Post-Truth American Politics

David Ricci has written two books on “political stories,” providing the foundations for post-truth democracy. Yet the present book is arguably the most important yet. The author writes that we need stories to make our way in the world. But many stories, say from identity politics, are necessarily false because they are simplifications of some larger reality. Moreover, not all stories are equally false or equally harmful. Some lead to bad outcomes, so we should counter them with other stories leading to better outcomes. In short, stories are a complex and potent form of political power, deserving attention from scholars, journalists, and activists.

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Post-Truth American Politics
False Stories and Current Crises

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For Gili and Yarden
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Note on cover image

The MAGA on Donald Trump’s red hats stands for “Make America Great Again.”

It is a national Story which Trump projected in his presidential campaigns, and which inspired his Inaugural Address in 2017. It is false in the sense that it claims America is no longer “great” (whatever “great” means) because someone (unnamed) has caused the country to decline (in an undefined way). Since the guilty party is not named in the story, listeners can fill in the blanks with whoever they dislike.

In short, MAGA is an example of the false stories that help to shape post-truth American politics.