

Searching for the Golden Truth in a Minefield of Fool's Bias

In his 1796 farewell address, President George Washington had ominously forewarned that political parties would bring an end to this country. Now some 200 years later, we are beginning to see the climactic Truth in his foreboding words. Today, in the realm of politics, we are experiencing a country divided along the lines of partisanship. It seems that each side is inclined to vehemently disagree with the other based on the grounds of party affiliation alone. But beyond this ideological division, Washington's words also find meaning in the realm of news reporting on this divisive policy. That being said, massive news conglomerates have irrefutably aligned their coverage to certain political parties such that they can better sensationalize this contentious discourse. Media sources are adamant about intentionally rousing on an emotional response from their specific sect of the population. By aligning themselves with a specific political party, they are more keen on identifying, and effective at honing in on, the rhetorical needs of that subgroup. An inherent danger with newsgroups portraying media in this slanted light is that the people of our country will respond with emotional consternation, evocative of our national division, rather than that of intellectual discourse based in the foundations of fact. Media conglomerates recognize the natural spell-like response that their Aristotelian appeal to pathos has over their audience, and continue to unapologetically exploit this unethical entrainment to promote cyclical engagement amongst their viewership; thereby, bolstering the success of their shareholders. The ostensible news network, CNN, is, by far, the most guilty of delivering instigative media, rather than delivering what should be strictly matter-of-fact reportage. It is imperative, therefore, to dig deeper into seemingly authoritative media sources that we consume content from in order to become: better, more well informed

citizens, adept examiners of bias in claims of fact, and quipped with the wherewithal to stand up for the Truth, even if it is unfavorable. We each have the faculty to seek out the truth behind the media's veil of rhetoric and a voice with which we can posit it; hence, affecting change in this fundamentally flawed system.

Bias is stratified across most media sources which directly impacts both the quality and validity of the content they produce. Having the most illustratable examples, due to severity of bias, CNN will serve as the basis for the rest of this analysis. CNN is a national online and television-based news network that primarily covers current political affairs in The United States; and, is regarded as a left leaning establishment – meaning they are predisposed to slanting their news coverage to appeal to the ideologies of a democratic base. Because their news incorporates rhetorical appeals to this particular audience, left-leaning Americans are inclined to consume CNN's content; thereby, perpetuating this rhetorical give and take system based solely on the foundation of offering up 'palatable news'. I cannot stress enough that we must understand that there is an important distinction to be drawn here, for we can only begin to internalize that there is an absolute bias in the content we consume when we delineate 'news' that is gathered from a news network of our choice (an interpretation of the truth presented in a way that aligns particularly well to our political ideologies) from news acquired from a fact-based non-partisan source. We far too often are driven to sources that report spun media that accommodate our own personal biases (after all, it's our choice, so why wouldn't we choose the source that glistens with gold). I lament the fact that these media conglomerates have redefined the system of media dissemination such that the convenience lies in the truth of artifice rather than the Truth of candor: if we want the 'Capital T' truth, the matter-of-fact assessment, we must

put on our mining helmets, dig deeper, and assess primary sources for ourselves. Only then can we begin to excavate context, formulate truth, and come to the realization that we have never seen anything more than the muddled glimmer of true gold, amid a field of fools.

Interestingly enough, it seems as if CNN's job is to make our role – *our responsibility* – as Truth finders all the more difficult by way of severely disguising Truth in their reportage. The most common tactic that CNN employs to create their fictitious news is, changing situational context to give them the proper basis upon which they can craft their own interpretation of political events. The most recent example I can recall surrounds CNN's account of the Kavanaugh hearing. In an unscrupulous effort to further disqualify Brett Kavanaugh during his nomination to be an Associate Justice to The Supreme Court, CNN went out of their way to fashion an enticing red herring, thrown with the specific intent of inciting a response of protest from their leftist base; thereby, further exacerbating the court of public opinion surrounding the confirmation.

Through the use of the rhetorical device metonymy, CNN conveniently misrepresented the President of the American Bar Association as the organization itself. CNN claimed that the entity petitioned to halt the nomination process pursuant to a reevaluation of Kavanaugh's bar status (Raju). After reading contentious media like this, we must kickstart our new 'take it with a grain of salt' examination mentality. After all, this article would probably not even exist if CNN had exercised even the slightest due diligence (i.e. employing the elementary journalistic practice of quotation through verbatim) – in order to find the Truth, we must do what CNN didn't, *consult the primary documents*. The most successful way of doing this is to analyze primary sources for *ourselves*, these documents may include: a recording of a speech, a transcription of

the same, or a letter, for example. In order to uncover the primary source of our last example, we need identify exactly what the American Bar Association actually said. The particular document that we are searching for, must come directly from the organization itself; after a quick Google search, *viola*, we've found just what we needed. In a letter from the ABA's counsel, the organization concretely refuted the contents of CNN's article – a Truth that was clearly omitted from the headlines. By juxtaposing this primary source with the incredible CNN article, we can begin to acknowledge news bias – or in this case falsification – by recognizing the astronomical difference between CNN's truth and *the Truth*. *The ABA's letter reads,*

The correspondence by Robert Carlson, President of the American Bar Association was not received by the ABA Standing Committee on the Federal Judiciary prior to its issuance. The Standing Committee ... acts independently of ABA leadership. ... The ABA's rating for Judge Kavanaugh is not affected by Mr. Carlson's letter (Moxley).

In this example, CNN used unconditionally misleading, deliberately deceitful, and absolutely false information to push their agenda. This intentional aggrandizement, and failure to delineate clearly personal opinion from that of an organizational stance, demonstrates CNN's superficial reporting style which is laced with the calculated intent to inflame and provoke a response from their base.

If we as Truth seekers would not have stood up in question of, and completed some digging into, this CNN article, it would have freely manifested itself as a forum of authentic and judicious concern; upon which anyone, including us Republicans, could confidently conclude

that Trump put forth a poorly qualified nominee – and this, my friends, is CNN’s intent; for, in portraying these men as bigoted and idiotic hypocrites, they rile up their base and continue to pour forth their self-serving interest of appeasing their shareholders, above that of their fiduciary obligation of candor to a nation that is desperate for national bi-partisan solidarity in a time where a secure future isn’t so certain. At the crux of all major failures in systems that wield the power of influence is the factor of money, a profit-driven industry standard that has unfortunately promulgated into the – now – profit hungry media. They have monopolized the seemingly unmonopolizable and forever tarnished the integrity of media impartiality. For now, media conglomerates have diverged from the beaten path of neutrality, amid the chaos that Washington had forewarned, to establish a self-deprecating system that hides Truth under the pretenses of increasing revenue – I’d be remiss if I hadn’t pointed out the rich irony that lies in this situation: CNN has created a system that intentionally deceives their audience in prospect of more USD, a fundamentally futile and failed system in its own right (Birosik). Notwithstanding, this grotesque wheel will keep on turning. As excavators of our own, we must chastise media which clearly transcends even a modicum of contextualization, in an effort to clot this hemorrhaging wound. Lest we be forced into making public faux pas, we must identify, intersect and sever our relationship with the cyclical dissemination of slanted news, in an effort to promote a well-informed society. It’s time that we keep these media giants honest and accountable, too.

Behest the greed of stakeholders in the *industry* of media, I urge you not to sacrifice your right to the Truth. Once we learn to uncover Truth and begin to engage in open civil discourse with the intent to promote mutual understanding, we can start to close the gap in partisanship. By

focusing our attention on issues of national concern, again with the best intentions for the future of our country at heart, we can forgo our relationship with the flawed system of pundit bias in search for an impartial news source that will advance national interests by fostering political stability. It is a terrible state of affairs that we, as members of the general public, must become detectives when interacting with today's media. We are forced to sacrifice extra time just to uncover the Truth, all because the nation we were born into is so deeply divided along partisan lines – not to mention further aggravated by the wicked lure of money.

Ever since the Associated Press – known even to this day as being the most reputable nonpartisan news authority – began to release news from the battlefields of Vietnam, domestic news networks began taking sides along party lines to appeal to a certain demographic of people; during this kairoitic period, their chief intent was to increase revenue through the sensationalization, and inflammation of information from the battlefield in such a way that directly appeals to their various bases. Since then, news in all mediums have lost sight of their original purpose, to deliver an unbiased factual account of what is happening around the globe, in search for something *better for themselves* – appealing to their stakeholders' pockets by producing readily-consumable content that maximizes profit amongst their select audience. Pursuant to this bias, it seems that today's Americans are far too eager to believe what they hear on the news. With a diverse array of political bias stratified amongst the continuum, there is certainly a news outlet for each political ideology. Without question, we instinctively accept the discourse of news anchors and political pundits as truth; after all, since we gravitate towards the news we like to hear, paired with their shameless incorporation rhetorically appealing devices, we are naturally allured into aligning with their politically biased messages – which may be (and

usually are) slanted truths. It is imperative that we seek out the ethos of the person, and the institution, which delivers the news that we consume, so we can begin straying away from our blind allegiance in this biting system; lest, we forget that the position anchors hold on TV alone does not constitute their authority. In fact some pundits are qualified in nothing beyond the mere fact that they are entitled to their own opinion. Once we come to this conclusion, we can each begin to delve a little deeper into the media that we consume and start to extrapolate what little Truth the coverage actually holds. This allows us to recognize bias in the media. When we are able to identify this, we can become better informed citizens, who conscientiously seek out the complete story before shaping an opinion of our own; and, can begin to close the gap between the isle which is now, more so than ever, at the brink of causing a national cataclysm. These ‘pick and choose’ news stories best abet the rhetorical needs of a politically-motivated audience. They are a hindrance rather than an aid, these stories are *not* what we are looking for and certainly *not* what we need. We as a society should no longer blindly accept discriminatory systems that we’ve been born into. And, we must fight with vim and vigor for our right to nothing short of *the Truth*.

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