

1. What does the concept of "provisional truth" mean? Why is journalistic truth "provisional"? What burden does it place on news consumers? Illustrate your answer by discussing one example of a recent news story that you followed. Your example can be from any reading assigned in the course, or from your daily habit of following the news. (10 points)

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Provisional truth means that truth changes over time. The story changes as new evidence comes about. This places the burden on us to follow the story/news over time. ~~we have to look for the entire truth.~~ Journalistic truth is provisional <sup>because</sup> the story changes as evidence arises. An example of this is the rocket Antares exploding. Over the course of 5 days, the truth changed from not knowing why it exploded, to engine failure, to deliberate destruction. The reason why it exploded changed as new evidence came about.

2. In his September 6, 2005, report for *The Times-Picayune*, Brian Thevenot reported that between thirty and forty dead bodies were stacked in the freezer of the Ernest N. Morial Convention Center after Hurricane Katrina struck New Orleans. This information turned out to be false. Why did Thevenot report this false information? How could Thevenot have avoided reporting falsehoods? What News Literacy catch-phrase is a specific reference to Thevenot's case? (10 points)

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Brian Thevenot reported this information because he was told by an Arkansas National Guardsman that the freezer they were passing by was filled with 30 to 40 bodies. He believed the national guardsman and published the info. Thevenot could have avoided reporting this false information by looking ~~into~~ in the freezer himself. The News Literacy catch-phrase specific to this case is ~~open~~ "Did the reporter open the freezer?". The reporters need to check the information for themselves.

3.

The main instances of evidence are the documents and memos, as well as the spokesmen for both the CIA and Pakistan's Foreign Ministry. The documents and memos are direct evidence, ~~because~~ <sup>seeing as</sup> documents are on the hierarchy of direct evidence. Both the nonstatement ~~and the~~ from ~~the~~ the CIA and Aizaz Ahmed Chaudry are examples of evidence because they came from spokespeople who work for the organizations involved and will have a ~~low~~ loyalty towards those organizations. There is not a lot of transparency, for instance how did The Washington Post obtain those files? Where and when did Chaudry's interview take place? It affects the credibility because the interview could have been in regards to another matter and the documents could come from an unreliable source. I think the story is pretty credible for its use of documents but could be way more credible. Also, Bob Woodward is on the story so you Bob Woodward.

4. In an attempt to track down two Sri Lankan children who had gone missing after a tsunami struck Southeast Asia, CNN's Anderson Cooper spoke with the missing children's aunt. The children's aunt told Cooper: "I believe they're alive." Use the IMVA/IN criteria for source evaluation to explain whether the aunt is a reliable source. (10 points)

Independent v.s. Self-interested - The aunt is clearly self-interested because she wants the children to be alive.

Multiple v.s. Single - The aunt is the only one that claims the children are alive. Other sources said they're dead.

Verify v.s. Assert - Does not verify anything, asserts that they're alive.

Authoritative / Informed v.s. Not informed - Not authoritative but informed on how the children look like and knows them personally. Not informed however on if they're kidnapped / dead / alive.

Named v.s. Unnamed

Not really reliable, more of a color source to connect readers emotionally. Is reliable on how the children look like, which serves to give the children more life & color.

5. According to the film *Shattered Glass*, who first discovered the truth about Stephen Glass's stories? How were his fabrications uncovered? What important parallel between journalistic and scientific methods does this case demonstrate? (10 points)

Forbes online <sup>technology</sup> writer <sup>n</sup> Peterberg first uncovered Glass' fabrications. He cross-checked all the information in "Macher: Heaven", but couldn't find any trace of ~~the~~ the company, a supposed technology powerhouse. The child in the story, or of the event even happening. This demonstrates peer review.

6. What is journalistic fairness? Discuss at least one specific example to illustrate the kind of story in which balance is required for a fair story, and one specific example of a story that does not require balance. (10 points)

10 Journalistic fairness is fairness to the evidence whereas balance is quantitative and even if the evidence for something greatly outweighs the evidence against it, they still get equal time to argue their point. In the most recent election, alongside any other election before this, stories should be balanced giving each side equal opportunity to build support for themselves so that the people can decide who is best for them. However, in a situation such as the Walter Reed case, there is so much more evidence leaning towards the negative aspects of the hospital that if there was balance, the negatives would be undermined and it wouldn't seem nearly as bad as it really is. Fairness is needed in this case so that the truth can be exposed. Balance is just in other political cases, court cases, and other situations where the evidence does not lean to one side or another.

7.

7. What is confirmation bias? How can it be a problem for news consumers seeking actionable information? Illustrate your answer with at least one specific example drawn from your lecture notes, course readings, or recent news reports. (10 points) *Very good: clear.*

10 Confirmation bias is the tendency to seek out information that supports one's predetermined view, while ignoring/debunking information that disagrees with their view of the topic. Evidently, this can be a big problem for news consumers, especially political ones, as they ~~give~~ <sup>ascribe</sup> much more validity to those stories that support their political beliefs & dismiss those that don't. For example, a liberal news consumer is more likely to dismiss an article that outlines Obama's flaws & approve of one that outlines his strengths, simply b/c ~~the~~ said news consumer actively seeks out information that is in line with his pre-existing beliefs.

8. Why is it important *not* to rely on television as your sole source of news? Discuss an example scientific from either course readings, lecture material, or from recent news reports to support your answer. (10 points)

Although T.V. has many advantages (reliability, ~~with~~ audience becomes a real-time witness, powerful verification tool, creates national and global experience), it also holds a number of disadvantages. With limited air time, context is sacrificed. If there is no video, there's no story, no matter how important. Powerful emotions and personalities distract viewers. We watched a video in lecture about a boy being killed by a drunk driver who hit him while he was riding his bike. With limited time, information became muffled. It seemed like the driver had been exonerated, but in reality, his court date hadn't

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One clear example of the impact of context was Prof. Miller's statistic in class that  $\frac{2}{64}$  (or  $\frac{1}{32}$ ) of NY's car jackings occur in Long Island. On its own, this piece of information is scary, but when you compare Long Island's population to New York's, it makes complete sense, as the statistics for both are nigh identical. In this scenario, a singular piece of information can be misconstrued in many ways, but it becomes much less ambiguous & more clarified when context surrounds it.

10.

A classic!  
"One For the Ages"

not know. By highlighting where the facts came from and the problems that were faced, it allows consumers to check these facts for themselves and increases the reliability of the journalist.

The example of transparency underlined is important because it outlines ~~the steps taken by the journalist~~ how the information was obtained. The Day newspaper requested the documents to get the information about Google. If I wanted more information as a consumer, I now know that The Day newspaper has the information I need.

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