

Propaganda–Guard Rails–Truth

by [John Henry](#) (June 2023)



Misinformation, manipulation, and the fragmentation of truth.
How did this virus infect human communications?



Throughout the annals of human history, communication has always been shaped by those in positions of power. First it was the shaman, witch doctor (soothsayer), priest, then king. They were the arbiters of day-to-day organization in villages, they maintained tribal order, and they guarded and sparingly imparted the secrets of life and death, explaining the world around them in terms of the sun, moon, stars, earth, wind,

fire, and spirit. Their word was final in all things.

Humans expressed themselves using paint, chalk, blood and charcoal thousands of years ago on animal skins, pieces of stone, wood, or in caves and could wipe off the areas where impressions needed to be corrected or reworked. Later, during the bronze age, statues were carved out of stone and inscriptions were chiseled in rock to memorialize important political or social events. The Code of Hammurabi contains a relief of a figure and a series of cuneiform inscriptions that made the laws appear immutable.

At approximately 3,000 BC the Greeks were developing their myths concerning the origins of life and the universe and invented 12 gods living on Mount Olympus in which they conferred human characteristics and concocted narratives in which the gods interacted with each other and with humans and from which worldly lessons were gained. The earth-bound humans were critical of the gods and could write plays and make jokes about them without much ostracization. They realized that even the 'truth' issued from the gods could be parsed.



Greeks had a curiosity about the human condition and produced incredible philosophers who expounded deeper concepts than their gods.

The average Greek would work the land or fish the sea and meet in a central area to trade their catch, crops, and wares. This meeting area, a 600 BC phenomenon—the agora, offered a stage

from which local and national news would pour in by foot or horse and be orally disseminated. The Greek populace considered the events that were impinging on their welfare and reasoned with each other about daily events, farming, trade, politics and medicine.

Out of these interactions, several world views were promoted and followed by those who believed either the Stoics, in the Socratic method, Aristotelian thinking, or the views of Plato, who all honed their theories in the agora and tested their ideas by conversing back and forth with likeminded individuals.

Women didn't often frequent the agora, but every other character in ancient Greece passed through its columns: politicians, criminals, philosophers and traders, aristocrats, scientists, officials and slaves.
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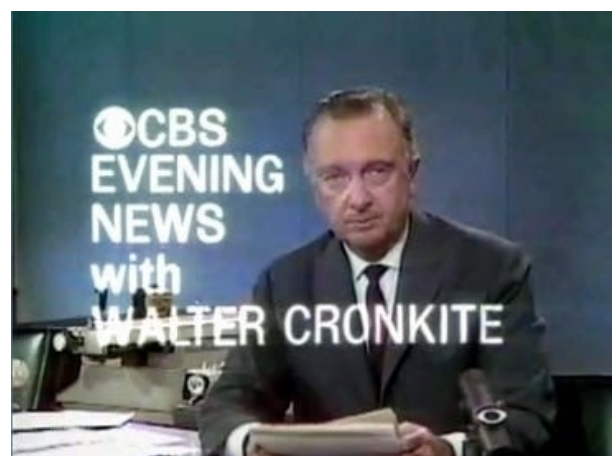
Clearly it was an open system through which anyone could participate freely. Color, creed, caste, political view, did not make a difference. Ideas did. Those ideas led to the democratic method of government, medicine and developed the mind of the human being. And this is a curious 3,000-year-old comparison to the open system we have now with social media platforms such as Twitter, Reddit, Bluesky, Mastadon, and others. Anyone in the current era, as in the time of the Greek agora, can put forth a view and argue its merits with absolutely anyone else. Why do current thinkers have to worry about retribution, doxing, marginalization, etc.? Something occurred in the intervening three thousand years that was not as egalitarian.

After the Greeks, the Romans emerged as a world power and concentrated authority in their senate and in a Caesar who had absolute rule. There were kings of course before this time in Egypt and Persia, and Mesopotamia. During the long rule of kings (in biblical times as well), authoritarianism did not engender free speech. But philosophers continued to espouse their thoughts that were orally transmitted until the written word preserved them and then political treatises were introduced and printed. A limited press distributed pamphlets and books. The rule of the royals was slowly challenged and blood was shed to right many wrongs. There were revolutions in France, Russia, and in the fledgling 13 Colonies.



A freer press was thereafter established after the change from royal rule to democratically established republics or socialist systems. The underground newspaper founded in 1912—*Pravda*, was first established as a mouthpiece for the revolutionary wing of the Russian socialist movement and became the principal propaganda outlet for the Soviet state and thereafter. *Pravda* translates to 'Truth.'

Early television offered basic news items without much commentary with variety shows and running series. It was a closed system where the TV media corporations controlled all content and political slant. Most Americans did not realize how successful and pervasive the liberal shadow was over the presentation of the 'news.' It was edited from a single point of view. And this was true for the



multiple politically themed monthlies (*Newsweek*, *Time*, *Business Week*, et al)

Recently after being let go as the 8 o'clock anchor (political commentary based on current events) from Fox cable news, Tucker Carlson made these points:

At the most basic level, the news you consume is a lie, a lie of the stealthiest and most insidious kind. Facts have been withheld on purpose along with proportion and perspective. You are being manipulated.

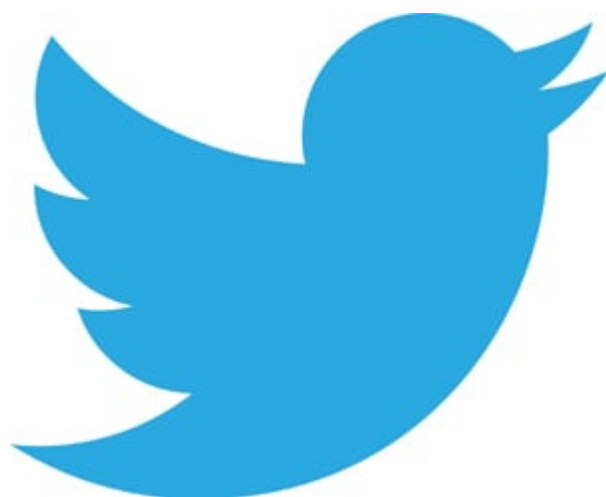
Those in the media/press are answering to their corporate boards which insist on presenting news with a bias which means, as Carlson insinuated, that relevant facts are not reported so there is a distortion that essentially resolve into flat out lying. And so the public is easily manipulated to believe a narrative that is held by powerful interests in order to control political and social thinking. (In China there is only one television station.)

Reporters are not trained or educated to report the truth anymore; the traditional duties and positions are being eliminated in fact by major news outlets in favor of AI assisted media outlet scraping, and less experienced news hounds are simply investigating two sides of every situation and asking each why each believes what they do. They are looking at the shadows and do not care to dig for what is really occurring. This has led to a complete breakdown where opinion based reporting and pure commentary based on a propaganda narrative leads the forecasts by every media source.

We are often not given salient information that would clarify the facts and condition any kind of conclusion possible. If we

knew what was in the recent 'Trans' manifesto's killer's computer, we might see another potential source of terrorism other than the often flouted single quoted 'white supremacist' threat, which our President claims is the central cause for most of our crime. We do not hear reporting about weekly deaths in major cities using handguns and unfortunately dealing mostly with Black American victims.

Viewers and readers are not told the age, gender, immigration status, or race of perpetrators in various crimes. But if the criminal can be linked to right wing thinking in any way, the liberal left will be prompted to outrage and respond with endless vitriol. We have an FBI that is biased (just confirmed by Durham's last report) which resulted in election tampering against Donald Trump and a concerted media persecution for two years.



Editing the truth in one's favor by media outlets and politicians is not new, and with the advent of AI it seems to be quite problematic. The repercussions with Deep Fakes and other voice/image manipulation can have catastrophic consequences. The world needs to invoke the human element as soon as possible to control the machines and curate the information that is starting to overrun media outlets.

Without guardrails the consumer is left alone to discern what is real or truthful and what is not. No one will be able to trust news sources and the content that is now gushing out and being simply invented.

And this is part of the problem we have now in a post-Modern world. Truth is relative and not absolute. Before this moment in time, there seemed to be moral absolutes as well. Our

schools have been infested with inaccurate and biased historical narratives and sexual pandering, with the added problem of blaming children for things relatives were involved with two hundred years ago. The civil rights movement and amendments made to correct the problem should have ended racial division and the color argument should have ended but recent Democrat administrations and race baiters have stirred the pot.

Now women can identify as men and vice versa with government and media control offering cover to the point of legalization. But there is a more treacherous system of control in our current media that is connected directly to the liberal mindset. It becomes legislated (gay marriage and abortion), and then it is surreptitiously introduced into our schools and reinforced in movies, television, and social media.

An unbalanced view of global warming leads to paranoia and finally a submission to the Green Agenda with many scratching their heads and reluctantly purchasing electric cars, stoves, etc. A lie, whether slight or massive, is used as propaganda and by simply throwing it in front of us constantly, the masses are conditioned and will eventually accede.

Corporations are being influenced as well and through their social action departments decide to act as woke as possible to hold up 'victims' as spokespeople for their products (Mulvaney/Budweiser). Transwomen are in recent issues of *Sports Illustrated*. The corporation is being prodded to follow DEI and other left-wing directives so that they can virtue signal. There is peer pressure even for large industries and businesses.

Those who incredulously are asked to accept these signals are deciding to vote with their wallets and refusing to buy goods and services by the woke advertisers. Target may be driven close to bankruptcy while Budweiser has lost market share and is bleeding. Nike has biological women upset with males

modeling women's sportswear, etc.

It was enough before the pop movements of the 50s through the late 90s to have records produced in any genre of music for wide distribution. While it is still possible to follow that method of production, media



companies and music producers, starting in the late 50s and early 60s, exerted a type of control over who and what was going to be backed and released on vinyl. They realized that they had the power to influence musical taste and they were taking advantage of the groups they backed in order to make millions. In a way of thinking, this was a form of editing and an example how those who become the gatekeepers can run into corruption.

A few producers from an elite group of record companies decided who was going to be heard and who was not. Fortunately, many great bands were distilled from the thousands of demos that were submitted to these producers. However, any political or economical group who assumes great power over information or judicial control of any kind should be subject to checks and balances.

Likewise book editors wield amazing power within a handful of publishers/houses as an exalted few decide what is worth printing and what is not. Newspaper editors are also able to control the narrative of what is reported and how it is presented to their readers. Newsprint is nearly obsolete as electronic media pushes information of all kinds to digital subscribers on a minute-by-minute real time basis. What we are getting pushed to us or offered online is not necessarily edited or curated for the absolute truth and should be suspect.



Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist Carl Bernstein once said, “The lowest form of popular culture—lack of information, misinformation, disinformation, and a contempt for the truth or the reality of most people’s lives—has overrun real journalism. Today, ordinary Americans are being stuffed with garbage.”

The internet allows millions of mediocre musicians, artists, writers, and political hacks to post drivel. This electronic/media phenomenon was heralded as democratization of thought and commerce but is in most part uncensored, unedited if you wish. Anyone can post anything online. And there are few guardrails to keep order of any kind. The attorney for a man who killed several people in a mall frequented by Black Americans in 2022 is now suing the social media corporations claiming that his client was never violent until he started reading white supremacist posts in social media outlets online. This argument will likely be stricken as books and movies promulgating violence cannot be held responsible for

the actions of an individual.

Due to a disintegration of spiritual life, an abandonment of tradition and propriety, and a justified suspicion of the government, the political and social order has fractured. This is something the Marxists have been trying to achieve for years. Furthermore, those in power feel unimpeachable as they relentlessly pursue their agenda with propaganda while they continue to 'cancel' those who oppose their views. They do this unabashedly until they are outed for mass falsehoods by the opposing party when they assume control of the government.



For over 2,500 years we have been interpreting the inscription on the two tablets etched by God and given to Moses. In addition we have an extensive written document that is purported to be 'spirit breathed' by the Almighty for all who will read His will. The words have not changed but religious leaders and scribes have created several 'versions' of the original biblical texts written in Aramaic, Greek and Hebrew. These modern nuanced accounts tend to give the reader different slants as to what God actually intended to make perfectly clear to humanity. These 'editors' too have to answer for their deeds.

Those who disseminate important daily news should not have license to edit the truth; no media group should be allowed to. And with the proliferation of AI into every corner of media and society we must undertake the most discerning investigations of anything presented to us and must take great

efforts to parse what is false from the truth. We need to unrelentingly question the arbiters of truth. As consumers of information, we must seek diverse sources, cross-reference information, and critically analyze the content we encounter.

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John Henry is based in Orlando, Florida. He holds a Bachelor of Environmental Design and Master of Architecture from Texas A&M University. He spent his early childhood through high school in Greece and Turkey, traveling in Europe—impressed by the ruins of Greek and Roman cities and temples, old irregular Medieval streets, and classical urban palaces and country villas. His Modernist formal education was a basis for functional, technically proficient, yet beautiful buildings. His website is [Commercial Web Residential Web](#). John has been a regular contributor to NER and has written about his profession and other topics such as history, music, technology, and politics.

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