for. The question that the process of reading Long's work foregrounds is: how should one write an introduction, especially to Indian philosophy? Because writing about the subject requires one to be heavily invested in thinking about the person that one aspires to be, such a book cannot be written from the standpoint of knowledge alone. It demands a certain dedication toward curiosity about self and reality, existence and non-existence of divinity, and so on while also eliciting a sense of wonder about the answers and perspectives various schools of thought put forth. In the process of uncovering these perspectives, one may or may not see the big picture of Indian philosophy. But one will definitely emerge riveted by the little insights into questions one faces everyday. Long's discussion of judging an action not by its consequences but by its intention is a case in point. While Jainism can be hard on someone for the consequences unleashed by their action, Buddhism can be quite forgiving if one's intention was not to harm. Seeing such everyday dilemmas in the light of larger scholasticism and worldviews is likely to make one feel light as well as help one relate to the labyrinthine ways of Indian philosophy.

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FAKE NEWS IN CONTEMPORARY SCIENCE AND POLITICS: A REQUIEM FOR THE REAL? By Keith Moser. London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2024. 218 pp.

Could the postmodern subject, within the confines of the "hyperreal," find an effective perspective that helps her/him enter freely into the inner workings of the "death" described by Saint Augustine, other than a will as narrated in *Aghwee the Sky Monster* by Kenzaburo Oe or in *The Last Day of a Condemned Man* by Victor Hugo?

In *Fake News in Contemporary Science and Politics: A Requiem for the Real?*, Keith Moser sheds light on the real-life consequences of the *infodemic* "threatening the stability of democratic institutions and the existence of all organisms on this biosphere, including *Homo sapiens*" (33), and offers us four enlightening revelations on the ubiquity of fake news and conspiracy theories (cf. QAnon and ANTIFA) in the larger context of the scientific and political realm. In a series of seamlessly connected musings from a plethora of philosophical and "evidenced-based" sources, Moser offers an overwhelmingly demonstrative discourse against "a requiem for the real on the horizon" (2). Specifically, Moser delves into postmodern or "Alt-Right politicians with autocratic tendencies" (100) all over the world (Donald Trump, Ron DeSantis, Jair Bolsonaro, Paul Kagame, Vladimir Putin, Boris Johnson, etc.) who take advantage of pro-administration messages on social media to suppress dissent and to consolidate even more power. Moser also outlines the fatal repercussions of living in an age of (dis-) information, as illustrated by the January 6th *coup d'état* attempt in the United States. Moreover, Moser's reflections about the deleterious effects of "alternative facts" in the scientific arena decry climate change skepticism-denial resulting in "no escape, or path for deviating from our *ecocidal* trajectory" (40). Moser also investigates the anti-vaccination movement, deconstructing the anti-science rhetoric promulgated by Big Carbon that has "whitewashed evidenced-based perspectives and replaced them with unfounded conspiracy theories" (68). Throughout the book, Moser underscores how Christian fundamentalists are trapped within a parallel universe of simulation, owing to the omnipresent influence of Rupert Murdoch's one-dimensional media empire that includes Fox News.

The fact that the book is more an assemblage of "science-based" perspectives than a rehashing of chimerical fantasies on social media, and that it at times presents more criticism than praise for great wealth without an altruism reconnecting to a deep knowledge of the cosmos, draws us to a matter of

Journal of Comparative Literature and Aesthetics Vol. 47, No. 4, Winter 2024 [236-238]

great urgency given that late capitalism has eroded the social fabric that has been completely commodified by the omnipresent realm of signs sustaining media pseudo-events, "preventing us from taking action in defense of an imperiled planet, eradicating infectious diseases, and preserving democratic forms of governance" (10). Moser compellingly makes the case for the implementation of "inoculation theory" that enables us to "build cognitive antibodies to fake news stories" (190), since the postmodern subject "dwells within a world defined by porous, geopolitical divisions" (143) owing to the advent of the Internet Revolution, and "internalizes another (hyper-) reality inextricably linked to a corporate agenda in late capitalism" (21).

It is a harrowingly realistic book meant to make us sympathetic to his stance. Moser's detailed and logical observations invite us to reflect upon the current status quo epitomized by Jean Baudrillard's theory of "integral reality" (2005) and Guy Debord's concept of the "integrated spectacle" (1992). For example, the Twittersphere is "the ideal environment in which to generate a hyperreal spectacle that has no connection to evidence, logic, or common sense" (121). Moser ponders the impact of "inoculative prebunking" (42) like the BBC's broadcasting on the dark web against "the nefarious impact of *dezinformatsiya*" (160) and "the *Bad News* game developed by scientists from the University of Cambridge" (42), while promoting "a revalorization of humanistic knowledge as a tool for combatting the ubiquity of fake news" (191). The author's instructive approach against the "pseudoscientific content flooding social networks" (77) such as Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, and Twitter (X) that may bear little to no connection to the real, as several philosophers probe the historical roots of post-factual knowledge claims like Michel Serres's ironic comments about the "good old days" (2017), is open to everyone affected by "the *infodemic* that pervades all facets of contemporary life" (85).

Moser's book joins a multidisciplinary field of post-truth epistemic studies, ranging from education (Horn and Veermans 2019), to psychology (Roozenbeek and van der Linden 2019), to law (Haan 2019), to international relations (Crilley 2018), to military strategy (Kipp 2022) and more. Such studies acknowledge that epistemic revelations, in an effort to "distinguish between reality and its pervasive misrepresentation on a plethora of screens" (1), represent the postmodern subject facing "an acute crisis of simulation [...] in the Technocene/Anthropocene" (45).

In order to "bolster her-his cognitive immune system" (42) against "a shaky, hyperreal edifice" (3), Moser focuses on media literacy training programs in schools, and in so doing, attempts to "penetrate the carapace of the hyperreal that sometimes appears to have covered and replaced everything" (45). Moser laments, "The mainstream media may fall well short of the fourth-estate ideal, owing to the profit motive and the entertainment imperative that govern it, but the increasing percentage of people who rely on social media for their news is even more problematic" (184). Even though, in the post-truth era, there is only "the simulacrum of power itself" as described by Baudrillard (1998), Moser highlights a glimmer of hope in the midst of an existential crisis of epic proportions in reference to Albert Camus's adaptation of *The Myth of Sisyphus*, that Moser describes as a source of "ontological meaning in a battle that we cannot win definitively" (193) – connected to the fight against a menace not only to "the existence of every sentient being on this planet," but also to "democratic models of governance around the globe coinciding with the rise of autocratic forms of populism" (2; 2). Moser concludes, "It is disheartening for the postmodern subject to watch the boulder come crashing down the mountain through the force of simulation that has resulted in new, deadly forms of obscurantism. However, given that the fate of all species hangs in the balance, the war against fake news is the most consequential battle that we will ever fight" (193).

In an effort to reinvestigate post-truth politicians' hyperreal metanarratives like Putin's "ludicrous *denazifcation* mission justification for the war in Ukraine" (181), predicated upon the good-evil duality in a simplistic manner, Moser also derives inspiration from the counter-hegemonic technique that "Debord calls *le détournement* (hijacking/rerouting)" (9) aimed at distorting the intended meanings of a sign into something more subversive or antagonistic, as illustrated by the world's

preeminent street artist "Banksy's hijacking of Disney images designed to undermine these signifiers" (166) and the works of "experimental and courageous Russian artists" (167) in major cities all throughout Russia. Moser indignantly argues, "When a world leader possesses the information superhighway, she-he has been bequeathed the capability of generating an alternate reality and a system of morality corresponding to these banal simulacra" (158).

As Jean-François Lyotard predicted regarding the degeneration of the situation (1984), we must further develop our "rending portrait of the postmodern subject who is condemned to live in a world from which all meaning has been excised" (155) in line with Baudrillard. For a civilization epitomized by "a flood of conspiracy theories and fake news stories" (107), Moser's requiem for the post-truth era must be fully chanted as a counter-hegemonic prayer leading to the awareness of the "real." Saint Augustine, in *Confessions*, describes the state before conversion as his death, and affirms that resurrection from that state is entering into faith. In this vein, Moser's "requiem for the real" will speak to mortal fake news.

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MILTON, LONGINUS AND THE SUBLIME IN THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY. By Thomas Matthew Vozar. Clarendon: Oxford University Press, 2023. 224 pp.

John Milton's first, fruitful acquaintance with the Longinian sublime, Vozar claims, was through his tutors, Thomas Young and Alexander Gil whose son, bearing the same name, alongside himself, were associated with Thomas Farnaby, who authored *Index Rhetoricus* (44). It was Hermogenes's *Ars Rhetorica*, probably perused by Milton when studying at Christ's College, Cambridge, that introduced sublimity in rhetoric, or rhetorical sublimity, to him. It is also, equally probable, that Thomas Dodington's copy of the Porteus anthology, containing Longinus's text, was not Greek to him. There is further possibility that Milton was not, during his famous Continental tour, unacquainted with Allatius, Holstenius's frenemy, who had translated *Peri Hypsous* into Latin recently (49), not to mention Gerard Langbaine's edition of Longinus, published in 1636 which included expansive notes on ways of approaching his text, and which is, unlikely, to have escaped Milton's attention. All this would have served to further Milton's grandeur of the Mind, his poetic inspiration, the perfect recipe behind the foundation of Longinian Sublimity, of "epic decorum" (54) being

Journal of Comparative Literature and Aesthetics Vol. 47, No. 4, Winter 2024 [238-240]