

# Mass persuasion and propaganda essay

[Experience](#), [Belief](#)



## **Introduction**

“ Literature is created on both sides of the frontier that divides fact from fiction.....” these are the words that introduce Timothy Garton’s article Truth is another Country (Ash, 2002, pp. 1). His article is about what he refers to as ‘ witness literature’; the issue he explores in the article is that of fiction and facts often found in the literature. He uses the words literature of fact to mean fact and literature of fiction to mean fiction. The purpose of this paper therefore, is to look at the different forms of truth, facts, and fiction as reflected by texts by Garton and Manjoo in their texts.

## **PART 1: COGNITIVE MAP**

The key term and theme the author uses in his article is ‘ fact’, and he explores this in the context of literature. Garton uses ‘ literature of fact’ to refer to the literature that is non fiction and ‘ literature of fiction’ to refer to the literature that is put together using fiction. Though these two different territories are very different, the author puts it that they both share something in common, and that is they both belong to literature. He uses the Maasai Mara found between the Kenyan and Tanzanian borders to show how borderless these two frontiers are. His main point here is that a writer can drift as he wishes from fiction to non fiction in the act of writing (Ash, 2002, pp. 1).

What the writer’s message seems to be is that writers should balance the use of facts and the use of fiction in their work as limiting ones work to facts only can be a grave for such a writer. The author however, seems to recommend that writers also practice self limitation when using literature of

fact and literature of fiction, as self restraint is by itself an art. Realism is one of the main themes in this text. The author in the most part of the article is trying to distinguish for the audience what fact or reality is from what fiction or unreality is. The author also gives several examples of other authors who used fiction and facts to put together a story (Ash, 2002, pp. 1).

The author goes on to explain why literature of fact might be resisted by the audience if an author decides to use facts instead of fiction. It is through the explanation of why this might be resisted that another minor theme in the text emerges; the theme of morality. Garton explains that some authors might be hesitant to utilize facts in their work simply because of the moral implications that work can have on the real world. Apart from these two themes, the theme of alienation is also slightly evident in the text; where by some writers alienate themselves from the other writers who produce their work through acceptable and common literature methods, and instead use the literature of fact to come up with some work for the purposes of enhancing their work. The theme of alienation in this article then is used by these kinds of authors to realize self knowledge and development. This article is very well integrated with the other available knowledge and especially the knowledge and material cited in the text (Ash, 2002, pp. 1).

Garton uses other sources of knowledge and quotes from them to make his own work make sense, for example in trying to explain the notion of memory and imagination he quotes Thomas Hobbes. This work can be very important to writers, novelist, poets, and other kinds of authors who want to know the differences between fiction and fact, their applications, and how to apply them. The work can also be a very reliable source of information and

knowledge for literature scholars. The article is generally presented in an understandable manner. The article is very interesting especially with the author using several literal styles like imagery, and metaphors (Ash, 2002, pp. 1).

## **PART 2: DIALOGUE AND EPILOGUE**

Timothy Garton: My work is about literature facts and literature fiction in most literature works. How they come about, and how authors and the audience generally perceive it. I understand that your work is related to mine in a way. Would you please care to expound more on this?

Farhad Manjoo: Yes, our works are actually very closely related as they both are about what is real, what is true and what is not. The book is about ‘truthiness’ a word that is used in the text to mean the quality of an idea or a theory feeling real or true without any need of evidence to back it up. The book just like yours relies heavily on other literatures and sources, especially those texts with sociological concepts and psychological abstracts. But mainly I use examples from American media, history, and politics. I particularly agree with your perception of ‘truth’. ...

Timothy Garton: Right. Truth to me is just like a fictional continent; one that has the states of truth and fiction existing together as equals.

Farhad Manjoo: I see your point of view. But do you not think that these are two entirely different kinds of truth; kinds that cannot be equal or similar.

Timothy Garton: Did you agree with my notion that the literature of fact and the literature of fiction both belong to literature just the way German and France belong to Europe?

**Farhad Manjoo: Yes I did. But what does that have to do with fiction and truth existing as equals?**

Timothy Garton: It has every thing to do with it. This is because we cannot say that the two kinds of truth belong to literature as two different kinds of truth. They have to be the same kinds of truth for the both of them to belong to literature. Answer this Manjoo, what determines if a statement is true or false, what makes it a fact and not fiction?

Farhad Manjoo: A fact has to be supported by evidence of course; though in most cases truth does not really need to be supported by evidence because it is obvious.

Timothy Garton: But some sources are never really reliable, take lawyers, journalists and historians for example. They in most cases lie, forget, exaggerate and even get confused about the truth. How then are we supposed to know what the truth is with such kinds of sources?

**Farhad Manjoo: Some truths are still obvious to see.**

Timothy Garton: But what I am saying is that it is hard for us to distinguish what is the truth, what is the fact from what is false, or fiction. This is why I am saying that fact and fiction stand as equal states in this other continent we are talking about. None is above the other because there is no way to determine which is true and which is false.

Farhad Manjoo: I still maintain that truthiness does not really need any evidence to justify itself as facts. But I do understand that several underpinnings such as sociological and psychological can affect what we believe and the reasons why we believe what we believe, and how we unconsciously choose and pick several sources of information such as the

media to confirm and justify beliefs that we previously held significantly. I know that our beliefs and biases can unknowingly play a significant role in changing or altering our interpretation of the truth in any information we come across, from politics, to football games to news.

Timothy Garton: That is exactly what I am saying. We can not rely on any source to verify whether something is the truth or not. The evidential basis on which most literature material is based on is usually very thin and thus unreliable. Sometimes there is no evidence at all, or the evidence is largely unreliable. So to come up with a literature work based on truth or facts we have to operate like novelists. We would have to select, cast some light on a certain object, and shadow the light on some others. We would also be needed to use our imagination. Because there is no piece of good history, I have come across that does not integrate into its facts some entity of imagination.

### **Farhad Manjoo: So what are you saying? That fact and fiction can not be adequately differentiated?**

Timothy Garton: No. What I am saying is that they are both equal. They should both be used sparingly in any form of writing for a text to be interesting and informative enough. The use of facts in most cases is usually dismissed on moral grounds. So why don't we use and integrate a little fiction with facts to show case our literally art and at the same time neutralize some of the ugliness of truth or facts.

Timothy Garton: Truth is never ugly Garton. What happens is that different people have different understanding of what reality or truth is. As a result there are numerous versions of truth, which everyone might not agree with.

This is where facts become essential, because they make it easier for people to accept a situation as it.

## **References**

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