SEPTEMBER 11 AND POST-TRUTH POLITICS: CONFRONTING THE REPRESENTATION IN DOMINANT DISCOURSE

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Abstract

The dominant discourse functions as the context for interpreting social and political reality by constructing a narrative that legitimises war and unlawful occupations. Post-truth politics, also known as post-factual politics and post-reality politics, is a political culture in which debate is mostly framed by emotional appeals divorced from the specifics of the policy and by the repetitive proclamation of talking points to which factual refutations are ignored. Post-truth varies from conventional contestation and falsification of facts by relegating facts and expert opinion to a secondary position in comparison to emotional appeal. The doctrine of war against terror envisions an era of permanent warfare. Literature and the media are mobilised to promote unilaterally aggressive actions against the societies and nations that support it. However, critical cultural studies must deconstruct the prevailing discourses, narratives, images, and spectacles to identify manipulation, propaganda, and questionable policies. Counter-discourse of peace and harmony can help to avoid the spread of the hegemonic political worldview of "us versus them" propagated by the dominant discourse. This perpetual war portends catastrophic historical regression and threatens the globe with an endless display of genocide, brutality, and destruction everywhere.

Keywords: media, discourse, literature, war, counter-discourse, politics, post-truth

Introduction

The selection of "post-truth" as the international word of the year in 2016 reflected the convergence of social media's influence as a news source and, according to the Oxford Dictionary, "a growing distrust of facts offered by the establishment." Post-truth period refers to "circumstances in which objective facts are less influential in shaping public opinion than appeals to emotion and personal belief" (Oxford Dictionary). Some theorists have portrayed post-truth as a confusing notion containing mixed characteristics, as opposed to merely the antithesis of "truth." John Keane, an Australian political scientist, classified it as a sort of "gaslighting," which he defined as an "organised effort by public figures to mess with citizens' identities, deploy lies, bullshit, buffoonery, and silence for sowing seeds; of doubt and confusion among subjects." (The Conversation)

In April 2010, blogger David Roberts first introduced the term "post-truth politics" on the environmentalist website *Grist*. It refers to living in a political society where politics and policy are separate. Roberts coined the word to describe a situation in the US Congress where the Republican Party did not use evidence-based arguments to gain support for its policy initiatives. Instead, it rejected all Democratic Party initiatives designed to exploit the emotional responses and affiliations of its supporters. Therefore, reason and facts no longer matter. Instead, the electorate bases political decisions on public sentiment and unverified allegations.