

**“We do not see
things as they are.
We see things as
we are.”**

The Talmud





Psychologist and Cognitive
Scientist Paul Bloom

“You might be taking advantage of [the] ethos and pathos of decision making rather than logic...you can appeal to emotion to a negative extent.”

MU MPH Student

**Is storytelling—itsself— even
ethical?**

Swamplandia (H/T Karen Russell)

Ownership

Who has the right to tell which stories? What about credit/money? What about conflict about what happened/what it means?

Representation

Images, language, metaphor, frames. It happened vs. Is that a thing?

Consent

Who should represent the community? What if the community is dominated by a certain group (gender)? What about secondary characters?

Public Health storytelling

PATTERNS

CONTEXT



Patterns and Context:



**Representativeness—is
that a thing?**



**Context: Poor people
are sicker**

Mission, values and *relationships*

Journalism

Promote public enlightenment
Democracy

Holding those in power accountable (give voice to voiceless)

Airing of even repugnant views

Medicine/ Social Work

Focus on patient well-being

Focus on storyteller well-being (Storycenter)

Patient/client confidentiality is paramount

Public Health

Focus on community well-being

Activities often happen in public settings

Advocacy and policy change are core tasks

Public health professionals are agency workers, government etc.



Question for Day 2:
Do facts have meaning?

In 2015, the infant mortality rate in the United States was 5.9 deaths per 1,000 live births.



1) In 2005 it was 6.86 and in 2010 it was 6.14

It is a story about the fact that more babies are surviving..

2) In Latvia it was 4.3/1000 in 2015 (vs.5.9).

It becomes a story about the high rate in US vs. developed and middle-income countries.

3) Among African Americans the IMR was 11.3 (2015)

It becomes a story about disparities, racism and stress.

Ellen Urbani's *There is No Such Thing as a True Story*:

How does one's perspective change what's true?

Secondary characters

Values: What works vs. What's best

Astead [@AsteadWesley](#)

Remember this after Katrina? The difference between "looting" and "finding" is often black and white [pic.twitter.com/nZoaP0KJ2l](#)

11:13 AM - Aug 29, 2017

AP Associated Press AP - Tue Aug 30, 11:31 AM ET

A young man walks through chest deep flood water after **looting** a grocery store in New Orleans on Tuesday, Aug. 30, 2005. Flood waters continue to rise in New Orleans after Hurricane Katrina did extensive damage when it

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- Looting Takes Place in View of La. Police AP - T

AFP AFP/Getty Images - Tue Aug 30, 3:47 AM ET

Two residents wade through chest-deep water after **finding** bread and soda from a local grocery store after Hurricane Katrina came through the area in New Orleans, Louisiana (AFP/Getty Images/Chris Graythen)

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- Katrina's Effects, at a Glance AP - Wed Aug 31, 11:11 AM ET
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Teju Cole (A Too Perfect Picture):

“The men are real, of course but they have also been chosen for how well they work as types.”



Taj Mahal and train in Agra, 1983. Steve McCurry

A photograph of a kitchen scene. In the foreground, a person's legs in blue jeans and a pink shirt are visible. In the background, a person's arm is stirring a pot on a stove. A black kettle with a floral cloth on its handle sits on the counter. The wall has a patterned wallpaper.

My BFF (Breastfeeding Friend)

Uncovering the secret life of a breastfeeder in modern
America

Laura McCulloch

“...From the beginning, critics worried that her book, which refused to contextualize itself with “positional” humility or some powerful theory, would serve only to reinforce popular stereotypes.”

“Chuck, her friend and sometime roommate, has been murdered by rivals, and Goffman describes driving her other roommate, Mike, on his manhunt for the killer.”

Prosecutable offense or “mourning ritual?”

Gideon Lewis-Kraus, *The Trials of Alice Goffman* 2016



Participation on a continuum

Writer as outside observer

Writer as reflective observer

Writer verifies perspective/ interpretation with
"informants."

Writer verifies with "subjects."

Content created through collaboration

Why am I *not* writing
about me?

The squirm test.

Asking: is it true? How
do I know?

Hidden narratives:

Pre-existing narratives.

Thibodeau, Paul H., and Lera Boroditsky. "Metaphors we think with: The role of metaphor in reasoning." *PloS one* 6.2 (2011): e16782.

The health/morality narrative is strong in public health!

A true PUBLIC HEALTH STORY:

- Provides context for facts
- Is non-exploitative
- Is evidence-based
- Uses both statistical evidence and real lived experience of people to get where it's going
- Is informed by multiple points of view (evidences reflection)

