deceit of others, or self-deception.

The expression "bad faith" is associated with "double heartedness",[1] which is also translated as "double mindedness".[2][3] A bad faith belief may be formed through self-deception, being double minded, or "of two minds", which is associated with faith, belief, attitude, and loyalty. In the 1913 ***Webster's Dictionary***, bad faith was equated with being double hearted, "of two hearts", or "a sustained form of deception which consists in entertaining or pretending to entertain one set of feelings, and acting as if influenced by another".[1] The concept is similar to perfidy, or being "without faith", in which deception is achieved when one side in a conflict promises to act in good faith (e.g. by raising a flag of surrender) with the intention of breaking that promise once the enemy has exposed himself. After Jean-Paul Sartre's analysis of the concepts of self-deception and bad faith, bad faith has been examined in specialized fields as it pertains to self-deception as two semi-independently acting minds within one mind, with one deceiving the other.

Iago (right) and Othello from *Othello* by William Shakespeare. Much of the tragedy of the play is brought about by advice Iago gives to Othello in bad faith.

Some examples of bad faith include: a company representative who negotiates with union workers while having no intent of compromising;[4] a prosecutor who argues a legal position that he knows to be false;[5] an insurer who uses language and reasoning which are deliberately misleading in order to deny a claim.[6]

Bad faith may be viewed in some cases to not involve deception, as in some kinds of hypochondria with actual physical manifestations. There is a question about the truth or falsity of statements made in bad faith self-deception; for example, if a hypochondriac makes a complaint about their psychosomatic condition, is it true or false?[7]

Bad faith has been used as a term of art in diverse areas involving feminism,[8] racial supremacism,[9] political negotiation,[10] insurance claims processing, intentionality,[11] ethics,[12] existentialism, climate change denial,[13] and the law.[6]

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Truth values

In pseudosciences

Zen Buddhism

General use

In ordinary usage, bad faith is equated with being of "two hearts", or "a sustained form of deception which consists in entertaining or pretending to entertain one set of feelings, and acting as if influenced by another",[1] and is synonymous with double mindedness, with disloyalty, double dealing, hypocrisy, infidelity, breach of contract, unfaithfulness, pharisaism (emphasizing or observing the letter but not the spirit of the law,[14] see Doctrine of absurdity), tartuffery (a show or expression of feelings or beliefs one does not actually hold or possess),[15] affectation, bigotry, and lip service.[16]

Definition

People may hold beliefs in their minds even though they are directly contradicted by facts. These are beliefs held in bad faith. But there is debate as to whether this self-deception is intentional or not.[17]

In his book ***Being and Nothingness***, the philosopher Jean-Paul Sartre defined bad faith (French: ***mauvaise foi***) as hiding the truth from oneself.[18] The fundamental question about bad faith self-deception is how it is possible.[19] In order for a liar to successfully lie to the victim of the lie, the liar must know that what is being said is false. In order to be successful at lying, the victim must believe the lie to be true. When a person is in bad faith self-deception, the person is both the liar and the victim of the lie. So at the same time the liar, as liar, believes the lie to be false, and as victim believes it to be true. So there is a contradiction in that a person in bad faith self-deception believes something to be true and false at the same time.[20] Sartre observed that "the one to whom the lie is told and the one who lies are one and the same person, which means that I must know the truth in my capacity as deceiver, though it is hidden from me in my capacity as the one deceived", adding that "I must know that truth very precisely, in order to hide it from myself the more carefully—and this not at two different moments of temporality ..."

In theology

Various commentators and translators have discussed being of two beliefs or faiths in being double hearted or double minded.[2][2][3] ***Webster's Dictionary*** equates bad faith with "being of two hearts".[1] "Double hearted" is translated also as "double minded", or "of two hearts" or "of two minds" or souls, two beliefs, two attitudes, two loyalties, two thinkings, two beliefs, or being as two souls at the same time. The Hebrew Bible and the New Testament Epistles admonish religious believers not to be double minded. In Psalms 119:113, one translation is "I hate double-minded men, but I love your law."[3] The New Living Translation emphasises divided loyalty translating the passage as "I hate those with divided loyalties, but I love your instructions."[3]

The Epistle of James warns against trusting a person that "perpetually disagrees with *himself*".[2] "Taking the Lord's name in vain", bad faith justifies actions known to be wrong by claiming a direction from God or religious authority to take unethical positions or untrue beliefs, when a person *should* know otherwise.[21] Commenting on double mindedness in James 1 and its relation to hypocrisy in Matthew 6:22, Jamieson-Fausset-Brown Bible Commentary says "double-minded-literally, 'double-souled', the one soul directed towards God, the other to something else ... It is not a hypocrite that is meant, but a fickle, 'wavering' man, as the context shows".[2] Alford's translation of the Bible uses the ancient Greek literature's "waverer" to express "double minded".[2]

In James 1:8, it denotes instability of a cognitive attitude, "he is a double-minded man, unstable in attitude". In the God's Word Translation, "a person who has doubts is thinking about two different things at the same time and can't make up his mind about anything".[2] Young's Literal Translation translates this as being "two souled".[2] In Clarke's Commentary on the Bible, a double-minded man is one of two souls in that one is for earth, and the other for heaven, wishing to secure both worlds at once.[2] Gill's exposition of the Bible refers to asking for one thing and meaning another, honoring in word but not in heart, confused in the mind.[2]

Clarke's commentary on the Bible commented on Deuteronomy 26:17 and Jewish theology regarding being double hearted, in that Rabbi Tanchum (fol. 84) remarked, "Behold, the Scripture exhorts the Israelites, and tells them when they pray, that they should not have two hearts, one for the holy blessed God, and one for something else."[22] Clarke comments that "James refers to those Jews who were endeavoring to incorporate the law with the Gospel, who were divided in their minds and affections, not willing to give up the Levitical rites, and yet unwilling to renounce the Gospel. Such persons could make no progress in Divine things."[22]

The Catholic Church does not consider everyone with heretical views to have bad faith: for example, people who earnestly seek the truth and lead exemplary lives.[23]

In philosophy, psychology, and psychoanalysis

Freudian psychoanalysis

Freudian psychoanalysis answers how bad faith self-deception is made possible by postulating an unconscious dimension of our being that is amoral, whereas the conscious is in fact regulated by morality, law, and custom, accomplished by what Freud calls repression.[20] The true desires of the unconscious express themselves as wish fulfillment in dreams, or as an ethical position unconsciously taken to satisfy the wishes of the unconscious mind.[20]

Ethics, phenomenology, existentialism

Bad faith wish fulfillment is central to the ethics of belief, which discusses questions at the intersection of epistemology, philosophy of mind, psychology, Freudian psychoanalysis, and ethics.[24][25][26][27]

A person who is not lying to himself is authentic. "Authenticity" is being faithful to internal rather than external ideas.

Bad faith in ethics may be when an unethical position is taken as ethical, and justified by appeal to being forced to that belief as an excuse, e.g., by God or by that person's natural disposition due to genetics, even though facts disconfirm that belief and honesty would require it.[28]

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Honesty

Honesty is a facet of moral character that connotes positive and virtuous attributes such as integrity, truthfulness, straightforwardness, including straightforwardness of conduct, along with the absence of lying, cheating, theft, etc. Honesty also involves being trustworthy, loyal, fair, and sincere.

Honesty is valued in many ethnic and religious cultures.[1][2][3][4][5] "Honesty is the best policy" is a proverb of Edwin Sandys, while the quote "Honesty is the first chapter in the book of wisdom" is attributed to Thomas Jefferson, as used in a letter to Nathaniel Macon.[6] April 30 is national Honesty Day in the United States.

William Shakespeare famously described honesty as an attribute people leave behind when he wrote that "no legacy is so rich as honesty" in act 3 scene 5 of "All's Well that Ends Well."[7]

Diogenes Searching for an Honest Man, attributed to J. H. W. Tischbein (c. 1780)

Others have noted, however, that "too much honesty might be seen as undisciplined openness".[8] For example, individuals may be perceived as being "too honest" if they honestly express the negative opinions of others, either without having been asked their opinion, or having been asked in a circumstance where the response would be trivial.

Contents

Definitions

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Definitions

Merriam-Webster defines honesty as "fairness and straightforwardness of conduct" or "adherence to the facts."[9]

The *Oxford English Dictionary* defines honesty as "the quality of being honest."[10] Honest is, in turn, defined as "Free of deceit; truthful and sincere...Morally correct or virtuous...(attributive) Fairly earned, especially through hard work...(of an action) done with good intentions even if unsuccessful or misguided...(attributive) Simple, unpretentious, and unsophisticated.[11]

See also

- Authenticity (philosophy)
- Good faith
- Integrity
- Lie

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Lie

A **lie** is an assertion that is believed to be false, typically used with the purpose of deceiving someone.[1][2][3][4] The practice of communicating lies is called **lying**. A person who communicates a lie may be termed a **liar**. Lies may serve a variety of instrumental, interpersonal, or psychological functions for the individuals who use them. Generally, the term "lie" carries a negative connotation, and depending on the context a person who communicates a lie may be subject to social, legal, religious, or criminal sanctions.

Pinocchio, a symbol of untruthfulness

Contents

Types and associated terms

A **barefaced (or bald-faced) lie** is one that is obviously a lie to those hearing it. "Bold-faced lie" can also refer to misleading or inaccurate newspaper headlines, but this usage appears to be a more recent appropriation of the term.[5]

A **big lie** is one that attempts to trick the victim into believing something major, which will likely be contradicted by some information the victim already possesses, or by their common sense. When the lie is of sufficient magnitude it may succeed, due to the victim's reluctance to believe that an untruth on such a grand scale would indeed be concocted.[6]

A **blue lie** is a form of lying that is told purportedly to benefit a collective or "in the name of the collective good". The origin of the term "blue lie" is possibly from cases where police officers made false statements to protect the police force or to ensure the success of a legal case against an accused.[7] This differs from the Blue wall of silence in that a blue lie is not an omission but a stated falsehood.

To **bluff** is to pretend to have a capability or intention one does not possess.[6] Bluffing is an act of deception that is rarely seen as immoral when it takes place in the context of a game, such as poker, where this kind of deception is consented to in advance by the players. For instance, gamblers who deceive other players into thinking they have different cards to those they really hold, or athletes who hint they will move left and then dodges right is not considered to be lying (also known as a feint or juke). In these situations, deception is acceptable and is commonly expected as a tactic.

Bullshit (also **B.S.**, **bullcrap**, **bull**) does not necessarily have to be a complete fabrication. While a lie is related by a speaker who believes what is said is false, bullshit is offered by a speaker who does not care whether what is said is true because the speaker is more concerned with giving the hearer some impression. Thus bullshit may be either true or false, but demonstrates a lack of concern for the truth that is likely to lead to falsehoods.[8]
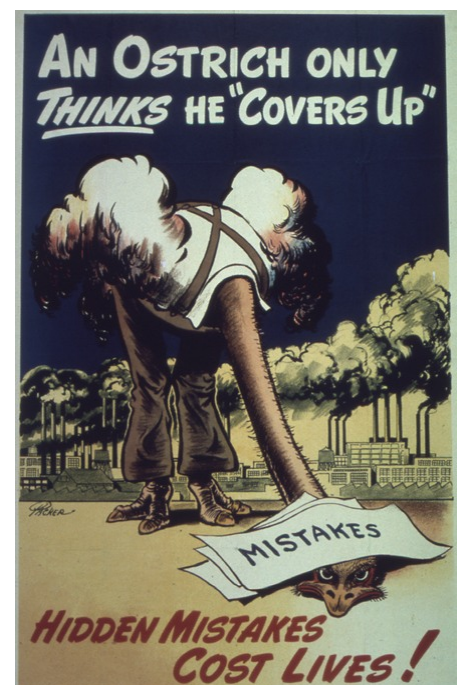
A **cover-up** may be used to deny, defend, or obfuscate a lie, errors, embarrassing actions, or lifestyle, and/or lie(s) made previously.[6] One may deny a lie made on a previous occasion, or alternatively, one may claim that a previous lie was not as egregious as it was. For example, to claim that a premeditated lie was really "only" an emergency lie, or to claim that a self-serving lie was really "only" a white lie or noble lie. This should not be confused with confirmation bias in which the deceiver is deceiving themselves.

Defamation is the communication of a false statement that harms the reputation of an individual person, business, product, group, government, religion, or nation.[6]

To **deflect** is to avoid the subject that the lie is about, not giving attention to the lie. When attention is given to the subject the lie is based around, deflectors ignore or refuse to respond. Skillful deflectors are passive-aggressive, who when confronted with the subject choose to ignore and not respond.[9]

a motivational poster about lying declares "An ostrich only thinks he 'covers up'"

Disinformation is intentionally false or misleading information that is spread in a calculated way to deceive target audiences.[6]

An **exaggeration** occurs when the most fundamental aspects of a statement are true, but only to a certain degree. It also is seen as "stretching the truth" or making something appear more powerful, meaningful, or real than it is. Saying that someone devoured most of something when they only ate half would be considered an exaggeration. An exaggeration might be easily found to be a hyperbole where a person's statement (i.e. in informal speech, such as "He did this one million times already!") is meant not to be understood literally.[6]

Fake news is supposed to be a type of yellow journalism that consists of deliberate misinformation or hoaxes spread via traditional print and broadcast news media or online social media.[10] Sometimes the term is applied as a deceptive device to deflect attention from uncomfortable truths and facts, however.

A **fib** is a lie that is easy to forgive due to its subject being a trivial matter; for example, a child may tell a fib by claiming that the family dog broke a household vase, when the child was the one who broke it.[6]

Fraud refers to the act of inducing another person or people to believe a lie in order to secure material or financial gain for the liar. Depending on the context, fraud may subject the liar to civil or criminal penalties.[11]

A **half-truth** is a deceptive statement that includes some element of truth. The statement might be partly true, the statement may be totally true, but only part of the whole truth, or it may employ some deceptive element, such as improper punctuation or double meaning, especially if the intent is to deceive, evade, blame, or misrepresent the truth.[12]

Infographic *How to spot fake news* published by the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions

An **honest lie** (or confabulation) may be identified by verbal statements or actions that inaccurately describe the history, background, and present situations. There is generally no intent to misinform and the individual is unaware that their information is false. Because of this, it is not technically a lie at all since, by definition, there must be an intent to deceive for the statement to be considered a lie.

Jocose lies are lies meant in jest, intended to be understood as such by all present parties. Teasing and irony are examples. A more elaborate instance is seen in some storytelling traditions, where the storyteller's insistence that the story is the absolute truth, despite all evidence to the contrary (i.e., tall tale), is considered humorous. There is debate about whether these are "real" lies, and different philosophers hold different views. The Crick Crack Club in London arranges a yearly "Grand Lying Contest" with the winner being awarded the coveted "Hodja Cup" (named for the Mulla Nasreddin: ***"The truth is something I have never spoken."***). The winner in 2010 was Hugh Lupton. In the United States, the Burlington Liars' Club awards an annual title to the "World Champion Liar."[13]

Lie-to-children is a phrase that describes a simplified explanation of technical or complex subjects as a teaching method for children and laypeople. While lies-to-children are useful in teaching complex subjects to people who are new to the concepts discussed, they can promote the creation of misconceptions among the people who listen to them. The phrase has been incorporated by academics within the fields of biology, evolution, bioinformatics, and the social sciences. Media use of the term has extended to publications including ***The Conversation*** and ***Forbes***.

Lying by omission, also known as a continuing misrepresentation or quote mining, occurs when an important fact is left out in order to foster a misconception. Lying by omission includes the failure to correct pre-existing misconceptions. For example, when the seller of a car declares it has been serviced regularly, but does not mention that a fault was reported during the last service, the seller lies by omission. It may be compared to dissimulation. An omission is when a person tells most of the truth, but leaves out a few key facts that therefore, completely obscures the truth.[9]

Lying in trade occurs when the seller of a product or service may advertise untrue facts about the product or service in order to gain sales, especially by competitive advantage. Many countries and states have enacted consumer protection laws intended to combat such fraud.
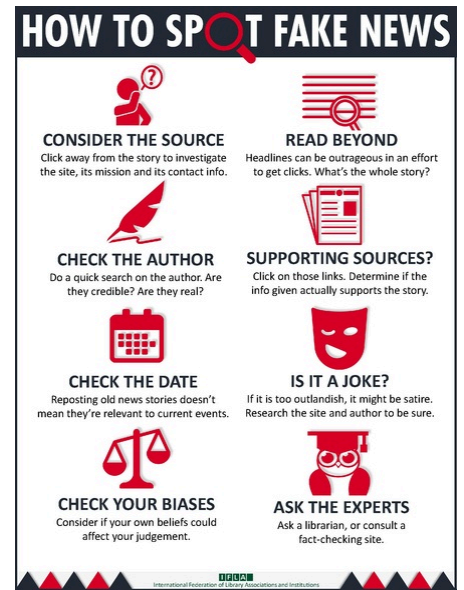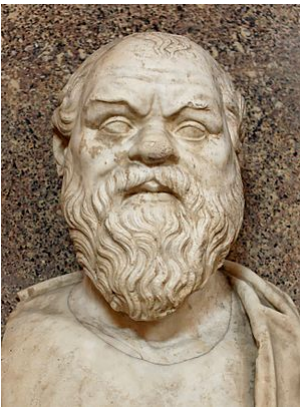
A **memory hole** is a mechanism for the alteration or disappearance of inconvenient or embarrassing documents, photographs, transcripts, or other records, such as from a website or other archive, particularly as part of an attempt to give the impression that something never happened.[14][15]

Minimization is the opposite of exaggeration. It is a type of deception[16] involving denial coupled with rationalization in situations where complete denial is implausible.

Mutual deceit is a situation wherein lying is both accepted and expected[17] or that the parties mutually accept the deceit in question.[18] This can be demonstrated in the case of a poker game wherein the strategies rely on deception and bluffing to win.[18]

Consumer protection laws often mandate the posting of notices, such as this one which appears in all automotive repair shops in California.

A **noble lie**, which also could be called a strategic untruth, is one that normally would cause discord if uncovered, but offers some benefit to the liar and assists in an orderly society, therefore, potentially being beneficial to others. It is often told to maintain law, order, and safety.

In psychiatry, **pathological lying** (also called compulsive lying, pseudologia fantastica, and mythomania) is a behavior of habitual or compulsive lying.[20][21] It was first described in the medical literature in 1891 by Anton Delbrueck.[21] Although it is a controversial topic,[21] pathological lying has been defined as "falsification entirely disproportionate to any discernible end in view, may be extensive and very complicated, and may manifest over a period of years or even a lifetime".[20] The individual may be aware they are lying, or may believe they are telling the truth, being unaware that they are relating fantasies.

Socrates (depicted in this bust) justified the use of noble lies in Plato's *Republic*.[19]

Perjury is the act of lying or making verifiably false statements on a material matter under oath or affirmation in a court of law, or in any of various sworn statements in writing. Perjury is a crime, because the witness has sworn to tell the truth and, for the credibility of the court to remain intact, witness testimony must be relied on as truthful.[6]

A **polite lie** is a lie that a politeness standard requires, and that usually is known to be untrue by both parties. Whether such lies are acceptable is heavily dependent on culture. A common polite lie in international etiquette may be to decline invitations because of "scheduling difficulties", or due to "diplomatic illness". Similarly, the butler lie is a small lie that usually is sent electronically and is used to terminate conversations or to save face.[22]

Puffery is an exaggerated claim typically found in advertising and publicity announcements, such as "the highest quality at the lowest price", or "always votes in the best interest of all the people". Such statements are unlikely to be true – but cannot be proven false and so, do not violate trade laws, especially as the consumer is expected to be able to determine that it is not the absolute truth.[23]

The phrase "**speaking with a forked tongue**" means to deliberately say one thing and mean another or, to be hypocritical, or act in a duplicitous manner. This phrase was adopted by Americans around the time of the Revolution, and may be found in abundant references from the early nineteenth century – often reporting on American officers who sought to convince the Indigenous peoples of the Americas with whom they negotiated that they "spoke with a straight and not with a forked tongue" (as for example, President Andrew Jackson told members of the Creek Nation in 1829).[24] According to one 1859 account, the proverb that the "white man spoke with a forked
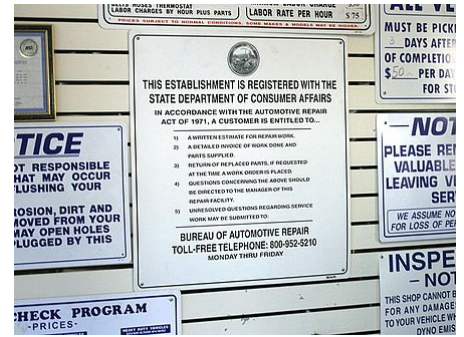
tongue" originated in the 1690s, in the descriptions by the indigenous peoples of French colonials in America inviting members of the Iroquois Confederacy to attend a peace conference, but when the Iroquois arrived, the French had set an ambush and proceeded to slaughter and capture the Iroquois.[25]

A **weasel word** is an informal term[26] for words and phrases aimed at creating an impression that a specific or meaningful statement has been made, when in fact only a vague or ambiguous claim has been communicated, enabling the specific meaning to be denied if the statement is challenged. A more formal term is equivocation.

A **white lie** is a harmless or trivial lie, especially one told in order to be polite or to avoid hurting someone's feelings or stopping them from being upset by the truth.[27][28][29] A white lie also is considered a lie to be used for greater good (pro-social behavior). It sometimes is used to shield someone from a hurtful or emotionally-damaging truth, especially when not knowing the truth is deemed by the liar as completely harmless.

Consequences

The potential consequences of lying are manifold; some in particular are worth considering. Typically lies aim to deceive, when deception is successful, the hearer ends up acquiring a false belief (or at least something that the speaker *believes* to be false). When deception is unsuccessful, a lie may be discovered. The discovery of a lie may discredit other statements by the same speaker, staining his reputation. In some circumstances, it may also negatively affect the social or legal standing of the speaker. Lying in a court of law, for instance, is a criminal offense (perjury).[30]

Hannah Arendt spoke about extraordinary cases in which an entire society is being lied to consistently. She said that the consequences of such lying are "not that you believe the lies, but rather that nobody believes anything any longer. This is because lies, by their very nature, have to be changed, and a lying government has constantly to rewrite its own history. On the receiving end you get not only one lie—a lie which you could go on for the rest of your days—but you get a great number of lies, depending on how the political wind blows."[31]

Detection

The question of whether lies can be detected reliably through nonverbal means is a subject of some controversy.[32]

Polygraph "lie detector" machines measure the physiological stress a subject endures in a number of measures while giving statements or answering questions. Spikes in stress indicators are purported to reveal lying. The accuracy of this method is widely disputed. In several well-known cases, application of the technique was proven to have been deceived. Nonetheless, it remains in use in many areas, primarily as a method for eliciting confessions or employment screening. The unreliability of polygraph results are the basis of such evaluations not being admissible as court evidence and, generally, the technique is perceived to be pseudoscience.[33]

A recent study found that composing a lie takes longer than telling the truth and thus, the time taken to answer a question may be used as a method of lie detection,[34] however, it also has been shown that instant answers with a lie may be proof of a prepared lie. A recommendation provided to resolve that contradiction is to try to surprise the subject and find a midway answer, not too quick, nor too long.[35]

Ethics

Aristotle believed no general rule on lying was possible, because anyone who advocated lying could never be believed, he said.[36] Although the philosophers, St. Augustine, St. Thomas Aquinas, and Immanuel Kant, condemned all lying,[37] Thomas Aquinas did advance an argument for lying, however. According to all three, there are no circumstances in which, ethically, one may lie. Even if the *only* way to protect oneself is to lie, it is never ethically permissible to lie even in the face of murder, torture, or any other hardship. Each of these philosophers gave several arguments for the ethical basis against lying, all compatible with each other. Among the more important arguments are:

1. Lying is a perversion of the natural faculty of speech, the natural end of which is to communicate the thoughts of the speaker.
2. When one lies, one undermines trust in society.
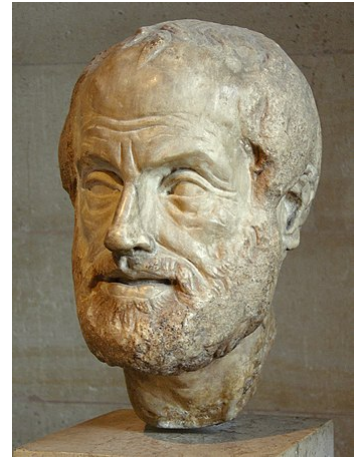
Portrait bust of Aristotle made by Lysippos

Meanwhile, utilitarian philosophers have supported lies that achieve good outcomes – white lies.[37] In his 2008 book, *How to Make Good Decisions and Be Right All the Time*, Iain King suggested a credible rule on lying was possible, and he defined it as: "Deceive only if you can change behaviour in a way worth more than the trust you would lose, were the deception discovered (whether the deception actually is exposed or not)."[38]

In *Lying*, neuroscientist Sam Harris argues that lying is negative for the liar and the person who's being lied to. To say lies is to deny others access to reality, and often we cannot anticipate how harmful lies can be. The ones we lie to may fail to solve problems they could have solved only on a basis of good information. To lie also harms oneself, makes the liar distrust the person who's being lied to.[39] Liars generally feel badly about their lies and sense a loss of sincerity, authenticity, and integrity. Harris asserts that honesty allows one to have deeper relationships and to bring all dysfunction in one's life to the surface.

In *Human, All Too Human*, philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche suggested that those who refrain from lying may do so only because of the difficulty involved in maintaining lies. This is consistent with his general philosophy that divides (or ranks) people according to strength and ability; thus, some people tell the truth only out of weakness.

In other species

Possession of the capacity to lie among non-humans has been asserted during language studies with great apes. In one instance, the gorilla Koko, when asked who tore a sink from the wall, pointed to one of her handlers and then laughed.[40]

Deceptive body language, such as feints that mislead as to the intended direction of attack or flight, is observed in many species. A mother bird deceives when she pretends to have a broken wing to divert the attention of a perceived predator – including unwitting humans – from the eggs in her nest, instead to her, as she draws the predator away from the location of the nest, most notably a trait of the killdeer.[41]

In culture

Cultural references

- Carlo Collodi's Pinocchio was a wooden puppet often led into trouble by his propensity to lie. His nose grew with every lie; hence, long noses have become a caricature of liars.

- Glenn Kessler, a journalist at *The Washington Post*, awards one to four Pinocchios to politicians in his Washington Post Fact Checker blog.[42]
- A famous anecdote by Parson Weems claims that George Washington once cut at a cherry tree with a hatchet when he was a small child. His father asked him who cut the cherry tree and Washington confessed his crime with the words: "I'm sorry, father, I cannot tell a lie."
- *The Boy Who Cried Wolf*, a fable attributed to Aesop about a boy who continually lies that a wolf is coming. When a wolf does appear, nobody believes him anymore.
- *To Tell the Truth* was the originator of a genre of game shows with three contestants claiming to be a person only one of them is.

Close-up of the bronze statue depicting a walking Pinocchio, named *Walking to Borås* by Jim Dine

The cliché "All is fair in love and war",[43][44] asserts justification for lies used to gain advantage in these situations. Sun Tzu declared that "All warfare is based on deception." Machiavelli advised in ***The Prince*** that a prince must hide his behaviors and become a "great liar and deceiver",[45] and Thomas Hobbes wrote in ***Leviathan***: "In war, force and fraud are the two cardinal virtues."

Fiction

- The concept of a memory hole was first popularized by George Orwell's dystopian novel, *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, where the Party's Ministry of Truth systematically re-created all potential historical documents, in effect re-writing all of history to match the often-changing state propaganda. These changes were complete and undetectable.
- In the film *Big Fat Liar*, the story producer Marty Wolf (a notorious and proud liar) steals a story from student Jason Shepard, telling of a character whose lies become out of control to the point where each lie he tells causes him to grow in size.
- In the film *Liar Liar*, the lawyer Fletcher Reede (Jim Carrey) cannot lie for 24 hours, due to a wish of his son that magically came true.
- In the 1985 film *Max Headroom*, the title character comments that one can always tell when a politician lies because "their lips move". The joke has been widely repeated and rephrased.
- *Larry-Boy! And the Fib from Outer Space!* was a story of a crime-fighting super-hero with super-suction ears, having to stop an alien, calling himself "Fib", from destroying the town of Bumblyburg due to the lies that caused Fib to grow. Telling the truth is the moral to this story.
- *Lie to Me* is a television series based on behavior analysts who read lies through facial expressions and body language. The protagonists, Dr. Cal Lightman and Dr. Gillian Foster are based on the above-mentioned Dr. Paul Ekman and Dr. Maureen O'Sullivan.
- *The Invention of Lying* is a 2009 movie depicting the fictitious invention of the first lie, starring Ricky Gervais, Jennifer Garner, Rob Lowe, and Tina Fey.
- *The Adventures of Baron Munchausen* tell the story about an eighteenth-century baron who tells outrageous, unbelievable stories, all of which he claims are true.
- In the games *Grand Theft Auto IV* and *Grand Theft Auto V*, there's an agency named FIB, a parody of the FBI, which is known to cover up stories, cooperate with criminals, and extract information with the use of lying.

1984 by George Orwell

Psychology

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Nineteen Eighty-Four

Nineteen Eighty-Four: A Novel, often published as ***1984***, is a dystopian novel by English novelist George Orwell. It was published on 8 June 1949 by Secker & Warburg as Orwell's ninth and final book completed in his lifetime. The story was mostly written at Barnhill, a farmhouse on the Scottish island of Jura, at times while Orwell suffered from severe tuberculosis. Thematically, *Nineteen Eighty-Four* centres on the consequences of government over-reach, totalitarianism, mass surveillance, and repressive regimentation of all persons and behaviours within society.[2][3]

The story takes place in an imagined future, the year 1984, when much of the world has fallen victim to perpetual war, omnipresent government surveillance, historical negationism, and propaganda. Great Britain, known as Airstrip One, has become a province of a superstate named Oceania that is ruled by the Party who employ the Thought Police to persecute individuality and independent thinking.[4] Big Brother, the leader of the Party, enjoys an intense cult of personality despite the fact that he may not exist. The protagonist, Winston Smith, is a diligent and skillful rank-and-file worker and Party member who secretly hates the Party and dreams of rebellion. He enters a forbidden relationship with a co-worker, Julia.

Nineteen Eighty-Four has become a classic literary example of political and dystopian fiction. Many terms used in the novel have entered common usage, including Big Brother, doublethink, thoughtcrime, Newspeak, Room 101, telescreen, 2 + 2 = 5, prole, and memory hole. *Nineteen Eighty-Four* also popularised the adjective "Orwellian", connoting things such as official deception, secret surveillance, brazenly misleading terminology, and manipulation of recorded history by a totalitarian or authoritarian state. *Time* included it on its 100 best English-language novels from 1923 to 2005.[5] It was placed on the Modern Library's 100 Best Novels, reaching No. 13 on the editors' list and No. 6 on the readers' list.[6] In 2003, the novel was listed at No. 8 on The Big Read survey by the BBC.[7] Parallels have been drawn between the novel's subject matter and real life instances of totalitarianism, communism, mass surveillance, and violations of freedom of expression among other themes.[8][9][10]

Nineteen Eighty-Four: A Novel	
First edition cover	
Author	George Orwell
Cover artist	Michael Kennar
Country	United Kingdom
Language	English
Genre	Dystopian, political fiction, social science fiction
Set in	London, Airstrip One, Oceania
Publisher	Secker & Warburg 8 June 1949
Media type	Print (hardback and paperback)
Pages	328
Awards	NPR Top 100 Science Fiction and Fantasy Books
OCLC	470015866 (https://www.worldcat.org/oclc/470015866)
Dewey Decimal	823.912[1]

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Political fiction

Political fiction employs narrative to comment on political events, systems and theories. Works of political fiction, such as **political novels**, often "directly criticize an existing society or present an alternative, even fantastic, reality".[1] The political novel overlaps with the social novel, proletarian novel, and social science fiction.

Plato's ***Republic***, a Socratic dialogue written around 380 BC, has been one of the world's most influential works of philosophy and political theory, both intellectually and historically.[2][3] The ***Republic*** is concerned with justice (δικαιοσύνη), the order and character of the just city-state, and the just man.[4] Other influential politically-themed works include Thomas More's ***Utopia*** (1516), Jonathan Swift's ***Gulliver's Travels*** (1726), Voltaire's ***Candide*** (1759), and Harriet Beecher Stowe's ***Uncle Tom's Cabin*** (1852).

Political fiction frequently employs satire, often in the utopian and dystopian genres. This includes totalitarian dystopias of the early 20th century such as Jack London's ***The Iron Heel***, Sinclair Lewis' ***It Can't Happen Here***, and George Orwell's ***Nineteen Eighty-Four***.

Aristophanes

Plato

Thomas More

Jan Kochanowski

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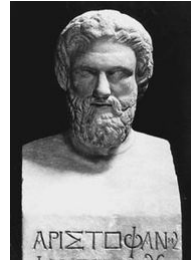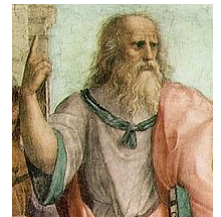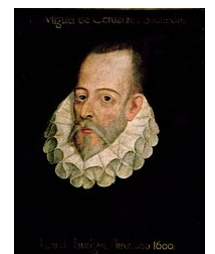   Science fiction

See also

Notes

Political satire

The Greek playwright Aristophanes' plays are known for their political and social satire,[5] particularly in his criticism of the powerful Athenian general, Cleon, in plays such as ***The Knights***. Aristophanes is also notable for the persecution he underwent.[5][6][7][8] Aristophanes' plays turned upon images of filth and disease.[9] His bawdy style was adopted by Greek dramatist-comedian Menander, whose early play, ***Drunkenness***, contains an attack on the politician, Callimedon.

Miguel de Cervantes

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Fiction

Fiction generally is a narrative form, in any medium, consisting of people, events, or places that are imaginary—in other words, not based strictly on history or fact.[1][2][3] It also commonly refers, more narrowly, to written narratives in prose and often specifically novels.[4] In film, it generally corresponds to narrative film in opposition to documentary.

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An illustration from Lewis Carroll's *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*, depicting the fictional protagonist, Alice, playing a fantastical game of croquet.

Overview

In its most narrow usage, fiction refers to novels, but it may also denote any "literary narrative" (see literary fiction),[5][6] including novels, novellas, and short stories. More broadly, fiction has come to encompass storytelling with imaginary elements in any format, including writings, audio recordings, live theatrical performances, comics, animated or live-action films, television programs, games (most notably, role-playing and video games), and so on.

A work of fiction implies the inventive construction of an imaginary world and, most commonly, its fictionality is publicly acknowledged, so its audience typically expects it to deviate in some ways from the real world rather than presenting only characters who are actual people or descriptions that are factually true.[7] Fiction is generally understood as not adhering precisely to the real world, which also opens it up to various interpretations.[8] Characters and events within a fictional work may even be set in their own context entirely separate from the known universe: an independent fictional universe.

In contrast to fiction is its traditional opposite: non-fiction, in which the creator assumes responsibility for presenting only the historical and factual truth. Despite the usual distinction between fiction and non-fiction, some fiction creators certainly attempt to make their audience believe the work is non-fiction or otherwise blur the boundary, often through forms of experimental fiction (including some postmodern fiction and autofiction)[9] or even through deliberate literary fraud.[10]

Formats