

THE QUESTION OF POST-TRUTH IN THE DISCOURSE OF POWER IN THE DIGITAL AGE

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Post-truth is a philosophical and communicational phenomenon whose conceptual emergence dates back to 1992, when the Serbian-American writer Steve Tesich coined the term in his essay published in *The Nation* [7], warning that democratic societies had developed a "spiritual mechanism" capable of depriving truth of all meaning. However, it was the philosopher Lee McIntyre [4] who deepened this notion by arguing that post-truth does not imply a simple denial of facts, but also the systematic subordination of objective reality to ideological preconceptions and subjective perspectives, where certain data acquire relevance not because of their correspondence with reality, but because of their congruence with previous beliefs.

McIntyre [4] argues that this phenomenon inherited the techniques of science denialism of previous decades, particularly those used to question the evidence on smoking, biological evolution, and climate change, thus configuring a roadmap that later extended to widespread denial of facts in the political sphere.

For the authors of this short essay, the particularity of our time lies in the convergence of four decisive factors: the explosion of information brought about by disruptive technologies; the weakening of trust in traditional institutions; the infiltration of postmodern ideas into fields previously reserved for empiricism; and the fierce political battles to establish the very criteria of what is true.

From the perspective of contemporary political philosophy, thinkers such as Matthew d'Ancona [3] have distinguished post-truth from the long tradition of lies, exaggerations, and political manipulations, emphasizing that what is new does not lie in the mendacity of the rulers but in the public response to it and in the capacity of new technologies to polarize and fragment collective opinion.

For her part, Hannah Arendt [1], whose thought is essential to understand this phenomenon, had already warned at the time about the unresolvable tension between factual and political truth, pointing out that the public domain constitutes a space where the distinction between facts and opinions tends to blur dangerously. In this sense, the post-truth era intensifies what Arendt called *alienation from the world*, that is, the erosion of a common foundation on which citizens can build a shared understanding of reality.

The discourse of power, as Van Dijk [8] argues, has found in post-truth a fertile ground for the deployment of persuasive strategies that privilege emotional resonance over factual foundation, configuring what various researchers call *psychopolitics*, a phenomenon that is expressed in the combination of *audiovisual* spectacularization, neuromarketing and algorithmic segmentation that transforms political communication into an exercise in affective manipulation.

In this context, social networks operate as amplifiers of content designed to generate visceral responses, where algorithms reward *virality* regardless of veracity, generating information ecosystems where fake news circulates faster than true content.

Contemporary political power understands that emotional truths—those that resonate with fears, grievances, and collective identities—are more effective in mobilizing wills than rational

arguments based on empirical evidence. For authors such as Navarro [5], the deliberate instrumentalization of disinformation allows political actors to construct alternative narratives capable of delegitimizing opponents, institutions, and traditional media, establishing what Byung-Chul [2] has characterized as regimes of social control that operate through emotional management rather than through direct coercion.

Faced with this complex reality, the great transnational political and economic powers emerge as the main propagators of false content, delegating massive redistribution to citizens who, often without full awareness, become vectors of disinformation through their trusted personal networks. Undoubtedly, this communicational architecture allows contemporary power to dispense with the arduous work of suppressing the truth that characterized classical totalitarianisms, since it has managed to make the audiences, themselves develop psychological mechanisms of immunization against evidence that contradicts their previous convictions.

For us, citizen resistance to post-truth requires the systematic cultivation of critical capacities that allow us to navigate the complex contemporary information ecosystem, based on the recognition that only individuals equipped with analytical tools and reflective disposition can identify and neutralize manipulation strategies.

Critical thinking, understood as the ability to evaluate arguments according to their solidity and credibility, analyze evidence, and reach conclusions through deductive reasoning, is an essential skill to distinguish reliable information from fabricated content. Empirical research such as that of Nygren [6] shows that people with high levels of information literacy show less susceptibility to believing and sharing fake news, although paradoxically most digital users lack the necessary skills to verify sources and assess the plausibility of claims.

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