

POST-TRUTH VERSUS THE LOGIC OF LANGUAGE

As disciplinary analyses show, post-truth authors, in order to achieve some of their goals, generally respect the logical consistency of propositions. But do they always do so? Do they not sacrifice the coherence of an argument to achieve some goals of theirs? If so, this would indicate that post-truth distances itself not only from the inherent logical rules, but also from the logical order of its own claims in favor of a deliberate pluralism or intentional ambivalence of opinion. Is there any “liberal” logic in which post-truth practices could be justified?³

THE “FALSITY” OF POST-TRUTH
AN INVERSION OF THE ORDER OF VALUES

The nature of post-truth consists in that the real world (the world of human life) is arbitrarily modified and, as a result, departs from the “truth” of that real world as the ultimate reference of (truthful) propositions. This is the case not only when the creators of post-truth aim to produce an alternative conception of the world in a spontaneous (so to speak, “disinterested”) manner, but also when they intentionally oppose the truth about reality, i.e., propagate untruth, or deliberately lie. As a result, the post-truth project is reintroduced, as it were, into the context of truth and falsehood, and must inevitably be evaluated by its

³ The question could be addressed to Saul Kripke. I refer to his idea to “liberalize” logic and his concept of possible worlds. The conditions of systemic correctness should be preserved in possible worlds. Can post-truth abrogate these conditions, or, colloquially speaking, the principles of rational thinking? Kripke considers the identity: the Evening Star is the Morning Star. In the world where the planet Venus is absent, there would be neither the Evening Star nor the Morning Star. The question arises whether the proposition stating the identity is true, false, or neither true nor false. If the latter is the case, the question of the truth of the proposition remains unresolved (which reminds us of post-truth and its location beyond truth and falsity). However, the vagueness of the identity proposition, related to the truth of its reference, points to its second essential property: the proposition is necessary because it is never false. On the basis of this finding, Kripke asks: “Should we require that a necessary truth be true in all possible worlds?” Saul Kripke, *Naming and Necessity* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1990), 110. In fact, Kripke’s questions are whether necessary truths should obtain in any arbitrary worlds and whether such truths are prior to and entirely independent of the vicissitudes of these worlds. Kripke prefers not to address them: “I am leaving such problems outside my considerations altogether.” *Ibidem*. Does he think that the primacy of necessity over possible truthfulness is not unconditionally certain? Does he suspect that there are possible worlds that do not guarantee such primacy? If that were the case, one might think that the post-truth world with its inherent contradictions is nevertheless not outside the scope of possible worlds, even if the contradictions were intentionally produced. This issue, as in Kripke’s considerations, must remain open.

audience as either true or false. An ideological construct created for the benefit of interest groups is presented to a certain audience as a faithful testimony to reality, which is supposed to furnish them with grounds for making judgements about the world. Such an attitude is possible on condition that references to “truthful” statements, and therefore also references to the original state of being, or reality as such, were excluded. Thus, all ideas, all claims, be they social, cultural, religious or scientific, retain their post-truth quality unless they correlate, or are identical with certain actually true or false utterances. If such a correlation, or identification, occurs, post-truth claims also enter the domain of “truthfulness.”

The creation and propagation of post-truth often involves a practice of inverting the hierarchy of values shared in daily life. Ideologies shape not only the world, but also the subject, his or her behavior and acts of judgment. Post-truth undergoes transformation in the processes of communication. Participants in cultural communication use multiple codes (sender codes and receiver codes) in which meanings and statuses of what they say change. However, the dependence of statements on their communicative situation cannot be used as an argument for adopting cognitive relativism and abandoning efforts to discover objective states of affairs.