Postdigital Science and Education

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The Epistemology of Deceit in a Postdigital Era

Dupery by Design

Postdigital Science and Education

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Series Editor's Preface

Less than five minutes after I sat at my desk to write this Series Editor's Preface for *The Epistemology of Deceit in a Postdigital Era: Dupery by Design*, I received an email from my dear friend and colleague, Michael Peters. Michael sent me Peter Webster's recently published book, *The Edited Collection: Pasts, Present and Futures* (2020), and asked: What do you think? As I welcomed the opportunity to procrastinate and started reading, I was taken aback. Already in the abstract, Webster puts forward a set of disturbing claims:

> Edited collections are widely supposed to contain lesser work than scholarly journals; to be incoherent as volumes, no more than the sum of their parts; and to be less visible to potential readers once published. It is also often taken as axiomatic that those who make decisions in relation to hiring, promotion, tenure and funding agree. To publish in or edit an essay collection is thought to risk being penalised for the format before even a word is read. (Webster 2020)

Webster provides a convincing set of sources which indicate that this attitude towards the edited book is indeed quite widespread. While he takes pains to argue the opposite, the very fact that (seemingly many) people look down at the edited book opens a myriad questions. What is the distinct value of the edited book? And what is our responsibility, as scholars and academic editors, towards the edited book?

Arguably, a useful way to examine the value of the edited book is to compare it with its closest cousin: the journal special issue. Edited books and special issues both have a clear theme and scope; journal articles and book chapters are roughly of the same length; and review processes, at least in the Postdigital Science and Education publishing ecosystem, are the same (double-blind peer review). According to Webster, however, journal special issues are slightly more impersonal, while the edited collection is fundamentally more conversational in nature.

> Born themselves often from ongoing interactions among groups of scholars, edited collections often display those conversations, with all the elements of consonance and dissonance that are entailed. In their turn, these volumes often become points of reference in the continuing conversations within the discipline. (Webster 2020: 13)

The Postdigital Science and Education community is well aware that 'my words and ideas in this article are not just mine: they are an amalgam of all encounters with colleagues, friends, and people known and unknown that have passed through my professional and personal life' (Jandrić 2020: 179; see also Mañero 2020). Epistemically, this is why the edited book has an important place in postdigital research based on the concept of (postdigital) dialogue (Jandrić et al. 2019), and the dialectics between we-think, we-learn, we-act, and we-feel (Jandrić 2019; Jandrić and Hayes 2020). Pragmatically, this is why this Preface emphasises the genre: postdigital research cannot be done in isolation from political economy.

This book was borne from our shared feeling that the world needs a serious conversation about truth, lies, and epistemology. In 2019, Alison MacKenzie and Ibrar Bhatt published the Special Issue of *Postdigital Science and Education* titled 'Lies, Bullshit and Fake News Online: Should We Be Worried?'[1] In 2021, it is my honour to present Alison MacKenzie, Ibrar Bhatt, and Jennifer Rose's edited book *The Epistemology of Deceit in a Postdigital Era: Dupery by Design*. For those who want to compare journal special issues and edited books, this is an exemplary case study.

So, what is the distinct value of this edited book? 'Lies, Bullshit and Fake News Online: Should We Be Worried?' is a set of distinct voices gathered around a common theme, with an odd loose connection. *The Epistemology of Deceit in a Postdigital Era: Dupery by Design* is more compact; the chapters are in deeper conversation with each other. One can clearly see an emerging community of scholars who have already made significant contributions in the field, and will surely continue to do so in the future. The journal special issue is a clowder of cats; the edited book is a pack of dogs. Both are equally important, but each brings about its own distinct value.

And what is our responsibility, as scholars and academic editors, towards the edited book? If you have mice, get a cat; if you are afraid of burglars, get a dog. Ideally, the choice of genre should follow the nature of the examined question. However, the choice of genre often emerges from our personal preferences: some people like cats, other people like dogs, and some of us equally like both. Whatever our choice, we need to remember that well-behaved dog owners will never allow their pets to chase cats, and well-behaved cat owners will never allow their cats to molest dogs. 'Special issue people' and 'edited book people' do not need to love each other, but their genres of choice do deserve equal respect.

In the following pages, Alison MacKenzie, Ibrar Bhatt, and Jennifer Rose have provided us with the simplest proof for this argument – they have produced a valuable edited book which presents years of diverse scholarly dialogues culminating in a coherent whole. This is why *The Epistemology of Deceit in a Postdigital*

[1] See https://link.springer.com/journal/42438/volumes-and-issues/2-1. Accessed 12 January 2021.

Era: Dupery by Design is more than the sum of its parts, and this is why it will be an unavoidable steppingstone for further research in the field.

Zagreb, Croatia Petar Jandrić

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Foreword: Lying, Politics, Government

In *Lying in Politics* (1971), Hannah Arendt, commenting on the Pentagon Papers, reflects on the fundamental relationship between lying and politics. She explains the nature of political action in the context of lying with surprising consequences that run against modern intuitions and threaten to change our understanding of the history of politics. She provides an account of political imagination that draws connections between 'the ability to lie, the deliberate denial of factual truth, and the capacity to change facts, the ability to act'. Arendt maintains that 'facts need testimony' and 'no factual statement can ever be beyond doubt'. She continues:

> It is this fragility that makes deception so easy up to a point, and so tempting. It never comes into a conflict with reason, because things could indeed have been as the liar maintains they were; lies are often much more plausible, more appealing to reason, than reality, since the liar has the great advantage of knowing beforehand what the audience wishes or expects to hear. He has prepared his story for public consumption with a careful eye to making it credible, whereas reality has the disconcerting habit of confronting us with the unexpected for which we were not prepared. (Arendt 1971)

What Arendt's analysis prepares us for is the deliberate intentionality of the lie in politics and its resistance to truth. Rarely is there a knock-down argument or evidential proof that can be advanced quickly and efficiently to counter false claims. The office of the president also carries with it a stamp of authority where only a few brave people are willing to publicly contradict an announcement from the White House which grips the imagination like an announcement from God himself.

The combination of systematic lying, a veritable torrent of seemingly endless lies, delivered directly through Twitter rather than traditional news media comes close to defining the style of Trump's presidency. He has been massively successful judged by his 32 million Twitter followers and the 74 million Americans that voted for him. It's interesting to discover how many voted for him despite their knowledge of his lying and his lying style.

I cannot think of a more important topic than the topic of this edited collection that focuses on the 'epistemology of deceit in a postdigital era' just as Donald Trump leaves the US presidency and Joe Biden becomes the 46th President. The collection is a reflection on the 4 years of Trump's presidency who came to office

already having developed his political style and apparatus of systematic deceit and Big Lies delivered directly to his 32 million core Twitter followers. Trump's 'big lie' conspiracy style of government began with casting aspersion on Obama's birth certificate in the 'birther movement', a conspiracy that claimed Obama was ineligible to be president because he was born in Kenya. It was a deliberate untruth that was designed to cast doubt on his citizenship, his racial origin and his religious convictions. The conspiracy suggested also that Obama's birth certificate was a forgery. Commentators have suggested that this was part of a racist slur against Obama's status as a black man. It was raised by Trump, then businessman and television personality, many times during Obama's election campaign going back as early as 2008. Twenty-five per cent of Americans, especially Republicans, believed that Obama was not born in the United States and was therefore not eligible to run for president.[1]

The 'birther movement', based on a lie, was the forerunner of many lies and conspiracies against Trump's political rivals, both Democrat and Conservative. This false narrative carefully crafted to capture the network of negative belief that was grafted onto a set of historical we-they prejudices, required the active and deliberate work of the architects of the lie, who craft the lie and then disseminate it in the right channels. I tried to draw attention to the viral nature of the post-truth era with my colleagues Sharon Rider, Mats Hyvönen and Tina Besley in the Springer collection *Post-Truth, Fake News: Viral Modernity & Higher Education.*[2] The viral nature of post-truth media, along with its virulent anti-democratic sentiments, served to fire-up the collective imagination of white supremacists, 'Patriot' movements, neo-nazi organisations and QAnon supporters, all of whom had their worst festering fears confirmed by Trump's tweets.

The conspiracy of the 'birther movement' was followed by a range of other major types which could be chanted and tweeted time and again. Climate change was another target of conspiracy, with a president in league with the oil and gas billionaires. As early as 2012, Trump suggested that climate change was 'a very expensive hoax' perpetrated by the Chinese government. Trump tweeted: 'The concept of global warming was created by and for the Chinese in order to make U.S. manufacturing non-competitive' (see Matthews 2017). There followed a large number of conspiracies that fired-up MAGA supporters who were incited by Trump and radicalised by conservative and far-right social media.

Claims that voter fraud in the 2016 election cost him the popular vote.
Questions that childhood vaccines cause autism.
Claims that Obama had wiretapped Trump's phone.
Claims that 3000 people didn't die in Puerto Rico after Hurricane Maria and that Democrats inflated the death toll.
Claims that windmills cause cancer.
Claims that the Clintons killed Jeffrey Epstein.

[1] https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Barack_Obama_citizenship_conspiracy_theories. Accessed 15 January 2021.

[2] https://link.springer.com/book/10.1007/978-981-10-8013-5. Accessed 15 January 2021.

Claims that former vice president Joe Biden was corrupt in his dealings with Ukraine during the Obama administration.
Claims that a cybersecurity company named Crowdstrike framed Russia for election interference.
Claims that the Ukraine may be hiding Hillary Clinton's missing emails.
Claims about voter fraud.
Claims about the stolen election.[3]

The Washington Post reports that Trump made 30,573 misleading claims during his presidency, with more than half in the final year.[4] The production of the lie is not a casual process but the result of a carefully crafted political strategy engaging a team of political workers.

Trumpology is a carefully constructed litany of lies and conspiracies where evidence is irrelevant to his supporters because these lies confirm his supporters' worst fears. They already 'knew' – their network beliefs were primed to accept these lies because they exonerated their worldview and gave life to their seething hatreds, acerbating and deepening racist and paranoid fears.[5]

The viral nature of conspiracy thinking is a subject we explored in 'A viral theory of post-truth' (Peters et al. 2020), drawing on Gregory Bateson's (1972) insight that '[t]here is an ecology of bad ideas, just as there is an ecology of weeds, and it is characteristic of the system that basic error propagates itself'. As we argued in that paper: 'Viral information and viral media have developed a special link between the way that information behaves in digital networks and the role that information plays as a messaging system in genomic biology'.

What is encouraging about this collection of chapters is that they help to rectify the historical imbalance in epistemology that favours the focus on knowledge and truth claims to begin to examine more carefully *The Epistemology of Deceit in a Postdigital Era: Dupery by Design*. My congratulations to the editors – Alison MacKenzie, Jennifer Rose and Ibrar Bhatt – who have done us philosophers, educators and social scientists a major service by linking epistemological questions to lies, manipulation and deceit, to post-truth and fake news, to dupery and democracy, and to questions of digital literacy and critical pedagogy. The collection is a major theoretical step forward in understanding the 'ecology of lies' where the propagation of falsehoods and government by conspiracy are inherent in the two-party system of American democracy in 'the era of digital reason' (Peters and Jandrić 2015).

Trump lost the election but he will be back, working to build his party and his white militia. American politics shows the historical deep divisions that were one of the main causes of the civil war. This division has barely faded. It has given birth to American fascism, which is not about to disappear any time soon. If anything, under

[3] 24 outlandish conspiracy theories Donald Trump has floated over the years.

[4] https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/how-fact-checker-tracked-trump-claims/2021/01/23/ad04b69a-5c1d-11eb-a976-bad6431e03e2_story.html. Accessed 15 January 2021.

[5] https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Category:Conspiracy_theories_promoted_by_Donald_Trump; https://www.factcheck.org/2020/10/trumps-long-history-with-conspiracy-theories/. Accessed 15 January 2021.

Trump, whether impeached or not, fascism has hardened into American desolation. In these circumstances, *Dupery by Design* will become ever more important.

Beijing, People's Republic of China — Michael A. Peters

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In plain truth, lying is an accursed vice. We are not men, nor have other tie upon one another, but by our word … If falsehood had, like truth, but one face only, we should be upon better terms; for we should then take for certain the contrary to what the liar says: but the reverse of truth has a hundred thousand forms, and a field indefinite, without bound or limit. The Pythagoreans make good to be certain and finite, and evil, infinite and uncertain. There are a thousand ways to miss the white, there is only one to hit it. For my own part, I have this vice in so great horror, that I am not sure I could prevail with my conscience to secure myself from the most manifest and extreme danger by an impudent and solemn lie. An ancient father says 'that a dog we know is better company than a man whose language we do not understand.'

Chapter IX, Of Liars, Essays of Michel de Montaigne (1877)

Telling the truth is, therefore, something which must be learnt. This will sound very shocking to anyone who thinks it must all depend on moral character and that if this is blameless, the rest is child's play. But the simple fact is that the ethical cannot be detached from reality, and consequently continual progress in learning to appreciate reality is a necessary ingredient in ethical action.

Dietrich Bonhoeffer, What is Meant by Telling the Truth? (1965)

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We would also like to thank our contributors. 2020 was an 'unprecedented' year, one that was almost entirely shaped by Covid-19: we lived through lockdowns, restrictions, working from home, home schooling, quarantine, travel bans, not seeing family, friends, and colleagues – save on Zoom, Teams and Skype – and watched in dismay as the virus ran out of control or reacted in admiration at those countries whose leaders kept the virus under control. We are now waiting for our 'jabs' and to be released from our homes.

Our contributors rose above these challenges to write the chapters you will read in this collection. We give them our heartfelt thanks.

Our thanks are also owed to Ian Thatcher and Jonathan McDonald for their insights and support.

Introduction: The Genesis of *Dupery by Design*

In 2018, Ibrar and Alison began collaborating on a paper on algorithms and ignorance that was eventually published as 'Just Google it! Digital literacy and the epistemology of ignorance' (Bhatt and MacKenzie 2019) in the journal *Teaching in Higher Education: Critical Perspectives*. It was a serendipitous decision (Ibrar invited Alison); Alison had very little experience of empirical research and was as ignorant of the operations of Google and other platforms as those surveyed in the research. As it turned out, we started writing on these issues at a very propitious time. Interest in the nature of political messages on social media and concerns over how platforms were being used to manipulate voters and harvest personal data without the knowledge of their users intensified as a result of Brexit[1] in the UK in 2016 and the Presidential elections of 2016 and 2020 in the United States. Lies, manipulation, and deceit are not new, as we discussed in a commentary (MacKenzie and Bhatt 2020a) and subsequent article (MacKenzie and Bhatt 2020b) in a special issue of *Postdigital Science in Education*, 'Lies, Bullshit and Fake News Online: Should We Be Worried?'.[2] However, these events placed these phenomena squarely onto the international agenda, with strategic online disinformation campaigns and computational propaganda, in which governments and private actors make cynical use of algorithms and big data to manipulate public opinion at scale, now prevalent in more than 80 countries – and counting (Bradshaw et al. 2021).

The 2020 US presidential election notoriously culminated in the storming of Congress on Capitol Hill on 6 January 2020 by supporters of Trump, determined to 'Stop the Steal'. The attack on democracy was 'unprecedented' in modern US history. Trump's language, his disdain for political norms and the gravity of the office, and his repeated false claims about fake news and the stolen election on social and

[1] A portmanteau of the words 'British' and 'exit' to refer to the UK's decision in a 23 June 2016 referendum to leave the European Union (EU).

[2] See https://link.springer.com/journal/42438/volumes-and-issues/2-1. Accessed 15 January 2021.

mass media were blamed for the 6 January insurrection. In the UK, the Brexit disinformation campaigns continue to reverberate and divide so-called Remainers (supporters of European Union membership) and Brexiteers (supporters of leaving the European Union).

As we write this, Twitter has banned Trump permanently from its platform; Reddit has banned the subreddit group 'r//DonaldTrump'; Google no longer hosts Parler; Apple has suspended it from its App Store; Amazon has ceased providing Parler with cloud services; and Facebook has banned Trump from posting on his accounts until the transition of power to President-elect Joe Biden is complete. Other media platforms and services have sought to distance themselves from Trump. These actions also seem 'unprecedented' – and welcome to many concerned with the degradation of social and political discourse.

These 'unprecedented' moves have inevitably raised concerns about the risks to free speech. It is not the job, it is claimed, of online platforms to determine who has the right to speech, or what the limits of free speech are, even if that free speech is odious, inciteful, or spreads lies. This is complex moral and political territory because free speech, in liberal democracies at least, is highly contentious because it is valued, even by autocrats (on their terms, of course). Therefore, any limits placed on such speech will be controversial and will place us on the slippery slope towards tyranny and censorship. (One rarely hears the opposite effects, that unfettered speech can lead to anarchy, violence, and, ultimately, tyranny.)

What is 'free' speech? What are the limits, if any, of free speech? At what point do we intervene to say that free speech is so harmful that it risks undermining democracy, the health of the nation, and the wellbeing of individuals, and so must be constrained? As events in the United States and the UK have demonstrably shown, free speech is volatile and contentious because it occurs in contexts of competing, if not antagonistic, values. Whatever one's views on where the limits lie, few states permit unfettered free speech (most countries will have libel, defamation, hate, and child pornography laws, for example). Few would argue that it is absolute: it cannot be. The reasons should be obvious: illegitimately unfettered free speech would corrode other entitlements such as privacy, security, bodily integrity and health, and life. Depending on the intensity, hate and libellous speech may also degrade, humiliate, and undermine the dignity of persons. The contentious question is: should platforms censure elected officials by removing their tweets and posts, or accounts? (Facebook and Twitter do, in fact, remove harmful content and political figures who foment hate.)

What motivated our research was the scale, speed, amplification, and quality of 'information' that spread across social media, particularly the harms of deceit on individuals and the polity. It seemed to us that another 'unprecedented' feature of our social media lives that spills over into mass media and thence into our personal lives, is the effect of deceit on our ability to engage in practical reasoning: our plans of action, goals, decisions, aspirations; on theoretical reasoning: what we should and ought to do; what it means to undertake one course of action as opposed to another. If any one entity seemed to show the hazards of deceit, it was social media.

In 2016, ‘post-truth’ was Oxford dictionary’s word of the year. Perhaps the most widely used word in 2020 was ‘unprecedented’. These words point to situations, events, and actions that are unrivalled, unequalled, and unmatched, not because deceit is new, or that leaders making grabs for power is unusual; rather, it seems to be the sheer scale, the sheer hubris, the sheer ruthlessness by which bad speech and its parasitic vices proliferate across media and clamour for our fractured attention. We decided to explore these issues through the philosophical lens of epistemology, more precisely, epistemic vices such as lies, malinformation, disinformation, wilful and insouciant ignorance. However, as we argued (MacKenzie and Bhatt 2020a, b; MacKenzie et al. 2020), determining what is true and truthful is rarely easy or without controversy.

As the collection of chapters gathered in this book will attest, social media, while a valuable and indispensable common good, is also the handmaiden of deception and a critical threat to democracy as a result of sustained manipulation of public opinion (Bradshaw et al. 2021). Technology enables humans to learn false, misleading, inaccurate information, corrupting not only the nature of information, but also social relations by increasing xenophobia (as seen throughout Covid-19, for example), generating new concerns about rights and freedoms, and implicitly supporting the resurgence and escalation of corrupted beliefs in and about politics. The debasement of public and online discourse has led to violent political riots (in the United States and India, for example).

The proliferation of fake news, lies, and deceit on digital media worldwide, and its connection to human and animal harm, is surely sound evidence for the need for a postdigital understanding of these disturbing phenomena. A postdigital understanding aims to rupture previously established ways of thinking, and to spotlight the entanglement of digitality in our everyday actions and interactions which are driven by what we know or presume to know. Digital technology and media are no longer separate or virtual entities but are life shaping and determining forms that exercise remarkable power and influence almost every aspect of our lives: social, political, economic, and biological (see Jandrić et al. 2018 for a literature review on meanings and effects of the postdigital). The extensive and pervasive power affects our capacities to reason, evaluate, deliberate, and analyse information, as many of the chapters in this collection will demonstrate.

This led us to the idea of *Dupery*. To what extent is the design and infrastructure of digital platforms an enabler in the current problem of what is true and truthful; fake or real; informative or misinformative? If dupery is sometimes ‘by design’ in that humans can, and often do, spread misinformation with intent to cause harm, then is the very ‘design’ of a social media platform also to be implicated in the current problems we face? Yes. When looked at through a postdigital lens, technologies and social media platforms in particular, via their infrastructural logics, create both new norms for discourse, radically alter a priori notions of ‘public sphere’, and enable new forms of power and inequality to exist.

As our contributors in this collection demonstrate in their highly diverse ways, deception is a pervasive feature of human interactions. While the reasons for understanding why people deceive and how they deceive are complex, lacking a

(consensual) unified understanding, what is increasingly clear is that the Enlightenment legacy, the Anthropocene, and the binary nature of understanding that governs past and present ways of being human, reasoning, and knowing, are no longer adequate for capturing and explaining the complexity that comes with a postdigital understanding.

Organisation of the Book

The book is organised into four parts: (1) Epistemology of Deceit; (2) Dupery, Politics, and Democracy; (3) Discourse and Digital Literacy; and (4) Towards a Critical Pedagogy.

Part 1: Epistemology of Deceit

The three chapters in 'Part 1: Epistemology of Deceit' are concerned with the threats to democratic processes posed by deceit, engagement in bad faith politics, and the rejection of the intrinsic value of truth.

In Chapter 1, MacKenzie and Bhatt draw on Machiavelli's statecraft to explore whether deceit should form part of the armoury of government, and argue emphatically that it should not. Bad faith in politics and on social media can have profound impacts on the polity and public discourse. They argue that platforms which create systems that favour deceit over truth, and which manipulate public opinion to pursue profit, erode trust, increase polarisation, threaten democratic processes, and destabilise democracy, as they discuss in the context of the UK and the United States. Ethical conduct, such as truthtelling, they argue, is critical to democracy and positive human relations.

Jennifer Rose, in Chapter 2, argues that false beliefs arise out of a commitment to truth as the sole epistemic aim for justifying one's belief. Belief in the absoluteness and cohesiveness of truth, and 'truthlings', fortifies trust in manipulated but emulated truth in digitised realities; consequently, deception is enabled, and false beliefs transpire. Resultantly, coinciding with the goals of truth, she argues that education ought to include the value of understanding as an epistemic aim to help reduce postdigital deception.

In Chapter 3, Jake Wright begins his analysis of epistemic nihilism by reference to the 2020 US presidential election and accusations that it was fraudulent. As he reports, liberal democracies depend on good faith engagement wherein citizens stand up for the values of fair and equal participation. Violation of those norms by repeated assertions of fraudulence, the practices of trolling, bullshitting, and vexatious litigation undermine democratic institutions. These phenomena represent what Wright terms 'epistemic nihilism' whereby truth, as a necessary condition for achieving one's good faith aims, is rejected because it is not valuable to the speaker.

Epistemic nihilism is a form of cheating because the nihilist expects his interlocutor to engage in good faith practices that he has rejected, so serving the nihilist an unfair advantage with respect to what is true.

Part 2: Dupery, Politics, and Democracy

Grouped together in this part of the book are four chapters which examine the impact and consequences of dupery, fake news, and information disorders on democracy, liberal democratic institutions, human rights, and the invisibility of animal welfare.

Tess Maginess in Chapter 4 examines how dupery weaponises and infects language, the degradation of which conveys how language betokens that there is something rotten in the State. Words that were once considered progressive and inclusive, such as 'radical' and 'liberal', are now terms of contempt and abuse, designed by the Alt Right and populists to Other the opponent. Concomitant with debasing language, the Populist has to be pretend to be real, to be of the people, and to be distinct from the elite from which they came. This pretence has the effect, Maginess argues, of manipulating the body politic and creating confusion about who or what is real, all the while exploiting the epidemic of resentment.

In Chapter 5, Selman Özdan takes a very different approach to fake news and what one should do about it. Here Özdan examines whether legal remedies against the circulation and publication of fake news are compatible with international human rights law and its criteria. Taking Singapore as his case study, he argues that legal sanctions against the flow of fake news could violate international human rights such as the right to freedom of expression and opinion. Özdan suggests that before forbidding or criminalising expressions and opinions, the danger and risks posed by fake news and disinformation should be clearly defined.

In Chapter 6, Benjamin Green takes up the notion digital nationalism to understand the Trump-dominated authoritarian 'fake news' media ecosystem. US digital nationalism is an authoritarian technic governed by political institutions which promote partisan misinformation to indoctrinate the masses, supported by rightist media. By taking a fake news approach, the aim is to undermine the public's understanding of First Amendment freedoms, protecting the freedoms of his allies, while impinging on and criminalising the freedoms of those who challenge Trump's disinformation and fake news, such as Black Lives Matter.

The chapters hitherto have focused on how fake news, disinformation, infodemics, and the like undermine democratic processes, institutions, and individual freedoms. Absent are analyses which examine the consequences of fake news on animals. In Chapter 7, Victoria O'Sullivan undertakes a project of mourning for our non-human kin that are invisibilised through absence and omission from information. Like the practices of mis- and dis-information, practices that omit the interests and experiences of animals are constitutive, O'Sullivan argues, of untruthfulness, in

that the 'anthropocentric noise disorder', which privileges human interests, obscures the trauma of other animals.

Part 3: Discourse and Digital Literacy

This part presents four chapters which collectively problematise discourse and digital literacy and their relationship to epistemologies of deceit. During the last two decades, much of society that previously had little or no acquaintance with digital media have now come to deploy them as part of their regular communicative repertoire. The contributors to this section reveal how processes of discourse and practices of digital literacy are best understood as embedded in social and material networks, and incorporated into platform users' engagement with the world, rather than simply in terms of technologies and their 'affordances'.

Jennifer Saul, in Chapter 8, addresses the question of whether those who are in positions of knowledge are obligated to correct misinformation and oppressive speech online, particularly on social media. The discoursal features of social media, particularly its algorithmic amplification, Saul argues, necessitate a fundamental rethink of what counter-speech actually entails.

In Chapter 9, Albin Wagener argues that our postdigital age is one of hypernarrativity, an interweaving network of discourse where truth becomes marketable via political and ideological actors, echoing similar arguments made by MacKenzie and Bhatt in Chapter 1.

Mike Hajimichael, in Chapter 10, presents an analysis of the discourse of widely circulated yet misinformative memes concerning refugees in the European Union. This is followed by an important media literacy intervention which sought to educate young users about critical media literacy in current times.

Finally, Jialei Jiang and Matthew Vetter's chapter presents a feminist new materialist perspective to examining Wikipedia's systemic biases and inequalities in content coverage. They argue that a sociomaterial sensitivity to agency can help better understand how inequality and misinformation can emerge, allowing us to then attend to the systemic biases within a platform like Wikipedia.

Part 4: Towards a Critical Pedagogy

This final part is comprised of four chapters which connect education, technology, and deception to raise pedagogical questions about the goals and purposes of education, education structures, and uses of technology.

In Chapter 12, Peter McLaren and Petar Jandrić address the ongoing concerns of hegemonic transnational capitalism and its role in sustaining injustice, oppression, and deception. Connecting the political landscape with an educational critical

revolutionary praxis, the authors argue for a scallywag pedagogy that focuses on socialist alternatives to capitalism, and a curriculum of liberation focused on action.

Christine Sinclair, in Chapter 13, addresses the question of what we can learn from dupers and deceivers' deceptive practices. She reveals specific tricks of duperation used by magicians, hoaxers, hackers, con artists, and academics who use deceit as an educational tool. She argues that tricks of duperation can exploit human psychology and that while technology can offer solutions to expose deception it can also amplify deception by allowing deceit and creating new subcultures of deceptive practice. She raises a question about ethics and whether education should teach students, not only how not to be deceived, but how to deceive.

In Chapter 14 Shane Ralston discusses the digital age of online teaching and its role in engendering student deception and online cheating. Ralston argues that online education lacks safeguards and penalties for online cheating. Previously established safeguards against student cheating, such as proctoring, and lack of penalisation for cheating encourages student to cheat in online education.

In the final Chapter 15, Eamon Costello and Prajakta Girme draw on the methodological device of speculative fiction, including the donning of human skins, to explore education as posthuman practice. Their unique and highly creative approach challenges the hegemony of the university by exposing how deception is embedded into datafication practices.

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Contents

Part I Epistemology of Deceit

1 Bad Faith, Bad Politics, and Bad Consequences: The Epistemic Harms of Online Deceit. 3
Alison MacKenzie and Ibrar Bhatt

2 An Epistemology of False Beliefs: The Role of Truth, Trust, and Technology in Postdigital Deception 21
Jennifer Rose

3 Towards a Response to Epistemic Nihilism 39
Jake Wright

Part II Dupery, Politics, and Democracy

4 Duperation: Deliberate Lying in Postdigital, Postmodern Political Rhetoric 63
Tess Maginess

5 The Right to Freedom of Expression Versus Legal Actions Against Fake News: A Case Study of Singapore 77
Selman Özdan

6 US Digital Nationalism: A Habermasian Critical Discourse Analysis of Trump's 'Fake News' Approach to the First Amendment 95
Benjamin Green

7 A Project of Mourning: Attuning to the Impact of 'Anthropocentric-Noise Disorder' on Non-Human Kin 119
Victoria O'Sullivan

Part III Discourse and Digital Literacy

8 Someone Is Wrong on the Internet: Is There an Obligation to Correct False and Oppressive Speech on Social Media? 139
Jennifer Saul

9 Writing Against the 'Epistemology of Deceit' on Wikipedia: A Feminist New Materialist Perspective Towards Critical Media Literacy and Wikipedia-Based Education 159
Jialei Jiang and Matthew A. Vetter

10 The Neoliberal Colonization of Discourses: Gentrification, Discursive Markets and Zombemes 177
Albin Wagener

11 Social Memes and Depictions of Refugees in the EU: Challenging Irrationality and Misinformation with a Media Literacy Intervention 195
Mike Hajimichael

Part IV Towards A Critical Pedagogy

12 Scallywag Pedagogy 215
Peter McLaren and Petar Jandrić

13 Learning from the Dupers: Showing the Workings 233
Christine Sinclair

14 Ghosting Inside the Machine: Student Cheating, Online Education, and the Omertà of Institutional Liars 251
Shane J. Ralston

15 'Choice Is Yours': Anatomy of a Lesson Plan from University V 265
Eamon Costello and Prajakta Girme

Conclusion: Some Resolutions to Dupery and the Power of Online Platforms 283
Alison MacKenzie, Ibrar Bhatt and Jennifer Rose

Index 289

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Jake Wright PhD, is a senior lecturer in philosophy at the University of Minnesota Rochester's Center for Learning Innovation (Rochester, Minnesota, USA). His research focuses on two areas: the ethical and pedagogical justifications for in-class practices, especially at the introductory level, and how we ought to respond to bullshit and other claims that reject the value of truth. He is particularly interested in how these areas overlap via the phenomenon of *naïve skepticism*, the predisposition to uncritically reject the idea of universal truth commonly held by introductory students.

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Part I
Epistemology of Deceit

Chapter 1
Bad Faith, Bad Politics, and Bad Consequences: The Epistemic Harms of Online Deceit

Alison MacKenzie and Ibrar Bhatt

Introduction

In politics, in social media, indeed, whenever and wherever humans engage in communication, some form of deceit will commonly result. Lying, it seems, is an integral part of communication, and there are myriad opportunities for lying (MacKenzie and Bhatt 2020a). We expect politicians to lie, and we all know that online platforms are prodigiously efficient at spreading misinformation, disinformation, malinformation, lies, and similar epistemic vices. Key events in the UK and the USA, such as the 2016 UK referendum on EU membership and the 2020 US Presidential election, have inundated us with deceits that strike us as qualitatively and quantitatively different from other times. This is mainly because of the power and reach of online platforms, which, according to the Netflix documentary, *The Social Dilemma* (Orlowski 2020),[1] is altering human behaviour. Google and Facebook, for example, use algorithms that create individualised versions of reality, exploit behavioural addictions (through 'clickbait' and 'likes'), manipulate belief, and increase polarisation, and on which fake news spreads six times faster than other goods (Vosoughi et al. 2018).

[1] *The Social Dilemma* (Orlowski 2020) is a Netflix documentary-drama aired on 27 August 2020. It explores the dangers of social networking, using accounts from tech experts who worked for Google, Facebook, and Apple. It focuses on, among other issues, the vulnerability of teenagers to the platforms' methods of addicting them to social media, leading to high rates of depression and anxiety.

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