

# What is Truth?

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Truth is a topic that consumed much of ancient Greek philosophy. The ancient Greek word “*aletheia*” meant “truth or disclosure in philosophy.” In the gospel of John, when Jesus is before Pilate, in response to the direct question, “Are you a king?” Jesus replies that he was born for one reason: “to testify to the truth.” In sarcasm, Pilate replies with the ancient philosophic (and, therefore, rhetorical) question: “**What is truth?**” (John 18:37-38).

**Truth** *noun, plural truths*. 1. The true or actual state of a matter. 2. Conformity with fact or reality; verity. 3. A verified or indisputable fact, proposition, principle, or the like. 4. The state or character of being true. 5. Actuality or actual existence. 6. An obvious or accepted fact; truism; platitude.

In other words, by dictionary definition, truth is a difficult concept, difficult to define, and it depends upon a certain state of existence, or “being.”

I very much like the lyrical retort of Pilate in Tim Rice and Andrew Lloyd Webber’s *Jesus Christ Superstar*, when Pilate speaks/sings “What is truth? We both have truths; are mine the same as yours?” Pontius Pilate and Jesus of Nazareth had some very different cultural realities, and this made for a real culture clash.

In George Orwell’s classic *1984*, his protagonist works at Oceania’s Ministry of Truth. If you haven’t recently re-read this dystopian novel, it is time to revisit it. There, at the Ministry of Truth, the bureau’s job was to erase the truth of the past and present and replace it with what the Party wanted portrayed as truth. In other words, the ministry had the authority to determine what was true and what was not. Like much in *1984*, the Ministry of Truth was misnamed, as it served the opposite purpose. Remember the three slogans of the Party from the novel: **WAR IS PEACE, FREEDOM IS SLAVERY, IGNORANCE IS STRENGTH**.

It is important to realize that Orwell’s Ministry of Truth was not a private organization, but a department of the ruling authority.

Mindful of the horrors that were a result of the Nazi propaganda machine, Joseph Goebbels’s Ministry of Public Enlightenment and Propaganda, and remembering both Woodrow Wilson’s Committee for Public Information (CPI) and Franklin Roosevelt’s Office of War Information (OWI)—both of which were created by presidential executive orders—the U.S. Congress was concerned about empowering the Department of State to control the dissemination of information. In 1948, the Smith-Mundt Act (Public Law 402) was passed. This limits how the U.S. government may engage international audiences and diplomacy. Recall that the Goebbels “ministry of truth” controlled a certain narrative in all forms of media, arts, and education. It was essential to

create an entire culture that promoted the Nazi party and its narratives. Similarly, the Smith-Mundt Act was about much more than how the U.S. Department of State could promote itself in international affairs; it also dealt with how the federal government could promote itself within its own borders.

Jump ahead 64 years (I’m hearing the song “Let’s Do the Time Warp Again” from *The Rocky Horror Picture Show* in my head). In May 2012, Republican congressman Mac Thornberry of Texas introduced HR 5736, the Smith-Mundt Modernization Act of 2012, which amended the U.S. Information and Educational Exchange Act of 1948 to “authorize the Secretary of State and the Broadcasting Board of Governors to provide for preparation and dissemination of information intended for foreign audiences abroad about the United States...through press, publications, radio, motion pictures, the Internet, and other information media, including social media, and through information centers and instructors.”

By the way, the Broadcasting Board of Governors is now referred to as the United States Agency for Global Media and has amongst its subsidiaries Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, Voice of America, Radio Free Asia, and Radio Free Iraq, just to name a few. Prominent on their website ([www.utagm.gov](http://www.utagm.gov)) in April 2022, is a press release entitled “The USAGM condemns Kremlin’s increasing censorship.” Yes, the Kremlin, not Twitter, Facebook, YouTube, Google, etc.

Constitutional attorney and founder of Liberty First University KrisAnne Hall wrote about the Smith-Mundt Act of 1948 back when the Smith-Mundt Modernization Act of 2012 was added to the fiscal year 2013 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA). It could not have passed as a separate bill.<sup>1</sup>

This “modernization” act created a giant loophole for the federal government to propagate its narrative. According to Hall’s article, the act made the executive branch’s Board of Broadcasting Governors, an “independent” agency “whose sole function is to create American propaganda and disseminate this propaganda abroad,” the equal of the Department of State, and it removes any limitations on using the same propaganda domestically, i.e., on U.S. citizens. Most importantly, “This act not only legitimizes the heinous manipulation of mainstream media but allows Congress to FUND IT with TAXPAYER DOLLARS [emphasis in original].” [1]

**Propaganda** *noun* 1. The systematic propagation of a doctrine or cause or of information reflecting the views and interests of those advocating such a doctrine or cause. 2. Material disseminated by the advocates or opponents of a doctrine or cause. 3. Systematic effort to propagate or win support for a theory or method of action.

Edward Bernays (1891-1995) is considered the “father of public relations.” This nephew of Sigmund Freud was born in Austria but moved as an infant with his family to New York, where he graduated from Cornell University. He helped President Woodrow Wilson promote the idea that U.S. efforts in the “Great War” (World War I) were designed to bring democracy to Europe. Europe, the birthplace of democracy and republican government. He was an integral part of Wilson’s CPI and could be better considered “the father of propaganda,” as he applied his uncle’s theories of human psychology to manipulate public opinion.

Bernays is the man every cigarette-smoking woman in the U.S. (world?) can thank for associating cigarettes with women’s rights in the minds of women. In 1929 he staged a suffragette demonstration whilst smoking Lucky Strikes, and then set up the advertising format with the AMA (that’s the American Medical Association) that pushed cigarettes as beneficial to health. “If we understand the mechanism and motives of the group mind,” he wrote, thereby coining the phrase, “it is now possible to control and regiment the masses according to our will without their knowing it.” Bernays was all the model Paul Joseph Goebbels needed.

Enter: “fact-checkers,” whom I visualize as a hive of worker bees, all named Winston Smith (the protagonist of Orwell’s

1984) and living in their mothers’ basements. Interesting that they have been given the title “fact-checkers” when in fact their job is precisely the same as Winston’s: to replace truth with the Narrative. Thus, not only is war “peace,” and freedom “slavery,” but information is “misinformation” or “disinformation.” If we have been paying any attention at all, we should not be surprised by the emergence of these holier-than-thou purveyors of untruth, who methodically remove/replace/coverup/marginalize/scandalize/muddy any attempts at discourse or questioning the narrative of the day.

No wonder people have no idea what to believe.

This is where you, the practicing independent physician, trusted by your patients, come in. I’ve told my patients, when you hear the Narrative, believe the opposite. In this brave new world, war is peace, freedom is slavery, Fauci is Science, and ignorance, we see, is rampant.

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#### REFERENCE

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