



laetus in praesens

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Varieties of Fake News and Misrepresentation

When are deception, pretence and cover-up acceptable?

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Produced in the light of concern regarding dissemination of "fake news" undermining elections to the European Parliament, of claims regarding the "fake news" purveyed by those seeking election, and in anticipation of an imminent false flag justification for war

Introduction

Widespread concern is currently expressed about "fake news" as it may be variously understood in relation to dissemination of [false and misleading information](#). This extends to concerns about [hate speech](#) and its role in exacerbating intolerance, discrimination and terrorism. The concern has called into question the major role of the social media in society and most obviously the manner in which Facebook has enabled fake news in the recent past.

This has led to unprecedented interrogation of its founder (*30 Questions that Facebook has yet to Answer: gaps in the testimony of Mark Zuckerberg at a US Senate hearing?* 2018). Beyond the recently implemented processes to detect and remove fake news from social media, the debate continues with a view to formulating appropriate responses in different legislations, notably within the European Union.

The focus in what follows is on how fake news may come to be defined in practice by legislative and other measures. More specifically the preoccupation is the extent to which the resulting definition will be carefully crafted to include those forms of information with which authorities formulating the definition disagree -- and to exclude those forms of information which they favour or with which they feel obliged to be complicit.

Constraining the definition? Paradoxically, will the definition of fake news then confirm the acceptability of some forms of communication which might otherwise be termed "fake news"? Will what is to be defined as fake news come to be perceived by the public as the "tip of the iceberg" of false and misleading information -- with the remainder then to be treated as acceptable by authorities rather than fake?

Will any legislative measures against "fake news" then be themselves "fake" in some respect (about which little can be carefully said)? Will the response to fake news as a whole then be essentially fake -- a token response? How indeed to understand what is not fake news in some manner? Paradoxically the denial that any news constitutes fake news may well be fake news in its own right.

The concern can be understood otherwise in that suppression of vital news or information effectively renders fake what is disseminated - through deliberately depriving it of context enabling valuable questions to be asked. Such concerns have long been highlighted in the light of the deprecated [Big Lie](#) propaganda technique of the Nazi regime and the critical commentary on [newspeak](#) by [George Orwell](#)

(*Nineteen Eighty-Four*, 1949). Crafting communication under constraints of political correctness may also limit appreciation of context.

Necessary context? The importance of context becomes only too evident through the actions of whistleblowers and the embarrassment they evoke through dissemination of information that partially undermines a preferred narrative of authorities. This is obvious in the case of multinational corporations ([Volkswagen emissions scandal](#), [Cancer lawsuits mount for Monsanto over glyphosate](#)), the Catholic Church ([sexual abuse by clergy](#)), and governments ([leak of US diplomatic cables](#)). The situation is far more subtle when reporting by such authorities is carefully crafted to be positive and upbeat -- skillfully omitting problematic news which may be troublesome to some and raise unwelcome questions. At what point does this become dangerously dysfunctional?

The issue is all the more evident in the case of indications of dangers or threats of any kind. Many examples have been noted of warnings that are carefully ignored by authorities. These have included institutional failures (as with abuse in hospices), structural failures (buildings, bridges, dams, railway infrastructure), and coordination failures (emergency response and security facilities). Most striking have been the warnings ignored regarding the subprime mortgage crisis.

Obvious efforts have been made to frame evidence of disaster as effectively fake news, most notably with respect to health and safety issues (Naomi Oreskes and Erik M. Conway, *Merchants of Doubt: how a handful of scientists obscured the truth on issues from tobacco smoke to global warming*, 2010). Some media may either avoid coverage of such warnings, question their validity or relevance, or discredit those reporting such information -- effectively by framing it as fake news. Multiple instances have been evident in the case of climate change, pollution and extinction of species.

What information do authorities consider it appropriate to conceal or ignore -- with the purported justification of needing to avoid "public panic"? Conspiracy theorists cite many examples. The difficulty is that such concealment reinforces any perception that the dominant public narrative is fundamentally tainted, namely substantively based on fake news to an unknown degree. There is considerable irony to the preoccupation with fake news in that it is accompanied at this time by the further indictment of the founder of Wikileaks (*WikiLeaks Founder Julian Assange Charged in 18-Count Superseding Indictment*, US Department of Justice, 23 May 2019). His actions notably resulted in unprecedented public access to information indicative by implication of the varieties of fake news informing public debate.

False flags and Father Xmas? It is in this context that the world is now faced with the possibility, if not the probability, of [false flag operations](#) to enable armed response with respect to Iran (Robert Bridge, *US-Iran Showdown Is One False-Flag Attack Away From Global Calamity*, Strategic Culture Foundation, 18 May 2019; Tyler Durden, *Iran Warns False Flag "Accident" Could "Lure" Trump Into War*, ZeroHedge, 25 April 2019; Whitney Webb, *History's Dire Warning: Beware False-Flag Trigger for Long-Sought War with Iran*, Mint Press News, 14 May 2019; Jeff Stein, *America's Next Phony War: Will Iran Be Trump's Iraq?* Newsweek, 11 February 2019).

Such covert operations are a form of fake news *par excellence*. An obvious precedent is the evidence, deliberately crafted for the benefit of the UN Security Council, of the existence of [weapons of mass destruction in Iraq](#). Earlier examples have included the notorious [Gulf of Tonkin incident](#) and that envisaged as [Operation Northwoods](#). Reframing the adage of [Carl von Clausewitz](#), is fake news then simply the "continuation of politics by other means"?

Whilst the nature of fake news may be called into question in this way, it is also ironically the case that there are many features of public discourse which depend on an artful form of cultivated deception -- readily lending themselves to criticism as fake news. The extreme example is perhaps Father Christmas, and the many fairy tales by which children are enthralled -- exemplified by the high fantasy of *The Lord of the Rings* and the magic of the *Harry Potter* series. When is such fake news appropriate? Should it be systematically withdrawn and suppressed when detected?

Overconfidence in growth and equality as fake news? Critics of the perceived necessity of unrestricted permanent growth would readily frame cultivation of that belief as a form of fake news -- given the crises thereby engendered (Richard Douthwaite, *The Growth Illusion: how economic growth has enriched the few, impoverished the many, and endangered the planet*, 1992; Gordon T. Long, *The Illusion of Growth*, GoldSilver, 31 October 2017; David Stockman, *The Illusion of Growth*, Daily Reckoning, 21 November 2017; World Economic Forum, *Davos 2016 - The Growth Illusion*, YouTube, 20 January 2016).

This raises the question of how cultivation of fake news is insidiously related to sustaining collective confidence in what might otherwise be recognized as an illusion (*Varieties of Confidence Essential to Sustainability: surrogates and tokens obscuring the existential "gold standard"*, 2009; (*Credibility Crunch engendered by Hope-mongering: "Credit crunch" focus as symptom of a dangerous mindset*, 2008).

Growth is claimed to be the golden route to universal equality. Is this too to be explored as an illusion (*Cultivating the Myth of Human Equality Ignoring complicity in the contradictions thereby engendered*, 2016)?

How are the dangers of [false confidence](#) and [overconfidence](#) to be explored in relation to the dangers of fake news?

Progressive clarification: Many of the manifestations of what may be considered fake news can be variously clustered. In the following exercise, instances considered under earlier headings may also be otherwise considered under later headings. The framework invites extension and amendment -- together with more specific examples of the controversy implied.

Fake news and misrepresentation in the media

Fake news: The primary characterization of what is (narrowly) framed as "fake news" is succinctly described by *Wikipedia* as:

[Fake news](#), also known as junk news or pseudo-news, is a type of [yellow journalism](#) or [propaganda](#) that consists of deliberate [disinformation](#) or [hoaxes](#) spread via traditional [news media](#) (print and broadcast) or online [social media](#). The false information is often caused by reporters paying sources for stories, an unethical practice called [checkbook journalism](#). Digital news has brought back and increased the usage of fake news, or yellow journalism. The news is then often reverberated as [misinformation](#) in social

media but occasionally finds its way to the mainstream media as well.

Fake news is written and published usually with the intent to mislead in order to damage an agency, entity, or person, and/or gain financially or politically, often using [sensationalist](#), dishonest, or outright fabricated [headlines](#) to increase readership. Similarly, [clickbait](#) stories and headlines earn advertising revenue from this activity.

As noted above, of particular concern is the use of social media to promote hate speech, extending into terrorism. More subtly this can be seen as the devious and misleading process through which people are groomed towards acts otherwise held to be legitimate but deemed to be reprehensible from other perspectives.

One difficulty in any framing of fake news is distinguishing it from [propaganda](#) for political, religious, or commercial purposes. The difficulty derives from the framework through which such communication is held to be appropriate rather than misleading.

Misrepresentation: Whilst fake news is in process of lacquering a clear definition, "[misrepresentation](#)" has long been more precisely defined as a feature of contract law -- although the law is recognized to be somewhat confused in this respect. In law it is understood to be an untrue or misleading] statement of fact made during negotiations of some kind between one party and another, with the statement then inducing that other party into the contract. "Contract" can of course also be understood very generally when reference is made to misrepresentation, rather than being restricted to any formal understanding in law, The law of misrepresentation is an amalgam of contract and tort; and its sources are common law, equity and statute.

Emphasis in law is placed on the concept of an [untrue statement](#), whereby to amount to a misrepresentation, the statement must be untrue or seriously misleading. A statement which is "technically true" but which gives a misleading impression is deemed an "untrue statement". Actionable misrepresentations must be misstatements of fact or law. Misstatements of opinion or intention are not deemed statements of fact. Statements of opinion are usually insufficient to amount to a misrepresentation.

Misrepresentation has been distinguished as fraudulent or innocent with the latter dividing into two separate categories of negligent and "wholly" innocent. The intention is thereby to recognize that the defendant may have been blameworthy to a greater or lesser extent; and the relative degrees of blameworthiness lead to differing remedies for the claimant.

Media bias: Some categories distinguished below were identified in a previous concern with [media bias](#) and related strategies (*Clues to possible vigilant interpretation of media coverage*, 2014). This noted the categories of [confidence tricks](#) usefully clarified by *Wikipedia* (*List of confidence tricks*). Also noted was the well-developed process of religious, legal and political [doublespeak](#) as a means of exploiting suffering towards questionable ends (*Indifference to the Suffering of Others: occupying the moral and ethical high ground through doublespeak*, 2013).

That discussion noted the recognition of the set of related techniques of [media manipulation](#) used to enable an image or argument favouring particular interests. The *Wikipedia* entry discusses such manipulation firstly by context

| | | |
|--|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Activism • Advertising • Hoaxing | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Marketing • Political campaigning • Propagandising | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Psychological warfare • Public relations |
|--|--|---|

This is followed by a discussion in terms of technique:

| Distraction types | | Other techniques |
|--|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Distraction by nationalism • Straw man fallacy • Distraction by scapegoat • Distraction by phenomenon | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Distraction by semantics • Distraction by regression • Distraction by misleading • Distraction by horror | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appeal to consensus • Censorship • Demonisation of the opposition • Fear mongering |

As a notable feature of bias in media coverage may be the use of a variety of forms of cover-up. These have been organized into a remarkably extensive [typology of cover-ups](#) in the relevant *Wikipedia* entry -- based on analysis of a number of typical cases.

Information "laundering": The earlier discussion also noted extension of this understanding from initial use of "[whitewash](#)" as a metaphor meaning to gloss over or cover up vices, crimes or scandals, or to exonerate by means of a perfunctory investigation, or through biased presentation of data. It is especially used in the context of corporations, governments or other organizations. Variants now extend to:

- [Greenwashing](#), namely the practice of companies spinning their products and policies as environmentally friendly, or "green".
- [Bluewashing](#), as used to describe either publicity-driven humanitarian relief efforts, notably with respect to United Nations initiatives
- [Pinkwashing](#), whether used to describe the practice of companies connecting their products to breast cancer awareness and fundraising (often while ignoring the ways their products may be contributing to the disease) or as the promotion of the gay-friendliness of a corporate or political entity in an attempt to downplay or soften aspects of it considered negative.

Statistical deception: There is widespread recognition of the [misuse of statistics](#), namely when a statistical argument deliberately asserts a falsehood for the gain of the perpetrator. *Wikipedia* describes the following types of misuse -- which may be variously present in biased media presentations.

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discarding unfavorable data | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • False causality | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Data manipulation |
|---|---|---|

| | | |
|--|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Loaded questions • Overgeneralization • Biased samples | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proof of the null hypothesis • Confusing statistical significance with practical significance • Data dredging | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Misreporting or misunderstanding of estimated error • Confusing statistical significance with practical significance |
|--|---|---|

Such deception has been variously documented (Darrell Huff, *How to Lie with Statistics*, 1991; Joel Best, *Damned Lies and Statistics: untangling numbers from the media, politicians, and activists*, 2012). Of particular relevance is the process described as massaging statistics so that they conform to a required media message, namely to manipulate results for the political convenience of some user, often the government.

Misrepresentation of electoral results: It is now common for claims to be made with respect to pre-electoral gerrymandering, restrictive voter registration, and hacking of the electoral process itself -- all variously resulting in misrepresentation of the results, especially to the extent that the election could be understood as a negotiated contractual process. *Wikipedia* offers a [List of controversial elections](#). These do not highlight the issue in dictatorships (*The Dictator's Dilemma: to win with 95 percent or 99?* *Foreign Policy*, 13 February 2012).

Potentially far more curious and undignified is the manner in which the losers in an election engage in tortuously spurious arguments, despite the voting results, to the effect that in they did "really" lose. This has been evident in the claims made that in reality more people voted for Donald Trump's opponent and that it has only been the obsolete processes of the US electoral college system which enabled him to have won. This is equivalent to claiming that greater possession of the ball in football justifies the declaration of a team to be the winner -- even though it scored fewer goals according to the rules.

Another form of misrepresentation has been evident with respect to commentaries on the European Parliamentary elections. In the case of France, spokespersons for the party of Emmanuel Macron are vigorous in their convoluted assertions that their unprecedented loss was meaningless in practice, that their program had a viable popular mandate, and that there was nothing they really needed to learn from the loss. Arguably such a bias has even been evident in the tone of commentary by the BBC:

In France, for example, far-right candidate Marine Le Pen beat President Emmanuel Macron at the polls. A huge victory for her, right? And for the nationalist Eurosceptic cause, while Mr Macron clearly failed to persuade voters with his reform agenda for France and the EU. But the margin of difference was so small between the two politicians, you could argue the opposite: that Marine Le Pen failed to truly capitalise on the weakness of an unpopular president, allowing him to emerge post-election with feathers ruffled, but not plucked. (Katya Adler, *European elections 2019: What were the clear trends?* *BBC News*, 27 May 2019)

Misrepresentation takes a different form within national and European parliaments where every effort is made to minimize the time their representatives are allowed to speak -- if representatives of other parties do the courtesy of according attention to them. Various framed as a "cordon sanitaire" -- but usefully understood as a "democratic chastity belt" -- this effectively constitutes a misrepresentation of parliamentary democracy from which populism is institutionally excluded as a legitimate expression of the people.

Fake news and misrepresentation in advertising

It is appropriate to ask what proportion of advertising can be understood to be fake news -- at least from some point of view. The promotion of products and services of health concern can be explored in this light, notably tobacco smoking and alcohol consumption.

Employing iconic models: The question is relevant given the heavy investment in crafting the verbal or visual message to the point of distorting the perspective of the viewer -- cultivating a perception which could be held to be false. This is evident from the choice of physically exceptional models, their cosmetic enhancement, their clothing, and the setting in which they are filmed -- in a context decorated with status symbols to which many can only aspire. The distortion may be reinforced by using celebrities in that role in order to echo the message. Whilst the result may indeed be considered "fake", to what extent does it constitute reprehensible "fake news"?

Puffery: A key question on which legislation has focused is whether and how advertising is misleading, namely the use of false, misleading, or unproven information to advertise products to consumers. Arguably, in that narrower sense, this could indeed constitute fake news. The issue is whether legislation is carefully and generously crafted to permit forms of advertising which could otherwise be recognized as fake news. A particular indication of this is the permissibility of what is defined in some legislations as [puffery](#), namely the ability to formulate a promotional statement or claim that expresses subjective rather than objective views, which no "reasonable person" would take literally. How frequently is the subtlety of that distinction challenged in practice? How easy is it to go beyond the bounds of puffery in practice?

Of interest in this respect is the constraint on the use of superlatives in advertising in some countries, notably Iceland ****. When is hyperbole to be understood as framing fake news, rather than being acceptable as puffery? From that perspective, how is the choice of the most attractive models to be understood -- exemplars of superlative qualities -- when few can aspire to such attributes, whatever the implied claims for the products made by their use by the models? There is increasing sensitivity in this respect -- resulting in the choice of models more reflective of average attributes.

Implication: An intriguing aspect of fake news is advertising by implication, avoiding specific claims but implying a case which may well be unproven. This is consistent with the marketing principle of "[selling the sizzle but not the steak](#)". Much advertising of products does indeed make claims for the proven performance of a product -- without being challenged to indicate where that proof is to be found, or by whom it has been substantiated. A feature of fake news is then the denial of the existence of proof to the contrary, or discrediting its nature. Such counter-claims are typically beyond resolution in the context in which the claims are made.

One style of advertising is of particular interest through "before" and "after" photographs of the use of a product (typically health products). Crafted as they are as advertising, to what extent do these constitute proof rather than the faking of proof -- possibly with the aid of photo enhancement software?

Labelling: Other issues are evident in labelling, whether or not the elements are legally defined. Problematic issues, potentially to be considered as fake news, include:

- use of styles reminiscent of branded quality products, whether or not labels implying this are genuine. There is a grey zone between genuine and counterfeit which can be explored in terms of misleading advertising
- advertising or product design, may be such as to imply quality although lacking it. This is evident in the case of fruit which may be designed to "look good" -- with the implication that it "tastes good", even though this is not the case. An aspect of this is evident in product labelling but is especially evident in restaurant menu design.
- skillful addition of reservations, in the smallest possible print, to claims made or implied in the largest possible print or imagery. Rendering reservations relatively inaccessible in this way can be interpreted as fake news, although this can indeed be denied -- being in effect fake news of a subtler order

More generally such advertising, whatever form it takes, can be understood as the making of a promise without any sense of whether what is advertised can be delivered -- as the consumer has been led to imagine (*Dreamables, Deniables, Deliverables and Duende*, 2015).

Descriptions of techniques of [deceptive and false advertising](#), are clustered by *Wikipedia* into the following categories.

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Manipulation of measurement units and standards • Fillers and oversized packaging • Manipulation of terms • Incomplete comparison • Inconsistent comparison | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Misleading illustrations • False coloring • Angel dusting • Bait-and-switch • "No risk" | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Guarantee without a remedy specified • Acceptance by default • Undisclosed dishonest business practices |
|---|---|---|

Fake news and misrepresentation in marketing

The above instances of fake news in advertising are engendered by strategic use of fake news in marketing more generally. Relevant examples include:

- creating or **exacerbating the problem**, which the product or service can be claimed to address, as with exaggeration of:
 - health hazards, beyond statistically proven vulnerability -- enabling the marketing of pharmaceutical and other products. Involving WHO, the case of swine flu and its vaccine is frequently cited (*WHO swine flu experts 'linked' with drug companies*, *BBC News*, 4 June 2010; *Swine Flu Scandal: billions of pounds are wasted on vaccines that will never be used after the swine flu alert was scaled down*, *Daily Express*, 5 February 2010; *The 'False' Pandemic: drug firms cashed in on scare over swine flu*, *The Daily Mail*, 18 January 2010)
 - threats to safety, beyond their proven reality -- enabling the marketing of remedial measures
 - security threats, beyond their proven reality -- notably enabling the marketing of military and surveillance equipment, as well as security facilities more generally
 - spiritual threats -- of which the problematic [sale of indulgences](#) is a classic example. .
- **misselling** or overselling, of which the lead up to the subprime mortgage crisis constituted a classic case. This is the deliberate, reckless, or negligent sale of products or services in circumstances where the contract is either misrepresented, or the product or service is unsuitable for the customer's needs. The representation of life insurance or over-designed products offer other examples.
- **undermining collective response** to an issue, notably with the use "dirty tricks" (*Wrecking an International Project: notes from a saboteur's vade mecum*, 1972). Thus may be otherwise exemplified by:
 - cultivating doubt as to the nature of a problem and any remedial strategy, or even the need for one (Naomi Oreskes and Erik M. Conway, *Merchants of Doubt: how a handful of scientists obscured the truth on issues from tobacco smoke to global warming*, 2010; David Michaels, *Doubt is Their Product: how industry's assault on science threatens your health*, 2008)
 - exacerbating uncertainty and confusion (D. Michaels and C. Monforton, *Manufacturing Uncertainty: contested science and the protection of the public's health and environment*, *American Journal of Public Health*, 95, 2005).
 - exacerbating conflict (Guus Bartholomé, Sophie Lecheler, and Claes de Vreese, *Manufacturing Conflict? How journalists intervene in the conflict frame building process*, *International Journal of Press/Politics*, 20, 2015, 4; Martin Hellman, *Manufacturing War: a primer*, *WhoWhatWhy*, 2014; Serge Halimi, *Fabricating a war on Iran*, *Le Monde Diplomatique*, January 2018; *The Danger of Fake News in Inflaming or Suppressing Social Conflict*, *CITS*).
 - cultivating complicity in complacency, thereby providing a context for disruptive surprise (*Pricking the Bubble of Global Complacent Complicity*, 2017; Nassim Nicholas Taleb, *The Black Swan: the impact of the highly improbable*, 2007)
- **"talking up"** is a strategy notably used by authorities, especially in response to the vulnerability of national currencies or in order to promote particular agendas -- a difficult to deprecate as fake news despite the level of deception it may deliberately involve
- **engendering complicity** and "buy-in" in the development of a market, as in the promotion of:
 - an actor or singer, a film, a book, a music recording (possibly irrespective of their relative merits)
 - art, most notably creating a context in which the value of particular works of art is inflated (often to a surprising degree), deprecating the value of copies, and protecting any deception through criminalizing counterfeiting

- wines, beers (again potentially inflating the value of some to an unreasonable degree, unrelated to those qualities which can be readily appreciated)
- particular destinations for tourism
- fashion products (irrespective of how artificial and temporary they may be)
- **exerting commercial pressure** on media to frame selected products favourably and to deprecate or ignore alternatives

Such strategies are notably deployed in presentations, as exemplified in the role of **lobbyists**. Curiously the latter could be said to adopt the strategies of witch doctors of the past in cultivating terror and appreciation of the existential threat it represents. As with **witch doctors**, lobbyists are thereby able to position themselves as purveyors of remedies to issues whose reality they may have been associated with engendering.

This raises the provocative question as to the proportion of products and services which have been adopted on the basis of fake news of some kind. Would any response to that question take the form of fake news?

Fake news and misrepresentation in agenda promotion

The emphasis above is primarily on the fake news associated with commercial products and services. That is however a particular instance of the use of fake news in the promotion of agendas more generally. Facts may be misleadingly selected and presented. Statistics may be massaged. Media presentations may be biased, whether through advertising or otherwise.

Examples include:

- advocacy **lobbying** and institutional promotion:
 - in business, as noted above, or in the business of fake news promotion -- now that it is recognized as a business following the documentation of the [Facebook-Cambridge Analytica scandal](#))
 - in TV and other media, engendering income through enabling dissemination of what may be held to be fake news -- most notably in the form of advertising
 - in institutional budget presentation, crafting positive reporting on budgets for which extra funds are required, exaggerating new threats, and ignoring the failures of previously funded programs. This is most evident in procurement of resources for defence budgets. As an indication of fake news, some of the misuse of such procurement is remarkable
 - positive reporting, public relations, excluding the negative ([Barbara Ehrenreich](#), *Bright-sided: How the Relentless Promotion of Positive Thinking Has Undermined America*, 2009; *Smile Or Die: How Positive Thinking Fooled America and the World*, 2009).
 - the role of corruption in lobbying rises the question of how concrete proof can be presented to disassociate the lobbying process from misrepresentation and fake news (Francesco Giovannoni, *Lobbying versus Corruption*, *CESifo DICE Report*, 2011; H. E. Sung, *Democracy and Political Corruption: A Cross National Comparison*, *Crime, Law and Social Change*, 41, 2004; B. Begovic, *Corruption, Lobbying and State Capture*, *CDLS Working Paper*, 2006, no. 0106.)
- false advertising may be used in the **misrepresentation of the nature of business**
- fake news in promotion of **political agendas** (Jason Bisnoff, *Fake Politics: how corporate and government groups create and maintain a monopoly on truth*, 2019; Edward Herman and Noam Chomsky, *Manufacturing Consent: the political economy of the mass media*, 1988; Roger Larocca, *Strategic Diversion in Political Communication*, *Journal of Politics*, 66, 2004):
 - political manifestos merit exploration as exercises in fake news, given the reliance on commitments to promises too readily made, given the unproven and limited capacity to implement them -- of which all are aware. A remarkable example is that of the Brexit referendum campaign now widely recognized to have been based on deliberate lies -- fake news with an increasingly acceptable face?
 - each political party could be said to perceive others to be instances of misrepresentation of what is best for the people of their country
 - political debate between opposing parties can be recognized as a process in which each endeavours to argue that the perspective of the other is incorrect -- raising the provocative question as to whether each is to be perceived by the other as a purveyor of fake news even in a democracy. Is parliamentary debate an exercise in mutual accusation of purveying fake news?
 - striking examples are offered by the well-documented lies of the leader of the world's primary superpower -- typically accusing opponents of lying and disseminating fake news (*Donald Trump has now said more than 10,000 untrue things as president*, *CNN*, 29 April 2019; *Lies, damned lies and Donald Trump: the pick of the president's untruths*, *The Guardian*, 29 April 2019). Should this be understood as a process characteristic of fake news?
 - false claims with regard to seeking peace and the means of upholding it, most notably exemplified by the permanent members of the UN Security Council -- as leading manufacturers and distributors of arms
- fake news in relation to **international governance**:
 - cultivation of uncritical assessments with regard to the remedial capacity of international institutions and global strategies, notably by focusing statistical effort on the dimensions of the problem rather than on the capacity to address it (*Remedial Capacity Indicators Versus Performance Indicators*, 1981; *Recognizing the Psychosocial Boundaries of Remedial Action: constraints on ensuring a safe operating space for humanity*, 2009; *Ungovernability of Sustainable Global Democracy?* 2011).
 - cultivating illusion regarding the existence and competence of the international community (*International community as an act of deception?* 2015; *Appeals to the international community (whether it exists or not)*, 2015)
 - cultivation of public relations policies characterized by hope-mongering -- deprecating doom-mongering, except to imply the responsibility of others to act urgently (*Varieties of Hope-mongering*, 2008; *Responsibility for Global Governance:*

Who? Where? When? How? Why? Which? What? 2008)

- fake news in promotion of the agendas of **religions**. This is especially noteworthy in the careful interpretation of scriptures, however controversial -- and despite their being held to constitute fake news from a secular perspective:
 - classic instances are offered by religious promises of being "raised up" to "heaven" through a salvatory process -- with the "unbelievers", the remainder, variously "left behind", even condemned to hellfire and damnation (if there is failure to respond to injunctions):
 - To what extent should both be recognized and condemned as constituting fake news?
 - Is the promise that "**Jesus Saves**" to be recognized as fake news, most notably from the perspective of competing religions -- with their equivalent claims?
 - Is indication "going to hell", as a terrifying possibility, to be recognized as the systematic exploitation of fake news?
 - modern instances are evident in references to "evil" by world leaders, and in the demonisation of political and ideological opponents (*Encyclopedia of Evil Claims, Claimants, Counter-claims, and Sigils*, 2016)
 - each religion could be said to perceive others to be instances of misrepresentation of divinity
 - aside from the main religions, variously tolerated, particular condemnation may be made of minority sects and cults as purveyors of fake news, often held to be of the most dangerous kind
- claims of **science** frequently lend themselves to recognition as a form of fake news, notably in the light of:
 - assertive conclusions of research regarding the nature of reality (on the basis of a particular model or paradigm) when these could be more clearly framed as **hypotheses** rather than statements of what "is" (to be treated as proven for all time)
 - each scientific discipline, to the extent that it deprecates the preoccupations of other disciplines, could be said to perceive them as misrepresenting the nature of reality. This is especially the case with those perceived as **pseudosciences**, namely those articulating statements, beliefs, or practices that are claimed to be both scientific and factual, but are incompatible with the scientific method.
 - the remarkable tendency whereby current knowledge is rendered obsolete, thereby suggesting the extent to which declarations of its veracity imply a degree of fake news (Samuel Arbesman, *The Half-Life of Facts: why everything we know has an expiration date*, 2012)
 - misuse of science as documented by Naomi Oreskes and Erik M. Conway, (*Merchants of Doubt: how a handful of scientists obscured the truth on issues from tobacco smoke to global warming*, 2010)
 - promotion of investment in distant problems (origin of the universe, aerospace technology) as of vital relevance to human progress can be recognized as a dubiously fake displacement of effort from more urgent matters -- and seemingly tempted by "low-hanging fruit" (*Challenges More Difficult for Science than Going to Mars*, 2014)
- **technology** upgrades misleadingly framed as desirable, if not essential, suggest a variety of forms of fake news:
 - exploitation of emerging environmental sensitivity to reinforce deprecation of older technologies in order to profit from the supply of newer ones, avoiding consideration of how these too are likely to be recognized as highly problematic
 - where standards are deliberately changed to destabilize those operating in conformity with them, the improvements declared can be challenged as a devious means of obliging users to invest further even though the advantages of doing so are relatively insignificant
 - ensuring dependency on the technical "institutionalization" of a fake news process (framed misleadingly as progress) can be recognized in the case of **customer lock-in**, **planned obsolescence**, and failure to ensure **backwards compatibility** of some technology
 - where new features are indicated and imposed, their originality and value can be readily challenged as "**feature bloat**" for marketing purposes, rather than constituting substantive improvement
 - automatically generated suggestions to upgrade software may be recognized as a dubious marketing ploy to update cookies and other user information collected, or potentially as a subversive means of enhancing surveillance of some form

Common to promotion, taking the form of fake news, is the incidence of spurious arguments and use of logical fallacies in presentations. This is indicative of the possibility that it may well be such factors which render the presentation false rather than any information to which reference is made.

It is appropriate to recognize the manner in which deliberate misrepresentation (notably through the presentation of fake news) is now a feature of **social engineering**, understood as the **psychological manipulation** of people into divulging confidential information or performing actions -- whether or not these are in their best interests (Ian Mann, *Hacking the Human: social engineering techniques and security countermeasures*, 2008; Christopher Hadnagy, *Social Engineering: the art of human hacking*, 2011).

Fake consultation

The merits of consultation are variously recognized and upheld as necessary for the progressive qualitative improvement of stakeholder experience of various kinds -- as a variant of the democratic voting process. The manner in which it is organized renders such processes vulnerable to recognition as purely token exercises -- pseudo-consultations and token consultations -- thereby transforming such claims into a form of fake news:

- claims regarding elections and referenda, especially where they are vulnerable to a variety of forms of manipulation, invite the accusation that they are exercises in fake news. The Brexit referendum on 23 June 2016 invites this interpretation, especially when the 51.9 per cent of those voting to leave the EU is interpreted as being the "will of the British people"
- the many invitations to supply feedback can be challenged as being simple marketing exercises in enabling the false claim that users perspectives are valued, irrespective of how the information is processed (if it is not ignored, as originally intended). Especially questionable is the framing of questions such as to avoid feedback on issues about which no comments are desired.
- misleading use of the consultation process (Aih Ching-tin, *Fake consultation on universal pension scheme doomed to failure*,

An 8-rung ladder of consultation has been usefully distinguished:

At the first stage there is **cosmetic consultation** where citizens may hear and be heard, although they lack the resources to ensure that their views will be taken into account. The ladder moves through various degrees of **token consultation** where the ground rules allow the consulted to advise but these rules retain, for those who hold power, the right to decide. Further up the ladder citizen power begins to develop, with partnership at stage 6 encouraging negotiation and trade-offs between the consulted and decision takers. At stages 7 and 8 citizens have obtained full managerial control and participation is complete and real. (Jeffrey Jowell and Dawn Oliver, *The Changing Constitution*, Oxford University Press, 2007, p. 2052; emphasis added)

Fake declarations

A wide variety of declarations are made, typically using documents. These raise the question as to the extent that they effectively constitute fake news or should be considered as such:

- fake identity profiling:
 - false claims are readily made with respect to identity, lineage or provenance. The use false flags in shipping is but one instance; the constitution of shell companies could be recognized as another
 - false claims are readily made with regard to age, whether to enter pubs or the military, or to engage in intercourse
 - false passports can be readily understood as a form of fake news
 - fake qualifications are readily fabricated or claimed
 - false claims are made with regard to any criminal record, or to the lack thereof
- financial declarations as exercises in fake news production:
 - the case of tax evasion and tax avoidance
 - budgets, especially national budgets, may be crafted such that they effectively constitute fake news, especially if they are excessively optimistic in their expectations and provisions
- health-related fake declarations:
 - claims relating to cures have long been recognized as potentially constituting fake news -- "snake oil" being one caricature to that effect.
 - questionable claims are made with regard to [aphrodisiacs](#), most notably resulting in seriously endangering certain wildlife species to the point of extinction (rhino, tiger, elephant). The failure to challenge these is indicative of another form of fake news.
 - [faith healing](#) is effectively challenged by the medical profession as constituting a form of fake news
 - claims to the curative powers of homeopathy are effectively held to be fake news by the pharmaceutical industry -- irrespective of whether a placebo is to be understood as fake news (*Deprecation of "homeopathic" remedies to global crisis*, 2009)
 - people subject to military conscription, or seeking to avoid military service, have long indulged in fake declarations
 - people may make false claims regarding their exposure to HIV, AIDS and other illnesses in order to avoid the consequences
 - employees and students are widely recognized as making questionable claims regarding illness as a justification for [absenteeism](#) -- fake news?
 - pregnancy may be falsely claimed to achieve particular advantages -- notably to ensure marriage
- fake health, safety and security claims:
 - conformity to regulatory specifications is frequently the subject of false claims, notably in the construction industry
 - false claims may be made with respect to product conformity to health and safety regulations, notably in the case of health products and of chemicals entering the food chain
 - financial transactions via the internet are claimed to be secure (despite many counter-indications associated with hacking), whereas the democratic electoral process is held to be secure as a consequence of physical checking of voter registration (despite counter-indications of electoral fraud). Widespread evidence of the higher levels of voter abstention (notably in elections to the European Parliament) suggests that both arguments are variously false, thereby depriving internet-enabled voters with the opportunities of participating in the the democratic process at their convenience (rather than queuing in all weathers at a distance from their home location).
 - safety of technology, despite being variously called into question (Boeing MAX 737**)
 - urban violence, variously held to be relatively insignificant despite indications to the contrary. Populist concerns have arisen in part as a consequence of ignoring the aggravation of security issues following increasing levels of unconstrained migration.
 - authorities typical dismiss the reality of violence between incarcerated prisoners
- false performance claims
 - performance of products and services may be falsely, claimed as highlighted by the [Volkswagen emissions scandal](#)
 - expertise may be falsely claimed in interview situations and in CVs
 - particular importance is associated with sexual performance, variously falsely claimed
- false spiritually-related claims, despite evidence claimed to the contrary:
 - revelations from divinity may be falsely claimed, as might include secular claims regarding scriptures variously held to be sacred

- channelling of spiritual guides and faith healing may be falsely claimed
- achievement of enlightenment may be falsely claimed or inferred as may be delightfully portrayed (*Being There*, 1979)
- forms of presentation of declarations may effectively render them vulnerable to the claim they constitute fake news:
 - as with accompanying legible labelling and marketing messages with qualifying detail in the smallest possible print (and relatively incomprehensible complexity), or indicated as available elsewhere (with appropriate software expertise), or requiring payment
 - as with carefully [massaged statistics](#) in support of a particular agenda, whether political, product, or health-related
- claims to discoveries, rights or entitlements variously held to be without foundation and false:
 - territorial claims to ownership, most obviously with regard to traditional lands, especially when reinforced by spiritually-related claims
 - claims to "discovery", as with that of the "Indies" by Columbus
 - claims to territorial rights, as by colonialists of the lands of indigenous populations, as with the claim of *terra nullius* in Australia,
 - claims to socio-political rights and entitlements, currently highlighted by controversy regarding refugees and immigrants -- a major factor in populist unrest
 - claims enabled by progressive encroachment and gerrymandering, whether with respect to physical domains, intellectual domains, or those claimed in terms of psychosocial traditions (*Varieties of Encroachment*, 2004; *Systematic Gerrymandering of Declared Threats and Legality of Response: opportunistic exceptionalism underlying promulgated rules of governance*, 2013; *Scientific Gerrymandering of Boundaries of Overpopulation Debate*, 2012).

Fake news and misrepresentation in social interaction

The process of inter-personal interaction can be variously seen as engendering or dependent on fake news.

- personal promotion and self-promotion:
 - interviews of any form involve a degree of what may be understood as fake news. Obvious instances are enhancements to a CV, verbal claims or implications, and carefully misleading physical presentation
 - status symbols, notably fashionable products and the value attached to them, may be understood as fake news and its cultivation
 - personal appearance, notably the use of cosmetics (possibly enhanced by cosmetic surgery) may be understood as presenting a fake appearance -- raising the question as to whether exceptionally large breasts (and breast enhancement) or unusual musculature, constitute fake news (*Golden Globes Confusing Cleavage, Hype and Hypocrisy*, 2018).
 - actions leading to the presumption of virtue may be understood as essentially false -- irrespective of the advice from Shakespeare: "*assume a virtue if you have it not*"
 - bluster in a variety of situations may be held to be the cultivation of a form of fake news
 - any implication of comprehension or originality -- as a means of disguising ignorance -- can be understood as a manifestation of fake news
- evaluation of intercourse can be understood as characterized as involving, to some degree, what could be interpreted as fake news:
 - courtship processes involve a complex interplay of authenticity and pretence, with the latter readily understood as fake news (as with habitual expressions of "love")
 - friendship, as with courtship, may well involve a degree of pretence (as with [social kissing](#) and expression of interest in other peoples photos, etc) -- potentially recognized in the incidence of "false friends"
 - sexual intercourse may be characterized by fake enjoyment, especially when characterized by [fake orgasm](#) ("how was it for you?")
 - especially problematic are processes of "[grooming](#)" -- an exercise in fake news?
- styles of face, head and body covering interpreted as misrepresentation:
 - degrees of body covering can be condemned as misrepresentation when they constitute a disguise or a provocation, especially when they conceal artificial enhancements, or expose the body inappropriately
 - widespread condemnation of face-covering frames a paradoxical form of misrepresentation. At one extreme, the [burqa](#) and [niqab](#) are condemned as concealing the face and inhibiting a genuine view of the person; at the other extreme, fashionable use of sunglasses concealing the eyes is held to be an enhancement of the person's sense of identity. Sunglasses with prescription lenses may however constitute a form of misrepresentation, if used as a pretence to disguise the implications of "needing to wear glasses". In both cases use of such covering may be associated with how the person experiences herself or himself as genuine (*Facism as Superficial Intercultural Extremism: burkha, toplessness, sunglasses, beards, and flu*, 2009). The paradox is compounded by the fact that an underlying consideration is the manner in which the capacity of facial recognition is handicapped for security purposes

Selectivity as deliberately faking it

Whilst that which is expressed may be unquestionably authentic, that which is deliberately or unconsciously omitted may thereby transform the former into fake news. The "unsaid" may therefore have a vital contextual role in determining falsity, irrespective of its acceptability (*Varieties of the "Unsaid" -- in sustaining psycho-social community*, 2003). Examples include:

- characteristic claims to "sea view" accommodation, when this is effectively minimal -- as with "by the sea", when this requires many minutes of walking
- carefully framed photos, omitting disagreeably relevant details -- exemplified in individual photos enhanced with airbrushing, etc

- photos rendered attractive by benefitting from uncharacteristic weather and levels of sunshine
- visual presentations omitting disagreeable dimensions of noise or odour
- constraining information supplied to those determined by a [filter bubble](#), whether personalized or augmented by forms of censorship -- effectively the use of algorithms and profiling to achieve fake news
- use of restraining orders, injunctions and superinjunctions. Beyond the legal instruments use to prevent media from reporting in ways that may prejudice a trial, is the emergence of "super-injunctions" as described by James Robinson (*How super-injunctions are used to gag investigative reporting*, *The Guardian*, 14 October 2009) with regard to the 12 notices of injunctions that *The Guardian* had been served in the previous year concerning stories that could not be legally reported. These "superinjunctions" -- of which there are currently some 200 in the UK -- prevent news organizations from revealing the identities of those involved in legal disputes, or even reporting the fact that reporting restrictions have been imposed -- namely of the existence of a superinjunction. Through the total misrepresentation of context, this becomes a form of institutionalized *omerta*.
- constrained temporal focus, as with [short-termism](#) -- deliberately neglecting consequences in the longer-term. Alternatively the focus may be on the distant future, effectively an exercise in escapism. Current instances include optimistic framing of the future role of artificial intelligence and robots, minimizing the social impact of their introduction, most notably with respect to employment
- advocating remedial strategies in response to minimally controversial problems, effectively avoiding attention to more controversial problems which exacerbate those so framed (*Lipoproblems: Developing a Strategy Omitting a Key Problem: the systemic challenge of climate change and resource issues*, 2009; *Vigorous Application of Derivative Thinking to Derivative Problems*, 2013).

[Cover-up tactics](#) -- fake news in their own right -- may be used to reframe or disguise any recourse to selectivity or recognition of its limitations (*Biased coverage of controversy by news media*, 2014).

Deception as misrepresentation the deployment of fake news

Engendering "fake news" may well be fundamental to processes of deception and bluff, variously considered appropriate (Timothy R. Levine, *Encyclopedia of Deception*, 2014; Kevin D. Mitnick and William L. Simon, *The Art of Deception: controlling the human element of security*, 2011; *To Bluff or Not to Bluff*, *KellogInsight*, 2015).

Examples include:

- deception by the military:
 - deception in military strategy (US Joint Chiefs of Staff, *Military Deception and Its Goals, Objectives, Functions, and Principles*, 2012; *Strategic Opportunities of the Twice Born: reflections on systemic camouflage of mass deception*, 2004; Hal Brands and Eric Edelman, *Avoiding a Strategy of Bluff: the crisis of American military primacy*, *Center for Strategic and Budgetary Assessments*, 2017; *Trump's entire North Korea strategy could be a giant bluff*, *The Hill*, 26 December 2017; Steven Aftergood, *Military Deception: A Handbook*, *Federation of American Scientists*, 2019). This may take the form of promotion of fake threats in order to enable reallocation of resources
 - deception in military operations, most notably in the form of use of camouflage, [decoy flares](#), fake materiel, and covert false flag operations.
- deception as skillfully practiced in board games and card games, most obviously use of [bluff in poker](#)
- deception and bluff may be a notable characteristic of courtship processes
- deception regarding the existence of concrete proof regarding any claims made
- deception in ball games and sport, most obviously in football, tennis and basketball
- deception in business as being fundamental to achieving competitive advantage (Peter de Pradines, *Deception for Power and Profit*, 2018; *Big Business Deceptions for Dumbed Down Humans*, 2012). *Bizshift-Trends* introduces a succinct summary of the views of various authors as follows:

The world is filled with deception, which can be broadly defined as the manipulation of appearances to convey a false reality that can affect the beliefs of others, and/or of ones self... Deception is not necessarily wrong or harmful, good or bad... but, understanding nature of deception will enhance greatly the chances of successfully avoiding or using it (*Mask of Deception - It's Reality of Business: And Probably One of the Most Important Ethical Issues*, 11 April 2019)

Fake culpability

Of particular relevance is the manner in which fake news is related to fake culpability, as instanced by the following:

- innocence is notably falsely claimed with respect to many international incidents, however engendered or provoked. False flag operations are designed from that perspective. Ongoing controversy regarding the assassination of JFK and 9/11 are an indication of this ([David Ray Griffin](#) and Elizabeth Woodworth, *9/11 Unmasked: An International Review Panel Investigation*, Olive Branch, 2018)
- innocence is similarly claimed by individuals convicted and imprisoned for various crimes -- arguing that they have been framed or "fitted up", possibly in the light of the tampering of evidence
- rape and domestic violence, giving rise to claims and counter-claims, may well imply an element of fake news
- striking examples of culpability held to be fake are evident in the indictments for financial embezzlement of leaders of major institutions -- culpability denied as politically motivated

Common to all these examples is the question of [plausible deniability](#) and [culpable deniability](#) and how these relate to fake news.

Given the current role of Donald Trump and its extensive coverage in the media, of particular interest is the manner in which he is falsely singled out as culpable for multiple forms of disruption. As the President of the USA, duly elected by the American People according to well-defined electoral procedures, it is currently irrelevant whether those procedures are in any way in question. Trump is therefore the legitimate representative of the American People, and their current mouthpiece in political, legal, executive, and public relations terms, as clarified separately (*Who to Blame: "Donald Trump" or the "American People"? Let's get real clear on any responsibility for imminent global disaster*, 2019). How is [scapegoating](#) to be understood in relation to misrepresentation?

Mythology, religion, superstition and fiction as misrepresentation and fake news?

Potentially the most controversial understanding of "fake news" is that relating to religion, superstition or mythology, as instanced by the following:

- there is no lack of claims, notably from a secular and scientific perspective, that religion is the epitome of fake news -- irrespective of the widespread belief in its fundamental value and heavy commitment to a belief in [divine intervention](#) and angels by some
- more generally, mythology and variously valued legendary tales, may be deemed to be fake news -- as indicated by reference to myth-mongering
- distinct from consideration of religion as fake news is the acclaimed significance of "evil" by world leaders, as noted above -- in the absence of what would be considered concrete proof from a secular perspective (*Encyclopedia of Evil Claims, Claimants, Counter-claims, and Sigils*, 2016). Are claims that some are demonic, or the mouthpiece of Satan, to be framed as fake news?
- variously appreciated as charming, to what extent is the belief in fairies, elves and the "little people" -- and in Father Xmas -- to be considered fake news? (*Global Strategic Implications of the "Unsaid": from myth-making towards a "wisdom society"*, 2003)
- there is extensive belief in what is variously held to be superstition -- exemplified by the quest for the auspicious through astrology and *feng shui* and the like -- all readily to be deprecated as fake news

It is appropriate to note the extensive literature on pretence

Nature's misrepresentation and "fake news"

The examples above suggest many possibilities of deprecating fake news. A number, notably those involving deception, involve comparison with processes in nature (Martin Stevens, *Cheats and Deceits: how animals and plants exploit and mislead*, 2016). Examples include:

- camouflage as a form of deception is widely employed in nature, most notably for defensive purposes and to enable successful predation -- suggesting that such fake news is "natural" and acceptable, irrespective of whether it is regrettable from a human perspective.
- bluff as a somewhat distinct form of deception is fundamental in nature, as with its use by flowers to attract pollinators, and by animals in seeking advantage in courtship rituals -- with one or other effectively "strutting their stuff".
- bluff may also be used in false charges by animals as a protective/defensive strategy

Covering both humans and the world of nature, [Loyal Rue](#) argues:

... that it may be more accurate to describe the history of our culture as a flight from deception than as a quest for truth. He turns then to the natural world to reveal how deception works at every level of life, ranging from plants that mimic dung, carrion, or prey to lure insects that then spread pollen.... Moreover, he points out that psychological research has shown that strategies of deception and self-deception are essential to our personal well-being, that we sometimes shore up our self-esteem by deceptive means, by leaving others in a state of ignorance, by manipulating others into a state of false belief, by suppressing information from consciousness, and by fabricating or distorting our own sense of reality. And he argues that social coherence is achievable only within certain optimal limits of deception -- the social fabric would be threatened by an overabundance of lies and false promises, of course, but it would also collapse if everyone were perfectly honest all the time. (*Grace of Guile: the role of deception in natural history and human affairs*, 1994)

In contrast with such arguments is the misrepresentation of nature (*The Hidden Biases that Shape Natural History Museums*, *SmithsonianMag*, 20 December 2017). Paula van Eenennaam notes the extent to which anthropomorphism, or personification, results in a false and idealised representation of nature which encourages the idea of human dominance (*Anthropomorphism and the Call of the Wild in Children's Literature, Publishing in the Digital Age*, 11 November 2018). The idealisation of nature in children's literature?-- ?its misrepresentation?--?has also been found to constitute one of the key drivers of biodiversity knowledge loss, as it creates a biased perception of local biota.

Engaging proactively with fake news and misrepresentation

Of interest is the manner in which prohibition and censorship of what is deemed "fake news" may effectively be called into question as a form of fake "fake news" in its own right.

Skills required: Reprehensible or not, the examples from nature suggest that there is a need to develop skills in responding to the widespread incidence of some form of fake news -- however it may be deplored as reprehensible. This was the focus of an earlier commentary (*Vital Collective Learning from Biased Media Coverage: acquiring vigilance to deceptive strategies used in mugging the world*, 2014).

Possible framings include:

- recognition that use of fake news is effectively part of a strategic game in which people may be variously obliged to engage. This is most evident when confronted with the exaggerated claims of vendors in market stalls in some cultures, necessarily requiring a bargaining posture
- recognition that there are various degrees of complicity in use of fake news, potentially to be enjoyed as a feature of social processes -- as with art, fashion, and use cosmetics. Use of copies of originals merits consideration in such terms -- however counterfeit variants may be deplored
- recognition of the appreciation of "fake news" by children, whether in the form of fairy tales or otherwise -- most obviously through such blockbuster movies as the *Harry Potter* series or that of the *Fellowship of the Ring* ***

A number of authors have responded more specifically to the challenge of how to navigate a world characterized by multiple forms of fake news and misrepresentation -- rather than simply recognizing and deploring its existence:

- Donald A. Barclay: *Fake News, Propaganda, and Plain Old Lies: how to find trustworthy information in the digital age* (Rowman and Littlefield, 2018)
- Bruce Bartlett: *The Truth Matters: a citizen's guide to separating facts from lies and stopping fake news in its tracks*. (Potter/Ten Speed/Harmony/Rodale, t 2017)
- Stephen Law: *Believing Bullshit: how not to get sucked into an intellectual black hole*. (Prometheus Books, 2011) [review]
- Venus Nicolino: *Bad Advice: how to survive and thrive in an Age of Bullshit*. (HarperCollins, 2018)
- Clint Watts: *Messing With the Enemy: surviving in a social media world of hackers, terrorists, Russians, and fake news*. (HarperCollins, 2018)
- David Weinberger: *Too Big to Know: rethinking knowledge now that the facts aren't the facts, experts are everywhere, and the smartest person in the room is the room*. (Basic Books, 2012)

As suggested, perhaps the most readily comprehensible survival mode is that required in any [street market](#) or [souq](#) where vendors engage proactively in the presentation of their wares -- deploying any tale that has the potential of being attractive. Claims of any kind can be made and it is for the buyer to be discerning in engaging with them to determine whatever can be considered credible -- knowing full well that it may not be. Both parties may derive a degree of pleasure from the bargaining process.

Dynamics of reinvention: Another mode is evident in the pleasure which women or men may derive from reinventing themselves on a daily basis through the clothes they choose to wear -- possibly complemented by jewelry, hairstyle, and cosmetics. This mode can be readily understood as one of disguise -- essentially a personal indulgence in misrepresentation, variously appreciated or deplored by those encountered. For some this extends to narrative, to the stories which complement such presentation -- readily recognized as fake news. Collectives may similarly reinvent themselves, using public relations to deploy a new narrative.

As a possibility in which some engage on a daily basis, this raises the fundamental question of how the fake is to be distinguished from the genuine. It calls into question whether choice of presentation should be consistent with a declaration of who one is -- or rather a playful pretence of who one is variously not. The latter is a recognition of how much presentation is a case of acting -- in which "actors" indulge. It is then a fundamental mistake to require that the genuine qualities of a person should be marked and constrained by any particular presentation -- serving as a form of uniform for a stereotype. In the case of international institutions, the argument relates to the potentially greater viability of "[variable geometry](#)" (*Alternation between Variable Geometries: a brokership style for the United Nations as a guarantee of its requisite variety*, 1985).

Corresponding to the clothing metaphor is the chosen narrative deployed -- individually or collectively. This too may be adjusted according to circumstances, thereby framing the challenge of the extent to which it is an exercise in fakes news and misrepresentation to be deplored. Again the flexible narrative of a market vendor clarifies the point -- and the challenge of how credibility is engendered and accorded in that process. Are truth and authenticity of a nature which enables them to be effectively "set in stone" for all time? Or does their essentially dynamic nature transcend the constraints of any particular presentation?

The **static** constraints of the "stone" metaphor can be speculatively explored (*Transforming and Interweaving the Ways of Being Stoned: imagination, promise, rocks, memorials, petrification*, 2012). They point to the possibility that genuine identity and authenticity may be more closely associated with a **dynamic** between a variety of manifestations of what indeed amounts to misrepresentation and fake news -- the focus being on **reinvention and the identity which enables that capacity**. This can be explored as cognitive shapeshifting (*En-minding the Extended Body: enactive engagement in conceptual shapeshifting and deep ecology*, 2003; *Resonance: enacting the world through shapeshifting*, 2011).

Re-imagining: With the considerable emphasis now placed on the vital importance of imagination in support of necessary innovation, the question of how people reinvent the context in which they live merits imaginative reflection (*Imaginal Education: game playing, science fiction, language, art and world-making*, 2003). This also applies to transcending strategic escapism associated with some framings of long-term goals (*Engendering 2052 through Re-imagining the Present*, 2012).

The set of "misrepresentations" through which an individual or collective may choose to be presented to others can be usefully understood as a set of metaphors. The point is usefully made by science fiction in speculating on the cognitive challenge of navigating the complexity of hyperspace, as discussed separately with respect to such cognitive shapeshifting.

It focuses on the challenge of comprehending high degrees of complexity calling for decision-making under operational conditions (as is the case of global management or daily life). The fictional problem is that of piloting or navigating a vessel through "hyperspace" or "sub-space", as imagined in the light of recent advances in theoretical physics and mathematics. Because of the inherent complexity of such environments, writers have explored the possibility that pilots and navigators might choose

appropriate metaphors through which to perceive and order their task in relation to qualitative features of that complexity -- for example, flying like a bird, windsurfing, swimming like a fish, tunneling like a mole, etc. The mass of data input derived from various arrays of sensors, and otherwise completely unmanageable, is then channelled to the pilot in the form of appropriate sensory inputs to the nerve synapses corresponding to s/his "wings" or s/his "fins". Perception through the chosen metaphor is assisted by artificial intelligence software and appropriate graphic displays. The pilot switches between metaphors according to the nature of the hyperspace terrain. Such speculations serve to stimulate imagination concerning a possible marriage between metaphor and artificial intelligence in relation to governance.

The existential challenge can be variously explored as *Being the Universe: a metaphoric frontier* (1999) or *Being What You Want* (2008). The latter distinguishes between the potential of "apophatic identity" and the current problematic aspiration to "kataphatic identity". Inherent in the challenge is the capacity to believe in what is believed by others to be fake as well as the capacity to question what others believe to be factual.

Embodying spin: In a context increasingly defined by its post-truth dimensions, with its inherent "curvature", expectation of a "straight answer" may well be naive. The contrast can be compared to the conditions under which a classical mechanical worldview is appropriate in contrast to those where far more "irrational" modalities offer greater coherence, as framed by Alexander Wendt (*Quantum Mind and Social Science: unifying physical and social ontology*, 2015).

It is an extreme irony that it is Donald Trump, as leader of the world's superpower, who offers many lessons with respect to engaging with fake news and misrepresentation. The expectation of "straight answers" is clearly naive, except as a momentary response. Everything can be reframed, as with experience in a street market (*New World Order of Walk-away Wheeling and Dealing*, 2018). The same can now be more realistically said of the institutions of global governance and their promises, notably in the light of the carefully cultivated myth of the "international community" (*International community as a divine surrogate?* 2015; *International community as an act of deception?* 2015). Since when has the expectation of "straight answers" from authorities been considered naive?

Given the widespread recognition of "spin" in relation to misrepresentation and fake news, there is a case for acquiring skills inspired by that metaphor -- as suggested by the bodily-kinaesthetic intelligence required for acrobatics and aerobatics. This is consistent with the appreciation of the dynamics and aesthetics of dance. Is the static invariance of truth and authenticity to be explored as a myth, as suggested by musicologist Ernest McClain (*The Myth of Invariance: the origins of the gods, mathematics and music from the Rg Veda to Plato*, 1978)?

The role of aesthetics in understanding is central to the argument of Mark Johnson (*The Meaning of the Body: aesthetics of human understanding*, 2007). The emphasis is placed on an understanding "through" the body and its dynamics by both Johnson and by Maxine Sheets-Johnson (*The Primacy of Movement*, 1999). This would of course be consistent with the philosophy articulated in relation to the martial arts necessarily preoccupied with possible deception.

As expressed by Mark Johnson:

Unfortunately meaning is a big, messy, multidimensional concept that is applied to everything from grandiose notions like the meaning of life all the way down to the specific meanings of single words or even morphemes.

The developing focus on the **embodied mind** contrasts with much contemporary philosophy with its exclusive emphasis on abstract conceptual and propositional structure, offering only a very superficial and eviscerated view of mind, thought, and language

The above argument could of course itself be construed as an exercise in misrepresentation and fake news. Why not? When are claims to authenticity themselves susceptible to interpretation as fake?

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